

GCSE RE Coursework

Question Three

Buddhism '02

“Western Economics Grow By Creating A Desire For Material Possessions. It would be difficult for Buddhists to live in such a society!”

Tom O'Dell
10JHA



Western economics grow by creating a desire for material possessions – this makes it very hard for Buddhists to live in such a society. This is mainly due to the Buddha’s rules on ‘reducing worldly attachment’.

So many people in the west’s contemporary economic system crave the latest labels and logos on everything they buy. Everyone prefers bigger makes to lesser ones even if the quality is no different. People would pay a lot more money to have a pair of trousers with a label like “Addidas” rather than “BHS”. It’s the same with cars, electronic accessories, paintings, toys, clothes – and much more.

Because of all this, Buddhists may find it hard to resist all the temptation. They have to be calm and relaxed and it’s hard to keep this up if you are constantly being badgered to buy the latest things.

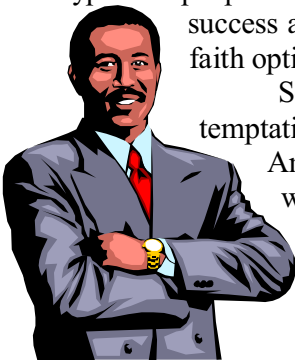
Through meditation, Buddhists may be able to ignore this however. They can relax their minds and get on with their lives by doing so. They can see that material things are not important in life – it’s quality of life that matters, not standard of living – so Buddhists can live happily without the latest fashion items or accessories..

Personally, I agree with the statement that Buddhists may find it hard to live in a western environment. It seems that everywhere I go, there is some sort of advertising for some new product etc. and I find it very hard to resist the temptation; so I can see how Buddhists would too.

Advertisements are all over the radio, television, internet, text messages, emails, posters, banners, flyers, post – everywhere. It’s very hard to avoid it and extremely hard to resist it.

I think it’s partially to do with money-management. A person’s financial and social statuses link with how they spend their money. Someone with a lot of money would be less inclined to resist the temptations of the economic system because they can afford to. As opposed to someone who can’t necessarily afford to be so carefree about how they spend their money.

Due to the fact that Siddhartha taught that Buddhists should keep their worldly attachment levels down, I would say that Buddhists would be the second of the two types of people mentioned above. They would have to choose between financial success and following their faith – being Buddhists, they would go for the faith option – which would bring more happiness anyway.



So, although I feel that it’s probably very hard resisting all these temptations, it can be done – there are many Buddhists in Europe and America living happily, and working successfully under the Buddhist way of life. I think that with a proper balance, Buddhists can find the “Middle Way” Siddhartha spoke of and they can achieve true happiness in their lives.

