

## REL 402 - Buddhism - Monks

### A day in the life of a Buddhist Monk

I found this essay to be the most interesting for me as I have always been curious as to how spiritual men and women live. I would think for myself that it would be quite lonely, but I have found that many Monks quite enjoy their life just as it is. A Monk's life is in no way easy or laid back as they are as busy as you or I are.

A monk starts his day extremely early and there is no sleeping-in no matter what day it is. A monk starts his day at five o'clock every morning; it that starts with a Bell. They meditate for a total of two hours before even eating their breakfast. I spent some time thinking about this as I could not imagine getting up at five o'clock any morning for anything, let alone meditating for two hours and trying not to fall asleep. The breakfast that a monk has to look forward to in the mornings consists of rice and vegetables rather than our big fat unhealthy eggs and bacon, which of course come with a side of grease or two. After a monk has completed his breakfast he is then set to start praying again until nine at which time younger monks go to class to learn about holy writings and Buddhist traditions. A monk goes for lunch at about twelve, and afterwards the monks spend an hour of discussion on the different scriptures and the knowledge which they have learned and know. The monks spend the afternoon in more classes in which they learn more, and then an hour of study hall so to speak to study what they had learned that day. I could not imagine that much study time each and every day of my life. They then retire to bed after another long discussion about what they learned. Many monks spend more time meditating before they retire to bed to help them with bad things in their mind such as pride, prejudice, aggression, jealousy and anything else that might cloud their thoughts. A Buddhist monk spends the biggest part of his day learning, chanting, meditating and making offerings. A monk does all of these things every day, to search for and receive enlightenment and eventually nirvana which all monks wish to attain.

A monk's robe can tell you much about him. A brown or orange robe shows that he is a wise and older monk. A monk who wears a yellow robe means he has renounced the world. A monk's robe is made of an outer material that is called the tricivara, an under-material which is called the uttarasnga, and the cape or cloak which is called the samghati. Monks are not allowed to have many worldly things, only the bare necessities on which to live, such as a begging/alms bowl, a belt, a razor, a staff, a tooth pick, and the monk's three part robe. I spend a lot of time worrying about the next outfit to wear or the next pair of shoes to pull out and I could not imagine wearing the same thing every day. Buddhist monks live in a monastery with many other monks, and that is considered their permanent home. Monks are allowed to participate in community activities when there is time, such as disease-awareness, helping the poor and needy people, and other things like that. I did find out that Monks are not allowed to cook, therefore the Buddhist followers in their communities make sure that the Monks are fed and taken care of.

I believe that a Monk gives all of his self to his faith and the hope for enlightenment and eventually Nirvana. I think this is a wonderful life for those who wish to have it although I could never imagine living like that myself. It is hard to understand how someone could live so solemnly and alone and be happy, as I could not but I am extremely happy for those who can. A monk is taught not to give any heed to worldly possessions and wants, and he spends the most part of his day meditating and studying to forget about all of those worldly possessions he should not want to have. I think that maybe their life is much simpler than ours and from what I can see they all seem happy without the trials of the world on their shoulders all the time. It seems to me there is no stress to speak of in their lives other than to achieve enlightenment and Nirvana.