

Topics for YMBA Diploma - Dhamma - 2000-2011

- 1a). The Buddha as a Social Reformer**
- 1b). Buddhism and Women**
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1a). The Buddha as a Social Reformer

Evaluate the role of the Buddha as a reformer of the contemporary society. – 2008

1b). Buddhism and Women

Discuss the position of women in Buddhism indicating how the teaching and practices of the Buddha elevated their social status. – 2007

Explain how the Teachings and religious practices of the Buddha contributed to elevate the position of women in society. – 2006

Discuss the position of women in Buddhism. – 2002

2. Kalama Sutta

Discuss importance of Kalama sutta as a criterion of true religion. – 2011

“Buddha encouraged free inquiry”. Comment on this statement. – 2010

Discuss the Buddha’s advice to Kalamas (in Kalama Sutta) as criteria for identifying truth from falsehood. – 2009

Discuss the importance of the Kalama Sutta as a criterion of true religion. – 2008

Discuss the guidelines given by the Buddha in the Kalama Sutta to lay devotees to identify the Truth in a multitude of conflicting teachings. – 2007

Kalama Sutta embodies the rational approach to religious belief that the Buddha expected His followers observe. Discuss this statement. – 2006

“Buddhism is not a system of faith and worship owing allegiance to a supernatural God”. Comment on this to show that Buddhism is not a religion. – 2005

Discuss the importance of the Kalama Sutta as a criterion of true religion. – 2004

Freedom of thought and enquiry is one of the main characteristics of Buddhism. Discuss. – 2000

3. Satipatthana Sutta and Meditation

Explain any one of the four foundations of mindfulness (cattaro satipatthana) forming the content of Maha Satipatthana Sutta. – 2011

What are the four ‘Contemplations’ (anupassana) dealt with in the Satipatthana Sutta? Explain one of them. – 2010

Distinguish between Tranquility Meditation (Samatha bhavana) and Insight Meditation (Vipassana bhavana). – 2010

Enumerate the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Sati patthana) and explain ONE of them. – 2009

Explain any one of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Cattaro Satipatthana) forming the content of the Maha Satipatthana Sutta. – 2008

Satipatthana is the basis to develop Vipassana. Elaborate on this idea. – 2004

State the benefits that one will get, when practicing the Satipatthana Sutta? State the objects of meditation that are mentioned according to the Mindfulness of the Dhamma (Dhammanupassana).

Or

“The only way for the purification of beings is Mindfulness”. Discuss with special reference to Mindfulness of the body. – 2001

4a). Theravada and Mahayana

Identify the main differences between the Theravada and Mahayana doctrines of Buddhism. – 2011

What are the main differences and common beliefs in the doctrinal systems of Theravada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism? – 2010

Identify the main differences between Mahayan and Theravada Buddhism. – 2009

Identify the main differences between the Theravada and Mahayana doctrines of Buddhism. – 2007

4b). Buddhist Councils

Discuss the contribution of the Six Buddhist Councils towards the preservation and dissemination of the Buddha Dhamma and maintaining the unity and discipline of the Sangha. – 2007

Discuss the achievements of the first Three Buddhist Councils that contributed to strengthen and spread the Buddha Sasana (Teachings of the Buddha). Did the Councils fail to achieve the objects in any respect? – 2006

The time has come for another Buddhist Council. Discuss the relevance giving a brief history of the previous Councils. – 2003

Give the causes and results of the first three Buddhist Councils. – 2002

5. Social Dimensions (Sigalovada, Vyagghapajja, Parabhava Suttas)

Summarise the advice of the Buddha to lay Householders regarding the means of earning wealth and the manner of using wealth. – 2011

Outline the Buddhist attitude to wealth and material progress. – 2010

“The Buddha’s teachings in the Sigalovada Sutta are aimed at promoting social harmony by the fulfillment of obligations by the parties that are mutually related”. Explain this statement. – 2010

Summarise the advice of the Buddha to lay householders regarding the means of earning wealth and the manner of using wealth. – 2008

“Although the main aim of the Teachings of the Buddha was the moral and spiritual advancement of mankind leading to final Emancipation, Buddha devoted considerable attention to promote the mundane and material welfare of human beings”. Comment on this statement drawing references from the relevant suttas. – 2006

We all clamour for peace. Can we seek redress in Buddhism in our plight? – 2003

How does Buddhism help solve the problems of the modern world? Write a short essay. – 2002

Dhamma can flourish only in a good social climate. Illustrate this with reference to the “Parabhava Sutta”. – 2001

‘The modern society is torn asunder by greed, hatred and fear.’ What is the solution in Buddhism to overcome this. – 2000

6. The Buddha, Uniqueness

Write a short Essay on "The Uniqueness of the Buddha and His teachings" – 2011

Explain how the Buddha stands unique amongst religious teachers of the World. – 2010

Discuss the qualities and achievements of the Buddha as a “Great Teacher”. – 2009

Write an essay on The Uniqueness of the Buddha. – 2007

Write a short essay on The Uniqueness of the Buddha. – 2006

“Although the Buddha was possessed of many superhuman powers, He was not a superhuman Being. He was subject to ordinary human experiences such as hunger, illness, old age and finally death”. Comment on this statement. – 2006

Write a essay on The Uniqueness of the Buddha. – 2005

Though the Buddha was perfectly selfless in His service to humanity, yet He had to contend against strong opposition. Who were His opponents? – 2004

Write a short essay on The Uniqueness of the Buddha. – 2004

“I belong to the Buddha lineage, not to the Khattiya”. Discuss the above statement connecting it with the episodes of the conversations of Prince Nanda and Rahula. – 2003

Buddha was no Super Human Being. He too had to face the rigours of nature, sickness, old age and finally death. Make your observations. – 2003

Give your views regarding the concept of Mara indicating the situations where Mara seems to have appeared. – 2000

7. Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta and Anattalakkhana Sutta

Explain the concept of 'Dukkha' (Suffering) as presented in the Teachings of the Buddha. – 2011

Briefly outline the Buddhist Doctrine of Anatta (Egolessness). – 2010

“Buddhism stands unique in the history of religions in denying the existence of a Soul, Self or Atman”. Explain this statement in relation to the Buddhist Doctrine of “No-Soul” (Anatta). – 2009

State briefly the main teachings expounded in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. – 2005

In Buddhism there is ‘neither a Saviour, nor a saved’ – but a way of self-realization. How far does Buddhism deviate from other religions in this context? – 2003

Comment on the saying : “The Path to deliverance is within you”. – 2002

“Suffering there is, but no sufferer”. How do you reconcile this statement in terms of the Dhamma? – 2001

Are the factors of the ‘Noble Eight Fold Path’ in a special sequential order? Give reasons for your answer. – 2001

8. Kamma

Give a summary of the 'Cula kammavibhanga sutta' with reference to the aspects of the Doctrine of Kamma dealt with therein. – 2011

Explain how Cullakamma Vibhanga Sutta illustrates how Kamma (both Kusala and Akusala) takes effect. – 2010

Give a summary of the ‘Cula Kammavibhanga Sutta’ with references to the aspects of the Doctrine of Kamma dealt with therein. – 2008

Write a brief account of the Buddhist Law of Kamma. – 2007

Our pain and happiness are the direct results of our own good and evil. Discuss. – 2005

“Rebecoming” is a central theme in the Buddha Dhamma. Validate this on the basis of Kamma and Vipaka. – 2001

9. Satta Visuddhi

What are the seven stages of Purity (satta visuddhi) on the Path to Nibbana? Enumerate and explain the "Four kinds of Morality consisting of Purification (catu parisuddha sila). – 2011

Evaluate the importance of the Seven Stages of Purity (Satta Visuddhi) as requisites for the attainment of Nibbana. – 2010

What are the Seven Stages of Purity (Satta Visuddhi)? Explain ONE of them. – 2009

What are the Seven Stages of Purity (Satta Visuddhi) on the path to Nibbana? Enumerate and explain. – 2008

What are the stages to Purity on the way to Nibbana? Enumerate and explain. – 2004

What are the 7 stages of Purity (Visuddhi)? Explain in detail any one of the seven. – 2002

Name the seven stages of Purity (Satta Visuddhi) and explain how an aspirant to Sainthood eradicates defilements. – 2000

10. Dhammapada

Explain the doctrine contained in the following Dhammapada stanza:

146. Ko nu haso kim anando
niccam pajjalite sati
Andhakarena onaddho
Padipam na gavesatha – 2011

Give the meaning of the following stanza from the Dhammapada and indicate the moral embodied within :

Tumhehi kiccam atappam
Akkhataro Tathagata
Patipanna pamokkhanti
Jhayino Marabandhana – 2010

“You yourselves must strive; Tathagatas only point the Way (Tumhehi kiccam atappam; akkhataro Tathagata – Dhammapada stanza 276)”. Explain this aphorism in relation to the spiritual role of the Buddhas. – 2009

Explain the doctrine contained in the following Dhammapada stanza :

Sabbe sankhara anicca ti
yada pannaya passati
atha nibbindati dukkhe
esa maggo visuddhiya – 2008

“Tumhehi kiccam atappam; akkhataro Tathagata”. (You yourselves must strive; Tathagatas only point the way – Dhammapada 276). Explain this dictum in relation to the role of the Buddha as a promoter of man’s deliverance from ‘Samsara’ (Round of Births). – 2007

Give the meaning of the following stanza from the Dhammapada :

Tumhehi kiccam atappam
Akkhataro Tathagata
patipanna pamokkhanti
jhayino Marabandhana

What aspect of the Teaching of the Buddha is highlighted in this stanza? – 2006

The Dhammapada is a vast treasure of knowledge embodying the essentials of Buddhism. Discuss. – 2005

The Dhammapada stanzas are useful for the ordinary layman to develop his inner self in this world as well as the world over. Discuss quoting examples. – 2004

(a) “Aneka jati Samsaram... “ Complete the two stanzas and give the meaning fully. (Dhammapada 153). (b) Discuss the suitability of this metaphor. – 2003

The Dhammapada is a compendium of the essentials of Buddhism, appealing to all levels of Intellect. Discuss.

Dhammapada is a book of wisdom suited to any society of any time, although it embodies the moral and philosophical teachings of the Buddha. Discuss. – 2000

11. Miscellaneous and Short Notes

Discuss the Importance of Vinaya (Monastic Discipline) as a factor that promotes the strength and long duration of the Buddha sasana (dispensation) – 2011

Write short notes on any FOUR of the following:

- a. Panca niyama dhamma (Five-fold law of Nature)
- b. Samma sankappa (Right intention)
- c. Katha vatthu (Abhidhamma text - Points of Controversy)
- d. Sotapanna (The stream Enterer)
- e. Sati (Mindfulness)
- f. Attakilamathanuyoga (Self - mortification) – 2011

Refer to context the following saying – by whom to whom and when?

“What say you my son! When you were conceived in my womb, I developed a craving to sip some blood from the right hand of your father..... Joyfully your father fulfilled my wish”. – 2004

What are the main functions of the Hindrances? Discuss what steps must be taken to overcome them. – 2001

Though prayers and petitions have no place in the realization of the Truth, why do some Buddhists resort to these non-Buddhist Practices? Discuss. – 2000

Anapanasati bhavana
Samatha bhavana
Samma ditthi
King Asoka / Dhammasoka
Kayanupassana
Samyojana
Vicikiccha
Parajika vinaya rules
Kathavatthu prakarana (Abhidhamma text)
The arahat
Personality View (Sakkaya Ditthi)
Volition (Cetana)
Akiriya vada
Sopadesa Nibbana
Bodhisatta (Aspirant to Buddhahood)
Sila Visuddhi (Purification of Morality)
Anicca (Impermanence)
Metta (Loving Kindness)
Eight Chief Rules for the Bhikkhunis (Garu Dhamma)
Mara
Dana Parami (Perfection of Generosity)
Ratana Sutta
Aho si Kamma
Bodhisatta (Future Buddha)
Ven. Ananda
Visakha
Kalama Sutta
Paticca Samuppada
Kundala kesi
Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma
Cunda, the metal worker
Maha Kassapa
Prasenajit Kosala
The Middle Path
Vipassana