

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 Mīmāṃsakas 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*, *arcā*)?
- 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