

# Confucianism in china and hinduism in india essay sample

[Religion](#), [Buddhism](#)



Confucianism and Hinduism are two religions that shared many similarities. Such similarities are the idea that both were used as an outline for the way one should live his/her life, they were used to teach strength in one's relationships, they both enforced political/governmental order, and each taught key concepts/values that would lead an individual down a path of peace. On the other hand, these two religions possessed differences from one another. Hinduism was a religion of the ancient world, as it also is in the present world, and held beliefs in hundreds of different deities (Prothero, 131). Confucianism, however, was a strict way of life with no deities. These religions were different because the two ways of life believed in different roads/paths to become enlightened, or to live the proper life. Both Hinduism and Confucianism were major ways of life during the ancient world, and continue to influence the world today. They impacted the ancient world because they both had outlines of how one of its followers should live his/her life. Confucianism says that in order to live the proper life, one should practice filial piety (the obligation to his/her family). Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, once said, "What you do not want for yourself, do not inflict on others" (Barrett, Kleeman, 78-79); this idea is another aspect that one must follow in Confucianism. In Hinduism, fulfilling your religious duties daily, known as dharma, is something a Hindu must do everyday.

Confucianism and Hinduism also sought to strengthen key relationships in life. Confucius said that the most important relationships were from father to son, brother to brother, husband to wife, friend to friend, and ruler to subject. According to Confucius, age determined everything. Age determined worth in not only individuals, but also in institutions and objects (philosophy.

lander. edu...). For example, in a friend to friend relationship, the eldest friend had the most responsibility and deserved the most respect. In Hinduism, they also believed very strongly in family relationships. Usually, three to four family generations lived together in the same household. Within this household, just like in Confucianism, age and gender determined one's role. The eldest family members made the important decisions, and often offered advice and guidance to the youngest family members. Women usually shared the domestic responsibilities such as cooking, while the men provided a pooled income. Property is passed from father to son, and the men made many of the lower level decisions; although their mothers and grandmothers still had a great amount of influence (hinduism. iskcon. org...).

Confucius strongly believed in making sure that the government was run correctly and efficiently. Confucius was not necessarily concerned with state structure, but more concerned with making sure that the Junzi's filled the offices of the state (a " Junzi" is a superior individual who was well educated and stood for the correct thing). His ideas were later incorporated into Confucianism, and that is why the followers of Confucianism were very concerned about politics. Hinduism also showed a great interest in government. As a matter of fact, Hinduism even came up with their own caste system. A caste system is a social class system that separated the people of India into different classes depending on their occupation. The different levels of the caste system, starting with the lowest class, were the Shudras, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas and Brahmins. There was another social class that is so low it didn't even belong to the caste system, and this level was

called the Untouchables. The Untouchables were people whose occupations varied from garbage removal to toilet cleaning. These people were such low class citizens that people believed everything these people touched became unclean or polluted.

If a person of a different caste were to come in contact with, or even see, an untouchable, they believed that the individual's purity was then darkened. Shudras were people who had jobs that people believed to be "polluted"-like agriculture or leather working. Vaishyas were the common people in Indian society, and were either merchants or trading people. Kshatriyas were warriors, generals or kings, and were believed to be the "protectors" of society. The highest people in society were the Brahmins. Brahmins were priests and people of religion in society, and were so high in the caste system that they would not even eat food that was considered to be polluted (such as meat). These people also were not allowed to demonstrate any form of violence, and they relied on the other classes for their protection (historyteacher. net...). Everybody in society wanted to become a Brahmin, and this possibility was made available when Hinduism was incorporated into the caste system. Hindus believed that if they were good during their life, they would be reincarnated into a higher class. They also believed the opposite, which is that if they were bad during their life, they would be reincarnated into a lower caste. This caste system was very helpful in India because all citizens believed that they would be rewarded if they were good, and so they did not act out or commit many crimes.

Both Confucianism and Hinduism taught that the proper life is a life of peace. Both belief systems said that a person does not have to become violent or threatening to achieve something. “ Confucius thought that a ruler who had to resort to force had already failed as a ruler — ‘ Your job is to govern, not to kill’ ” (friesian. com...). Hinduism also taught peace. An example is that many Hindus were strict vegetarians, and did not eat any sort of meat. Hindus “ reject violence and believe that animals, birds and all sorts of living things become your friend when you cease to kill and eat them” (Gellman, Hartman, 96).

\*\*As much as these two belief systems have in common, they do have their differences. For example, Confucianism is not a religion, while Hinduism is one of the most prominent religions in the world with over a billion followers. Hinduism is also the third largest religion in the world, and has always been one of the largest religions since it’s creation in the 11th century B. C. E. (paths2peace. org...). Hinduism has a god for most things such as a god of love, war, peace, rain and so on. However, Hindus do not pray to all of these gods. There are gods and goddesses that are more important than others, and these are the ones many Hindus focus on. In Confucianism, however, there are no deities (gods and goddesses). Confucius was not a very spiritual man, although very philosophical (globaled. org...). Confucianism is actually referred to as an ethical system rather than a religion due to the fact that there are no deities involved (worldhistoryforusall. sdsu. edu...).

Although both Confucianism and Hinduism taught their followers to follow a path that would lead them to peace or enlightenment, they had different

ways of finding the peace they were looking for. In Confucianism, they taught that a person should practice Ren, Li, and Xiao; the key Confucian values. Ren is kindness, goodness, and humanity. Li is a respect of one's elders, being courteous, and respectful. Xiao is filial piety or family obligation. These three key values of Confucianism are what Confucius said would lead someone to peace. In Hinduism, they believed in different ways of being led to peace, or in their terms, becoming a Brahmin. Hindus believe they should practice good Dharma, good Artha, good Karma and good Moksha (paths2peace. org...). Dharma, as discussed above, is a Hindu's religious duties such as praying. Artha is being good in your career, having useful skills, and fulfilling life. Karma is the belief that a persons actions will be either rewarded or punished later in their life or even their next life. Moksha is the ultimate reward for a Hindu, and is the release from the constant cycle of birth, death and rebirth. A Hindu believed that if they practiced good Dharma and Artha, then they would have good Karma and would have achieved Moksha.

Two of the most well known belief systems of the ancient and present world, Confucianism and Hinduism, have many similarities as well as many differences. Some of these similarities are that they both were an outline for the way one should live his/her life, they taught strength in ones relationships, stood for political/governmental order and taught key concepts/values that would lead an individual down a path of peace. These two ways of life are different in that Hinduism is a religion of the ancient and present world that has hundreds of different deities while Confucianism is

strictly a way of life with no deities, and are different because the two ways of life believe in different roads or paths to become enlightened or to live the proper life.