

Comparison of two religions essay



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The purpose of this paper is to select two (2) religions from those that we have studied so far. The religions I have chosen are Confucianism and Buddhism. First I will identify the cultural and geographical origin of each religion. Secondly, identify and describe at least three (3) specific religious practices of each religion. Thirdly, provide a specific example of how each religion is practiced in different parts of the world today. Then finally I will discuss three things I learned while researching this paper.

The Cultural and Geographical Origin of Confucianism

This Religion was founded by Confucius (551-479BC), China. Confucianism is a way of life taught by Confucius in the 6th-5th century BC. Sometimes viewed as a philosophy, sometimes as a religion. Confucianism is perhaps best understood as an all-encompassing humanism that neither denies nor slights Heaven. This Religion has been followed by the Chinese for more than two millennia. It has deeply influenced spiritual and political life in China; its influence has also extended to Korea, Japan and Vietnam. East Asians may profess themselves to be Shintoists, Taoists, Buddhist, Muslims, or Christians, but seldom do they cease to be Confucians.

The Cultural and Geographical Origin of Buddhism

Buddhism was founded by Siddharta Gautama (the Buddha) in c. 520 BC, NE India. Buddhism remains the dominant religion of the Far East and is increasingly popular in the West. Over its long history Buddhist has developed into a wide variety of forms, ranging from an emphasis on religious rituals and worship of deities to a complete rejection of both rituals

and deities in favor of pure meditation. But all share in common a great respect for the teachings of the Buddha.

Specific Religious Practices Confucianism

Honesty, politeness, propriety, humaneness, perform correct role in society loyalty to family, nation. Aside from its important ethical principles, Confucianism does not prescribe any specific rituals or practices. These are filled by the practices of Chinese religion, Taoism, Buddhism, or other religion which Confucians follow.

Specific Religious Practices Buddhism The specific practices of Buddhism are meditations, mantras, devotion to deities (in some sects), mandalas (Tibetan) Buddhism incorporates a variety of ritual and practices, which are intended to aid in the journey to enlightenment and bring blessings on oneself and others. The practice of meditation is central to nearly all forms of Buddhism, and it derives directly from the Buddha's experiences and teachings. Meditation is in the central focus of Zen Buddhism and the only way to liberation in Theravada Buddhism.

Practices Today in the World There are some 4, 300 religions of the world. This is according to Adherents, an independent, non-religiously affiliated organization that monitors the number and size of the world's religions. Side-stepping the issue of what constitutes a religion, Adherents divides religions into churches, denominations, congregations, religious bodies, faith groups, tribes, cultures, and movements. All are of varying size and influence. Nearly 75 per cent of the world's population practices one of the five most

influential religions of the world: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

Christianity and Islam are the two religions most widely spread across the world. These two religions together cover the religious affiliation of more than half of the world's population. If all non-religious people formed a single religion, it would be the world's third largest. One of the most widely-held myths among those in English-speaking countries is that Islamic believers are Arabs. In fact, most Islamic people do not live in the Arabic nations of the Middle East.

Three Things I Learned Religion is a part of our shared cultural history, shaping the way we see the world and the people in it. Thus, learning to understand and appreciate the religious beliefs and practices of others can help each of us become a more enlightened global citizen. Understanding and appreciating the different world religions is a necessity. So far I have learned how different people approach religion and spirituality will help you understand their cultures and beliefs and may help strengthen and expand your personal beliefs and faith. Religion is a fundamental part of the human experience, often defining cultures and establishing social norms. I have learn about Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and several other religions and religious practices. Most importantly, the impact religion can have on our lives and our world.

Conclusion In conclusion, while they may be similar on several levels, Confucianism and Buddhism can certainly be worlds apart in some aspects. One of them, and most important of all the differences, is the distinction

between the secular and the spiritual. Buddhism, for one, is very spiritual, as it believes in the afterworld, the spirit that unites everything (known as “Brahman”), as well as believing in reincarnation. Even though Buddhists believe in reincarnation, they desperately try to avoid it, as they want to achieve Nirvana, which stops the wheel of life. Confucianism, on the other hand, is entirely secular. Its followers devote their time solely to worldly business, not usually considering life after death and spiritual mysteries.

Many of the several facets of Buddhism adhere to many of the principles of Confucianism, respectively in their views of God, or gods in general (a wide-ranging lack of concern when it comes to divinity), as well as a common zest for attaining wisdom. They do, though, diverge when it comes to fundamental beliefs. Buddhism is spiritual, as its followers focus much of their energies to stepping out of the wheel of life. Confucians, on the other hand, devote their time to secular, or Earthly, matters. While not being identical, Buddhism and Confucianism are similar in many aspects.