

# Distribution Features of Confucianism and Buddhism Essay

In contemporary studies, it is common to consider and study religious currents according to one principle: the connection with spiritual development. In this case, Buddhism differs considerably from the most common religions, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism, and has more features in common with them than with Confucianism. Examples of such features are the quest for enlightenment, the superiority of the spirit over the body, and questions about existence after death. Confucianism is more a philosophical doctrine than a religion, and its connection with the East is strong due to the specificity of the Asian mentality.

The cultures of East Asia, namely China, Japan, Vietnam, and other countries, share several common characteristics that other cultures do not always share. From ancient times, respect for elders and the cult of the teacher have flourished in these countries (Vuong et al., 2018). Whereas many other cultures are accustomed to relying on learning primarily from their own mistakes, the more rhythmic East Asians prefer to take their time in the matter. Respect for elders is instilled in children from infancy, and people of age themselves, in turn, feel responsible for passing on knowledge and experience to the next generations.

Confucius was born into a wealthy family in China but later became impoverished and an itinerant philosopher. According to the accepted dogma, his journey and the formation of Confucianism began in the fifth century B.C. (Giordano, 2019). Confucius was not a religious leader but was engaged in conducting ethical teachings on the importance of knowledge, goodness, and justice. The basic principles of his instructions could be described as teaching loyalty to the state, respect for one's ancestors, and deep reverence and devotion to one's parents.

Not surprisingly, this philosophical current has remained and spread in those countries where it is closest to the culture of the local population. According to Confucius, anyone with knowledge can become a teacher (Vuong et al., 2018). Furthermore, the philosophical current partly embraces universal religious virtues: compassion, good manners, decency, faithfulness, and discernment. It is worth noting that, unlike most religions, Confucianism does not practice following rules for good conditions after death or in the next life. Its main point is the preservation of harmony and the elimination of disharmony in the current life. Although there are now five different schools of Confucianism: Korean, Japanese, Singaporean, neo- and modern neo-Confucianism, the principles are virtually the same for their followers.

On the other hand, Buddhism can be described as a set of spiritual practices that aim at enlightenment and knowledge of self and the universe, which adds to the religiosity of the teaching. Despite the lack of worship as in the other major religions, this current, which emerged in the sixth century B.C., has the concept of the Buddha, or the person who has attained the highest level of enlightenment (Giordano, 2019). The result of working on oneself and teaching others after death is attaining nirvana, a state without earthly suffering. Pursuing such a goal makes Buddhism similar to other religions, increasing its popularity worldwide. Moreover, the absence of rigid boundaries and obligatory rituals makes it a relatively unburdening religion, which may likewise attract followers.

From the abovementioned, it can be concluded that such a narrow spread of Confucianism is due to the prevalent regional mentality. Buddhism's more significant popularity in East Asia than in other domains of the world is due to its peaceful, relaxed presentation. The great emphasis placed on teaching oneself and others resonates perfectly with the mentality of eastern peoples. As a result, the final goal of nirvana and the promise of existence without suffering in the afterlife appeal to members of other cultures. To make the final conclusion, treating the philosophical current of Confucianism as a religion would be incorrect due to its concentration on lifelong learning and rules.

## References

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