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As you enjoy your Tibet tour in Lhasa or other parts of Tibet, one of the most intriguing aspects would be the mysterious life of Tibetan monks. Lets have a glimpse of how a Tibetan becomes a monk and what their daily life is like in Tibet. 1. How to Become a Monk in Tibet? According to Tibetan Buddhist doctrine, small children cant become monks until they reach the age of 7 or 8 when they can drive crows away. Besides, the head of the monastery will check their background. Those who have been goldsmiths, blacksmiths, butchers, or practitioners of sky burial will be considered unclean and not a qualified candidate for being a Lama. Head of the monastery removed the remaining hair of the kid. If a kid proves to be qualified, he needs to find two teachers. One is responsible for his social conduct; the other takes care of his study of the classics of Tibetan Buddhism. Mostly, these teachers would be his relatives such as his uncle, older brothers, etc. Before the tonsure, the kid has to present a Hada (white ceremonial scarf used by Tibetans), yak butter tea, and some gifts to his teacher. Later his teacher will shave most of his hair but only keep a strand of hair in the middle. Then, the kid is expected to be taken to meet the abbot, the head of the monastery. After making sure the kid truly decides to become a monk, the abbot will cut the remaining hair of the kid and give him a Dharma name for the newly-ordained Lama. 2. How is the Scholastic Life of Tibetan Monks? And What They Learn Daily? Shortly after small monks begin their scholastic life in the monastery, they need to serve their mentor or master for 3 years, during which they will learn all the monastic disciplines and customs in monasteries; In addition, they are also expected to shoulder chores of the monastery and learn how to spell Tibetan Buddhist mantra and recite some basic prayers. Young Tibetan monks in the monastery After young Tibetan monks have a good command of the Tibetan language, its time for them to study the 5 Buddhist classics: a.Buddhist Logics (Yinming): Its the most elementary knowledge of Buddhism, which is expected to be studied for 3 years. b.Heart Sutra (Banruo): It literally means the heart of perfection of understanding. c.Madhyamika (Zhongguan): dependently co-arisen phenomena d.Monastic Discipline (Jielv) e.Kusha-sh (Jushe) The above 5 Buddhist classics are mandatory courses for Tibetan monks. It normally takes them 20 years or more to finish all of them mainly via reciting and monk debate. 3. How is the Daily Life of Tibetan Monks Nowadays? Tibetan monks or lamas lead a fairly peaceful life. At daybreak, the monk on duty will climb to the rooftop of the Great Assembly Hall of the monastery clap his hands three times, and loudly pray for the blessings of the Goddess of Mercy (also known as Guanyin). Upon hearing the morning call, all the monks will swarm into the assembly hall for morning praying, which is a solemn and incredible spectacle to see. Monks returned to their dorm after morning praying. Morning Praying Morning praying lasts for 2-3 hours, during which hundreds of young monks will line up to serve other monks with butter tea and porridge. In the meantime, monks can have their meal while chanting Buddhist mantras. What a lovely and rare scene to see for visitors. Its often the case that led by the head of the Buddhist scripture chanting, monks will perform praying for the happiness of a family or the rest and peace of the dead or family members in mourning. Shortly after the prayer, the family will offer some money to the monks as a special way of giving. Tea break during the morning praying in Tashilhunpo Monastery Afternoon Praying From 9:00 to 10:00 and 15:00-16:00, Tibetan monks will have afternoon praying at smaller places like Zhacangs Hall (college) and Khangtsen (dorm) in a monastery. Monk debate in Sera Monastery is one of the highlights of Lhasa Tour. 4. Some Personal Questions about Tibetan Monks, like Can They Get Married? Its normal to be curious about the personal lives of Tibetan monks, here are some common questions answered: Can Tibetan monks get married? The Buddha preached celibacy and restraint, and following his teachings, Tibetan monks are not allowed to get married. Can Tibetan monks drink wine or alcohol? Tibetan monks do not drink alcohol or wine. Buddhism teaches that alcohol can lead to carelessness, so monks avoid it. Do Tibetan monks eat meat? There are branches of Buddhism in Tibet that are strictly vegetarian, but Tibetan monks are allowed to eat meat. Living in the high altitude and rugged conditions of the Tibetan Plateau requires a lot of energy, so for practical reasons eating meat is allowed. Do Tibetan monks use smartphones? Rules for different branches of Buddhism vary, but in general, there is no restriction on Tibetan monks using mobile phones. Are Tibetan monks allowed to go home often? Tibetan monks are allowed to go home on occasion. They have a responsibility to their studies and monastery, but as long as their duties are met, there are chances to visit their homes. Can Tibetan monks go outside of the monasteries? Yes, as long as monks follow the monasterys rules, they are allowed to go out. Do Tibetan monks get paid? Monks in Tibet get money from two main sources. One is a government stipend to support their scholarship, and the other is from donations made by local people. 5. Where Can I See Monks and How to Plan a Tibet Monk Tour? You can see monks absolutely everywhere in Tibet. Most Tibet tours will include important monasteries, temples, and places like the Potala Palace, the Jokhang Temple, the Sera Monastery, etc. To better understand the life of Tibetan monks, you will not miss the traditional monks debate at Sera Monastery that you will not miss during your Tibet monk tour. The Monk debate is one of the major forms of testing monks study. The most famous monk debate in Sera Monastery is held from 15:00 to 17:00 in the courtyard every Monday to Saturday. Moreover, there are some Buddhist events in Tibetan monasteries during festivals and ceremonies, such as the Thangka unfolding in Drepung Monastery in the Shoton Festiva. How to Plan a Tibet Monk Tour? One great option for a Tibet monk tour is our 8-Days Lhasa to Everest Base Camp Tour. It includes visiting the main temples and monasteries in Lhasa and Shigatse, and several other important places. After arriving at the Everest Base Camp, you will visit Rongbuk Monastery, the highest monastery in the world at 5,154 meters. It could be a lifetime memory to witness the worlds highest monastery in front of the top of the world. If you want to take a meditation tour in Tibet, you can plan a trip to Drak Yerpa Monastery. Located 30 kilometers away from downtown Lhasa, the ancient Drak Yerpa Monastery is one of the most sacred practice sites of many masters. You can explore and choose a meditation cave and enjoy the moment of tranquility in the spiritual setting with the beautiful scenery of the mountain valley. If you prefer to stay for a while with the monk, we can help you arrange that. Just feel free to tell us your travel plan. We will arrange you the trip for an unhurried, intimate experience of Tibetan Buddhist culture. Enjoy the video about A Day in the Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk Conclusion Monks and spiritual life are an integral part of Tibetan culture. They play an important role in preserving the traditional culture of the region, and are a highlight of any visit to Tibet. The best way to learn about the lives of Tibetan monks is to visit the local monasteries and see them in person. Let us know what you are looking for, and we will ensure you have a chance to see the real Tibet. According to Buddhist practice, there are three stages or steps. The initial stage is to reduce attachment towards life. The second stage is the elimination of desire and attachment to this samsara. Then in the third stage, self-cherishing is eliminated HH Dalai Lama Becoming a Buddhist monk or nun is truly a meaningful and worthwhile way to spend your life, and to be of benefit to others. We are very fortunate that the monastic tradition started by the Buddha is still alive today, thanks to the devotion, dedication and efforts of many thousands of monks and nuns in Asia over the last 2500 years. Although there is great benefit in becoming ordained, the life of a Buddhist monk or nun also carries a deep responsibility for oneself and for others.Knowing the Buddhist TeachingsBefore making the decision to take ordination, one should have a thorough foundation in the teachings of the Buddha, such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Pathd the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (lam-rim). Traditionally a student requesting ordination has completed several years of study and practice under the guidance of a qualified teacher. If you are beginning, check your local area for a center or study group where you can generate an understanding of the teachings, gather the support of other dharma students and have the guidance of a qualified teacher.Having a Spiritual GuideIn any venture we undertake, we need someone who can teach and guide us. This is especially true in our spiritual journey where a qualified teacher can provide the guidance we need to be successful in our practice. Our teacher can help provide the foundation for the monastic life, and will understand when we are ready to take on the commitment required for the monastic vows of ordination. You need to have a teacher who can give you permission to be ordainedEntering the Buddhist PathTake the time you need in developing your spiritual practice. Once one understands the value of the Buddhas teachings and feels they are appropriate for ones own spiritual development, the next step is to formally establish yourself as a Buddhist by taking refuge.It is also important to strengthen ones practice by taking lay vows preparing one for living with vows; many students will also practice celibacy for a period prior to taking ordination. Know yourself and know whether you will feel comfortable being a monk or nun.Considering OrdinationIf possible spend some time living in a monastic community receiving advice from the resident monks or nuns on what it is like to be a monastic. Discuss with monks and nuns who have lived with the vows and can offer very practical information on how to maintain ones commitment. Members of the monastic community are happy that you are interested in following the monastic path and want to support you in your ordination. Resources and articles are also available online.Programs are being developed where lay practitioners considering ordination can gain an understanding and experience of the monastic life in protected retreat environment.A Lifelong CommitmentThe vows of a Buddhist monk or nun are taken for life, therefore it is important to spend time and take great care in reflecting on the various advantages and disadvantages before making a decision. Some monasteries in Asia (e.g. in Thailand) offer part-time ordination programs, usually for men, which allow one the possibility to live as a monastic for a few days, weeks, months, or years. However, in the Tibetan tradition, one makes a commitment for life. And although there are cases of people who take vows and later give them back and return to lay life, this is not recommended. The vows are taken with the determination to keep them for the rest of ones life.Being Part of a CommunityBecoming a Buddhist monastic means that you are joining a communitythe Sangha. The purpose of the community is to study and practice the Buddhas teachings, and whenever possible, to share them with others. Traditionally, one stays in a monastic community for at least 5 years after becoming ordained. However, as monastic communities are still in development in many parts of the world, this is not always possible. In some cases, one can also reside within a dharma center under the guidance and protection of ones teachers. One should investigate the possibilities that are available to join monastic communities prior to ordination.Living in community also means that we share our resources, our habits, our practice and our personalities. In learning to live in a community one can face many difficulties, particularly as many of us have been raised in cultures of individual expression. In order to protect our ordination, the vinaya (code of conduct) for monastic life is very explicit in how we live in community.Supporting YourselfTraditionally, when one joins a monastic community, the four basic requisites of food, clothing, dwelling and medicine are provided. However, as Buddhism is relatively new to many parts of the world, resources to support the monastic communities are limited. For those considering ordination, it is important to consider what resources are available for support once one has taken ordination. Many monks and nuns provide service to their local dharma communities in exchange for their basic needs. The International Mahayana Institute also provides support in dependence on available resources. It is contrary to the Vinaya (code of conduct) for monks and nuns to work in worldly jobs to support themselves. Those seeking to become monks or nuns should discuss their situation with their teacher or senior Sangha to ensure their stability once they have taken ordination.These points should give you a better idea of the realities and challenges! of living as a Buddhist monastic. 1Study the teachings of the Buddha. 2See if you can master the disciplines that the Buddha had given to his disciples.3Once you feel that you know and understand fully what the Buddha has taught, look for a Tibetan temple.4When you have found a Tibetan temple, contact its head monk, and ask him for information on joining his temple community.5The head lama(or monk)will take care of everything else in your quest, from there. Ask a Question Thanks wikiHow is a wiki, similar to Wikipedia, which means that many of our articles are co-written by multiple authors. To create this article, volunteer authors worked to edit and improve it over time. This article has been viewed 12,023 times. Co-authors: 4 Updated: November 3, 2022 Views:12,023 Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 12,023 times. Tibetan monks Buddhist monks are often known in their own cultures by a word that means "sharer." A large portion of the Buddhist cannon consists of doctrines attributed to The Buddha on how monks are supposed to behave and what they were supposed to do. Traditionally monks have renounced all personal possession and sexual relations and relied on the charity of lay-people for necessities. Temples and monasteries are paid for with donations and fees paid to monks for performing funerals and other ceremonies. In Buddhist societies, monks are generally respected by everyone and most families have a son who is monk or was a monk at one time. Monks are given free food and often allowed to ride free on buses and trains. Even the girlie bars and brothels on Patpong Road in Bangkok welcome saffron-robed monks who show up periodically recite mantras and make blessings to ensure good profits. Few Buddhist monks are monks their entire lives. Those that are often become scholars, teachers, and healers. Some specialize in folk magic and even work as astrologers. Many spend much of their time presiding over funerals. Monks are free to a leave anytime they want. In Southeast Asia, many young men often serve a few weeks as a monk as a sort of coming of age rite, and then resume their ordinary lives. Undisciplined children are sometimes taken to monasteries by parents to set them straight. The Theravada Buddhist scholar Bhikkhu Bodhi wrote: A special aspect of the lifestyle of the Buddhist monk is that he lives in dependence on the offerings of others. He does not work for his living, he does not receive payment for his religious services, but he lives entirely in dependence on the support of the laity. Those who have confidence in the Dhamma provide him with the basic requisites, his robes, food, dwelling place, medicines, and whatever other simple material support he might need. [Source: Virtual Library Sri Lanka lankalibrary.com] In Tibetan Buddhism and some other sects, some monks retreat to caves or remote huts to meditate and live as hermits. But generally most monks live in a community with other monks in a monastery. Theravada Buddhism devotes a great deal of literature to monks and their role in the monk community and society as a whole. In Mahayana Buddhism, there is more emphasis on pursing individual enlightenment. See Buddhas Begging Under BUDDHAS LATER LIFE: TEACHING, DAILY ROUTINE, BEGGING AND MIRACLES: factsanddetails.com ; BUDDHIST MONKS AND NUNS: HISTORY, EVOLUTION, SEX AND GREED factsanddetails.com ; SANGHA (BUDDHIST MONK COMMUNITIES) AND MONASTERIES factsanddetails.com ; MONKS IN THERAVADA BUDDHISM factsanddetails.com;NOVICE MONKS IN THERAVADA BUDDHISM AND THEIR ORDINATION factsanddetails.com;FOREST MONKS IN THERAVADA BUDDHISM factsanddetails.com; CHINESE BUDDHIST TEMPLES AND MONKS factsanddetails.com;TIBETAN MONKS AND LAMAS factsanddetails.com; factsanddetails.com Websites and Resources on Buddhism: Buddha Net buddhanet.net/e-learning/basic-guide ; Internet Sacred Texts Archive sacred-texts.com/bud/index ; Introduction to Buddhism webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/buddhaintro ; Early Buddhist texts, translations, and parallels, SuttaCentral suttacentral.net ; East Asian Buddhist Studies: A Reference Guide, UCLA web.archive.org ; View on Buddhism viewonbuddhism.org ; Tricycle: The Buddhist Review tricycle.org ; BBC - Religion: Buddhism bbc.co.uk/religion ; Theravada Buddhism: Readings in Theravada Buddhism, Access to Insight accesstoinsight.org/ ; Wikipedia article Wikipedia ; Encyclopdia Britannica britannica.com ; Pali Canon Online palicanon.org ; Vipassan (Theravada Buddhist Meditation) Wikipedia article Wikipedia ; Pali Canon - Access to Insight accesstoinsight.org ; Forest monk tradition abhayagiri.org/about/thai-forest-tradition ; BBC Theravada Buddhism bbc.co.uk/religion RECOMMENDED BOOKS: What is the Sangha?: The Nature of Spiritual Communityby Sangharakshita Amazon.com ; Teachings of a Buddhist Monk by Ajahn Sumedho , Marcelle Hanselaar, et al. Amazon.com ; Three Japanese Buddhist Monks (Penguin Great Ideas)by Various and Meredith McKinney Amazon.com ; Adventures of the Mad Monk Ji Gong: The Drunken Wisdom of China's Famous Chan Buddhist Monk by Guo Xiaoting, John Robert Shaw, et al. Amazon.com ; The Silk Road Journey With Xuanzang by Sally Hovey Wriggins Amazon.com; Xuanzang: China's Legendary Pilgrim and Translatorby Benjamin Brose Amazon.com; Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms by Faxian and James Legge Amazon.com; The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monkby Georges B. J. Dreyfus Amazon.com; From a Mountain In Tibet: A Monks Journey by Yeshe Losal Rinpoche Amazon.com; The Life of a Tibetan Monk by Geshe Rabten Amazon.com; :The Autobiography of a Tibetan Monk by Palden Gyatso Amazon.com; Himalayan Hermitess: The Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Nun by Kurtis R. Schaeffer Amazon.com; Labrang Monastery: A Tibetan Buddhist Community on the Inner Asian Borderlands, 1709-1958" by Paul Kocot Nietupski Amazon.com; Sera Monastery by Jos Cabezn and Penpa Dorjee Amazon.com Buddhist Monk Initiation Cutting the hair To become a member of a Buddhist monastic order (sangha) involves two rites of passage: 1) Renunciation of the secular life; and 2) Acceptance of monasticism as a novice Because, in many cases, acceptance as a monk can not be made before the age of 20, the two rites can be separated by many years. Ordination is an important ceremony in all traditions, especially in Theravada Buddhism, where means becoming a monk. To become a Theravada monk, future novices are required to shave their head and face and don the yellow robes of the monk. Various vows are exchanged, including the repetition of the Ten Precepts. Then the the future novice is questioned about past behavior and their suitability for becomong a monk. If everything is order an officiating abbot admits the new novice monk. [Source: BBC] The vow taken by Theravada monks is essentially an embrace of the Three Jewels Buddha, Dharma (Buddha's teachings), and the Sangha (the brother hood of monks) with the vow: "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the law, I take refuge in the Community of monks." This is a ritual recitation of the intent to live as a Buddhist, to embody the dharma, and to seek guidance from the dharma, and, as such, it is a kind of minimal condition for becoming a Buddhist. For the monk, this simple ritual is the first step in a far more elaborate rite of passage: formal ordination into the sangha. The first step in this elaborate process is severing one's ties with domestic life, a ritual renunciation that is usually called "leaving home for homelessness." It is followed by a series of vows, particularly the vow to follow the code of monastic discipline, the Vinaya. [Source: Jacob Kinnard, Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices, 2018, Encyclopedia.com] The first five ascetics who became the first monks under The Buddha were joined by 55 others. They together with The Buddha are known as the 61 arhants. The were ordained by The Buddha by repeating the simple phrase: Come monk; well-taught in the Dharma; fare the attainment of knowledge for making a complete anguish. Others that came later were ordained after cutting their hair and beard, donning a robe and uttering three times: I go to The Buddha for refuge, I go to Dharma for refuge, I go to the sangha for refuge. This ritual remains the basis of the Theravada monk ordination process today. Buddhist Monk Initiation Ceremony In countries where Theravada Buddhism predominates, the novice monk initiation ceremony is an important rite of passage for young boys. Conducted when a boy is around 13 years year old, the event includes the offering of gifts to the Buddhist clergy at the temple where the ceremony is held, a feast hosted by the boys family, a formal head shaving ritual, and lots of prostrating by family members to the boy to symbolize the elevation to adulthood and the boy's new position as a son of Buddha. The parents gain merit by offering their son to Buddha and the grander the ceremony the more merit they earn. Elaborate ceremonies sometimes last several days and have musical performances, singing and chanting of poems that recall episodes of Buddhas life. While the boys head is being shaved, he is instructed by an abbot or senior monk to meditate on the action, contemplate its meaning and repeat thing like, "They are of this body, hair of the head, hairs of the body, nails, teeth and skin, which are unclean, abominable, filthy, lifeless and insubstantial." The hair of a novice monk is considered sacred. It is not allowed to touch the ground and is collected in a cloth spread out by the parents. After the head is shaved the boy turmeric and saffron powder is rubbed into the scalp and the newly anointed monk is given a robe and sent off to the monetary for several weeks or months. After that time he returns to a normal life. Upon ordinations a monks is given robes (often three robes, an inner, lower and outer ones), and simple possession such as a cup, bowl, razor, filter (for keeping out insects out their drinking water), an alms bowl and an umbrella. Monks and nuns in some Buddhist sects have five scars on their arm made with burning incense to remind them of the five basic moral prohibitions (the Panch Sila) which they vowed to avoid: killing, lying, stealing, adultery and drinking alcohol. After the marks are made the burns are cooled with watermelon rind. The Buddha on What He Expected From Monks The following sutra mentions Buddha's enlightenment and what he told his arhats (the first monks) on how to achieve (Sn 3.11 PTS: Sn 679-723 Nalaka Sutta: To Nalaka) : young monks in Myanmar Abstaining from sexual intercourse,abandoning various sensual pleasures,be unopposed, unattached,to beings moving & still. 'As I am, so are these. As are these, so am I.'Drawing the parallel toyourself,neither kill nor get others to kill.Abandoning the wants & greedwhere people run-of-the-mill are stuck,practice with vision,cross over this hell.Stomach not full,moderate in food,having few wants,not being greedy,always not hankering after desire:one without hankering,is one who's unbound. Instructed by the onewhose mind was set on his benefit,Such, seeing in the future the utmost purity,Nalaka, who had laid up a store of merit,awaited the Victor expectantly, guarding his senses.On hearing word of the Victor's turning of the foremost wheel,he went, he saw, the bull among seers. Confident,he asked the foremost sageabout the highest sagacity,now that Asita's forecasthad come to pass. Having gone on his almsround, the sageshould then go to the forest,standing or taking a seat at the foot of a tree.The enlightened one, intent on jhana,should find delight in the forest,should practice jhana at the foot of a tree,attaining his own satisfaction.Then, at the end of the night,he should go to the village,not delighting in an invitationor gift from the village.Having gone to the village,the sage should not carelesslygo among families.Cutting off chatter,he shouldn't utter a scheming word.'I got something, that's fine.I got nothing,that's good.'Being such with regard to both,he returns to the very same tree.Wandering with his bowl in hand not dumb, but seemingly dumb he shouldn't despise a piddling giftnor disparage the giver. Buddhist Monk Code of Behavior Begging monks in SE Asia Monks follow the model of the Buddha who traded in his clothing for simple robes. They live as simply as possible and follow a strict code which includes refraining from stealing, drugs, alcohol, sex, entertainment, dancing, swearing, lying, sacrilegious acts, sex, and making money. The code includes the five basic commandments of Buddhism (the Panch Sila), plus three to five additional restrictions which may include prohibitions against things like eating after noon, sleeping on high beds and wearing jewelry or garlands. Buddhist monks make a vow to give up all possessions. They are allowed to possess three robes and own a handful of personal items. Monks shave their heads and faces to discourage vanity and symbolize the renunciation of the worldly life. They also are supposed to eat only vegetarian food. The public supplies them with food and money for housing and medical care. In Southeast Asia monks must follow 227 vows. In many places even touching a woman is taboo. Offenses can result in a reprimand, suspension or expulsion from the monastery. Many of the rules are similar to those followed by Hindus Sadhus (holy men). Novice Buddhist Monks Most monks are novices. If all goes well they are ordained as full monks after two years or so. Novice monks study of the sacred texts in Pali and Sanskrit (the original Buddhist texts were written in these languages);engage in debates subtle points of Buddhist theology such as whether or not a rabbit has a horn and whether or not past and future events can be described as real. Young monks also have to perform chores around the monastery like collecting water and the sweeping floors. In their free time they often monkey around, or play cricket, soccer or baseball. To earn merit on Buddha birthday some monks walk around and around their monasteries the entire day, carrying heavy wooden bound prayer books. Many classrooms in monastery colleges are outfit with buckets. If a monk can't remember a text he was supposed to recite he has to wear a bucket of water around his neck until he gets it right. Buddhist Monk Duties monk laborers in Tibet The life of a monk is not all quiet meditation, teaching, praying and studying. Monks preside over the important events in a person's life. They bless births, consecrate weddings, interpret the future, cure sickness and cremate the dead. A Buddhist's social life often revolves around festivals held at temples and monasteries. Monks have traditionally taught reading and writing to young girls and boys, and morals, philosophy and meditation to older students. Today, they often teach poor children whose families cant afford regular school. They also offer courses in architecture, sculpture, painting, carving, massage and brick-making. Some monks provide counseling for people with problems. Other specialize in healing, folk magic and fortune telling. Monks also take part in public works projects and help villages build dams and irrigation projects, build schools and temples, preside over government events, bless dignitaries and projects, and preside over shop openings, new car purchases and moving into a house. In some places, monks are called in to settle family and property disputes and offer advice and consul to people who are depressed, contemplating suicide or suffer from mental illness. They also reform juvenile delinquents and cure drugs addicts of their affliction. Buddhists can seek the moral and spiritual advice from a monk the same way Catholics seeks help from a priest. Many people also seek out monks for advice on matters usually associated with fortunetellers. See Tough Love Buddhist Treatment for Addicts Under:ILLEGAL DRUGS, DRUG USERS, ADDICTS IN THAILAND factsanddetails.com Clothes and Shaved Head of Buddhist Monks Monks generally have shaved heads and are prohibited from wearing anything other than their robes, which consists of three garments: a bed sheet-size out garment, a similar-size inner garment and a loincloth-like underpants. Wearing clothing made from animal skin and leather is taboo. Monks are not even supposed to ride on animals. The Theravada Buddhist scholar Bhikkhu Bodhi wrote: The distinctive marks of the bhikkhu [monks] in all the Buddhist countries are the shaven head and the saffron robes. The reason the bhikkhu adopts this appearance is rooted in the very nature of his calling. The Buddhist monk seeks to realize the truth of anatta, of selflessness. This means the relinquishing of ones claims to stand out as a special individual, to be a "somebody". The aim of the bhikkhu is to eliminate the sense of ego of self identification. Our clothes, hairstyle, and beard often become subtle ways by which we assert our sense of identity or express our self image. Bhikkhus give up their personal identity and blend into a larger body the Sangha. [Source: Virtual Library Sri Lanka lankalibrary.com] Robe of Buddhist Monks Jacob Kinnard wrote in the Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices: The symbolic significance of Buddhist robes can be easily seen in the common phrase for becoming a monk, "taking the robes." Although the color and style of robes varies considerably from country to country, as well as from school to school, all monastics wear robes. Not only does the robe physically mark the monk as distinct from the layperson, but it also serves as a physical reminder of the monk's ascetic lifestyle. The Buddha himself fashioned his own robe out of donated scraps and recommended that his followers do the same. Buddhist robes continue to be symbolically constructed in the same manner, sewn together out of many smaller pieces of cloth (although not usually actual scraps). [Source: Jacob Kinnard, Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices, 2018, Encyclopedia.com] The robes worn by monks vary in color from place to place. Monks in Thailand and Cambodia wear yellow-orange or saffron robes; those in Tibet, Bhutan and Mongolia were maroon or wine-colored robes; monks in Korea wear grey; monks in China and Japan wear brown and yellow. Sometimes monks don black robes when they preside over a funeral or perform rites for the dead. Monks sometimes meditate on their robes, chanting, "I wear these robes to avoid cold, to avoid heat, to prevent the bites of insects, mosquitos, snakes and bugs, to shelter from wind and sun, and to cover the shameful parts of my body." The robes can be positioned in a number of ways depending on the weather. Hoods, for example, are fashioned when the sun is really bright. Many go barefoot though most wear sandals. Buddhist Monk's Daily Routine Monk examinations in Bago Myanmar The daily routine of Buddhists monks varies from sect to sect, but the patterns are similar. Most monks wake up early, usually around 3:00am, live simply, do chores around the monastery and spend many hours meditating and praying. Monks sleep in dormitories, often on wooden beds with little or no privacy. Most of their duties and chores are performed in the main prayer hall. They generally eat before they meditate. Temple meals are vegetarian with natural spices such as pepper or powdered sesame. Describing his experience at a Zen monastery journalist Patrick Smith wrote in National Geographic, "I ate an austere dinner of rice and fresh, cold vegetables. Under the watchful eye of a youthful priest-trainee, I spent 30 minutes at zazen meditation that evening. Before I could begin it took him that amount of time to get my position just right legs properly crossed, hands correctly placed, head at the desired angle. Then I was to follow my thoughts wherever they led. I slept on a tatami mat on the floor." The monasteries is most active after dawn or between 9:00am and 11:00am when chanting and prayers are being done. "At 3:30 the next morning," Smith wrote, "I was awakened and led to a room where row upon row of priests, kneeling on a vast spread of tatami, were softly chanting a Buddhist sutra. So the monastery began its day. It was cold and breakfast (as austere as dinner) was hours away; hunger gnawed at my attention, and my eyes wandered across the old plaster walls and the heavy ceiling beams, darkened by the smoke of countless sticks of incense...[Source: Patrick Smith, National Geographic September 1994] Buddhist Monks and Begging In Theravada Buddhist societies in Southeast Asia, monks often spend the morning wandering from place to place in single file with a bowl, begging for food which they must consume before 12:00 noon. These monks are not allowed to eat anything for the rest of the day. Buddha himself wandered around with a begging bowl for a while and lived liked a monk. The begging bowl is usually round, black and smooth and has a lid. An official of the Myanmar Religious Affairs Department told journalist Richard Ehrlich, "In the beginning of monastic history, monks picked up broken water jars discarded by housewives blackened them by baking them in a kitchen fire and converted them into alms bowls. But later on, Lord Buddha allowed the disciples to make new alms bowls." During the morning begging ritual in Thailand, the monks walk through the streets with their begging bowls for 20 minutes or so. There is no talking, thanking, or eye contact. The monks accept the offerings, sometimes walking away silently, and sometimes bless the people who give them food. Male food givers often remove their sandals to show respect. Women are supposed to kneel. It is impolite to offer a banana with the tips still on. Jacob Kinnard wrote in the Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices:Vegetarianism is the ideal, certainly, but not always the practice, even in monasteries. Monks in particular are put in a kind of ethical double bind when it comes to eating. As much as they may wish to practice vegetarianism, in countries where monks go from home to home begging for their meals, they are also under an ethical and philosophical obligation to take (without grasping) whatever is offered; this provides the laity with the opportunity for a kind of domestic asceticism. Thus, if a layperson offers meat, the monk is obligated to accept it. The prohibition against killing or harming other beings, however, importantly involves intention, and if the monk had no say in the killing of the animal and if it was not killed specifically for him, then no karmic taint adheres to him because there was no ill intention on his part. [Source: Jacob Kinnard, Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices, 2018, Encyclopedia.com] Buddhist Monks, Prayer, and Meditation alms bowl Monks sit cross-legged in rows as they chant their prayers to the accompaniment of drums, bells and burning incense. Prayer and chanting sessions are usually held in private and lay people usually don't attend. These ceremonies are often held on a daily basis and sometimes they begin at three in the morning. Meditating Zen monks cast their eyed downward, assume the lotus position, keep their backs straight and attempt to clear their mind so that "enlightenment will grow out of the state of nothingness." Novice monks who droop their head or fall asleep while mediating are whacked on the shoulder with a stick, by their instructors, who tell them to "Concentrate." [Source: Patrick Smith, National Geographic September 1994] Monks spend a lot of time meditating. Meditation requires deep concentration and a lack of distraction. As a result, many Buddhists need to meditate somewhere quiet and private. Thus monasteries are often quiet and seem almost empty. They can also be quite noisy of teh monks are chanting while they are meditating or are debating. Married Monks in Japan Japanese Buddhist monks dont have to be celibate. Both Buddhist and Shinto priests marry, and sons often inherit responsibility for their father's congregation when he dies. Wives sometimes receive some training and participate in the running of a temple. Reporting from Yamagata prefecture in Japan, Chihiro Fukai wrote in the Yomiuri Shimbun: Along with his job as the 33rd chief priest of the Toshoji temple of the Soto Buddhism sect in Nagai, Yamagata Prefecture, Takuya Ono takes care of his three children aged 12, 8 and 5 as a full-time househusband. His wife, who works as a researcher in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, lives separately from her family. [Source: Chihiro Fukai, Yomiuri Shimbun, November 16, 2014]. As Ono, 41, does all the housework, including cooking, he became well known as the ikumen chief priest from about a year ago. Ikumen is a recently coined Japanese word for fathers who actively take part in raising children. When he is invited as a lecturer to local meetings of parents and guardians or on other occasions, the priest of the temple established in the Muromachi period (1336-1573) talks about his feelings and the joy of raising children. See Househusband Japanese Monk with Three Kids Under BUDDHIST MONKS IN JAPAN factsanddetails.com Text Sources: East Asia History Sourcebook sourcebooks.fordham.edu , Topics in Japanese Cultural History by Gregory Smits, Penn State University figal-sensei.org, Asia for Educators, Columbia University; Asia Society Museum The Essence of Buddhism Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius, 1922, Project Gutenberg, Virtual Library Sri Lanka; World Religions edited by Geoffrey Parrinder (Facts on File Publications, New York); Encyclopedia of the World's Religions edited by R.C. Zaehner (Barnes & Noble Books, 1959); Encyclopedia of the World Cultures: Volume 5 East and Southeast Asia edited by Paul Hockings (G.K. Hall & Company, New York, 1993); BBC, Wikipedia, National Geographic, New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Smithsonian magazine, The New Yorker, Reuters, AP, AFP, and various books and other publications. Last updated March 2024 Facebook Twitter Google+ e-mail Page Top This site contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been authorized by the copyright owner. Such material is made available in an effort to advance understanding of country or topic discussed in the article. This constitutes 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this site is distributed without profit. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner. If you are the copyright owner and would like this content removed from factsanddetails.com, please contact me. Download Article Download Article Buddhism is a religion over 2,000 years old. It offers a method of overcoming the suffering that is inherent in being. Buddhist monks are those who take it upon themselves to live a life entirely devoted to this goal.It doesn't take a whole lot to become a monk. You will need to have a basic understanding of Buddhism (which, if you intend to ordain, you will likely have). Otherwise, a sincere intent to practice the Buddhist teachings is all you need. 1Familiarize yourself with Buddhist teachings. Begin your path to becoming a monk by understanding the basics about Buddhism. Check out books from the library, do research on line, and if possible, take classes from an instructor who has been ordained as a monk. The Buddha doesn't force anyone to believe, but asks disciples to prove the tenants true based on their own investigation of the religion. Here are the fundamentals you should know:Study the Eightfold Path, which is the way to the end of all suffering. The path consists of the right understanding, right speech, right intention, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right action and right livelihood.Learn the four noble truths, which contain the essence of Buddhism. A simple version of the four noble truths is that suffering exists, it arises from attachment to wants, the condition stops when the attachment to desire stops and freedom from suffering is possible through the Eightfold Path.[1] 2Join a temple, or sangha, that practices Buddhism. The Buddhist religion is worldwide and temples exist in almost every country. Practicing Buddhism as a layperson will give you valuable insight into what it's like to be part of a Buddhist community, which is central to becoming a monk. You'll want to become a regular part of the community for months, or even years, before you take the next step to become a monk.Check your phone book or look online for a Buddhist center near you.Be an active participant of the temple. Some sanghas offer introductory courses where you can learn more about Buddhism. Others schedule retreats to help you grow in your faith.Not all Buddhist communities are alike. Like other types of religious institutions, some are more traditional, while others have changed with modern times. Find a community that fits with your views and is appealing to you.It may also be helpful to visit Buddhist temples in other cities or even other countries to get a well-rounded view of the Buddhist community. Advertisement 3Find a spiritual guide or mentor. Learning from a mentor is a very important first step in becoming a monk. One-on-one instruction allows you to delve deeper into Buddhist teachings and gain a more complete understanding of what will be expected of you as a monk. Begin working with someone who can teach you everything you need to know.[2]To find a mentor, ask people in your Buddhist community for recommendations.Often, a temple will invite Buddhist leaders to come and speak to the group, and this gives you a chance to make contact with potential mentors. Advertisement 1Spend time meditating. Becoming a Buddhist monk requires daily meditation and a conscious effort to change how the mind works. When you live in an abbey, much of your day will be spent in meditation. This takes practice.Buddhism incorporates different kinds of meditation, including meditation that focuses on breathing, meditation that focuses on transformation and meditation on the Lamrim. Mediation can also include certain postures.Start with five minutes of meditation two times a day. When you become comfortable with five minutes, increase your meditation time by a few minutes every day until you can meditate for 15 minutes two times a day. Some monks meditate for hours at a time.2Prepare to support yourself for two to three years. Becoming a Buddhist monk requires you to follow the Vinaya, a code of conduct, which stipulates that Buddhist monks and nuns do not work a normal everyday job to support themselves. In some cases the abbey you join will provide for your basic necessities, but in other cases you'll need to have enough saved to support yourself.3Prepare to give up your worldly possessions. Monks live as mendicants, meaning they possess only what is required for a very simple quality of life, nothing more. You'll be provided with clothing, sundries, and other items you need to stay comfortable from day to day. However, electronic devices, expensive clothes or shoes, and anything that could be considered a luxury item is not allowed. Monks are not allowed to possess items that could inspire emotions like greed, envy or possessiveness.[3]4Realize that your Buddhist community will become your new family. Once you join a monastery, your life will be devoted to your Buddhist community. Your days will be spent in service of others, and your focus will be on those who need your help. You will have little contact with your family, and will be encouraged to think of your Buddhist community as your new family.Before pursuing ordination, you may want to discuss this with your family and let them know what is to come.Some monasteries don't accept candidates who are married or have other strong relationship ties. Single people are more able to devote themselves to the teachings of Buddhism, since they don't have outside forces pulling their attention away.5Be ready to take a vow of chastity. Monks do not engage in sexual behavior of any kind. In some cases male and female monks (or nuns) are not allowed to communicate with one another about matters that aren't related to everyday business. It is wise to practice chastity before becoming ordained so that you can find out whether you're suited to a chaste life. The idea is that the energy you'd normally put into sex is directed to matters greater than the self.6Decide what kind of commitment you want to make. In some traditions, ordination is meant to be a lifelong commitment. However, there are other traditions in which it's perfectly fine to pursue ordination for a limited number of months or years. In Tibet, for example, many men complete two or three-month ordinations to develop their spiritual identities before eventually getting married or pursuing careers.Make sure the monastery you're interested in joining offers the level of commitment you want.If you're not sure, it's possible to do a two or three-month ordination, then pursue a longer-term ordination later. Advertisement 1Start training at an abbey. If you're convinced that you want to become a monk, you'll be ordained at a specific abbey. It will be necessary to meet the requirements outlined by the abbey in order to be ordained there. In some cases an offer to become ordained must be extended by an elder who has decided you're a good candidate to become a monk.2Participate in an ordination ceremony. The ceremony will mark your decision to become a Buddhist, and can only be performed by an ordained monk. During this ceremony, the monk will transmit to you the three Jewels and the five Precepts. You will also receive your Buddhist name.If you're following Shin Buddhism, you'll have an affirmation ceremony, rather than an ordination ceremony. The affirmation ceremony serves the same purpose as ordination.3Follow the instructions of your teacher. If you partook in an ordination ceremony, your teacher will usually be the ordained monk who led the ceremony. You will receive instructions specific to the monastery you are joining.4Take the Bodhisattva Vows. A Bodhisattva is a person who devotes his or her life to the Buddhist way. The vows focus on doing compassionate deeds, striving to benefit every human being and seeking enlightenment. The vows serve as a way for you to embody your highest aspirations. They commit you to a life of selfless service, and you will recite them on a regular basis. 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