

**13. Buddhist Concepts of Interconnectedness**

At a recent SBFUK study group meeting we focused on the Buddhist concept that the absolute and concrete worlds are interconnected rather than separate. Gary read and explained passages from a Buddhist text, highlighting the concept of "suchness" as both empty and not empty, and alluded to the top half of a circle, the bottom half of a circle, and the whole circle.

14. Form is Emptiness and Emptiness is Form

At a recent SBFUK study group meeting we discussed the Buddhist statement that "form is emptiness, and emptiness is form," and I retold a story about how I learnt a similar lesson at art school many years ago. We were asked to draw a tangled pile of wooden chairs. We were all struggling, and then the teacher suggest we do not attempt to draw the objects but concentrate instead upon the space *between* the objects.

15. Buddhist Philosophy and Academic Critique

At a recent SBFUK study group meeting we discussed the nature of the absolute and its relationship to the phenomenal world. We explored ideas about change and constancy, using metaphors like a small gold ingot that can become a ring to illustrate how the absolute remains immutable despite apparent transformations.

16. Existential and Religious Narratives

The group discussed existential concepts and religious narratives; exploring the distinction between Nirvana and Enlightenment, and the idea that enlightenment is a living reality that pervades everything. They examined how religious stories, like the Buddha's birth and Jesus's virgin birth, serve as narratives rather than literal truths. The conversation touched on how stories can be used to teach children, whilst it is important that adults understand them as being metaphorical rather than factual.