ORIENTAL STUDIES TRIPOS Part II

South Asian Studies

Friday 30 May 2008  09.00 – 12.00

SA.24  SPECIAL SUBJECT IN SOUTH ASIAN RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Candidates should answer **three** questions.

*All questions are of **equal** value.*

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of each Section booklet.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS
20 Page Answer Book x 1
Rough Work Pad

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator.
1 Give a critical evaluation of the attempts at interpreting Vedic deities.

2 "The most orthodox Brahmanism is an atheistic autonomism." Discuss.

3 ‘... the secret of Hinduism may be found in the dialogue between the renouncer and the-man-in-the-world’ (Louis Dumont). Discuss.

4 What was the ideological basis of royal authority in ancient and medieval India?

5 ‘Men ... serve as a convenient dump for celestial moral garbage’ (Wendy O’Flaherty, The origins of evil in Hindu mythology, p. 141). To what extent does this statement apply to the relationship between men and gods as depicted in the Mahābhārata and/or the Rāmāyaṇa?

6 How do the Mīmāṁsakas defend the authority of the Veda, and what consequences does that defense have for their ontology?

7 ‘Pradhāna is one, Puruṣa is many.’ Discuss.

8 What distinguishes the Naiyāyika anumāna from the Aristotelian syllogism?

9 Consider the roles of the Trika and the Krama in the Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya of Kṣemarāja.

10 How did Śaivism incorporate itself into the religious life of the court and the state?

11 Discuss the relationship between Tantric Śaivism and Tantric Buddhism.

12 What is an idol (mūrtiḥ, arca)?

13 Discuss the representations of Kṛṣṇa in Indian literature.

14 What role does causality play in Buddhist thought?

15 What distinguishes Mahāyāna Buddhism from earlier forms of Buddhism?
16 Discuss the contribution of Nāgārjuna to Buddhist philosophy.

17 Outline the main differences between Digambara and Śvetāmbara Jainism.

18 Outline the Jain cosmology and discuss its religious significance for Jains.

19 How does the literature of bhakti relate its theology to the traditional categories of Brahmanical religion?

20 Discuss the use of viraha within Bhakti poetry.

END OF PAPER