

# [The and transfer of merit for the](https://assignbuster.com/the-and-transfer-of-merit-for-the/)

The most devoted followers of the Buddha were organized into a sangha. Itsmembers were identified by their shaved heads and robes made of un-sewn orangecloth. The early Buddhist monks, or bhikkus, wandered from place to place, settling down in communities only during the rainy season when travel wasdifficult. Theravadan monks and nuns were humble and obtained their food in theform of offering on a daily round of the homes of Lay devotees. Among thetraditional functions of the Buddhist monks are the performance of funerals andmemorial services in honor of the dead.

Major elements of such services includethe chanting of scripture and transfer of merit for the benefit of the deceased.(1, 3) Lay worship in Buddhism is primarily done individual rather thancongregational. Although technically the Buddha is not worshipped throughTheravada, worship is done through the stupa. A stupa is a dome-like structurecontaining a relic.

Devotees walk around the dome in a clockwise direction, carrying flowers and incense as a sign of respect. The relic is the Buddhastooth in Sri Lanka. It is the focus of a popular festival on the Buddhasbirthday. The Buddhas birthday is celebrated in every Buddhist country. InTheravada this celebration is known as Vaisakha, the month after the Buddha wasborn. Popular in Theravada cultures is a ceremony known as pirit, or protection, in which readings from a collection of protective charms from the Pali canon areconducted to exorcise evil spirits, cure illness, bless new buildings, andachieve other benefits. This was a popular practice that practitioners ofBuddhism, monks, did to help them reach Nirvana. (1, 3, 4, 5) In Mahayanacultures, ritual is more important than in Theravada cultures.

Images of theBuddhas and bodhisattvas on temple altars and in the homes of devotees serve asa focus for worship. Prayer and chanting are common acts of devotion, as areofferings of fruit, flowers, and incense. One of the most popular festivals inChina and Japan is the Ullambana Festival, in which offerings are made to thespirits of the dead and to ghosts.

It is said that during this celebration thegates to the other world are open so that departed spirits can return to earthfor a brief time. (1, 3, 4, 5) In the Christian faith, people may practiceseveral methods to bring them closer to God or Heaven. One way has beenaround for many centuries, called baptisms. Baptism is an initiation into thereligion. Jesus was among the first to be baptized. He was baptized by John atthe beginning of his public ministry (Mark 1: 9-11). Another practice that isused among the Christian religion would be prayer. A Prayer may be individual ordone as a group, formal or spontaneous, silent or spoken.

Christian prayernormally includes gospel, praise, thanksgiving, confession, and an appeal forforgiveness. Another ritual that is very similar to Lay Worship would beChristmas. People often celebrate this holiday as Jesus Christs birth-date, even though it was not because of many biblical references, but despite that, People celebrate this with carols. The carols could be the equivalent ofchanting holy scripts in Buddhism. (1, 2, 4) The Christian religion is not thatsimilar to Buddhism for many reasons. One reason is that Buddhism does not havea God. In Buddhism, people do not worship anybody, since that divine being wasalso just human.

The goal is to achieve Nirvana, like the Buddha did. Christianity has a God and Jesus as his son. We worship God and Jesus. Peoplestrive to be noble and good. In Christianity, there is pursuit of happiness andmorality, but not through greed.

Although the goal is not Nirvana, one goal isthrough prayer is to be truthful with yourself and God. Achieving Nirvana isvery similar to achieving Heaven. In Christianity, there is one god, and inBuddhism there is no God. (1, 3, 4) To me, Christianity is more appealing to me, just because I have lived as a Christian, my whole life. If I had not, I believeI still would find Christianity more appealing, since there is a God to worship.

There is also a story of how the much of the world began. Also it is morecomforting, since in Buddhism, one should sacrifice them self, like everythingelse is more important than you. Logically Christianity is better to me sincepeople can about their daily lives with out having to chant everyday. InChristianity, it is more logical that there is someone watching over you at alltimes. In Buddhism, no-one watches you, it is your conscience that knows whatyou do. (3, 4) In General, I believe that Christianity has some similar aspectsbut the path/direction is not the same.

God the Father, Jesus Christ the son, and the holy spirit are essentially one Gold. This is very different fromBuddhism, since there is no God at all, just models to be like. In Christianity, there are many goals in life, for example, follow the ten commandments. Betruthful to yourself and God. Also in the Christian religion, there is noconcept of reincarnation, there is incarnation of Jesus but no reincarnation.

InBuddhism, followers want to become enlightened and become a Buddha. The goal inChristianity is to be truthful with yourself and one day you will go to Heaven.(1, 3, 4, 5) Buddhism Sources: World Religions: A Voyage of Discovery (1) TheBible (2) Encarta Encyclopedia 99 (3) Comptons Encyclopedia Deluxe (4)Buddhist Cultures in America (5)Religion