



**Nāgānanda International Institute for Buddhist Studies**

**Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**Masters of Arts in Buddhist Studies Examination**

**2025 November**

**MABS 1114 - Buddhist Literary Sources (Early Buddhist, Later Theravada,  
Mahayana and Vajrayana)**

**Number of questions: 06**

**Time: 2 Hours**

Answer any **three (03)** questions only.

01. Examine the early classifications of sayings of the Buddha and highlight the contribution of the first Buddhist council for compilation of Pāli *Tipiṭaka*.  
(20 marks)
02. Point out briefly the divisions, sub-divisions and the content of the Pāli *Sutta-piṭaka*.  
(20 marks)
03. Explain the nature of *Theravāda Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and the evolution of the Abhidhamma in Buddhist schools.  
Or  
Make a study on the various types of classifications of individuals as found in the *Puggalapaññattippakarana*.  
(20 marks)
04. Do a critical discussion on the origin & content of the Pāli commentarial literature.  
Or  
Outline the origin & gradual development of *Theravāda Tīkā* literature. (20 marks)
05. Make a survey of the Sanskrit *Mahāyāna Sūtra* literature. (20 marks)
06. Make a critical study on the nature of the Chinese Buddhist sources. (20 marks)

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**MABS 1124 - Fundamental Doctrines of Buddhism**

**Number of questions: 06**

**Time: 2 Hours**

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Answer any **three (03)** questions only.

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01. Discuss the distinctive characteristics of the Buddha in comparison with his contemporary religious teachers in India. (20 marks)
02. Explain your understanding of the Noble Truth of the Origin (cause) of Suffering. Discuss the three forms of craving (tanha) with reference to suitable examples. (20 marks)
03. Present a detailed account of Buddhist analysis of five aggregates (*pañcakkhandā*) as the basis of human personality. (20 marks)
04. Discuss the Buddhist theory of kamma and analyze its unique features that distinguish it from other Indian conceptions of moral action and its consequences. (20 marks)
05. Discuss the ethical significance and practical relevance of the Noble Eightfold Path in realizing Nibbana. (20 marks)
06. Evaluate the importance of Buddhist meditation with special reference to Satipatthana-sutta, highlighting its significance in the development of insight (*vipassana*). (20 marks)

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**MABS 1134 - Intellectual History of Buddhism: Theravada and the Four Traditions**

**Number of questions: 06**

**Time: 2 Hours**

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Answer any **three (03)** questions only.

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01. Discuss the relevance of studying the pre-Buddhist religious and philosophical views in understanding the teachings of the Buddha. (20 marks)
02. Outline the main religious and philosophical views held by the 'six religious teachers' contemporary to the Buddha and the Buddha's response to those views. (20 marks)
03. Examine the key doctrinal views held by those who belonged to Mahasanghika, Sarvastivada and Vatsiputriya (pudgalavada) schools and the Theravada response to those views. (20 marks)
04. Survey the reasons for the origin of the Mahayana tradition in opposition to what they called 'hinayana' schools. (20 marks)
05. Discuss how the elements of the fundamental doctrines of Madhyamaka and Yogacara schools could be traced to the teachings of the Buddha. (20 marks)
06. Outline the main ideas of the schools belonging to the East Asian (China, Korea and Japan) Mahayana tradition. (20 marks)

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**MABS 1244 – Buddhist Theory of Knowledge and Ethics  
(Based on early Discourses)**

**Number of questions: 06**

**Time: 2 Hours**

Answer any **three (03)** questions only.

01. Introduce the concept of epistemology and explain how the Buddhist theory of knowledge can be considered a foundation for the attainment of Nibbana. (20 marks)
02. Elucidate the concept of the limits to knowledge and examine the Buddhist attitude toward it with reference to relevant discourses. (20 marks)
03. Discuss the different ways of acquiring knowledge and explain the Buddhist perspective on empiricism. (20 marks)
04. Describe the meaning of ethics and explain the Buddhist concept of sila with reference to relevant discourses. (20 marks)
05. Explain, with examples, the criteria used in Buddhism to distinguish between good and evil. (20 marks)
06. Write adequate notes on any **two (02)** of the following :
  - I. Freedom of Thought and Inquiry
  - II. Concept of Omniscience
  - III. The Kālāma Sutta
  - IV. Relationship between Sila and Paññā (20 marks)

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**MABS 1254 - Buddhist Economic and Political Thought**

**(Based on Early Discourses)**

**Number of questions: 06**

**Time: 2 Hours**

Answer any **three (03)** questions only.

01. Having elucidated the political and administrative systems of pre-Buddhist and contemporary India, analyze how the Buddha critiqued these structures, with reference to the relevant sources.  
(20 marks)
02. Describe the principles of good governance with reference to the early Buddhist discourses, and examine their applicability to the current governing system.  
(20 marks)
03. Analyze how the concept of the ideal ruler (*cakkavatti rājā*) is portrayed in Buddhism, focusing on its moral and social dimensions and its implications for an ethical and a just ruler.  
(20 marks)
04. Critically examine the competencies and ethical considerations emphasized in Buddhist teachings for effective economic management and entrepreneurship.  
(20 marks)
05. Evaluate the importance of household economic management as outlined in early Buddhist suttas, highlighting its ethical, social, and practical implications.  
(20 marks)
06. Study the concept of *Sammā Ājīva* (Right Livelihood) from an economic perspective, examining its ethical foundations and contemporary relevance.

Or

Examine the Buddhist viewpoint on development, analyzing how spiritual, ethical, and socio-economic factors are integrated within the Buddhist framework

(20 marks)

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**MABS 1264 - Buddhist Art and Architecture**

**Number of questions: 06**

**Time: 2 Hours**

Answer any **three (03)** questions only.

01. Describe the characteristics of Buddhist monasteries. You may choose examples from Sri Lanka and India. (20 marks)
02. Illustrate the architectural elements of stupa according to your experience. (20 marks)
03. Describe the characteristics of Buddha image in Sri Lanka.  
Or  
Compare the Sri Lankan Buddha image with those from India (20 marks)
04. Briefly explain the cult of Bodhisattva according to Theravada (Lesser vehicle) and Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) traditions and describe the iconography of Bodhisattva images. (20 marks)
05. Describe the aniconic symbols depicted in Sanchi stupa to represent the Buddha. (20 marks)
06. Describe the contribution of king Ashoka to spread Buddhism and Buddhist art in Indian Sub-continent. (20 marks)

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