

### 1: My friend claims to be and agnostic Buddhist? | Yahoo Answers

*Nichiren Buddhism for Daily Life Tentative translation of "To My Friends" published in the Seikyo Shimbun, based on President Ikeda's recent guidance.*

Honoring those worthy of honor; This is the greatest blessing. Mangala Sutta [Sn 2. Noble friends and companions are the whole of the holy life. Work or school associates, sports teammates, companions in religious community – in all of these there is some degree of choice. You accept a job, join a team, or become a member of a social group; and you choose how closely to associate with the people in each group. Even in your family, you choose how close or distant to be with individual members. How do you choose which people fall into which category? Do you like the ones who seem to like you? Or the people you consider the most physically attractive? Are you drawn to people you consider thoughtful, or wise and helpful? Do you passively wait to be contacted, by anyone at all? Somehow, by some sorting method, you end up with friends and acquaintances that influence you and whom you influence. This page is concerned with how you choose friends and what happens in these relationships. Are your friends wholesome companions? One definition of a good friend is someone who brings out what is best in you. She might do this by following your lead when you do something worth emulating, and by telling you directly what she admires about you. A good friend discourages what is worst in you, perhaps by declining to follow an unwise lead, and sometimes by telling you directly when she thinks something is off. By her actions and words, a good friend gives you helpful feedback. Out of genuine concern for your well-being, a good friend will support your wholesome actions and discourage your unwholesome actions. Are you a wholesome friend to your companions? On the other side of the question, how much of the time are you a wise and beneficial friend? Are you willing to bring up awkward topics if you think it will help another person? Do you appreciate your relationships? Do you attend to them regularly, showing that you are grateful for them? This was said by the Buddha: Thanissaro Bhikkhu The people you choose to associate with affect how you think and what you do. And you affect the people you associate with. Are you spending time with people you chose? Or did they choose you? What activities do you do together? Are the activities beneficial, or at least harmless? Do you feel that others drag you down, or lift you up? And what would your companions say about your effect on them? What did the Buddha say about friends? In a lesson directed to a person not connected with the Buddha DN31, tr. Kelly, Sawyer, Yareham , the Buddha outlines what to look out for in a false friend, and what actions would make you a false friend. Young man, be aware of these four enemies disguised as friends: The taker can be identified by four things: The talker can be identified by four things: The flatterer can be identified by four things: The reckless companion can be identified by four things: The taker The taker is out for herself and weighs her interactions with a view to what she can gain. This person may be marked by false generosity and by a tendency to put herself first and disregard the needs of others. Observe with discrimination the people in your life. Do you have tendencies in this direction? A good friend non-taker is consistent in all her friendships, and treats people in a caring way in good times and bad. You can tell a lot about someone by the way she treats others. If she is kind and generous to you but cruel and stingy to others, how can you trust her? In your pocket – not one penny. Soon as you get on your feet again, everybody, everybody is your long-lost friend. This is a real shortcut to determining character. Do you do what you say you will do? Are there people around you whose words you cannot trust? Should everyone trust your word? Part of not being a vain talker is knowing your limits, and not promising what you cannot deliver. Would they say the same things if the person being discussed were in the room? Another dangerous form of flattery is the human tendency to defer to others if they seem important. What makes being noticed by these people so important? Is it worth giving up your integrity? Every situation is unique and deserves consideration, but the goal – wholesome intention – is the same. Take your own words seriously. Pay attention to whether others take their own comments seriously or not. The reckless companion You can easily recognize the reckless companion. This is the friend that appeals to your weaknesses; induces you to stay out later than you intended, get into situations you later regret, drink too much, and speak too carelessly. Leading another person astray may be even worse than being

led astray yourself, because the underlying perhaps even unconscious intention is to harm another. Yet this all too human inclination to want companions to help justify our baser instincts is often just below the surface, waiting for an opening. Remember that all actions have consequences. Honor yourself and your companions by letting your caring intentions guide your actions. And look for that characteristic in your friends. In the same lesson, the Buddha continues by outlining what to look for in a good friend and how to be that valuable friend. Young man, be aware of these four good-hearted friends: The helper can be identified by four things: The enduring friend can be identified by four things: The mentor can be identified by four things: The compassionate friend can be identified by four things: That is what the Buddha said. A false friend will scoff at the idea of thinking about tomorrow and help you spend whatever money you have. The helper will also take your phone call, even late at night, when you are worried or fearful, or have had bad news. She will listen sympathetically and give you emotional shelter. This friend is willing to tell you something you may be reluctant to hear, if it is for your benefit. She takes joy in being able to help. Are you a helper a rock for your friends? The enduring friend The enduring friend is very similar to a helper. She confides in and trusts you, and holds your confidences with the greatest care. In this category I think of a particular time, very soon after my father had died. I was in a type of shock and was feeling numb. An enduring friend of mine came to my house and sat with me. I was very reluctant. But he just sat there until I relented. At the end of our talk, I felt deeply that my father had lived, I had known him, and now he was gone. I was immensely grateful for the wisdom and patience of my friend and grateful for our friendship. The mentor A mentor is a special type of good friend, who gives you good counsel. A mentor will be interested in talking with you about things that matter, will listen attentively and give you advice that is sound and appropriate. You will recognize the advice of a good friend by its result. When you follow the advice, does it result in the happiness and welfare of yourself and others? Or does it result in unhappiness and grief for yourself and others? Who have acted as mentors in your life? Who do you look to for guidance? Do others see you as a mentor?

### 2: November | | Everyday practice

*I would like to discuss the assertion that Buddhism is about winning. My mentor, President Toda, who often gave Read Article View All News To My Friends. Daisaku.*

To not associate with fools. Those who drag us down with their foolishness; drunkards, layabouts etc. To associate with the wise. Those who encourage us to grow spiritually. The Buddha emphasized the importance of good companionship in many ways; when Ananda remarked that good friends were half of the Holy Life, He replied " Say not so! Good friends are the whole of the Holy Life! Making puja to the Triple Jewel, honouring our teachers and elders; to have this opportunity is a blessing not to be missed! To reside in a suitable location. A place congenial to life, peaceful and with such a society and economy that we can live free from want and fear. To have previously done meritorious deeds. Thus, we can enjoy the fruit now. Invest in yourself by making more good merit now. To be heading in the right direction. If we are advancing spiritually, growing in wisdom and compassion, then we are surely blessed. To have much learning. Being well educated in the broadest sense; a well-rounded individual. In particular to have knowledge of the Dhamma is to possess a jewel beyond price. To be skilled and knowledgeable. Every useful skill we possess, crafts, trades, special knowledge can be of some use in improving life for ourselves and others. To be restrained by a moral code. A sound morality is the basis of peace and happiness. To have beautiful speech. That is; truthful, timely, pleasant speech connected with meaning. Such speech that others are delighted and improved by hearing. To be a support for your parents. The opportunity to repay the enormous debt we owe to our mother and father should be seen as a blessing and not as a burden. The cherishing of wife and child. A happy family life. A wholesome occupation that one does well and enjoys. Giving is a source of joy for both giver and receiver. Be one blessed with a generous spirit. To live in accord with the Dhamma. To have heard the Holy dhamma in this life and to have the capacity and opportunity to practice is a rare and wonderful thing. To have a functioning extended family clan either in the traditional sense or a community of friends and colleagues. To do blameless actions. Nothing to hide, nothing to fear, nothing to regret. To cease and abstain from evil. Having the inclination of mind that instinctively recoils from evil as if from a red hot iron ball. To refrain from intoxicants. Not to need those substances which dull our precious human consciousness. Not to be heedless of the Dhamma. Being mindful and compassionate; going through life with eyes and heart open. Respect for the conventions is to make the life into a beautiful dance. Respect for the Buddha nature of all beings is the root of refined manners. Pride goeth before a fall and the meek shall inherit the earth. Contentment with little is the magical wish-fulfilling gem! Its also a healthy attitude for our planet right now. The Buddha said that gratitude is rare to find in this world. Remember always that you never would have gotten this far without a lot of help! To hear the Dhamma at the right time. Everyone who has experienced a word of teaching that touched the heart at just the right moment knows what a precious gift this can be. Patience is a virtue but also a blessing. Just think how much suffering comes from impatience. To be easy to admonish. Make yourself amenable to teaching and those with something to teach will be ready to help you. The sight of monks. The robed figure of the recluse is an archetypal call to consciousness; together with the dead man, the sick man and the old man they are called the four divine messengers. To discuss the Dhamma at a suitable time. Speaking of the Holy Dhamma is the noblest use of the human power of speech. To be blessed with time and companions with which to speak of things tending to liberation is amazing grace indeed. In the buddhist context this means the practising of meditation; a daily practice and regular retreats. To lead the Holy Life. To live devoted to the Eightfold Path and the seeking of Liberation. Seeing the Noble Truths. Opening of the Dhamma Eye. This refers to a level of direct penetration well beyond the intellectual. The realization of Nibbana. Going through the gateless gate. The treasure beyond any price in heaven and earth. A mind unshaken by contact with the world. Being in the world but not of it. Beyond the realms of suffering. The end of the obscuring defilements. Once found it cannot be lost. These are the highest blessings! Having accomplished this one goes everywhere in peace. These are the blessings supreme!

### 3: Why are Buddhists such assholes? | Sex, math and programming

*Friendship is the most constant, the most enduring the most basic part of love. ~Ed Cunningham The friend who is a helpmate, the friend in happiness and woe, the friend who gives good counsel, the friend who sympathises too – these four as friends the wise behold and cherish them devotedly as does a mother.*

July 29, J. Adamson Leave a comment Go to comments I had some particularly troubling experiences surrounding Buddhists growing up in Boulder, Colorado. I had trouble avoiding contact with Buddhists, as many of the most interesting cultural events in town were put on by the Naropa Institute now Naropa University, and they sometimes got involved in the wildlife community. I mean really, nobody in Boulder wears a suit outside of city government and not most people in it, even then. Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. Wikipedia The question kept coming up: I want to be clear about a couple of things: Hopefully things are different in Boulder now for people who are interested in Buddhism. Last point to clarify: I do not mean someone who is unintelligent, forgetful or unfashionable only assholes use those definitions. The Symptoms Let me give you an example of what can happen to people when they try to take up the path of self-reflection. When my next-oldest brother Michael turned eighteen and was a senior in high school, he started dating a girl who lived in downtown Boulder, went to a different high school from he and myself, and came from a family of convert Naropa Buddhists. Unbeknownst to our Christian family my brother was meditating and taking part in some other Buddhistic stuff. Well known to our family at this time was he acted like a complete asshole. What the hell was going on? Why had hanging out with Buddhists turned my brother into an asshole? A less personal example of assholiness I encountered was self-identification: I knew that I had something in common with the driver right away. The problem I have is what if you accidentally cut somebody off? Buddhists attack other Buddhists. Why would people who supposedly value kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity be so good at turning people off? Why would people who are trying to let go of the defilement of anger seem so angry? If Buddhism is about compassion and generosity, then why do some Buddhists seem so damn snooty and self-indulgent? My first hypothesis has to do with what Buddhism itself entails, and the devastating personality effects this can have for people who grow up in a guilt-focused culture. The basic instruction of the Buddha is that if you want to find the root of your suffering, look inward. So self-reflection to a lot of people just means guilt. Many people report that after they start meditating they get pissed off because they see how angry and self-deceptive they are. I used to really not be able to sit still. If I was sitting still I was worried about what was happening because I was sitting still. This keeps some people from starting meditation. At the same time, seeing people not doing this can be maddening! Going back to the story of my brother, I am pretty sure that what had happened was that he just wanted to mindfully sit down and enjoy dinner, and seeing my dad get up to get the salt and pepper, sit down, and then get up to get the parsley, sit down, and then get up to get himself a drink was probably even more annoying than it had been before. One of the benefits of practicing mindfulness is that you will eventually remember to bring the salt and pepper to the table. Seated Buddha with flower Photo credit: BaboMike My second potential explanation is that perhaps the chain of causation is reversed: My first idea explained that the reflective process of the spiritual path can indeed inspire asshole behavior. Someone who takes up a spiritual path usually does so because they notice the pain and suffering that they and others are enduring. These people notice their pain and suffering, they study it, they give it real attention. What would it look like not to suffer? How can we change our lives to create less suffering? You might forget for weeks or years at a time. Buddhism spread mostly by oral tradition along the Silk Road, before the creation of the internet, much less public libraries; ignorance of culture: I was only exposed to splattered with? There are forms of Buddhism that emphasize meditation Zen and Theravada, there are forms that emphasize ritual and ceremony, there are forms that de-emphasize meditation e. Nichiren, and there are forms that only emphasize generosity and ethics. Jon Kabat-Zinn Photo credit: Mari Smith I rediscovered Buddhism by way of mindfulness in modern psychotherapy. I thought I would find a bunch of ego-driven jerks! That group itself is diverse, with some people who primarily meditate for its psychological benefits, and others who call themselves Buddhists

because of their interest in the Dhamma. This leaves me disappointed and guilty okay, not really about some of the interactions I had in Boulder. However, the point of my own spiritual path is that I can learn to let go of all that. And hopefully the next time I visit Boulder, I can greet people with a smile, even if they look really disturbed and grumpy. If any of you have experienced the dukkha of interacting with a self-righteous Buddhist, you can still keep an open mind.

### 4: I am a Buddhist. Why should I consider becoming a Christian?

*How my friend and Buddhist teachings changed my life forever (www.enganchecubano.comsm) submitted 4 years ago \* by brighterside I was around 17 and a friend of mine had begun reading up on Buddhism (the philosophy, teachings, practices, themes, etc, etc) and I was just so completely blinded by my ego - we were completely opposite.*

Photo by Celia Friendship is the most constant, the most enduring the most basic part of love. I am imagining that anyone in that position is struggling with grief and fear, dislocation, despair, and longing for physical safety. I hope those who are losing homes and neighbors have good friends who can comfort them and let them know they are not alone. We are not born to be solitary beings. We all do better with support and community and the kindness of friends can help make tragedy more bearable when we are met with compassion. Friendships according to the Buddha are not only a way to make life more enjoyable, but are an essential ingredient in waking up. The Buddha repeatedly counseled his followers to seek Kalyanamittata [good friendships]. While friendships with those who are not interested in waking up can lead us off the path, friendships with those who are wise and have an evolved spiritual practice can guide and be a support for us. When we experience doubt or the pain in our lives seems too heavy for us alone, we can borrow the skillful qualities of others. We can find strength and renew our confidence in our own goodness and capability through the examples of others. When we see someone do something we would like to do, we learn how to do it ourselves. The more we are witness to kind speech, thoughtful generosity, or patience, the more realistic living those virtues becomes. He [She] talks with them, engages them in discussions. He [She] emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. Emulating friends we admire is a way to catch the contagion of goodness and faith in our own ability. Making a place in our lives for those we admire and see as wise, gives us the courage to be bravely true to our most cherished intentions. The Buddha warns of friendships with those who engage in bad habits, of drinking, gambling, gossip, lying, harsh speech, sexual misconduct, who are lazy and do not seek any transformation, are ungenerous or give gifts without care or believe that they make a difference. Hanging around with this crew will likely not advance your path towards enlightenment and most likely add some heavy karmic load to your luggage. The Buddha was called a physician who cured suffering and a teacher, but he also thought of himself as a worthy friend for his followers to rely on. As I write this I am thinking of all the opportunities for care and togetherness we have in this lifetime. The physical presence of the sangha who encourages us with their kind eyes and gentle speech, examples of those who have gone before and show us the way to walk with strength and conviction, and the wise teachers we include in our lives who demonstrate kindness, generosity, and fearlessness. May we all trust our light, Celia.

### 5: A Buddhist perspective on friends

*How to bless someone with special words in Buddhism? My friends ask me for keep them in my pray but we don't believe in praying. So what should my answer to them?*

Glad I found your blog – looking forward to following your journey! Ranjit Rajane I want to be a Buddhist monk. Do you have a specific tradition in mind? Keep up the good work! I hope all is well John Thank you for making this blog! Did you learn the language of your adopted home, and how much did language affect your studies? I am most interested in Tibetan Buddhism and would like to know how to go about selecting a monastery and starting the path of a monk. Your comment lead me to think that I need to write more on this topic, I will post another article on the monastic path this week. I needed to learn Tibetan because I decided to be close to a Tibetan master. In general it should only be a requirement if: I quit when I realized that: I hope it helps you make the right choices. Regarding the concrete steps to take, I recommend you start studying Buddhism in a local center close to your place. Try a few tradition if need be Zen, Tibetan, Theravada see how you like it and if you do, start asking about monasteries related to the tradition you feel most comfortable with. Where are you located? James I am located in St. Still, I found a center in Moncton not too close [http: Cara Hi](http://) – my question is – can a woman be a monk? I thought women had to be nuns and could not do so unless they are virgins? BB Hi, thanks for your sharing. I have been thinking of becoming a nun and have identified a Chinese monastery. However, I have no idea how to go about with the investigation. Could you guide me the right questions to ask? Who should be asked? What observations should I pay special attention to? As a general advice: First, google the name of the organization and its leaders as well. Wikipedia might have information that the monastery would never share. See how it feels, discuss with the people, take your time. Next step can be: If after investigating you come to the conclusion that everything looks good, listen to your inspiration and go ahead: Did I answer your questions? BB Thank you, Gael. Thanks for your great advice. You have triggered me to start thinking in areas which have never crossed my mind. Where do you currently live? I live in Tennessee. Would it be possible for you to please provide some input? Thank you, any advice or suggestions would be so Appreciated. Thanks for leaving a comment: Are you looking for a Buddhist master? Do you need a guide in Tennessee specifically or other parts of the US could do? Peter I am interested in a Buddhist sect in Japan. I am an island boy coming from Guam and I am considered a sansei or third generation Japanese as my grandfather originated in Tochigi-ken prefecture, Mamada City. I have some challenges that need to be answered before I can seek the possibility of a monastic life. These are the following: I am 60 years old, married before and divorced with children and grandchildren. Will this be a problem? I am also an insulin dependent diabetic and have been for thirty years now. What would I need to do and know before seeking the opportunity for this aspect of my future in the Buddhist faith as a monk? Ask questions and observe people in that Monastery: If not, consider another place. The only challenge for me was to accept that a change was necessary. What Buddhist sect are you considering to join?

### 6: Soka Gakkai International - USA

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Stories Demonstrating the Attributes of the Buddha The following is the story demonstrating the Attributes of the Buddha. At a distance of about one yojana before arriving at Rajagaha, Anathapindika sent a message about his arrival in advance as usual to his brother-in-law. At that time Visala could not welcome his brother-in-law as usual because he was engaged in the preparation of alms-food to be offered to the Buddha and His disciples. Also Anathapindika, excepting the welcoming of Visala, continued his journey. Only when he reached Rajagaha, he discovered that Visala was very busy indeed. When Anathapindika asked Visala why he was so busy. Visala explained to him that he was busy not because of the preparations for a wedding reception nor for preparations of a feast to the King but for the offerings of alms-food to the Buddha and His disciples. Visala told him to visit the Buddha the next day as it was too late already. His desire to pay homage to the Buddha was so strong that Anapindika forgot everything even to have dinner and to do business. He could not fall into deep sleep; he remained half-asleep and half-awake. Whenever he was awake, he thought of the Buddha. It was still dark. As he reflected on the virtues of the Buddha repeatedly, his mind became calm, concentrated and saturated with joy and the rays of light emanated from his body. Due to these rays of light, he thought that it was dawn and got up three times. When he woke up for the third time, he saw all the doors of the house were open. So he came down to the ground floor, went out of the house and walked along the main road. When he reached Sivaka, the city gate, he found that it was already open. He went out of the gate and stepped into the cemetery. Rajagaha was a densely populated city. According to the custom of those days dead bodies were left unburied in the cemetery. When Anathapindika stumbled over the corpses, he got frightened and the light emanating from his body disappeared. The whole place became pitch-dark. The foul smell of the corpses made him more and more frightened and disgusted. Having goose-flesh, Anathapindika wanted to return home. Go on, my friend. When Anathapindika heard these words, he was encouraged, thinking that he had some companions. Fear and dread abated and he again reflected on the virtues of the Buddha. On account of this, the darkness disappeared and light rays reappeared. So he went on, and then he saw the corpses and heard the sounds of howling dogs, he felt frightened again. As soon as he felt frightened, the rays of light disappeared and it became dark again. So, he thought of going back again. At every time he thought of going home, he heard the encouraging words of deva Sivaka. And so he went on and on. Finally, at early dawn he reached Sitavana grove where the Buddha recited. The Buddha was walking up and down mediating in the open air. When the Buddha saw Anathapindika coming, He sat at a suitable place. At that time, suddenly a strange idea was flashed upon by Anathapindika. Anathapindika felt pleased and happy. Then he listened to the discourse given by the Buddha. At the end of the discourse, he became a Stream-winner. He invited the Buddha and His disciples to come to Savatthi. When he knew that the Buddha accepted his invitation, he went back to Savatthi and built the splendid monastery known as Jetavana monastery at a great cost. He donated the monastery to the Buddha and became a lay disciple of the Buddha, and a well-known patron of the Buddha Sasana. The above mentioned story provides some examples of the Attributes of the Buddha. Paying homage to the Buddha, reflecting on the virtues of the Buddha, paying mental devotion to the Buddha who is endowed with major marks and minor marks of a Great Man, etc. If a person steadfastly concentrates his mind on Buddhanussati Bhavana It is also a kind of Samatha Bhavana like Anapana , he will be overwhelmed with delightful satisfaction. Owing to the reflection on the virtues of the Buddha, he will be free from the hindrances such as greed Lobha , anger Dosa , etc. His mind will be active and pure. If he keeps on contemplating on the arising and perishing of his delightful satisfaction stage by stage or on the arising and perishing nature of mind and matter, he will attain Nibbana.

### 7: I am Thankful for my Friends | Everyday practice

*My actions are my responsibility, your actions are your's, OP's his, and his friend's are his friend's. A person needs to take care of himself. Trying to care for someone else while neglecting oneself just makes everything worse.*

It is even more difficult to recognize enemies who pretend to be your friends. Enmity arises not only from attitude but also from actions. Those who involve you in wrong actions are not really your true friends. This is the message you will find in the following discussion. By the standards laid down in the Buddhist texts some of which are stated below, most of those whom you consider as your friends come under the category of your enemies. According to the Buddha, friends who encourage you to indulge in sinful actions or who trouble you with deception and dishonesty are definitely not your friends, but your enemies since they increase the burden of your karma and contribute to your moral and spiritual downfall. It is therefore important, especially for spiritual people who are by nature very sensitive, to know who your friend is and who is your foe. According to the code conduct prescribed in the Digha Nikaya, a laydisciple should be aware of who is a true friend and who is not, because such an awareness would help him avoid the common pitfall of getting into moral and spiritual trouble. It may also help him to shape his future welfare. Four types of enemies The Digha Nikaya identifies four types persons who should be viewed as enemies in the guise of friends. A man who speaks only what you want to hear. A man who helps you waste your money. Four true friends There are four types who should be looked upon as true friends. A man who tries to help you. A man who is the same in happiness and sorrow. A man who gives good advice. A man who is sympathetic to ascetics and brahmans Those who are foes in the guise of friends "These four, young householder, should be understood as foes in the guise of friends: And whenn the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again: His parents were devout followers of the Buddha, but the son was indifferent to religion. The pious father and mother could not by any means persuade their son to accompany them to visit the Buddha or his disciples and hear the noble Doctrine. The son thought it practically useless to pay visits to the Sangha, as such visits may entail material loss. He was only concerned with material prosperity; to him spiritual progress was to no avail. Constantly he would say to his father: Paying homage to them would make my back ache, and my knees stiff. I should have to sit on the ground and soil and wear out my clothes. And when, at the conversations with them, after so sitting, one gets to know them, one has to invite them and give them offerings, and so one only loses by it. It is at this hour that he surveys the world with his great compassion to find out what fellow being he could be of service on that day. That discourse will be of benefit to many folk. There must I go. Commenting on this Sutta, the Venerable Buddhaghosa says, "Nothing in the duties of a householder is left unmentioned. This Sutta is called the Vinaya of the householder. Hence in one who practices what he has been taught in it, growth is to be looked for, not decay. And truly we may say even now of this Vinaya or code of discipline, so fundamental are the human interests involved, so sane and wide is the wisdom that envisages them, that the utterances are as fresh and practically as binding today and here as they were then at Rajagaha.

### 8: Friendships | The Buddha's Advice to Laypeople

*A Buddhist perspective on friends By Venerable Thubten Chodron on Nov 24, in For Young Adults A talk for youth given at Tai Pei Buddhist Centre, Singapore, and organized by Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery.*

Instead he wanted people to follow his path to liberate themselves through hard work in study and meditation. His critical analysis of the human condition was heavily bound by personal, empirical experience. This is expressed within the Kalama Sutta, where he advises the Kalamas: And in reference to this was it said. It does not deny the validity of God, but the Buddha had something to say about faith in concepts that are neither provable, nor verifiable within our experience: Practice straightforwardly, my dears, for the realization of an exclusively happy world, because it was through such a practice that we ourselves have been reborn in an exclusively happy world"? The relationship between the Hindu Atman and the Hindu concept of God Brahman or Ishvara, depending on whether the deity is impersonal or personal, is complicated, but a close parallel can at the very least be drawn here. As such, there is no base, no ground on which to build a reistic philosophy nor for that matter any reason to infer a God, at least not a God that has any Essential properties whatsoever! In fact, the first Sutta within the Digha Nikaya a sort of introduction to Buddhism for novices and the curious denies the validity of all metaphysical speculation. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful. This is best read from the source! There is not even the slightest removal of power to progress within the path from the individual to any other individual, including any conception of God. This makes sense because a world view that explicitly states that the ground from which the world manifests is not to be found, explicitly denies that any truth can be gleaned from such a ground after all, it is not found! In denying the validity of reistic world views, the Buddha did not however embrace annihilationism or nihilism to us. He created a relational philosophy, where things are dependently originated. With regards to ethics, this is explained in https: The path is, mostly, walked alone http: But none of them are permanent, and they all still possess the risk of falling into lower realms including the hells, the animal realms and the human realm , if they act in such a way as to bring bad karma onto themselves. The Buddha neither worshiped nor placed any authority in them. The second answer is that Buddhism has spread to a very diverse group of people, some of which invoke the power of prayer, mantra, even begin to define Buddha as divine in one way or another. Strictly speaking, this is not Buddhism as the Buddha envisioned. If you place your faith in God and the divine, His power and authority, you will find Buddhism lacking in these respects. But, in that all possible power to act, change and improve, is left within the sphere of influence of the individual, all that is necessary to bring about an end to suffering is already within you. Physical illness the Buddha would have likely advised to leave to those that practice medicine!

### 9: 4 things you should know if you want to be a Buddhist monk

*Friendships Not associating with fools, Associating with the wise, Honoring those worthy of honor; This is the greatest blessing. (Mangala Sutta [Sn ] tr. John Kelly) In an ancient Buddhist story, the Buddha's faithful attendant, Ananda, asked about the importance of having wholesome companions.*

I am a Buddhist. Why should I consider becoming a Christian? Compared with Buddhism, Christianity has several distinguishing features that show that it deserves consideration. First, while both Christianity and Buddhism have an historical central figure, namely Jesus and Buddha, only Jesus is shown to have risen from the dead. Many people in history have been wise teachers. Many have started religious movements. Siddhartha Guatama, the historical Buddha also called Sakyamuni, stands out among them for having special wisdom and a profound philosophy of life. But Jesus also stands out, and He has confirmed His spiritual teachings with a test that only divine power could pass. Jesus deserves special consideration. Second, the Christian Scriptures are historically outstanding, deserving serious consideration. One could even say that the history of the Bible is so compelling that to doubt the Bible is to doubt history itself since the Bible is the most historically verifiable book of all antiquity. The multiplicity of manuscripts allows for a tremendous research base by which we can test the texts against each other and identify what the originals said. All of the originals were written within the time of the contemporaries eyewitnesses , in the first century A. Whole book copies surface by A. Having all the books of the New Testament initially written within the times of eyewitnesses means that the books did not have time to devolve into myth and folklore. Plus, their truth claims were held accountable by members of the Church who, as personal witnesses to the events, could check the facts. Robinson in *Honest to God* reports that the New Testament documents are Bruce Metzger, an expert in the Greek New Testament, suggests a more modest Third, Christian ethics has a stronger foundation than Buddhist ethics. Christian ethics is founded in the personal character of God. God is personal and moral. His nature is good, and therefore all actions which align with His goodness are actually good. Whatever departs from His goodness is actually evil. For Buddhists, however, ultimate reality is not understood as personal. But morality by its very nature requires personality. To illustrate, consider the morality of a rock. One does not blame a rock for being used in a murder since it is not a person with moral duties. Rather, the moral duty lies with the person who used that rock for evil purposes. Buddhism lacks the personal framework for moral duty. With Buddhism, karma is the framework for morality. But karma is impersonal. It is akin to a law of nature. Breaking a karmic "rule" is not intrinsically evil. There seems to be no significant difference between error non-moral mistakes and sin moral wrongdoing. Furthermore, many Buddhists even assert that the dualities of "good" and "evil" ultimately break down. The categories of morality are not grand enough to map onto ultimate reality, and enlightened individuals will see that good and evil blur into one. But such a position means that ultimate reality would not be "good. And what grounds would there be for living a morally good life as opposed to an amoral life without regard for moral distinctions, or an inactive life avoiding moral choices as much as possible? If Buddhism asserts that reality is not ultimately personal and the distinctions between good and evil are not actually real, then Buddhism does not have a true foundation for ethics. Christianity, on the other hand, can point to the character of God as personally founding morality and providing a basis to distinguish good from evil. Fourth, Christianity rightly appreciates "desire. Sakyamuni taught that tanha, "desire" or "attachment," is the root of suffering and is to be dissolved. But some admittedly good things are based on the idea of desire. Love, for example, is "to desire the good of another" John In contrast, Christianity teaches that desire is good when it is properly directed. Paul urges Christians to "desire the greater gifts" of the Spirit 1 Corinthians In the Psalms, we see pictures of worshipers longing for and desiring fellowship with God Psalm And, of course, God does not simply act loving, He is love 1 John 4: Sacrificing desire altogether seems to throw out the proverbial baby love with the dirty bathwater suffering. Fifth is the question "What do you do with your sin? Sin is sometimes understood as ignorance. It is sinful if one does not see or understanding reality as Buddhism defines it. However, in Buddhism, there is still an idea of moral error termed "sin. But, this latter definition of sin points to a kind of moral error that requires real atonement. From where can

atonement rise? Can atonement come by adherence to karmic principles? Karma is impersonal and amoral. One could do good works to even the balance, but one cannot ever dispose of sin. Karma does not even provide a context whereby moral error is even moral. Whom have we offended if we sin in private? Karma does not care one way or the other because karma is not a person. Can atonement come by prayer or devotion to a Bodhisattva or a Buddha? Even if those characters could offer forgiveness, it seems like sin would still be left unpaid. They would forgive sin showing it to be excusable; it is not a big deal. Christianity, on the other hand, has the only adequate theological view of sin. In Christianity sin is moral error. Ever since Adam, humans have been sinful creatures. And it sets an infinite gap between man and bliss. But it cannot be "balanced out" with an equal or greater amount of good works. If someone has ten times more good works than bad works, then he or she still has bad works on the conscience. What happens to these remaining bad works? Are they just forgiven as if they were not a big deal in the first place? Are they permitted into bliss? Are they mere illusions thus leaving no problem whatsoever? None of these options are suitable. Concerning illusion, sin is too real to us to be explained away as illusion. Concerning our sinfulness, when we are honest with ourselves we all know that we have sinned. Concerning forgiveness, to simply forgive sin at no cost treats sin like it is not of much consequence even though we know that to be false. Concerning bliss, bliss is not much good if sin keeps getting smuggled in. It seems like the scales of karma leave us with sin on our hearts and bliss either cannot tolerate us, or it must cease being perfect so that we can come in. Christianity has an answer for sin. God became man, lived a perfect life, and died the death that we deserved. He was crucified on our behalf, a substitute for us, and a covering, or atonement, for our sins. Furthermore, He was resurrected, proving that not even death could conquer Him. He promises the same resurrection unto eternal life for all who put their faith in Him as their only Lord and Savior Romans 3: This is no "easy believism" where God, like a janitor, just cleans up all our mistakes. Rather, this is a life-long commitment where we take on a new nature and begin a new relationship with God Himself Romans 6: When a person really believes God is who He says He is in the Bible, and really believes God did what He says He did in the Bible, and a person puts his or her life on that belief—that person is transformed. He becomes a new creation by the power of God 2 Corinthians 5: You cannot stay the same once you have that belief. One could just as easily continue reading the morning paper after realizing his house was on fire. That knowledge the house is on fire motivates action and changes your life stop reading the paper and do something about the fire. Nor is Jesus simply an answer among many others. Meditation, works, prayer—none of these can make us worthy of the infinite and eternal gift of heaven. Only when Christ pays our sin debt and we place our faith in Him can we be saved. Only then is sin covered, hope assured, and life filled with eternal meaning. Finally, it is only in Christianity that we can know that we are saved. We do not have to rely on some fleeting experience, nor do we rely on our own good works or fervent meditation. Nor do we put our faith in a false god whom we are trying to "believe-into-existence.

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