

**Religion 202. Question sheet 5: S Asian Mahāyāna and SE Asian Theravāda Buddhism.**

NOTE: Please answer with schematic overviews, NOT in full sentences.

Please do not type, but hand-write your answer

**Fact and Comparison Questions to study for the exam (required)**

1. Name the three main schools of Indian Mahāyāna, and situate in time, naming the main thinkers for the first two. Describe briefly the main tenets of each of the three schools.
2. Give a brief overview of the history of Buddhism in India till the present day, indicating possible causes for success and decline.
3. Give a brief overview of the complexity of the religious history of South East Asia, and how this is relevant for contemporary Theravāda, with regard to ritual, the role of the state, and reform elements.
4. Make a comparative overview of the general differences in approach and doctrine between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Buddhism.

**Discussion questions (optional)**

1. To what do you attribute the success of Theravāda Buddhism in South East Asia? What factors might be involved in the changes in the history of the region that you have sketched under fact question 3.
2. Does any of the major Mahāyāna schools seem attractive to you? Why (not). Why do you think they became such successful “export” articles?
3. Outline briefly the discussion in Oxtoby 2002 (290-4) on Buddhism and women. Note the differences between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. How do you evaluate the author’s argument?
4. Compare the position of women in Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, past and present. How do you account for the differences? In comparing Buddhism in India and South East Asia, do you feel the religious doctrine is more important than the customs of the area, or vice versa? Which view comes closest to contemporary Western politically correct attitudes? Do you feel it is necessary/fair to judge by these standards?