

A comparison of the religions of india

Religion



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Comparing and Contrasting the Religions of India Comparing and Contrasting the Religions of India India is believed to be the birth place of many religions. The main religions that arose and are practiced in India are the Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and the Buddhism. These are the main religions with the highest number of followers in India. Other religions like the Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are also found in India but have few followers. These main religions basing on their characteristics and what each religion stands for have played a major role in influencing the cultures of India, Thailand, Tibet and Nepal. This is mainly because the people in these countries mainly practice the four eastern religions; Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Jainism all tracing their roots in India (Sudheer, 2014). To understand how the religions have influenced the cultures of these countries it is necessary to look at their characteristics, similarities and their differences.

Buddhism is believed to have originated from North India in the fifth century. Their main texts are the three pitakas. The Buddhists believe in a supreme being referred to as the Buddha. They also believe that the suffering experienced by the people is always as a result of the desire held by the people. Hinduism on the other hand is believed to have originated from the Indus valley. Their main texts are collectively referred to as the Veda. Hindus believe in many gods and goddesses. Hinduism is therefore a polytheistic religion. The Hindus believe in re-birth after death which is facilitated by one dying in a holy place. All Hindus are also expected to strictly follow and observe the caste system and to go for cleansing annually (Sudheer, 2014). Sikhism started in the sixteenth century in India. This religion is believed to have originated from Guru Nanak. The main text that is used by the Sikhs is the Guru Granth Sahib. As opposed to the Hindus, Sikhs always believe in a <https://assignbuster.com/a-comparison-of-the-religions-of-india/>

supreme God who is believed to be an immortal creator. The believers and the followers of the Sikhism religion believe that the good life always achieves unity with God. Sikhs Like the Hindus believe in reincarnation which is also the re-birth after death. Jainism which is another main religion in India is seen as a group of Hindus that broke away from Hinduism in the sixteenth century. The Jains view the earth as a place full of misery. This is the sole reason as to why most Jains are either nuns or monks as a way of seeking their personal liberation (Sudheer, 2014).

The four religions share many common similarities and the characteristics. One of the similar characteristic is that they all believe in reincarnation. This is they believe that the human life revolves around the cycle of birth, life and lastly rebirth after death and the cycle continues. By this, the four eastern religions emphasis on the fact that the way one treats others follows someone in their next life. They all believe in the karma law (Becky, 2009). The other similarity is the fact that the four religions have a high emphasis on vegetarianism. This is as they all observe compassion for the animals even if it is not strictly followed and a requirement for all. The eastern religions also observe the nonviolence virtue in their doings.

The main difference between the four religions is that while the jains are strictly vegetarians the Hindus and Buddhists are not. Another main difference is on their belief in God. Jainism believes and practices religious dualism believing in two gods. Hinduism is purely polytheistic as they pray and believe in many gods. Sikhism, on the other hand is purely monotheistic as they believe in one God. They also have different religious leaders and routines. The Sikhs and Jains believe in equality as opposed to Buddhists and Hindus who believe in compassion (Becky, 2009).

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In conclusion, the different religious practices in India have greatly influenced the Indian cultures and those of other countries where the four eastern religions are practiced. This is seen in the vegetarian cultures observed by the Jains. The culture of the cast system among the Hindus is another main influence. These countries also believe in nonviolence attributed to their beliefs.

References

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