

# Hope



Hope is an important element of the human experience. For many, hope is as essential to the maintenance of our mental well-being as food and water are for our physical survival. The hope of a better tomorrow is what drives many of our thoughts and actions today. In Buddhism, hope is the antithesis of doubt. Hope and doubt relate to many desires, but in Buddhism they primarily relate to our desire to transform suffering into happiness and awakening; in ourselves and others. Hope and doubt are merely views, and are therefore conditioned and relative.

We generally use hope as a means to make the present moment more bearable. Hope often arises from faith – faith either in ourselves or some external agency. Hope and faith are often interwoven, but faith in the Buddhist sense simply means that we have faith in our ability to transform suffering. Any such faith has to be based upon personal experience, not mindlessly indoctrinated.

Happiness is available in the here and now – and it is within reach of the mind. It does not depend upon manipulation of the physical body

or the outside world – how could it ever? If the world all practiced the kind of Buddhism that chants for physical change, how could the universe ever respond to the myriad different desires? No, the only happiness to be realized is in the here and now, with all the difficulties and challenges that face us – the real simultaneity of cause and effect reveals this mystery with every breath.