

FPMT BASIC PROGRAM ONLINE

TENETS

Open Book Study Questions
with
Answer Keys

Supplementing the Commentary

by

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Study Questions 1

1. Can you quote sutra to explain the origin of the four different tenets?

2. Can you give the definition of a proponent of Buddhist tenets? Please memorize it and then write it here.

3. Can you give the names of the four schools of tenets? Please memorize them and then write it here.

4. When Vaibhasikas are divided, how many are there? Please list them here.

Answer Key 1

1. Can you quote sutra to explain the origin of the four different tenets?

In sutra it says, "There is no understanding of suffering." This "no" is explained in different ways by different disciples. From these various explanations came the four views.

2. Can you give the definition of a proponent of Buddhist tenets? Please memorize it and then write it here.

A proponent of Buddhist tenets accepts the Three Jewels as ultimate objects of refuge and does not assert any ultimate objects of refuge other than these.

3. Can you give the names of the four schools of tenets? Please memorize them and then write it here.

Vaibhasika
Sautrantika
Cittamatra
Madhyamika

4. When Vaibhasikas are divided, how many are there? Please list them here.

There are three:
Kashmiris
Aparantakas
Magadhas

Study Questions 2

1. Can you please give an example of a conventional truth and of an ultimate truth according to the Vaibhasika system?
2. How is the person exemplified in this system?
3. How many divisions of yogic direct perception are asserted in this system? Please memorize them and write them here from memory.
4. Are both selflessness of persons and selflessness of phenomena accepted in this system?

Answer Key 2

1. Can you please give an example of a conventional truth and of an ultimate truth according to the Vaibhasika system?

Examples of a conventional truth are a vase and a woolen cloth

Examples of an ultimate truth are directionally partless particles, temporally partless (moments of) consciousness and non-compounded objects.

2. How is the person exemplified in this system?

The mere collection of the five aggregates is an illustration of the person in this system.

Also some assert the mental consciousness as an illustration of the person.

3. How many divisions of yogic direct perception are asserted in this system? Please memorize them and write them here from memory.

There are two types of yogic direct perceivers: yogic direct perceivers that clearly realize selflessness of persons and yogic direct perceivers that clearly realize subtle impermanence.

There are two types of the first: yogic direct perceivers that realize the emptiness of a permanent, partless, independent person, and yogic direct perceivers that realize the emptiness of a self-supporting or substantially existent person.

4. Are both selflessness of persons and selflessness of phenomena accepted in this system?

This system doesn't accept a selflessness of phenomena.

Study Questions 3

1. Are the examples of deluded obstructions and non-deluded obstructions different in Vaibhasika? What are examples of each of these?
2. Is there a difference with regard to the view that is meditated on in each of the three vehicles in Vaibhasika?
3. Is there a difference in terms of the duration for the practitioners of the three vehicles to achieve their enlightenment? What is the duration for each of the three vehicles according to Vaibhasika?
4. Does this system accept that some hearer foe destroyers will enter the Mahayana path and achieve the state of full enlightenment?

Answer Key 3

1. Are the examples of deluded obstructions and non-deluded obstructions different in Vaibhasika? What are examples of each of these?

Yes, they are different; the deluded obstructions are the actual delusions while the imprints left by the delusions are the non-deluded obstructions.

2. Is there a difference with regard to the view that is meditated on in each of the three vehicles in Vaibhasika?

There is no difference in terms of the view to be meditated on in the three vehicles.

3. Is there a difference in terms of the duration for the practitioners of the three vehicles to achieve their enlightenment? What is the duration for each of the three vehicles according to Vaibhasika?

Yes, there is a big difference: hearers take three lifetimes or more, solitary realizers take one hundred great eons, and bodhisattvas take three countless great eons.

4. Does this system accept that some hearer foe destroyers will enter the Mahayana path and achieve the state of full enlightenment?

No, this system doesn't accept this. The reason they don't accept this is that they believe that when a foe destroyer (arhat) dies and achieves nirvana without remainder, at that time everything ceases including their mental continuum.

Study Questions 4

1. Are the definition of Vaibhasika and Sautrantika similar? What are they?
2. How are sharp facultied and dull facultied practitioners differentiated in the Sautrantika school?
3. What is the definition of “existent” in the Sautrantika system?
4. Since both the *Abhidharmakosha* the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* are scriptures, doesn't it follow that both the sharp facultied and the dull facultied Sautrantikas are followers of scripture?

Answer Key 4

1. Are the definition of Vaibhasika and Sautrantika similar? What are they?

The definition of a Vaibhasika is: one who propounds Hinayana tenets, and asserts external objects to be truly existent but does not assert self-cognizers.

The definition of a Sautrantika is: one who propounds Hinayana tenets, and accepts both self-cognizers and external objects.

2. How are sharp facultied and dull facultied practitioners differentiated in the Sautrantika school?

Dull facultied practitioners follow scripture as in the *Abhidharmakosha*.

Sharp facultied practitioners follow reasoning as in the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition*.

3. What is the definition of “existent” in the Sautrantika system?

The definition of an existent is: that which is realized by valid cognition.

4. Since both the *Abhidharmakosha* the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* are scriptures, doesn't it follow that both the sharp facultied and the dull facultied Sautrantikas are followers of scripture?

This is not the case, because the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* is reasoning scripture and the *Abhidharmakosha* is transmitted scripture. Also, the dull facultied follow the *Abhidharmakosha* based on faith while the sharp facultied do not accept things until they have reasoned it out.

Study Questions 5

1. What is the definition of a conventional truth and of an ultimate truth according to the Sautrantika school?
2. From the division of existents into the two, single phenomena and different phenomena, can you give an example of each?
3. What is the definition of a valid cognizer in this system?
4. How many eliminations are there in the definition of valid cognizer? Please list them.

Answer Key 5

1. What is the definition of a conventional truth and of an ultimate truth according to the Sautrantika school?

The definition of a conventional truth is: a phenomenon that is not able to perform a function ultimately.

The definition of an ultimate truth is: a phenomenon that is able to perform a function ultimately.

2. From the division of existents into the two, single phenomena and different phenomena, can you give an example of each?

Examples of single phenomena are: vase, pillar, garden, person.

The two, pillar and vase, is an example of different phenomena

3. What is the definition of a valid cognizer in this system?

The definition of valid cognizer is: a new incontrovertible cognizer. (Initial, infallible cognizer are the terms used by the interpreter)

4. How many eliminations are there in the definition of valid cognizer? Please list them.

There are three eliminations in the definition: initial/new eliminates a subsequent cognizer from being a valid cognizer; infallible/incontrovertible eliminates correct assumption; and cognizer eliminates a physical sense power from being a valid cognizer.

Study Questions 6

1. Does yogic direct valid cognition exist within the continuum of all sentient beings?
2. What are the three types inferential cognizers? Can you give an example of each?
3. Please memorize the definition of a valid direct perceiver and write it out here.
4. Please memorize the definition of a valid inferential cognizer and then write it out here from memory.

Answer Key 6

1. Does yogic direct valid cognition exist within the continuum of all sentient beings?

No. It has to be generated through practice and meditation; one needs a union of calm abiding and special insight, so it only exists in the continuum of the superior beings.

2. What are the three types inferential valid cognizers? Can you give an example of each?

An example of an inferential cognizer by the power of the fact is sound is impermanent because it is a product.

An example of an inferential cognizer through renown is a Volkswagen is suitable to be called a bug because it is a convertible known by that name.

An example of an inferential cognizer through belief is realizing that from giving (arises) wealth and from practising morality happiness, based on scripture that is known to be valid.

3. Please memorize the definition of a valid direct perceiver and write it out here.

The definition of a valid direct perceiver is: an new, incontrovertible cognizer that is free from conceptually.

4. Please memorize the definition of a valid inferential cognizer and then write it out here from memory.

The definition of a valid inferential cognizer is: an new and incontrovertible conceptual cognizer that arises in dependence upon a correct sign, its basis.

Study Questions 7

1. What is the definition of a non-valid cognizer?
2. How many divisions are there to non-valid cognition?
3. Please memorize the divisions of non-valid cognition, and list them here from memory.
4. Please memorize the definition of doubt and the names of its divisions.

Answer Key 7

1. What is the definition of a non-valid cognizer?

The definition of a non-valid cognizer is: a cognizer that is not new and incontrovertible.

2. How many divisions are there to non-valid cognition?

There are five divisions.

3. Please memorize the divisions of non-valid cognition, and list them here from memory.

Subsequent cognizers, wrong consciousnesses, doubt, correct assumption and inattentive perception.

4. Please memorize the definition of doubt and the names of its divisions, and write them here from memory.

The definition of a doubt is: a mental factor that, by its own power, hesitates with regard to two alternatives.

There are three divisions of doubt: doubt tending towards the factual, doubt not tending towards the factual and doubt that is equal to both sides.

Study Questions 8

1. What is the definition of the Mind Only School?
2. Are the external objects posited in the same way by the Cittamatrins as in the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika systems?
3. Since form is the basis for assigning the term “form,” does it exist by way of its own characteristics?
4. How does form become the basis of the term “form”?

Answer Key 8

1. What is the definition of a Cittamatrín?

The definition of a Cittamatrín is: one who propounds Mahayana tenets, and does not assert external objects but asserts self-cognizers to be truly existent.

2. Are external objects posited in the same way by Cittamatríns as in the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika systems?

There is big difference. The Vaibhasika and Sautrantika schools believe external objects to exist without depending on the ripening of the imprint in the mind. For the Cittamatrín school, there is no external object at all. External objects are merely in the nature of consciousness.

3. Since form is the basis for assigning the term “form,” does it exist by way of its own characteristics?

No; if it did, there would be a self of phenomena.

4. How does form become the basis of the term “form”?

By depending on both form and the name expressing form. Not independently, by form itself.

Study Questions 9

1. What are the eight types of consciousness asserted by dull-facultied Cittamatrins?
2. What is the illustration of the person according to these Cittamatrins?
3. In their system, if one realizes a person's emptiness of being permanent, partless and independent, has one has realized the subtle selflessness of person? Please explain.
4. For the Cittamatrins, if it is an inference is it necessarily a valid cognition?

Answer Key 9

1. What are the eight types of consciousness asserted by dull-facultied Cittamatrins?
The six consciousnesses (the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness), plus the mind basis of all and the deluded mind.
2. What is the illustration of the person according to these Cittamatrins?
The mind-basis-of-all is posited and the illustration of the person.
3. In their system, if one realizes a person's emptiness of being permanent, partless and independent, has one has realized the subtle selflessness of person? Please explain.
Realizing a person's emptiness of being permanent, partless and independent is a realization of a gross selflessness of persons. This is not sufficient for a realization of a subtle selflessness of persons.
4. For the Cittamatrins, if it is an inference is it necessarily a valid cognition?
No. Other than for the Sautrantikas, for Cittamatrin an inference is not necessarily a valid cognition.

Study Questions 10

1. What is the meaning of the Middle Way?

2. What is the difference between the two Svatantrika-Madhyamika schools?

3. Is the difference between the Prasangika and Svatantrika-Madhyamika schools based on not agreeing about the word “merely” in “merely imputed by conception?” Please explain.

4. What is the object of abandonment in the Svatantrika Madhyamika School ?

Answer Key 10

1. What is the meaning of “middle way”?

Abiding in the middle, not falling into either of the two extremes of eternalism or nihilism.

2. What is the difference between the two Svatantrika-Madhyamika schools?

The difference is whether or not they accept external objects.

3. Is the difference between the Prasangika and Svatantrika-Madhyamika schools based on not agreeing about the word “merely” in “merely imputed by conception?” **Yes.**

4. What is the object of abandonment in the Yogacara Svatantrika Madhyamika School ?

For hearers the main object of abandonment is the conception grasping a self-supporting or substantially existent person;

for solitary realizers the main object of abandonment is the conception grasping form and form-apprehending valid cognizers to be of different substances;

and for bodhisattvas the main object of abandonment is grasping at true existence together with its propensities

Study Questions 11

1. Name some scholars of India who are proponents of the Sautrantika-Madhyamika School.
2. Name some scholars of India who are proponents of the Yogacara-Madhyamika School.
3. When a Svatantrika-Madhyamika realizes that the “I” does not exist from its own side, does (s)he at that time give up his or her Svatantrika-Madhyamika tenets? Please explain.
4. Do Svatantrika-Madhyamikas accept that the three arhats or foe destroyers abandon three different objects of abandonments? Please explain.

Answer Key 11

1. Name some scholars of India who are proponents of the Sautrantika-Madhyamika school.

Bhavaviveka, Yeshe Nyingpo and so forth.

2. Name some scholars of India who are proponents of the Yogacara-Madhyamika school.

Shantirakshita, Haribhadra, Kamalashila and so forth.

3. When a Svatantrika-Madhyamika realizes that the “I” does not exist from its own side, does (s)he at that time give up his or her Svatantrika-Madhyamika tenets? Please explain.

Yes, this is a Prasangika tenet, a Svatantrika would not accept this.

4. Do Svatantrika-Madhyamikas accept that the three arhats or foe destroyers abandon three different objects of abandonments? Please explain.

Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas do posit three different objects of abandonment for hearers, solitary realizers and bodhisattvas.

For hearers the main object of abandonment is the conception grasping a self-supporting or substantially existent person; for solitary realizers the main object of abandonment is the conception grasping form and form-apprehending valid cognizers to be of different substances; and for bodhisattvas the main object of abandonment is grasping at true existence together with its propensities.

According to the Sautrantika-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas, there is no difference between hearers and solitary realizers regarding their main objects of abandonment.

Study Questions 12

1. What is the difference between a valid cognizer distinguishing a conventionality and a valid cognizer distinguishing an ultimate or final phenomena?

2. Are the two truths upon form, for example, one entity or different entities?

3. What is the reason for true cessation being an emptiness?

4. Is Prasangika Madhyamika similar to Svatantrika Madhyamika in terms of accepting that one can become an arya being without realizing selflessness of phenomena? Please explain.

Answer Key 12

1. What is the difference between a valid cognizer distinguishing a conventionality and a valid cognizer distinguishing an ultimate?

If a valid cognizer realizes any phenomenon other than emptiness, it is distinguishing a conventionality; if a valid cognizer realizes emptiness, it is distinguishing an ultimate.

2. Are the two truths upon form, for example, one entity or different entities?

They are one entity. But they are different isolates.

3. What is the reason for true cessation being an emptiness?

The emptiness of the mind of an arya freed from any of the delusions is called true cessation. This is why a true cessation is an emptiness.

4. Is Prasangika Madhyamika similar to Svatantrika Madhyamika in terms of accepting that one can become an arya being without realizing selflessness of phenomena? Please explain.

No, according to Prasangika one needs to realize the emptiness of phenomena to be an arya; in other words, if one is an arya one necessarily realizes the emptiness of phenomena.