

Examiners' Report
June 2015

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1C

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Introduction

Important information about mark schemes:

Detailed mark schemes are available on the Religious Studies web site. Examiners at standardisation are reminded that the mark scheme contains:

(i) General Marking Guidance: This consists of eight bullet points including, 'Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.'

(ii) Generic mark scheme: This divides each level across both AO1 and AO2 into three sub-levels – low, mid and high. Each concludes with a statement about quality of written communication.

(iii) Indicative level descriptors: These are meant to be indicative rather than definitional of content at each level.

The introduction to the indicative level descriptors states:

'Examiners should be reminded that any legitimate approach to the clarification and discussion of the passage must be rewarded and there is no need for candidates to cover every idea mentioned in the extract.'

(iv) In addition, on pages 120-121 of the Spec there is an abbreviated guide of the level descriptors.

Introduction to the paper:

The most able candidates engaged with all aspects of the passage. Candidates at this level of success made the best use of the synoptic opportunities from related anthologies in 6RS04 and relevant material in 6RS03, plus, where appropriate, the two AS units: 6RS01 and 6RS02. The higher levels of work displayed a broad range of understanding of Theravada and Mahayana and in particular Pure Land schools and Zen. There was admirable work on *The Questions of King Milinda* and the contributions of Ashoka to Buddhist ethics. In these cases candidates made explicit links to the passage selected for examination.

Lower levels of work had a more basic understanding of the passage with limited scholarship to support the claims being made. There were instances of unsatisfactory time management relating to the respective demands of the two assessment objectives. A few spent too long on AO1 with too little attention to AO2 and vice versa.

Question 1

Good practice and areas for improvement

AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- comprehensive understanding of the passage
- well-managed and coherent answers
- competent analysis of complex issues and problems
- analysis of terms including dukkha and nibbana
- confident use of scholarship to support their explanations, including Gethin, Keown, Ling and Saddhatissa
- effective use of the other anthology sources by Smart and Griffiths including links with Buddhist philosophical traditions
- effective reference to ethical theories including Virtue Ethics.

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- answers were not systematically focused on the passage in an explicit manner
- a simple comprehension task and typically short
- a generic account of the whole source from the anthology
- a general account of related ideas on key Buddhist teachings with limited ability for drawing out the ethical specifics in the passage.

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- competent presentations with sound evaluations
- effective selection and management of arguments and implications
- an ability to discuss key ideas such as the contrasts between hedonism and materialism
- sustained debate with purposeful use of views for and against the claims about the 'middle path'.

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- basic points of view with limited use of argument and evidence
- isolated view-points without appropriate exemplary support.

The following scripts are examples of good practice.

Keown argues that Buddhism is an 'ethical religion' as it is concerned with the moral behaviour of individuals. Buddhism is concerned with eliminating dukkha, the Buddha argues that, 'I teach dukkha and the cessation of dukkha.'

DeSilva argues that when we eliminate dukkha in our life, it creates the 'ultimate happiness'. One must understand the concept of anatta and anicca. Anatta means no self and anicca means impermanence. Once we understand that everything is impermanent and that everything changes then we can eliminate suffering. One may become upset because they are ageing and they are attached and they don't want to change; the concept of anatta and anicca allows us to understand that we should not get upset and that we will all change and others will change too. and once we stop becoming attached then suffering will be reduced.

The Concept of anatta also allows us to ~~understand the concept~~ understand how to eliminate dukkha. There is no self and we are all Shunya (emptiness) we have names for convenience. The Chariot analogy allows us to understand this concept, if we break down the chariot and take the wheels away, the rope, it isn't a chariot but an ~~assembly of things~~ and the name shows a sum of its parts. The name 'chariot' is given for convenience. Once individuals realise that we are only made up of the five Skandhas then we can eliminate dukkha.

Once we eliminate suffering we can achieve enlightenment which is the 'ultimate happiness' and then we become nirvana'd which as Desilva states is the 'ultimate happiness for men.'

Many may argue that dukkha is pessimistic but Rahula argues that dukkha is not pessimistic or optimistic; but realistic. Surely all beings should understand how

to eliminate dukkha so they can achieve nirvana. We should be aware of the reality of things and if we understand dukkha and how to get rid of it; then how can it be pessimistic, ~~if it can be reduced~~ and eventually eliminated if it can bring ultimate happiness.

The layity can not achieve enlightenment but they can reduce suffering in their lives. DeSilva argues that the Buddha offers a qualified notion of happiness and the layity can achieve this by following the Sigala Vada Sutta (Layman's Code of ethics) which suggests that Buddhists should be respect, be generous, be kind, be caring etc. By being a kind and towards others will reduce karmic consequences and this is a form of Buddhism promoting ethics. DeSilva argues that a ~~where~~ the layity should not be greedy for example they will eat but they ~~would~~ will try to not want more because being greedy causes dukkha.

The layity must also do make sure

that they are following the lawful means which means having a job is ethical. Buddhists follow the concept of ahimsa so a lay man or woman should follow this principle when they have a job; jobs must not harm sentient beings. Meaning they must not do jobs such as being a butcher etc. This will reduce karmic consequences and it allows them to be a virtuous person.

A monk has a strict life-style in which they must not work as they aren't allowed to handle money, they must follow the Vinaya Pitaka which is the discipline section of the Pali Canon, Pāṭimokkha etc. A monk should be compassionate to all (karuṇā) and this will then eliminate dukkha as it reduces karmic consequences. Monks will also focus on Vipassana meditation which is understanding the reality of things. Again, Buddhism is promoting ethics as it is certainly concerned with ethics.

DeSilva argues that the Buddha was 'critical of some materialists who did not believe in an afterlife'. The Buddha believes in the cycle of Samsara which may be seen as an after-life but it is impermanent and individuals can get out of the cycle of Samsara through being enlightened.

The Buddha promoted the middle way because it is the correct way to achieve enlightenment. The Buddha lived in an over-indulgent life for 29 years and this blurred the mind as it caused, caused ignorance (3 fires). Buddha left the palace and saw the four signs which were death, ageing, aesthetics and poverty. The Buddha became an ascetic for many years and it again blurred the mind due to the Buddha under-eating and it caused him to become unbalanced and blurred the mind. The Buddha realised that the only way to achieve enlightenment is to follow Magga. ~~and one DeSilva argues that a~~

~~Answer~~
b)

Dukkha may be seen as pessimistic because it sees everything as creating dukkha which is not true. Not everything creates dukkha. ~~and~~

Many can criticise the Buddha's story of his time in the palace. It is impossible for someone to not have experienced suffering in twenty nine years. Gautama must have realised himself changing and aging; which suggests that everything is anicca. Gautama must of witnessed others around him being ill or himself. Therefore we can not completely agree that the ~~But~~ Gautama had lived an over indulgent life.

Although, the story of the Gautama in the palace is meant to carry a theoretical meaning to emphasize the doctrine of magga and how important ~~the~~ to follow the teachings of Buddhism.

Keown argues that Buddhism is an 'Consequentialist idea'. Buddhism can be compared to Utilitarianism. Utilitarians look at the consequences of actions and Buddhism are also concerned with the consequences because negative actions can create bad karmic consequences. Although, it can be argued that they differ because Buddhism is concerned with the intention behind an act for example the principle of ahimsa can be put aside if it is another individual's best interest. Buddhists accumulate punya and ~~less~~ less give an example of a man going to kill another a Buddhist may cause kill the man who was going to kill. This is due to the fact that Buddhists want to stop others from having bad karma. So the intention of the Buddhist was good.

~~Buddhism~~ Which could suggest that Buddhism may follow the principle of Situation ethics. Due to the fact that they may put aside their beliefs for it

Certain situations; if it is beneficial.

Buddhism can be compared to virtue ethics as it is concerned with self transformation and making one self a better person. Buddhism tries to eliminate the Akusala (vices) which are avraga, amoha, advesa and replace them with Kusala (virtues) raga, moha, dvesa.

Buddhism is concerned with the moral behaviour and virtue ethics is too. Although, virtue ethics has no contact with the visible world ~~as it is~~ unlike Buddhism that has contact with the invisible world through the cycle of Samsara.

Buddhism can be compared to deontology as it tries to suggest that there are certain acts that are right and certain acts ~~are~~ that are wrong. Although, a Buddhist is under no moral obligation to follow the rules of Buddhism as it is their individual decision and ~~Buddhism~~ Kant agrees that we have a moral duty to follow the universal rules in society.

It can be argued why Buddhism is being compared to Western ethical theories when Buddhism isn't an original Western religion. Buddhism originates from India many of its teachings have little similarities to Western ethical theories and we should not try to compare the two to decide whether Buddhism is ethical or not.

It can be argued why Buddhism embraced materialism because there isn't really an after-life in Buddhism. The cycle of Samsara is impermanent and it will eventually end and many religions believe in an after-life that is permanent because there is an eternal god.

It can be argued that meditating doesn't eliminate dukkha but it doesn't make one become nirvana'd. Paulus states that nirvana is reached when meditating is not achieved.

De Sil

To conclude, I believe that Buddhism is an ethical religion which focuses on being a morally good person. as DeSilva mentions in this extract, "Buddha offers for man in following the ethical system." I believe that Buddhism should not be compared to Western theories due to Buddhism being very different from Western religions. ~~and~~ they both have a different goal. Due to Buddhism being concerned with ethics it allows for an individual to be calm in oneself and it allows for them to gain a religious experience of being enlightened.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

In AO1 the candidate made good use of a range of scholars. There was a full examination of key Buddhist terms. The candidate related the material well to the passage and made helpful observations about the contrasts between the householder and the recluse and also about the significance of the Middle Way.

AO2 presented considerable material on views about a range of ethical theories. The candidate engaged in thoughtful arguments including the view that Buddhism was not reducible to a Western system.

De-silva

Life of Buddha

problems with ethics - 8 fold path Noble Truths

3 marks must be understood

~~ethical~~ moral ethics - Karma

intention = key importance

Reli Buddhist perspective on knowledge & truth

• NOT absolutist

positively differs from abrahamic
recommends rather than imposes.

vices & virtues

all bad stuff has positive counterparts.

middle way is best way.

Aristotle: virtue = moral ~~best~~

practical ethics link directly with karma

all emphasise compassion for others.
must

Social ethics - Everyone is equal - Sunta
6 relationships. advice to kings

Madhyamaka
school of
thought

later additions (Mahayana)

extra ethics.

6 perfections

wisdom (prajna) compassion (karuna)

a) De ^{ro} silva discusses Buddhist ethics ~~in his~~ ~~which~~ is his analysis of Buddhist ethics has been published in the book 'A Companion to Ethics'. In the passage ~~he~~ De Silva is ~~state~~ explaining his perception that Buddhism is often seen to ~~be a very neg~~ have a very negative outlook on life. ~~As he~~ ~~goes on to explain~~ primarily because one of the basic principles of Buddhism is ~~that~~ the concept of Dukkha, the ~~1st~~ first Mark of Existence and the ~~1st~~ first Noble truth, ~~it explains~~ meaning that the human condition is ill and that all life is suffering. However, as De Silva goes on to explain, ~~the~~ Buddhism is not all negative and Buddhist ethics can ~~offer~~ promote a very positive life. De Silva describes Buddhism as an ethics of vices and virtues. What he means by this is that for every negative aspect of Buddhism, there is a positive counterpart. For example, the 3 vices; greed, hatred and ignorance have (vices) have the positive counterparts of the 3 virtues; Generosity, wisdom and compassion.

There are many positive aspects of Buddhism, for example in Mahayana Buddhism the Celestial Buddhas act as positive role models, for example Avolokiteshvara demonstrates the importance of compassion in Buddhism. ~~The concept of change can give~~ while Buddhists ~~accept~~ believe in anicca; impermanence and that this ~~impermanence~~ can lead to suffering they have a positive outlook on change and believe that one should celebrate life's changes and the new opportunities they bring.

In fact, Buddhists believe the whole journey from eliminating Dukkha to the attainment of Nirvana should be viewed as positive, ~~this is because it~~ because it is a journey of personal development.

~~■~~ ~~■~~ Buddhism promotes the concept of living an ethical life ~~and~~ one that is 'righteous and harmonious' ~~because by~~ ~~getting~~ however, as De Silva notes it is very important to take the approach to leading the ethical life with the middle way in mind. ~~Extremities~~ If ~~you~~ one is truly ~~lucky~~ lucky and ~~is~~ has the perfect lifestyle, it is inevitable

that this will lead to boredom and frustration because there is nothing ^{new} to aim for, and ~~not~~ However, at the same time practices such as extreme asceticism ~~is~~ is also ~~not~~ ~~the best way~~ to not advised. The Buddha himself ~~realised~~ practiced this and it brought him to the brink of death at which point he realised he had achieved nothing. This is why Buddhism promotes the middle way, ~~is~~ avoiding extremities, because a balanced life is the best kind of life.

~~In Buddhism leading the way~~ In Buddhist ethics the concept of karma is very important. It ~~is~~ literally means action and is the natural law of cause and effect. Every action will have a reaction and this ~~can~~ will result in either positive or negative karmic merit. An action motivated by the 3 greis will ~~can~~ create negative karma, while an action motivated by the 3 virtues will create positive karma. Buddhists believe that karma will transmigrate from one life to the next and will affect ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~ones~~ psychological state one is born into in

their next life. ~~Therefore~~ ~~or~~ ~~Therefore~~
~~As~~ As well as this through leading an ethical life and creating good karma you will as a consequence further yourself on the path to enlightenment. In Buddhism however, it is not so much the action itself but rather the intention behind that action that is important.

Buddhism is a Virtue Ethics Theory which means that in order to decide if an action is ~~good~~ positive or negative they will first look at the intention and consequence of that action.

The concept of karma is linked directly to Buddhist practical ethics. These practical ethics are all based on living a righteous and harmonious life, as De Silva speaks of in the passage. The basis behind every Buddhist ethic is compassion ~~for~~ for others. These are practical ethics are emphasis expressed in the eight fold path where ~~the~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ this is the 4th noble truth (Magga) and it is a series of recommendations ^{for} Buddhists to ~~should~~ take promoting an ethical life and positive life & and therefore ~~helping~~ ^{helping} ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~benefit~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~

Buddhists to eliminate Dukkha from their lives. These include things such as the right speech and right action; ~~doing~~ ^{avoiding} things that ~~will~~ ^{will} harm others.

Buddhism also promotes the 5 precepts, which are refraining from: gossip, overindulgence in substances, sexual misconduct, taking what does not belong to you and harming others. De Silva notes that the 5 precepts are very practical and can help one to differentiate between human need and moral need.

~~In order to lead a~~ ~~p~~ Another Buddhist social ethics are also very important in leading a harmonious and ethical life ~~as mentioned~~, ~~which~~ as mentioned in the passage an ethical life will lead to happiness. ~~Buddh~~ The principle behind Buddhist social ethics certainly promotes a positive and happy society. ~~The~~ De Silva emphasises that the Buddhist believe that everyone is equal. No one person is more important than another. This can be emphasised in the story of Sunita, ~~an~~ an untouchable, who the Buddha led

to enlightenment. It demonstrates that everyone can attain enlightenment. ~~It~~ In a respect this could be likened to the way in which Jesus ^{in Christianity} ~~was not~~ ~~discriminated~~ did not discriminate through his healings. The Madhyamaka ~~view~~ philosophical school explains that we are all part of the same. Everything is empty and interconnected. In this respect one person is not more important than another, we are all equals. The Buddha also promoted the importance of family life and a cohesive society. As mentioned in the passage boredom and dissonance interfere with family and community life which are an integral part of Buddhism. The Buddha promoted the importance of the 6 types of relationship; parent and child, teacher ^{and} pupil, employer and employee, householders and monastics, friends and husband and wife. He also promoted the importance of kings and rulers following the ethical life. ~~for example~~, Danna through the 10 duties of a king. ~~for example~~ Danna (generosity) ~~so~~ means kings should be generous in spiritual guidance and compassion. All of these things

are positive ideals that Buddhists promote and are important for Buddhist ethics. Although the function of these roles in and society has greatly changed. But the Sangha still remains as a reminder of the importance of living in a creative society. ~~Through~~

~~Through living the moral life and to accepting the positive and embracing the positive virtues, Buddhism has to offer one will further their spiritual development as a natural consequence of this.~~

~~De~~ De Silva also explains that while these things are greatly encouraged they are ~~to~~ not orders. Buddhism is very positive in that it ~~accepts that~~ is not absolutist. It makes guidelines and recommendations rather than rules and regulations. This positively differs from the abrahamic traditions that ~~get~~ are getting rules from a divine God. They have absolute right and wrongs such as the 10 commandments in Christianity, they are commands.

Buddhism prefers to describe things as positive and negative. It makes recommendations on ways to lead the ethical life but accepts that there is not only one way to attain enlightenment. Overall, as emphasised in the passage, through living the moral life and accepting and embracing the Buddhist ethics and positive virtues that it promotes, in moderation rather than in excess, one will further their spiritual development as a natural consequence of this.

part B) In many respects I do agree with the ideas expressed. De Silva has ~~made~~^{written} a very comprehensive analysis of Buddhist ethics.

I can clearly see how living a life of moderation and following the ethical guidelines of Buddhism are very practical and that they would lead to a positive and happy life. For example the 5 precepts are very practical and realistic.

Through not over indulging in intoxicating substances it seems clear to me that one will have a clearer mind and be able to make more ethical decisions, therefore leading to a happier life.

I can also ~~great~~ see clearly how the ~~act~~ ~~to~~ concept of Karma in Buddhist ethics has some truth behind it, an action will give rise to a reaction and through positive intentions behind ones actions ~~the~~ one will ~~clearly~~ ~~how~~ have more positive consequences and therefore be in a more positive psychological state. However, what I disagree

with is the idea that karma will transmigrate from one life to the next. ~~But~~ This is because I reject the concept of rebirth, to me it seems like a faith claim. ~~So while it~~ seems similar to the concept of ~~Samsara~~ the abrahamic traditions and the vedic tradition, that leading the ethical life ~~in ones~~ will lead to a positive state of affairs after death, be that a better reincarnation or a higher realm. e.g. heaven. While I believe that ^{the} positive ethical life can affect ones state of affairs in this life ~~for the better~~ positively, I don't believe it will result in one being born into a better psychological state in their next life as I don't believe there is a next life.

Another problem I have with the Buddhist ethics de silva discusses is the over simplification of the four Noble Truths. ~~These imply~~ In Buddhism it is implied that one can eliminate Dukkha simply by changing their perspective, accepting reality (The Dharma) ~~and having a~~ ~~to~~ losing attachment and desires and

having a positive outlook on life.

It explains in the passage that one should live an ethical life without greed or longing. I feel that in ~~today~~ western society this is almost impossible. One can't escape the constant bombardment of the media promoting the material life.

I feel that ~~thus~~ therefore, that simply changing ones perspective and losing ~~to~~ ~~one's~~ attachment and desires is highly impractical in Western culture. Furthermore, ~~the~~ the concept of karma and leading the ethical life fails to take into consideration, the constraints of society. ~~This ethical system that~~ ~~the passage explains the Buddha~~ ~~recommends one should follow is~~

~~we don't~~ Buddhist ethics emphasise the ~~&~~ fact that we are all free to make our own decisions and we are all in charge of our own destiny; governed by the choices we choose to make. While, I believe that ~~we~~ to some extent we are free to govern our own destiny because I don't

believe in a higher plan, ~~or~~ or that our life has already been laid out for us like the abrahamic traditions ~~seem~~ ^{believe} suggest. However, we are all constrained by governments, laws and ~~we all~~ in this respect we are not entirely free to make our own decisions. This is more of a problem in countries ruled by repression, however it means that while these Buddhist ethics don't seem to take this into account when speaking of the importance of ~~be~~ living the ethical life as in the passage.

← However, I strongly agree with the ~~notion~~ ~~of~~ fact that Buddhism is not absolutist. As mentioned in the passage, the Buddha promoted 'ideals' but these were not orders. Buddhism accepts the importance of dealing with situations on a case by case basis and that one size doesn't fit all. What may be most ethical in one situation may not be the same in another. In this respect ~~it~~ it is clear how Buddhism positively differs from abrah



The candidate selected and examined some key Buddhist beliefs highlighted in the passage. There was a focus on Buddhist ethics across some different Buddhist traditions. The candidate showed an understanding of the significance of key terms such as the 'Middle Way' and 'karma'. There was effective use of ethical theories and an emphasis on Buddhism as not being an absolutist type of ethical system.

In AO2 there were debates around important topics such as the Five Precepts and the view that Buddhism presented a distinctive type of ethical system.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to develop important study skills. This unit opens up the possibility of developing a range of study skills applicable to a number of career and HE routes. There are many excellent sources available. One noteworthy edition is:

The Arts Good Study Guide 2nd Edition 2008 Open University Worldwide Chambers, Ellie and Northedge, Andrew.

This includes a scrutiny of:

- a range of reading and note making techniques
- the craft and process of writing good essays
- significance of analysis and evaluation
- preparing for examinations.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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