

# Moral Weakness in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and in Buddhist Teachings

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Aristotle as any other Greek recognized the serious impact of moral weakness in ruining the quality of one's life. The Greeks called it *akrasia* which can be interpreted as lack of moral strength. Aristotle seems to perceive *akrasia* as a state of character in relation to vice, moral strength and virtue. He attempts to give us an insight into the manner in which the moral weakness may occur, which is crucial in overcoming such conditions in the process of succeeding one's life, the object of *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Buddhist teachings on the other hand, through its numerous instructions and discourses advocate its followers on overcoming moral weakness and cultivating moral strength, by adopting the process of *samma ditti* (correct vision) and by being aware of the consequences of *akushala kamma*. Anti-authoritarian thinking in Buddhism promotes one's own speculative contemplation that may lead to wisdom and also to cultivate necessary moral strength that prevent one from committing *akushala kamma*. Meditation is another practice that help Buddhist followers to acquire moral strength and *Nibbana* is rated as the highest goal one may acquire through such exercise.

This study compares and contrasts how the Buddhist teachings and Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* perceived moral weakness in the light of overcoming it to arrive at their respective goals. The nature of this study and the possible unfamiliarity of the compared components urge us to examine each part individually prior to comparing them.

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