Answer three questions, one from each part of the exam, as fully and accurately as you can, bearing in mind that discussion of scholarly literature is always relevant. Before you begin to write, please read all of the following questions.

**Part One. Choose A or B.**

A. Characterize the importance of various healing practices and rituals such as nianfo, dharani/paritta, and mantra chanting in the premodern Buddhist societies of India and China. How are such particular practices understood as related to the broader cultivation of ethical virtue and meditative mindfulness? In light of the Buddha’s assertion that the ordinary life is in need of healing, what is the link between physical and spiritual well-being? How do ways of “disease” prevention such as proper diet, simple remedies, right ways of thinking, and avoidance of the three poisons build on the Four Noble Truths? Finally, are ascetic practices viewed as healing? Can the Buddha’s life serve as a model for healing practices in Buddhism?

B. What roles did relics play in Buddhism in India, China, and Japan? Examine the different ways of thinking of relics in Buddhist contexts, including in terms of the linguistic bases of the terms themselves as well as the economies of relic trading that emerge in Asia (c. 500 BCE-c. 1500 CE). Discuss the links between relics and healing as well.

**Part Two. Choose A or B.**

A. How would you define the term “asceticism”? What roles did it play in pre-modern Christianity, and how did those roles vary across time and space, and between different social groups? How have the attitudes of modern scholars towards such ascetic practices changed in recent years?

B. Discuss the influence of cultural assumptions about “manliness” or “masculinity” on pre-modern Christian belief, practices, and institutions.

**Part Three.**
Choose one of the two questions you have not already answered from Parts One and Two above. Write a comparative essay, exploring the topic’s importance within both the Buddhist and Christian traditions.