

Meditation and Human Flourishing: Bridging Buddhist Wisdom with Social Sciences

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Abstract

The Buddha declared in the Dhammapada: “Mind precedes all phenomena, mind matters most, everything is shaped by the mind.” Rooted in this timeless truth, meditation (bh?van?) has been practiced for over 2,500 years as a path to liberation and well-being. Today, meditation is increasingly studied within the fields of psychology, education, and social sciences as a means to enhance mental health, resilience, and social harmony.

This paper explores meditation as both an ancient spiritual discipline and a modern tool for human flourishing. Drawing upon canonical Buddhist teachings—such as mindfulness (sati), concentration (sam?dhi), and insight (vipassan?)—and aligning them with contemporary research, the discussion highlights three key dimensions:

1. Mental Well-Being: How meditation reduces stress, anxiety, and depression by cultivating equanimity (upekkh?) and compassion (karu??).
2. Educational and Social Application: The integration of mindfulness-based programs in schools, healthcare, and workplaces as pathways to holistic development.
3. Universal Relevance: The Buddha’s teaching, “As a mother would protect her only child with her life, even so should one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings,” as a guiding principle for building inclusive and compassionate societies.

By presenting meditation as both a path of inner liberation and a subject of interdisciplinary study, this paper seeks to bridge the wisdom of the Buddha with contemporary social sciences, demonstrating its enduring value for individual transformation and global well-being.

Keywords: Meditation, Mindfulness, Buddhist Studies, Social Sciences, Mental Health, Human Flourishing