

# Differences and Challenges Due to Religion: The Influence of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism on Transnational Ethical Decision-making

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# Overview: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism

- ▶ Investigation of key religious values
- ▶ Application of values to a business context
- ▶ Identification of organizational examples embodying religious values in practice
- ▶ Comparison of values across religions

# Hinduism: Its Values

- ▶ “You can have what you want” but practice good sense and do not injure others
- ▶ Hindus want to be, to know and seek joy
- ▶ Emphasis on “what people do,” not think
- ▶ Ethical leadership: learner, keep promises, dynamic, actions not words, think first

# Hinduism: In Practice

## New Belgium Brewery

- ▶ Product labeling: "In this box is our love."
- ▶ Share in the customers' being, knowing and joy; avoid injuring customers

## Tata Group

- ▶ Culture: deeply rooted set of values
- ▶ Leadership: twin pillars – trust and integrity
- ▶ Social responsibility since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century

## Apollo Hospital Group

- ▶ *Vastu* reflected in design of building

# Buddhism: Its Values

- ▶ **The Four Noble Truths:** life is suffering, focus on self causes life's dislocation, seek connectiveness, achieve release by following the Eightfold Path
- ▶ **Eightfold Path:** right views, right intention, right speech, right action (not kill, steal, lie, be unchaste, drink), right livelihood, right effort, right mindedness, right contemplation

# Buddhism: Its Values

## Ethical leadership (ala Michael Roach)

- ▶ **Make money** (enabling one to do more good for others),
- ▶ **Enjoy money** (to keep mind and body in good health),
- ▶ **Business should have meaning** (leave mark on the world)

# Buddhism: In Practice

## Greyston Bakery

1. Life is impermanent and interdependent
  - ▶ Emphasizes *mandala*, circle; connectedness
  - ▶ Support the circle by hiring the disenfranchised
2. Change is constant
  - ▶ Value agility and innovation
  - ▶ Foster self-sufficiency, be a path for change: provide benefits for employees

Motto: "We don't hire people to bake brownies,  
we bake brownies to hire people"

# Buddhism: In Practice

## Takeda Pharmaceuticals

- ▶ Founded in 1781, “ethical drugs are Takeda’s core business”
- ▶ Takeda-ism: high ethical standards and a strong sense of mission
- ▶ Management pledge of integrity, fairness and honesty in every activity, commitment to build trust

# Confucianism: Its Values

- ▶ Fundamental notion of social cohesion

## Five key terms:

- ▶ *Jen* – ideal relation between two people: see goodness, respect others, love totally
- ▶ *Chun tzu* – superior person, serve others
- ▶ *Li* – authority and ritual important
- ▶ *Te* – power, based on trust and consent
- ▶ *Wen* – aesthetic focus, seek exalted culture

# Confucianism: Its Values

- ▶ Compatible with managerial practice (Romar)
- ▶ Challenges conventional purpose of business
- ▶ Moral values can conflict with economic goals, the case of the Chinese entrepreneurs (Cheung & King)

# Confucianism: In Practice

## The Weizhi Group

- ▶ Four core beliefs: kindness, sincerity, wisdom, diligence (Ip)
- ▶ “love is at the heart of all corporate activities” (Weizhi employees)
- ▶ Three Slaps On the Face: if dishonest, not trusted by employees, self-centered
- ▶ 1997 Customers’ Most Admired Company

# Comparison Across Religions

	Hinduism	Buddhism	Confucianism
Personal self-satisfaction	Have what you want, but good sense and not injure	Selfishness is illness, strive for cure	Focus on important collective well-being, not self
Profit taking	Chance to give to society	Make money to do more for others	Accept costs to maintain moral values

# Comparison Across Religions

	Hinduism	Buddhism	Confucianism
<b>Business as a career</b>	A path to being, knowing, joy	Leave good mark on the world	Be your best to be able to help others
<b>Ethical leadership</b>	Learn, act, think Trust and integrity	Wisdom, reasoning, morality Integrity and trust	Authority and power based on trust

# Comparison Across Religions

	Hinduism	Buddhism	Confucianism
Business in society	Source of being, knowing and joy	Life is <i>mandala</i> , a circle	Jen – care for, respect, love others
CSR in practice	Tata Group	Greyston Bakery	Weizhi Group

# Next paper

- ▶ Validate summation of religious values
- ▶ Assess values in practice by organizations
- ▶ Test values as decision tool for managers
- ▶ Compare “eastern values” with “western values” for a universal ethic, building an ethical decision-making framework