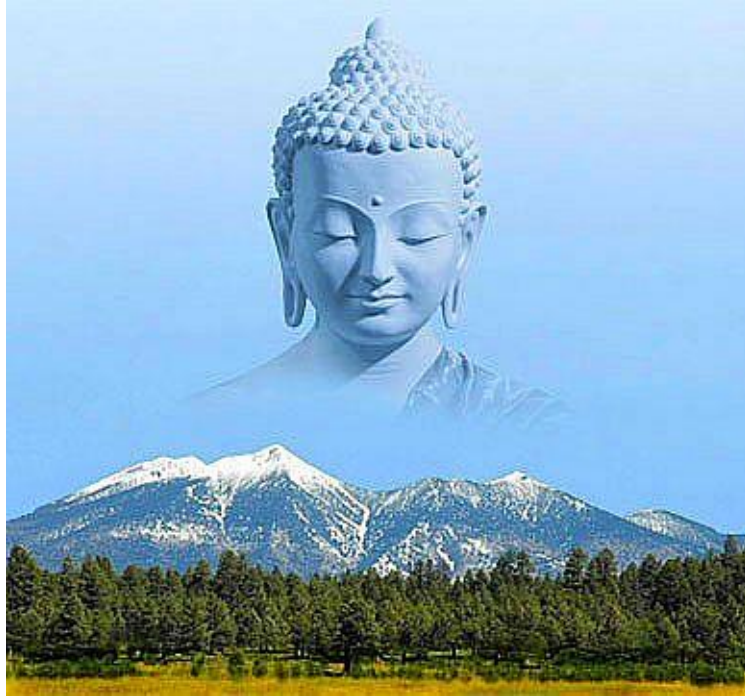


N5/Higher RMPS

World Religion



Buddhism



A note on spelling:

The teachings of the Buddha were written in two different languages; Pali and Sanskrit. So in different text books you may find different spellings for some of the Buddhist terms. For example Karma is the Sanskrit form of the Pali word Kamma. In this booklet I have used the Pali spelling for Buddhist terms because this is the spelling used by the SQA in exams, however you would not lose marks for writing *karma* in the exam.

You will study two main Buddhist traditions Theravada & Mahayana in this unit and it is worth noting that Theravada Buddhists use the Pali spelling and the Sanskrit spelling is used by Mahayana Buddhists.

Theravada	Mahayana
Pali	Sanskrit
Kamma	Karma
Nibbana	Nirvana
Dhamma	Dharma
Siddhatta	Siddhartha
Gautama	Gotama

Contents

Beliefs	Pages
There is no God in Buddhism	5&6
The Life of the Buddha	7-9
<i>Nature of Human Beings</i>	10
Three Root Poisons - Greed	11-12
The Three Root Poisons - Hatred	13
The Three Root Poisons - Ignorance	14-15
The Nature of Human beings diagram	16
Three Marks of Existence - Anicca	17-19
The story of Kisa Gotami	20
Three Marks of Existence - Anatta	21-22
• The Five Skandhas	23-26
• Dependent Origination	27-29
Three Marks of Existence - Dukkha	30-32
The Four Noble Truths	33-34
<i>Nature of existence</i>	
Samsara	36-38
Kamma	39-44
Nibbana	45-47
Theravada View	48-49
Mahayana View	50-53

Practices

Pages

The Three Fold Way	56
The Eight Fold Path	56-59
The Ten Precepts	60
The Three Jewels	61-62
The Buddha	7-9
The Dhamma	63-66
The Sangha	67-70
Puja	71-72
Meditation	73-75
Theravada and Mahayana comparisons grid	76-78
Further study links	79

Past Papers

Higher	80-81
N5	81-83
Old Higher	84-85
Analysis map	86

There is no God in Buddhism

Key Ideas

- Buddha is not God
- Buddhism could be religion or philosophy
- Question of God not relevant to Buddhist goals
- Emphasis on wisdom/knowledge rather than belief

Buddhism is a religion which was founded by a man called Siddhartha Gautama in 6th century BCE India. Buddha literally means awakened one and this title was only given to Siddhartha after he had come to a new understanding of the true nature of how things really are. It is important to understand that the Buddha is not understood by Buddhists as a God, but as an extraordinary human being who discovered the truth of how things really are and how to eradicate suffering.

Clive Erricker, author of *Buddhism an Introduction* has called the Buddha's teachings "radical and revolutionary and, in many ways, quite different from those in other religions"¹ largely due to the idea that there is no concept of God in Buddhism. The Buddha, seemed to believe that the idea of God/gods have their origins in fear as this quote from the Dhammapada shows:

Gripped by fear people go to sacred mountains, sacred groves, sacred trees and shrines.
Dhammapada. 188

However, when it came to questions such as ***is there a God?*** Buddha refused to give a definitive answer arguing that the question was irrelevant. He implied that questions about God are not useful in helping us to achieve our goals and so could be ignored.

He compared asking if there was a God to "a man who was wounded with a poisoned arrow saying to the doctor 'I won't have this arrow removed until I know whether the man who shot me was a noble warrior, a priest, a merchant, or a worker.'" In this analogy the arrow

¹ Buddhism an Introduction, Clive Erricker, Hodder, VIII

represents the suffering and dissatisfaction that we all experience as human beings. The Buddha like the doctor can take the pain and suffering away regardless of whether there is a God or not. Since for Buddhists, the goal is the complete alleviation of suffering, a state called enlightenment, anything that doesn't directly help in achieving this goal can be regarded as pointless. **So what the Buddha is trying to say here is really just that it doesn't matter whether there is a God or not, knowing the answer to that question will not help you to get rid of your suffering so why worry about the answer.** This implies that if there is a God he cannot or does not get involved in the everyday lives of people. This would exclude most religious ideas of what God is like.

However, since the Buddha did not directly address the question of the existence of God, some Buddhists believe that the idea of God is not incompatible with Buddhism, so it is possible for example for someone to consider themselves both a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time. However, most Buddhists would argue that a belief in a creator God will get in the way of achieving enlightenment. For example Buddhists don't believe in an outside force like God who punishes or rewards people for what they do. A person's kamma is not a punishment or reward, but simply a result of the force of cause and effect.

Despite this, most Buddhists consider worship/veneration of the Buddha as an important part of reaching enlightenment, although the two main traditions of Buddhism can differ in their attitudes to this.

In Buddhism there is an emphasis on knowledge as opposed to faith or belief, so for example the Dali Lama has claimed that "If scientific analysis were conclusively to demonstrate certain claims in Buddhism to be false, then we must accept the findings of science and abandon those claims." *The Universe in a Single Atom*, anything therefor that falls within the realm of belief like the existence of God, is not useful to pursuing the Buddhist goal of permanent happiness.

For more info on the God question in Buddhism:

<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/qanda03.htm>

The Life of the Buddha

Key Ideas

- Story of his life can be interpreted literally or symbolically
- His life illustrates the middle way
- Awakened one, enlightened being
- Not a God



Siddhartha Gautama was born around 563 BCE in Lumbini, in modern day Nepal (look it up on google earth). He was a man, not a God.

There are many stories surrounding his birth and life, some of them fantastic and unbelievable. However, for some Buddhists it is not really important whether they are true or not, because his greatest achievement was the discovery of the **Dhamma** (truth). What is important is that somebody discovered the **Dhamma** and it is still available to Buddhists today.

So the life of the Buddha can be understood as a mixture of myth and reality which helps to highlight

the essential ideas of Buddhism.

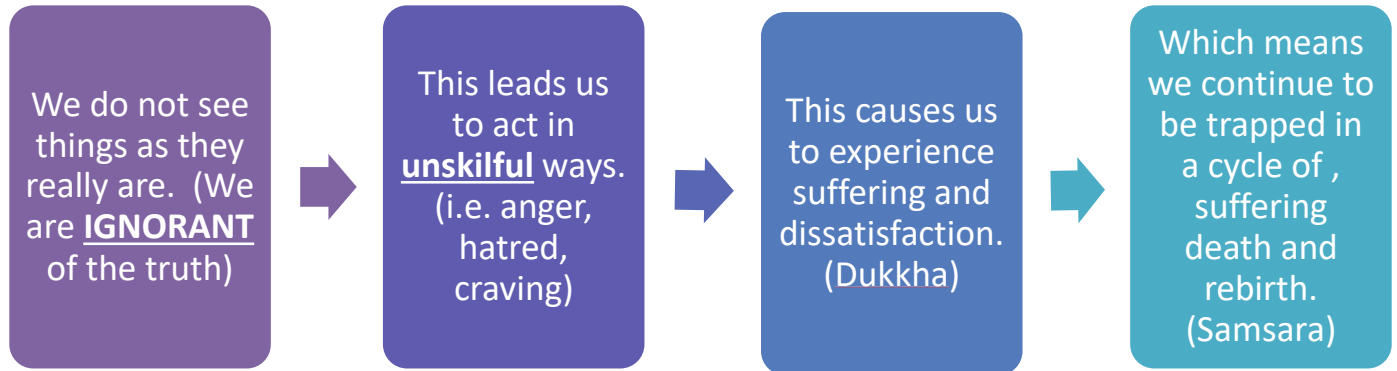
The Buddha acts as an inspiration to Buddhists showing that enlightenment is possible.

Story	What it illustrates
In around 563 BCE Queen Maya, Siddhartha's mother dreamed a vivid dream, in which four angels carried her high into white mountain peaks and clothed her in flowers. A magnificent white bull elephant bearing a white lotus in its trunk approached Maya and walked around her three times. Then the elephant struck her on the right side with its trunk and vanished into her. When Maya awoke, she told her husband about the dream. The King summoned 64 Brahmins to interpret it. Queen Maya would give birth to a son, the Brahmins said, and if the son did not leave the household, he would become a world conqueror. However, if he were to leave the household he would become a Buddha. Queen Maya wished to travel back to her home to give birth. With the King's blessings, she left Kapilavatthu on a palanquin carried by a thousand courtiers. On the way, the procession passed Lumbini Grove, which was full of blossoming trees. Entranced, the Queen left the palanquin and entered the grove. As she reached up to touch the blossoms, her son was born. Then the Queen and her son were showered with perfumed blossoms, and two streams of sparkling water poured from the sky to bathe them. And the infant stood, and took seven steps, each leaving a lotus flower behind. Maya died seven days after his birth.	The white elephant was a sacred animal representing fertility and wisdom. The lotus is a common symbol of enlightenment in Buddhist art. A white lotus, in particular, represents mental and spiritual purity. The baby Buddha's seven steps evoke seven directions—north, south, east, west, up, down, and here.
Siddhartha marries Yasodhara and they have a son called Rahula. His father, the king, keeps him in his palace surrounded by young and healthy servants and courtiers. The gardens of the palace are kept perfectly and Siddhartha never sees anything that is not perfect and beautiful. In effect he never witnesses suffering.	Money and material goods cannot help you to avoid suffering.
However, aged 29 Siddhartha was not content and wanted to know what was beyond the palace walls. He convinced his charioteer, Channa to take him outside 4 times. He saw old age, sickness, death and a holy man. Confused Siddhartha asks the question "why is there so much suffering?" Holy man had nothing and knew about the human condition yet was content. The 4th sight gave him hope.	Life is suffering; everyone gets old, sick and dies, this cannot be avoided.
Siddhartha wanted to figure out how to stop everyone suffering. Whilst the rest of the palace was sleeping he left to become a wandering holy man, this is known as the '<u>going forth</u>'. He left his family because he thought they would be a distraction (also symbolising leaving attachments behind).	Giving up our attachment to money and material wealth is the start of the path towards understanding the truth.
Siddhartha lives life as a wandering holy man for 6 years. He tries many different approaches to finding the truth. One of these was asceticism (self-denial), this is when he lives on 3 grains of rice a day and he learned to meditate.	Giving up everything cannot help you to avoid suffering.
Eventually he comes to the conclusion that none of the approaches he has tried so far is helping him to find the truth. So he accepts food from a woman and all his followers, wander off, thinking that Siddhartha has given up the quest for the truth so is no longer	The middle way, having what you need but not craving after things is the

worth following. He learnt the Middle Way through watching the tuning of the sitar.	only way to discover the real truth.
He sat down under the Bodhi tree and determined not to move until he figured out the truth. Whilst meditating under the tree, Siddhartha has many tempting thoughts sent by the demon Mara, but he manages to resist them all.	Meditation helps you to discover the truth.
Eventually Siddhartha figures out the truth (Dhamma) and finally understood the reality of the human condition. This was the moment when he achieved enlightenment.	Understanding the truth, is enlightenment.
After his enlightenment Siddhartha Gautama became known as the Buddha , because this means enlightened one or awakened one (ie he was awake to the truth).	Enlightenment is possible.
He then spent the next 45 years teaching the Dhamma (truth) to others beginning with the Sermon at Benares (or the Deer Park) where he met his followers at Benares. He shared his first teachings about the human condition (4 Noble truths and 3 marks of existence). He instructed his followers to join him in teaching others about the ways to end suffering. This is called the ' first turning of the wheel of the Dhamma .'	Teaching the dharma (truth) to others will help them to become enlightened.

The Nature of Human Beings

Buddhist view of the nature of human beings:



People deficient in wisdom, childish ones,
Engage in unawareness.
But the wise one guards awareness
Like the greatest treasure.
Dhammapada 27

Buddhist view of how human beings could be:

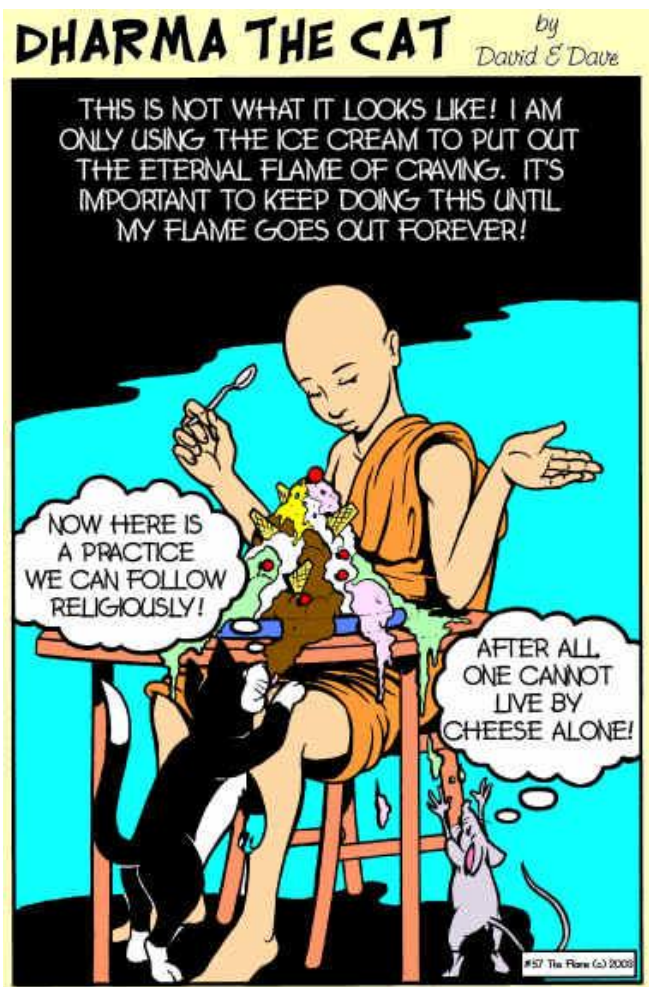


The Three Root Poisons

Greed Hatred Ignorance

Key Ideas

- Greed = Craving Tanha Attachment
- Greed is a root cause of dukkha



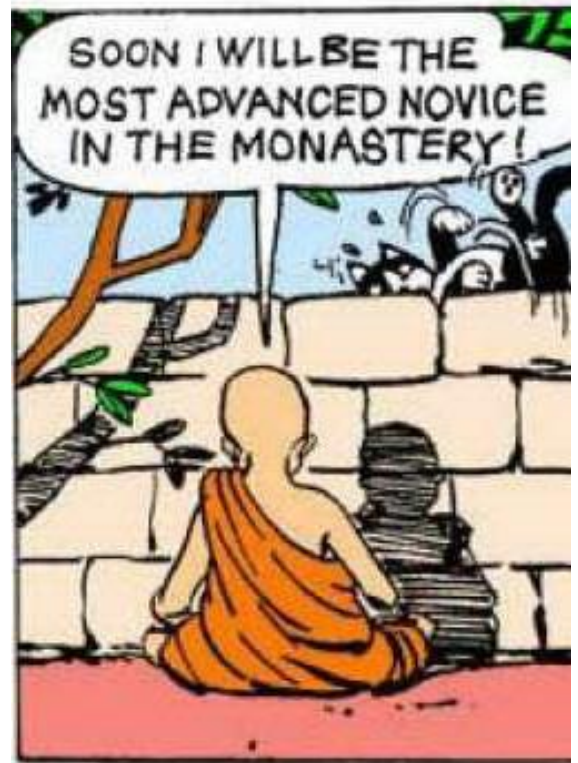
The three root poisons drive the wheel of samsara. They are at the centre of the wheel because they are central to understanding Buddhist ideas about the human condition. They are shown by the three animals (a cockerel, snake and a pig) they chasing each other because they all feed into each other. The cock represents greed, the snake hatred and the pig, ignorance.

In many ways it is easy to understand how greed might cause suffering. If we constantly eat too much we will probably get sick and die younger than we would have done if we had only eaten as much as we actually needed. However there is more to greed in the Buddhists sense than just overeating. Greed in this sense also means craving, so craving for material things like food, clothing, phones but also craving admiration, love, power or virtually anything. In fact from a Buddhist perspective even craving nibbana is

likely to cause suffering which would effectively stop you from attaining enlightenment anyway.

So greed/craving is a real problem and only by eliminating it entirely can a being achieve enlightenment. To do this most Buddhists will use vipassana (insight) meditation as a tool to help them see clearly how craving can only lead to more suffering.

Buddhist monks and nuns give up all their worldly possessions, because they are ready to stop craving material things, in other words they want to overcome their attachment to material possessions. That doesn't necessarily mean that they have successfully overcome craving. They may still be attached to ideas!



"Neither of iron nor wood nor hemp
is bond so strong, proclaim the wise,
as passion's yearn for sons, for wives,
for gems and ornaments."

Dhammapada 345

The Three Root Poisons

Greed Hatred Ignorance

Key Ideas

- Hatred = Anger
- Hatred causes Dukkha

The three root poisons drive the wheel of samsara. They are at the centre of the wheel because they are central to understanding Buddhist ideas about the human condition. They are shown by the three animals (a cockerel, snake and a pig) they chasing each other because they all feed into each other. The cock represents greed, the snake hatred and the pig, ignorance.

Hatred causes suffering. The opposite of hatred is loving-kindness. Buddhists are trying to cultivate loving-kindness. To do this they will use insight (vipassana) meditation.

"Never here by enmity
are those with enmity allayed,
they are allayed by amity,
this is the timeless Truth."

Dhammapada 5

The one who controls anger that's arisen
Like a chariot going off-course
I call a charioteer.
Other folk are merely rein-holders.

Dhammapada 222

There is no fire like passion,
No grip like hate,
No net like delusion,
No river like craving.

Dhammapada 251

The Three Root Poisons

Greed Hatred Ignorance

Key Ideas

- Ignorant of the true nature of reality
- Ignorance causes us to act in unskilful ways
- Ignorance keeps us trapped in samsara
- Ignorance is one of the root causes of suffering
- Wisdom is the opposite of ignorance

Ignorance in this sense is ignorance of knowledge rather than being rude to someone. The Buddha concluded that most people are ignorant of the truth about how things really are. We are a bit like Neo from the Matrix, we think we know the nature of the reality that we live in, but we are actually totally unaware of the true nature of reality. The Buddha discovered the true nature of reality and in doing so became enlightened. He then passed on the knowledge he had gained to others so that they could be enlightened too. So the Buddha is offering us the truth, in the same way that Morpheus wakes Neo up to the truth of his situation.

Ignorance in itself is not a problem, the problem is that our ignorance about our true situation leads us to act and think in ways which lead to our continued suffering. Like a bird constantly trying to escape from a room through a closed window, battering itself against the window not even realising the window is there we are trapped and don't understand how to escape. Buddhists call this prison Samsara, and we (and all sentient creatures) are trapped in Samsara, a never ending cycle of birth death and re-birth.

From the Buddhist point of view most people do not understand the situation they are in and therefore can't escape from the inevitable consequences their ignorance brings. Ignorance of the impermanent nature of things causes craving/attachment and desire/greed this in turn results in suffering (dukkha).

"From the Buddhist point of view, the unwillingness or failure to see the facts of life as they are, to see ourselves as we are, and to conduct ourselves in harmony with these realities, is the chief cause of our self-inflicted suffering and, therefore the chief obstacle to our happiness."

Ron Leifer, MD & Buddhist practitioner

The opposite of ignorance is wisdom. Buddhists are trying to gain wisdom in order to escape from suffering. To gain wisdom Buddhists will study the dhamma (the truth/teachings of the Buddha) and use meditation as a tool to deepen their understanding/insight.

Many analogies are used to illustrate this for example the lotus which grows in mud (ignorance) and the flowers in the sunshine (enlightenment).



Awake among the unaware,
Fully awake among the sleeping,
The wise one goes, leaving them behind,
As a swift horse leaves a weak horse behind
Dhammapada 29

Buddha = awakened one (he is awake to reality)

- So we are asleep (ignorant of our situation) and the Buddha is awake.
- Called a **root** poison because the root of all our suffering is *ignorance*.

Questions:

1. Describe a Buddhist understanding of ignorance 4KU
2. Explain how ignorance causes suffering 4KU

The Nature of Human Beings

IGNORANCE

of

ANICCA + ANATTA

leads to

(attachment) **TANHA** (craving)

which results in

DUKKHA

this leads to

REBIRTH IN SAMSAARA

The 3 Marks of Conditioned Existence

Anicca Anatta Dukkha

Key Ideas

- Anicca = Impermanence
- Everything is impermanent or subject to change
- We act as if we believe things are permanent
- Attachment
- Craving

Anicca literally translated means "impermanence". It is the observation that **everything** is impermanent. Nothing stays the same because it is constantly changing.

Beside the pictures below explain the **conditions** required for the item to come into being. Then explain how it will change over time:



Conditions required: Sunlight, nutrients, insects

Change over time: Seed, plant, flower, wither and die, seed

It should be clear from the above, that **all** things depend on prior conditions to come into existence and **all** things change constantly over time. Sometimes we may not see the changes happening because they happen so slowly, however science supports the Buddha's observation that everything does indeed change all the time and that everything is therefore impermanent.

So Buddhists call this observation that nothing is permanent, everything changes anicca. Some things change quickly, for example a cut flower will wilt and die within the day if not put in water. This is why you will find that they are often placed as offerings in Buddhist temples as a reminder that everything is impermanent or used as the focus of meditation.

Despite this human beings act and behave as if things were permanent. We do this either because we do not know that everything is impermanent (we are ignorant of the facts) or because we do not accept on a deeper fundamental level that this is in fact the case (we do not accept anicca). Either way the end result is that we crave things (tanha) and this in turn, results in experiencing suffering/dissatisfaction (dukkha).

Think about saving up for a whole year to buy a new laptop. At many points during the year we will experience frustration because a task we need to complete would be so much easier if we had a laptop. We are convinced that when we have a laptop all of our suffering and frustration will do away and that having the laptop will make us very happy. Finally after suffering a lack of spending money for a whole year our laptop arrives shiny and new and you are very happy and excited. Then you turn it on and discover it is running Windows 2010. You do not know how to work Windows 2010, you are less happy and excited than you were originally. However, after much frustration you learn the new system and carry on. A little while later you take an essay you have written on the laptop into school on a flash drive, the school computers still use Windows 2003; your document doesn't open, your teacher goes into hyperdrive because you haven't done your homework and the deadline for folio work is today. Still later, the laptop has lost a few keys due to user frustration and or old age, the webcam no longer works, there is a big dent in one corner from when your brother 'accidentally' dropped it, and you lean over to grab your calculator and spill a can of coke all over the keyboard. Laptop dead. Start saving for a new laptop.....

A Buddhist will agree that you did experience happiness from owning the laptop; however the happiness was not permanent because the laptop and the software on it was not permanent. Impermanent things cannot bring us permanent happiness but they will definitely result in us experiencing dukkha because as they change we will become unsatisfied with the result.

Another example might be saving up for ages to buy a pair of real UGG's. You work like a slave at the corner shop every weekend till you can afford to buy the real UGG's. You buy them and are ecstatic for a while. Soon your friends start to laugh at you and talk behind your back because UGG's are "so last year", so you keep on working so you can buy the next big thing in footwear fashion till they go out of fashion too. So you have to repeat the whole process all over again and again and again.....Despite what Carrie Bradshaw says no pair of shoes or boots will bring you permanent happiness.

Accepting that **everything** is impermanent allows us to see that craving (**tanha**) only leads to more craving so is really just pointless. We are craving after stuff that will decay and ultimately cease to exist. As it does so we will be ever more dissatisfied and unhappy.

"Those who are subject to craving
Crawl around like a trapped hare.
Bound by fetters and bonds, for a long time
They undergo suffering again and again"
Dhammapada 343

"The mind, freed from conditioned things,
Has reached the end of cravings."
Dhammapada 154

So the Buddha argued that by realising that there is no happiness to be found in conditioned things we should cease our craving. If we stop craving it follows that we will stop suffering. However, this is easier said than done! So Buddhists will use vipassana (insight) meditation to help them to really internalise the idea of anicca which should result in them experiencing less craving and therefore less suffering.



The Story of Kisagotami

Kisa Gotami lived in Savatthi. She married a rich young man and a son was born to them. The son died when he was a toddler and Kisa Gotami was stricken with grief. Carrying her dead son, she went everywhere asking for medicine to restore her son to life. People thought she had gone mad. But a wise man seeing her pathetic condition, decided to send her to the Buddha.

He advised her: "Sister, the Buddha is the person you should approach. He has the medicine you want. Go to him."

Thus she went to the Buddha and asked him to give her the medicine that would restore her dead son to life. The Buddha told her to get some mustard seeds from a home where there had been no death. Overjoyed at the prospect of having her son restored to life, Kisa Gotami ran from house to house, begging for some mustard seeds. Everyone was willing to help but she could not find a single home where death had not occurred. The people were only too willing to part with their mustard seeds, but they could not claim to have not lost a dear one in death. As the day dragged on, she realised hers was not the only family that had faced death and that there were more people dead than living. As soon as she realised this, her attitude towards her dead son changed; she was no longer attached to the dead body of her son and she realised how simply the Buddha had taught her a most important lesson: that everything that is born must eventually die.

She buried her dead son and told the Buddha that she could find no family where death had not occurred. Then the Buddha said: "You should not think that you are the only one who has lost a son. As you have now realised, death comes to all beings. Before their desires are satiated death takes them away."

Perceiving the fleeting nature and impermanency of life, Kisa Gotami decided to renounce the worldly life. She requested the Enlightened One to admit her to the Order of Nuns. Accordingly, the Buddha sent her to the community of nuns where she was hardworking and always mindful and conscientious of her religious duties, and strove diligently for her spiritual development to purify her mind of all mental defilements.

Questions:

1. Describe the Buddhist understanding of anicca 4KU
2. How would a belief in anicca affect the everyday life of a Buddhist? 4AE
3. "Impermanent things cannot bring permanent happiness." How far do you agree with this statement? 8AE

The 3 Marks of Existence

Anicca Anatta Dukkha

Key Ideas

- Anatta = Not self
- Nothing about a person is permanent
- Self is an illusion
- Attachment to illusion of self, causes suffering

Anatta is anicca applied to people. As **everything** is impermanent, then that must include people. Like anicca the problem is that we believe that there is something permanent which we call 'me' or I.

Buddhists would argue that you are not the person you were 10 years ago or even 5 minutes ago. Everything about you is always changing. The cells in your body are being replaced, the thoughts in your head change, what you think of as **you** is in a constant state of change at all times. Whilst it is convenient to refer to you by a name, and Buddhists do, the point is, that this being which you call (insert your name here) right now is actually a different being from the being you called (insert your name here) yesterday. There is nothing you can point to and say that is (insert your name here) for all time. On the upside this view gives the constant potential for improvement, if we accept that there is nothing permanent about a person then change can be for the better.

Many other religious traditions believe that humans have a soul or spirit which survives the death of the physical body and is therefore understood to be in some sense permanent. Whilst they would accept that the body of a person is constantly changing they would also argue that there is some unseen inner aspect of a person which stays constant over time. In many ways this is problematic, if we have a fixed or permanent aspect that does not change then it is impossible to become a better person.

However; Buddhists argue that whilst we certainly feel like there is something which we can call 'I' or 'me' this is actually just an illusion. This illusion inevitably leads to suffering because we act and behave as if it were true. So for example if I believe that I have been insulted by someone, I will take it personally and feel hurt or humiliated, in other words suffering. This

may in turn lead to me feeling anger towards that person and that anger will cause me to experience even more suffering.

By self evil is done:
It is born of self, arisen from self.
It crushes the ignorant
As a thunderbolt crushes a gemstone.
Dhammapada 161

If you are constantly changing, you are **impermanent**, and as we have already seen our attachment to impermanent things causes suffering because we are constantly disappointed and frustrated by the fact that they are not what we thought they were. This has profound implications for Buddhists. For example even craving after achievements will only result in suffering since the 'I' who is attracted to such ideas is an illusion. Imagine a person who desires a powerful position like head teacher of a big secondary school, to boost his own ego or to convince others that he has made it and is a successful powerful man. Any threat to this man's position or power would cause him to experience suffering. He is likely to cause considerable frustration to the pupils he deals with because their welfare is unlikely to be his primary concern. On the other hand a successful head teacher who became so because he had his pupil's best interests at heart should arguably experience less suffering as a result. Intention is the key factor here, if your intention is to serve others there is nothing fundamentally wrong with being in a position of power or authority.



The Buddhist who has abandoned or overcome his or her attachment to self would be entirely selfless and their actions would only be motivated by compassion for others. Whilst few Buddhists may actually achieve this many are working towards such a goal, since truly accepting that the self is an illusion is to become enlightened.

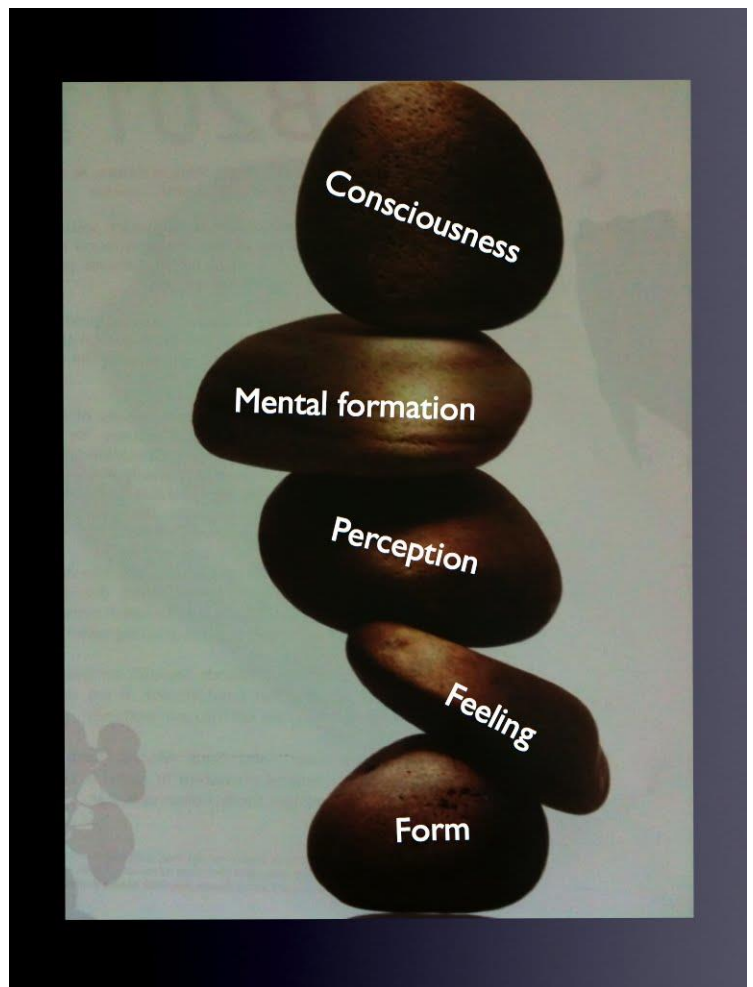
However there is a world of difference between accepting on an intellectual level that the self is an illusion and internalising it to the point where it has become second nature. Whilst we as students of Buddhism may be able to accept that there indeed appears to be no-self this does not cause us to instantly become selfless! This is why Buddhists will often spend years engaging in practices such as meditation to help them to accept these concepts at a more fundamental level. For many the initial breakthrough will be having an experience of no-self, this might be described as a feeling of being at one with the universe and is a powerful and wonderful feeling. This momentary experience may

inspire Buddhists to continue in their practice working towards the goal of maintaining such a perspective permanently.

This idea that the self is an illusion was also developed by Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) who argued that there was no "simple and continued" self, just the flow of experience. More recently the modern philosopher Mary Midgley (1919 - present) in her book *Are You an Illusion?* (2014) Has argued that ??????. Today a growing number of psychologists would argue the same.

The 5 Skandhas

(Sometimes called heaps or aggregates)



Key Ideas

- Humans comprised of 5 constituent parts
- None of which are permanent so none can be the self
- These 5 parts together create the illusion of self

Buddhists believe humans can be broken down into five constituent parts; these are called the five skandhas, heaps or aggregates. When examined individually all are impermanent so cannot be a permanent self. However, together they create the *illusion* of a permanent self.

Matter (Rupa)

Matter means all the physical material in the universe, including all the elements and our bodies. Buddhists believe that as our physical bodies are constantly changing, we cannot claim to be our physical bodies.

Sensations (Vedana)

This is the physical sensation that we experience through the six senses. In other words, it is the sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. The five senses give the experience of pleasure or pain, as such they lead to craving, either to feel something pleasurable or avoid something painful. Buddhists believe that our sensations are constantly changing because the things around us change, and our sense-organs also change. Therefore we cannot claim to be our sensations.

Perceptions (Sañña)

Perception is when we put a particular sensation provided by the six senses into a particular category. We compare our sensations with our previous experience and by doing so can make sense of them. Our perceptions, like our sensations, are changing. Since we can also only identify things by comparing them with other things, we can never perceive what a thing is in itself. We categorise things according to their usefulness to us rather than because of what they 'really' are, or because of what we 'really' are. For example we may categorise an unpleasant sensation as not useful or a pleasant one as useful.

Mental Formations (Sankhara)

This is the stage where we produce some kind of response to our perception. Our will becomes involved so that mental formations are said to include intention. There are different types of mental formation, but they all involve some kind of intentional response to the results of our perceptions.

It is these mental formations which generate kamma. So we can act skilfully in response to what we perceive, or we can act unskilfully. Again since our responses are always changing, they can't possibly be the basis of a fixed self.

Consciousness (Viññana)

It is important to understand that consciousness depends on the other skandhas and does not exist by itself. It is awareness but not recognition, as recognition is a function of the third skandha. This awareness is not sensation, which is the second skandha. Our consciousness changes all the time too, sometimes we are asleep, sometimes awake. It should not be regarded as the equivalent of the "soul" as consciousness is always consciousness of something. If there is nothing to be conscious of, there is no consciousness arising. All five skandhas are interdependent on one another and in turn interdependent on the surroundings.

The Questions of King Milinda- The Doctrine of Not-self

Dates back to the 2nd Century CE.

King Milinda was a great ruler of North West India.

Among the King's many questions to Nagasena are what is the doctrine of no-self, and how can rebirth happen without a soul? How is a not-self morally responsible for anything?

What is the distinguishing characteristic of wisdom? What are the distinguishing characteristics of each of the Five Skandhas? Why do Buddhist scriptures seem to contradict each other?

Nagasena answers each question with metaphors, analogies and similes. For example, Nagasena explained the importance of meditation by comparing meditation to the roof of a house. "As the rafters of a house connect up to the ridge-pole, and the ridge-pole is the highest point of the roof, so do good qualities lead up to concentration," Nagasena said.

One of the King's first questions is on the nature of the self and personal identity. Nagasena greeted the King by acknowledging that Nagasena was his name, but that "Nagasena" was only a designation; no permanent individual "Nagasena" could be found.

This amused the King. Who is it that wears robes and takes food? he asked. If there is no Nagasena, who earns merit or demerit? Who causes karma? If what you say is true, a man could kill you and there would be no murder. "Nagasena" would be nothing but a sound.

Nagasena asked the King how he had come to his hermitage, on foot or by horseback? I came in a chariot, the King said.

But what is a chariot?

Nagasena asked. Is it the wheels, or the axles, or the reigns, or the frame, or the seat, or the draught pole? Is it a combination of those elements? Or is it found outside those elements?

The King answered no to each question. *Then there is no chariot!* Nagasena said.

Now the King acknowledged the designation "chariot" depended on these constituent parts, but that "chariot" itself is a concept, or a mere name.

Just so, Nagasena said, "Nagasena" is a designation for something conceptual. It is a mere name. When the constituent parts are present we call it a chariot; When the Five Skandhas are present, we call it a being.

Questions:

1. Describe the Buddhist understanding of anatta. 6KU
2. What impact do beliefs about anatta have on the lives of Buddhists? 4AE
3. Why might a Buddhist find accepting anatta difficult? 8AE

First break this down into 3 points for which you will aim to get at least 3 marks.

- The idea of self or soul seems to appeal to common sense
- What is reborn if no self?
- What gets the kamma if no self?

Then use S-E-X-Y to structure your answer (see below).

S	A Buddhist might find accepting anatta difficult because most peoples every day experience suggests that a permanent self exists.
E	Every day I experience a sense of self, I was late for class so I had to do a detention, I stubbed my toe on the way into the bathroom and it hurt me.
X	However, Buddhists who have understood the 5 skandhas understand that whilst they create the illusion of a self, they do not constitute a self. The monk Nagasena explained this to King Milinda by explaining that the chariot is just a convenient name for a collection of component parts which function as a chariot.
Y	I think that whilst the Buddhist idea of anatta makes sense it is very hard to accept this in everyday life.

S	Buddhists might also struggle to accept anatta if they have not fully understood Buddhist teachings on rebirth.
E	Buddhists accept the idea of rebirth, but at first glance this seems to contradict the idea that there is no permanent self which can be transferred on death to another body.
X	However, fully accepting anatta would in fact lead to not being reborn and in reality, it is not understanding anatta which leads to rebirth.
Y	I think....

S	Similarly not understanding kamma would make it difficult for Buddhist to accept anatta.
E	Kamma in the Buddhist tradition is simply the law of cause and effect. Skillful actions will result in a better rebirth. Skillful actions would be those based on an acceptance of anatta.
X	However, if a person is constantly in a state of change through one lifetime then this is not so very different from the change that occurs during rebirth.
Y	I think.....

Dependent Origination

Key Ideas

- Everything that exists depends on prior conditions

In the twelve links which make up the outer circle of the wheel of life, going clockwise from the top, you should be able to identify twelve pictures:

Each of these pictures symbolises a stage in the process of conditioning whereby craving gives rise to karmic effects, which in turn set up the conditions for craving again.

Past Life: the first five pictures represent the way in which past ignorance has led to the current situation		
	Blind man	After death (previous picture) we are reborn without understanding of our situation, so the blind man represents our ignorance. He doesn't see ahead just as people in samsara don't.
	Potter	We make our karma just as a potter makes pots. Due to our ignorance we make continuing choices based on greed and hatred, building up future effects that keep us in samsara.
	Monkey	The monkey moves restlessly from tree to tree just as our mind moves between objects. Based on our karmic choices we build up a habitual awareness moving from object to object.
	Four people in a boat	The boat represents the body and the passengers sensations, perceptions, karmic formations and consciousness in other words the five skandhas. In dependence on our karmic choices and consciousness we seek out a new body with further sensations and perceptions.

	House with five windows and one door	The six senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell and mind. Each window or door represents a sense. The five skandhas are the cause of the six senses arising, and interacting with each other.
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Present life: once the conditions for new craving have been set up by past actions, the next four pictures show how this results in karmic formations

	Couple embracing	Sensation. The couple are having particularly strong sensations in their embrace! Having five senses sets up the conditions for sensations of new things.
	Man with arrow in his eye	Feeling. This man is having a particularly strong (and painful) feeling! Sensations set up the conditions for pleasant, painful or neutral feelings.
	Woman offering man a drink	Craving (tanha). The man craves the drink, and perhaps the woman as well. Tanha literally means 'thirst'. This is the point of control and responsibility, where we respond to a pleasant feeling with craving or a painful one with hatred.
	Woman picking fruit	Grasping (upadana): the woman reaches out to grasp the tempting fruit and collect it. Once we have given way to craving, this is likely to lead to the physical action of taking or using the thing we crave.

Future life: the final three pictures show the effects of karmic activity in the form of death and rebirth

	Pregnant woman	Becoming: in traditional Buddhist belief rebirth begins at fertilisation following entry of the karmic formations. Grasping leads to rebirth as we continue the habit of relating to the things we want. We grasp at a new rebirth after death.
	Woman giving birth	Birth : Re-becoming (rebirth into one's mother's womb) leads inevitably to birth into the world again.
	Corpse	Death Birth leads inevitably to the further suffering associated with death, and thus back to ignorance.

As you can see, each of the three 'lives' is a complete craving-karma cycle in itself, so each could be taken by itself as a complete representation of samsara. However, the twelve links together show the relationship between different ways of seeing the same basic cycle:



The 3 Marks of Existence

Anicca Anatta Dukkha

Key Ideas

- Dukkha = suffering dissatisfaction feeling of unsatisfactoriness
- Dukkha caused by 3 Root Poisons
- Suffering keeps us trapped in Samsara
- Ending suffering breaks the cycle of Samsara
- The cessation of suffering is Nibbana

A literal translation of dukkha is suffering.

However, dukkha means more than just straightforward suffering like pain. It also refers to the suffering we feel as a result of frustration and more general dissatisfaction because life is not very satisfying. This is usually summed up with the word unsatisfactoriness.

There are three types of dukkha:

- o Dukkha-dukkha
- o Viparinama-dukkha
- o Sankhara-dukkha

Dukkha-dukkha is suffering in its straightforward form. It consists of pain and directly unpleasant experience generally. We do not need to appeal to impermanence to appreciate the presence of dukkha-dukkha, but it does not usually account for our whole experience because we also experience happiness and pleasure.

o **Examples might include:**

- o Breaking a bone
- o Illness
- o Being bitten by a dog
- o Death of a loved one

- o Pain following an operation
- o Falling over

Viparinama-dukkha is the frustration which arises due to the fact that pleasant experiences are impermanent. When the pleasant experiences end, we continue to want more of them, and thus experience disappointment. This type of dukkha leads to **tanha** or craving, which continues even when the source of the pleasure does not. (Think iPhone 4)

o **Examples might include:**

- o Reading a book
- o Relationships ending
- o Holiday ending
- o End of a tv series
- o Favourite clothes going out of fashion
- o Running out of money - nothing to show for it

Sankhara-dukkha is the unsatisfactoriness that we experience due to impermanence. Things in **samsara** are not satisfying because they don't fulfil our expectations completely.

This term can also be applied to a sense of dissatisfaction about our whole lives, sometimes called 'existential dukkha', when life as a whole seems meaningless.

o **Examples might include:**

- o Buying stuff online
- o Food
- o Movie trailers
- o Working hard for a job which ends up not being great
- o Seeing a show
- o Being a kid and wishing you were an adult

All conditioned things are impermanent.
When by wisdom you see this,
You grow weary of suffering.
This is the path to purity.
Dhammapada 277

Questions:

Describe what Buddhists understand by dukkha. 4KU

S Dukkha is often translated to mean suffering.

E However for Buddhists it means more than just suffering it also means unsatisfactoriness.

eX The Buddha is said to have observed suffering when he left the palace for the first time and saw old age, sickness and death. However, there are different levels of suffering which are also understood as dukkha. For example when we buy something at first it is new and exciting but after a while it fails to live up to our expectations and we are dissatisfied with it.

- o For further study:
- o <http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Students/Ages-17-18/Nature-of-Reality/three-marks.aspx>

The Four Noble Truths

Key Ideas

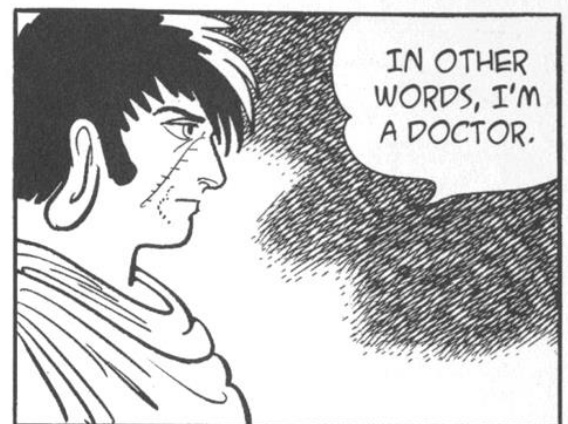
- Analogy of the doctor
- Description of the nature of human existence

The Buddha is sometimes described like a doctor:

He diagnosed the human condition.	1st	Dukkha	<u>Suffering.</u>
He identified the cause of disease.	2nd	Samudaya	The cause of suffering is craving (<u>tanha</u>).
He then identified the cure.	3rd	Nirodha	Reaching enlightenment will cure the suffering (<u>Nibbana</u>).
He then prescribes the medicine.	4th	Magga	The way to reach enlightenment is the <u>Eight Fold Path.</u>

1. Dukkha.

During our lifetime, we will experience physical suffering such as pain, sickness, injury, tiredness, old age, and eventually death. We will also experience psychological suffering like sadness, fear, frustration, disappointment, and depression. Although there are different degrees of suffering and there are also positive experiences that we understand as the opposite of suffering, such as joy, comfort and happiness, because these things are impermanent (they don't last) they too eventually lead to suffering.



2. Samudaya.

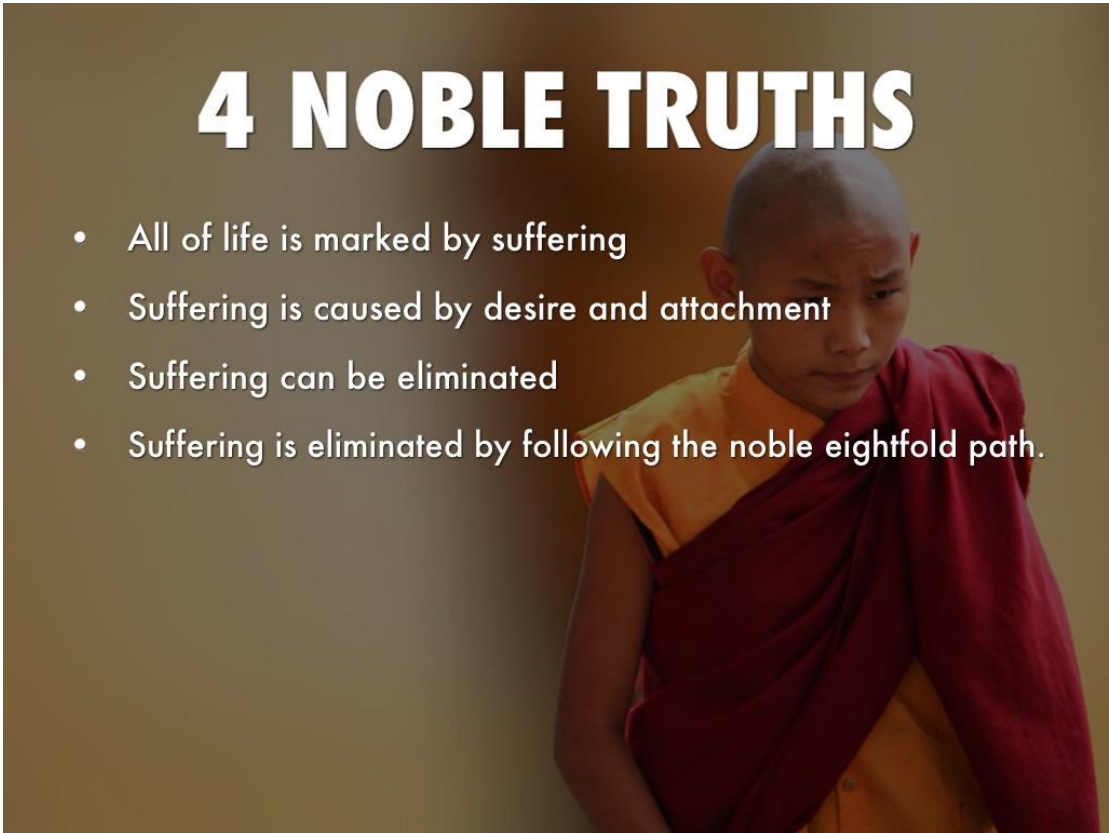
Suffering is caused by our ignorance of the fact that things are impermanent which means we become attached/crave impermanent things. The reasons for suffering are **greed/attachment/craving, hatred and ignorance** (the three root poisons).

3. Nirodha.

We can stop the suffering through **nirodha**. Nirodha means getting rid of craving and attachment. So suffering can be ended by attaining dispassion. This means that suffering can be stopped through human effort, simply by removing the cause of suffering. Attaining and perfecting dispassion is a process that ultimately results in the state of **Nibbana**.

4. Magga.

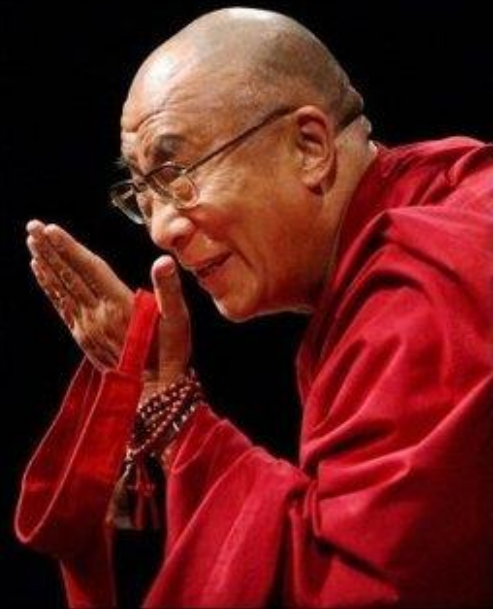
Magga is another word for the **Middle Way** or 8 Fold Path. Between the two extremes of excessive self-indulgence (having it all) and excessive asceticism (having nothing at all); is the Middle Way. This leads to Nibbana (the end of all suffering). The journey to the end of suffering can extend over many lifetimes, but craving and ignorance, and their effects (dukkha) will disappear gradually, as progress is made.



4 NOBLE TRUTHS

- All of life is marked by suffering
- Suffering is caused by desire and attachment
- Suffering can be eliminated
- Suffering is eliminated by following the noble eightfold path.

The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, answered "Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."



The Nature of Existence

Samsara

Key Ideas

- Samsara = cycle of life, death & rebirth
- Beings are trapped in Samsara
- Symbolic way to represent & explain human condition
- Human life best possible chance of escape from Samsara
- Escape from Samsara is enlightenment

The cycle of samsara is illustrated by the Wheel of Life. This is a **symbolic** representation of the way things really are for unenlightened beings. A bit like a picture book for kids. It is



not meant to be taken literally. Samsara is the endless cycle of birth, death and re-birth. Enlightenment is shown outside the circle, but remember enlightenment is NOT a place.

The wheel is held up by Yama to show that we are caught in the grip of suffering. The best possible realm to be born into is the human one, because from there it is possible to escape from the cycle of samsara. This is what makes human life so special.

Hard to reach is this human state,
Hard the life of mortals.

It's hard to hear the true Dhamma,
Hard for Buddhas to arise.

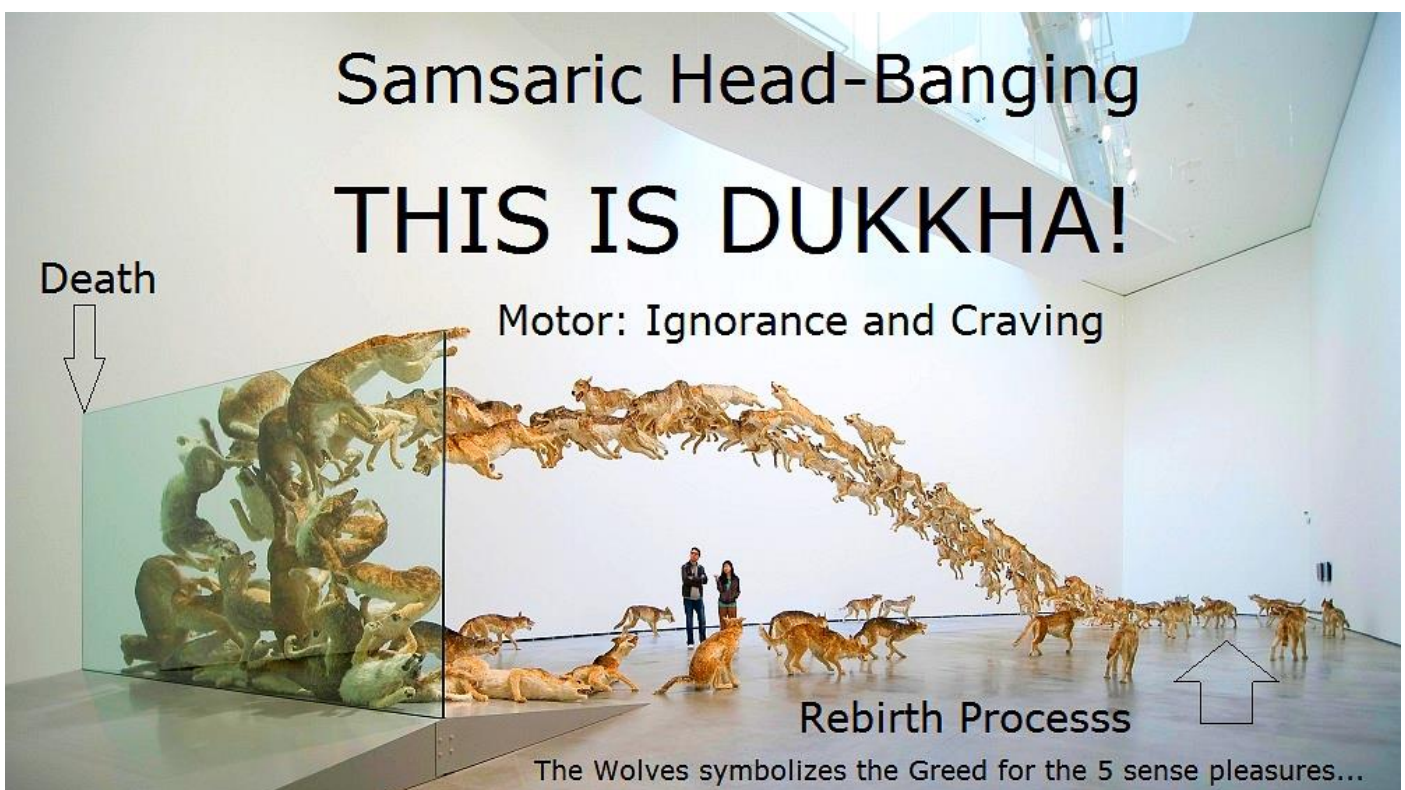
Dhammapada 182

At the centre are the **Three Root Poisons** represented by the cock (**greed**/attachment), the snake (**hatred**) and the pig (**ignorance**). They are at the centre of the wheel because they are the three things which drive samsara because they are the root causes of suffering. In the next layer we can see the six realms which can be understood as different states that we might be born into.

Human Realm	The Human realm is the best realm to be born into, as it is only from this realm is it possible to attain enlightenment. However there are exceptions: Theravada An arhat (who has the help of teachers) can attain enlightenment from the realms of the devas. Mahayana A bodhisattva can appear in many different types of lives, for instance as a human an animal or as a deva.
Realm of the Hungry Ghosts	The hungry ghosts are just that, constantly hungry and thirsty but never able to satisfy their hunger or thirst.
Animal Realm	It takes many lives in the animal realm to build up enough merit to be reborn as a human. They see just what is in front of them, nothing more. It is in exceptional circumstances possible for animals to create good kamma for themselves as there are certainly examples from nature which show animals sacrificing themselves for others or for their human companions. For example a dog which attacks an intruder to protect his human owners. However it usually takes many lives as an animal to be born as a human.
Deva (gods) Realm	The Deva realm is also sometimes called the realm of the <i>gods</i>, because its inhabitants are so powerful within their own realm, that compared to humans, they resemble the gods of Greek or Roman mythology. They are not gods in the way we normally think of them. Mahayana The disadvantage of this realm is that things are so very comfortable there, that these beings completely neglect to work towards enlightenment. Instead they gradually use up the good karma they had previously accumulated, and so they subsequently fall to a lower rebirth. Theravada They only have 5 realms because they count the Deva & Ashura Realms as one Realm. According to Theravada tradition it is possible to attain enlightenment from this realm.

Ashura (demi-gods) Realm	The <i>Asura realm</i> is the realm of the demigods (half gods). They may be here because in human form they had good intentions but committed bad actions such as harming others. The Asuras are said to experience a much more pleasurable life than humans, but they are plagued by envy for the devas, whom they can see just as animals can perceive humans. Theravada They only have 5 realms because they count the Deva & Ashura Realms as one Realm. According to Theravada tradition it is possible to attain enlightenment from this realm.
Hell Realm	The Hell Realm is a rebirth based on strong states of hatred cultivated in a previous life or lives.

Long is the night for the wakeful;
Long is the league for the weary.
Long is samsara for fools
Who do not know the true Dhamma.
Dhammapada 60



Kamma/ Rebirth

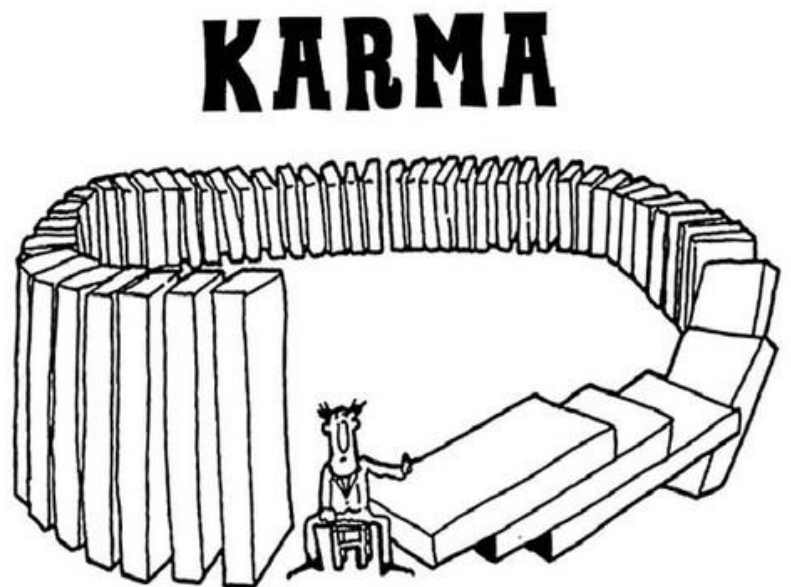
Key Ideas

- Kamma = Law of cause and effect
- Skillful actions lead to positive Kamma
- Unskillful actions lead to negative Kamma
- Consequences of actions in this lifetime might affect the next life
- Consequences of actions in past rebirths may bear fruit in this lifetime
- Rebirth
- Kammic energy passes from one lifetime to another
- Analogy of the lamp
- Analogy of snooker balls
- Problems with no self

Buddhists understand kamma to be a natural law of cause and effect. All actions have consequences. If someone tickles you, you will giggle, if you are mean to someone, they will be upset and angry.

Buddhists believe that we are the masters of our own lives. Everything that happens to us is the karmic consequence of actions in this or previous lives. Good and bad rebirths are not understood as rewards or punishments but as simply the natural results of certain kinds of actions.

An action is like a seed which will sooner or later, as part of the natural process, result in fruits. The 'fruits' of our actions may not happen in this life, or for many lifetimes to come.



Equally the karma that we experience in this lifetime may be the consequence of actions taken many lifetimes ago.

What determines the consequence of an action, is the intention behind it. So killing an insect by accident will not result in much negative karma. However, killing the same insect intentionally will.

This attitude encourages people to take responsibility for their own actions and not blame other people or circumstances for their situation in life.

Positive karma comes as a result of skilful actions. Skilful actions are those motivated by loving kindness, not craving and wisdom, any action driven by these aims will gain kammic merit. There are many ways that Buddhists can gain kammic merit through worship, teaching the dhamma and supporting the sangha. Following the 8 Fold Path will ensure a Buddhist accumulates merit. However, becoming the most learned monk in the monastery motivated by the desire to gain the admiration of the other monks would only generate negative kamma, since the motivation behind this would be unskilful.

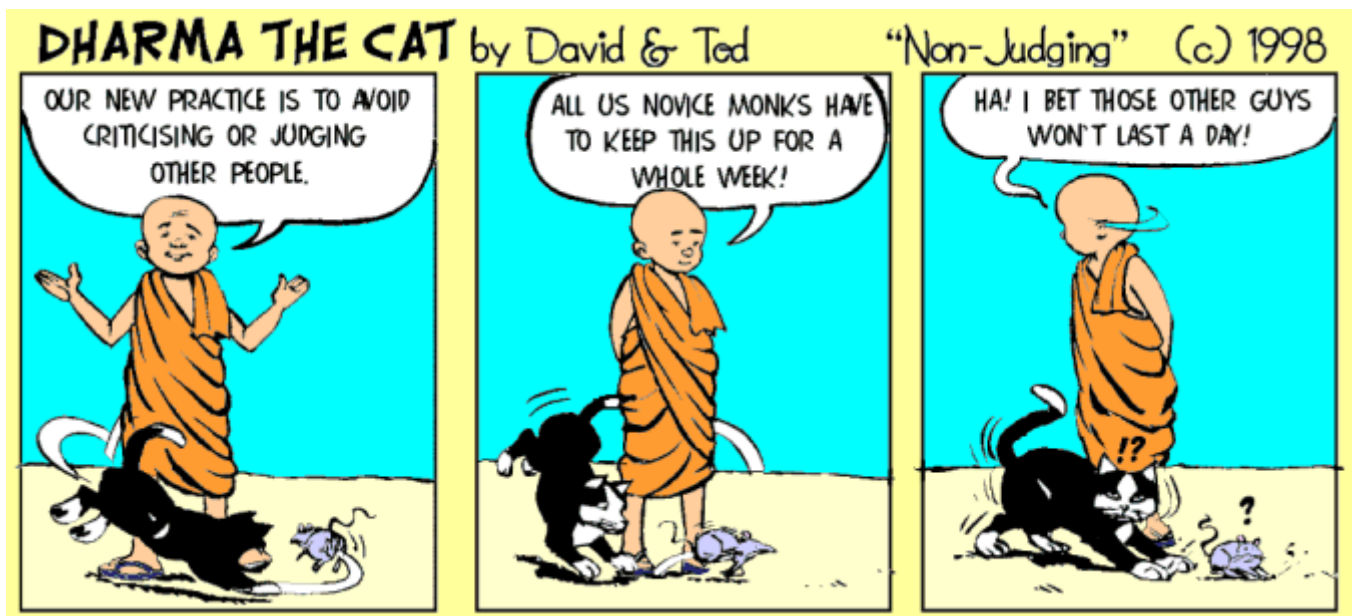
Our life is shaped by our mind: we become what we think.

Suffering follows an evil thought as the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that draw it.

Our life is shaped by our mind: we become what we think.

Joy follows a pure thought like a shadow that never leaves.

Dhammapada 1



Negative karma is a result of unskillful actions. The three roots of unskillful actions are **greed**, **hatred** and **ignorance** (The Three Root Poisons). Any action which is motivated by these will result in negative kamma.

Since the fruits of these actions may not ripen for many lifetimes this concept provides a clear rationale which explains how those who seem to be motivated by greed for example often appear to prosper and have happy and fulfilled lives.

Until the evil ripens
The fool thinks it's honey-sweet;
But when the evil ripens
The fool's plunged into suffering.
Dhammapada 69

Kammic energy is therefore transferred from one lifetime to the next. The kamma one has at death determines the next rebirth. Two popular analogies are used to illustrate how this works. The first is the analogy of the lamp. So if I use one lamp to light a second lamp the flame of the second lamp is brought into being by the energy of the first lamp. The flame is the same flame and also not the same flame. A more modern analogy would be that of the snooker balls. In this analogy the first snooker ball strikes the second snooker ball. The first snooker ball stops (death) and the energy is transferred to the second snooker ball which starts to move (rebirth). The second snooker ball is not the same as the first snooker ball, however the conditions at the time of death created the conditions for the second snooker ball to come to life.

Surprisingly science lends some support to this idea. Einstein showed that matter and energy are synonymous (the same) using his now famous formula $E=Mc^2$, (Energy=Matter x the speed of light squared). In simple form this means matter can be turned into energy and vice versa. The first law of thermodynamics states that energy can neither be destroyed nor created, it can only change its form. So for example we could take a piece of coal (potential energy) and burn it to release heat energy. The heat is not the same as the coal but in terms of energy, nor is it different; it has just taken a different form.

Buddhism emerged from a Hindu background around 2500 years ago. In the Hindu tradition *reincarnation* involves the transmigration of a permanent self/soul to another body. Much of Hinduism concerns the search for this true self. In Buddhism there is no-self and that makes the whole idea of rebirth problematic. How is it possible to reconcile re-birth with the idea of anatta? The simple answer is that what is reborn is not the same as what died nor is it different.

Different schools of Buddhism have slightly different approaches to how this can be understood. In Theravada Buddhism a monk or nun may strive to gain kammic merit in order to become enlightened in this life. This seems like a logical goal, given that enlightenment means the cessation of suffering. However, an Arhat who has attained nibbana will continue to live but since he/she is no longer motivated by greed, hatred and ignorance he/she will no longer be generating negative kamma and will not be reborn when they die, they may still have some negative kamma to work through however.

On the other hand the case of a Theravadan lay Buddhist whose more immediate goal is to secure a better rebirth makes less logical sense because if in the next life they will not be the same person, what then is the point in accumulating kammic merit which will only be passed on to what is effectively someone else. A Buddhist would argue that this is the wrong way of looking at things, since there is no self in the first place, only the illusion of a self and indeed there will be no self in the next life either.

In Mahayana Buddhism it can seem even more contradictory since an enlightened being is understood to be able to control the conditions or even predict their next rebirth. Which sounds very much like, there must be permanent part of the person, being passed from one lifetime to the next. However, once again, if as enlightened beings they have gained a true understanding of the laws of cause and effect or in other words kamma, as they are understood to do, then an enlightened being ought to be able to direct and control the kammic energy which will lead to a rebirth of their choosing. Again since neither the being that dies, nor the being that is reborn has a self, then there is no real contradiction.

This links to the Buddhist idea of dependant origination. Since what comes into being is dependent on prior conditions then we can conclude that all things are interdependent. This interdependence can also be understood as interconnectedness. Nothing that exists, exists independently, it exists because of the prior conditions which led to its existence. In other words its origin depends on other things having existed before - dependant origination. The fact that some of the things that exist are under the illusion that they exist independently is irrelevant, in the Buddhist view of reality, they do not exist independently at all.

Again this is an idea that is supported by science. Life does not exist in isolation; animals depend on plants to turn the carbon dioxide that they exhale into oxygen that they can then breathe in. In a very real sense all life on planet earth is interdependent. This interconnectedness links one life to the next in a very real way, what Buddhism does is to expand that link to include kammic energy generated by our intentions.

Questions:

Describe the Buddhist understanding of the nature of human existence 6KU

So you could start off a question about the nature of human existence in a number of different ways:

1	S	Buddhists understand the nature of human existence to be one of suffering as a result of ignorance .
	E	We are ignorant about the true nature of things which leads us to act in unskilful ways which in turn results in our suffering.
	eX	For example we act as if we have a permanent self, this means that we feel jealousy towards others who have more than we do. The jealousy we feel is a form of suffering which Buddhists call dukkha.

2	S	The Buddhist understanding of the nature of human existence is that humans are trapped in a cycle of birth, sickness, death and rebirth as a result of the three root poisons .
	E	This never ending cycle is called samsara and Buddhists believe that our goal should be to escape this cycle through achieving enlightenment.
	eX	Through following the teachings of the Buddha, it is understood that we can escape samsara by overcoming greed, hatred and ignorance and replacing this with loving-kindness, compassion and wisdom.

3	S	The nature of human existence according to Buddhism is that as humans we are living in the best of all possible situations.
	E	As humans we have a unique opportunity to escape from the cycle of samsara and achieve enlightenment.
	eX	Only as humans do we have the understanding required to fully comprehend the reality of our situation and thus escape the endless suffering experienced by beings trapped in samsara.

Describe how Buddhists view the nature of human existence.

4KU

1a)	How do Buddhists describe the nature of human existence?	4KU
S	Buddhists describe the nature of human existence as one of suffering (dukkha) and ignorance.	2
E	Our fundamental ignorance of how things really are causes us to suffer.	
eX	For example not understanding and accepting the impermanent nature of things (anicca) causes suffering (dukkha).	
S	Suffering is caused by craving (tanha) impermanent things.	2
E	We crave permanent happiness but impermanent things cannot bring permanent happiness.	
eX	For example people crave the latest mobile phone, and when they get one, they are happy at least for a while. However, soon a newer version will be available and then they will be dissatisfied with their original version.	

Another possible answer might be:

1a)	How do Buddhists describe the nature of human existence?	4KU
S	Buddhists describe the nature of human existence as one of suffering (dukkha).	2
E	The Buddha taught that suffering is caused by the three root poisons, greed, hatred and ignorance.	
eX	For example because we are ignorant of the truth (dhamma) so we continue to suffer.	
S	All sentient beings are trapped in a cycle of birth, death and rebirth (Samsara).	2
E	In order to escape this cycle and attain nibbana (a state of ultimate bliss) all suffering must be extinguished.	
eX	Buddhists particularly value human life because it is only as a human that we can gain a true understanding of how things really are and therefore be able to escape the cycle of Samsara.	

Nibbana

Key Ideas

- Nibbana = Enlightenment
- Not a place
- Cannot be described only experienced
- Effects of enlightenment should be apparent on a person
- Analogy of the slave
- Analogy of the heavy load
- Ultimate goal of all Buddhists
- Can be experienced by living beings
- The cessation of all suffering

Nibbana is the ultimate goal of all Buddhists, however achieving nibbana is not an easy task and many Buddhists may instead be aiming for a better rebirth from their present life.

In the Questions of King Melinda, the monk Nagasena said that nibbana cannot be described, it can only be experienced. He compared it to the wind, saying that "One cannot point to the wind like that for the wind does not lend itself to being grasped with the hands, or to being untouched. But nevertheless there is such a thing called 'wind'."

So what can be said about nibbana if it can't be described? Well we can start by saying what it is not:

- Nibbana is **NOT** a place.
- Nibbana is **NOT** a state **entered** at death, but can be experienced by the living.
- Nibbana is **NOT** a state of mind.



Nibbana is on the other hand, the cessation of suffering. This means that all suffering has stopped for an enlightened being. Since suffering has ended, it follows that craving must have ended (as craving is the cause of suffering) and therefore being caught in the cycle of samsara is also over. So, nibbana is the liberation (freedom from) from all suffering, ignorance and the endless cycle of samsara.

Those whose minds are rightly developed
In the enlightenment factors,
Who, not clinging, rejoice
In the cessation of clinging,
Who are radiant, with defilements extinguished:
These have attained nibbana in the world.
Dhammapada 89

Nibbana is enlightenment, or in other words an enlightened being understands the true nature of reality. Having this understanding gives them ultimate control over their state of being. They can choose when they die to remain outside the cycle of samsara (parinibbana, the Theravada ideal) or whether to re-enter samsara for the benefit of others (Mahayana ideal).

The Buddha described nibbana like this:

- Imagine you had been carrying a huge rucksack filled with rocks your whole life, and then suddenly it was gone.
- Imagine you had been a slave your whole life and then you were set free.
- It is like trying to explain the colour blue to a blind man.
- It's like trying to describe land to a fish.

In the Dhammapada, the Buddha says of nibbana that it is "the highest happiness"

"Health is the best possession,
Contentment is the greatest wealth;
Trust is what makes the truest kin;
Nibbana is the greatest happiness."
Dhammapada 204

Some Buddhists believe that the effects of enlightenment can be seen on a person. The best example of this would be that the Buddha glowed gold when he reached enlightenment. It is probably best not to take this story too literally, remember people often tell expectant mothers that they are glowing! Instead try to imagine what someone would look like if they were experiencing bliss, would they look any different? Perhaps their demeanour would convey

something of the contentment and happiness they were feeling. Certainly the actions of someone who has reached enlightenment should give some indication of their experience. So we might expect them to be calm, serene and not displaying any signs of greed, hatred or ignorance.

Questions

1. Nibbana is 'cessation'. Explain this aspect of Nibbana. 4KU
2. How can one be aware of the effects of attaining Nibbana? 4KU
3. How did the Buddha describe Nibbana? 4KU
4. Describe a Buddhist understanding of Nibbana? 4KU

S	Buddhists also refer to Nibbana as enlightenment.
E	Enlightenment cannot be explained it must be experienced.
eX	The Buddha said that it was like being a slave your whole life and then being set free.

S	Nibbana is the ultimate goal for all Buddhists.
E	It is not a place or even a state of mind, but the absence of all suffering.
eX	It is possible to achieve Nibbana whilst alive as the Buddha did.

S	Buddhists understand Nibbana to be the cessation of all suffering.
E	This means that nibbana is total happiness and bliss.
eX	The Dhammapada states that "Nibbana is the greatest happiness." 204

S	The monk Nagasena said that Nibbana can't be explained only experienced.
E	He compared it to the wind because although we can't see the wind we can feel its effects.
eX	So we should be able to see the effects of Nibbana on an enlightened being for example the Buddha was reported as glowing gold when he reached enlightenment.

Theravada View

Key Ideas

- Theravada = Way of the Elders
- Earliest form of Buddhism
- Ideal is the Arhat
- Seeking personal enlightenment
- Parinibbana on death
- Monk/nun much more likely to reach enlightenment
- Lay Theravadan's goal would usually be a better samsaric existence & better rebirth

After the death of the Buddha his followers eventually divided into two main branches following disagreements over what the Buddha actually taught. Around 100BCE Theravada Buddhism had started to emerge as a recognisable school of thought. Theravada means The Way of the Elders and this reflects their belief that they consider themselves to be following the original Buddhism as taught and practiced by the Buddha himself. For this reason the life and death of the Buddha has more significance for Theravadan Buddhists than it does for most Mahayana Buddhists. For example since the Buddha entered parinibbana on his death, this is also the goal that Theravadan Buddhists aim for.

Theravadan Buddhists stress the importance of seeking personal enlightenment. Enlightenment in this tradition is something which an individual must work towards for him or herself, in contrast to the Mahayana idea of having Bodhisattvas who can help; Theravadan's believe that only through their own efforts will they be able to achieve enlightenment. Some would argue that this is a more selfish goal than that of Mahayana Buddhists.

A Theravadan Buddhist's ideal would be to become an Arhat. An Arhat is an enlightened being. It takes a lifetime of dedication and study as a monk to reach this stage and few monks become Arhats.

Some Mahayana Buddhists would regard the Arhat ideal as selfish, pointing out that to choose parrinibbana (death with no remainder) shows a lack of compassion for those sentient beings who remain trapped in Samsara and therefore subject to suffering. However, it is worth considering that whilst they are alive an Arhat can make a significant contribution to the Sangha. For example:

- The Arhat acts as an inspiration to others
- Teaches both monks and lay Buddhists the dharma
- Protects the dharma (so that it won't be lost again, remember the Buddha discovered the dharma, he did not invent it)
- Gives lay Buddhists the opportunity to gain positive kamma by providing for him/her
- Increases positive kamma for all by their deeds

The goal of lay Theravadan Buddhists is to gain a better samsaric existence in this life and a rebirth with the opportunity to become a monk/nun from which point it would be possible to aim for enlightenment. It can take many rebirths to reach the stage where one has the optimum conditions to become an Arhat.

Theravadans view the Buddha as superior to the Arhat, because the Buddha discovered the Dhamma without the help of teachers. This contrasts with Mahayana ideas of all sentient beings having the prospect of Buddhahood.

Mahayana View

Key Ideas

- Mahayana = Greater Vehicle
- Comes in many forms - Zen, Tibetan, Pure Land
- Fast track to enlightenment
- Ideal = Bodhisattva
- Motivated by compassion to bring about the enlightenment of all sentient beings
- Enlightenment possible even as a lay Buddhist
- Buddhanature

For the Mahayana monk or nun the ideal is to become a Bodhisattva. A Bodhisattva is effectively a Buddha, an awakened one, or enlightened being. However, unlike the historical Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) they vow to be reborn and thus re-enter Samsara in order to help other sentient beings attain Nibbana. The rationale for this is simple, how can the complete cessation of suffering be achieved whilst witness to the suffering of others? They are therefore motivated by pure compassion to put off their own parinibbana and be reborn to teach and spread the dhamma. This is made possible because a Bodhisattva can choose their own rebirth, thus ensuring that they will be in the right place at the right time to be able to pick up where they left off. In fact some Bodhisattva's predict their own rebirth.

In contrast to lay Theravada's lay Mahayana Buddhists believe it is possible to achieve enlightenment as a lay Buddhist. This means that Mahayana Buddhism is more *inclusive* (includes more people). Therefore the goals for the lay and monastic Mahayana are essentially the same. However, an individual Mahayana Buddhist (whether monastic or lay) may choose to aim for a better samsaric existence or rebirth on the grounds that it is not always easy to become enlightened!

The idea that everyone has Buddha nature is heavily stressed in Mahayana schools. There are a variety of understandings amongst the various schools as to what Buddha nature is but as a generalisation it could be described as the potential within all sentient beings to attain Buddhahood. So this concept opens the way for lay Buddhists within this tradition to attain nibbana.

BUDDHA NATURE (tathagatagarbha)

Within Mahayana Buddhism, sutras contain the notion of Buddha-nature. This concept expresses the potentiality of Buddhahood (of becoming a Buddha) in all beings. The idea is that all beings have this potential of Buddhahood within them, but that in the unenlightened this is obscured by defilements.

From a Mahayana perspective, this shows that enlightenment itself is not so much achieving something new, but uncovering what is already there.



SOURCE - THE DHAMMAPADA - ENLIGHTENMENT

90 The traveller has reached the end of the journey! In the freedom of the Infinite he is free from all sorrows, the fetters that bound him are thrown away, and the burning fever of life is no more.

97 And he who is free from credulous beliefs since he has seen the eternal NIRVANA, who has thrown off the bondage of the lower life and, far beyond temptations, has surrendered all his desires, he is indeed great amongst men.

THE BODHISATTVA (Mahayana Buddhism)

Through time, Mahayana Buddhism developed a much more explicit stress on selfless, compassionate action, and a new version of the Buddhist spiritual ideal, distinct from the older ideas of the Arahant (Theravada Buddhism).

This new ideal was called the Bodhisattva which means, literally, 'wisdom being', and it refers to someone whose energy is directed towards the attainment of Enlightenment - but for the sake of all beings, rather than for personal liberation.

The Bodhisattva idea serves a dual purpose. Firstly it stressed the selfless, compassionate aspect of Enlightenment which they felt some Buddhists had lost sight of. Secondly, it offered a goal that could be aimed at by ALL Buddhists - whether or not they lived a monastic lifestyle.

The Bodhisattva

- One who understands the emptiness of all things (Sunyata)
- A heavenly companion of Amitabha in the Pure Land
- A deity to be visualized and identified in meditation

The 2 fundamental elements of the Bodhisattva are:

- PRAJŇA (wisdom) - the total insight into reality; the complete understanding of the total interdependence of all things and the realization of Anatta and Sunyata
- KARUNA (compassion) - puts the happiness of all beings in the universe before his/her own, willing to suffer anything. Any punya (merit) earned is given to others.

SOURCE - THE BODHISATTVA VOW

*"May I obtain supreme and perfect enlightenment,
promote the good of all beings and establish them
in the final and complete nirvana."*

AVALOKITESVARA

Represents compassion (karuna). Popular in Tibet. Dalai Lama said to be his 14th reincarnation. Name means 'the Lord'.

In Tibet he is called
'Chenrezi'.



TARA

Important in Tantric Buddhism, especially in Tibet. She is a partner of Avalokitesvara and the embodiment of loving kindness.



MANJUSRI

Name means 'beautiful lord'.

Model of knowledge and
destroyer of
ignorance.



AMITABHA

Also known as Amida, he is the
Buddha of immeasurable light and
King of the Western Paradise.



MAITREYA Name
means 'friendly' or
'benevolent'.

He is often represented
as fat and laughing – a
symbol of abundance.



Mahayana & Theravada Buddhism

	Theravada	Mahayana
Nature of Reality	Anicca and Dukkha are the key focus of the nature of reality.	Anicca, Dukkha and Sunyata (everything is inter-related) are the key focus of the nature of reality.
Nature of human beings	Anatta and the 5 Skandhas The Four Noble Truths Emphasis on wisdom	Buddhanature (the potential in us all) The Four Noble Truths Emphasis on compassion in action
Beliefs about Buddha	No longer accessible, having attained his Pari-Nirvana. A good example to follow	Accessible and knowable Historical Buddha is one of many Buddhas, such as Amitabha
Samsara & Nibbana	The Arahant Path Only monks have any chance of reaching enlightenment Nirvana is a goal but it may take many lifetimes	The Bodhisattva Path All have the potential to achieve enlightenment (Buddhanature) but delay their own Nirvana to help all beings achieve enlightenment
The Noble Eightfold Path	Path to enlightenment - individual effort in following the Noble Eightfold Path	Advanced beings provide help on the Noble Eightfold Path to enlightenment
Individual and community worship	Merit gained through <i>puja</i> (worship), meditation and taking part in festivals and ceremonies	Buddha's attributes are <i>prayed to</i> directly during worship.

		Ritual worship, offerings to statues and prayers often more of a focus than formal meditation.
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Questions:

The ideal of the Arhat is more true to the Buddhist teaching than the ideal of the Bodhisattva. In what ways might Buddhists respond to this statement? 8AE

- S Mahayana Buddhists and Theravada Buddhists would respond to this statement very differently.
- S The arhat is the ideal of Theravada Buddhists, they would therefore agree with this statement.
- E Theravada Buddhism is called 'The way of the elders' and Theravada Buddhists believe that their practice is the closest to the way advised by the Buddha.
- eX A Theravadan Buddhist would argue that the Buddha was not born into Samsara after his death so that should be the goal of all Buddhists.
- S Mahayana Buddhists, on the other hand would disagree with this statement since their ideal would be the bodhisattva.
- E A bodhisattva is motivated by compassion to delay their own parinibbana and be reborn into samsara in order to help other beings reach enlightenment.
- eX Mahayana Buddhists believe that this is more in keeping with Buddhist ideals of compassion and loving kindness. They would argue that it is impossible for an individual to extinguish all suffering whilst they remain aware of the suffering of others.

The above would only get 4 marks! How would you finish it off?

Practices

The Noble Eight Fold Path/The Middle Way

Key Ideas

- Can be divided into 3 sections (3 Fold Way) - Wisdom, Ethics, Meditation
- Not steps to be followed but should be done all at the same time
- The way to gain enlightenment

Wisdom	1. Right/Skilful View 2. <u>Right/Skilful Intention</u>	Prajna
Morality	3. <u>Right/Skilful Speech</u> 4. <u>Right/Skilful Action</u> 5. <u>Right/Skilful Livelihood</u>	Sila
Meditation	6. Right/Skilful Effort 7. Right/Skilful Awareness 8. Right/Skilful Concentration	Samadhi



8 Fold Path

1. Right View	Right view is essentially the Four Noble Truths and the three marks of existence. If you have the right view you know that dukkha characterises the human experience, you know that suffering is caused by craving, you know that suffering can be eliminated and you know that the right way to do it is to follow the eightfold path. Accepting anicca and anatta may come later.
2. Right Intention	Right intention is the intention/resolve to do everything necessary to achieve enlightenment. In other words gain the right view or understanding and follow the eightfold path.....
3. Right Speech	Right speech means no gossip, lying, bitchiness etc.
4. Right Action	Right action means skilful actions which will generate positive karma. Encapsulated in the 5 precepts.
5. Right Livelihood	Right livelihood means earning a living in a way which does not result in harming other sentient beings.
6. Right Effort	Nothing can be achieved without effort. The right effort means being prepared to actually persist in achieving your goal.
7. Right Awareness	This is about living in the present moment. All judgments and interpretations have to be suspended, or if they occur, just registered and dropped.
8. Right Concentration	Right or skilful concentration is the concentration a person acquires through meditation.

Right Intention

It is important to have the right intention both in terms of our thoughts and deeds. Just following the 5 precepts for example will not result in enlightenment or even a better rebirth, because the intention behind the act is the factor that determines the kammic consequences. So for example a person who is always truthful but has the intention of hurting other people with the truth would gain no positive kamma from this. The parable of the burning house demonstrated clearly that if it helps, then telling a lie might be the right thing to do.

So the important thing to consider is whether your intention is motivated by compassion and loving-kindness. Another example of wrong intention would be intending to become a monk or a nun because you want to escape from the daily responsibilities of looking after a family, this would be selfish, and their motivation must stem from the desire for their own liberation from suffering and for the sake of all sentient beings.

Right Speech

There are four kinds of speech Buddhists should avoid:

- Telling lies
- Causing trouble between people by spreading gossip
- Speaking harshly
- Idle chatter

The intention here is to avoid generating hatred. As one of the 3 root poisons it will inevitably lead to suffering for everyone involved. It requires the right effort to attain right speech as you probably found out when you tried it.

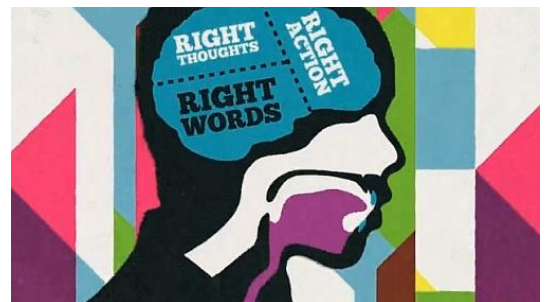
Do not speak harshly to anyone:
Those spoken to will answer back.
For angry speech is painful:
Retribution may reach you.
Dhammapada 134

Just as an elephant in battle
Endures arrows shot from the bow
I will endure abusive speech -
For people in general are ill behaved.
Dhammapada 320

Avoiding idle chatter concerns the desire to direct attention towards the gaining of wisdom. If you have time for idle chatter you should really be using it to further your understanding of the Dhamma, perhaps by meditating!

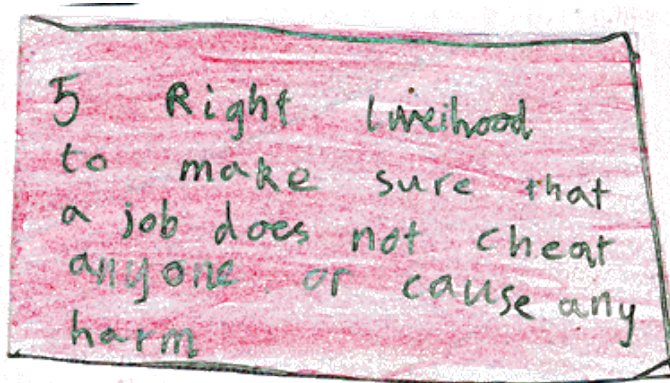
Right Action

Right action for all Buddhists would involve following the 5 precepts, and for monks and nuns the 10 precepts. The intention behind any act would have to be the right intention. The precepts provide a foundation for following an ethical life. So an example of right action might be to avoid the suffering of animals by being vegetarian or not eating after midday to ensure that you do not eat more than you actually need.



Right Livelihood

For lay Buddhist this means earning your living in an ethical way, in other words earning money without breaking the 5 precepts. So for example a Buddhist would not wish to earn their living by working in an abattoir as this would break the precept not to kill.



Right livelihood would also mean not earning a living which involved telling lies, which might make being involved in the advertising or fashion industry where models are regularly photoshopped undesirable.

This would still leave many jobs available, for example teaching, nursing or police work, but as before the key would be having the right intention. A person who became a doctor with

the intention of becoming rich and being admired by others would not be earning a living in an ethical way because he would be exploiting others for selfish reasons. The doctor who trains in order to be able to help people would on the other hand be considered to be on the right path.

The Ten Precepts

Key Ideas

- 5 Precepts followed by all Buddhists
- 10 Precepts followed by monks/nuns

These were the golden rules we had to follow when we were at Samye Ling.

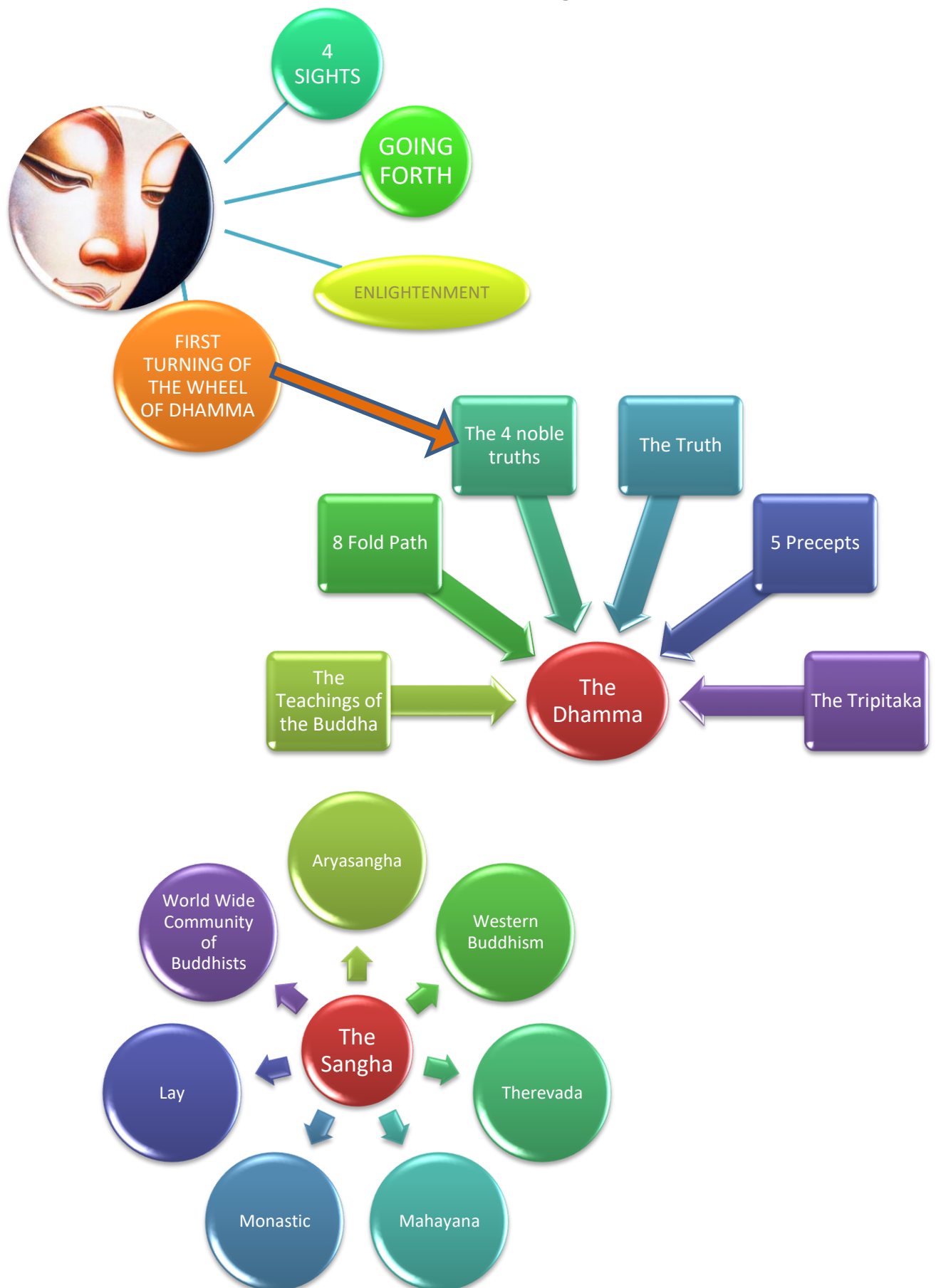
Followed by all Buddhists

1. To protect life and refrain from killing.
2. Respect other's property and refrain from stealing
3. To speak the truth and refrain from lying.
4. To embrace health and refrain from intoxicants.
5. To respect others and refrain from harmful sexual activity.

There are a further 5 precepts for monks and nuns

1. Refrain from taking food at inappropriate times (after noon).
2. Refrain from singing, dancing, playing music or attending entertainment programs (performances).
3. Refrain from wearing perfume, cosmetics and decorative accessories.
4. Refrain from sitting on high chairs and sleeping on luxurious, soft beds.
5. Refrain from handling money.

The Three Jewels



The Three Jewels

Key Ideas

- Three Jewels = Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha
- All Buddhists take refuge in the 3 Jewels
- What makes you a Buddhist is taking refuge

The Three Jewels/Refuges

A Buddhist takes refuge in:

1. the Buddha
2. the Dharma
3. the Sangha

When we go to a place or a person for refuge we are seeking help and support. So Buddhists are going to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha for help and support.



Each of the 3 Jewels are linked and depend on each other.

The Dhamma (teachings) could not have been taught without the Buddha, and could not have been followed without the Sangha, so the three are inseparable.

The Dhamma

Key Ideas

- Three Jewels = Buddha, **Dhamma** & Sangha
- The truth
- The teachings of the Buddha
- Buddhist scriptures
 - Dhammapada
 - Tripitaka
 - Theravada - Pali Canon
 - Mahayana - Sanskrit Canon
- Living the Dhamma

The word Dhamma can be used in many ways, it can mean the truth, the teachings of the Buddha as preserved in scripture and it can also mean Buddhist practice.

The Dharma was discovered by the Buddha as he sat under the tree which became known as the Bohdi tree. The Dharma has always existed but it had been lost. There had been Buddhas before and they too would have taught the Dharma but we don't know about them, because their teaching has been forgotten, so the Buddha actually **rediscovered** the Dharma. In Buddhist thought eventually the Dharma will be lost again and another Buddha will come along and rediscover it. This is because the Dharma is the **truth**. It is the reality of how things are.

The teachings of the Buddha were originally passed on orally from teacher to pupil. This is not such an unreliable method as you might think; people were used to remembering things 'off by heart' as writing was not common practice at the time of the Buddha

During the Buddha's lifetime he had established meetings of Buddhists at special places during rainy seasons when recent teachings could be passed on. The rainy season lasts for many weeks so there was plenty of time for discussion and learning.

During the **first** rainy season **after** the Buddha died (usually given as around 483BCE), Buddhists met to gather all his teachings together and agree on what he said. This gathering is known as the 'First Council' and the collection of teachings that they agreed on became

known as the Pali Canon (Canon means approved scriptures). At this point the teachings were still being recited in Pali and had not been written down. The Pali Canon has three sections (Three Baskets - Tipitaka Ti=3 Pitaka=Basket):

- **Vinaya Pitaka** - 227 Rules for monastic life
- **Sutta Pitaka** - Words of the Buddha (which includes the Dhammapada)
- **Abhidhamma Pitaka** - Explanations of the teachings of the Buddha



There are also non-canonical works that are considered important teaching aids in Buddhism, for example, "The Questions of King Milinda".

The Pali Canon (Tipitaka) is used by Theravada Buddhists who emphasise the importance of the authenticity of these scriptures.

Mahayana Buddhists accept many other scriptures (as well as the Tripitaka) as 'canonical' texts - they are written in many languages and are considered as 'newer' revelations of the Buddha's teaching, still carrying the authority of the Buddha. Examples of this are the Lotus and Diamond Sutras. These later teachings are written in many of the native languages of the countries where Mahayana Buddhism spread e.g. Japanese, Tibetan. Theravada Buddhists would not accept these as authentic.

The Dhammapada is part of the Sutta Pitaka and is used by **all** Buddhists. It is said to be the **actual words** of the Buddha. It 'argues' between the foolish person, and the wise person who understands the path of Buddhism. It aims to 'win' the reader over to Buddhism by logic, verse, prose, and clever argument! This is the main text you will need to use.



There are so many different scriptures and so many ways of explaining the Dharma because everybody learns differently and because everybody is at a different stage in their

development/understanding of the truth. So if you were five years old and still in P1, I would be teaching you Buddhism with the help of picture books. In many ways what this means is that **anything** which helps an individual to have a greater understanding of the truth can be considered the Dharma. This also helps to explain why the Buddha and subsequent teachers tell different stories or give different examples to different people who ask similar questions. The teaching must suit the pupil. This is very CfE by the way!

The Parable of the Burning House is often used to illustrate this:

One day, a fire broke out in the house of a wealthy man who had many children. The wealthy man shouted at his children inside the burning house to flee. But, the children were absorbed in their games and did not heed his warning, though the house was being consumed by flames

Then, the wealthy man devised a practical way to lure the children from the burning house. Knowing that each of the children wanted different kinds of carts, he called out to them, "Listen! Outside the gate are the toys that you have always wanted: carts pulled by goats, carts pulled by deer, and carts pulled by oxen. Why don't you come out and play with them?" The wealthy man knew that these things would be irresistible to his children.

The children, eager to play with these new toys rushed out of the house but, instead of the carts that he had promised, the father gave them a cart much better than any he has described - a cart draped with precious stones and pulled by white bullocks.

In this parable the father, of course, represents the Buddha and sentient beings are the children trapped in the burning house. The Burning House represents the world burning with the fires of greed,

hatred and ignorance. The Buddha or any teacher for that matter can say whatever needs to be said to get sentient beings to safety.

The importance of the Dhamma in Buddhists' lives cannot be over-emphasised. The religion is based around the development of understanding and most schools of Buddhism concentrate on developing understanding through hearing the Dhamma. Theravadan Buddhists use recitation of the Dhamma as an important way to gain knowledge and insight into its meaning. Monks recite the 227 rules of the Vinaya Pitaka every fortnight and many of the sayings of the Buddha are told again and again to emphasise a point. Learning sections by heart, hearing and teaching the Dhamma are also understood to generate positive kamma, since through such practices a Buddhist gains wisdom. At first, the teachings of the Buddha may be accepted through faith but it is necessary for each of the teachings to be analysed and meditated upon so that belief can be replaced by knowledge.

Buddhists also talk of 'practising the dhamma'. The monk Nagasea from *The Questions of King Milinda* is believed by Theravadans to have lived Buddhism, teaching the Dhamma by example.

Long is the night for the wakeful;
Long is the league for the weary.
Long is samsara for fools
Who do not know the true Dhamma.
Dhammapada 60

The Sangha

Key Ideas

- One of the 3 Jewels = Buddha, Dhamma & **Sangha**
- Worldwide community of Buddhists
- Monastic Sangha
- A particular monastic community i.e. Samye Ling
- Aryasangha - community of enlightened beings

The Sangha as the worldwide community of Buddhists provides refuge to all Buddhists. This means that the Sangha is there to support Buddhists with their goal of reaching enlightenment or attaining a better rebirth. However many Buddhists would argue that the Sangha actually refers only to those Buddhists who have taken refuge in the 3 Jewels.

The worldwide Sangha could be split into two groups:

- Those who have taken monastic vows (monks & nuns)
- The laity (lay Buddhists)

The Monastic Sangha

The monastic Sangha was first established by the Buddha. During the dry season monks and nuns would live a nomadic life teaching the Dhamma as they moved from village to village. During the rainy season the monks would gather together, share teachings and clarify their understanding of the Dhamma by engaging in debate with other monks. This at first temporary gathering of monks and nuns gradually developed into a collection of permanent communities (monasteries) giving people the opportunity to study the Dhamma full time. Monastic communities developed through gifts of land from wealthy patrons and were usually built alongside villages and towns.

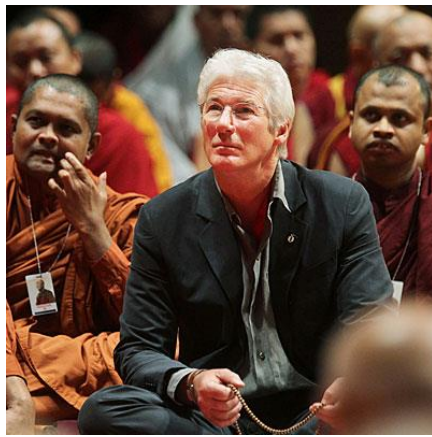
The monastic community relies on the generosity of lay Buddhists. Since monks and nuns have renounced all their worldly goods they must turn to the lay community for essentials like food, shelter and robes. Without the lay community the monastic community could not exist.

The support from the laity can take many forms. There are for example a number of famous lay Buddhists like Goldie Hawn and Richard Gere who in all probability donate large sums of money to Buddhists around the world.

Famous Buddhists



Orlando Bloom



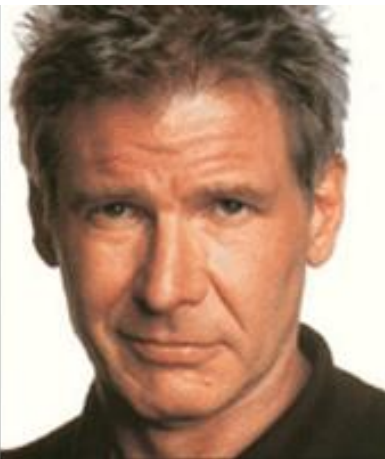
Richard Gere



Goldie Hawn



Brad Pitt



Harrison Ford

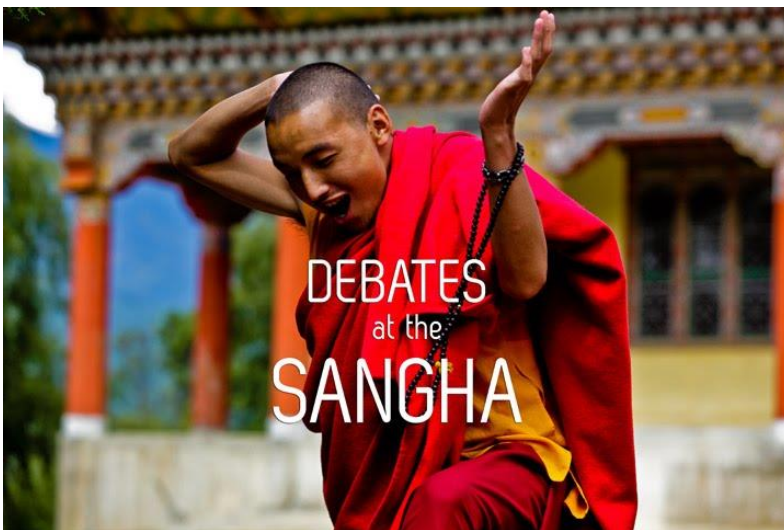


Leonardo DiCaprio



However donations can range from a bowl of rice to the large monetary donations made by rich Buddhists, all would be welcome and would gain the giver positive kamma.

Monasteries also provide a focus for community worship and as a place of learning. Monastic communities provide opportunities for both lay and



ordained Buddhists to gain a better understanding of the Dhamma by providing opportunities for meditation, worship and direct teaching.

The monastery also provides the means by which the lay community can generate karmic merit by providing for the material needs of monks and nuns. The monastic community also generates positive karma for the lay community

and indeed all sentient beings through worship and prayer for example through the maintenance of prayer wheels, flags and daily worship.

In countries where Buddhism is the main religion this makes the relationship between the lay community and the monastic community very much a mutually beneficial relationship.

However, in places like Scotland this could be understood quite differently. At Samye Ling, lay Buddhists and the general public are welcome to visit the monastery for free. However there were charges to receive teaching, guided tours and so on. The gift shop and tea rooms will also provide the monks and nuns with a source of revenue with which to pay for the upkeep of the temple and indeed the continuing expansion of the temple and surrounding facilities. So here in Scotland monastic Buddhists rely on more than just the lay Buddhist community to provide for them. Not everyone who visits Samye Ling will be a Buddhist (we went there after all!)

Aryasangha

The Aryasangha includes all Buddhists (both lay and monastic) who have reached enlightenment and is sometimes called the 'noble sangha'.

The Aryasangha as the community of enlightened beings acts as an inspiration to other Buddhists. Since they have already reached enlightenment they show that it is possible for others to also do so. They also provide an example for others to follow and provide teaching to other Buddhists who have not yet achieved enlightenment.

BUDDHIST WORSHIP

PUJA

Buddhists can worship both at home or at a temple. It is not considered essential to go to a temple to worship with others.

Worship at home - Buddhists will often set aside a room or a part of a room as a shrine. There will be a statue of Buddha, candles, and an incense burner.

Worship at temple - Buddhist temples come in many shapes. Perhaps the best known are the pagodas of China and Japan. Another typical Buddhist building is the Stupa, which is a stone structure built over what are thought to be relics of the Buddha, or over copies of the Buddha's teachings.

Buddhist temples are designed to symbolise the five elements:

- Fire
- Air
- Earth, symbolised by the square base
- Water
- Wisdom, symbolised by the pinnacle at the top



All Buddhist temples contain an image or a statue of Buddha.

There are many different forms of worship across different schools of Buddhism. Worship in Mahayana tradition takes the form of devotion to Buddha and to Bodhisattvas. Worshippers may sit on the floor barefoot facing an image of Buddha and chanting. They will listen to monks chanting from religious texts, perhaps accompanied by instruments, and take part in prayers.

MANTRAS - A mantra is a word, a syllable, a phrase or a short prayer that is spoken once or repeated over and over again (either aloud or in a person's head) and that is thought to have a profound spiritual effect on the person.

PRAYER AIDS - It's common to use prayer beads to mark the number of repetitions of a mantra. Mantras may also be displayed on a prayer wheel and repeated by spinning the wheel, or written on a prayer flag - in which case the prayer is repeated each time the flag moves in the wind. Prayer wheels can be tiny things that a Buddhist carries with them or enormous objects up to nine feet high found in monasteries. These physical prayer devices are very common in Tibetan Buddhist communities.

COMMUNITY WORSHIP CAN INVOLVE THE SANGHA

There are two types of Sangha - the laity (lay community) and the ordained (monks and nuns)

THE ORDAINED SANGHA:

- Live in monasteries
- Some have little contact with the outside world whilst others work in the local community helping them in various ways
- Monks and nuns take on special rules (e.g. five extra precepts)
- Often they dress in robes and shave off their hair. They do this to detach themselves from how they appear.
- The roles of monks differ slightly depending on different schools of Buddhism



THE LAITY:

- The laity is made up of Buddhists who live normal lives
- Lay Buddhists often provide food for monks and nuns. In return, monks and nuns will pass on the Dhamma. Both accumulate good kamma with their selfless deeds.
- Many lay Buddhist families encourage their children to join the monastic community for a period of time in order to gain good kamma for themselves and the whole family.



Meditation

Key Ideas

- How the Buddha attained enlightenment
- One of the 3 Fold Way (One third of the 8 Fold Path)
- Training for the mind
- Gaining focus and control of the mind for the purpose of reaching enlightenment
- Meditation a regular part of Buddhist worship
- Meditation forms basis of most Buddhist retreats
- Meditation forms a significant part of the day of a Buddhist monk
- Mindfulness
- Scientific studies support efficacy
- Secular appeal
- **Samatha** meditation - focus on one thing to calm the mind
- **Vipassana** meditation - insight meditation - to gain insight into the teachings of the Buddha

The Buddha reached enlightenment sitting underneath the Bohdi tree after vowing that he would not get up until he had come to a true understanding of how things are. Since meditation is how the Buddha finally gained enlightenment, Buddhists believe it to be the means by which everyone else can reach enlightenment too.

It is important to realise that meditation is **NOT** about emptying your mind of all thoughts! If this were the case the Buddha would not have been able to gain any insight into the true nature of reality by practicing meditation. Meditation is **training for the mind**, so that the mind will be better able to understand the truth about reality. Meditation is like training the mind in the same way that physical exercise is used to train the body.

In recent years meditation has found favour in the secular world. This has prompted several scientific studies into the efficacy of meditation. Neuroscientist Sara Lazar has shown that regular meditation changes the structure of the brain, specifically in areas of the brain which affect empathy and compassion.

Other scientific studies have demonstrated that meditation can:

- Reduce stress and reduce symptoms associated with:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Pain
 - Insomnia
- Enhance ability to pay attention
- Increase quality of life



The adoption of meditation techniques by many in the secular world has led to widespread use of meditation in a non Buddhist context. However the goals of such meditation are different for secular practitioners. Meditation practices may for instance be taught in schools to promote concentration in pupils, however it is not expected that having developed an increased ability to concentrate and focus that pupils will then use this ability to understand the dhamma.

Samatha Meditation:

Most meditation starts with a period of samatha meditation. Its purpose is to calm the mind.



The everyday mind is often compared to the water in a lake on a stormy day. The water in the lake is rough and this in turn disturbs the mud at the bottom of the lake so the water is muddied. Samatha meditation helps to calm the waters of the mind, this allows the mud to settle to the bottom of the lake, leaving the water itself clear. To do this Samatha meditation usually focuses on one thing, for example breathing. Other thoughts which enter the mind, are just registered (noticed) and dropped without passing judgment or making interpretations.

Whilst Samatha meditation is often practiced sitting cross legged with a straight back or in the lotus position, it can also be practiced in almost any comfortable position and even whilst walking.

The mind is hard to restrain, light,
Flying where it will.
Control of it is good,
Mind controlled brings happiness.
Dhammapada 35

Vipassana Meditation:

Vipassana meditation is **insight** meditation. This means that the purpose of vipassana meditation is to gain insight (a better understanding) into the Dhamma. During this type of meditation a variety of techniques can be used to help the practitioner to gain a better understanding of Buddhist teachings. This could mean focusing on a flower to better understand and accept the concept of impermanence. Mahayana Buddhists may also use vipassana meditations to visualise themselves as a bodhisattva in order to increase their compassion.

People often find it easy to embrace the idea of compassion for their friends and family, it may even be easy to extend this compassion to strangers, however many find it difficult to extend this feel if compassion to people who they consider enemies. They might be instructed by their teachers to meditate repeatedly on extending compassion towards a person they don't like very much. With time and practice this should become easier.

	THERAVADA BUDDHISM	MAHAYANA BUDDHISM
The Buddha	Only the historical (Siddhartha Gautama) Buddha and 6 other Buddha's who came before him are recognised.	Besides (Siddhartha Gautama) Buddha, other more recent Buddha's like Amitabha and Medicine Buddha are also recognised.
Bodhisattvas	Only Maitreya (the future Buddha) bodhisattva is accepted.	Avalokitesvara, Mansjuri, Ksitigarbha and Samanthabhadra are four very well-known bodhisattvas besides Maitreya.
Scriptures	The Pali Canon comprises 3 baskets (Tipitaka): Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma.	The Mahayana Canon comprised of Tripitaka and many additional sutras from a much later date for example Heart sutra, Lotus sutra.
Goal of training	To become an Arhat. The main emphasis is self-liberation.	Alongside self-liberation, it is important for Mahayana followers to help other sentient beings. This is called Bodhicitta - the spontaneous wish to attain enlightenment motivated by great compassion for all sentient beings, accompanied by a falling away of the attachment to the illusion of an inherently existing self.
Location	Southern transmission: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia and parts of Southeast Asia.	Northern transmission: Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and parts of Southeast Asia.
Language of dharma teaching	Tipitaka is strictly in Pali.	Original language of transmission is Sanskrit but this has been translated into the local languages e.g. Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese.
Nibbana	No distinction is made between nibbana attained by a buddha and that of an arhat.	There are subtle distinctions in the level of nibbana attained.
Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples	Historical disciples of the Buddha are recognised.	The bodhisattvas in this tradition are not historical figures.

	THERAVADA BUDDHISM	MAHAYANA BUDDHISM
Rituals	There are some rituals but not heavily emphasised as in Mahayana schools.	There is much more emphasis on the use of rituals; e.g. Rituals for the dead, tantric rituals. Bowing, chanting, incense, offerings.
Use of Mantras and Mudras	Some use of Parittas (Buddhist practice of reciting certain verses and scriptures in order to ward off bad kamma.)	Heavily practised in the Vajrayana school of Mahayana Buddhism. Other schools also have included some mantras in their daily liturgy.
Bardo	Very little emphasis on the process of dying and death. Usually, the dying person is advised to meditate on impermanence, suffering and emptiness. The in-between stage after death and before rebirth (Bardo) is ignored in Theravada school.	Bardo is recognised by all Mahayana schools. Bardo is the intermediate state between one birth and the next, Mahayana Buddhists believe that through ritual practices they can ease this passage and influence the dead person's rebirth during this time.
One meal a day practice	This is the rule in Theravada monasteries.	This is a highly respected practice but it is left to each individual to decide.
Vegetarianism	This aspect is not necessary. In places like Thailand where daily morning rounds are still practised, it is very difficult to insist on the type of food to be donated	Very well observed in all Mahayana schools (except the Tibetans due to the geographical circumstances). However, this aspect is not compulsory.
Focus of worship in the temple	Simple layout with the image of Sakyamuni Buddha the focus of worship.	Can be quite elaborate; with a chamber/hall for Sakyamuni Buddha and two disciples, one hall for the 3 Buddhas (including Amitabha and Medicine Buddha) and one hall for the 3 key bodhisattvas; besides the protectors, etc.
Schools/Sects of the tradition	One surviving school.	8 major schools: four practice-based (Zen, Pure Land, Vajrayana, Vinaya); four philosophy-based (Tendai, Avamtasaka, Yogacara and Madhyamika)

	THERAVADA BUDDHISM	MAHAYANA BUDDHISM
Buddha nature	Absent from the teachings of Theravada tradition.	The idea that everyone has Buddha nature is heavily stressed in Mahayana schools. There are a variety of understandings amongst the various schools as to what Buddha nature is but as a generalisation it could be described as the potential within all sentient beings to attain Buddhahood. So this concept opens the way for lay Buddhists within this tradition to attain nibbana.

Websites for further study:

<http://www.clear-vision.org/Home/Home.aspx>

<http://buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/index.htm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/>

<http://www.buddhanet.net/>

For more info on the self:

<http://www.newscientist.com/special/self>

<http://www.buddhistgeeks.com/2011/05/psychological-self-vs-no-self/>

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/khema/bl095.html>

Higher Past Papers

2022 Higher

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Analyse the relationship between nibbana and meditation. | 10 |
| 2. Evaluate the significance of Buddhist beliefs about the nature of human beings. | 20 |

2020 Higher

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Analyse the relationship between beliefs about kamma and samsara. | 10 |
| 2. Evaluate the relevance of living according to the Eightfold Path. | 20 |

2019 Higher

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Analyse the purpose of following the Five Precepts. | 10 |
| 2. 'The Three Marks of Existence are the most significant of all Buddhist beliefs.' How far do you agree? | 20 |

2019 Specimen paper

- | | |
|--|----|
| Analyse the relationship between beliefs about tanha and the Three Root Poisons. | 10 |
| 'Living according to the Eightfold Path presents too many challenges for Buddhists.'
To what extent do you agree? | 20 |

2018 Higher

- | | |
|--|----|
| Explain the purpose of living according to the Eightfold Path | 10 |
| 'Beliefs about Samsara present challenges for Buddhists' How far do you agree? | 10 |

2017 Specimen paper

- | | |
|--|----|
| Analyse the significance of the ten precepts for followers of Buddhism. | 10 |
| 'Of all the belief Buddhists have, Kamma is the one which has the greatest impact on their daily lives'
How valid is this view? | 10 |

2017 Higher

- | | |
|---|----|
| Explain the relationship between two Buddhist beliefs you have studied. | 10 |
| To what extent does worship benefit Buddhists? | 10 |

2016 Higher

In what ways are Buddhists beliefs about the nature of human beings and nibbana connected? 10

'Following the eight fold path presents more challenges than benefits to Buddhists today'.

To what extent do you agree with this statement? 10

2015 Higher

How significant is the life of the Buddha to Buddhists today? 10

Explain the purpose of meditation in Buddhism 10

N5 Past Papers

2022

1. (a) Describe how Buddhists perform puja. 4

(b) Why do Buddhists perform Puja? 6

2. Explain how the Three Marks of Existence are connected. 4

3. (a) Describe what Buddhists understand by Nibbana. 5

(b) 'Nibbana is a realistic goal for all Buddhists.'

How far do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. 8

2020

1. What do Buddhists believe about the Buddha? 4

2. (a) What do Buddhists mean by the root poisons? 4

(b) How might a Buddhist's **belief** about the root poisons **affect** them? 4

3. Explain how Buddhists **follow** the Eightfold Path. 6

4. 'Buddhist belief about kamma is too negative.'

How far do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. 8

2019

Describe the Buddha's teaching about the four noble truths. 6

2. (a) What do Buddhists believe about Samsara? 4

(b) How might belief about Samsara affect the life of Buddhists? 4

3. Explain why Buddhists meditate. 5

4. "People can't be expected to follow the five precepts in the 21st century". Lynne
How far do you agree with Lynne? Give reasons for your answer. 8

2018 N5

1. (a) Explain Buddhist belief about Dukkha (suffering) 4
(b) How might belief about Dukkha (suffering) **affect** Buddhists? 4
2. Describe how Buddhist meditate. 4
3. What do Buddhists mean by Nibbana? 4
4. Describe **one** of the Three Jewels. 3
- 'The Buddha's teachings are still relevant in the 21st Century'.
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer 8

2017 N5 Specimen paper

1. (a) Describe what Buddhism teaches about human beings. 5
(b) Buddhist belief about human beings is too negative. Do you agree? Give reasons
for your answer. 4
2. (a) Describe what Buddhists mean by Nibbana. 4
(b) Explain why achieving Nibbana is important for Buddhists today. 6
3. "Performing the puja with others is essential for Buddhists." Would all Buddhists
agree? Give reasons for your answer. 8

2017 N5

1. Explain Buddhist belief about human beings. 4
2. Explain how Samsara is **connected** to Nibbana. 5
3. (a) Describe **one** part of the Eightfold Path. 3
(b) 'Following the Eightfold Path is too hard'. 'It is hard, but it's worth it!' What do you think? Give reasons for your answer. 8

2016 N5

1. (a) Describe **one** way in which Buddhists meditate. 3

(b) In what ways might meditation affect Buddhists in their daily lives?	5
2. (a) What do Buddhists understand by kamma ?	4
(b) 'People should be more concerned with what happens after death than their actions in this life'. Do you think Buddhists would agree ? Give reasons for your answer.	8

2015 N5

Describe what Buddhism teaches about the nature of existence.	3
Explain how beliefs about the nature of existence might affect Buddhists.	5
Explain what Buddhists understand by the term "Sangha".	4
<i>"Living as part of the Sangha is no longer relevant in today's world."</i> Would Buddhists agree? Give reasons for your answer.	8
Explain the purpose of meditation in Buddhism	10

2014 N5

Explain why the life of the Buddha is important to Buddhists.	3
Explain why Buddhist believe it is helpful to follow the Dhamma.	5
Describe two steps of the Noble Eightfold Path.	4
<i>"Following the Noble Eightfold Path is too difficult in today's society."</i> Would Buddhists agree? Give reasons for your answer.	8
Explain the purpose of meditation in Buddhism	10

2015 Old Higher

1. Describe what Buddhists understand by enlightenment. 4 KU
2. Explain two ways in which belief in enlightenment might benefit Buddhists. 6 AE
3. Describe Buddhist beliefs about the human condition. 6KU
4. "Belief in Anatta is central to the human condition." Explain why Buddhists might agree with this statement. 6 AE
5. Describe Buddhist worship. 4KU
6. What does Buddhism teach about the treatment of others? 6 KU
7. "For Buddhists, how you treat others is just as important as worship" How far do you agree with this statement? 8 AE

2014 Old Higher

8. Describe what Buddhists understand by tanha. 4 KU
9. What do Buddhists believe about kamma? 4 KU
10. Explain how tanha is related to kamma. 4 AE
11. Describe Buddhist beliefs about Nibbana. 6 KU
12. Why might achieving Nibbana be challenging for Buddhists?
8 AE

HOLDING ON
TO ANGER IS
LIKE GRASPING
A HOT COAL WITH
THE INTENT OF
THROWING IT AT
SOMEONE ELSE;
YOU ARE THE ONE
WHO GETS BURNED

13. Describe how Buddhists follow the Eightfold Path. 6 KU
14. To what extent can it be argued that following the Eightfold
Path brings more benefits to the individual than to the Buddhist community? 8 AE

2013 Old Higher

1. What do Buddhists understand by skilful actions? 4 KU
2. Describe Buddhist meditation. 4 KU
3. How important is Buddhist meditation as a means of developing skilful actions? 4 AE
4. Describe Buddhist beliefs about the Three Root Poisons. 3 KU
5. What do Buddhists believe about Samsara? 3 KU
6. Explain the challenges belief in the Three Root Poisons and Samsara present to Buddhists. 6
AE
7. Describe the dhamma. 6 KU
8. Why might Buddhists believe that the dhamma is still relevant today? 10 AE

2012 Old Higher

1. Describe the law of Kamma. **6 KU**
2. Explain the benefits that belief in Kamma might bring Buddhists. **4 AE**
3. Explain the difficulties that belief in Kamma might create for Buddhists. **4 AE**
4. By what means do Buddhists believe they can achieve the goals of life? **8 KU**
5. How important is the Dhamma in the lives of Buddhists? **4 AE**
6. What do Buddhists believe about anatta? **6 KU**
7. "*For Buddhists, anatta is the key to understanding the human condition.*" How far do you agree? **8 AE**

2011 Old Higher

1. How do Buddhists describe the human condition? **6 KU**
2. "*Anicca is central to Buddhist understanding of the human condition.*" To what extent do you agree? **6 AE**
3. What do Buddhists mean by Nibbana? **6 KU**
4. Explain the impact of belief in Nibbana on the lives of Buddhists. **6 AE**
5. Describe **two** of the Five Precepts. **4 KU**
6. Describe ways in which Buddhists show devotion to the Buddha. **4 KU**
7. "*There is no more important practice than devotion to the Buddha.*" How far would Buddhists agree with this statement? **8 AE**

2010 Old Higher

1. Describe what Buddhists understand by Dukkha. **4 KU**
2. Explain the relationship between Dukkha and other aspects of the human condition. **4 AE**
3. What is the Sangha? **4 KU**
4. "*The Sangha benefits only monks and nuns, not the laity.*" Do you agree? **8 AE**
5. What are the main moral principles of Buddhism? **6 KU**
6. In what ways do Buddhists meditate? **6 KU**
7. "*Living a moral life is more important than meditating.*" Explain at least **two** ways in which Buddhists might respond to this statement. **8 AE**

