

A Level Buddhism - Further AO1 resources (in addition to the Guidance for Teaching document)

Specification:

Theme 1 Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)

A) The Pali Canon: its role in Buddhism as a whole:

The Tipitaka. The authority of the Vinaya for the Theravada sangha the wider authority and significance of the Sutta Pitaka, the relevance of the Abidhamma for the commentarial development of Buddhism. The importance of the Pali Canon as a source of wisdom.

Guidance for Teaching

In this section, candidates should be aware of the structure of the Pali Canon i.e. Sutta Pitaka, Vinaya Pitaka and Abidhamma Pitaka. Candidates should understand the basic teachings and wisdom of the Buddha as found in the Suttas; the importance of the regulation of the community, as described in the Vinaya, its significance for the Theravada community, and the relevance of the commentarial tradition as recorded in the Abidhamma. Candidates should be able to evaluate the importance of the Pali Canon in Buddhism as a whole.

Useful resources

Books:

Harvey, Peter (1990) - An Introduction to Buddhism, Cambridge University Press, B01K0TGV4Y

Lopez, D.S. (ed.) (2004) Buddhist Scriptures. Penguin Books. (Penguin Classics S), 9780140447583

Mascaro, Juan (2015) - The Dhammapada, Penguin, 9780141398815 Rahula, Walpola (1959) - What the Buddha Taught, Gordon Fraser, 9559219197 Williams, Paul (2000) - Buddhist Thought, Routledge, 0415571790

- http://palicanon.org/
- http://tipitaka.org/eot
- https://store.pariyatti.org/Comprehensive-Manual-of-Abhidhamma-A--PDF-eBook_p_4362.html



Theme 1 Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)

B) The main themes and concepts in two Mahayana texts:

The Heart Sutra - the philosophical content regarding the mutual identity of emptiness and form. The Parable of the Burning House in the Lotus Sutra - exemplifying the concept of skilful means and the provisional nature of the teachings.

Guidance for Teaching:

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Heart Sutra as the shortest of all the Prajnaparamita Sutras, and that it is recited daily in Zen temples. It is a philosophical text, enumerating the five skandhas, explaining that all is empty (sunya) of inherent existence (svabhava). It claims 'form is emptiness, emptiness is form.' They should also be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ideas that the Parable of the Burning House from the Lotus elucidates the urgency of the human condition, the distracted state of sentient beings, the use of skilful means, the provisionality of the teachings of Buddhism, and the ultimate subsummation of all paths into the one bodhisattva path.

Useful resources

Books:

Harvey, Peter (1990) - An Introduction to Buddhism, Cambridge University Press, B01K0TGV4Y

Kapleau, P. (1989) - The three pillars of Zen: teaching, practice and enlightenment, Doubleday Anchor, 9780385260930

Lopez, D.S. (ed.) (2004) - Buddhist Scriptures. Penguin Books, (Penguin Classics S), 9780140447583

Suzuki, D.T. (1991) - An introduction to Zen Buddhism. Rider, 9780712650618 Teiser S & Stone J. (2009) - Readings of the Lotus Sutra, Columbia University Press, 0231142897

Williams, Paul (1989) - Mahayana Buddhism, Routledge, B01FIY901I ISBN:0415236614

- http://www.mpcmontreal.org/sites/pleineconscience.org/files/The_Lotus_ Sutra-The_Burning_House.pdf
- http://www.english.fgs2.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/The%20Lotus%20Sutra.pdf
- https://kongmu.wordpress.com/lotus-sutra-resources/



Theme 1 Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)

C) The contribution made to the development of Buddhist thought by the work of contemporary Buddhist teachers.

A comparison of the background and work of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh: their practical interpretation of Buddhist teachings for life in the West: with reference to Thich Nhat Hanh's emphasis on simple practices (smiling, breathing and walking) and the Dalai Lama's emphasis on acts of kindness; both teachers' views about compassion and non-harming.

Guidance for Teaching:

This section focuses on the contributions made to Buddhism made by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh. Candidates need to know something of the life and background of both teachers, their respective Tibetan and Vietnamese roots, and their global/western orientations. Reference will need to be made to: Thich Nhat Hanh's emphasis on simple practices (smiling, breathing and walking) and their accessibility to a global audience; the Dalai Lama's emphasis on acts of kindness; both teachers' views about compassion and non-harming. Candidates will be aware of the role of these leaders as political actors on the world stage as well as of their teachings.

Useful resources

Books:

Dumoulin, H. (1992) - Zen Buddhism in the 20th century, Weatherhill Inc., 9780834802476

Faure, Bernard (2009) - Unmasking Buddhism. John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 9781405180641

HH Dalai Lama. (2012) Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World. Mariner Books. 054784428X

Piyadassi, M. (1991) - The spectrum of Buddhism : writings of Piyadassi. Jivinda De Silva, 9789559098034

Thich Nhat Hanh. (1999) - The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy, and Liberation, Broadway Books, 0767903692

- https://www.dalailama.com/teachings
- https://www.lionsroar.com/the-best-of-the-dalai-lama-life-quotesteachings-books/
- https://plumvillage.org/about/thich-nhat-hanh/
- https://coiuk.org/thich-nhat-hanh/



Theme 2 Significant historical developments in religious thought

A) Historical development of Buddhism in Japan:

The development of key Buddhist traditions in Japan - Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren, with particular reference to the central practices of koan (paradoxical statement used as a practice in Zen traditions), nembutsu (going for refuge in Amida/Amitabha Buddha in Pure Land traditions) and daimoku (mantra used in Nichiren traditions).

Guidance for Teaching:

Theme 2 sections A-C, begins with a broadening of candidate's awareness of diversity in the Buddhist world, with a focus on well-known Japanese traditions and their practices. Focus should be on the practices, but with enough contextualisation to make sense of the practices. The section also includes exploration of Buddhism's relationship with science and questions around whether Buddhism is religious or secular.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of: the development of key Buddhist traditions in Japan - Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren - with particular reference to their central practices. The koan is a paradoxical statement used as a practice in Zen traditions designed to make the mind despair of logic and take a leap into an intuitive understanding of reality. The nembutsu (going for refuge in Amida/Amitabha Budha) in Pure Land traditions is an expression of thanks to Amida for providing the conditions for enlightenment after death in the Pure Land, because enlightenment (in contrast to Zen belief) is not achievable through self-power. The daimoku is a mantra used in Nichiren traditions which expresses the taking of refuge in the name of the Lotus Sutra, the central sutra of Nichiren Buddhism.

Useful resources

Books:

Nichiren, P.B. and Yampolsky (ed.) (1996) - Letters of Nichiren. Columbia University Press (Translations From The Asian Classics, 9780231103848 Nichiren, P.B. and Yampolsky (ed.) - (1990) Selected writings of Nichiren, Columbia University Pres. (Translations From The Asian Classics), 9780231072601 Van, De W.J. (1973) - The empty mirror: experiences in a Japanese Zen monastery. St. Martin's Press, 9780312207748

Williams, Paul (1989) - Mahayana Buddhism, Routledge, B01FIY901I Schireson, Grace (2009) - Zen Women, Wisdom Publications, B00JDZLTOE Blackstone, Judith (1986) - Zen For Beginners, Writers and Readers Publications, 9780863161162

- http://www.purelandbuddhism.org/
- https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/
- http://ashidakim.com/zenkoans/zenindex.html



Theme 2 Significant historical developments in religious thought

B) The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.

Responses to the challenges from science:

The tension between presentations of Buddhism as avoiding 'blind faith', emphasising the realisation of truth in experience (with reference to the Kalama Sutta v.9 & 10) and Asian Buddhist worldviews populated with a diversity of beings and realms. The Dalai Lama's assessment of the value of science.

Guidance for Teaching:

Candidates will explore presentations of Buddhism as avoiding 'blind faith' and emphasising the realisation of truth in experience (with reference to the Kalama Sutta v.9 & 10

http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.soma.html

Thera Soma translation). They will contrast these with Asian Buddhist worldviews populated with a diversity of beings and realms (for example six realms or rebirth, popular beliefs in spirits and hungry ghosts (pretas). Taken as a whole Buddhism contains teachings which seem to emphasise rationalism, and also to contain teachings about a multiverse richly populated with diverse spiritual beings with supernatural powers. Candidates will also explore the Dalai Lama's positive assessment of the value of science, exemplified in his founding of the Mind and Life Institute https://www.mindandlife.org/.

Useful resources

Books:

Dumoulin, H. (1992) - Zen Buddhism in the 20th century. Weatherhill Inc., 9780834802476

Faure, Bernard (2009) - Unmasking Buddhism. John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 9781405180641

Harvey, Peter (1990) - An Introduction to Buddhism, Cambridge University Press, B01K0TGV4Y

Lopez, D. (2010) - Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed. University of Chicago Press, 0226493199

Williams, Paul (2000) - Buddhist Thought, Routledge, 0415571790

- http://online.sfsu.edu/rone/Buddhism/VerhoevenBuddhismScience.htm
- https://quark.phy.bnl.gov/~pisarski/talks/Colloquia/Lopez.pdf
- http://www.bps.lk/olib/nl/nl009.pdf



Theme 2 Significant historical developments in religious thought

C) The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.

Reponses to the challenges from secularisation

Buddhism's frequent presentation in the West as a secular philosophy, with reference to *Stephen Batchelor* (a Buddhist Atheist) and his presentation of Buddhism as a rational philosophy and way of life, and *David Brazier*, who claims Buddhism is a religion.

Guidance for Teaching:

Candidates should explore Buddhism's frequent presentation in the West as a secular philosophy, with reference to Stephen Batchelor (a Buddhist Atheist) and his presentation of Buddhism as a rational philosophy and way of life. They should consider the extent to which Batchelor's view of Buddhism is a distortion to suit a Western world view. They might refer in general terms to the following texts: Batchelor, S. (1998). Buddhism Without Beliefs: A Contemporary Guide to Awakening (Riverhead Books), Batchelor, S. (2011) Confession of a Buddhist Atheist (Spiegel & Grau), Batchelor, S. (2015) After Buddhism: Rethinking the Dharma for a Secular Age (Yale University Press). Candidates should engage critically with Batchelor's presentation of Buddhism. To contrast with Batchelor they may consider another the approach of another Western teacher, David Brazier, who claims Buddhism is a religion. Brazier, D. (2014). Buddhism is a Religion: You Can Believe It (Woodsmoke Press).

Useful resources

Books:

Batchelor, Stephen (1998) - Buddhism Without Beliefs: A Contemporary Guide to Awakening. Riverhead Books, 1573226564

Brazier, David (2014) - Buddhism is a Religion: You Can Believe It. Woodsmoke Press, 0993131700

Piyadassi, M. (1991) - The spectrum of Buddhism : writings of Piyadassi. Jivinda De Silva, 9789559098034

- https://www.stephenbatchelor.org/index.php/en/stephen/confession-of-abuddhist-atheist
- http://www.buddhanet.net/nutshell03.htm
- https://www.thoughtco.com/buddhism-philosophy-or-religion-449727



Theme 3 Significant social developments in religious thought

A) The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.

Responses to the challenges of pluralism and diversity:

Emphasis within Buddhism on the individual testing the teachings and staying true to experience, even if that means following a path different to Buddhism (with reference to the Kalama Sutta v. 9 & 10 and Majjhima Nikaya 56.16 - the Buddha's conversation with Upali). In Mahayana Buddhism the teachings are sometimes considered to be only provisional, different upaya (skilful means) to suit different listeners. The idea that religions contain truth/goodness that all can learn from, as evidenced in the Edicts of Emperor Ashoka: Rock Edict Nb7 and Rock Edict Nb12.

Guidance for Teaching:

Sections 3A, 3B and 3C explore Buddhism's attitude to other religions, the development and popularity of Buddhism in Britain, and the changing roles of men and women including feminist approaches within Buddhism.

Candidates have already encountered the Kalama Sutta v 9 & 10 (http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.soma.html

- Thera Soma translation) which evidences the emphasis within Buddhism on the individual testing the teachings and staying true to experience, rather than accepting the authority of religious truth claims. The Buddha's conversation with the rich Jain follower, Upali, in Majjhima Nikaya 56.16 shows the Buddha's resistance to asserting authority. Candidates need not consult the MN but should know that Upali, who had followed and given alms to the Jains, was encouraged by the Buddha to continue giving alms to the Jains, despite his conversion to Buddhism. The authority of a teacher or tradition is nothing compared to the experience of a teaching resulting in the defeat of greed, hatred and delusion. In Mahayana Buddhism the teachings are sometimes considered to be only provisional, different upaya (skilful means) to suit different listeners (c.f. The Lotus Sutra) thus no teaching is absolute truth. Many Buddhists would consider that there is good within all religions and they should be respected. They might quote the Edicts of the Buddhist Emperor Ashoka, Rock Edict NB 7 'All religions should reside everywhere, for all of them desire self-control and purity of heart' and Rock Edict NB 12 'Contact (between religions) is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others [...] all should be well-learned in the good doctrines of other religions.'



Useful resources

Books:

Hinnells, John (1984) - A Handbook of Living Religions, Penguin, 0140135995 Williams, Paul (2000) - Buddhist Thought, Routledge, 0415571790 Lahiri Nayanjot (2015) Ashoka in Ancient India. Harvard University Press, 0674057775

Piyadassi, M. (1991) The spectrum of Buddhism : writings of Piyadassi. Jivinda De Silva, 9789559098034

Smart, Ninian (1969) - The Religious Experience of Mankind, Fontana, ISBN 0684146479

Williams, Paul (1989) - Mahayana Buddhism, Routledge, B01FIY9011

- http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/edicts-asoka6.pdf
- https://www.quora.com/How-is-Jainism-different-from-Buddhism
- https://studybuddhism.com/web/x/nav/n.html_1867868580.html



Theme 3 Significant social developments in religious thought

B) Historical development of Buddhism in Britain

Buddhism in Britain, distinguishing between 'heritage' Buddhism (the Buddhism of those whose relatives were born in Buddhist countries and migrated to Britain) and 'convert' Buddhism. Possible reasons for the popularity of Buddhism in Britain.

Guidance for Teaching:

Candidates should be able to give an account of Buddhism in Britain, distinguishing between 'heritage' Buddhism (the Buddhism of those whose relatives were born in Buddhist countries and migrated to Britain) and 'convert' Buddhism. They should explore possible reasons for the popularity of Buddhism in Britain. These reasons might include the values of British society, as well as the apparently attractive features of Buddhism.

Useful resources

Books:

Batchelor, Stephen (2011) - The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture, Echo Point Books & Media, 0963878441 Bluck, Robert (2008) - British Buddhism: Teachings, Practice and Development. Routledge, 0415483085

Queen, Christopher (2012) - Engaged Buddhism in the West. Wisdom Publications, BOOJDZM84O

Strong, John (2015) - Buddhism : An Introduction. Oneworld Publications, 1780745052

- https://thebuddhistcentre.com/timeline/the-triratna-story-byvajragupta.pdf
- http://buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/to-west.htm
- http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/60349/1/WRAP_Thanissaro_%25282014%2529% 20Internal%20diversity%20in%20Buddhism%20%255BJCR%255D%20preprint%20for%20WRAP.pdf



Theme 3 Significant social developments in religious thought

C) The relationship between religion and society: religion, equality and discrimination.

The changing roles of men and women including feminist approaches within Buddhism:

Different views in Buddhism about whether women can be nuns or attain awakening. The Buddha ordained women, after persuasion. The Lotus Sutra presents a range of teachings: all equally possess the potential to attain Buddhahood; the Dragon King's daughter (Chapter 12) transforms into a man before attaining awakening. Buddhism's commitment to the end of suffering may be seen as inherently feminist (as indicated by Rita Gross). Cultural stereotypes of the roles of men and women have no universal application within Buddhism.

Guidance for Teaching:

Different views in Buddhism about whether women can be nuns or attain awakening. The Buddha ordained women, after persuasion. The Lotus Sutra presents a range of teachings: all equally possess the potential to attain Buddhahood; the Dragon King's daughter (Chapter 12) transforms into a man before attaining awakening. Buddhism's commitment to the end of suffering may be seen as inherently feminist (as indicated by *Rita Gross*). Cultural stereotypes of the roles of men and women have no universal application within Buddhism.

Useful resources

Books:

Gross, Rita (1992) - Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism. State University of New York Press, 0791414043 Harvey, Peter (2000) - An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, Cambridge University Press, B01K2IMC14

Schireson, Grace (2009) - Zen Women, Wisdom Publications, BOOJDZLTOE Johnston, W.M. (2000) - Encyclopedia of monasticism, volume 2 : M - Z. Fitzroy Dearborn Publish., 9781579580902

Lopez, D.S. (ed.) (2004) - Buddhist Scriptures. Penguin Books. (Penguin Classics S), 9780140447583

Williams, Paul (1989) - Mahayana Buddhism, Routledge, B01FIY9011

- https://manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk/talks/buddhism-feminism-self-transcendence/
- http://www.uvm.edu/~skaza/bibliographies/assets/Women_and_Buddhism.pdf
- https://nichiren.info/buddhism/lotussutra/text/chap12.html



Theme 4 Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 2)

 A) Beliefs and practices of Tibetan Buddhist traditions with reference to mudra, mandala and mantra.

The relationship of Buddhism with pre-Buddhist Bon religion as part of the context for the development of these distinctive practices associated with Vajrayana Buddhism - mudra, (ritual bodily movements, often hand gestures) mandala (cosmic diagrams) and mantra (sacred sounds).

Guidance for Teaching:

Theme 4 involves a broadening of candidate's awareness of diversity in the Buddhist world, with a focus on Tibetan traditions and their practices. Focus should be on the practices, but with enough contextualization to make sense of the practices. The section also includes a critical exploration of the modern Mindfulness movement, and of Socially Engaged Buddhism.

Candidates should be able to comment on the relationship of Buddhism with Bon as part of the context for the development of these distinctive practices associated with Vajrayana Buddhism - mudra, (ritual bodily movements, often hand gestures) mandala (cosmic diagrams) and mantra (sacred sounds). Bon and Buddhism coexist, and whilst Bon developed as an official religious system only after the arrival of Buddhism, pre-Buddhist practices are reflected in Tibetan Buddhism, especially in relation to the uttering of sacred sounds (mantra) and the performance of mudra associated with diverse deities (yidam).

Useful resources

Books:

Kapstein, Matthew (2013) - Tibetan Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction. OUP, 0199735123

Powers, John (2008) - A Concise Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism, Snow Lion, 1559392967

Rinpoche, S., Gaffney, P. (ed.) and Harvey, A. (ed.) (2008) - The Tibetan book of living and dying. Rev. and updated edn. Rider, 9781846041051

Thurman, Robert (1997) - Essential Tibetan Buddhism. Bravo Ltd, 0062510517 Williams, Paul (1989) - Mahayana Buddhism, Routledge, B01FIY901I

- http://www.bonfoundation.org/aboutbon.html
- http://www.vajranatha.com/articles/traditions/bonpo.html?showall=1
- https://studybuddhism.com/en/advanced-studies/abhidharma-tenet-systems/comparison-of-buddhist-traditions/bon-and-tibetan-buddhism
- http://www.patheos.com/library/vajrayana-buddhism



Theme 4 Significant social developments in religious thought

B) Buddhism and change - the development and influence on religious belief and practice within Buddhism of:

The Mindfulness Movement:

Philosophical understandings of the nature of reality and religious experience found within the contemporary Mindfulness movement. The use of mindfulness in health care, education and business – examples drawn from pain management, treatment for stress, depression and anxiety, cancer management, addiction treatment, mindfulness in schools, mindfulness in large corporations and businesses. The response of *Slavoj Zizek* - that by encouraging stress-release, mindfulness serves capitalism rather than challenges it.

Guidance for Teaching:

Candidates should explore philosophical understandings of the nature of reality and religious experience found within the contemporary Mindfulness movement: including the use of mindfulness in health care, education and business - examples drawn from pain management, treatment for stress, depression and anxiety, cancermanagement, addiction treatment, mindfulness in schools, mindfulness in large corporations and businesses. Candidates may wish to make reference to the role of Jon Kabat-Zinn in bringing 'secular mindfulness' to prominence. Candidates will engage critically with the Mindfulness movement, asking how Buddhist is it. They will be able to engage with the argument forwarded by Slavoj Zizek (e.g. see http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/2/western.php) - that by encouraging stress-release, Western Buddhist practices such as mindfulness serve capitalism rather than challenge it.

Useful resources

Books:

Culadasa (2017) - The Mind Illuminated: A Complete Meditation Guide Integrating Buddhist Wisdom and Brain Science for Greater Mindfulness. Hay House, 1501156985

Thich Nhat Hanh (2014) - The Miracle Of Mindfulness: The Classic Guide to Meditation. Ebury Digital, BOOIIS1XB6

- http://www.patheos.com/blogs/americanbuddhist/2013/12/2013-as-theyear-of-mindfulness-critics-and-defenders.html
- https://www.newstatesman.com/sci-tech/2014/02/mindfulness-racket-evangelists-unplugging-might-just-have-another-agenda
- http://www.pomoculture.org/2016/09/25/zombie-apocalypse-asmindfulness-manifesto-after-zizek/
- https://www.everyday-mindfulness.org/the-benefits-of-mindfulness/



Theme 4 Significant social developments in religious thought

C) Socially Engaged Buddhism - 'liberationist' traditions:

Reasons for the development of Socially Engaged Buddhism. The primary drive to combat suffering (not just on achieving a positive rebirth or awakening for oneself). Thich Nhat Hanh's Mindfulness Trainings. The Dalai Lama's support of non-violent protest with regards to Tibet. Sakyadhita and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship as key SEB organisations. The scholarly contribution of *Joanna Macy* and *Damien Keown*.

Guidance for Teaching:

Candidates should consider reasons for the development of Socially Engaged Buddhism: the primary drive to combat suffering (not just on achieving a positive rebirth or awakening for oneself); the support of high profile individuals such as the Dalai Lama (non-violent protest with regards to Tibet); it receives extensive media coverage. Candidates should explore Thich Nhat Hanh's Mindfulness Trainings, the work of Sakyadhita and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Candidates should also explore the work of i) Joanna Macy (http://www.joannamacy.net/) and be able to comment on the relationship between engaged Buddhism and Deep Ecology and ii) Damien Keown, who writes extensively on Buddhist ethics.

Useful resources

Books:

Brazier, David (2002) - The New Buddhism. St. Martin's Griffin, 0312295189 Guruge, Ananda (2008) - Buddhism, Economics and Science: Further Studies in Socially Engaged Humanistic Buddhism. AuthorHouse, 1434332241 Henry, Phil (2015) - Adaptation and Developments in Western Buddhism: Socially Engaged Buddhism in the UK. Bloomsbury Academic, 1474223788 King, S.B. (2009) - Socially Engaged Buddhism (Dimensions of Asian Spirituality). University of Hawaii Press, 0824833511

- https://www.globalonenessproject.org/people/joanna-macy
- http://dl4a.org/uploads/pdf/Buddhism%20A%20Very%20Short%20Introduction%20-%20Damien%20Keown.pdf
- http://www.sakyadhita.org/
- http://dl4a.org/uploads/pdf/Charles-Prebish-and-Damien-Keown.-Buddhism-An-Online-Introduction-en08-.pdf