

Warren Buffett, the “Oracle of Omaha,” held court at the annual Berkshire Hathaway meeting in early May. Few events on the American business calendar are so hotly anticipated, and there is no hotter ticket in Nebraska- perhaps the entire Midwest!¹

Notably absent was Buffett’s longtime business partner and comic foil, Charlie Munger, who passed in 2023. Munger worked with Buffett for over a decade before becoming Berkshire Hathaway’s vice president and sounding board. In his wake, discussion of succession for the 93-year-old Buffett was in the air. Greg Abel, chief of Berkshire’s non-insurance operations, is the heir apparent and has the venerable CEO’s public endorsement.²

Despite these topics, the atmosphere was anything but somber. Buffett did not disappoint, treating his audience to his opinions on various topics. Notably:

- **AI:** Buffett is unambiguously a skeptic of artificial intelligence and made headlines with his warning: “We let a genie out of the bottle when we developed nuclear weapons. AI is somewhat similar—it’s part way out of the bottle.”¹
- **Overseas:** Buffett spoke on his company’s future in Asia. “I am sure there are loads of opportunities in countries like India.” However, he anticipated that he would not explore those opportunities as much as his successors would.³
- **Domestic:** Another hot topic was BH’s investments related to major companies and big deals in the news. On Apple, “We have sold shares and I would say that at the end of the year, I would think it extremely likely that Apple is the largest common stock holding we have,” indicating that the sale was for tax purposes. Buffett took responsibility for a less-than-successful investment while discussing Paramount, saying: “We’ve sold it all, and we lost quite a bit of money.”^{4,5}
- Any companies mentioned are for illustrative purposes only and should not be considered a solicitation for the purchase or sale of securities. This email is an update on Buffett’s annual report. Consult your tax, legal, and accounting professionals before modifying your tax strategy.

Warren Buffett is one of the most fascinating American business figures alive. He retains a financial imagination that looks into the future. However, he is realistic that a smart succession is important, even though he didn’t signal his retirement, quipping to the audience: “I not only hope you come next year. I hope I come next year.”⁶

1. Wsj.com, May 4, 2024, “Warren Buffett Fears AI Has ‘Enormous Potential for Harm’”
2. Cnn.com, May 4, 2024, “Warren Buffett holds first Berkshire Hathaway meeting without Charlie Munger”
3. Economicstimes.indiatimes.com, May 6, 2024, “Buffett says India has ‘unexplored’ opportunities”
4. Foxbusiness.com, May 6, 2024, “Buffett explains Berkshire’s reduced stake in Apple at annual company meeting”
5. Wsj.com, May 4, 2024, “Warren Buffett Praises Apple After Berkshire Hathaway Cuts Stake”
6. Cnbc.com, May 5, 2024, “Warren Buffett weighs in on his own mortality at this year’s Berkshire Hathaway annual meeting”



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