Buddhism & Homosexuality Summary

(pages 160-1 in the Buddhism textbook)

1. The Buddhist scriptures say very little about this subject. The Five Moral Precepts say a Buddhist should refrain from sexual misconduct but there is disagreement over whether this includes homosexuality.
2. There are no Buddhist teachings that directly say homosexuality is wrong. Right & wrong are not the same as in Christianity and there is no idea of sin. There is only the idea that some actions lead to happiness (good karma) and others to unhappiness (bad karma).
3. Some Asian Buddhists including the Dalai Lama have said that same-sex relationships are not appropriate for members of their religion.
4. Many Buddhists in Western countries think that the Five Moral Precepts mean that homosexual couples should be faithful to one another and that homosexual relationships are okay.
5. Some Buddhist leaders in Western countries are in same-sex relationships but in Asia this is less likely to be accepted.

Buddhism & Women Summary

(Page 88, 89 & 160 of the Buddhism textbook)

1. Buddha grew up in ancient India where women occupied a lower status than men.
2. Buddha’s own view of women varies.
   1. He originally refused to ordain women as nuns because he said it would cause his teachings to die out.
   2. He was later persuaded by an aunt to ordain women after all. This was an unusual step for the time.
3. One of the holy writings called the Aparimitayur Sutra says women have to be reborn as men to become enlightened but the Lotus Sutra sees them as equal.
4. Tara is a Buddhist enlightened woman.
5. The Dalai Lama says the next one after him could be a woman.
6. Theravada Buddhism no longer has nuns but Mahayana Buddhism does.
7. Some Buddhist orders in the West ordain women as leaders, e.g. the Triratna Buddhist Order.