

The Cross & the Lotus:

Ethics in Christianity and Buddhism

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"Dear Friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." -1 Peter 2:11-12.

Religious Identity & Authority	Christianity	Buddhism
On Being a member of said Religion	<p>"What would Jesus Do?" Is the decision in accordance with the Great Commandment? -I Co. 13:4-7; 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.' -Mk. 12:29-31; Mt. 22:37-39; Lk. 10:27-28. "What are good works? Those only which proceed from true faith, and are done according to the Law of God, unto His glory, and not such as rest on our own opinion or the commandments of men." -<u>Heidelberg Catechism</u>, Rom. 14:23; I Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10; I Co. 10:31; Deu. 12:32; Eze. 12:18, 20; Isa. 29:13; Mt. 15:9; Num. 15:39. Right Motives -Mt. 23:23,24. Right standards, right purpose. Pleasing God -I Th. 2:4. To be rich in good deeds -I Ti. 6:18, Tit. 2:7,14; 3:8,14. "Behavior, and not confession, is the best litmus paper for establishing the genuineness of a person's faith" (Gerstner:625). I Jn. 3:18. "Faith justifies works"(Gerstner:620); Mt. 28:19-20.</p>	<p>An ethic of Self-Development that is based upon a right view of the world as defined in the Four Noble Truths and living accordingly to the Noble Eightfold Path:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Right understanding. 2) Right thought. 3) Right speech. 4) Right action. 5) Right livelihood. 6) Right effort. 7) Right Mindfulness. 8) Right concentration. <p>"Buddhahood as perfect manhood"(King:4) "According to the karma doctrine of universal causality of ethical compensation, man's ultimate fate depends entirely on one's own free behavior," -Max Weber, (Butr-Indr:73).</p>
Authority	<p>Jesus, Chief cornerstone -Lk. 20:17; Rom. 13:1; Jn. 8:28; 20:21; Mt. 22:15-21; Eph. 2:18-22; Mt. 16:18,19. The Word of God, Traditional teaching of the Church; -2 Ti. 3:16; Mt. 4:14. The Holy Spirit -Jn. 16:13. Authority to forgive sins -Mt. 9:6. Government ordained by God -Rom. 13:1.</p>	<p>The Triple Gem-the Buddha (<i>Siddhartha</i>), the <i>Dharma</i> (the Buddhist Law) and the <i>Sangha</i> (the priestly community). "Ye monks, have no mothers and fathers who might take care and look after you; if you do not teach one another, who will do so?"</p>
Authority Figures	<p>"One God and Father of all who is over all..." Eph. 4:4-6. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Christ is King of Kings, Lord of Lords -I Ti. 6:16. "There must be a true object of faith, before there can be a true exercise of faith." (Gerstner:620).</p> <p>Differing Church Traditions, e.g. the Pope of Roman Catholicism; Priesthood of all believers; Apostles -Eph. 4:11-12. Prophets -Hag. 1:2. Pastors; Elder or Congregational Rule.</p>	<p>Each tradition has a number of different figures. The leader of the <i>Gelugpa</i> sect of Tibetan Buddhism is the <i>Dalai Lama</i>, seen as a "living god and king" and yet seeks guidance from the "State Oracle" a separate authority figure. In Zen Buddhism they may be called Masters or Abbots; In Nichiren-High Priests; Bodhisattvas and Arhats. "Kings, queens, and their children are recognized as <i>sammutideva</i> (conventional gods)" and the King is to be <i>patisaranam</i>, the refuge of his subjects. Also known as the <i>mannussindo</i>, Lord of men. (Butr-Indr:147-48).</p>
Duties of Leaders	<p>Maintaining the Faith; Speak on matters of Faith and Morality; To Shepherd the flock of God; Remind flock to be subject to rulers, authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed -Tit. 3:1-2; Lk. 15:4-10. Not entangled in the affairs of this world -2 Ti. 2:4. "Manages his household well"-I Ti. 3:4-5. Elder qualifications: hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, able to exhort & refute -Tit. 1:6-9.</p>	<p><i>Dharma-raja</i> (Righteous King) like Asoka who must follow the "Ten Duties of the King," e.g. rule 3: "Being prepared to give up all personal comfort and glory and even one's own life in the interests of the people." Arhats, Rinpoches, Lamas (Category of Saints) transcend the moral order. "The lama knows." For the monks to follow the <i>patimokkha</i>, the Disciplinary Code of Obligation-227 regular and compulsory rules (Butr-Indr 112:118).</p>
Duties of Subjects	<p>"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." -Mk. 12:17. To obey magistrates -Tit. 3:1; Rom. 13:1-7. Stimulate one another to love and good deeds -He. 10:24. Pray for those in authority -He. 13:17-18; I Ti. 2:1,2. Honor those who labor for you in word and doctrine -I Ti. 5:17. Quakers- "speaking the truth to power." Expose the deeds of darkness; thankful; forgiving one another; cross bearing -Mt. 4:4; Deu. 8:3. Fasting -Mt. 6:16-18; I Co. 13:4-7. Prayer -I Jn. 5:14; Jas. 4:3; Lk. 11:5-13; 18:1-8. "To live and die for the Lord...leave the limits for our life and death in his decision and good pleasure" (Calvin:77); II Co. 5:6; Rom 7:24; 14:7,8; Phil. 1:20. Lord's Prayer -Mt. 6:9-13.</p>	<p>"Obedience does not occur in Buddhist social ethics which are generally not prescribed for. For the <i>upasaka upasika</i>, (the laity) they are commanded to follow the Code of morality, "Take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, to observe the five principles of moral conduct, to overcome selfishness by living in free practice of liberality...delighting in generosity, accessible to begging, delighting in distribution of gifts. (Butr-Indr:79). "Continually support religious men with some suitable spiritual offerings, to long for their admonition, keeping in mind the religious texts...to attend reverentially to the virtuous learned men" (Butr-Indr:82).</p>

