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Chapter 1 : ANCIENT EGYPT : Wisdom Teachings

For the study of the moral character of the ancient Egyptian, a document, of which a mutilated copy is found on a papyrus preserved in the Royal Library in Berlin, is of peculiar importance.

Ancient Greece Ancient Greece was the birthplace of Western philosophical ethics. The ideas of Socrates c. The sudden flowering of philosophy during that period was rooted in the ethical thought of earlier centuries. In the poetic literature of the 7th and 6th centuries bce, there were, as in other cultures , moral precepts but no real attempts to formulate a coherent overall ethical position. The Greeks were later to refer to the most prominent of these poets and early philosophers as the seven sages , and they are frequently quoted with respect by Plato and Aristotle. Knowledge of the thought of this period is limited, for often only fragments of original writings, along with later accounts of dubious accuracy, remain. He appears to have written nothing at all, but he was the founder of a school of thought that touched on all aspects of life and that may have been a kind of philosophical and religious order. In ancient times the school was best known for its advocacy of vegetarianism , which, like that of the Jains, was associated with the belief that after the death of the body, the human soul may take up residence in the body of an animal see reincarnation. Pythagoreans continued to espouse this view for many centuries, and classical passages in the works of writers such as Ovid 43 bceâ€”17 ce and Porphyry â€” opposing bloodshed and animal slaughter can be traced to Pythagoras. This term was used in the 5th century to refer to a class of professional teachers of rhetoric and argument. The Sophists promised their pupils success in political debate and increased influence in the affairs of the city. They were accused of being mercenaries who taught their students to win arguments by fair means or foul. Aristotle said that Protagoras c. They regarded themselves as imparters of the cultural and intellectual qualities necessary for success, and their involvement with argument about practical affairs naturally led them to develop views about ethics. The recurrent theme in the views of the better-known Sophists, such as Protagoras, Antiphon c. He argued that, while the particular content of the moral rules may vary, there must be rules of some kind if life is to be tolerable. Thus, Protagoras stated that the foundations of an ethical system needed nothing from the gods or from any special metaphysical realm beyond the ordinary world of the senses. He explained that the concept of justice means nothing more than obedience to the laws of society, and, since these laws are made by the strongest political group in its own interest, justice represents nothing but the interest of the stronger. Presumably he would then encourage his pupils to follow their own interests as best they could. It is not surprising that, with ideas of this sort in circulation, other thinkers should react by probing more deeply into ethics to see whether the potentially destructive conclusions of some of the Sophists could be resisted. This reaction produced works that have served ever since as the cornerstone of the entire edifice of Western ethics. Yet, unlike other figures of comparable importance, such as the Buddha or Confucius, he did not tell his audience how they should live. What Socrates taught was a method of inquiry. When the Sophists or their pupils boasted that they knew what justice, piety, temperance, or law was, Socrates would ask them to give an account, which he would then show was entirely inadequate. For those who thought that adherence to the conventional moral code was more important than the cultivation of an inquiring mind, the charge was appropriate. By conventional standards, Socrates was indeed corrupting the youth of Athens, though he himself considered the destruction of beliefs that could not stand up to criticism as a necessary preliminary to the search for true knowledge. In this respect he differed from the Sophists, with their ethical relativism, for he thought that virtue is something that can be known and that the virtuous person is the one who knows what virtue is. SocratesSocrates, herm from a Greek original, second half of the 4th century bce; in the Capitoline Museums, Rome. He believed that virtue could be known, though he himself did not profess to know it. He also thought that anyone who knows what virtue is will necessarily act virtuously. Those who act badly, therefore, do so only because they are ignorant of, or mistaken about, the real nature of virtue. This belief may seem peculiar today, in large part because it is now common to distinguish between what a person ought to do

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and what is in his own interest. Once this assumption is made, it is easy to imagine circumstances in which a person knows what he ought to do but proceeds to do something else—what is in his own interests—instead. Indeed, how to provide self-interested or merely rational people with motivating reasons for doing what is right has been a major problem for Western ethics. In ancient Greece, however, the distinction between virtue and self-interest was not made—at least not in the clear-cut manner that it is today. The Greeks believed that virtue is good both for the individual and for the community. He also took over the Socratic method of conducting philosophy, developing the case for his own positions by exposing errors and confusions in the arguments of his opponents. He did this by writing his works as dialogues in which Socrates is portrayed as engaging in argument with others, usually Sophists. Plato, marble portrait bust, from an original of the 4th century bce; in the Capitoline Museums, Rome. Suppose a person obtained the legendary ring of Gyges, which has the magical property of rendering the wearer invisible. Would that person still have any reason to behave justly? Behind this challenge lies the suggestion, made by the Sophists and still heard today, that the only reason for acting justly is that one cannot get away with acting unjustly. Plato maintained that true knowledge consists not in knowing particular things but in knowing something general that is common to all the particular cases. This view is obviously derived from the way in which Socrates pressed his opponents to go beyond merely describing particular acts that are for example good, temperate, or just and to give instead a general account of goodness, temperance, or justice. The implication is that one does not know what goodness is unless one can give such a general account. But the question then arises, what is it that one knows when one knows this general idea of goodness? It has been said that all of Western philosophy consists of footnotes to Plato. Certainly the central issue around which all of Western ethics has revolved can be traced to the debate between the Sophists, who claimed that goodness and justice are relative to the customs of each society—or, worse still, that they are merely a disguise for the interest of the stronger—and the Platonists, who maintained the possibility of knowledge of an objective Form of the Good. But even if one could know what goodness or justice is, why should one act justly if one could profit by doing the opposite? This is the remaining part of the challenge posed by the tale of the ring of Gyges, and it is still to be answered. For even if one accepts that goodness is something objective, it does not follow that one has a sufficient reason to do what is good. One would have such a reason if it could be shown that goodness or justice leads, at least in the long run, to happiness; as has been seen from the preceding discussion of early ethics in other cultures, this issue is a perennial topic for all who think about ethics. According to Plato, justice exists in the individual when the three elements of the soul—intellect, emotion, and desire—act in harmony with each other. The unjust person lives in an unsatisfactory state of internal discord, trying always to overcome the discomfort of unsatisfied desire but never achieving anything better than the mere absence of want. The soul of the just person, on the other hand, is harmoniously ordered under the governance of reason, and the just person derives truly satisfying enjoyment from the pursuit of knowledge. Plato remarks that the highest pleasure, in fact, comes from intellectual speculation. He also gives an argument for the belief that the human soul is immortal; therefore, even if a just individual lives in poverty or suffers from illness, the gods will not neglect him in the next life, where he will have the greatest rewards of all. Plato does not recommend justice for its own sake, independent of any personal gains one might obtain from being a just person. This is characteristic of Greek ethics, which refused to recognize that there could be an irresolvable conflict between the interest of the individual and the good of the community. Not until the 18th century did a philosopher forcefully assert the importance of doing what is right simply because it is right, quite apart from self-interested motivation see below Kant. To be sure, Plato did not hold that the motivation for each and every just act is some personal gain; on the contrary, the person who takes up justice will do what is just because it is just. Nevertheless, he accepted the assumption of his opponents that one could not recommend taking up justice in the first place unless doing so could be shown to be advantageous for oneself as well as for others. Aristotle Plato founded a school of philosophy in Athens known as the Academy. Aristotle was often fiercely critical of Plato, and his writing is very different in style and content, but the time they spent together is reflected in a considerable

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amount of common ground. Thus, Aristotle holds with Plato that the life of virtue is rewarding for the virtuous as well as beneficial for the community. Thus, Aristotle does not argue that in order to be good one must have knowledge of the Form of the Good. Detail of a Roman copy 2nd century bce of a Greek alabaster portrait bust of Aristotle, c. The highest form of existence is the life of the rational being, and the function of lower beings is to serve this form of life. From this perspective also came a view of human nature and an ethical theory derived from it. All living things, Aristotle held, have inherent potentialities, which it is their nature to develop. This is the form of life properly suited to them and constitutes their goal. What, however, is the potentiality of human beings? For Aristotle this question turns out to be equivalent to asking what is distinctive about human beings; and this, of course, is the capacity to reason. The ultimate goal of humans, therefore, is to develop their reasoning powers. When they do this, they are living well, in accordance with their true nature, and they will find this the most rewarding existence possible. Aristotle thus ends up agreeing with Plato that the life of the intellect is the most rewarding existence, though he was more realistic than Plato in suggesting that such a life would also contain the goods of material prosperity and close friendships. The fallacy is to assume that whatever capacity distinguishes humans from other beings is, for that very reason, the highest and best of their capacities. Perhaps the ability to reason is the best human capacity, but one cannot be compelled to draw this conclusion from the fact that it is what is most distinctive of the human species. It is the idea that an investigation of human nature can reveal what one ought to do. For Aristotle, an examination of a knife would reveal that its distinctive capacity is to cut, and from this one could conclude that a good knife is a knife that cuts well. In the same way, an examination of human nature should reveal the distinctive capacity of human beings, and from this one should be able to infer what it is to be a good human being. This line of thought makes sense if one thinks, as Aristotle did, that the universe as a whole has a purpose and that human beings exist as part of such a goal-directed scheme of things, but its error becomes glaring if this view is rejected and human existence is seen as the result of a blind process of evolution. Whereas the distinctive capacity of a knife is a result of the fact that knives are made for a specific purpose—and a good knife is thus one that fulfills this purpose well—human beings, according to modern biology, were not made with any particular purpose in mind. Their nature is the result of random forces of natural selection. Thus, human nature cannot, without further moral premises, determine how human beings ought to live. Aristotle is also responsible for much later thinking about the virtues one should cultivate. In his most important ethical treatise, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he sorts through the virtues as they were popularly understood in his day, specifying in each case what is truly virtuous and what is mistakenly thought to be so. Thus, courage, for example, is the mean between two extremes: The virtue of friendliness, to give another example, is the mean between obsequiousness and surliness. Aristotle does not intend the idea of the mean to be applied mechanically in every instance: The Buddha, who had experienced the ascetic life of renunciation, would not have agreed. This caution in the application of the idea is just as well, for while it may be a useful device for moral education, the notion of a mean cannot help one to discover new truths about virtue. One can determine the mean only if one already has a notion of what is an excess and what is a defect of the trait in question. But this is not something that can be discovered by a morally neutral inspection of the trait itself: Thus, to attempt to use the doctrine of the mean to define the particular virtues would be to travel in a circle. For Christians the corresponding excess, vanity, was a vice, but the corresponding deficiency, humility, was a virtue. He distinguishes between justice in the distribution of wealth or other goods and justice in reparation, as, for example, in punishing someone for a wrong he has done. The key element of justice, according to Aristotle, is treating like cases alike—an idea that set for later thinkers the task of working out which kinds of similarities e. Aristotle distinguished between theoretical and practical wisdom.

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Chapter 2 : Philosophy - Wikipedia

Ancient Egyptian literature tackled almost all aspects of life. Literary works were classified by subjects into various "genres" such as novels, short stories, poetry, folkloric tales, proverbs, wise-sayings, moral teachings, philosophical meditations and literary messages.

Historians of philosophy have been wont to begin their story with the Greeks. The Hindus, who believe that they invented philosophy, and the Chinese, who believe that they perfected it, smile at our provincialism. It may be that we are all mistaken; For among the most ancient fragments left to us by the Egyptians are writings that belong, however loosely and untechnically, under the rubric of moral philosophy. The wisdom of the Egyptians was a proverb with the Greeks, who felt themselves children beside this ancient race. Retiring from office, he decided to leave to his son a manual of everlasting wisdom. It was transcribed as an antique classic by some scholars prior to the Eighteenth Dynasty. The eyes are small, the ears are deaf. Energy is diminished, the heart hath no rest. Command thy servant, therefore, to make over my princely authority to my son. Let me speak unto him the words of them that hearken to the counsel of the men of old time, those that once heard the gods. I pray thee, let this thing be done. His Gracious Majesty grants the permission, advising him, however, to discourse without causing weariness advice not yet superfluous for philosophers. For no limit can be set to skill, neither is there any craftsman that possesseth full advantages. Fair speech is more rare than the emerald that is found by slave-maidens among the pebbles. Live, therefore, in the house of kindness, and men shall come and give gifts of themselves. Beware of making enmity by thy words. Overstep not the truth, neither repeat that which any man, be he prince or peasant, saith in opening the heart; it is abhorrent to the soul. If thou wouldst be a wise man, beget a son for the pleasing of the god. Wheresoever thou goest, beware of consorting with women. If thou wouldst be wise, provide for thine house, and love thy wife that is in thine arms. Silence is more profitable to thee than abundance of speech. Consider how thou mayest be opposed by an expert that speaketh in council. It is a foolish thing to speak on every kind of work. If thou be powerful make thyself to be honored for knowledge and for gentleness. Beware of interruption, and of answering words with heat; put it from thee; control thyself. My words shall instruct a man how he shall speak;. Good fortune shall befall him; Another sage, Ipuwer, bemoans the disorder Another sage, Ipuwer, bemoans the disorder, violence, famine and decay that attended the passing of the Old Kingdom; he tells of sceptics who "would make offerings if" they "knew where the god is"; he comments upon increasing suicide, and adds, like another Schopenhauer: If the land would but cease from noise, and strife be no more" It is clear that Ipuwer was tired and old. In the end he dreams of a philosopher-king who will redeem men from chaos and injustice: It is said he is the shepherd of all men. There is no evil in his heart. When his herds are few he passes the day to gather them together, their hearts being fevered. Then would he have smitten evil. He would have stretched forth his arm against it. He would have smitten the seed thereof and their inheritance. Doth he sleep perchance? Behold, his might is not seen. Brothers are evil, Friends of today are not of love. To whom do I speak today? The gentle man perishes, The bold-faced goes everywhere. When a man should arouse wrath by his evil conduct He stirs all men to mirth, although his iniquity is wicked. Death is before me today Like the odor of myrrh, Like sitting under the sail on a windy day. Death is before me today Like the odor of lotus-flowers, Like sitting on the shore of drunkenness. Death is before me today Like the course of a freshet, Like the return of a man from the war-galley to his house. Death is before me today As a man longs to see his home When he had spent years of captivity Saddest of all is a poem engraved upon a slab now in the Leyden Museum, and dating back to B. Carpe diem, it singsâ€”snatch the day! I have heard the words of Imhotep and Hardedef, Words greatly celebrated as their utterances. Behold the places thereof! None cometh from thence That he may tell us how they fare;. That he may content our hearts Until we too depart To the place whither they have gone. Encourage thy heart to forget it, Making it pleasant for thee to follow thy desire While thou livest. Put myrrh upon thy head, And garments upon thee of fine linen, Imbued with marvelous luxuries, The genuine things of

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the gods. Increase yet more thy delights, And let not thy heart languish. Follow thy desire and thy good, Fashion thy affairs on earth After the mandates of thine own heart, Till that day of lamentation come to thee When the silent-hearted dead hears not their lamentation, Nor he that is in the tomb attends the mourning Celebrate the glad day; Lo, no man taketh his goods with him; Yea, none returneth again that is gone thither. In part such literature represents one of those interludes, like our own moral interregnum, in which thought has for a time overcome belief, and men no longer know how or why they should live. Such periods do not endure; hope soon wins the victory over thought; the intellect is put down to its customary menial place, and religion is born again, giving to men the imaginative stimulus apparently indispensable to life and work. We need not suppose that such poems expressed the views of any large number of Egyptians; behind and around the small but vital minority that pondered the problems of life and death in secular and naturalistic terms were millions of simple men and women who remained faithful to the gods, and never doubted that right would triumph, that every earthly pain and grief would be atoned for bountifully in a haven of happiness and peace. You may also be interested in

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In ancient Egypt, there was probably never a theoretical framework as such that dealt with these issues, but the concept of what the Egyptians considered correct moral conduct can be deduced from various written sources, particularly autobiographies and texts that we now refer to as wisdom literature. We must be aware that such texts, and.

The Maxims of Good Discourse of Ptahhotep indeed remain the fundamental treatise of this sapiential literature, born in scribal circles. In Ancient Egypt, "philosophy" was not a profession, nor a trade as it would be in the Greece of the errant Sophists teachers and pre-Socratic Eleatics. Hence, there was no word for "philosopher" the lovers of wisdom, "sofia" in the Greek sense the first positive use of the word "philosopher" has been attributed to Pythagoras and Anaximander. Wisdom was regarded as something some people grew into as a result of obeying the "natural" correct laws which regulated life. Their conceptualization of these laws, although metaphorical, visual and pluriform, shows that a constant appreciation of truth, justice and integrity stood at the heart of it. These higher human values were at work in the cosmos in things as they are and in human cultures in things as they ought to be , and Pharaoh was the best of the good examples. That humans were able to turn their face and do "isefet" evil willingly was forcefully rejected but indeed already then a daily fact of life. To make tombs as well as to rob them was always a national sport. Much later, bishop Augustine of Hippo said the same using other words: Also in Sufism is this apparent: As nobody was born wise, we see wisdom appear, in the so-called "didactical literature" of the Instructions, as an exponent of the didactical process of acquiring a just, sapiential perspective on life, i. Wisdom was the best a non-royal aristocrat or a common intellectual priest, scribe could hope for. In the Instructions, we can see it at work as the law of existence itself. Both the good discourse as the state of the hearer who should listen were deemed essential. Insofar as we relate philosophy to the overall metaphysical question of the nature of the universe and humankind, Ancient Egyptian literature reveals itself to be a very fertile ground. These considerations are always intermingled with the context at hand, but as soon as a broad comparative horizon emerges, one can not deny that the Ancient Egyptians had a philosophical inclination, albeit in an ante-rational format. That this "wisdom" was not the result of a free, independent rational dialogue should trigger our interest to find out the silhouette of the Ancient Egyptian sage. He is not a disputant, but one who listens and acts out truth and justice. It is likewise true that only in the "sapiential" genre, wisdom-teachings i. Although the extant record of the sapiential teachings is slightly more extended than the usual instructions on papyrus cf.

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Chapter 4 : The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians, by E.A. Wallis Budge

The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians By E. A. Wallis Budge. Format: Global Grey free PDF, epub, Kindle ebook. Pages (PDF): Publication Date: (Download links are just below the donate button).

These works represent the experience, and shrewdness, and knowledge which their writers had gained at the Court of the Pharaohs, and are full of sound worldly wisdom and high moral excellence. They were written to teach young men of the royal and aristocratic classes to fear God, to honour the king, to do their duty efficiently, to lead strictly moral, if not exactly religious, lives, to treat every man with the respect due to his position in life, to cultivate home life, and to do their duty to their neighbours, both to those who were rich and those who were poor. The Precepts of Ptah-hetep The oldest Egyptian book of Moral Precepts, or Maxims, or Admonitions, is that of Ptah-hetep, governor of the town of Memphis, and high confidential adviser of the king; he flourished in the reign of Assa, a king of the fifth dynasty, about B. His work is found, more or less complete, in several papyri, which are preserved in the British Museum and in the National Library in Paris, and extracts from it, which were used by Egyptian pupils in the schools attached to the temples, and which are written upon slices of limestone, are to be seen in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and elsewhere. The oldest copy of the work contains many mistakes, and in some places the text is unintelligible, but many parts of it can be translated, and the following extracts will illustrate the piety and moral worth, and the sagacity and experience of the shrewd but kindly "man of the world" who undertook to guide the young prince of his day. The sage begins his work with a lament about the evil effects that follow old age in a man "Depression seizeth upon him every day, his eyesight faileth, his ears become deaf, his strength declineth, his heart hath no rest, the mouth becometh silent and speaketh not, the intelligence diminisheth, and it is impossible to remember to-day what happened yesterday. The bones are full of pain, the pursuit that was formerly attended with pleasure is now fraught with pain, and the sense of taste departeth. Old age is the worst of all the miseries that can befall a man. The nose becometh stopped up and one cannot smell at all. Who is it that will authorise me to repeat to the prince the Precepts of those who had knowledge of the wise counsels of the learned men of old? It is instruction of this kind alone that formeth the character of the sons of noblemen, and the youth who hearkeneth to such instruction will acquire a right understanding and the faculty of judging justly, and he will not feel weary of his duties. Governor of Memphis, confidential servant of the king. These Precepts instruct the ignorant, and teach them to understand fine speech; among them are the following: Converse with the ignorant man as well as with him that is educated. If any man saith that he is going to live by these means, God will make his mouth empty of food. Let no man terrify the people, for the command of God is that they shall enjoy rest. Set it before thee. Look at what is before thee, but not too closely, and do not look at it too often. The man who rejecteth it is an ill-mannered person. Do not speak to interrupt when he is speaking, for one knoweth not when he may disapprove. Speak when he addresseth thee, and then thy words shall be acceptable. When a man hath wealth he ordereth his actions according to his own dictates. He doeth what he willeth The great man can effect by the mere lifting up of his hand what a [poor] man cannot. Since the eating of bread is according to the dispensation of God, a man cannot object thereto. Take great care not to spoil it in delivery and so to set one nobleman against another. He who wresteth the truth in transmitting the message, and only repeateth it in words that give pleasure to all men, gentleman or common man, is an abominable person. Eat not too much when thou art near thy neighbours The children of the man who, being a man of substance, seizeth [prey] like the crocodile in the presence of the field labourers, are cursed because of his behaviour, his father suffereth poignant grief, and as for the mother who bore him, every other woman is happier than she. A man who is the leader of a clan or tribe that trusteth him and followeth him becometh a god. Since thou knowest who are to serve, and who are to command, let not thy heart magnify itself against the latter. Since thou knowest who hath the power, hold in fear him that hath it Do more than is commanded. Waste not the time wherein thou canst labour; he is an abominable man who maketh a bad use of his time.

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Lose no chance day by day in adding to the riches of thy house. Work produceth wealth, and wealth endureth not when work is abandoned. Love thy wife absolutely, give her food in abundance, and raiment for her back; these are the medicines for her body. Anoint her with unguents, and make her happy as long as thou livest. She is thy field, and she reflecteth credit on her possessor. Be not harsh in thy house, for she will be more easily moved by persuasion than by violence. Satisfy her wish, observe what she expecteth, and take note of that whereon she hath fixed her gaze. This is the treatment that will keep her in her house; if thou repel her advances, it is ruin for thee. Embrace her, call her by fond names, and treat her lovingly. Keep silence, for this is better than to talk overmuch. When thou speakest thou must know what can be urged against thy words. To speak in the council chamber [needeth] skill and experience. Be not harsh in respect of the grain, for thou art only an overseer of the food of God. Let thy opinion coincide with that of thy lord. But whilst the Egyptian scribes who lived under the Middle and New Empires were ready to pay all honour to the writings of an earlier age, they were not slow to perceive that the older Precepts did not supply advice on every important subject, and they therefore proceeded to write supplementary Precepts. A very interesting collection of such Precepts is found in a papyrus preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. The Maxims of Ani They are generally known as the "Maxims of Ani," and the following examples will illustrate their scope and character: God is wroth with the transgressor of this law. Bear testimony [to Him] after thy offering Follow her not, nor any woman who is like her. Do not make her acquaintance. She is like a deep stream the windings of which are unknown. Act not the part of the chatterer. Pray thou with a loving heart, and let thy words be hidden or secret. Do this, and He will do thy business for thee. He will hearken unto thy words, and He will receive thy offering. Forget not to do this when thou art outside thy house, and as thou doest for them so shall thy son do for thee. Thou wilt fall down, thy bones may be broken, and there will be no one to give thee a hand [to help thee]. Alas, thou wilt have no opportunity for speech, for verily his terror will be before thee. Death cometh, and he seizeth the babe at the breast of his mother, as well as the man who hath arrived at a ripe old age. Observe this, for I speak unto thee good advice which thou shalt meditate upon in thy heart. Do these things, and thou wilt be a good man, and evils of all kinds shall remove themselves from thee. Administrators of high rank should discuss the laws, women should talk about their husbands, and every man should speak about his own affairs. If the scribe be appointed to any position, he will converse about his documents. The director of the treasury hath no son, and the overseer of the seal hath no heir. High officials esteem the scribe, whose hand is his position of honour, which they do not give to children To answer roughly is like the brandishing of weapons, but if thou wilt speak kindly and quietly thou wilt always [be loved]. Chatter not [during] his journeyings or processions, seek not to prolong? Let thine eye observe his dispensations. Devote thyself to the adoration of his name. It is he who giveth souls to millions of forms, and he magnifieth the man who magnifieth him When after some months thou wast born, she placed herself under a yoke, for three years she suckled thee When thou wast sent to school to be educated, she brought bread and beer for thee from her house to thy master regularly each day. Thou art now grown up, and thou hast a wife and a house of thy own. Keep thine eye on thy child, and bring him up as thy mother brought thee up. Do nothing whatsoever that will cause her i. Work thou [for him]. God seeth him that worketh for Him, and He esteemeth lightly the man who esteemeth Him lightly. Speak gently to him that hath spoken in anger, for soft words are the medicine for his heart. The Talk of a Man who was tired of Life with His Soul For the study of the moral character of the ancient Egyptian, a document, of which a mutilated copy is found on a papyrus preserved in the Royal Library in Berlin, is of peculiar importance. As the opening lines are wanting it is impossible to know what the title of the work was, but because the text records a conversation that took place between a man who had suffered grievous misfortunes, and was weary of the world and of all in it, and wished to kill himself, it is generally called the "Talk of a man who was tired of life with his soul. The man weary of life discusses with his soul, as if it were a being wholly distinct from himself, whether he shall kill himself or not. This shows that the man who was tired of life was alone in the world, and that all his relations and friends had either forsaken him, or had been driven away by him. His soul then advised him to destroy himself by means of fire, probably, as has been suggested, because the ashes of a

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burnt body would need no further care. The man accepted the advice of his soul, and was about to follow it literally, when the soul itself drew back, being afraid to undergo the sufferings inherent in such a death for the body. The man then asked his soul to perform for him the last rites, but it absolutely refused to do so, and told him that it objected to death in any form, and that it had no desire at all to depart to the kingdom of the dead. The soul supports its objection to suffer by telling the man who is tired of life that the mere remembrance of burial is fraught with mourning, and tears, and sorrow. It means that a man is torn away from his house and thrown out upon a hill, and that he will never go up again to see the sun. And after all, what is the good of burial? Take the case of those who have had granite tombs, and funerary monuments in the form of pyramids made for them, and who lie in them in great state and dignity. Because men receive fine burials it does not follow that offerings of food, which will enable them to continue their existence, will be made by their kinsfolk. Finally the soul ends its speech with the advice that represented the view of the average Egyptian in all ages, "Follow after the day of happiness, and banish care," that is to say, spare no pains in making thyself happy at all times, and let nothing that concerns the present or the future trouble thee. This advice, which is well expressed by the words which the rich man spake to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" St. In a second group of rhythmical passages the man who was tired of life goes on to describe the unsatisfactory and corrupt condition of society, and his wholesale condemnation of it includes his own kinsfolk. Each passage begins with the words, "Unto whom do I speak this day?"

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Chapter 5 : Ancient Egyptian philosophy

The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians. by E.A. Wallis Budge | | 97, words. Summary: This book is intended as an introduction to Ancient Egyptian calendrierdelascience.com contains compilations of all the great periods of literary activity in Egypt under the Pharaohs.

Wisdom Texts Ancient Egyptian Literature: Wisdom Texts The wisdom literature can be found throughout all periods of ancient Egyptian history from the Old Kingdom through to the New Kingdom. Much of the literature of ancient Egypt deals with the state religion, the relationship between the gods and the king. It is very rare to find literature that deals with relationships in a much more general way. There are examples of personal worship of the gods and personal feelings towards the gods, special prayers. The wisdom texts represent one special category of literature because they look at codes of behaviour and ethical values of the ancient Egyptian society, what they thought was right and wrong, and how they taught people and passed on moral codes. The wisdom texts were textbooks for teachers, for children to be brought up and taught a particular set of morals, ethics and values. They believed that these instructions had been handed down from the gods, the first examples go back to the Old Kingdom, but undoubtedly go back even further as an oral tradition, passed on from generation to generation. The texts are not about the afterlife, they concerned with living a good life and how to conduct your life on earth, and as such give us a different view of the ancient Egyptians. They are sets of rules for conducting personal relationships and standards of behaviour. These texts provide guidelines for manners, appropriate conduct in various social situations. The wisdom texts were used as schoolboy exercises thousands of years later. The values recorded in these texts are values that would stand up in any society today; they express kindness, moderation and the ability to make good judgements. These texts were for the upper classes of Egyptian society who would later in life take up official appointments and rule. The later texts of the New Kingdom and Late periods were more for middle class people, also during these periods different texts are composed and added. In the Old Kingdom, it would be the Prime Minister or King addressing his children, in the later periods it is an ordinary middle class man talking to his son. Most literature in ancient Egypt was anonymous, and the authors attributed to the texts were almost certainly not the composers of the texts, and their names were probably used to give it a greater credibility. Fifth Dynasty, c BC This can be found on a number of papyri, modern translations are compilations of these different papyri. One version can be found in Paris, the Papyri Prisse, there are two copies in the British Museum, one dating from the Middle Kingdom and one from the New Kingdom, it can also be found on a wooden tablet that can be found in the Cairo Museum. There are no limits that have been decreed for art; There is no artist who attains entire excellence. A lovely thought is harder to come by than a jewel; One can find it in the hand of a maid at the grindstone. Do not let your heart become swollen with pride In case you may be humbled. It is true that one may become rich through doing evil, But the power of Truth and Justice is that they endure And that a man can say of them: If you are resolute, acquire a reputation For knowledge and kindness. Follow the dictates of your heart. The texts deals with advancement in life advising caution in speech, refrain from becoming hotheaded, always be cool and calm, put your arguments logically, never loose your temper. Young men are advised to marry young, and to treat their wives with solicitude. Be not covetous of wealth. You can swallow down a fat morsel, But you may vomit it up, And be emptier than you were before Better a single bushel bestowed by God Than five thousand ill-gotten When you hear things spoken that are of good or evil report, Reject the latter, as though it had never come to your ears. Keep a sweet word ever on your tongue. Never allow a division to sunder what you say from what is in your heart. No, remember that you do not know what is in the mind of God, And that you cannot know what may happen tomorrow. Man is the clay and straw, and God is the builder, Daily he destroys and daily he recreates Leave no one behind you at the river crossing While you are lolling in the ferry-boat. Duauf is not a scribe or vizier, but a common man, who has a son called Pepy. Who has been awarded a scholarship place and is receiving an education in the School of Books

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amongst the children of the magistrates. Duauf is anxious that his son take good advantage of this opportunity, that he should apply himself to his books and schoolwork, and become a scribe. It was a way of escaping from all the other trades available. The Judges who give judgement on the downtrodden, You know how rigorous they are When the day dawns for judging the guilty, When the momentous hour arrives. Woe results when the prosecutor is the Wise One; Put not your trust in longevity. Where these judges are concerned, a lifetime last but a single hour. One is faced with the prospect of eternity; The person who makes light of it is an idiot. But the man who comes stainless before his judges Abides in the hereafter like a god, Marching proudly forward Like those who possess the keys of eternity. Be not ruthless, for it is fine to be generous; Act in such a way that your work will endure because it is endearing. Speak the truth in your house So that the great ones who rule the land will hold you in respect It is the inside of the house that compels outward admiration. Do not exalt someone of noble birth More than you do the child of a humble man, But choose a man because of his actions. The virtue of a man whose heart is just is more acceptable to God Than the choice bull of the man who commits iniquity.

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Chapter 6 : Moral And Philosophical Literature [Chapter XIII]

The wisdom of the Egyptians was a proverb with the Greeks, who felt themselves children beside this ancient race. The oldest work of philosophy known to us is the "Instructions of Pta'h-hotep," which apparently goes back to B.C. 2600 years before Confucius, Socrates and Buddha.

Ideal conduct for ancient Egyptians was both practical and religious. Texts such as the Book of the Dead stress the virtues of charity, benevolence, prudence, social justice, mercy, and the love of intellectual pursuits. Moral thoughts and desires were as important as moral actions. The ancient Egyptians believed that man was composed of three parts: The fate of the soul was determined by its actions during life, whether good or bad, and the amulets, prayers, and gifts offered to gain the favor of the gods. After Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, Alexandria was established as a major commercial center that also became a meeting place for Greek and Eastern thought. Philosophy was less popular in Greece after the death of Aristotle, but the philosophers found a welcoming audience in Alexandria. Here several lines of philosophy developed: The Neo-Pythagoreans combined monotheism with the fatalistic cult of the gods into a reverence for God as a pure spirit who is served by prayers, wisdom, and virtue rather than outward sacrifices. He tried to merge the traditions of Israel and those of the Greeks by interpreting the Scriptures using an allegorical method. He defined mystical experiences as different from physical experiences in that the former lifts one out of the ordinary plane of life. Neo-Platonism was founded by Ammonius Saccas and expanded by his student Plotinus. It introduced the supra-rational, that which lies beyond reason and reality. Neo-Platonism proposed that because neither sensory perception nor rational thought provides justification for religious ethics, the highest sphere of knowledge, which they called the supra-rational, must depend on divine revelations. Early Christianity tried to reconcile philosophy with theology. It shared the Hellenistic concept that the physical world was evil and inferior to the transcendental world to which the soul could win its way back through self-denial and purification. Prominent early Christian philosophers were Clement and Origen. Philosophical investigations into the nature of Christ led to controversies in early Coptic Christianity. Christ was believed to be an eternal emanation, like God, but the interpretation of eternity differed between the Alexandrian and Antioch churches, which led to what is called the Arian Controversy. The Antioch church believed there was a time that God existed, but the Son did not, as the Son came from God, while the Alexandrians argued that there was no before or after in eternity. In a later controversy, the Alexandrians believed the human and the divine were fused in the person of Christ as one nature, while the Antioch school of thought conceived of Christ as uniting in himself two persons, the divine spirit and the human man. As the Muslims expanded their empire, they came into contact with the philosophical traditions present in Egypt. Philosophy during the early phases of Islam had only been concerned with the acceptance or rejection of the message of Mohammad. New converts to Islam asked questions about free will and the nature of God. The Mutazilite school, which encouraged the use of rational, independent thought, proposed that the nature of Allah and existence could be understood through reason alone. Reason should be used to guide actions and to define morality. Early Muslim philosophical methods, such as the use of citation to back up ideas and the development of open inquiry, influenced modern philosophy.

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Chapter 7 : Ancient Ethical Theory (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

In ancient Egyptian literature, there is a story dating back to the Middle Kingdom (BC BC). This era witnessed a great number of writers and thinkers who left behind a number of works of art reflecting the elevated status of thinking and culture in ancient Egypt.

Its object is to present a short series of specimens of Egyptian compositions, which represent all the great periods of literary activity in Egypt under the Pharaohs, to all who are interested in the study of the mental development of ancient nations. It is not addressed to the Egyptological specialist, to whom, as a matter of course, its contents are well known, and therefore its pages are not loaded with elaborate notes and copious references. It represents, I believe, the first attempt made to place before the public a summary of the principal contents of Egyptian Literature in a handy and popular form. Translations of most of the texts have appeared in learned works written by Egyptologists in English, French, German, and Italian, but some appear in English for the first time. In every case I have collated my own translations with the texts, and, thanks to the accurate editions of texts which have appeared in recent years, it has been found possible to make many hitherto difficult passages clear. The translations are as literal as the difference between the Egyptian and English idioms will permit, but it has been necessary to insert particles and often to invert the order of the words in the original works in order to produce a connected meaning in English. The result of this has been in many cases to break up the [vi] short abrupt sentences in which the Egyptian author delighted, and which he used frequently with dramatic effect. Extraordinarily concise phrases have been paraphrased, but the meanings given to several unknown words often represent guess-work. In selecting the texts for translation in this book an attempt has been made to include compositions that are not only the best of their kind, but that also illustrate the most important branches of Egyptian Literature. Among these religious, mythological, and moral works bulk largely, and in many respects these represent the peculiar bias of the mind of the ancient Egyptian better than compositions of a purely historical character. No man was more alive to his own material interests, but no man has ever valued the things of this world less in comparison with the salvation of his soul and the preservation of his physical body. The immediate result of this was a perpetual demand on his part for information concerning the Other World, and for guidance during his life in this world. The priests attempted to satisfy his craving for information by composing the Books of the Dead and the other funerary works with which we are acquainted, and the popularity of these works seems to show that they succeeded. From the earliest times the Egyptians regarded a life of moral excellence upon earth as a necessary introduction to the life which he hoped to live with the blessed in heaven. And even in pyramid times he conceived the idea of the existence of a God Who judged rightly, and Who set "right in the place of wrong. To him, as to all Africans, the Other World was a very real thing, and death and the Last Judgment were common subjects of his daily thoughts. The royal writer in it reminds his son that the Chiefs [of Osiris] [vii] who judge sinners perform their duty with merciless justice on the Day of Judgment. It is useless to assume that length of years will be accepted by them as a plea of justification. With them the lifetime of a man is only regarded as a moment. After death these Chiefs must be faced, and the only things that they will consider will be his works. Life in the Other World is for ever, and only the reckless fool forgets this fact. The man who has led a life free from lies and deceit shall live after death like a god. The reader who wishes to continue his studies of Egyptian Literature will find abundant material in the list of works given on pp.

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Chapter 8 : The Ethics and Morality of the Ancient Egyptians

This section is devoted to six Egyptian wisdom-teachings, written between ca. and BCE. The first three teachings (Hordedef, Kagemni & Ptahhotep) are translated, annotated and discussed in a single paper, which also serves as a general introduction to "maat", truth and justice and "Maat", the goddess of the balance.

Introduction In their moral theories, the ancient philosophers depended on several important notions. These include virtue and the virtues, happiness eudaimonia, and the soul. We can begin with virtue. There is the excellence of a horse and the excellence of a knife. Then, of course, there is human excellence. Conceptions of human excellence include such disparate figures as the Homeric warrior chieftain and the Athenian statesman of the period of its imperial expansion. From this description we can see that some versions of human excellence have a problematic relation to the moral virtues. In the ancient world, courage, moderation, and justice were prime species of moral virtue. This settled disposition includes a practical knowledge about how to bring it about, in each situation, that each receives their due. It also includes a strong positive attitude toward bringing it about that each receives their due. Just people, then, are not ones who occasionally act justly, or even who regularly act justly but do so out of some other motive; rather they are people who reliably act that way because they place a positive, high intrinsic value on rendering to each their due and they are good at it. Courage is a settled disposition that allows one to act reliably to pursue right ends in fearful situations, because one values so acting intrinsically. Human excellence can be conceived in ways that do not include the moral virtues. For instance, someone thought of as excellent for benefiting friends and harming enemies can be cruel, arbitrary, rapacious, and ravenous of appetite. Most ancient philosophers, however, argue that human excellence must include the moral virtues and that the excellent human will be, above all, courageous, moderate, and just. This argument depends on making a link between the moral virtues and happiness. While most ancient philosophers hold that happiness is the proper goal or end of human life, the notion is both simple and complicated, as Aristotle points out. It seems simple to say everyone wants to be happy; it is complicated to say what happiness is. We can approach the problem by discussing, first, the relation of happiness to human excellence and, then, the relation of human excellence to the moral virtues. It is significant that synonyms for eudaimonia are living well and doing well. These phrases imply certain activities associated with human living. Ancient philosophers argued that whatever activities constitute human living are e. One can feel fear and react to dangerous situations sometimes appropriately and sometimes inappropriately; or one might always act shamefully and dishonorably. However, to carry out the activities that constitute human living well over a whole lifetime, or long stretches of it, is living well or doing well. At this point the relation of happiness to human excellence should be clear. Human excellence is the psychological basis for carrying out the activities of a human life well; to that extent human excellence is also happiness. While the unhappy person deals with a vital and dynamic emotion like fear in an inept way, the happy person handles fear skillfully, and thereby exhibits human excellence. So described, human excellence is general and covers many activities of a human life. However, one can see how human excellence might at least include the moral virtues. The moral virtue relevant to fear, for instance, is courage. Courage is a reliable disposition to react to fear in an appropriate way. What counts as appropriate entails harnessing fear for good or honorable ends. In this way, moral virtues become the kind of human excellence that is other-regarding. The moral virtues, then, are excellent qualities of character intrinsically valuable for the one who has them; but they are also valuable for others. In rough outline, we can see one important way ancient moral theory tries to link happiness to moral virtue by way of human excellence. Happiness derives from human excellence; human excellence includes the moral virtues, which are implicitly or explicitly other-regarding. While some think there is a distinction between feeling happy and feeling content, still happiness is a good and pleasant feeling. Of course, if their work is going well, they might feel contentment. But in speaking of their happiness, they might just as well be referring to their absorption in some successful activity. For ancient

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philosophers eudaimonia is closer to the secondary sense of our own term. In this way, then, ancient philosophers typically justify moral virtue. Being courageous, just, and moderate is valuable for the virtuous person because these virtues are inextricably linked with happiness. Everyone wants to be happy, so anyone who realizes the link between virtue and happiness will also want to be virtuous. This argument depends on two central ideas. First, human excellence is a good of the soul – not a material or bodily good such as wealth or political power. Another way to put this idea is to say happiness is not something external, like wealth or political power, but an internal, psychological good. The second central idea is that the most important good of the soul is moral virtue. By being virtuous one enjoys a psychological state whose value outweighs whatever other kinds of goods one might have by being vicious. Finally, a few words about the soul are in order since, typically, philosophers argue that virtue is a good of the soul. In some ways, this claim is found in many traditions. Many thinkers argue that being moral does not necessarily provide physical beauty, health, or prosperity. Rather, as something good, virtue must be understood as belonging to the soul; it is a psychological good. However, in order to explain virtue as a good of the soul, one does not have to hold that the soul is immortal. While Plato, for example, holds that the soul is immortal and that its virtue is a good that transcends death, his argument for virtue as a psychological good does not depend on the immortality of the soul. He argues that virtue is a psychological good in this life. To live a mortal human life with this good is in itself happiness. This position that links happiness and virtue is called eudaimonism – a word based on the principal Greek word for happiness, eudaimonia. By eudaimonism, we will mean one of several theses: However, one must be cautious not to conclude that ancient theories in general attempt to construe the value of virtue simply as a means to achieving happiness. Each theory, as we shall see, has its own approach to the nature of the link between virtue and happiness. It would not be advisable to see ancient theories as concerned with such contemporary issues as whether moral discourse – i. These reflections on virtue can provide an occasion for contrasting ancient moral theory and modern. One way to put the contrast is to say that ancient moral theory is agent-centered while modern moral theory is action-centered. To say that it is action-centered means that, as a theory of morality, it explains morality, to begin with, in terms of actions and their circumstances, and the ways in which actions are moral or immoral. We can roughly divide modern thinkers into two groups. Those who judge the morality of an action on the basis of its known or expected consequences are consequentialist; those who judge the morality of an action on the basis of its conformity to certain kinds of laws, prohibitions, or positive commandments are deontologists. The former include, e. Deontologists say an action is moral if it conforms to a moral principle, e. While these thinkers are not uninterested in the moral disposition to produce such actions, or in what disposition is required if they are to show any moral worth in the persons who do them, their focus is on actions, their consequences, and the rules or other principles to which they conform. The result of these ways of approaching morality is that moral assessment falls on actions. This focus explains, for instance, contemporary fascination with such questions of casuistry as, e. By contrast, ancient moral theory explains morality in terms that focus on the moral agent. These thinkers are interested in what constitutes, e. A modern might object that this way of proceeding is backwards. Just actions are logically prior to just persons and must be specifiable in advance of any account of what it is to be a just person. Of course, the ancients had a rough idea of what just actions were; and this rough idea certainly contributed to the notion of a just person, and his motivation and system of values. Still, the notion of a just person is not exhausted by an account of the consequences of just actions, or any principle for determining which actions are and which are not just. For the ancients, the just person is compared to a craftsman, e. Acting as a physician is not simply a collection of medically effective actions. It is knowing when such actions are appropriate, among other things; and this kind of knowledge is not always definable. These are manifested in particular actions but are not reducible to those actions. In the same way, what constitutes a just person is not exhausted by the actions he or she does nor, for that matter, by any catalogue of possible just actions. Rather, being a just person entails qualities of character proper to the just person, in the light of which they decide what actions justice requires of them. In those dialogues in which he plays a major

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role, Socrates varies considerably between two extremes. On the one hand, there is the Socrates who claims to know nothing about virtue and confines himself to asking other characters questions; this Socrates is found in the Apology and in certain dialogues most of which end inconclusively. On the other hand, in other dialogues we find a Socrates who expounds positive teachings about virtue; this Socrates usually asks questions only to elicit agreement. These dialogues are didactic, and conclusive in tone, e. However, these distinctions between kinds of dialogues and kinds of Socratic characters are not exclusive; there are dialogues that mix the aporetic and conclusive styles, e. In observing these distinctions, we refer only to the characteristic style of the dialogue and leave aside controversies about the relative dates of composition of the dialogues. See the entry on Plato , especially the section on Socrates and the section on the historical Socrates. The significance of this distinction among dialogues is that one can isolate a strain of moral teaching in the aporetic and mixed dialogues. In spite of their inconclusive nature, in the aporetic dialogues the character Socrates maintains principles about morality that he seems to take to be fundamental. In the mixed dialogues we find similar teaching. For our purposes it is sufficient to point out a distinction between kinds of moral teaching in the dialogues. We will focus on the aporetic dialogues as well as the mixed dialogues Protagoras, Gorgias, and Meno. The first feature of Socratic teaching is its heroic quality. In the Apology, Socrates says that a man worth anything at all does not reckon whether his course of action endangers his life or threatens death. He looks only at one thing – whether what he does is just or not, the work of a good or of a bad man 28b-c. Said in the context of his trial, this statement is both about himself and a fundamental claim of his moral teaching.

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Chapter 9 : Ancient Egyptian philosophy - Wikipedia

The Literature of ancient Egypt is the product of a period of about four thousand years, and it was written in three kinds of writing, which are called hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic. In the first of these the

Indian philosophy Indian philosophy Sanskrit: Some of the earliest surviving philosophical texts are the Upanishads of the later Vedic period ~ BCE. Important Indian philosophical concepts include dharma , karma , samsara , moksha and ahimsa. Indian philosophers developed a system of epistemological reasoning pramana and logic and investigated topics such as metaphysics, ethics, hermeneutics and soteriology. Indian philosophy also covered topics such as political philosophy as seen in the Arthashastra c. The commonly named six orthodox schools arose sometime between the start of the Common Era and the Gupta Empire. Later developments include the development of Tantra and Iranian-Islamic influences. Buddhism mostly disappeared from India after the Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent , surviving in the Himalayan regions and south India. Due to the influence of British colonialism, much modern Indian philosophical work was in English and includes thinkers such as Radhakrishnan , Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya , Bimal Krishna Matilal and M. Jain philosophy Jain philosophy separates body matter from the soul consciousness completely. Jain philosophy attempts to explain the rationale of being and existence, the nature of the Universe and its constituents, the nature of bondage and the means to achieve liberation. Jain texts expound that in every half-cycle of time, twenty-four tirthankaras grace this part of the Universe to teach the unchanging doctrine of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. Buddhist philosophy begins with the thought of Gautama Buddha fl. Buddhist thought is trans-regional and trans-cultural. It originated in India and later spread to East Asia , Tibet , Central Asia , and Southeast Asia , developing new and syncretic traditions in these different regions. The various Buddhist schools of thought are the dominant philosophical tradition in Tibet and Southeast Asian countries like Sri Lanka and Burma. Because ignorance to the true nature of things is considered one of the roots of suffering dukkha , Buddhist philosophy is concerned with epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and psychology. The ending of dukkha also encompasses meditative practices. Key innovative concepts include the Four Noble Truths , Anatta not-self a critique of a fixed personal identity , the transience of all things Anicca , and a certain skepticism about metaphysical questions. Mahayana philosophers such as Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu developed the theories of Shunyata emptiness of all phenomena and Vijnapti-matra appearance only , a form of phenomenology or transcendental idealism. After the disappearance of Buddhism from India, these philosophical traditions continued to develop in the Tibetan Buddhist , East Asian Buddhist and Theravada Buddhist traditions. The modern period saw the rise of Buddhist modernism and Humanistic Buddhism under Western influences and the development of a Western Buddhism with influences from modern psychology and Western philosophy. East Asian philosophy The Analects of Confucius fl. East Asian philosophical thought began in Ancient China , and Chinese philosophy begins during the Western Zhou Dynasty and the following periods after its fall when the " Hundred Schools of Thought " flourished 6th century to BCE. These philosophical traditions developed metaphysical, political and ethical theories such Tao , Yin and yang , Ren and Li which, along with Chinese Buddhism , directly influenced Korean philosophy , Vietnamese philosophy and Japanese philosophy which also includes the native Shinto tradition. During later Chinese dynasties like the Ming Dynasty ~ as well as in the Korean Joseon dynasty ~ a resurgent Neo-Confucianism led by thinkers such as Wang Yangming ~ became the dominant school of thought, and was promoted by the imperial state. In the Modern era, Chinese thinkers incorporated ideas from Western philosophy. Modern Japanese thought meanwhile developed under strong Western influences such as the study of Western Sciences Rangaku and the modernist Meirokusha intellectual society which drew from European enlightenment thought. The 20th century saw the rise of State Shinto and also Japanese nationalism. The Kyoto School , an influential and unique Japanese philosophical school developed from Western phenomenology and Medieval Japanese Buddhist philosophy such as that of Dogen.

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African philosophy Main article: African philosophy African philosophy is philosophy produced by African people , philosophy that presents African worldviews, ideas and themes, or philosophy that uses distinct African philosophical methods. Modern African thought has been occupied with Ethnophilosophy , with defining the very meaning of African philosophy and its unique characteristics and what it means to be African. Another early African philosopher was Anton Wilhelm Amo c. Contemporary African thought has also seen the development of Professional philosophy and of Africana philosophy , the philosophical literature of the African diaspora which includes currents such as black existentialism by African-Americans. Modern African thinkers have been influenced by Marxism , African-American literature , Critical theory , Critical race theory , Postcolonialism and Feminism. Indigenous American philosophy is the philosophy of the Indigenous people of the Americas. There is a wide variety of beliefs and traditions among these different American cultures. Among some of the Native Americans in the United States there is a belief in a metaphysical principle called the "Great Mystery" Siouan: Wakan Tanka , Algonquian: Another widely shared concept was that of Orenda or "spiritual power". According to Peter M. Whiteley, for the Native Americans, "Mind is critically informed by transcendental experience dreams, visions and so on as well as by reason. Another feature of the indigenous American worldviews was their extension of ethics to non-human animals and plants. The Aztec worldview posited the concept of an ultimate universal energy or force called Ometeotl which can be translated as "Dual Cosmic Energy" and sought a way to live in balance with a constantly changing, "slippery" world. The theory of Teotl can be seen as a form of Pantheism. Aztec ethics was focused on seeking tlamatiliztli knowledge, wisdom which was based on moderation and balance in all actions as in the Nahuatl proverb "the middle good is necessary". These groupings allow philosophers to focus on a set of similar topics and interact with other thinkers who are interested in the same questions. The groupings also make philosophy easier for students to approach. Students can learn the basic principles involved in one aspect of the field without being overwhelmed with the entire set of philosophical theories. Various sources present different categorical schemes. The categories adopted in this article aim for breadth and simplicity. These five major branches can be separated into sub-branches and each sub-branch contains many specific fields of study.