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## Interpretation of William Wordsworth's Poems Under Buddhism

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### ABSTRACT

William Wordsworth, who was of great importance in the Romanticism movement, is credited for his sheer exposure of nature and his curiosity about human mind. Although Wordsworthian poetry is often sugared to the Christian context, there are some lines in his verses that indirectly point him in the direction of Buddhism exploration. This article will unveil the role played of Buddhism in Wordsworth's poems. We designate mood, as embedded in nature, oneself, and the unity of all things, and the Buddhist values associated with each. This article scrutinizes certain poems written by Wordsworth as well as identifies their respective philosophical conceptions with Buddhist teachings to give you a better understanding of a new not so popular side of the poet and its importance in the history of English romantics. In addition, the basic tenet of Buddhism to which Wordsworth's poetry pays homage is the interdependence of all things. In "The Prelude," Wordsworth describes "one life within us and without" which implies that we all are in the greater indivisible unit with other living creatures. This principle is at the basis of Buddhism teaching, known as "pratityasamutpada," or dependent origination, which discloses that everything happens because of and by relation to each other.

**Keywords:** Romantic Poetry, Buddhism, Ecstasy, Enlightenment

### INTRODUCTION

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) is possibly among the most popular poets of the Romantic period and is critically acclaimed for his innovative style and his close association and deep empathy with the nature and the human condition (Gill 1). Although the Christian perspective is predominant in the interpretation of Wordsworth's poems, modern scholars are propagating that he got some inspirations from the Eastern philosophers particularly Buddha's thought (Endo 287). This piece investigates how Wordsworth's poetry represents Buddhist thought in particular ways through his nature imagery, his perspective of the self, and mind's interconnectedness with all beings.

Before delving into Wordsworth's poetry, it is important to consider the historical context in which he was writing. The late 18th and early 19th centuries saw a growing interest in Eastern philosophy and religion among European intellectuals, including the Romantics (Rudy 1). This interest was fueled by the translation of Buddhist texts into European languages and the accounts of travelers who had visited Asia (Hayter 23). The Romantics were drawn to Buddhism's emphasis on the unity of all things, the illusory nature of the self, and the path to enlightenment through meditation and self-reflection (Abrams 45). These ideas resonated with the Romantic ideal of the individual's connection to nature and the universe.

### **Nature and the Self in Wordsworth's Poetry:**

Probably the most unusual feature of Wordsworth's poems is his way of looking at nature as a temporarily maybe lifeless but still sentient being. Nature is a provider of spiritual sustenance and transportation to self of the kind described by Wordsworth in the poems "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" and "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud" (Wordsworth 131, 287). The relationship with nature one may meet in this context is also based on Buddhist philosophy's dependent origination principle (Endo 290). It stands that according to this principle, there can be no separate existence; everything is the result of other events that, in their turn, develop in connection with other phenomena. Wordsworth's work expresses such concept of unity presenting images which involve the human self with nature.

Wordsworth gives the silver enchanting poetry another main topic - the deceptive character of our identities. In "Ode: Wordsworth almost summarizes the entire concept of the self in this phrase: "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," while he describes the prison-house of the self and the need of self-transcendence to achieve an elevated state of consciousness (Wordsworth 462). A similar concept is the Buddhist doctrine of "anatta" of no-self. This doctrine holds the view that the self is something conjured by the mind (Rudy, 34). In such a way one realizes himself as illusion and knows the state of enlightenment and lack of pain. In addition, the basic tenet of Buddhism to which Wordsworth's poetry pays homage is the interdependence of all things. In "The Prelude," Wordsworth describes "one life within us and without" which implies that we all are in the greater indivisible unit with other living creatures. This principle is at the basis of Buddhism teaching, known as "pratityasamutpada," or dependent origination, which discloses that everything happens because of and by relation to each other (Endo 291). Wordsworth plays to this philosophy in his poetry as a consequence of his emphasis on the union of the soul and nature, as well as the realization of the inter-relatedness of all living beings.

### **The Buddhism and the poetry Wordsworth:**

Wordsworth's poetry is renowned for its deep engagement with nature and its exploration of the relationship between the self and the natural world. In many of his poems, Wordsworth presents nature as a living, sentient being with which the individual can connect on a profound level (Hartman 45). This view of nature as a source of spiritual nourishment and a means of transcending the self is evident in poems such as "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" and "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (Wordsworth 131, 287).

In "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth describes how his encounters with nature have shaped his sense of self and his understanding of the world. He writes of how "the mighty world / Of eye, and ear, —both what they half create, / And what perceive" (Wordsworth 106-108), suggesting that the individual's perception of nature is not passive, but rather an active process of creation and interpretation. This idea is consistent with the Buddhist concept of "dependent origination," which holds that all phenomena arise in relation to one another and that the self is not separate from the world around it (Endo 290). Similarly, in "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," Wordsworth describes a moment of intense connection with nature, in which he comes upon a field of daffodils and feels his heart fill with pleasure (Wordsworth 288). The poem suggests that this moment of connection with nature has a profound impact on the poet's sense of self, as he carries the memory of the daffodils with him and feels his soul "dance with the daffodils" (Wordsworth 296). This idea of the self as deeply connected to and shaped by nature is a recurring theme in Wordsworth's poetry (Hartman 78). At the same time,

Wordsworth's poetry also explores the idea of the self as an illusory construct, a theme that is consistent with the Buddhist concept of "anatta" or "no-self" (Endo 295). In "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," Wordsworth writes of the "prison-house" of the self and the need to transcend it to achieve a higher state of consciousness (Wordsworth 462). The poem suggests that the self is not a fixed, permanent entity, but rather a limiting construct that must be overcome in order to achieve a more profound understanding of reality (Hartman 102).

The literary work of William Wordsworth also suggests the idea of interconnection among all living things in his imagery and metaphor hence highlights the oneness of everything in the universe. As in the poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," Wordsworth talks about how seeing a daffodil field gives him joy with the memory of the flowers that stays with him even those moments when he thinking of nothing or is gloomy (288,293).

The poem underlines the idea that humans are not separate and insulated from nature but a fundamental part of it as well. It is possible for the one to be greatly transformed and lifted by the simple sight of nature. All

things even the inward self and other people are connected metaphor is also possible to observe in William Wordsworth's representation. As an example, "The Old Cumberland Beggar" by Wordsworth puts into perspective how the presence of a poor beggar in a community creates a sense of equality within the connecting community. This is as a result of the reminder that there is no boundaries between people and no difference as far as compassion and empathy is concerned (Wordsworth 209). With the words of the poem, it is hinted that a person belongs to the bigger picture, the individual does not exist separately with society, but rather is an essential part of a big intricate web made of human relations and responsibilities (Altieri 131).

## **CONCLUSION**

William Wordsworth's poetry hence demonstrates that nature is only a manifestation of the Buddhist idea of interdependence in the way it approaches the relationships of self and nature, and the examination of both societal and ethical problems in human existence. Through the assertion of profound, ultimate interdependence of all the things (seemingly different), Wordsworth's verse questions the age-old notion of a self as a separate and capricious entity and exemplifies a more united and global view concept of reality (Rudy 156). Wordsworth also stresses this idea of the world as oneness in the poem, "all the mighty world / Of eye and ear" are "well pleased to be acknowledged / In nature and sense language" (43-61, Wordsworth). It turns out that such a recognition is the most stable point of my purest feelings, the cradle, teacher and guardian of my heart and soul, and a Thus, the given piece specifically implies that an individual is very influenced and moulded by nature and which dealing with nature is also caring for nature (Altieri 127).

On this journey, the poem is also continually in the process of explaining the nature of an individual which is the Buddhist idea of no-self (anatta) (Endo 295). With these words Wordsworth shows us how "I have learned / Not to regard nature as when I was young / And thinking without the reason of maturity / To have felt what is deeper and sadder in the melodies of life" (Wordsworth 89-92). As a result, he reveals that the experience acquired, and the mature thinking now have spilled into the appreciation of nature (Hartman 7)

The poet, Wordsworth, makes us feel that while one might look at the aspect of. He writes of how "we are laid asleep / In body, and become a living soul: / As we allow our mind to be absorbed by the beauty of harmony and the tremendous power of happiness, we look into the world of life and become aware that one can surpass the limits of selfhood and acquire the chance to contemplate the meaning of things" (Wordsworth 45-49), which Rudy considers to be a viewpoint of the self that emerges with a profound understanding of reality (156).

Through his representations of nature as a lively, empathic entity, and his great recurrent theme of an in-born kinship between humans and the world of nature, Wordsworth poem becomes an eloquent meditation on the interaction between the individual person and the unlimited universe, and on the unfailing ability of nature to guide and comfort the human heart (Endo 298). Lastly, the main Buddhist concepts discussed in "Tintern Abbey" include a belief that each thing is influenced by others, the illusion of self and a strong power of nature in defining humanity.

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