

Karma, Anatta and Bad Faith: A Personification through Mona Lisa Smile

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Abstract: One of the things that interest me in Buddhism is the concept of karma. It takes on quite an oversimplified meaning since it has become a part of every individual's life. It may just be a term that we use in our day-to-day conversations but others attach a special affinity to it since they treat it as their guiding principle when it comes to their human relationships. Fascinatingly, it is the same term that is used by those who are heartbroken or feel betrayed by their special someone. It also serves as a reminder for anyone to think twice before doing something to others because that determines what kind of actions they would like to receive in the future. In spite of our common understanding of the concept, Buddhism shows that it is far more complex than we think. Our discussions in our Buddhist philosophy class reinforce the fact that understanding the concept of karma is never a walk in the park experience.

What I would like to do in this paper is to point out a specific example in an attempt to make this very concept more comprehensible. In that way, we would still be able to come up with reasons to consider the practical relevance of this term in spite of the difficulty in understanding that it poses. In other words, my task is to elucidate the reasons how this concept can establish its efficiency in a given context. For me to be facilitated, I will turn my attention to the movie, *Mona Lisa Smile*. I believe that for such an abstract concept to be comprehended well, it is important to embody this in a relatively familiar platform. And the movie, as I see it, can actually do the job for me. Before going there, the concept of the karma will be discussed briefly. The next part of the paper is allotted for the discussion and evaluation of the movie, *Mona Lisa Smile*. Since its focus is on the concept of karma, the Buddhist's concept of anatta or non-self will be dealt with in relation to the movie. I noticed that it is committed to the existential concept of bad faith so this will be given attention as well by relating it to the same movie. The last is the conclusion, which will take place in the form of summarization of the main points in the paper.