

Seeking the highest good essay

[Religion](#), [God](#)



Abstract

This paper explores such questions as the key ideas of seeking the highest good in Confucianism, Taoism and Christianity. The main principles of mentioned religions are described. The relationship of right being to right doing in each of Confucianism, Taoism and Christianity are considered.

Keywords: Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, the highest good, religion.

The main subjects that are considered in Confucianism are ethics, morality, and issues of governance (“ Confucianism,” n. d.). The basic ethical principle of Confucianism is humanity. Confucianism is characterized by a highly optimistic view of human nature (“ Confucianism,” n. d.). This principle is central in family and community life of a human. It is achieved through cultivation of self-improvement and strict adherence to the laws and rituals undertaken in the community. These laws prescribe respect for elders and social status, courtesy, loyalty to the state (“ Confucianism,” n. d.).

According to Confucianism only " noble men" who are the representatives of the ruling classes can comprehend the laws of humanity, for common people this understanding is not available (“ Confucianism,” n. d.). By proving the superiority of the ruling class, this teaching makes these social strata be opposite. The rulers in Confucianism are the messengers of heaven, and divine power itself, and much attention is paid to the humane management. Humane management consists in strict adherence to duty. Confucianism calls on civil servants to follow wise management by showing an example of nobility by their own epitome and not to burden the people with strict duties and taxes.

Confucian ethics wants to affirm the principle of equity between people in

the system of government. Confucian ideology is pervaded with rationality and practicality. Confucius and his followers have found methods of governance, determined a system of relations in society and family and other ethical standards. The center of the highest good and harmony, the example for imitation in Confucianism is considered to be heaven - the ancient god ("Confucianism," n. d.). Imitating celestial harmony a man aims at creating some kind of kingdom of God on earth. State by Confucianism is defined as a big family, where everyone has strictly designated areas, in which everyone should behave respectively ("Confucianism," n. d.). The rod that holds the entire state, according to Confucius, is loyalty and obedience ("Confucianism," n. d.). They should pervade society from top to bottom: children respect parents, younger brothers and sisters - the older, and citizens - their rulers. But the principle of a large family means the responsibility of government (the "parents") before people. Then only in the state ("family") mutual trust will reign, without which the stable existence is impossible ("Confucianism," n. d.). In Taoism according to Lao Tzu, the great Tao, id est. "Path", has been created by nobody, but everything comes from it ("Taoism", n. d.). To know it and to merge with it is the highest meaning of Taoists' existence and the main purpose of their lives ("Taoism", n. d.). A believer's goal is to harmonize themselves with the Tao ("Taoism", n. d.). They tried to go away from passions and vain life to the primitive simplicity. Taoists' ethics proclaims satisfaction with their fate, and unpretentious being, patient attitude towards evil, and renunciation of desires. Taoism prescribes norms of behavior like not to boast with their merits, not to humiliate the weak, to live in peace and harmony with others, not to desire

wealth and luxury, content with little, not to steal (“ Taoism”, n. d.). Taoism was named because of Lao Tzu and his followers insisted that Tao was a way of life. Their motto is " back to nature", " nature" should be understood in the sense of the natural and proper order of things (“ Taoism”, n. d.). Early Taoists so unconditionally believed in it, they called for the end of rites and customs, and even civilization itself, for it is the result of interference with the nature. The nature is the key to all Taoists’ questions that they get during their life. The highest good of a man, his true happiness can be found in harmony with the nature, the Tao. Only when someone is natural, he is internally calm and able to accept what life offers. When someone is ambitious and aggressive, he is contrary to his true nature. Waging war with himself, he makes a fatal blow to his possible happiness. The nature never argues the way humans do. Nature is just natural. And what reason can change the way in which the world is going? Force of gravity does not argue with us, it just works. Lao Tzu pointed out that Tao also never use force, though there is nothing that he would not have reached. The power of the Tao acts constantly, without effort or strain. A man who professes Tao will not use force, because force destroys his high goals. A man who is trying to make the world the way he wants it to be, does harm to himself and others. A person who persists or seeks to achieve something, immerses in his own efforts and simply loses the value of what he is looking for. So he destroys his ideal, destroys the target and suffers a complete collapse.

According to Christian ethics, human life and its values have meaning only in relation to the divine commandments (B. Davies-Stofka, Principles of Moral Thought and Action, n. d.). Thus, God acts as the objective, absolute and

only valid source of morality. Christian ethics is characterized by contradictory combination of pessimistic and optimistic thoughts (B. Davies-Stofka, Principles of Moral Thought and Action, n. d.). Pessimism is mainly related to the local world and optimism is connected with hopes of the kingdom of God. A man should give up self-will and fully submit to the will of God. The main point of the Christianity concept is the idea of love for God. Love is to be understood as a kind of universal principle of morality and ethics. It defines the moral attitude toward the neighbor, allows attachment of universal moral status, and sanctifies everything that exists. In Christianity the idea of the love to God results in a new virtue such as charity. So Confucianism says that right doing leads to right being, vice versa Taoism states that right being leads to right doing. Christianity determines that by repenting of sins and following the laws of the Ten Commandments a person finds relation with God.

References

- Confucianism. (n. d.). In Religion facts. Retrieved from <http://www.religionfacts.com/a-z-religion-index/confucianism.htm>
- Davies-Stofka, Beth. Principles of Moral Thought and Action (n. d.) In Patheos Library. Retrieved from <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Christianity/Ethics-Morality-Community/Principles-of-Moral-Thought-and-Action.html>
- Taoism. (n. d.). In Religious tolerance. Retrieved from <http://www.religioustolerance.org/taoism.htm>
- <https://assignbuster.com/seeking-the-highest-good-essay/>