

Candidate 1 evidence

Understanding Standards Higher RMPS

Essay 1 – Buddhism

Analyse the relationship between nibbana and meditation. (10)

Nibanna is a state of total liberation and freedom from suffering, where Buddhists believe that we are no longer trapped in the cycle of rebirth and death (samsara) (KU). The Tibetan Wheel of life shows the many realms Buddhists may be reborn into, with the lowest realms being the Hell realm, the realm of animals and the realm of the hungry ghosts! The Hell realm is associated with hatred and anger, showing the mean nature of human beings. The realm of animals is associated with ignorance, where we have failed to attempt to understand the true nature of our existence by choice. The realm of the hungry ghosts is associated with unsatisfactoriness, where we crave so much that we end up craving even more - we cannot get enough material wealth and satisfactoriness. One of the highest realms is the human realm, which is associated with passion and desire, and is the only realm in which humans can achieve Nibanna due to our level of consciousness compared to the other realms (such as the animal realm) (KU). However, in each realm, we still experience suffering, which shows that despite gaining a higher rebirth when we accumulate positive kamma, if we are trapped in the cycle of samsara having not achieved nibanna - we will never be fully happy. An implication of believe about Nibanna would be that Buddhists would try to accumulate positive kamma to try and get better samsaric rebirth, which will lead them on the way to enlightenment (KU). For example, they may engage in right action, which is a part of the noble eightfold path, where they will follow the 5 or 10 precepts to try to live an ethical life and reach Nibanna sooner (KU). In the Dhammapada, it describes Nibbana as "calm in his thoughts, calm in his actions and calm in his speech (KU). This implies that when Buddhists have achieved Nibanna, they will experience total peace and freedom from worry, where the causes of worry have ceased to exist, and we will now approach others, our feelings and our words in the kindest and calmest way possible - we are happy! (KU) In Therevada Buddhism, someone who has achieved Nibanna can be described as an 'arhat', meaning 'worthy one' and is seen as ideal, with their role being to protect the Dhamma (the Buddha's teachings) from ever being lost again, as the Buddha did not make it, he found it (KU). In Mahayana Buddhism, someone who has reached Nibanna would be described as a 'Bodhisattva', meaning someone who can be reborn, but chooses not to in order to help others in their reachings to a better samsaric rebirth or even enlightenment (KU). For example, the Dalai Lama is the 'bodhisattva of compassion', as he has reached enlightenment and promotes kindness to all

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sentient beings (KU). An implication of this belief is that Buddhists would not kill any living animal, as they would view this as morally wrong as it would hurt the animal and not be a kind action - therefore, they would not take up a job as a butcher. The Buddha achieved Nibanna by sitting under a tree and vowing not to get up until he had found out the true nature of reality. He fell deeper and deeper into meditation, where he realised many things (KU). An implication of belief in Nibanna would be that the Buddha's enlightenment would have encouraged many Buddhists to do the same, and meditate to find out why we suffer and what characterises humans, so therefore Nibanna is directly linked to meditation through the Buddha's enlightenment (A). Buddhists can achieve a still mind, where they have eradicated the three root poisons, where they cannot live a happy life as they are free from greed, hatred and ignorance. Buddhists achieve this state of mind by practicing meditation. For example, the Samye Ling website says "Meditation is a way of finding peace from within by simple methods of calming and stabilising our minds." (KU) An implication of meditating for Buddhists would be that by eradicating the three root poisons, they can now live life to the full, where they are more likely to spread positivity to others around them!

Nibanna is related to meditation because the more we meditate, the closer we become to eradicating the three root poisons, which will bring us closer/to escaping the cycle of samsara, and in turn bring us nearer to Nibanna. (A) Samatha meditation is a type of meditation which involves focusing the mind by concentrating on the body, and is more focused on calming our minds. For example, the Buddha recommended Buddhists to use KASINAS (visual objects) to aid meditation, which could even involve placing a coloured dust in front of us to focus on and put all our thoughts and feelings onto this (KU). Therefore, samatha meditation could be linked to Nibanna, as we need to have a clear and relaxed mindset in order to have any chance of reaching Nibanna, so without samatha meditation, Nibanna would not be possible and Buddhists would live an unhappy life filled with worry and craving. Vipassana meditation is another type of meditation which involves finding out about the true nature of reality and the nature of human beings. Whilst meditating, you will undertake a discovery into these Buddhist teachings, in order to gain insight (KU). For example, it involves considering the four noble truths, being Dukkha, Tanha, Magga and Nibanna! Therefore, Vipassana meditation links to Nibanna because in order to

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achieve Nibanna, you need to have a full understanding of the Buddha's teachings, without this, Buddhists would be meditating out of ignorance and attempting to get to Nibanna endlessly when they cannot, as they need to fully contemplate the true nature of reality first (A). Also, it could be said that Nibanna is actually directly linked to Vipassana meditation, as part of this involves understanding that Nibanna is complete freedom from suffering, where we no longer experience craving, so in order to reach Nibanna, we need to understand it by meditating first. Another type of meditation is walking meditation. An example of this is the marathon monks of Mt Tei Hei, who walked over 1000 marathons in the space of a year whilst meditating (KU). An implication of this is that Buddhists would be encouraged to partake in more active meditation, which would allow them to get fresh air and be sociable.

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