

3 Jewels

Buddha

All humans can achieve nirvana. He can see past lives, all he meets and can see all of his own past lives.

Central teachings = Four Noble Truths, contain Eightfold Path of perfection.

Founder of Sangha - monastic and universal community.

Everyone responsible for their success on a spiritual path.

There's no divine help in the form of rewards and no divine judgement of failure.

Everyone must avoid extreme conditions of behaviour, integrate moral life with meditation, = gain an understanding of Dharma.

Dharma

Means by which Buddha instructed followers on the correct spiritual journey towards enlightenment and nirvana.

It contains a description of the human condition and a way of overcoming this condition.

Lord Buddha is the Dharma; his life and message indicate that the truth is attainable.

3 Jewels (cont)

Found in the sacred text - mainly in Tripitaka, Suttas of Mahayana, and texts by Vajrayana Also, located in-laws of the universe.

It is the lived experience of Buddhism throughout the ages. The lives of holy people, the development of ordinary Buddhist and the Sangha all indicate the Dharma.

Sangha

Universal community of Buddhists (monks/nuns). Observe rule from Vinaya - code monastic behaviour. Young men enter Sangha as novices.

Respect is given to older monks. Ordination = specific number of monks (usually 10).

- Thailand: all men must join the Sangha once.

Senior monks run it (maintain monastery and temples).

Leader of the community = Abbott (he who has achieved the highest level of spiritual development)

Lord Buddha established a female sangha.

Nuns = more rules to observe than monks and must show respect to male members regardless of age or spiritual development.

3 Jewels (cont)

Monks and nuns rise before dawn, meditate and Puja, leave the monastery and beg for food eaten in 2 meals, one on returning to the monastery and the other just before noon.

The day is spent in study, domestic duties and helping laity with Puja and advice.

4 Noble Truths

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS: a significant set of beliefs because it spells out firstly why there is suffering and then allows overcoming the grief.

1. Life is full of suffering (dukkha).

The First Truth identifies the presence of suffering.

2. Suffering is caused by desire.

The Second Truth, on the other hand, seeks to determine the cause of suffering. In Buddhism, desire and ignorance lie at the root of suffering. By passion, Buddhists refer to craving pleasure, material goods, and immortality, all of which are wants that can never be satisfied. As a result, desiring them can only bring suffering.

4 Noble Truths (cont)

Ignorance, in comparison, relates to not seeing the world as it is. Without the capacity for mental concentration and insight, Buddhism explains, one's mind is left undeveloped, unable to grasp the true nature of things. Vices, such as greed, envy, hatred and anger, derive from this ignorance.. **3. Desire can be overcome, and therefore suffering can be removed.**

The Third Noble Truth, the truth of the end of suffering, has a dual meaning, suggesting either the end of suffering in this life, on earth, or in the spiritual life, through achieving Nirvana.

When one has achieved Nirvana, a transcendent state free from suffering and our worldly cycle of birth and rebirth, spiritual enlightenment has been reached.

4. Following the Buddhist Eightfold Path is the way to overcoming desire and suffering.

The Fourth Noble truth charts the method for attaining the end of suffering, known to Buddhists as the Noble Eightfold Path.

4 Noble Truths (cont)

The steps of the Noble Eightfold Path are Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Moreover, there are three themes into which the Path is divided: good moral conduct (Understanding, Thought, Speech), meditation and mental development (Action, Livelihood, Effort), and wisdom or insight (Mindfulness and Concentration)..

Eight Fold Path

1. Right knowledge - the Four Noble Truths.
2. Right aspiration - enlightenment is being sought.
3. Right speech - avoid speaking falsely and unkindly.
4. Right behaviour - no killing, no stealing, no lying etc.
5. Right livelihood - earning a living can distract from the goal of Nirvana - for serious devotees, becoming a monk or nun; the Buddha advised engaging in occupations that promote life instead of destroying it.
6. Right effort - activities aim for spiritual advancement.
7. Right mindfulness - observing physical actions and mental activities, one becomes more aware of what one is doing and why.
8. Right meditation - practice of Raja yoga to develop and purify mind of all distractions.

3 Marks of Existence

Anicca (Impermanence)

Refers to the concept that everything changes, everything we are or experience and even all that currently exists now, at some time, cease to exist. Can describe the more fleeting activities of the moment or the less accessible existence of the Universe.

Dukkha (Suffering)

More generally relates to the inability of any person to get or gain as much satisfaction as they would like. All good things and experiences will at some time stop = suffering. All uncomfortable or bad experiences will continue past their desired end time = suffering.

Anatta (Lack of Self)

A spiritual concept that states that what one calls 'I' or 'me' or 'oneself' does not really exist. If the self is essential, then personal suffering is easy to experience and difficult to escape. If the self is not crucial, then it is easier to escape from emotional suffering. Lack of a person exists until birth or post rebirth.

KARMA, SAMSARA, NIRVANA

Karma:

A concept which explains the idea of cause and effect. It is the effect of past and present deeds which determine the future experience for the individual vital as it is the release from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth = Samsara is overcome, and all desire and therefore suffering has been overcome. It is the goal of existence for Buddhists.

Samsara:

Repetitious transfer of one's soul after death into another body. Called reincarnation, it is caused because one still possesses passion, aggression and ignorance or even a tiny amount of unresolved personal bad Karma. If one gains enough good Karma, they can escape Samsara to achieve enlightenment or Nirvana.

Nirvana:

State of being nothing = exists when a soul's not required to undergo a repetitious process of reincarnation. Total freedom from desire = release from suffering.

The connection between Karma and Samsara:

The three main classifications of Karma are:

KARMA, SAMSARA, NIRVANA (cont)

- Sanchita - a total of past Karma not yet resolved
 - Prarabdha - resolution of Sanchita still to be experienced in this life
 - Kriyamana - still being created by thought, word, and deed will be resolved in the future
- Samsara:
Caused because the soul still possesses passion, aggression, ignorance, or a small amount of unresolved personal bad Karma; one gains enough good Karma = can escape Samsara = achieve enlightenment or Nirvana.

Assessment Task

Information relevant to the assessment task.

Following on from my presentation yesterday, key elements you need to address in your essay are as follows.

- you MUST identify the key Buddhist principal beliefs (Identify components)
- you MUST show how they are interrelated / interconnected (the relationship between them)
- you MUST show how they shape the daily lives of adherents (draw out and relate implications).



Assessment Task (cont)

A good way to show how the different beliefs are connected is to group them in paragraphs. For example, you could group Karma, Samsara and Nirvana together; you could group the eightfold path and Karma together in another paragraph; or you could group the four noble truths and the eightfold path together in a paragraph.

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