

Introduction to Buddhism

Session 3

10/16/22

What Siddhartha (The Buddha) taught.

“The Four Characteristics of Life”

Also known as

“The Four Marks of Life”

- 1. All things are impermanent.**
- 2. All things are unsubstantial or interdependent.**
- 3. There is suffering and anxiety in our lives.**
- 4. This suffering can end by achieving Nirvana.**

We will discuss the Four Characteristics of Life for two sessions. Today we will cover the first two and finish with the last two next week.

I. All things are impermanent:

* The Buddha taught that there is no permanent substance, and so all things are impermanent.

* When conditions are no longer together or never came together, solidity does not exist.

* Karma. Predetermination/ fate?

* **Causes and Conditions/Causes and Effects:** Working from the beginning of time, to the present, and into the future.

II. All things are nonsubstantial or interdependent.

If all things are impermanent then nothing can be permanent, non-changing substance and so it is nonsubstantial. Thus if something were to exist or not exist, it would be dependent upon everything else and thus everything else is interdependent.

Dependent Origination of Dependent Arising. This means that all things are related by cause', 'condition' and 'result'. That is to say all things in our world are interdependent and interconnected in a multidimensional, web like structure of infinite details.

* **Permanent soul:** Not in the context of a separate, indestructible entity.

* **Emptiness (Sunyata) :** Is not to be equated with nihilism since the term is equivalent to Suchness or the ultimate reality.

SUGGESTED BOOKS REGARDING BASIC BUDDHISM

Basic Teachings of the Buddha By Glenn Wallis, Modern Library Classics 2007

Jewels By Kenneth Tanaka, BDK 2020

Jodo Shinshu A Guide Hongwanji International Center 2004

Ocean By Kenneth Tanaka, Wisdom Ocean Publications 1998

The heart of the Buddha-Dharma By Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, Numata Center 2003

The Vision of the Buddha By Tom Lowenstein, Little Brown 1996 (Thorsons 2002)