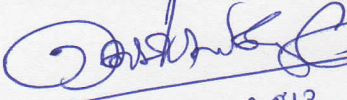


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**A Comparative Study of the Social Ethics in Buddhism and
Confucianism**



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Abstract

Buddhism and Confucianism have some similar concepts, but are largely different in many ways. Both Buddhism and Confucianism have beliefs of what the ideal human should be like. Buddhists have different ideal figures depending on what path of Buddhism is being taken, whereas Confucians have only a single ideal human figure. Confucians believe in the Tao being the order of things as they should be. No human being, however, is automatically what he or she should be in the order of things. In turn to be fully manifested in the Tao, a person has to be trained in virtue or Ren (仁). A few of the most significant virtues are known as Shu(恕), Ren(仁), and Xiao(孝). These are virtues of reciprocity, cultural refinement, and family devotion. The ideal human figure in Confucianism is the Jun-zi (君子). The Jun-zi (君子) follows Ren(仁) and Li (礼). Li (礼) is the rites that bring harmony to society, which Confucianism is based on. "The Jun-zi (君子), does not need to be rich, but he or she must be a well-rounded lover of history, art, poetry, and music". Confucians believe that relationships are the main essences that make a person who they are and that everyone should be cared for and protected. Five Relationships make up the interwoven connections between everyone. These relationships are between: Father and Son; Ruler and Subject; Husband and Wife; Elder Sibling and Younger Sibling; Friend and Friend. Respect must be shown between all of these relationships accordingly. The goal of Confucianism is to bring about harmony. Everything fits together as it should be, like the concept of Yin and Yang. Yin symbolizes everything that is feminine and dark, whereas Yang symbolizes everything that is masculine and bright. These two symbols are not opposites; they are complimentary to each other and work together to make everything, as it should be in the way of the Tao. The religions of Buddhism and Confucianism are strongly portrayed by their ideal human figures. Buddhism has three paths, each with slightly different ideals, which lead to the same goal of nirvana. Confucianism has only a single path with one ideal and leads to the ultimate goal of harmony and the cosmic order of the Tao.