

Asian Philosophy Study Questions -- Lectures 6, 7

Early Indian Buddhism

What are the Four Noble Truths?

What is the Eightfold Path? How does it work? What are some of its recommendations?

What is the Buddhist understanding of the self?

What is the Buddhist stance on the existence of Atman?

What are the five skandhas? How do they give rise to the self?

What is the cause of dukkha, in terms of the skandhas?

Major Branches of Buddhism

What are the distinctive features of Theravada Buddhism?

What is the Theravadan argument against the existence of Atman?

What are the various meanings of the term "dharma" in Buddhist literature? How are those meanings related? Which kind of dharma is most important to Theravadans, and why?

What are the differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism?

What is the Bodhisattva Vow of Compassion? (What is a bodhisattva?)

What are the main Mahayana criticisms of Theravada Buddhism?

Who is Nagarjuna?

What is the Madhyamikan view of concepts: what can they do and what are their limitations?

What is Nagarjuna's argument in favor of the doctrine of shunyata?

What is Nagarjuna's argument in favor of the emptiness of the self?

Explain the relation between wisdom and compassion in Mahayana Buddhism.

What is the main focus of Yogacara Buddhism?

What are the eight kinds of consciousness distinguished by Yogacara? What is the function of the seventh, manas? What is the purpose of Yogacara practice in relation to manas?

Asian Philosophy Study Questions -- Lectures 8, 9

Confucius

What are some of the major differences between Indian and Chinese philosophy?
What is the ultimate goal for much of native Chinese philosophical thought? How does this differ from the goal for much of Indian philosophical thought?

Who is Confucius? What social problems did he face?
What are the Legalist and Mohist responses to these problems (and who is Mozi)?
Why are both Legalism and Mohism unsatisfactory, according to Confucius?
What is Confucius's alternative? Explain each step of Confucius's social program.
What are the basic human relationships? Why are they important to Confucius?
What is the rectification of names?
How does the rectification of names purport to solve the problems facing Confucius's society?

What do the following terms mean, and what is their significance within Confucius's philosophy: *tian*; *ren*; *li*; *xiao*; *yi*; *de*; *junzi*? Keep in mind the following, more specific questions:

What are the multiple meanings of "*ren*"?
What is the relation between *ren* and *li*?
Why is *xiao* the origin of *ren*?
How does *yi* help one to be *ren*?

Mencius

Who is Mencius? What is his relation to Confucius?
What question does Mencius raise about the role of education, and how does he argue in favor of his answer?

According to Mencius, what is the "root" or "seed" of each of the four Confucian virtues? Give examples for each.

What is Mencius's suggestion for how to cultivate the virtues?

According to Mencius, what is the connection between being virtuous and having *qi*?

How does Mencius develop the rectification of names, as it pertains to politics?

What is some of the advice that Mencius gives to rulers?