



**Higher & National 5**

**World Religion**

**Buddhism**

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## MANDATORY CONTENT

<b>WORLD RELIGION: BUDDHISM</b>	
<b>HIGHER</b>	<b>NATIONAL 5</b>
<b>Beliefs</b>	
Three Marks of Existence: Anicca Anatta Dukkha	Three Marks of Existence
Nature of human beings: Tanha Three Root Poisons Kamma	Kamma Four Noble Truths Three Poisons
Beliefs about Buddha	Beliefs about Buddha Three Jewels
Samsara & Nibbana	Samsara Nibbana
<b>Practices</b>	
Living according to the Eightfold Path	Living according to the Eightfold Path Five Precepts
Five Precepts & the Sangha	Five Precepts
Meditation & Devotion	Meditation & Puja

# ASSESSABLE ELEMENTS

## K A E

### K

#### Knowledge & Understanding

- Providing facts and definitions
- Explaining the meaning of a concept
- Describing the main features of an issue

### A

#### Analysis

Analysis questions are looking for you to give sides of an argument/issue. The easiest way of doing this is to give contrasting/opposing viewpoints, ie.

- Explaining different interpretations of a concept
- Relating concepts and viewpoints to appropriate sources
- Identifying and explaining 2 or more viewpoints on an issue
- Theravada / Mahayana viewpoints
- Lay / Monastic viewpoints

### E

#### Evaluation

Evaluation essays require you to give your own opinion on the issue. Not only should you provide a full and detailed opinion, but you should also make a JUDGEMENT on this (ie. This argument is weak because...):

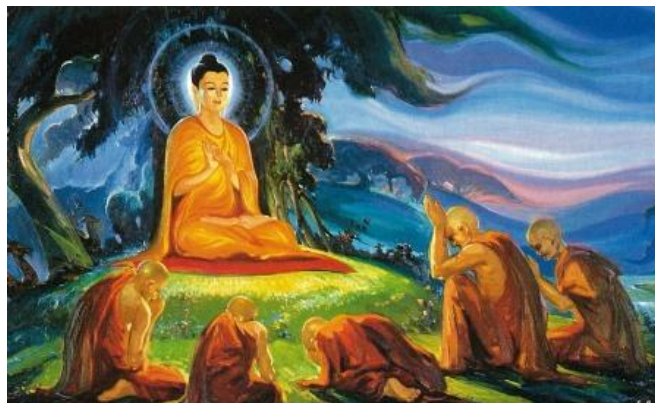
- Explaining different interpretations of a concept
- Relating concepts and viewpoints to appropriate sources
- Identifying and explaining 2 or more viewpoints on an issue
  
- Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of arguments
- Discussing both sides of an issue
- Presenting conclusions
- Expressing and justifying opinions with supporting arguments
- Backing up arguments with logical reasons

# THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

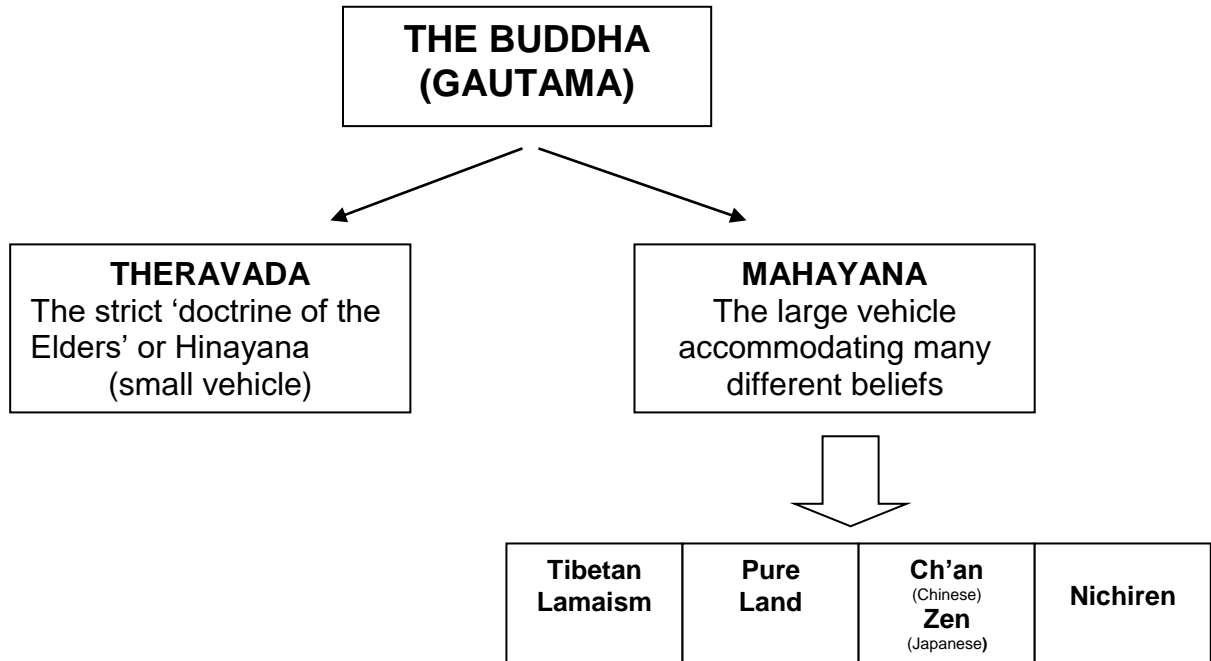
**Compose a summary of significant events in the life of the Buddha. Present this information as a written summary, 1-2 sides of A4 long. (See pages 37-38)**

**Your summary should contain information about most of the following:**

- A His name, 'clan' background and status  
Birth and upbringing  
His marriage (age at the time; name of wife)
  
- B The Four Signs
  
- C His life as an ascetic (holy man)  
Examples of self denial  
The five monks/ascetics who befriended him
  
- D His Enlightenment and conquest of Mara  
His meditation experiences (past existences)  
His attainment of Nirvana
  
- E His first sermon: where and when?  
Content of the first sermon  
Length of his teaching ministry  
Age and cause of death



## SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM



The two major schools of Buddhism, Theravada and the Mahayana, are different expressions of the same teaching of the historical Buddha. They agree upon and practice the core teachings of the Buddha.

Theravada	Mahayana
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on wisdom</li> <li>• Only monks have any chance of reaching enlightenment</li> <li>• Path to enlightenment is followed with individual effort</li> <li>• Countries: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma (Myanmar), Laos and Cambodia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on compassion in action</li> <li>• All have the potential to achieve enlightenment (Buddhanature)</li> <li>• Advanced beings provide help on the path to enlightenment</li> <li>• Countries: Tibet, China, South Korea, Japan and Vietnam</li> </ul>

## THE LAITY & THE MONASTIC COMMUNITY

# BUDDHISM

### LAY COMMUNITY

Ordinary Buddhists who go about their daily lives, work, family etc. but who follow the teachings of the Buddha

### MONASTIC COMMUNITY

Monks and Nuns who live a life separate from the lay community. People who devote their entire lives to following the teachings of the Buddha



The community of people who practice Buddhism can be divided into two main groups: the 'monastic community' or 'sangha', monks and nuns who live in monasteries and nunneries, and the 'lay community', Buddhists who live the ordinary family life of a householder. There has always been a strong relationship between these two communities.

When someone becomes a bhikkhu (a Monk or nun), they promise to keep around 250 vows. Probably the most important of these vows is the promise not to become involved in any sexual activity. The reason they take this vow is because they have made a decision to spend their lives studying and meditating on the Buddha's teachings, and they don't want to be distracted from doing this. Monks and nuns see sexual activity and all the things that go with it: relationships, children, house, job, and money, as a massive distraction from their chosen way of life, and so they vow not to have sex. As with the vow against sexual activity, many of the other vows that monks and nuns keep are to help them to improve their mindfulness. There is a vow against eating after noon, for example. This is because eating makes the mind feel heavy and sleepy. Not eating after noon makes it easier to meditate at night without nodding off every few minutes.

A layperson (laity) is someone who is not a member of the monastic community, but who lives the ordinary family life. The laity keep the 5 precepts. Because the laity make offerings of food and clothing to the Sangha, the monastic community can devote lots of time to study and meditation, and get closer to their final goal of nirvana. By making offerings like this, the laity believe they are creating

lots of good karma. In return for their kindness, the monastic community teach the Dharma and guide the laity along the path to enlightenment.

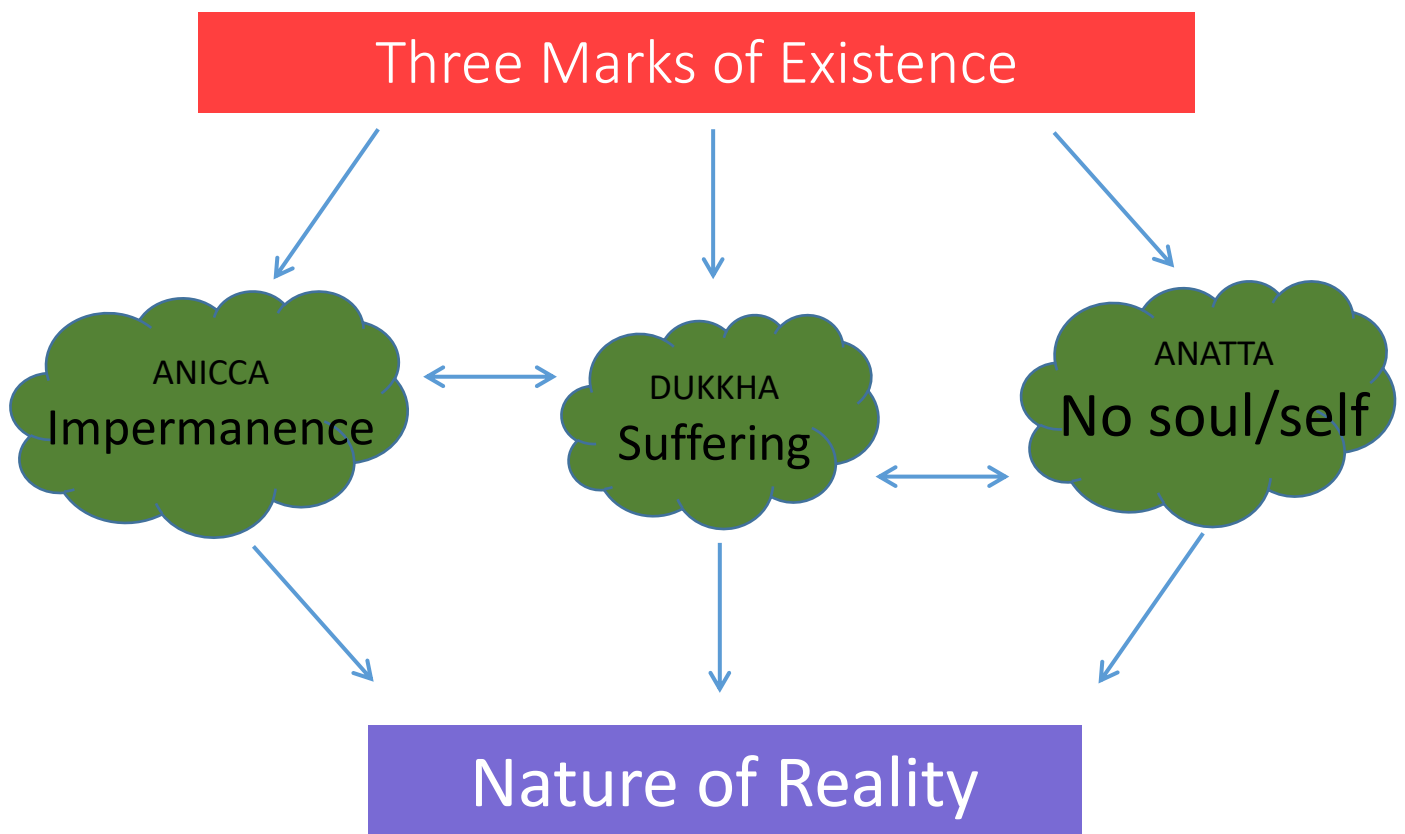
## LAY/MONASTIC DIFFERENCES IN UNDERSTANDING

<b>Mandatory Content</b>	<b>Monastic Community Monks/Nuns</b>	<b>Lay Community/Laity Buddhist followers</b>
Nature of Reality	Specific focus on understanding Anicca and attempting to overcome Dukkha through study of scripture and meditation	Aim to have an awareness of Anicca and Dukkha, but in reality there is no escape for lay Buddhists
Nature of human beings	Detailed focus on Anatta and the 5 Skandhas Strict adherence to The Four Noble Truths	Focus on compassion through action (development of Buddhanature) Potential awareness of The Four Noble Truths
Beliefs about Buddha	A good example to follow. Founder of the Path. Understanding of the teachings through his life	A good example. Stories of the Buddha's past lives handed down in families to teach morality
Samsara & Nibbana	Chance of reaching enlightenment through the Arhat Path Nirvana a potential goal but it may take many lifetimes	The Bodhisattva Vow make Nibbana impossible. Buddhanature makes enlightenment potentially possible in this lifetime, but for the laity samsara is a more realistic goal
Living according to the Noble Eightfold Path	Essential Path to enlightenment for the monastic community, avoiding extremes of self-denial and over-indulgence	A moral path to enlightenment. Lay Buddhists will try to follow this path as best they can given the restrictions and distractions of daily life
Individual and community worship	Focussed and intensive meditation Leading festivals and ceremonies Assisting/supporting the lay community	May visit the temple for worship Formal meditation less likely. Support for the sangha and monastic community through donations of food/robes etc, time, skills etc



## THE THREE MARKS OF EXISTENCE

The Three Marks of Existence is important in Buddhism, because it means we start to see things, situations as they really are. Everything is impermanent, suffering is a part of existence (for living things anyway), and nothing exists in and of itself, without dependencies. The three marks of existence is not an idea or theory you have to believe in. Rather it is a way to explore yourself and everything around you.



## DUKKHA

Dukkha is the suffering or unsatisfactoriness in life. It is caused by desire. If you desire something, but cannot have it, then you suffer - you experience Dukkha. Walpola Rahula in "What the Buddha Taught", describes Dukkha as being a happiness of many things including renunciation, detachment, physical and mental happiness. Therefore, Dukkha is not necessarily pessimistic.

**At the heart of Buddhism, lies the fact that all life involves suffering.**

There are many important questions in life to which people are constantly seeking answers. For the Buddha, even these questions took a back seat. His search was to find an end to suffering.

In a famous story the Buddha tells of a man who lay shot with an arrow. His friends rushed to help him, but he would not let them remove the arrow until they first told him who had shot him, was it made of this or that wood, did it have this or that number of feathers – and all the while his life – blood ebbed away. The moral of the story is to ignore irrelevancies and get on with the problem. God may or may not exist, the Universe may or may not be Infinite, but meanwhile Man suffers. That is the problem, and the emphasis in Buddhism is ever upon it.

**In Buddhism, suffering or 'Dukkha' is understood in a very broad sense as:**

**UNSATISFACTORINESS**

**IMPERMANENCE**

**IMPERFECTION**

Do these three words suitably describe what life is like for individuals?

Do you agree or disagree that life is unsatisfactory/impermanent and imperfect?

**Clearly Buddhism is not concerned with the worship of a creator God.  
It is, first and foremost, concerned with individuals:**

The Buddha's concern was with the individual, his suffering, and the way, which he had found and trodden to the end, of removing it. The word 'suffering' (Dukkha) has a wide range of meaning, from mental and physical suffering as we know it, down to mere irritation, frustration, dissatisfaction with things as they are, even to a sense of incompleteness which haunts each one of us.

According to Buddhist teaching, Dukkha can take many forms:

PHYSICAL

EMOTIONAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

ENVIRONMENTAL

IRRITATION

FRUSTRATION

DISSATISFACTION

INCOMPLETENESS

## **A Buddhist explains the causes of Dukkha:**

Each and every time we get cross, frustrated, embittered when things do not go the way 'I' want them to go, we are in Dukkha and we have allowed an infantile habit to control us. It is these automatic and generally infantile habits that are the direct cause of Dukkha, and in Buddhism they are called the 'Cankers', the addictions that stain the mind.

To what extent emphasis on 'we', 'mine' and 'I' is the cause of Dukkha in your experience. (ie. Suffering caused by what YOU want, what makes YOU happy/unhappy)

Think again about Dukkha and how it could be ended. Using the information you have gathered so far, write a short report describing the concept of Dukkha (in its different forms – physical, mental, personal, and worldwide), and how Dukkha can cease.

### **SOURCE THE DHAMMAPADA - DUKKHA**

**334** If a man watches not for NIRVANA, his cravings grow like a creeper and he jumps from death to death like a monkey in the forest from one tree without fruit to another.

**335** And when his cravings overcome him, his sorrows increase more and more, like the entangling creeper called *birana*.

**336** But whoever in this world overcomes his selfish cravings, his sorrows fall away from him, like drops of water from a lotus flower.

## Anicca

Anicca is one of the 3 Marks of Existence.

Everything in the universe is Anicca, nothing lasts, nothing is fixed, because the universe is by its very nature not a collection of stable entities, but a process of change.

Our bodies, the houses we live in, the earth under our feet, and the mountains on the skyline are all in a constant state of flux.

On an intellectual level most of us recognise impermanence, but we still become upset when a relationship ends, one of our possessions breaks, or when we notice that we are growing older.

We act as though all things are unchangeable and permanent. The tensions created by trying to maintain an attitude which is so profoundly at odds with reality introduces a jarring and irritating quality into our everyday experience, because the real world is constantly slapping us in the face whenever it fails to match up to our illusions.

### SOURCE

**THE DHAMMAPADA 20/277**

*“All created things perish”*



## “What the Buddha Never Taught”

Timothy Ward

Ruk led us to the front of the *sala*, near the sewing room. He got a measuring tape and began to measure us for new *sabongs*. We stood beside the skeleton of Dukita’s mother. While Ruk worked, I asked him about the woman and how her bones ended up on display in our temple.

‘It’s common in Thailand to have a skeleton next to an alter. It reminds us of what we are. She used to come to the monastery often. She liked to be here. When she died, since she could not be burned, she was buried in the jungle nearby. Her husband gave permission for her body to be exhumed a year later when it was suggested that the bones could be used in the *sala*. One of the monks was a good friend of hers. Her death made him very sad. He took it upon himself to prepare the body for display. When the body was dug up, they left it out for a while, to completely dry. Then the monk spent a few hours every day cleaning the remaining flesh from the bones. He did it as a meditation on death. He worked alone in the jungle. He was devoted to his task and he used only one tool: his food knife. At the end of every day, he would clean it, then use it for the morning meal.’

Jim and I examined the skeleton while Ruk wound up the measuring tape. It was exquisite, a giant dangling sculpture in perfect balance. From the slender spinal column delicate ribs curved into space. From the pelvis and clavicle arms and legs hung motionless, yet free to move. Her fingers and toes were all precisely tooled. Covered with living flesh, these bones were the miracle in each of us. We stood in awe of her beauty.

‘What about the other reminders of mortality, Ruk?’ I asked, walking over to the alter. I touched the clear plastic box and half a metre high, filled to the top with formaldehyde. Inside it sat a small pink figure with its eyes closed. The skin had a rubbery tone, but it was real. A dead human baby, less than a year old.

‘Did the parents donate this?’ I said. Ruk shook his head. ‘What about this?’ I pointed to a photograph, framed in black wood, which was sitting on top of the baby’s case. It was a black and white picture of a naked meditator sitting cross-legged in the lotus position, grinning. It seemed at first glance that he must have been sitting that way for a long time. The ascetic was emaciated. I looked more closely and noticed that the skin had come away between his ribs. The pelvic cavity was just a gaping black hole. Each toe bone could be seen clearly. So could the joints where his elbows joined his forearms. The head was a skull wrapped in leather. The blissful but insane smile on his face was there because his lips had pulled back and withered away.

‘They think he was a monk’ said Ruk. ‘They found his body alone in a cave a few hundred kilometres north of here. He died in *samadhi*. His posture was so perfect, his body did not fall.’

‘Looks like he died happy’ I said.

‘It’s hard not to smile when you don’t have any lips’ said Jim.

‘Ruk’ I said, ‘what I want to know is why is his photo here in front of the *sala*? Is he supposed to be a warning to us, or a good example?’

‘A good example, of course’ said Ruk, a little surprised at the question.

Dukita’s mother. Notice the bullet hole behind the right eye.



A reminder of mortality, the preserved infant sits in its case at the front of the alter.

## 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.



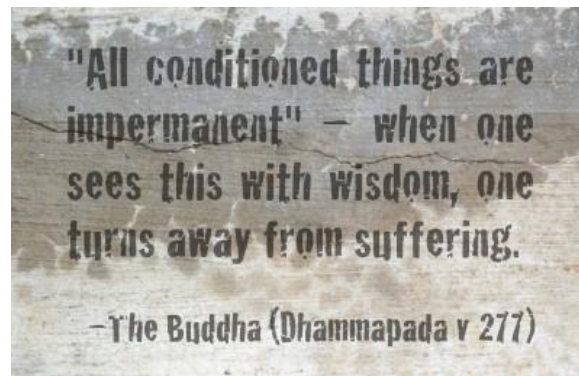
## ANICCA TASKS

1. Explain the concept of Anicca (Impermanence) in your own words.
2. Read the excerpt from 'What the Buddha Taught':
  - a) What do you think about the examples of impermanence (Anicca) found in the temple?
  - b) What purpose do the examples serve?
  - c) Are they too extreme?
  - d) Do they make the connection with Anicca clear/easier to understand?
3. Is the concept of Anicca relevant to contemporary society? Try to give a balanced answer.
4. Read the story of Kisa Gotami and the Mustard Seed:
  - a) Summarise the story of Kisa Gotami, in your own words.
  - b) In what ways does this story illustrate the fundamental Buddhist concept of Anicca?
  - c) Do you think this story helps Buddhists to overcome Anicca? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Look at your essay on the Life of the Buddha.

Explain the ways in which Siddhartha experienced Anicca throughout his life?

- Death of his mother
- Father tries to cheat/hide impermanence and fails
- Four signs
- Indulgence and asceticism
- Tempted by Mara on the attractions of Anicca (pride, lust, delight etc.)
- Death of the Buddha

In what ways might the Buddha's experiences help ordinary Buddhists?





## SOURCE – THE DHAMMAPADA - ANICCA

**147** Consider this body! A painted puppet with jointed limbs, sometimes suffering and covered with ulcers, full of imaginings, never permanent, forever changing.

**148** This body is decaying! A nest of diseases, a heap of corruption, bound to destruction, to dissolution. All life ends in death.

**153** I have gone round in vain the cycles of many lives ever striving to find the builder of the house of life and death.

**154** How great is the sorrow of life that must die! But now I have seen thee, housebuilder: never more shalt thou build this house. The rafters of sins are broken, the ridge-pole of ignorance is destroyed. The fever of craving is past: for my mortal mind is gone to the joy of the immortal NIRVANA.

## OVERCOMING ANICCA

An intellectual awareness of Anicca is relatively simple. We understand that things have an end and don't last forever. However, we don't act like things will end and this is what causes us to suffer, to experience dukkha. We get frustrated when we smash our phones, we get upset when a relationship ends or we mourn the loss of life.

For Buddhists, the aim is not only to intellectually understand Anicca, but also to try to overcome it. Only by overcoming Anicca can you prevent Dukkha, suffering. The Buddhist answer to overcoming Anicca would be to end craving. We want 'things' because we don't understand that they are impermanent. So the desire to have the latest phone, the fastest cars, the biggest houses and the most money takes over and we lose sight of the fact that all these things are impermanent. As a result of this craving or desire, we ignore or refuse to fully comprehend Anicca which then forces us to experience suffering, Dukkha.

### Higher Essay Question

What benefits and difficulties might a lay Buddhist experience in attempting to understand Anicca?

**10**

### National 5

1. What do Buddhists mean by 'Anicca'. **2**
2. What can Buddhists do to try to overcome Anicca? **3**
3. Why might understanding Anicca be more important for Buddhists today?



## Anatta “The Mindful Way”

Interviewer	What should a monk’s main concern be?
Ajaan Chah	The aim is to let go
Interviewer	So you have to let go without striving to let go?
Ajaan Chah	That’s right. You should let go without desire. If there’s still desire in the pursuit to do that then that’s not Nirvana.

Anatman: “ATMAN” is the Sanskrit word for ‘souls’ – ANATMAN or ANATTA, means no soul/self.

Ajaan Chah, abbot of Wat Pah Pong, gave his views on anatta on “The Mindful Way” programme:

*“If the body belonged to us, it would obey our commands – we only rent this house, we don’t own it. If we think it belongs to us, when we leave it to die, we suffer. In reality there is no such thing as a self. The idea of self is a convention (an accepted custom). To understand anatta, we must meditate. Once understood, the burden of life is gone – you’ll be at peace with the world. When we see beyond self we no longer cling to happiness and when we stop clinging we can begin to be happy.”*

Ajann Chah is speaking of the Buddha’s teaching. He said the world is full of thieves and these are of its dangers. But the real thieves, he says, are within us. Inwardly, are the five gangs of attachment, the Five Aggregates, which are ever robbing, beating and destroying us.

### The Five Aggregates If there is no soul, what are we made up of?

1. **BODY** - It is prey to illness and pain; when it doesn’t accord to our wishes, we have grief and sorrow. Not understanding the natural aging and decay of the body, we suffer.
2. **FEELINGS** – When pain and pleasure arise, we forget that they are impermanent, suffering, not self; we identify with our feelings and thus are tortured by our wrong understanding.
3. **MEMORIES & PERCEPTIONS** – Identifying with what we recognise and remember gives rise to greed, hatred and delusion.
4. **VOLITIONS** – Not understanding the nature of mental states, we react, and thoughts and feelings, likes and dislikes, happiness and sorrow arise. Forgetting that they are impermanent, suffering and selfless... we cling to them.
5. **CONSCIOUSNESS** – We grasp that which knows the other aggregates. We think “I know, I am, I feel” and are bound by the illusion of self.

## Anatta

1. People and things are not-self: there is no permanent self-secure, happy, independent self or 'I'.
2. The teaching was given in the Buddha's second sermon.
3. People have a (mistaken) concept of a true self when they think there's a 'real me' which remains unchanged from childhood to adulthood. They think in terms of "I am worried/happy/angry..." etc.
4. The Buddha accepted the conventional usage of 'self' as in 'yourself' and 'myself' as a way of referring to a particular collection of mental and physical states – but he taught that there was no permanent, substantial, independent, metaphysical self.
5. The teaching of not-self is a practical teaching aimed at overcoming attachment. This leads to Nirvana.

We are bound by suffering until we understand the truth of the doctrine of anatta. We constantly strive to become more and more attached to things (money, possessions, power) and to life itself – BUT, **it is only when we let go of the self that 'no self' is attained.** This can be achieved by following the Noble Eightfold Path:

- Right View – egoless and optimistic outlook on life
- Right Action – selfless acts (helping others etc.)
- Right Mindfulness/Concentration – focussing the mind and meditation on anatta

On attainment of Nirvana the delusion of 'self' is seen through and finally 'freedom' can be attained.

<b>ANATTA</b>	
<b>THERAVADA</b>	<b>MAHAYANA</b>
<p>Some would argue that the Theravada focus on the self and overcoming anatta is selfish. However, progress along the Path to enlightenment involves the cultivation of 'selfless' action. This can only be done by fully grasping Anatta.</p>	<p>An important Mahayana doctrine is that of Sunyata (being empty of inherent existence and existing only in relation to other things). From this perspective Mahayana Buddhism makes anatta seem more explicit and perhaps easier to grasp. In fact it would appear that to understand sunyata is to realise the human condition as a whole.</p>

**SOURCE - Visuddhimagga, p. 513**  
*"Mere suffering exists, but no sufferer is found;  
 The deeds are, but no doer is found"*

**Source - The Questions of King Milinda**  
**The Doctrine of Not-self**  
Dates back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## ANATTA TASKS

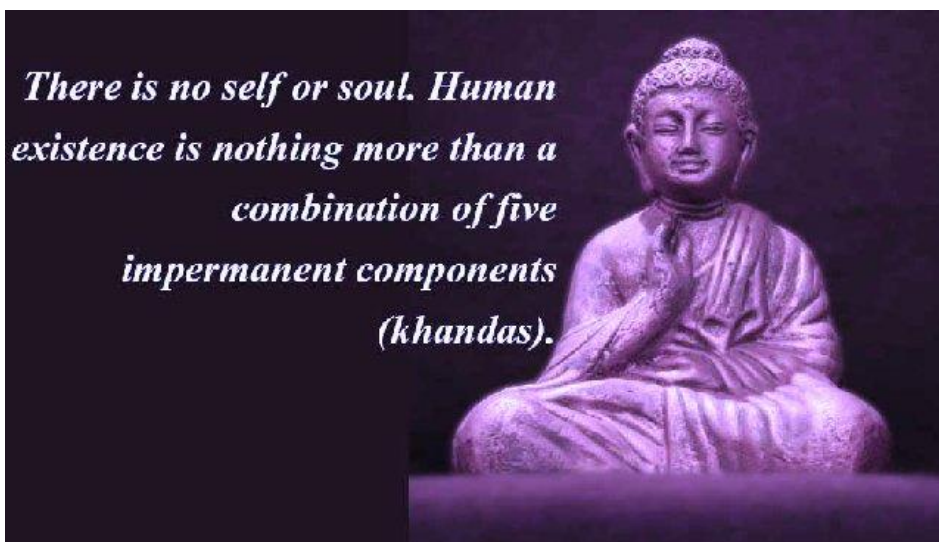
1. Why did the Buddha describe the belief in *Atman* (soul) as a “dangerous illusion”?
2. Using your own words, describe Nagasena’s chariot analogy and explain its significance.
3. In your opinion, does this analogy help to explain the concept of *Anatta*? Give a reason for your answer.
4. What is your view of the concept of *Anatta*? Remember that you must back up your viewpoint with logical and valid reasons.

## ESSAY QUESTION

**Explain the significance of the Three Marks of Existence for Buddhists.**

Higher – 10 marks

N5 – 8 marks



## THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The heart of the Buddha's teaching lies in the Four Noble Truths which he expounded in his very first sermon to the five ascetics, at Isipatana near Benares.

1. **DUKKHA** All life is suffering
2. **TANHA** The cause of suffering is desire
3. **NIRODHA** Release from desire brings release from suffering
4. **MAGGA** Release from suffering is brought about by following the Noble Eightfold Path

### SOURCE

#### SETTING IN MOTION THE WHEEL OF THE LAW The Sermon at Benares

##### **DUKKHA: All life is suffering**

“(1) Now this, monks, is the noble truth of pain: birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short the five groups of grasping are painful.”

##### **TANHA: The cause of suffering is desire**

“(2) Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cause of pain: the craving, which tends to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and there; namely, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for non-existence.”

##### **NIRODHA: Release from desire brings release from suffering**

“(3) Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of pain, the cessation without a remainder of craving, the abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment.”

##### **MAGGA Release from suffering is brought about by following the Noble Eightfold Path**

“(4) Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the way that leads to the cessation of pain: this is the Noble Eightfold Way; namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.”

# THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Fourth Noble Truth is known as the 'Middle Path', because it avoids the 2 extremes of self denial and over-indulgence. This Middle Path is generally referred to as the Noble Eightfold Path. Each step on the Path should be developed simultaneously.

The 8 sections aim at promoting and perfecting the 3 essentials of Buddhist training and discipline: namely **WISDOM** (stages 1 & 2), **MORALITY** (stages 3, 4 & 5) and **MEDITATION** (stages 6, 7 & 8).

## 1. RIGHT VIEW

Having the correct outlook on life and accepting the Buddha's analysis of the human condition. Without this acceptance it would be very difficult to stay on the rest of the path.

## 2. RIGHT INTENTION

Having the right attitude to life, basically seeing one's goal as enlightenment and unselfish love for all beings. In Buddhist ethics, actions are judged by intention.

## 3. RIGHT SPEECH

Buddhists should avoid four kinds of speech – lying, gossip, speaking harshly and time-wasting chatter because these may cause suffering to oneself and to others. Rather, they should always try to be truthful, speak in a way that promotes harmony, be gentle in their speech and value silence when there is nothing useful to say.

## 4. RIGHT ACTION

All Buddhists try to follow the Five Precepts as general guidelines for life.

They are:

- |                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) Not to destroy life            | 4) Not to lie                  |
| 2) Not to steal                   | 5) Not to take drugs & alcohol |
| 3) Not to over-indulge the senses |                                |

## 5. RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

It is important that a Buddhist earns their living in a way that does not involve going against Buddhist principles. Work should be of benefit, and should not harm others.

## 6. RIGHT EFFORT

To train the mind by making a conscious effort to set aside all negative, evil thoughts, and replace them with good, positive ones.

## 7. RIGHT MINDFULNESS

The practice of calm and awareness through mental training. To become more aware of the body, sensations, feelings and thoughts in order to have better control over them.

## 8. RIGHT CONCENTRATION

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Formal meditation, the practice of techniques designed to lead the mind into the states (jhanas) achieved by the Buddha, which prepare the mind for insight into the Truth.

**SOURCE**  
**THE DHAMMAPADA - NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH**

**273** The best of the paths is the path of eight. The best of the truths, the four sayings. The best of states, freedom from passions. The best of men, the one who sees.

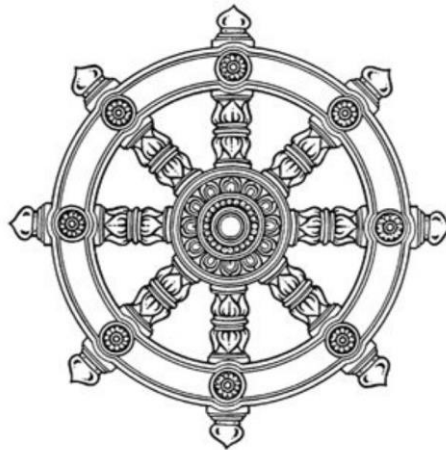
**274** This is the path. There is no other that leads to vision. Go on this path, and you will confuse MARA, the devil of confusion.

### The Noble Eightfold Path

The Buddha said that people should follow the 'Middle Way' to Nirvana in order to avoid the 2 extremes of over-indulgence and self-denial. The Noble Eightfold Path, as its name suggest, shows eight ways in which people should live. Each part starts with the word 'right'. This does not just mean the correct way to do something. It also means the best possible way.

### Task

1. Using the information of the Noble Eightfold Path, summarise each step, in your own words.
2. Make a list of jobs (present day or past) which Buddhists would consider are NOT included with those representing 'Right Livelihood'
3. Do you agree that these jobs cannot be represented as 'Right Livelihood'? Explain your answer.



# THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH ESSAY QUESTIONS

**Analyse the importance of living according to the Noble Eightfold Path.  
Higher - 10 marks  
N5 – 8 marks**

**Remember your K,A structure:**

- Very brief intro on what the Noble Eightfold Path is.
- Give an explanation of the Path by describing each step. Remember to divide them into categories of Wisdom, Morality & Meditation. Provide a context of the Buddha's first sermon (therefore very important).
- Pick specific sections or attributes of the path that show importance to Buddhists. Provide detailed knowledge then analyse how important it is.
  - Eg. The Path IS important as it provides Buddhists with a 'Middle Way' between the 2 extremes. You could also argue that it is even more important today as there is more to distract Buddhists from following the teachings of the Buddha.
  - Refer directly back to the question using phrases like, "To analyse..."
- Pick specific sections of the path that show that it is not important to Buddhists. Provide detailed knowledge then analyse why it is not important.
  - Eg. One third of the Noble Eightfold Path focusses on meditation. This is less important for Lay Buddhists who do not have time for 'mindfulness'. For them action is more important.
  - Refer directly back to the question using phrases like, "To analyse..."
- Use of sources can help to provide knowledge and you can analyse these to bump up your mark.
- Remember to conclude by providing a final answer to the question, WITH ANALYSIS.





## THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH ESSAY QUESTIONS

Evaluate the moral issues surrounding following the Noble Eightfold Path  
Higher – 20 marks  
N5 – 8 marks

Remember your K,A,E structure:

- Briefly introduce the Noble Eightfold Path as the first teaching of the Buddha.
- Give an explanation of the Path by describing each step. Remember to divide them into categories of Wisdom, Morality & Meditation.
- The key words in this question are NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH, MORAL ISSUES and EVALUATE
  - When asked to look at moral issues you should be exploring whether the issue is right or wrong. So, you need to look for issues in the Noble Eightfold path that might present as right or wrong for Buddhists
- Using your K, (A), E structure, think of areas where the Noble Eightfold path presents some sort of problem of issue:
  - Using Right livelihood as your example
  - Give KU on what this step of the path involves
  - Provide a little analysis on what following this step means
  - EVALUATE this step in the Path as a MORAL ISSUE:
    - Socio-economic changes in the modern world
    - High levels of unemployment
    - Focus on financial gain
    - Is right livelihood a luxury today?
    - Can people afford to choose the '*Right*' job? What gets in the way?
    - Is it purely a case of right job or wrong job?
    - Can even the '*Right*' job be compromised?
    - Is intention more important than action?
  - Make sure you provide a full EVALUATION for each point. To do this you must make a judgement. "To evaluate, this is a weak argument because..." etc
- Use of sources can help to provide knowledge and you can evaluate these to bump up your mark.
- Remember to conclude by providing a final answer to the question, WITH a final JUDGEMENT of your EVALUATION.

# SAMSARA & REBIRTH

## Rebirth

The theory of rebirth is integral to Buddhist life-style and applies equally to the good and bad mind. It is related to the theory of interdependent origination and to the law of cause and effect (karma). It is therefore, a major factor in the development of the wisdom and compassion ultimately leading to the attainment of the fully enlightened state of the Buddha.

On attaining Enlightenment, the Buddha himself recalled thousands of his past lives. Today Buddhists retell these lives in the form of 'Jataka Tales'.

There are incidents where people, in childhood, recollect and recognise past life experiences and environments. Furthermore, a considerable number of scientists are taking a keen interest in this field.

## Samsara

Samsara meaning 'wandering on' is used to refer to the cycle of BIRTH, DEATH and REBIRTH. It is not just said that we have had 'many' past lives, but that we have had *innumerable* ones over vast stretches of time.

If this cycle of birth, death and rebirth only involved human rebirths, it would be hard for a Buddhist to explain the population explosion. As it is, the cycle is seen to involve many other forms of life, such as animals. This then introduces the idea of different realms of rebirth, as seen in the Tibetan Wheel of Life.

Merit making is linked closely to rebirth in the Theravada tradition. This involves making donations to the sangha etc in order to make merit, which can then be transferred to a dead relative in the hope that they will gain a better rebirth.

### SOURCE

#### THE DHAMMAPADA 334

*"The craving of the person addicted to careless living grows like a creeper; he jumps from life to life like a fruit loving monkey in the forest."*

## So...What is Reborn?

If there is no such thing as a permanent soul, what is there to move from one life to another? The answer given by Buddhism is that it is the character that has been built up through a person's karma and is expressed through another life. It is a person's craving for life that leads to action and through it to rebirth.

This means that the person in the next life is different from the present person, although in some ways (through the karma) they are one and the same.

The relationship between them is explored by a number of similies. One of the most straightforward (from the Milinda Panha) is that of light passing from one candle to another. Nothing actually passes from one candle to another, yet the flame spreads across between them. The one candle burns because the other is also burning.

Another image is of the seal being pressed down into wax. The design of the seal is determined by the karma that the person has accumulated. It gives character to the wax, but is not itself part of the wax.

## KAMMA & SKILFUL ACTION

The movement of beings between rebirths is not a haphazard process but is ordered and governed by the LAW OF KARMA, the principle that beings are reborn according to the nature and quality of their past actions.

It is said that acts of hatred and violence lead to rebirth in a hell, acts bound up with delusion and confusion lead to a rebirth as an animal, and acts of greed lead to rebirth as a ghost.

### KAMMA - ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

A person's actions mould their consciousness, making them into a certain kind of person, so that when they die their outer form tends to correspond to the type of nature that has

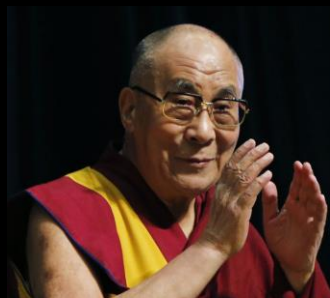
The law of Karma is seen as a natural law inherent in the nature of things. Good and bad rebirths are not, therefore, seen as 'rewards' and 'punishments', but simply the natural results of certain kinds of action.

Karma (also known as Kamma) is a result of deliberate action only. Intention plays an important part in the accumulation of karma.

### SOURCE – THE DHAMMAPADA 1-2

1 What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind. If a man speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him as the wheel of the cart follows the beast that draws the cart.

2 What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind. If a man speaks or acts with a pure mind, joy follows him as his own shadow.



Be kind whenever possible.  
It is always possible.

*Dalai Lama*

## THE THREE ROOT POISONS

1. **Greed**
2. **Hatred**
3. **Ignorance**



The cause of human suffering, in Buddhist terms, is greed, hatred and ignorance. These negative traits and fundamental evils are called the Three Root Poisons, because they are dangerous toxins in our lives. Not only are they the source of our unquenchable thirst for possessions, and the root cause of all of our harmful illusions, but they are painful pollutants, which bring sickness, both physical and mental.

Greed's companions are desire and lust, and these passions and attachments cause us to want to "get hold of" things, and to have more and more of them. Hatred's friends are anger, animosity and aversion, which cause us to reject what displeases us or infringes upon our ego. Ignorance, which is "not knowing," especially not knowing our true nature, paves the way for delusion or in our believing something that is false.

These poisons fill our lives with suffering, unhappiness and unsatisfactoriness. They cause us to make unskillful decisions, which affect our future. They cause us to have self-serving and dishonest intentions, which in turn cause us to act unethically and immorally. They are the roots of not only our own pain and misery, but those of our loved ones and of society. Fortunately, there is a way to eradicate this trio of contaminants. The practice of loving kindness and compassion is the medicine and enlightenment is the antidote.

Many of us are apt to be dominated by one of the poisons. Even when one dominates the other two are always lying dormant. If one is dominated by hatred, one tends to be depressed or obsessed over our views, real or imagined enemies, or any of life's negative realities. If the dominating poison is greed, then it can be manifested by stinginess, lack of compassion, hoarding or self-indulgence. One tends to be attached to material things, thinking that more is better and that getting things will bring happiness. When we are ignorant, we are not realising our potential for true happiness, which is our true nature, our Buddha nature. Ignorance causes insecurity and a feeling of weakness, powerlessness and apathy.

Buddhist teachings tell us that because of our connectedness, these personal poisons are reflected in our society. Greed, for example, is reflected in the destruction of the environment. Such reflections, however, are impermanent, changeable and transitory. They can be transformed for good. Hatred, for instance, can cause us to rally against intolerance, injustice and immorality. If we are aware of the Three Poisons, their causes and their cures, we can bring about a wonderful metamorphosis. When we realise our interdependence, our connectedness and oneness, we can cultivate loving kindness and rid ourselves of the poisons that keep making us sick.



## THE TIBETAN WHEEL OF LIFE

The Wheel of Life illustrates life in the world of samsara. It is found especially in Tibetan Buddhism, and helps people to understand how to be released from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. It is also commonly used in Buddhist meditation. Beings do not remain permanently in any one realm, but move from one to another. They are seen as different states of mind – not different places.



## MAHAYANA & THERAVADA BUDDHISM

Mandatory Content	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</i> to directly during worship. Ritual worship, offerings to statues and prayers often more of a focus than formal meditation.

# ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment is the goal of the Buddhist Path. It is also virtually impossible to describe. Chris Pauling said that:

*“To try to describe Enlightenment is like trying to describe the colour blue to someone who has been blind from birth – words simply are not up to the job.”* (Introducing Buddhism, p 11)

**Enlightenment is a state of being combining knowledge in a total understanding of life. On reaching enlightenment you are set free from all ignorance and suffering in the world. The Buddha on reaching enlightenment had broken the chain of rebirth, he had reached perfect peace and would therefore have to suffer no longer.**

## **Enlightenment from the point of view of wisdom**

Enlightenment shows you the real truth of the world and what our purpose is here on earth. This view is sometimes looked upon as being negative but this insight does not destroy us, but instead expands our initial thoughts and views. By becoming enlightened you no longer think small but look at things from the widest possible perspective. Buddhism in general may be looked at as a way to try and get people to widen their views of who and what they are.

Enlightenment is spoken of as a pure, clear and radiant awareness. It is more a way of seeing things ‘in a true light’. The knowledge gained is more a spiritual vision that sees all things directly, clearly, vividly and truly.

Enlightenment is also seen as a state of love and compassion. The Buddha said:

*“Just as a mother protects her only son even at the cost of her own life, so should one develop a mind of all embracing love towards all living beings.”*

This is the typical attitude of one who has been enlightened. He does not talk of just human beings but instead looks at the world as a whole and talks of “all living beings” within the world. The love and compassion which is present in the enlightened mind believes that all beings should be released from all suffering, from all difficulties and develop until they reach enlightenment.

Enlightenment also consists of a state of mental and spiritual energy. This can be seen in the life of the Buddha himself. The Buddha reached enlightenment at the age of 35 but continued to teach until his death at the age of 80. His body had become frail and exhausted but his mind and spirit were still young and energetic:

## 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:

- PRAJÑA (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.”*

## **Arhat: “Worthy One” (Theravada Buddhism)**

The path towards Nibbana is known as the Middle Path and is followed in one way or another by all Buddhists. However, the way in which the Middle Path is interpreted differs between the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. For the Theravada Buddhists the Path is one of the Arhat. By following the Middle Path an individual can learn how to get rid of the craving that leads to dissatisfaction and become enlightened.

The word Arhat means ‘worthy’ ie. worthy of great respect. He or she is one who has fully completed spiritual training, is fully endowed with all factors of the Path, and has overcome the ‘disease’ of dukkha.

Ordinary people are dominated by the delusions of ‘I’, ‘mine’, etc. They develop attachment to things which should be avoided, and so bind themselves to samsara. They occupy one, then another, of the segments of the Wheel of Life.

### **The Path of the Arhat**

#### **1. Stream-entrants**

Stream-entrants are less advanced spiritually, than arhats, and occupy a position between average people and arhats. Someone who has become a stream-entrant is no longer liable to be reborn in the 3 lowest spheres of existence – ie. the world of animals, of unsatisfied spirits, or the realm of pain. A stream-entrant won’t be reborn into any of the other spheres of existence; in fact, attaining Nibbana within the next 7 human or heavenly births is assured.

Stream-entrants have complete faith in the Three Jewels and perfect observance of the 5 Precepts.

#### **2. Once-Returners**

Once-returners will attain Nibbana after being reborn only once more into this world.

#### **3. Non-Returners**

A Non-returner is exempt from more human rebirths, but on death passes to the Pure Abodes – a group of 5 celestial planes of existence. At this stage, the Non-returner is a divine being, far along the path to Nirvana.

#### **4. Arhats, or Worthy Ones**

Arahats are people who by virtue of their supreme attainment, are worthy of ‘respectable offerings of the whole world’. In the Pali scriptures, they are described as declaring:

*“Destroyed is rebirth; lived is the Higher Life; done is what had to be done; after this present life there is (for me), no beyond”.*

## NIBBANA / NIRVANA

The Buddhist name for the state where all craving, ignorance and suffering has been eliminated is Nibbana. It is a state which is said to be indescribable in our human words, which is why even the Buddha found it difficult to express. There are two stages to Nibbana, the stage where the mind and heart has achieved Nibbana but the body still exists, and Nibbana-after-death.

The word literally means 'blown out' – the burning fires of greed, hatred and delusion and extinguished. It often sounds rather negative, and some people have taken Nibbana to mean that we escape suffering, because we cease to exist altogether. Phrases that make Nibbana sound like this are 'unborn', 'unbecoming', 'extinction' and 'cessation'. However, there are also positive descriptions of Nibbana which include Peace, Truth, Purity, Freedom and independence.

Nibbana cannot be understood, only experienced – to talk about it is like talking about colours to a blind person, or dry land to a fish.

### **ENLIGHTENMENT:**

State of being combining knowledge in a total understanding of life.

### **NIRVANA:**

'Blown out'. The state where all greed, hatred and delusion are ended. Using the total understanding (enlightenment) to blow out/extinguish the triple fires.

<b>NIBBANA</b>	
<b>THERAVADA</b>	<b>MAHAYANA</b>
Way of the Elders – involving strict adherence to one Path	Greater Vehicle – suggesting there are several different routes to Nibbana
Only achieved by following the Noble Eightfold Path	Transfer of merit to aid others in achieving Nibbana
Arahat achieves enlightenment then goes beyond to Nibbana	Path of the Bodhisattva
May take many lifetimes to achieve	Enlightenment achievable in this lifetime (in certain Mahayana schools)

## NIBBANA TASK

**What do Buddhists understand by the concept of Nibbana?**

- Literal meaning 'blown out'
- Absolute Truth
- Unconditional
- End to craving and desire
- Goal for Buddhists
- Beyond understanding (unless you have experience of it)
- Blowing out of triple fires
- Dhammapada 204 "*Nibbana is the greatest joy*"
- Achieving Nibbana means entering a realm of peace and contentment – free from suffering
- No need for future rebirths – breaking free from samsara
- Described in negative or positive terms, but in reality it is neither
- Not an actual place. Enlightenment is a state of being, Nirvana is beyond this
- Different understanding of Nirvana, ie. Theravada and Mahayana

## ESSAY QUESTION

**Nibbana is an inspirational and appealing goal for life.**

**To what extent do you agree?**

**Higher 20 marks**

**N5 – 8 marks**

This is an EVALUATION question so you will need to follow the K, A, E structure:

- Reasons why Nibbana IS an inspirational and appealing goal, eg.
  - Achieved by the Buddha
  - Recognised goal of Buddhism
  - Theravada – path of arahat, individual progression towards Nibbana
  - MAKE JUDGEMENTS ON EACH POINT
- Reasons why Nibbana IS NOT an inspirational and appealing goal, eg.
  - Appropriateness of describing Nibbana as 'inspirational' and 'appealing' - will this only lead to desire/suffering
  - Mahayana – path of the bodhisattva (vow), accessible for all, buddhanature – towards enlightenment only, NO NIBBANA
  - MAKE JUDGEMENTS ON EACH POINT

## THE THREE JEWELS

Within Buddhism there are various traditions. However, there are always the same three cornerstones, which are called the Three Jewels. These are:

The Buddha  
The Dhamma (the teaching of the Buddha)  
The Sangha (the community who follow the teaching)

The Dhamma could not have been taught without the Buddha and could not have been followed without the Sangha. Therefore the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha are inseparable: each depends on the other two. Together the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha are called the *Tiratana*. These three things are so special and valuable to a Buddhist that they are often referred to as the Three Jewels, or the three treasures, or the triple gem.

Every day a Buddhist makes a declaration to take refuge in the Three Jewels.

I take refuge in the Buddha  
I take refuge in the Dhamma  
I take refuge in the Sangha.

By making this declaration Buddhists are showing that they are dedicated to the Buddha and his teachings. They are taking refuge here. They are not taking or trying to find refuge in money, or a career or to find security in a relationship. Nor are Buddhists simply putting blind faith in the Buddha and his teachings. Buddha taught that his teachings should never be accepted on faith but should be examined, questioned and put to the test.

When Buddhists take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, they are saying that they are beginning the pursuit of enlightenment.

## THE BUDDHA

Buddhism is named after the title given to its founder Siddhatta Gautama – the Buddha. He was born into a wealthy family in Kapilavastu in Northern India, in about 563 BCE.

Siddhatta grew up in a royal palace surrounded by luxury. He wanted for nothing. However, he was confined to a life within the palace as his father tried to shield him from the world outside.

At the age of twenty-nine, Siddhatta grew dissatisfied and began to think seriously about his life and what it meant.

On excursions from the palace with his charioteer Channa, Siddhatta saw four sights that changed his life. He saw an old man, a sick person, a corpse and a holy man. These four sights led to Siddhatta's decision to leave the palace and become a wandering holy man.

There were many teachers at this time claiming to have the answers to questions in life and methods for achieving peace of mind.

At first Siddhatta trained in meditation, but he became dissatisfied with this: it did not offer the complete release he was looking for.

He then began to follow an extremely ascetic life. He spent long periods of time standing or sitting in the same position, in solitude, without food and without washing.

While all of these things helped him to develop greater self-control, to conquer feelings of fear, desire and disgust, and to have greater mental control, they still however did not answer his questions about life.

Siddhatta almost starved himself to death in this quest. But in the end he gave up this austere way of life. He rejected the idea of a strictly ascetic life just as he had rejected the rich, luxurious and indulgent one.

By the age of thirty-five Siddhatta had experienced two extremes of lifestyle and had still not found satisfaction in his quest. Determined to fulfil this he sat down under a bodhi tree and vowed to meditate until he achieved enlightenment.

After Buddha became enlightened he was able to help others towards enlightenment by teaching the Dhamma. He decided he would do this for the five ascetics that he had lived with in the years before. His first sermon is known as the Sermon of Benares. It was given at the deer park at Sarnath by Varanasi (once called Benares).

His first sermon is also known as the Deer Park Sermon or the Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Law, in which he explained the Four Noble Truths.

For the next forty-five years, or the remainder of his life, the Buddha travelled around India teaching people from all walks of life.

Buddhists take refuge in the Buddha to recognise not only that he was a historical person but also to recognise the possibility of their own enlightenment.



## The Dhamma (DHARMA)

Dhamma can mean many things. It can mean the ultimate truth or reality of life. It can also mean the teachings of the Buddha. Some Buddhists talk of practising the dhamma. Some have said it is the Buddhist word for Buddhism.

Buddha's teaching pointed to the truth and it said that by practising his teaching people are living a truthful life. The dhamma is open to everyone.

The Fourth Noble Truth can also be known as the dhamma. The dhamma is not the source of enlightenment but rather indicates the way. Buddha refused to answer questions of a metaphysical nature – questions about the universe, life and life after death. He did this because he felt that there are no straightforward answers to these questions. Humans only have the capacity to ask limited questions because they have limited knowledge.

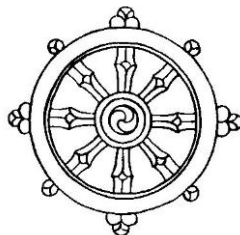
Buddha said that asking these questions and searching for answers are irrelevant in trying to overcome and remove suffering.

Dhamma is the term given to Buddhist teaching. The term can refer to a particular teaching such as the Four Noble Truths, a collection of scripture like the Pali Canon, or to the whole of Buddhist teaching. Dhamma is sometimes translated as 'The Way', as it shows what Buddhists should do in order to gain enlightenment.

The main purpose of Buddha's teaching was to help people overcome suffering and achieve happiness, not to teach about 'everything'. A popular image which demonstrates the practical nature of Buddha's teaching is: If a man has been shot by a poisoned arrow he does not sit around discussing the make, type and quality of the arrow he has been shot with. Nor does he then discuss who shot the arrow and why. Rather the first thing that the man does is to try to remove the arrow!

The Dhamma has also been likened to a raft. A person may use a raft to cross a river. The person guides and steers the raft as best as he can to reach his chosen destination. A raft is also something that you set aside once you have reached your destination.

After Buddha's death a gathering of Arhats agreed on one version of the Dhamma. Ananda, as one of Buddha's closest disciples, recited every teaching the Buddha had taught. These sayings of the Buddha were eventually written down and became the Sutta Pitaka section of the Pali canon.



The earliest collection of Buddhist scriptures is known as the Pali Canon, a compilation of the teachings of Buddha made after his death. There are three sections:

- *Vinaya Pitaka* – Rules of the Sangha, or discipline section
- *Sutta Pitaka* – Buddha's sermons
- *Abhidhamma Pitaka* – Higher or philosophical teaching.

The three sections are referred to as baskets – *pitaka*. So the Pali Canon is also known as the *Tipitaka* (three baskets).

In addition to doctrines, the Dhamma also contains rules for conduct. These differ for monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen but all are based on the acceptance of the Four Noble Truths and the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.

All schools of Buddhism see these teachings as central to the Dhamma but their interpretation of how the Dhamma should be understood varies. Theravada Buddhism means the 'teachings of the elders' and therefore concentrates on the Dhamma first taught by Buddha and then passed on to the Sangha. It is important for them that the Dhamma is what the Buddha actually taught his disciples. The Pali Canon (Tipitaka) contains Buddha's philosophy and ethics and it is this that the Theravada must follow to the letter if they wish to gain enlightenment.

Mahayana Buddhism includes additional references to later scriptures that were inspired by Buddha's teaching but are not his actual words. Examples of this are the Lotus and Diamond Sutras. These later teachings have been translated into many of the native languages of the countries where Mahayana Buddhism spread e.g. Japanese, Tibetan.

The Lotus Sutra emphasises the point that Buddha wanted everyone to understand the Dhamma; and so later versions of this were written to enable more people to understand.

The importance of the Dhamma in Buddhists' lives cannot be overemphasised. The religion is based around the development of understanding and most schools of Buddhism concentrate on developing understanding through hearing the Dhamma.

Theravada Buddhists still use recitation of the Dhamma as an important way to gain knowledge and insight into its meaning. The 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. It is regarded as good kamma to learn sections by heart, and sections are changed both morning and evening.



Through the Dhamma the Buddhist can gain wisdom. At first, the teachings of the Buddha are accepted through faith but it is necessary for each of the teachings to be analysed and meditated upon so that belief is replaced by knowledge. The Questions of King Milinda is a text which helps Theravadins to explore the concepts of the human condition and the goals of Buddhism. Nagasena is believed by Theravadins to have lived Buddhism, teaching the Dhamma by example.

The Dhamma of Mahayana Buddhism develops the teachings within the Pali Canon and emphasises that the way to Nibbana is possible for everyone. Different schools within Mahayana use the Dhamma in a variety of ways. Collecting scriptures is important in many Mahayana traditions and the written texts are often wrapped and stored in places of honour around a shrine. The number of scriptures that exist makes it unlikely that many Buddhists could learn them all, so the emphasis on memorisation and reciting the scriptures is seen to be less important. Most Mahayana schools concentrate on teachers explaining the meanings of the Dhamma to their students.

The school started by Nichiren focuses on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and followers chant its name in daily mantras – '*nam myoho rengye kyo*', which means 'hail to the Lotus of the true Law'. The Japanese characters that make up this phrase are sometimes drawn into a mandala for meditation purposes.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead describes the changing states between death and rebirth known by Tibetans as Bardo. This is read in front of a dying person to help the departing spirit understand what is happening and to encourage detachment which may lead to Nibbana or, if not, then to a better rebirth.

Ch'an and Zen Buddhists place little emphasis on written scripture and concentrate on transmitting the Dhamma from teacher to student.

Zen teaches that scriptures are only a tool rather than the Dhamma itself. Zen teaching seems like nonsense to non-Buddhists, because riddles are used to try to awaken the understanding of the impermanence of existence. These riddles are known as *koans* and go beyond the normal meaning of the words being used, because words themselves are mistakenly seen as permanent.

The Zen Buddhist is given a koan by his master and has to work out a response. As there is no intelligent answer to a koan, enlightenment can be found by using intuition only. Other ways of gaining enlightenment can come through experiences such as flower arranging, archery or the Japanese tea ceremony. These appear not to be connected to the Dhamma but they are practices that relate to the teaching of Mindfulness, which is an important part of the Noble Eightfold Path and therefore central to the Dhamma.

## The Sangha

At the beginning of his teachings, Buddha and his followers of monks travelled around meeting wherever they could. Gradually, as they continued to meet, temporary buildings were erected for use during the rainy season, but which eventually became permanent monasteries where Buddha's followers could live all year. These were called *viharas* (resting places).

The Sangha is the term used for those who are followers of Buddha. Sometimes it is the term used for all those who are ordained monks. In its broader sense, it is the term used for all followers of Buddha whether they are laity or live a monastic life.

Buddhist monks and nuns are called *bhikkus* (male) and *bhikkunis* (female). A person can choose to become a bhikku or a bhikkuni and enter the vihara to live a monastic life, removed from society, in order to follow the path to enlightenment.

Some enter for a short time to experience the disciplined life. Others commit for a lifetime.

When first admitted to the Sangha a man is known as a *samenera* or novice. He will shave his head and face and put on the robes of the vihara. At this point he will take on an additional five precepts which are more difficult outwith a monastic environment, making ten in total. The vihara is supposed to create the best opportunities for gaining enlightenment through a life of work, study and meditation.

- Avoid food after midday
- Avoid a high or luxurious bed
- Avoid public amusements e.g. music, dancing
- Avoid jewellery and perfume
- Avoid handling gold and silver

After a period of study the samenera will be ordained as a bhikku. Those who have been ordained for ten years are given the title *thera* (elder). Those who have been ordained for twenty years are given the title *mahathera* (senior elder).

Monks are given more detailed rules so that they concentrate on detachment from craving and set a good example for lay people. By following the rules the monk can get rid of craving and reach Nibbana. The Vinaya Pitaka explains the way that Buddhists should live their lives. This involves following 227 rules which start with the rules that must be followed in order to remain in the monastic sangha. For lay Buddhists this involves following the five precepts but also trying to develop positive virtues – self-discipline, tolerance, contentment, compassion and detachment. Monks are not allowed to work for money and therefore they rely on the lay community for support. This is often seen in the daily alms round where the monastic sangha travel through the villages with their alms bowls into which lay people donate food. Lay people may go to the vihara to provide and cook meals for the monks, or they may invite monks to their homes for meals.

The monks usually get up early and spend their days meditating, studying scriptures, performing ceremonies and preaching sermons to lay people. During the rainy season retreat (*vassa*) they spend most of their time in meditation and at the end of the retreat they celebrate Kathina day where the lay people provide them with new robes.

Monks and nuns in the past only had bare essentials to live on. They did not take personal possessions with them into the monasteries. Today monks and nuns are allowed a few possessions, such as an umbrella or an anorak. But these would not be personal possessions so much as basic essentials.

Some may see lay people as inferior in religious status to monks because they cannot devote all their lives to the Dhamma and have to be concerned with more worldly attachments.

However, the relationship between the monastic and lay community is essentially interdependent – the monks rely on the lay community for their material needs and the lay people rely on the monks for their spiritual needs.

The laity provide an important role within the Sangha. They provide items such as food for the monks and nuns. The monks and nuns provide the service of passing on the Dhamma, keeping ancient texts alive and administering at ceremonies such as funerals and festivals. Both accumulate good kamma with their selfless deeds.

Remember that the goal for most lay people within Theravada Buddhism is to gain good kamma for a better rebirth (*Samsara*). Merit can be gained through moral behaviour, by taking part in religious ceremonies and by supporting the monastic Sangha.

Some lay Buddhists take additional precepts when they visit the temple. They dress in white robes with no jewellery, perfume or amusements. They do not eat after midday and do not use comfortable chairs or beds.

Many lay Buddhist families encourage their sons to join the monastic community for a period of time in order to gain good kamma for themselves and the whole family. Temporary admission to the monastic Sangha is not seen as failure, since everything is impermanent; and in some countries it gives boys the additional material advantage of a good education.

As well as religious purposes the vihara serves the community in other ways: as a school, a secure place for important items, and a hotel or inn.

In the Mahayana schools the difference between the monastic and lay community may in some schools seem less distinct whilst in others there are greater divisions.

Mahayana belief in Nibbana for everyone affects their practice of religion. There is less of a difference between lay people and monks and nuns, and in some schools the monks are more like priests and are able to marry.

**Pure Land Buddhism**, with its emphasis on faith in Amida Buddha, encourages lay people to believe that enlightenment is possible for anyone who calls upon his name. The Shin sect of Pure Land does not have a celibate monastic order but is organised by a married priesthood who perform the basic ceremonies. This role is passed down from father to son. It attracts followers who have found traditional forms of Buddhism difficult to fit in with their busy lives. This form of Buddhist practice can be described as 'skilful means'.

In contrast **Tibetan Buddhism** has very obvious divisions between the monastic and lay Sangha. Buddhism was the foundation stone of Tibetan society with one in six men being monks at one time. Joining the monastic Sangha is a lifetime commitment and for some this begins at a very early age. Each of the different sects within the Tibetan school has a lineage of leadership. In some cases, when an important teacher or lama dies the monastery searches for his reincarnation. These lamas are believed to be bodhisattvas who take human form in order to help others towards Nibbana. When the incarnation is found the small boy is taken to the monastery and brought up as a monk. His parents see giving birth to a lama as being a special honour which produces good kamma and so they will not be as reluctant to give up their son as a western family might be. The Dalai Lama, head of Tibetan Buddhism, is the fourteenth incarnation, and he is believed to be an emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig.

Some of the sects have married clergy rather than celibate monks. Whatever the sect, there are definite roles for the lay people. It is the lay people who give the viharas material support in return for religious rituals, education and supernatural protection. Lay people spend more time on ritual worship rather than meditation – giving offerings, chanting prayers, spinning prayer wheels and going on pilgrimage.

The Arya Sangha is the noble or the ideal sangha. This is for arhats within the Theravada tradition and bodhisattvas within the Mahayana tradition. They are seen as the spiritual elite, and others look to them for inspiration.

There are various traditions of Buddhism in Britain today. One group, called the Western Buddhist Order, and their supporters called **Friends of the Western Buddhist Order** (FWBO), are trying to work out a distinctively British form of Buddhism.

FWBO was founded by Dennis Lingwood in 1968. He was given the Buddhist name Sangharakshita, which means 'One who builds up the sangha'. FWBO combines the practices of Theravada, Tibetan and Zen along with a strong sense of right livelihood. They do not take on special monastic vows. The common feature is commitment to the three jewels. The emphasis within FWBO is on commitment first and life-style second. As a result there are some single-sex communities and some communities with family units. Members wear ordinary clothes but have a special stole called a kesa which is worn during worship.

## THE THREE JEWELS TASK

1. What are the Three Jewels and how are they connected?
2. What is the daily declaration made by a Buddhist? Why is it made?
3. What is the Dhamma? Give as detailed an answer as possible.
4. What is the main purpose of the Dhamma?
5. Explain why the Dhamma is seen as being practical.
6. Explain how Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists view the Dhamma. List any differences which you find.
7. What is the Sangha and how did it come about?
8. What is the Arya Sangha?
9. Describe the roles of the monks, nuns and the laity within the Sangha.
10. Why would the variety of different practices within the Mahayana schools of Buddhism be classed as skilful actions? Give reasons for your answer.
11. Monks are allowed eight items (this can vary from tradition to tradition): alms bowl; water strainer; razor; needle; toothpick; three robes given by laity or made from rags collected by the monk. Give reasons why you think these items would be classed as essential.
12. Shoes for monks are considered a luxury, but are permitted. Why do you think this is so?
13. Why do you think some monks would not fast, not be vegetarian and perhaps even have access to the use of a credit card? Give reasons for your answer.
14. Do you think the FWBO offers a diluted form of the Dhamma for people living in the West and wanting to practise Buddhism? Give reasons for your answer.

## THE FIVE PRECEPTS

Followed by ALL Buddhists, lay and monastic	1. To abstain from harming living beings
	2. To abstain from taking things not freely given
	3. To abstain from sexual misconduct
	4. To abstain from false speech
	5. To abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which cloud the mind
Followed only by monastic Buddhists: monks and nuns	6. To abstain from taking food other than at prescribed times (ie. not after noon)
	7. To abstain from dancing, singing, music and other unseemly activities
	8. To abstain from the use of garlands and perfumes
	9. To abstain from the use of high and luxurious beds
	10. To abstain from accepting gold, silver or money

**Buddhist monks are expected to follow a further 227 rules.**

### The Enoblers

At first sight the Five Precepts appear to be purely negative; but they also have a positive aspect – the Enoblers.

PRECEPTS	ENOBLERS
1. To abstain from killing	1.
2. To abstain from taking the not given	2.
3. To abstain from misuse of sensual pleasures	3.
4. To abstain from false speech	4.
5. To abstain from drugs and alcohol which cloud the mind	5.

Considered in their positive aspects, the Five Precepts embody important social values. Buddhist texts regard their observance as a basis of stability and harmony.

# 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.

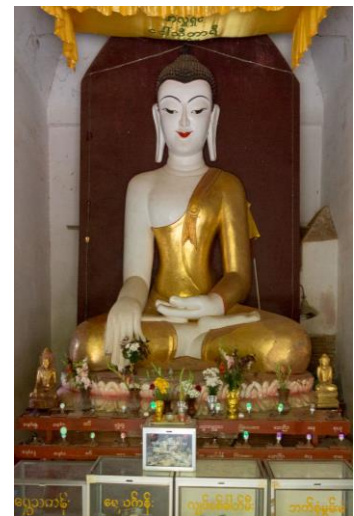
Worship at home - Buddhists will often set aside a room or a part of a room as a shrine. There will be a statue of Buddha, candles, and an incense burner.

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

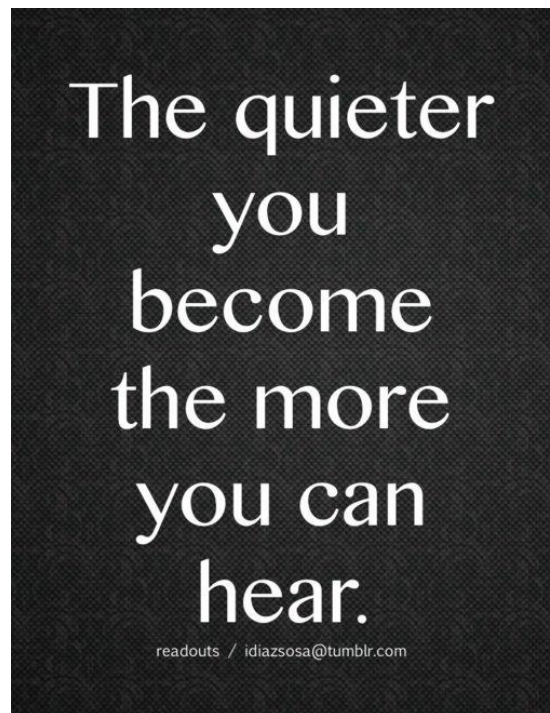
Meditation is a way of exerting a more direct influence on our mental states. Meditation gives us a way of working the mind *with the mind*, allowing us first of all to increase the overall awareness and positivity, and then to use this strengthened and purified awareness to see into the nature of all things as they really are.

Although meditation is now a common practice in the West, there are still many misconceptions about what it really is. Meditation is not a trance, or a hypnotic or blank state of mind. It is a state of increased awareness in which we raise our level of being to new heights, not a way of reducing it to a semi-conscious haze. All of the four hundred or so techniques of Buddhist meditation fall into 2 major categories, according to their purpose. These are Samatha techniques meaning 'peace' or 'tranquility' and Vipassana or 'insight' techniques.

## MEDITATION & HEALTH

There are many different types of meditation. While their aims may be slightly different, they share common benefits:

- It improves concentration
- It encourages a healthy lifestyle
- The practice increases self-awareness
- It increases happiness
- Meditation increases acceptance
- It slows aging
- The practice benefits cardiovascular and immune health



## SAMATHA MEDITATION

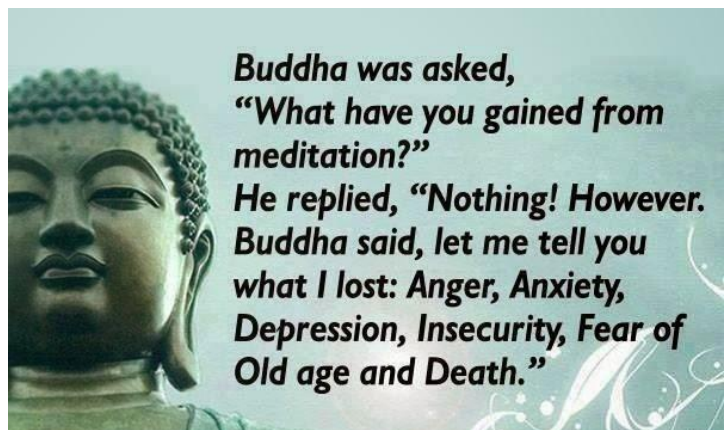
This type of meditation is known as '**CALM**' meditation. The meditator must apply Right Effort (Noble Eightfold Path). By applying Right Effort the meditator will be able to concentrate strongly on the object of meditation without feeling sleepy. Concentration developed with Right Effort and Right Mindfulness, is 'Right Concentration', the final step in the Noble Eightfold Path. As Concentration develops, mindfulness is developed and this leads to full presence of mind. There then arises a state of tranquil, focused alertness.

Samatha meditation includes a wide range of distinctive meditations. They all require the practitioner to focus on an object such as a bowl of water, a candle flame or a mantra:

- **Metta Bhavana - loving kindness meditation.** This eventually allows the meditator to break down the barriers which make his/her mind friendly towards only a limited range of people; he/she cultivates an all-pervading kindness.
- **Meditating on the qualities of the Buddha:** devotional meditations like this one enable people to develop a state of relatively deep calm.
- **Mindfulness of Breathing:** this is the most common form of Calm meditation. After a good deal of practice, an image or 'sign' arises in the practitioner's mind.

### Benefits of Samatha Meditation

- Samatha meditation calms your mind and makes you generally more aware. It encourages positive emotions and it expands our perspectives. Our normal state of mind is too clouded by negative emotions and too limited in its point of view to see reality as it really is.
- The normal awareness of our minds could be compared to a bad torch with flat batteries. It does not give out much light to brighten your darkness. The job of Samatha is to focus the beam and recharge the batteries. It can also be compared to turbulent, muddy water, too clouded by moving dirt for any light to pass through. Samatha calms the turbulence of the mind and allows the mud to settle – the water becomes bright and clear.
- It is from this calm state that the Buddha went on to attain enlightenment



## VIPASSANA MEDITATION

This is known as '**INSIGHT**' meditation. During it, a higher degree of mindfulness is generated. This is based on Right Effort and also requires a degree of concentration. Whereas Calm meditation (SAMATHA) temporarily suspends and weakens attachment, hatred and delusion, only Insight (VIPASSANA) combined with Calm can destroy the Triple Flame (attachment, hatred and delusion). Insight develops concentration and trains the mind in 'letting go'. It makes the mind stable and strong so that it's not agitated by potentially disturbing insights into concepts such as Anatta (not-self).

Various methods of meditation can be used:

- Samatha meditation is used to calm the mind before then developing Vipassana meditation to access concentration and apply insight.
- Samatha and Vipassana meditation developed simultaneously, progressing through stages of calm and insight

The basic framework for developing Insight practice is 'the four foundations of mindfulness'. Here, instead of focussing on one chosen object (as in Calm meditation), the attention is opened out so that mindfulness carefully observes each passing sensory or mental object. The four foundations of developing Vipassana mindfulness are:

- **Body.** Since it's easiest to perceive the body, mindfulness takes this as its object first. Body sensations involved in movements, like bending and stretching, walking, eating are carefully observed. In seated meditation, the breath is usually investigated. The mind does not rest solely on breath, but observes other physical sensations such as itches and stomach rumbles.
- **Feelings.** Next attention is turned to feelings. These are noted as they arise and pass away, as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. These are viewed as simply passing phenomena.
- **Mindfulness.** Next mindfulness moves on to states of mind, noting moods and emotions as they rise and fall.
- **Dhammas.** Finally mindfulness investigates dhammas. It notes when they are present and when absent, how they came to arise, and how they came to cease. The Four Noble Truths, too, are investigated, using the heightened awareness which mindfulness brings.

Insight meditation is more analytical and probing than Calm, since it aims to investigate the nature of reality, and not just focus on the object.

## Sources & Quotes

### Life of the Buddha

- The founder of Buddhism was not a god, a prophet, or a messiah. He was a normal human being who, by his own efforts, became completely awake, both to his own potential and to the nature of the world around him.

**Chris Pauling**

### Dukkha

- “If a man watches not for Nirvana, his cravings grow like a creeper and he jumps from death to death like a monkey in the forest from one tree without fruit to another.”

**Dhammapada 334**

### Anicca

- “Consider this body! A painted puppet with jointed limbs, sometimes suffering and covered with ulcers, full of imaginings, never permanent, for ever changing.”

**Dhammapada 147**

- “When a man considers this world as a bubble of froth, and as the illusion of an appearance, then the king of death has no power over him”

**Dhammapada 170**

- “When one doesn’t understand death; life is very confusing.”

**Achaan Chah “A Still Forest Pool”**

### Anatta

- “We only rent this house, not own it. If we think it belongs to us, we will suffer when we have to leave it. But in reality, there is no such thing as a permanent self, nothing solid or unchanging that we can hold on to.”

**Achaan Chah, “A Still Forest Pool”**

### Enlightenment/Nirvana

- “The stopping of becoming is Nirvana”

**Samyutta-nikaya 1, 39**

- “Enlightenment is direct insight into the nature of reality.”

**Chris Pauling, “Introducing Buddhism”**

### Noble Eightfold Path

- Known as the ‘Middle Path’, because it avoids two extremes: one extreme being the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses; the other being the search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism.

**Walpola Rahula**

- “This is the Path, there is no other that leads to the purifying of the mind.”

**Dhammapada 20**

### Samsara and Rebirth

- “The king asked: ‘When someone is reborn, Venerable Nagasena, is he the same as the one who has just died, or is he another?’ – The Elder replied: ‘He is neither the same nor another’.”

**The Questions of King Milinda**

- “What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind. If a man speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him as the wheel of a cart follows the beast that draws the cart.”

**Dhammapada 1**

- “O bhikkus, this cycle of continuity (samsara) is without visible end, and the first beginnings of beings wandering and running around, enveloped in ignorance and bound by the fetters of thirst (desire) is not to be perceived.”

**Walpola Rahula, “What the Buddha Taught”, p 27**