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Epicureanism is commonly regarded as the refined satisfaction of physical desires. As a philosophy, however, it also denoted the striving after an independent state of mind and body, imperturbability, and reliance on sensory data as the true basis of knowledge. Epicurus (ca. 341-271 B.C.) founded one of the most famous and influential philosophical schools of antiquity. In these remains of his vast output of scientific and ethical writings, we can trace Epicurus' views on atomism, physical sensation, duty, morality, the soul, and the nature of the gods.

EPICURUS (341 - 271 B.C.E.) was an Athenian philosopher of the Hellenistic period, who was born on the Aegean island of Samos off the coast of present-day Turkey. At age eighteen, he moved to Athens to complete a compulsory two-year term of military service and thereafter began studying philosophy under Nausiphanes of Teos. This teacher, at the time a follower of Democritus, proved to have considerable influence on Epicurus's thinking. Nonetheless, Epicurus later criticized some of the ideas of Nausiphanes and claimed to be mainly self-taught. After this period of study, he taught briefly in Mytilene on the island of Lesbos and then founded a school in Lampsacus on the Hellespont before returning to Athens in 306 B.C.E. There he purchased a house with a garden that became the site of a school and commune thereafter known as "The Garden." It admitted both men and women, slave and free. Located midway between the famous Athenian Stoa and the Academy founded by Plato, the school and the philosophy taught there by Epicurus attracted many students and continued to be influential for centuries after his death. Text:

English (translation)

Original Language: Greek

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¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ Wentworth Dewitt Epicurus and his Philosophy , Minneapolis , University of Minnesota Press , 1954 Eugene O'Connor (editor) The Essential Epicurus : Letters , principal doctrines , vatican sayings , fragments Series : Great Books ..."