

# Confucianism and buddhism

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



Are Confucianism and Buddhism religions? To answer this question one must first find the definition of the word religion. According to our text book the word religion come from the Latin word religio which means awe for the gods and concern for proper ritual (experiencing the worlds religion 3). The definition of the word religion according to several dictionaries is a belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator and the ruler of the universe, or any specific systems of belief, worship or conduct often involving a code of ethics and philosophy. My personal definition of the word religion is anything that help people develop a self understanding, provides comfort, help people develop values and morals, and something that may answer question that may otherwise be unanswerable. Our text book also states that most religions follow eight elements, these elements are a belief system or worldview which is an interpretation of the universe and humans place in it, a community or followers who believe and practice the religion, central myths or stories that express the religious beliefs of the religion, rituals or ceremonies enacting the beliefs, ethics or rules and guidelines about human behavior, characteristic emotional experiences such as the feeling of dread, guilt, devotion, rebirth, liberation, and inner peace, material expression such as statues, rituals objects, clothing and specific location, and the last of the eight is sacredness or a distinction between ordinary things and those things that are considered sacred (experiencing world religions 45). Although these are some of the characteristic that help us define the word religion, they are not all required for something to be called a religion. Our book also states that religion is also ever changing, and is influenced by the values of the

culture in which the religion exist ( experiencing world religion 11). After interpreting the results of my findings for the word religion, I have come to the conclusion that both Confucianism and Buddhism are religions. I based my belief that Confucianism and Buddhism are both religions on the fact that both religions have at least three of the eight defining characteristics of what is considered a religion. The three characteristics that I found in Confucianism and Buddhism are a belief system, ethics, material expression, and characteristic emotional experiences. For Confucianism Li (proper comportment and ritual) is the greatest principle of living. Confucius said “ He who can himself submit to ritual(li) is good"(The world wisdom 123). When society lives by li it moves smoothly. The five relationships that Li embodies are, father to son kindness in the father, obedience in the son, Elder brother to younger brother help in the eldest brother, compliance in the younger, husband to wife protective behavior in the husband, and submissiveness in the wife, elder to younger mentorship in the elders and respect in juniors, and ruler to subject benevolence in rulers, loyalty in the subjects. In my opinion Li is almost like a code of ethics. Coinciding with Li is jen which is goodness, humaneness, and kindness Confucius taught that men should love one another and practice respect and courtesy “ without goodness a person cannot for long endure adversity, cannot for long enjoy prosperity" (The worlds wisdom 128). If li and jen are present in a person, the end product would be the Confucian goal, the superior man, which goes along with the concept of characteristic emotional experiences or a feeling of being liberated. Another aspect that Confucianism is big on was art and music. “ For teaching people to be affectionate and loving there is nothing

better than filial piety;...for changing their manner and altering their customs there is nothing better than music.... " (the worlds wisdom 133). It seems as though music was just as important to Confucius as rituals " A person who is not good what can he/she have to do with ritual? A person who in not good what can he/she have to do with music" ( the worlds wisdom 133). This show another aspect of religion which is material expression. Buddhism, which is similar in some ways to Confucianism, shows some of the same characteristic. One of the main goals for people who practice Buddhism is to end suffering or to reach nirvana this show the characteristic of characteristic emotional experiences. To reach nirvana one must follow the noble eightfold path which, just like Confucianism's li, is a ethical guideline. When following the eightfold path one has the right understanding or recognizing the impermanence of life, right intentions which are pure motives and thoughts, right speech one speaks honestly and kindly, right actions or not doing anything to harm yourself or others, right work , right effort one strive to improve, right meditation or discipline and focus to reach a deeper reality of nature, and the right contemplation or state of inner peace (experiencing world religions 136). Two other characteristic that Buddhism shows is rituals of ceremonies, and material expression . Ritual are expressed in the Buddhist practice of meditation. Material expressions are expressed in a Varsity of ways such as hand gestures or mudras, and mantras which are sacred sounds such as the sound OM. Although Confucianism and Buddhism don't fit into what most people consider a religion, because of the lack of a " God" or a haven, or because one does not have to take a blind leap of faith, I believe they are religions. They offer a sense of inner peace,

they provide guidelines on how to live one's life, and basically they follow the characteristics of what is considered a religion. IN closing I would say that the definition of the word religion is so broad that it depends on which one you choose to follow.

Reference page Novak, Philip. (1994) *The Worlds Wisdom*. HarperCollins. New York. Molloy, Michael. (2008) *Experiencing the world's religions*. McGraw-Hill. New York.