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A-level  
**RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  
**7062/2A**

Paper 2A Study of Religion and Dialogues: Buddhism

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Mark scheme

June 2021

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Version: 0.1 Pre-Standardisation



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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## Methods of Marking

It is essential that, in fairness to students, all examiners use the same methods of marking. The advice given here may seem very obvious, but it is important that all examiners follow it as exactly as possible.

1. If you have any doubts about the mark to award, consult your Team Leader.
2. Refer constantly to the mark scheme throughout marking. It is extremely important that it is strictly adhered to.
3. Remember, you must **always** credit **accurate, relevant and appropriate** answers which are not given in the mark scheme.
4. Do **not** credit material that is irrelevant to the question or to the stated target, however impressive that material might be.
5. If a one-word answer is required and a list is given, take the first answer (unless this has been crossed out).
6. If you are wavering as to whether or not to award a mark, the criterion should be, 'Is the student nearer those who have given a correct answer or those who have little idea?'
7. Read the information on the following page about using Levels of Response mark schemes.
8. Be prepared to award the full range of marks. Do not hesitate to give full marks when the answer merits full marks or to give no marks where there is nothing creditable in an answer.
9. No half marks or bonus marks are to be used under any circumstances.
10. Remember, the key to good and fair marking is **consistency**. Do **not** change the standard of your marking once you have started.

## Levels of Response Marking

In A-level Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, levels of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Levels of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Levels are tied to specific skills. Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Levels of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully, responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. This should only be necessary occasionally and where this occurs examiners must indicate, by a brief written explanation, why their assessment does not conform to the levels of response laid down in the mark scheme. Such scripts should be referred to the Lead Examiner.

## Assessment of Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication will be assessed in all components and in relation to all assessment objectives. Where students are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. The quality of written communication skills of the student will be one of the factors influencing the actual mark awarded within the level of response. In reading an extended response, the examiner will therefore consider if it is cogently and coherently written, ie decide whether the answer:

- presents relevant information in a form that suits its purposes
- is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear
- is suitably structured and that the style of writing is appropriate.

<b>Levels of Response: 10 marks A-Level – AO1</b>	
<b>Level 5 9–10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated</li> <li>• Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 7–8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained</li> <li>• Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 5–6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 3–4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 1–2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development</li> <li>• There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No accurate or relevant material to credit</li> </ul>

<b>Levels of Response: 15 marks A-Level – AO2</b>	
<b>Level 5 13–15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis</li> <li>• There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning</li> <li>• Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 10–12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis</li> <li>• There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning</li> <li>• Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 7–9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A general response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought</li> <li>• An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning</li> <li>• Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 4–6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument</li> <li>• Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 1–3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support</li> <li>• Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No accurate or relevant material to credit</li> </ul>

0 1 . 1

**Examine why there are different acts of devotion in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.**

**[10 marks]**

**Target: AO1.3:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

One reason there are different acts of devotion is because of different understandings of the status of Buddha. Theravada Buddhists believe that Buddha can no longer interact in this world. Accordingly, many of their acts of devotion take the form of thanksgiving and paying reverence, for example, giving offerings at the shrine to thank Buddha for the Dharma. Most Mahayana Buddhists believe that Buddha and Bodhisattvas can interact with the world, therefore many of their acts of devotion focus on asking for help or guidance from Buddha or Bodhisattvas.

Another reason that there are different acts of devotion is because of differing beliefs about the use of Buddha images. For Theravada Buddhists, Buddha images allow them the opportunity to reflect on Buddha's qualities and consider how they can adopt these into their own lives. For Mahayana Buddhists, Buddha images are visualised, and are believed to be able to awaken their Buddha-nature. For example, Avalokitesvara is visualised by Mahayana Buddhists to develop the virtue of compassion.

A final reason that there are different acts of devotion is because they are performed for different purposes. Some acts of devotion focus on individual merit-making. For example, members of the Theravada laity offer alms to a monk on their daily rounds. Other acts focus the mind upon the enlightenment of all sentient beings. For example, the chanting of the Bodhisattva Vow by Mahayana Buddhists helps them to practise wisdom and compassion in the world with the aim of freeing all beings from the samsaric cycle.

Maximum Level 2 for answers that only explain different acts of devotion.

0 1 . 2

**‘Ahimsa means that Buddhists should not take part in war.’**

**Evaluate this claim.**

**[15 marks]**

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to consideration of the following specification content: Ahimsa: the concept of ahimsa and its application to issues concerning [...] war, including the use of weapons of mass destruction; different Buddhist views.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Ahimsa is the concept of non-violence or non-harm. As war is rooted in violent action and leads to harm, many Buddhists agree this violates the first moral precept and breaks the principle of ahimsa, and therefore they do not take part in war. However, some Buddhists argue that whilst war should be avoided, it is sometimes necessary. For example, some Buddhist men take part in military service within their country. They take on the karmic burden of performing violent actions so that others do not have to.

Many Buddhist figures who have advocated the principle of ahimsa have shown that it is possible to overcome conflict through non-violent methods. For example, Thich Nhat Hanh has encouraged the use of non-violent protest and meditative practices to overcome conflict. However, some Buddhists argue that engaging in war is sometimes necessary as an act of self-defence. At times it may be the only action that will stop aggressors causing harm and destruction. Killing may be seen as an act of compassion and skilful means. For example, in the Jakarta Tales there is a story of Buddha, in a previous life, killing as an act of compassion to save the lives of 500 others.

Buddhist teaching suggests that Buddhists should uphold ahimsa by settling conflicts in ways that do not cause harm. For example, Mahayana scriptures teach that conflict should be resolved through compassion rather than by war. Many Buddhists therefore support conflict-resolution by diplomacy and peacekeeping. However, there have been examples of Buddhist teachers in history who have advocated the use of violence to overcome conflict, especially to protect the interests of the state.



0 2 . 1

**Examine how scientific discoveries have influenced Buddhist ethical thinking.**

**[10 marks]**

**Target: AO1.2:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Scientific discoveries have allowed the development of genetic engineering, raising new ethical questions. These have encouraged Buddhists to develop their ethical thinking. Some Buddhist thinkers suggest that genetic engineering is compatible with Buddhist ethics because it can alleviate Dukkha. For example, the engineering of crops may bring an end to food insecurity, and allow those who are hungry to eat.

The way some scientific discoveries lead people to treat animals has encouraged Buddhists to reaffirm Buddhist ethical thinking. Many intensive farming processes mistreat animals through breeding and rearing processes, and this is incompatible with Buddhist ethical thinking. For example, the cramped conditions of factory farming cause animals to experience Dukkha, which is not in accordance with the Buddhist principles of loving kindness and compassion.

For many Buddhists life begins at conception. In light of this, some Buddhists have suggested that some scientific developments, for example embryo research, are incompatible with Buddhist ethics. This is because the death of an embryo as part of the research violates the principle of ahimsa through the taking of life. As a result, some Buddhists may be influenced to reject scientific developments.

0 2 . 2

**‘Buddhism has no effective response to issues arising from the freedom of religious expression.’**

**Evaluate this claim.**

**[15 marks]**

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to consideration of the following specification content: Buddhist responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

One issue which arises from the freedom of religious expression is violent conflict between different religious communities. It can be argued that Buddhism has no effective response to this, for example, as shown in the ongoing conflict between Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar. However, there are many examples of Buddhists co-existing peacefully and working together with other faiths to overcome social problems, for example in the Inter Faith Network. Engaging in interfaith dialogue may be seen as an effective response to issues raised by the freedom of religious expression.

Another issue which arises from the freedom of religious expression is conflicting truth claims. Buddhism fails to respond to this issue effectively because some traditions, for example some Nichiren Buddhists, claim to possess the absolute truth. Historically, this has led to animosity between religious communities. However, other Buddhists suggest that all religions should be treated equally. For example, Ashoka argues that one tradition should not be placed above another. This overcomes the issue of conflicting truth claims by suggesting that all religions are equally valid.

A third issue which arises from the freedom of religious expression is disagreement about the acceptability of particular religious practices. For example, many Buddhists disagree with the Jewish and Islamic ritual slaughter of animals. Buddhism cannot respond effectively to this issue because the killing of animals contradicts Buddhist ethics. However, some Buddhists have responded effectively to this issue by using their freedom of expression to challenge slaughter practices. For example, in some Buddhist communities they have used their right to protest to campaign for a ban, or boycott of such practices and associated products.

0 3 . 1

**‘Human life has purpose because there is continuing personal existence after death.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

### **AO1**

There may be discussion of religious and non-religious views about the possibility of continuing personal existence after death, and the relative values of different religious views about the purpose of life.

### **Buddhism**

Purposes of life include better rebirth and the attainment of Nirvana. There are differences between Theravada and Mahayana understandings of these. There may be discussion of the role of karma and the range of views about rebirth. There may be consideration of how the concept of anatta challenges the idea of continuing existence being personal.

### **Philosophy**

The possibility of continuing personal existence after death may reflect views about the nature and existence of the soul, Descartes’ arguments for the existence of the soul, and aspects of the body / soul relationship. Various theories explaining continuing personal existence may be considered, for example Hick’s replica theory or Swinburne’s light-bulb argument.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

**AO2**

There is some philosophical evidence to suggest that there might be continuing personal existence after death, for example, rebirth stories and accounts of near-death experiences. If these are accepted by a Buddhist, life may have some purpose in preparing for the afterlife. However, philosophical thinking about the possibility of continuing personal existence varies, and since philosophers have different views about the existence of a soul and the nature of consciousness, it is hard to see any sense of ultimate purpose in human life.

Buddhist beliefs about karma and its cumulative effects mean that all human life has purpose. This is because human life gives Buddhists the opportunity to perform skilful actions and generate fruitful karmic consequences to ensure a greater future rebirth. However, Buddha's teaching on rebirth, the five aggregates, and anatta reject traditional understandings of continuing personal existence after death. This means that current human life may have very little purpose, because to realise Nirvana takes many cycles of death and rebirth.

For those Buddhists who follow the Bodhisattva path, human life has profound purpose. This is because it allows them to fulfil the Bodhisattva Vow of saving all other sentient beings before attaining Nirvana themselves. However, for those Buddhists on the path of arhatship, human life has limited purpose. Once a Buddhist becomes an arhat and attains enlightenment, the purpose of life has been achieved and, for example, human existence is merely continued until the passing into Parinirvana.

0 4 . 1

**‘Miracles have no value for religion today.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

There may be discussion of what Buddhists mean by the term miracle. Buddhist scriptures mention miracles, for example, flying and remembering former lives. Buddha talked about different kinds of miracles, for example, supernatural powers, psychic powers and instruction. For Buddhists today, miracles may be symbolic, or they may be examples of the use of skilful means.

### **Philosophy**

There may be a consideration of realist and anti-realist views about miracles, and the views of Hume and Wiles. Hume’s realist approach sees miracles as maximally improbable. Wiles’ anti-realist approach denies that they happen apart from the miracle of creation.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

**AO2**

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Hume was largely successful in arguing from a realist perspective that miracles are maximally improbable because no amount of evidence could support a violation of the laws of nature, and if he was correct, then miracles cannot possibly have any value for religion today. However, an anti-realist view of miracles allows for both a natural explanation of an event and a view that such an event acts as a sign of the Ultimate Reality's action in the world. For an anti-realist, a miracle may have value even if it is not a violation of the laws of nature.

Many modern Buddhists take a scientific world view, and often discount the value of miracles because they lack scientific support. They may look for empirical evidence to explain unlikely events rather than explaining them with reference to the Ultimate Reality's intervention in the world. However, for some Buddhists, the lack of empirical evidence does not reduce the value of miracles today. Many see the miraculous events within Buddha's life as a source of inspiration. They provide them with faith and encourage action such as pilgrimage, for example to Sravasti, the site of the Twin Miracle.

The Dalai Lama has suggested that miracles can be explained through science; they are merely natural phenomena. If miracles can be explained by science, they are of little value for Buddhists today. However, for some Buddhists, miracles are a foundational aspect of the religion. Some spend their life trying to replicate Buddha's miracle of enlightenment, hoping to escape the samsaric cycle. For these Buddhists, miracles have great value today.

0 5 . 1

**‘Buddhist teachings about homosexuality and transgender issues are no longer morally acceptable.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and ethical studies.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

The Pali Canon mentions transgender states without moral judgement. Sex of any kind is prohibited for monks and nuns, but others are expected to engage in sex responsibly to avoid harming others. Some Buddhists see homosexual sex as misconduct. Terms which translate as transgender are considered abusive in some Buddhist majority societies.

### **Ethics**

There may be consideration from the perspective of any normative ethical theory, including Natural Moral Law, that reproduction is a primary precept, or from Situation Ethics, that agape love determines what is morally acceptable. The role of meta-ethics in determining the meaning of right and wrong may be considered relevant.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and ethics.

**AO2**

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

In modern society, where attitudes to homosexual relationships are positive, traditional Buddhist teachings that suggest homosexual sexual activity is sexual misconduct because it does not lead to procreation may appear outdated and narrow-minded, and therefore, morally unacceptable. However, many Buddhists are rejecting these traditional teachings. Instead, as in Virtue Ethics, they teach that all relationships which develop the virtues of love, compassion and respect should be supported. This view is morally acceptable today.

Some Buddhist teachings suggest that those who identify as transgender are being punished for acts of sexual misconduct in a previous life. As these teachings deny people the right to acknowledge their true identity and often lead to stigmatisation, they are morally unacceptable. However, today, many Buddhists do not make judgements about the karma of others, and allow individuals to acknowledge and embrace their true gender identity because this promotes the alleviation of Dukkha. This approach is morally acceptable today.

Some Buddhist monastic communities interpret some early Buddhist teachings as suggesting homosexuality and transgender issues are bars to ordination. Those outside these communities largely consider the exclusionary and preventative nature of these teachings as morally unacceptable. However, many contemporary monastic communities teach that anyone who has undergone the right preparation and training can become a monk or nun. They accept people who are heterosexual, homosexual or transgender. As in Situation Ethics, the compassion, love and acceptance for all shown in these teachings make them morally acceptable today.



0 6 . 1

**‘Belief in free will undermines religious authority for Buddhists.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and ethical studies.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

Buddhism generally rejects the idea of absolute free will but the idea of karma includes sufficient free will to make individuals morally responsible. The Mahayana concept of realms means that action is somewhat determined. Religious authority comes from the life, example and teaching of Buddha. There may be debate about the nature and authority of the Pali Canon in this respect.

### **Ethics**

There may be consideration of how far free will is possible, including various determinist, compatibilist and libertarian views, and the conditions of moral responsibility. There may be reference to theological determinism and debate about the free-will defence against the problem of evil, for example Mackie’s version, Plantinga’s response and Hick’s ideas.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and ethics.

**AO2**

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

For many Buddhists, authority originates in Buddha. For some, this is mediated through scripture, while for others it comes from the monastic traditions or contemporary Buddhist teachers. Whichever way Buddhists access the Dharma, Buddha's authority directs their actions, suggesting there is always a level of determinism in Buddhism. A belief in the absolute freedom of the will therefore undermines religious authority. However, many Buddhists also believe that Buddha has little or no direct influence upon their life today. Instead, they are free to pick those aspects of Dharma they wish to follow. This suggests that free will is not undermined by religious authority, but an aspect of it.

Belief in the absolute freedom of the will implies that Buddhists can make moral decisions without any reference to a source of authority, for example, Intuitionism. This undermines the authority of Buddhist teaching, for example, the Three Jewels. However, Buddha taught his followers to consider everything they were taught carefully, and only to accept it as truth if it led to happiness. Therefore, free will is an integral part of Buddhist authority, and does not undermine it.

Some Buddhists suggest that a belief in the absolute freedom of will may undermine some religious authority in Buddhism, for example, the teachings of dependent origination and karma. This is because these teachings suggest that current states are the consequence of previous actions or thoughts. If the absolute freedom of the will is accepted, Buddhists are free moral agents unaffected by previous events. However, other Buddhists suggest that free will is an integral part of these teachings. This is in line with Virtue Ethics and the concept that every individual is responsible for their own moral development and therefore must be morally free.