



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
OPTION D: A STUDY OF BUDDHISM
A120UD0-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 20 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> - <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i> - <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">17-20 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. • Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">13-16 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">9-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied. • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">5-8 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied. • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-4 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. <p>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 30 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">25-30 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">19-24 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">13-18 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">7-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 1 OPTION D

A STUDY OF BUDDHISM

SUMMER 2024 MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

Either,

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- (a)
- Examine the notions of pratityasamutpada and rebirth in Buddhism with reference to the bhavachakra. [AO1 20]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Credit should be given to a variety of definitions/explanations of the bhavachakra/pratityasamutpada.
- The bhavachakra (cycle of existence/Tibetan Wheel of Life) can be described in the following ways:
 1. The three poisons of delusion, greed and hatred are at the centre.
 2. The movement downwards or upwards is within samsara to the various realms.
 3. The six realms are those of the devas, asuras, pretas, hell, animals and humans.
 4. The outer circle contains the 12 nidanas/links of existence ignorance, mental formations, consciousness, mind and matter, six senses, contact, feeling, craving, clinging; becoming; birth; and, decay and death.
 5. The Wheel is held by Yama representing death/decay and impermanence.
 6. Outside of the Wheel, the Buddha points to an escape from samsara.
- Pratityasamutpada can be defined as conditioned arising/dependent origination/interconnectedness.
- Pratityasamutpada can be seen as relating to the fact that there is no starting point for existence instead, samsara is cyclical.
- This relates to one of the lakshanas, anicca - everything is impermanent.
- This also relates to another of the lakshanas, anatta, whereby there is no permanent self – what is thought of as the self is, as the Buddha described it, a mountain river” always changing and never the same.
- Punabhava (rebirth/rebecoming) is not the same as reincarnation as there is no permanent soul/spirit/essence which moves from one life to the next.
- Rebirth may be explained using the analogies given by Nagasena as being a baby growing to an adult/a candle burning throughout the night/milk changing into butter.
- Rebirth is a result of the series of dharmas (units of existence) understood in a collective and successive way within the context of cause and effect.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **'In Buddhism, pratityasamutpada, karma and rebirth are of little help in understanding reality.'**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement, it might be argued that pratityasamutpada, karma and rebirth are of little help in understanding reality because taken together they are too complex and are metaphysical concepts.
- Pratityasamutpada when understood as dependent origination is contrary to modern understanding whereby there must be a starting point to things such as the planet earth, the universe etc.
- The concept of rebirth is of little help in understanding reality because it is based on a priori religious belief and is rejected, for example, by secular Buddhists.
- The bhavachakra in itself is of little help in understanding reality as it is only an imaginative expression of religious beliefs tied to a particular culture at a particular time.
- There is no empirical evidence for karma in people's lives such that good consequences always follow a good action and 'bad' consequences follow a bad action which makes it unhelpful in representing reality.
- From a different perspective it might be argued that whether or not the concepts are helpful depends on which Buddhists are being considered i.e. possibly helpful for bhikkus/bhikkunis but not for lay Buddhists.
- On the contrary, it might be argued that pratityasamutpada, karma and rebirth are helpful in understanding reality because they are based on the scientific understanding of causality – cause and effect.
- They are helpful because they reflect what happens in the natural world in that the cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth can be seen in the seasons and in sentient and non-sentient life such as plants and animals.
- Taken together they are helpful because they remove the need for any a priori belief in God/gods as the source of judgment since this can be replaced by the simple belief in actions always having consequences so that each person is responsible for their own destiny.
- The bhavachakra can be interpreted metaphorically and shows that, for example, pratityasamutpada, karma and rebirth can move a person from being in great suffering (the hell realm) through to great happiness (the realm of the devas).
- The three poisons of delusion, greed and hatred are found in varying degrees in each person's life showing how helpful the concepts of pratityasamutpada and karma can be in understanding reality.
- Pratityasamutpada is particularly helpful in understanding reality as it promotes a holistic understanding of humankind and the environment whereby each and every aspect is connected to every other aspect

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

0 2 (a) Examine the Four Noble Truths, with reference to the medical metaphor. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The Four Noble Truths were given by the Buddha in his first sermon following his enlightenment. They are considered as the first and most important Buddhist teaching.
- They are found in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.
- The Four Noble Truths may be described as the four Arya satyas, the four truths which make the person who follows them noble, or as being four sure realities.
- Taken together, the Four Noble Truths identify:
 1. The centrality of dukkha in human existence.
 2. The cause of dukkha in terms of tanha (craving) causing the arising of dukkha.
 3. The possibility of the nirodha (cessation) of dukkha.
 4. The manner in which the nirodha can come about through following the magga (path) set out in the Eightfold Path.
- The medical metaphor identifies the Buddha as the physician who is able to diagnose the problem – that there is dukkha. This takes the form of suffering as:
 1. pain experience (dukkha-dukkha)
 2. suffering experienced through the changing nature of existence (viparinama-dukkha)
 3. suffering caused by the nature of life itself whereby we have no control over things constantly changing, arising and passing away nature of existence (sankhara-dukkha).
- The medical metaphor identifies the Buddha as the physician who identifies the cause of dukkha as being tanha which is the most immediate cause of dukkha being based on clinging/grasping on to things as a result of the three poisons of delusion, greed and hatred.
- Three types of tanha are identified: craving for sensual pleasures; craving for existence; and craving for non-existence. All of these might be seen as part of holding onto a concept of the self which is the opposite of anatta.
- As the physician, the Buddha provides the good news that there is a cure for dukkha – that its nirodha can be achieved.
- Once this happens, then it is possible to attain the highest and ultimate goal of Buddhism, nibbana – the stopping of becoming.
- The prescription provided by the Buddha is the Eightfold Path which provides a plan of action to follow in modelling one's life to bridge the gap between the nirodha of dukkha and nibbana.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘The Four Noble Truths are essential for all Buddhists.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement with the statement, it might be argued that given it was the first teaching of the Buddha after his enlightenment it must be essential for all Buddhists – it sets in motion the wheel of dhamma.
- For all Buddhists, the Four Noble Truths establish the truth of the human condition, as explained in the medical metaphor of the Buddha, and show how a way of life might be followed which frees a person from dukkha.
- The Four Noble Truths link closely to the three lakshanas of dukkha, anicca and anatta and implicitly reference the need to remove the three poisons of greed, hatred and delusion: thus, they are the foundation of the dhamma and are intertwined with every aspect of its development.
- Without acceptance of the Four Noble Truths, Buddhism makes no sense since it is built on an understanding of reality as dukkha which can, however, be overcome by individual effort shown in the main Buddhist practice of meditation.
- The third Noble Truth is the one which points to escape from samsara through nirrodha which leads to highest goal for all Buddhists – nibbana.
- The fourth Noble Truth – the Eightfold Path – sets out for all Buddhists the magga – a way of life to follow in order to break out of samsara and achieve nibbana.
- In disagreement with the statement, it might be argued that whilst the Four Noble Truths are essential for Theravada Buddhists, they are not essential for Mahayana Buddhists who give greater authority to texts and teachings such as the Lotus Sutra and the bodhisattva path.
- Just because the Four Noble Truths are the first teaching of the Buddha does not mean that they are essential since – as in the Parable of the Raft – they are only one means to the goal of nibbana.
- Whilst the Four Noble Truths might be readily understood as essential by bhikkus and bhikkunis, for the majority of lay Buddhists they are not as important as the concepts of gaining punya kamma and a better rebirth.
- For Pure Land Buddhists, the Four Noble Truths are not essential at all because all that is required is the nembutsu and taking refuge in Amida Buddha and the Western Pure Land.
- That the Four Noble Truths are not essential for all Buddhists can be seen in the fact that, taken in isolation, they give a misleading impression of the Buddhist message – particularly through the concept of what seems to be all-encompassing dukkha.
- For many Buddhists, their practice shows what is seen to be essential: thus, whilst the Pancha Sila might commonly be recited on a daily basis to provide a pattern for life, the same is not true of the Four Noble Truths.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

- 0 3** (a) **Examine the wider religious interpretations of the Four Sights, with reference to dukkha, anicca and anatta.** [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The Four Sights are described in a variety of ways. The overall account establishes Gautama as living a life of hedonism and luxury in Kapilavastu having been married at 16 to Yasodhara with their son Rahula.
- The premise is that – through the strategy of his father Suddhodana - Gautama had been protected from viewing the reality of the outside world by staying within the palaces and the surrounding area.
- Suddhodana acted in this way in order to avoid the prophecy of Asita coming to pass whereby Gautama would become a wandering ascetic/holy man rather than a ruler or King to succeed him.
- Aged 29, Gautama is described as either making four journeys on separate occasions or one journey with his charioteer Channa outside of the palaces and their surrounding area.
- Gautama then viewed the Four Sights which are variously described but which can be summarised as being:
 1. Old age
 2. Sickness
 3. Death
 4. A wandering ascetic/holy man
- Channa explained to Gautama that the first three sights are the lot of all people and cannot be avoided by anyone whatever their condition of life – even if they are living a life of hedonism and luxury.
- The wider religious interpretations of the meaning of the Four Sights link to the Three Lakshanas (marks of existence):
 1. Dukkha (unsatisfactoriness)
 2. Anicca (impermanence)
 3. Anatta (insubstantiality/no-self)
- Gautama's view of the world had to confront the reality of dukkha to be found in the difficulty of enduring old age, the pain of sickness and the grief caused by death.
- What had formerly appeared to be unchanging and permanent in terms of life within the palaces and their surrounding area was now seen to be subject to anicca – the reality that everything, including people, is subject to alteration, change and decay.
- That Gautama himself would be subject to change, decay, old age and death raised the question of his permanence as a person and showed the truth of anatta that there is no abiding self.
- The fourth sight of the wandering holy man could be seen as a pointer towards finding the truth of how to live in the midst of old age, sickness and death: this was the path Gautama chose to follow.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘For Buddhists, the only way the biography of the Buddha should be interpreted is as an accurate historical record.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement with the statement, it might be argued that the biography of the Buddha should only be interpreted as an accurate historical record because it provides Buddhists with a clear account of their founder.
- That the biography of the Buddha is an accurate historical record can be seen in Buddhist practice with the key celebration of Vesak - commemorating the birth, enlightenment and parinirvana of the Buddha – being observed by all Buddhists worldwide.
- The biography of the Buddha should only be interpreted as an accurate historical record because Buddhists take refuge in the historical Buddha and his life and example: ‘Buddham saranam gacchami’.
- The biography of the Buddha should be seen as an accurate historical record because understanding his sheltered and hedonistic background followed by the Four Sights, the Great Renunciation, the six years as an ascetic and enlightenment under the Bodhi tree give Buddhists the pattern for finding the Middle Way in how they live their lives.
- The Buddha pointed to the four places that “produce spiritual enthusiasm” connected to his life – Lumbini, Bodhi Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinara – and these are of great importance to Buddhists today and show that the life of the Buddha should be interpreted only as an accurate historical record.
- The biography of the Buddha is needed as an accurate historical record because it shows that he was neither more nor less than a man - who was born, married, had a son, grew old, became sick and died - who attained spiritual enlightenment through meditation.
- In disagreement with the statement, it might be argued that the biography of the Buddha cannot be interpreted only as an accurate historical record because it contains many supernatural/mythological details.
- The biography of the Buddha is, as Paul Williams argues, not a historical biography but a religious biography: it should therefore only be interpreted as hagiography.
- The biography of the Buddha should only be interpreted as a hagiographical record because – as with other world religions - it aims to promote the unique nature and spiritual wisdom of the founder regardless of historical accuracy.
- Due to the lack of any supporting external evidence from 2,500 years ago, it is impossible to interpret the biography of the Buddhas as an accurate historical record.
- Interpreting the biography of the Buddha as an accurate historical record is not important for many Mahayana Buddhists, because their focus is on the Buddha as a supernatural being whose birth as Guatama was simply the last of many previous rebirths.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

Examine Buddhist teaching on going for refuge.

- Precise details/terms regarding Buddhist teaching on going for refuge may be outlined in a variety of ways depending on the textbooks used and for this allowance needs to be made.
- Going for refuge refers to the key Buddhist belief/practice which can be summed up in the chant: 'I go to the Buddha for refuge; I go to the Dharma for refuge; I go to the Sangha for refuge.'
- The term 'refuges' may be seen as referring to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha as being shelters which provide spiritual support, strength and refreshment in following the Buddhist path.
- The term 'triratna' might also be used which refers to the three refuges as being three 'jewels'. This shows that the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha are precious and of importance to Buddhists.
- The three refuges can be chanted by all Buddhists: lay people, monks and nuns as part of worship in a variety of ways: at the start of meditation, on visiting a temple/shrine, on a daily basis.
- The three refuges may also be chanted ritually to mark a person's becoming a Buddhist or becoming ordained. Here the tradition may be to have a threefold recitation of the refuges.
- Some Buddhist traditions might include and chant other 'refuges' such as Amida/Amitabha in Pure Land Buddhism. Some Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns may 'take refuge' in the lama who has given them instruction.
- Taking refuge in the Buddha may be seen as gaining strength from the life and example of the historical Buddha with the focus on him as the one who achieved Awakening/Enlightenment and who taught the middle way. Mahayana Buddhists may focus more on gaining strength from the transcendent Buddha through the three bodies (Trikaya) ideal.
- Taking refuge in the Dharma may be seen as gaining strength from the whole teaching of the Buddha as found in the Pali Canon for Theravada Buddhists and in the Pali Canon plus additional sacred texts for Mahayana Buddhists.
- Taking refuge in the Sangha may be seen as gaining strength from the Buddhist community. This might be seen in its widest sense as the four-fold sangha of monks, nuns, lay men and lay women. Some Buddhists may focus much more on the monastic Sangha alone.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **'The refuges are all of equal value.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may argue that together the three refuges of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha are like the three legs of a stool: alter or remove one and the stool collapses. Thus, all three together uphold Buddhist beliefs.
- It may be argued that the three refuges are interdependent and an example of pratyasamutpada. Thus, the Buddha is revealed in the Dharma, the Dharma is transmitted through the Sangha and the Sangha is united around the Buddha.
- Candidates may argue that it is only when the three refuges are seen as equal that a proper understanding of Buddhism can be conveyed since together, they are the foundation of all Buddhist belief.
- It may be argued that it is essential that the three are seen as being of equal value to maintain the balance in Buddhism between belief in the founder, adherence to teaching and shared communal practice.
- It may be argued that the order of the three refuges – Buddha, Dharma, Sangha – should not be seen as a hierarchy with the Buddha being the most important and the Sangha being least important. Instead, this is a chronological order with each being equally important.
- Another line of reasoning is that whilst Buddhists might spend more time reflecting on one of the refuges at some stage than on the other two, over time each will have their role and thus together be seen as equally important.
- Conversely, others may argue that in reality the Buddha is the most important refuge for Buddhists for a variety of reasons. Thus, for example, it is the image of the historical Buddha, which is found in some form, in most shrines whether in temples or in Buddhist homes.
- It may be argued that the Buddha is the most important of the refuges since he was the founder of Buddhism and he declared 'to see me is to have seen the dharma'.
- A further line of argument may be that the Dharma is the most important refuge for Buddhists since when he was asked as to his successor, the Buddha declared that it was the Dharma which could continue to teach when he could not.
- It may be argued that the historical Buddha has been dead for over two and a half thousand years and that he cannot be as important a refuge as the Dharma which maintains his presence in the world today.
- Others may argue that the Sangha is the most important refuge for Buddhists because whether they are in Tibet, Thailand or the UK they need the Sangha to provide the community within which Buddhism can flourish.
- It may be argued that, for example, it is only through the hard work of the monastic Sangha that the Dharma can be transmitted to heritage Buddhists, convert Buddhists and those wanting to find out more about Buddhism. Hence it is the monastic Sangha which is the focus of attention at Buddhist festivals such as Wesak and Vassa.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

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(a) Explain the development of Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren Buddhist traditions in Japan. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Accounts of the key Buddhist traditions in Japan may be outlined in a variety of ways depending on textbooks used and for this allowance needs to be made.
- Buddhist traditions in Japan are a form of syncretism intertwined with Kami and Shinto and developing in the context of belief in mappo – the present age being one of the decays of the dhamma.
- The origins of Zen might be traced back to Bodhidharma and Cha'an Buddhism in China.
- Zen began in Japan in the 12 and 13 century CE through the teaching of Eisai and Dogen.
- Eisai is associated with Rinzai Zen which found favour with the educated warrior and political classes. It cultivated martial arts, observance of ceremonial rules and defence of the state.
- Dogen is associated with Soto Zen which found favour with people outside of the educated warrior and political classes. It rejected any dealings with politics and martial arts, upholding instead a life of poverty.
- Zen focuses on the practice of zazen – just sitting and on the use of a particular form of focused meditation through the use of koans.
- Pure Land's origins might be traced back to Hui Yuan who had a vision of Amitabha Buddha and the Pure Land.
- Pure Land Buddhism in Japan developed through the teaching of Honen and his follower Shinran in the 12 and 13 century CE.
- Honen's teaching which was simplified by Shinran held that absolute devotion to Amida Buddha is all that is required to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land from where enlightenment or becoming a bodhisattva or Buddha becomes easily possible.
- Nembutsu is associated with Pure Land Buddhism with the key point being that refuge is taken in Amida.
- Nichiren Buddhism may be traced back to Nichiren in the 13
- Nichiren Buddhism might be seen as being based on the belief that the world could not understand the true dharma and that therefore something else was needed.
- Nichiren rejected Zen and Pure Land and upheld the Lotus Sutra as being the one scripture with the perfect and final truth.
- The Daimoku is part of Nichiren belief and practice so that seeing it, reflecting on it and chanting it all bring enlightenment.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘The koan, nembutsu and daimoku are very important expressions of Buddhist teachings.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement with the statement, it might be argued that the koan, nembutsu and daimoku are very important expressions of Buddhist teachings because they represent the general approach taken by the Mahayana school.
- The three are very important expressions of Buddhist teachings because their ultimate aim is to help a person find release from dukkha and samsara.
- The koan is a very important expression of Buddhist teaching because it helps a person to focus on samma samadhi (right concentration) which is part of the Threefold Trainings on meditation in the Eightfold Path.
- The nembutsu is a very important expression of Buddhist teaching because it is by chanting ‘Namu Amida Butsu’ a person is given a clear path leading to rebirth in the Western Pure Land from which enlightenment is easily possible.
- The daimoku is a very important expression of Buddhist teaching because a person is given a particular part of the dhamma (the Lotus Sutra) on which to reflect.
- As in the Parable of the Raft, the koan, nembutsu and daimoku are all important expressions of Buddhist teachings because their goal is to bring the person to the shore of nibbana which is the highest goal for Buddhists.
- In disagreement with the statement, it might be argued that they are not very important expressions of Buddhist teachings because they are peculiar to Japanese Buddhist belief and practice and are not shared throughout the Buddhist world.
- The koan might be seen as just one development of samma samadhi which is of use only to a minority of Zen practitioners since it requires a great deal of practice, time and effort.
- The nembutsu might not be regarded as a very important expression of Buddhist teachings because it requires belief in - and devotion to - Amida Buddha which would not at all be part of, for example, the Theravada Buddhist approach.
- As the Lotus Sutra is outside of the Pali Canon, it might be argued that the Daimoku is not a very important expression of Buddhist teaching particularly since it seems to give lesser importance to the rest of the dhamma.
- They might not be seen as very important expressions of Buddhist teachings because they are much later developments of the dhamma and cannot be found in, for example, the Pali Canon.
- Questioning the question might suggest that individual parts of Buddhist practice cannot be isolated from other parts since they are all interconnected – pratityasamutpada – and, depending on situation and circumstance, are all equally important.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.