

Department of Philosophy, University of Western Ontario
Philosophy 154E: Asian Philosophies, 2003-04
Possible Longer Answer Questions for the Final Exam**

Instructions: (1) Ensure that you *actually answer the question* to which you are responding. (2) Provide *as much (relevant) detail* as you can in your answer (the more **knowledge of** the material that you reveal in your answer, the better your grade). (3) Remember to *explain all the terms of art* (i.e. specialized concepts or terms) you use (this will include philosophical terms derived from Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese or Japanese). (4) *Take care* in your choice of words. *Do not overstep* the bounds of what you can reasonably claim (i.e. *do not make claims that lack a reasonable defense or that are grossly inaccurate*).

1. What do the Upanishadic philosophers mean by the claim '*Tat Tvam Asi*'? Provide an argument for what we *could call* the 'identity of ultimate grounds (of being)' contained in this claim. How does this claim, and your argument, relate to 'the' Upanishadic view of *moksha*?
2. In the *Gita*, Krishna's argument that Arjuna should join the fight against the Kauravas is largely based upon a particular view of the Self and of action in the world. Describe the position championed by Krishna. Is the position internally coherent? Defend your answer.
3. Why does Ishvarakrishna's view of liberation (or *moksha*) cause problems for any practitioner of Yoga who adopts his metaphysics (**hint**: think of (i) what we really are, according to Ishvarakrishna, and (ii) how we, as Yoga practitioners, achieve freedom from samsaric existence)? Can a practitioner of Yoga solve these problems without giving up Ishvarakrishna's metaphysics? Defend your answer.
4. Shankara believes that this world is (ultimately) *unreal*. What does this *mean* for Shankara, and why does he believe it? (In your answer, take care in your choice of words.) Are there serious objections to his view? Defend your answer.
5. How does Ramanuja reconcile Vedantan monism with the view that the world is real? Does he succeed in providing an internally coherent position? Defend your answer.
6. How can we relate the Jain view of *karma*, liberation and asceticism (e.g. Jain monasticism)? In your answer explain the Jain view of *karma* and of liberation from *samsara*.
7. What is the Jain view of *ahimsa* (i.e. what does the term *mean* in Jainism, how does it contrast with *himsa*, and to whom does it apply)? What, for Jains, justifies *the scope* of their principle of *ahimsa*?
8. Explain the 'Four Noble Truths' of Buddhism. Are these fundamental teachings of Buddhism pessimistic? Defend your answer.
9. How might a Buddhist decide whether an action is right or wrong? Are there serious worries about any of the decision procedures you have discussed in your answer? Defend your answer.
10. What is the Buddhist teaching of *anatman* and their view of personal identity? Is their position on these matters *reasonable* (i.e. can you *make sense of* personal identity or rebirth without a soul)? Defend your answer.
11. In the *Heart Sutra* the following claim is made: "form is emptiness, and the very emptiness is form" (*Buddhist Scriptures*, p.162). What does this *mean*? (Remember to include an adequate account of *Shunyata* in your answer.) How is this applied in the rest of the *Heart Sutra*?
12. Explain the Bodhisattva Ideal of Mahayana Buddhism. Is this Bodhisattva Ideal a *radical* departure from earlier Buddhist teaching? Defend your answer.

13. What, according to Nagarjuna, is wrong with a view of the self as some kind of permanent or semi-permanent entity? Is he right? Defend your answer.
14. Explain the Yogacara teaching of store consciousness. Why do the Yogacara introduce this notion into Buddhist metaphysics or psychology? How does it relate to their view of enlightenment?
15. For Confucius, the ideal moral person is a *Zhunzi*. To be a *Zhunzi* is to be a person of *jen*. What is meant by these terms (i.e. '*Zhunzi*' and '*jen*'), and how are we to cultivate *jen*?
16. What is *hsiao*? How is it used by Confucius to develop moral character? Can *hsiao* provide *an adequate ground for the moral life without recourse to anything else* (i.e. is it **sufficient** for cultivating a moral character)? Defend your answer.
17. Lao Tzu claims that in following the *Tao* we must move beyond morality. Explain this claim. In your answer show how this contrasts with the outlook proffered by Confucius.
18. Explain the Taoist notion of *wu-wei*. How does it compare and contrast with the view of nonaction proffered in the *Gita*?
19. Below are two verses allegedly written on a temple wall by Shen-hsiu and Hui-neng. The second verse is taken to evince Hui-neng's enlightenment. Why?

The body is the Bodhi tree,
 The mind is like a clear mirror standing.
 Take care to wipe it all the time,
 Allow no grain of dust to cling. Shen-hsiu (*Asian Philosophies*, p.240)

The Bodhi is not like a tree,
 The clear mirror is nowhere standing
 Fundamentally not one thing exists;
 Where, then, is a grain of dust to cling? Hui-neng (*Asian Philosophies*, p.240)

20. What is meant by 'Buddha Nature' in Zen Buddhism? Is this a way of sneaking in an Ultimate Ground of Being akin to *Brahman* or the *Tao*? Defend your answer.
21. What philosophical influences can we arguably see in two of the martial philosophies or perspectives covered in our readings?
22. Of the traditions we have studied on the issue of gender, who has the most and who has the least egalitarian view of women? Defend your answer.

I will be choosing **eight** out of the **twenty-two** questions above as exam questions on your Final Exam (**they will be taken verbatim from what you see here**). You will *have to* answer **six** out of those **eight** questions. (Remember the exam is on April 17th, 2:00 p.m. at 3M 3250.)

*****One or two of these questions may be dropped if we get too far behind.***

Andrew Fenton, Instructor