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Q50

With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: 1. The concept of Bodhisattva is central to Hinayana sect of Buddhism. 2. Bodhisattva is a compassionate one on his way to enlightenment. 3. Bodhisattva delays achieving his own salvation to help all sentient beings on their path to it. Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3 Official key: B.

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Explanation

(a)

Statement 1 only. Bodhisattva as a central saving being is a Mahayana idea, not the core of Hinayana/Theravada, which emphasises the arahant path. 1 is false.

(b) Official key

2 and 3 only. A bodhisattva is a compassionate being on the path to Buddhahood who postpones personal nirvana to help all sentient beings. Statement 1 wrongly assigns that ideal to Hinayana. That stored letter is the official key.

(c)

Statement 2 only. Compassion on the way to enlightenment is right, but delay of one's own salvation to help others is also standard Mahayana doctrine. 2 only is incomplete.

(d)

All three. Because 1 is false, all three cannot be the key.

Summary

Official key is (b) 2 and 3 only. Bodhisattva is the Mahayana compassionate being who delays personal nirvana for others. It is not the central Hinayana ideal. Honour the stored letter (b).

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Hinayana / Theravada ideal

Arahant; individual liberation

Mahayana ideal

Bodhisattva; Buddhahood for all beings

Paramitas

Perfections practised on the bodhisattva path

Avalokiteshvara / Tara

Great compassion figures in Mahayana-Vajrayana

Trikaya

Mahayana **Buddha**-bodies doctrine-askable neighbour

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