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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2024**

**AS  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - UNIT 1  
OPTION D: AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM**

**2120UD0-1**

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## 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.

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## **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.

### **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.

## AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions [15 marks]</b></p> <p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language /vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. A maximum of 1 mark should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions [15 marks]</b> <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

## Unit 1

### Option D: An Introduction to Buddhism

#### SUMMER 2024 Mark Scheme

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

#### Section A

1. (a) Explain the significance of the Eightfold Path for Buddhist morality. [AO1 15]

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

- Candidates may refer to the significance of the Eightfold Path (magga) as part of the Four Noble Truths providing Buddhists a guide out of suffering. The teachings all begin with 'right' or 'correct', showing their significance for Buddhist morality. Expect a brief overview of the eight parts of the path. The Eightfold Path is divided into three groups: sila (morality), dhyana (meditation) and prajna (wisdom).
- Morality refers to Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Candidates may give examples of how these are put into practice. They may explain how the path influences Buddhists to live the middle way, helping them to develop all aspects of their lives, including morality.
- Right Speech: avoiding slander, gossip, lying, untruthful or abusive speech that cause others harm. Right Action: adhering to nonviolence (ahimsa) and refraining from forms of stealing or sexual misconduct. Conduct differs for monastics and laity, e.g. sexual activity is inappropriate for monks, but responsible, nonharmful sexual activity is acceptable for laity. Right Livelihood: avoiding jobs involving harming, violating, exploiting or slaughtering.
- Candidates may explain how the separate steps of the path are all used simultaneously by Buddhists to train themselves in every aspect of their lives, including morality. They may point to morality being the outward evidence of spiritual development that takes place by following the trainings.
- Candidates may explore the significance of the Eightfold Path as the way out of suffering and of how it overcomes tanha and dukkha. By following it suffering is alleviated for others as well as for the practitioner. This could be considered morally worthwhile.
- Candidates may explore the significance of the Path in different Buddhist schools. It enables Theravadin monastics to live a life of poverty, chastity and inoffensiveness - it enables meditation and study needed on the arhat path. For Tibetan Buddhists the Path is just one element of an advanced path which emphasises developing the perfections associated with the bodhisattva path - focus on morality, generosity and patience. Not all Buddhists explicitly practise the Eightfold Path, but the notion of morality remains significant.
- Candidates may argue that the Path is significant as its moral principles lead to ethical decision-making and behaviours such as vegetarianism.

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

**1. (b) ‘Morality is the most important part of the path to Awakening.’**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Credit can be given to candidates who approach the question specifically from the Eightfold Path or from the context of Buddhism as a whole being a ‘path’ in itself.
- One line of reasoning may be that morality is essential to Awakening as it is part of the historical Buddha’s Eightfold Path and Four Noble Truths. There is an inseparable link between morality and Awakening as it is outward evidence of inner spiritual development. Nibbana excludes suffering of any kind and it destroys hatred and delusion showing that a direct link between morality and Awakening. If the moral life leads to a reduction of suffering it is essential.
- Another line of reasoning may point out that the Awakening of the historical Buddha occurred through meditation. Gotama retreated from the world before he decided to help others, so Awakening led to morality and rather than morality leading to Awakening.
- Another line of reasoning may be that moral behaviour without wisdom and meditation cannot lead to Awakening. Morality cannot function in isolation. The threefold trainings all need to be practised simultaneously, as the illustration of the three-legged stool indicates. Without one or two of its legs, the stool cannot function.
- Candidates may argue that it is essential that moral behaviour is grounded in compassion and loving kindness so that non-violence and non-harm become part of the practice. Right Intention is necessary to accrue merit. Additionally, without wisdom and discernment, actions are likely to be unskillful and potentially immoral. It is impossible to be wise and not to act virtuously.
- Candidates may argue that moral action is essential even if it does not lead to Awakening. It generates punya (merit) having a positive effect on the world.
- In Theravada Buddhism practising morality creates the conditions for practitioners to spend time in meditation and study, which are necessary on the path to Awakening. An arhat has destroyed the three poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance and is no longer able to act in a way that creates karmic results – showing a link between moral behaviour and Awakening.
- Mahayana Buddhists believe that everyone has Buddha nature and are already Enlightened, they just need to realise it. However, moral behaviour is necessary on the bodhisattva path as it lies at the heart of the vow to delay Enlightenment / Awakening to help all other sentient beings.

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



2. (a) Explain how the dasa sila (ten precepts) are used differently by lay and monastic sanghas.

[AO1 15]

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

- Candidates show awareness that the dasa sila (ten precepts) are major ethical principles for monastic and lay Buddhists; guidelines for personal conduct and having a role in regulating the monastic sangha. Training aspirations rather than commandments.
- Reference to the five lay precepts (pancasila) – refraining from destroying living creatures; taking what is not given; sexual misconduct; incorrect speech; and intoxicating drink and drugs that cloud the mind. The pancasila relate to general behaviour in the world.
- The dasa sila relate to monastic living. Awareness of the five additional precepts undertaken– refraining from eating at the forbidden time; from dancing, singing, music, going to see entertainments; from wearing garlands, using perfumes, and beautifying the body with cosmetics; from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place; and from accepting gold and silver. It is also necessary that the monastic sangha follow the Patimokkha to regulate behaviour.
- Examples of how the dasa sila are used by both the monastic and lay sanghas are expected. For example, there may be different interpretations of not doing any harm – influence on diet and vocation; Not taking anything which is not given means that generosity is also expected. Keeping the precepts reduces dukkha and increases positive karma.
- Candidates may refer to vows taken to abstain from negative actions that are contrary to Buddhist principles. This can create harmony within the sangha.
- There may be reference to how the dasa sila encourage the monastic sangha to follow the Middle Way between extremes. Also, the monastic sangha keeps the vows on behalf of the wider sangha thus the roles of the monastic sangha and lay sangha complement each other.
- Candidates may explain that eight precepts are often observed by lay people during periods of intense meditation. The panca sila plus refraining from eating after midday, dancing, singing music and entertainment and sleeping in a luxurious bed. These are observed by novice monks.
- Reference may be made to how the community responds to the breaking of the precepts, e.g. hiri – feeling shame rather than guilt. Reference to situations when it is difficult to keep the precepts e.g. not drinking at social occasions.
- Candidates may also explain different approaches to the precepts within Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism.

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

2. (b) 'The precepts are as relevant today for Buddhists as they have ever been.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- Candidates may argue the precepts are not 'rules', but commitments to develop the spiritual life and as such may be just as relevant to individuals as ever. The precepts are helpful for living a good life. In Theravada and Tibetan Buddhism the monastic life remains relevant and they continue to follow the dasa sila. In contemporary society it is necessary that the precepts are flexible, e.g. to travel to teach Dharma a monastic might have to carry money.
- Another line of reasoning may be that the perceived lack of strict rules in Buddhism today is a benefit in attracting people to the religion. Some Mahayanist schools do not have a monastic sangha and the dasa sila are no longer relevant to them.
- Candidates may argue that the monastic life is much more governed by precepts than lay life is, but this does not mean the five lay precepts are unimportant today, to either the monastics or the laity.
- It may be argued that there are more relevant practices within today's sanghas such as the practice of meditation with the rewards it reaps for enabling the practitioners to navigate life in the modern world. Additionally, the precepts and the monastic life are less relevant today as Buddhism has become a global religion and has had to adapt to the places where it is now practiced. It is difficult to follow all the precepts if there is no support from a lay sangha.
- Candidates may argue that many Western Buddhists today take precepts or change their lifestyle considerably as a result of their religious beliefs. This may involve the following of what appear to be 'rules' for example about vegetarianism, or not getting intoxicated.
- Some may argue that Buddhism has never been about the observance of rules, but of the effort to overcome greed hatred and delusion, and to combat suffering wherever it arises.
- It may be argued that Buddhism is ultimately about personal devotion to buddhas, bodhisattvas or texts, not about rules.
- Candidates may argue that in Buddhism the precepts are used only if they are helpful in finding nirvana, if they are not relevant to the individual then they can be discarded as Buddhists seek their own salvation with diligence.

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

## Section B

3. (a) **Examine the concept of anatta, with reference to the Chariot Passage of the *Questions of King Milinda*.**

[AO1 15]

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

- Candidates may explain that the concept of anatta reveals what a human being is. Anatta is no-self/no-fixed self or insubstantiality. It is one of the three lakshanas (characteristics of existence). The others being unsatisfactoriness (dukkha); impermanence (anicca). They are interlinked and interdependent.
- Anatta denies the teaching that there is an atta (Pali) or atman (Sanskrit), often translated as a soul. Atman is the word given in Hinduism to the true self which exists eternally, and travels from one body to another in the process of reincarnation (as opposed to rebirth in Buddhism). One way in which the historical Buddha challenged the teaching of the Brahmins was by challenging this established belief in the self. So, anatta is often translated as 'no self'.
- The teaching of impermanence points out that we are constantly changing, thus implying there is no fixed part of ourselves which remains unchanged. The self is a process. If nothing remains unchanged, there is nothing which can contain a fixed or final identity. There is no own self which is reborn. Reference may be made to the three lakshanas relating to other Buddhist teachings, such as pratityasamutpada and rebirth.
- Candidates should refer to the Chariot passage of the Questions of King Milinda to illustrate knowledge of anatta. The misunderstanding King Milinda came to that Nagasena was denying his existence in a nihilistic way. Nagasena was illustrating the idea that human beings are not to be completely understood as physical beings, but rather a collection of physical and mental properties.
- Samsaric existence is painful as a result of suffering, and because pleasures are impermanent and insubstantial. We, the experiencers of the pleasures, are also impermanent and insubstantial. The continual failure to take this into account makes us unenlightened.
- Reference may be made to sunnatta (Pali)/sunyata (Sanskrit) 'emptiness' which relates to the absence of svabhava (own being). If there is no-self, then what is a human being? – Reference to the five skandhas – rupa (form, vedana (feeling), sanna (perception), sankhara (mental formations), vinnana (consciousness).
- Reference to the Buddha's Awakening/Enlightenment and his realisation that there was nothing within himself that was unchanging/no permanent fixed soul or self.
- Reference to illustrations explain anatta, e.g. Ajahn Chah's reference to an ice cube.

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

**3. (b) 'Anatta is the most important Buddhist teaching.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Candidates may refer specifically to the three lakshanas or more generally to other aspects of Buddhist teaching.
- Candidates may argue that anatta is the most important Buddhist teaching as it provides an accurate and realistic description of the reality of the human condition. This is particularly important in Theravada Buddhism. The concept of anatta enables people to see that there is no permanent, unchanging self. They are made of five constantly changing skandhas. Understanding this, people can let go of the ego self and achieve Enlightenment.
- Another argument is that it is more important within Buddhism to understand the teaching of dukkha as suffering needs to be overcome to experience the peace of Enlightenment.
- Candidates may argue that all the lakshanas are equally important as all were discovered by the historical Buddha whilst witnessing the Four Sights and during his Awakening. All lakshanas are equally important as they all describe reality. They are interlinked and interdependent so that one cannot be important without the others. All lakshanas are important as they provide the basis for understanding other Buddhist teachings, e.g. the Four Noble Truths which explain the cause of dukkha and its solution. The teachings lead to practice of the Eightfold path which creates the causes and conditions for the wisdom to arise, so that the Enlightenment might be experienced.
- Mahayanists focus on the idea of sunyata as developed through the teachings of Nagarjuna. This is a development of the concept of anatta. Mahayanists may see the three lakshanas as merely skilful means. As such they are not 'true' in any ultimate sense, but merely 'fingers pointing at the moon.'
- Another line of reasoning might be that some Mahayana Buddhists (e.g. Pure Land) may argue that, in this age of the degenerate dharma, it is no longer possible to truly understand abstract philosophical teachings such as the three lakshanas, and all the devotee can do is trust in the Amida Buddha and hope for rebirth in a Pure Land where Enlightenment will be bestowed upon them.
- Zen Buddhists may argue against the importance of anatta suggesting it is possible to become caught up in discriminative thinking by focusing on philosophical notions such as anatta, and that these should be abandoned in favour of 'just sitting' in zazen.

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

4. (a) Explain the concept of bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism.

[AO1 15]

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

- The term bodhisattva (Sanskrit) means “Enlightenment Being”. The term refers to one who understands the emptiness of all things.
- Candidates may refer to Mahayanists following the vow of the bodhisattva emphasising the idea of ‘no self’ (anatta). In Mahayana Buddhism, out of compassion, the bodhisattva ‘puts off’ or delays nirvana for him or herself until all sentient beings are saved. Any living person who has embarked on the bodhisattva path can thus be considered a bodhisattva. This Mahayanist goal recognises that all beings can achieve nirvana and realise ultimate truth. Mahayana Buddhism is referred to as Bodhisattvayana showing the concept of the bodhisattva is of paramount importance.
- Bodhisattvas practise The Six Perfections of generosity, morality, patience, vigour, meditation and wisdom.
- The compassionate nature of this path is seen in the bodhisattva’s progress through ten bhumis, stages, where the ten paramitas are perfected - generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, determination, lovingkindness, and equanimity.
- “Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life” (Bodhicaryavatara) by Shantideva explains that it is through the cultivation of bodhicitta (the mind or heart of awakening) that one becomes a bodhisattva.
- In Mahayana, the bodhisattva ideal means that it is no longer necessary to be a monk or a nun to follow the example of the Buddha. Enlightenment or Buddhahood is open to all.
- In Tibetan Buddhism Lamas delay enlightenment to help others achieve it e.g. the Dalai Lama is believed by Tibetans to be the incarnation of Avalokitesvara – The Bodhisattva of Compassion.
- Manjushri (meaning ‘gentle glory’ or ‘sweet splendour’) is one of the two most important bodhisattvas in Mahayana and is the first bodhisattva mentioned in Mahayana scriptures.
- Reference may be made to the doctrine of Trikaya – Nirmanakaya (transformation body) is a Buddha in physical form, e.g. Gautama. Sambhogakaya (enjoyment body) which is a body of heavenly realms and Dharmakaya (Dharma body) that is beyond existence.
- A bodhisattva has fully developed both compassion (karuna) and wisdom (prajna), the two pillars of Mahayana. Being a bodhisattva means putting the happiness of all beings in the universe before your own and not resting until everyone is successfully saved.

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

**4. (b) 'The bodhisattva path is the best way to achieve Enlightenment.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Candidates may refer to there being two main paths to Enlightenment in Buddhism. Mahayanists follow the bodhisattva path to realise Enlightenment and Theravadins follow path of the arhat (noble or worthy one). Candidates may argue that path of the bodhisattva is the most compassionate path, and therefore the best path, as it is open to all as everyone has Buddha nature. The path of the arhat is open only to a few advanced practitioners. Mahayanists refer to the school as the Greater Vehicle. The bodhisattva path is the best way to achieve Enlightenment because a vow is taken to delay Enlightenment to aid all other sentient beings. The Bodhisattva path involves a series of lives marked by compassion and self-sacrifice in serving others.
- Some may argue that some Mahayanists claim the path of arhatship is selfish and concerned with personal spiritual development. The way of the bodhisattva is better as the arhat achieves Enlightenment for himself and, upon death, enters parinibbana.
- It may argued that the arhat acts compassionately by teaching the dharma; offering guidance and performing rituals that benefit others e.g. puja and dana. Therefore, being the best path to Enlightenment. Theravada temples function as community and medical centres, schools, orphanages, and homes to the homeless – all acts of compassion which are incredibly worthwhile.
- References may be made to scholars such as John Snelling who suggested that the bodhisattva is a spiritual hero who aims to help others. This may be a more compassionate, better goal than that of the pratyeka Buddha.
- Although wisdom alone is the pillar of Theravada Buddhism, an arhat would act compassionately as a result of seeing the suffering in the world just as the historical Buddha did in making his decision to teach.
- The compassionate nature of the bodhisattva path can be seen in the transfer of merit. Examples such as the great compassion of Amitabha or Avalokitesvara may be referred to.
- Candidates may suggest that the journey on the arhat path, despite being a solitary and individual effort, includes destroying the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance which is the goal of Buddhism that leads to Enlightenment.

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

**5. (a) Explain how the practice of dana (giving) helps support Buddhist communities.**

**[AO1 15]**

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

- Candidates may explain that dana 'giving' is connected to central Buddhist teachings. There are Vinaya rules surrounding the dangers of attachment and so dana is important in eliminating attachment. Dana is a practice that may lead to the cessation of suffering, experiencing a better rebirth and ultimately the goal of Enlightenment. It, therefore, gives people in Buddhist communities hope and peace. Dana can include giving in material or immaterial ways in different communities.
- Candidates may explain that Dana, the practice of giving, is the first punnakiriyavatthu, three bases of meritorious deeds; the first of the three sanghavatthu, means of benefitting others; and the first of the ten paramitas, perfections.
- Explanations explore the interconnection between dana and punya, meaning 'merit'. Buddhist communities benefit from caga (generosity) that is linked to dana. Giving should not be done superficially but should be an act of self-sacrifice. The best way of gaining merit is through giving to the sangha as the environment there is favourable to the accrual of punya.
- Reference may be made to ways in which the monastic sangha supports the laity through dana; offering the opportunity to gain merit (punya) through almsgiving; teaching the Dhamma; counselling; performing religious rituals such as puja; preserving the Dhamma through study, recitation and translation; distributing the Dhamma freely.
- Reference may be made to ways in which the laity support the monastic sangha through dana: Almsgiving can include gifts of money, food, robes, medicine, buildings and land; donation of time in volunteering to do domestic tasks, gardening, building maintenance
- The benefits of dana extend beyond Buddhist communities. Charities, welfare organisations and local causes also benefit from the practice of dana. Intention and motivation free from craving are important when practising dana. These selfless or egoless acts benefit communities where dana is practised. Buddhist communities receiving dana give the opportunity for the giver to eliminate attachment and to progress spiritually.
- Reference to specific practices within local and global Buddhist communities, e.g. in Thailand businesses and politicians are involved in collective merit-making and sometimes people offer themselves to the service of a monastery in practising dana.

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

5. (b) 'Without the practice of dana, the notion of punya is pointless.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- Candidates may argue that dana and punya only hold worth when they work hand in hand. Punya, (Sanskrit: "merit"), Pali 'punna', is sought by Buddhists to build up good karma (the cumulative consequences of deeds) and to achieve a more favourable future rebirth. The sangha is described as a 'field of punya' where merit is acquired and can be transferred. Giving to a community who practices the Eightfold Path is considered more meritorious than other kinds of giving, e.g. within families. All are worthwhile, showing the value of both dana and punya. Transfer of merit is an act of dana. Dana is the first punnakiriyavatthu, three bases of meritorious deeds, therefore dana and punya are complimentary.
- The notion of punya is not pointless without dana. In Theravada punya can be accrued via other means as well as through dana e.g. through sila (the keeping of the moral precepts); and bhavana (the practice of meditation).
- Punya relates not just to dana, but also to ritual actions (such as sutra chanting or creating mandalas) and even to good thoughts.
- Candidates may argue that all good and meritorious intentions are of worth. Punya is associated with intention rather than the moral action. The moral action is not as relevant as the intention behind the action. Examples may be given to illustrate this. Punya may not be accrued if the intention is selfish. If giving is done merely to gain merit or to make spiritual progress, then punya seems worthless. In Buddhism the goal is to let go of the ego self to realise Enlightenment. It is vital that the concept of punya is attached to the concept of dana to ensure actions are carried out for worthy reasons.
- In Mahayana the concept of punya is of value as bodhisattvas attain merit through their perfection of wisdom and practice and not necessarily through practicing dana. Their merit can be powerful enough to bring sentient beings to awakening and liberation.
- Merit gained at the highest level, through the purest of intentions, is impersonal merit and, therefore, punya can be detached from dana and is not pointless. This works in the same way that karma is an impersonal force.

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