

Thesis Title                      A Comparative Study of the Concept of Male  
and Female Equality in Buddhism and  
Christianity.

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Degree                             Master of Arts (comparative Religion)

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#### ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to undertake a comparative study of the concept of male and female equality in Buddhism and Christianity. This study is a documentary research of the religious texts of the Tripitaka and the Bible.

The findings indicate that both Buddhism and Christianity agree on the point that women are equal to men even though each religion has a different system of beliefs and practices. The women's status was raised equal to men's by the teachings, attitudes and behaviors of the Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ. Furthermore, both religions share a similar view that the two sexes are not only equal at the beginning, that is to be born a human being, but also equal at the end, to attain the religious ultimate goal. But the meaning

of equality at the beginning between the two religions is different. That is, in Buddhism it means that a being has an equal opportunity to be born male or female according to the law of Karma and the principle of ultimate sexual unity. In Christianity it means the equality of the human origin that God creates both sexes in the Image of God by His grace. The ultimate Truth of Nibbana in Buddhism and the achievement of eternal life in the Kingdom of God in Christianity are above the sexual state.

On the question of the social status, the two religions agree upon the equality between the husband and the wife. They are companions and help-mates. They maintain monogamy as a norm for sexual morality. As for the religious status between the sexes, both religions generally agree upon the equality of sexes but not in every case. This is due to the socio-cultural dynamics of each religion from the past until the present time.