

Introduction

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Ordination is an essential part of life for all male 'Buddhists. The individual acquires merit that carries over into the next life and receives many benefits for his present life. Furthermore, he gains knowledge, wisdom, a greater understanding of the world, both socially and economically as well as physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Those who are ordained are not merely individuals who shave their heads and wear monks' robes, they must train, practice, and embody the teachings of Lord Buddha.



There are 227 precepts, which include rules, regulations, and traditions that serve as guidelines for those who are ordained. The precepts are tools that help define the differences between right and wrong, good and evil. They help to strengthen the individual's determination in facing life's challenges by instilling mindfulness, patience and purpose in life. These precepts are guarantees for the future, whether the individual subsequently chooses the path of the lay world, or that of the ordained monk. The knowledge learned during ordination will not be wasted or serve to harm others.

The strict study of Dhamma, in both theory and practice, lifts the individual's consciousness to a higher level, so that he may know truth and goodness, to attain spiritual goals. The truths that the teachings embody will guide the individual towards a life of self - sacrifice for the benefit of all.

Consequently, ordination is not only an important rite of passage, but also a necessary path taken by all those who seek to lead and guide their fellow man. This truth transcends past, present and future.

In an essay that was awarded first class honours during the annual Visakha Puja Day writing competition in the year 1960, entitled, "The Kings of Thailand and Buddhism." The author Tinakorn Tongsevatu writes on pages 128 -129

"Ordination during the time of Ayuddhaya, consisted largely of those who had faith in the ritual only. However, later on it became a tradition that all males should be ordained for it was a part of education during the reign of King Paramakosa which began in 1732." Those who sought government service had to

have already undergone ordination before His Majesty granted titles. Therefore, civil servants of that period were all ordained, and sought to encourage their male children to be ordained as well, upon coming of age. All male members of the royal family also had to undergo a period of ordination.'

This tradition continued until the Ratanakosintra Period, when there was an expansion of the education system towards a more Western approach. This new direction in education caused people to believe that knowledge in the western sciences and worldly affairs were enough, and that further study of the Dhamma was no longer necessary.

Until World War II, the number of people who studied abroad increased steadily. An increase in the educated population of Thailand reflected this. The rapid expansion of curricula towards the sciences and all things modern caused many people to forget the Dhamma

Favouritism grew in certain government and education circles for those who studied abroad, and who brought with them new-thoughts and ideas. All these led the people to believe that the Dhamma was a relic of times past, something that is no longer relevant to modern life. The nature of change meant that those who practiced Dhamma, and lived a life of virtue were abnormal, whereas those whose lives were untouched by faith became increasingly normal.

The trend continues to this day. It is widely believed that those who believe in the Dhamma and who live their lives by its teachings, are not able to compete and succeed in the real world.

This belief encouraged those well versed in new ideas and knowledge, but lacking morals instilled by the Dhamma, to take advantage of others for selfish gain. These people sabotaged the economic and social growth of our country, steering it away from a brighter future.

These misfortunes transpired because Thai people turned away from the teachings that their forefathers had instilled for many generations. Nevertheless, as time

Wat Phra Dhammakaya was established to earning on the legacy handed down to us by our forefathers. Its founding saw the planting of a seed of hope for future generations, so that they might find not only worldly knowledge, but also truth and the wisdom of Lord Buddha.

It is gratifying to see that young students and lay people are becoming increasingly interested in studying and practicing meditation. Although it is still only a fraction of all those of Buddhist faith, this growing interest does much to strengthen the resolve of not only monks, but all those who seek to guide and spread the teaching of Dhamma Near after year. 1

have lectured on the topic of ordination and its benefits many times, and in many places. That is why I have asked the

Education Department of Wat Phra Dhammakaya to compile my lectures so that it may be useful in the training of monks and novices on their duties and responsibilities. The result of this is publication you hold in your hands today. This book represents the first step on the path

towards finding the Dhamma within you. It begins with an introduction to the importance and the benefits of ordination, so that those who choose to be ordained may understand all that it entails. It also prepares the individual, both spiritually and physically, so that he may one day become a person worthy of being at one with the Dhamma.

Phrabhavanaviriyakh (Phra Phadet Dattajeevo)

The Benefits of Ordination

The benefits of ordination are separated into two categories.



Direct benefits.

1. For people who no longer suffer from desire or lust, and have become an Arahant, they will receive the benefits as follows:

a) All of your old suffering from the past will disappear

b) The new suffering that might happen, has no chance to give its retribution because you have banished craving from your life

c) You will become a model of good conduct and moral fiber for all those in your community

2. On the Dhamma side of things:

a) You will be pure both physically and spiritually

b) You will be a kind and generous person

c) You will have wisdom

Indirect benefits.

1. Benefits for those around you:

a) Giving the opportunity for your friends and relatives to be closer to the temple and to give them a chance to listen to the Dhamma when they visit you.

b) After you leave your monkhood, if you start your own family, your wife and children will live in happiness and harmony due to your patience and kindness.

c) You will be a good member of society and your surrounding community.

2. On the Dhamma side of things, you will be a steward for Buddhism— one who bears the responsibility for passing the religion on to future generations.

The Benefits of Ordination while still Young

For students who choose to be ordained for just a short period of time, if these students are diligent, then they will receive the following benefits:

1. They will know how to organize their time, and how to make the most of the time that they have. In Buddhist terms, this is called *Kalannuta*. When you are a student, you do not have very many responsibilities or burdens, family problems are usually limited as well. Because of this, when you are ordained while being a student, your mind will be better able to understand and receive the Dhamma than those who are beset with family, and professional worries.

2. In your youth, for a brief period, you will be able to taste the fullness of true happiness. When you are a student, your defilements are still limited. However, after you are ordained, you will have experienced a glimmer of inner peace and have a better understanding of merit and demerit, when you establish inner peace within you, you will worry less about worldly happiness.

3. The opportunity to study the Dhamma will go hand in hand with your academic and worldly knowledge. With this in hand, you will be able to apply it towards the rest of your life and reap the benefits.

The Buddha taught us that,

"All of the knowledge that we learn in this world, if it falls into the wrong hands, then this will result in death and destruction. These are people who do not have Dhamma within them."

4. You will have the opportunity to improve your self-discipline. You will appreciate the principle of community life and teamwork. If you set about this diligently, then you will be able to succeed in society.

5. The opportunity to practice meditation and develop inner peace, which is beneficial for your studies

6. You will be able to walk tall and be proud of the merit you made while still young. It will be something that will forever remind you of your good deeds and conduct. Moreover, if you pass on from this life, you will be able to do so with a free mind. Young people look at the

world with their future ahead of them. However, old people look at the world with their past behind them. If you look in your past, and you see that you have made good merit, and you will feel good about yourself. If you look back and see that you failed to do well, then you will feel the sadness of regret. Moreover, when you leave this world, your regret will stay with you. However, if you have been ordained, and made good merit, then happiness will follow, when you pass away, you will know that you have spent your time doing something worthy and noble.

7. You will understand the purposes of life, why we are here on this earth, when we are ordained, we will free ourselves of desire, establish inner peace, and be able to correct all the wrongful acts in our lives.

8. You will have strength, perseverance and courage to face life's obstacles.

When you are first ordained, you are not allowed to keep any food. You do not even know whether there will be any food to eat tomorrow, when you go out seeking alms, you do not expect to get food every day, every time. Sometimes you do not receive anything at all, especially in the rural provinces. I had the opportunity to visit some of these rural temples.

I was very impressed by the monks' generosity. Visiting these temples close to the time for their midday meal, as I arrived, the monks invited me to eat with them, and they brought out the food that they had received during their morning alms round. As I looked at it. I saw that for three monks, there was only half a fish to share. Yet, they still had the consideration to invite me to share their food. I did not know what to do; so another monk said to me, "Don't worry, if there is not enough to eat. we still have a whole bottle of fish sauce."

For those who have gone out and meditated in the woods for a long period of time, after they are done with this, they will have acquired enormous perseverance and will have no fear of life's obstacles.

Those who have been ordained and are used to living a life of luxury, sleeping in air-conditioned rooms, etc., will find that they have to eat alms, and sleep outside, eventually, their need to sleep in air-conditioned rooms will disappear.

You learn about your true self. You learn about your inner strength, knowledge, moral fiber and virtue.

Before you are ordained, you think that you are so talented and smart. However, once you are ordained, you have a chance to learn more about life and yourself. Then you will realize that what you thought and knew was only a fraction of what you still have to learn.

Once you are ordained, you will have the chance to develop into a person of a higher standard and better standing. There is a Chinese proverb, which states,

"As in a race, distance tests a horse's endurance, so does time test the character of man."

Once we know this, we can go on to evaluate ourselves and gain a greater insight into who we truly are. Knowing other people is easy. We readily see their faults and weaknesses, but we rarely see these qualities in ourselves. Nevertheless, once you are ordained, and have studied the Dhamma, you will realize that you have much more to learn and to improve about yourself.

9. You will be a person who achieves results.

10. You will be able to cleanse your body, speech and mind

of worldly desires and sufferings, by virtue of:

1. Precepts which will cleanse your body and speech

2. Meditation which will cleanse your mind

3. Wisdom which will cleanse you of your bad habits, and help you to become a better person.

11. You will become a person worthy of respect and praise

12. You will have the ability to defeat desire and lust. Thus, you will become an heir to a victorious spirit.

Once you have planted this seed of victory within you, subsequently, whenever you face obstacles, you will persevere and never give up. You will try your best to overcome it. As you follow Buddha's teachings, you will know that you can live up to them. Then you will truly know what it means to be known as a follower of Lord Buddha. Though the obstacles in life will be varied and difficult, once you bear up wholeheartedly, the road to happiness will not be barred for you.

13. You will be able to gain as much happiness as any man can want.

14. You will be a person who gains the most out of life because you have a chance to do the best things for your mind and body.

15. You will have started your journey towards Nibbana. You will not have to worry about how far you have to go, because once you start at One, then Two and Three will follow. However, if you have not chosen to go beyond Zero, then you will always be at Zero and your life will be a total waste.

These are just some of the benefits of ordination. Those of you, who are parents, let me say to you that before you release your children from under your protection, and allow them to become vulnerable to drugs, and bad company.

You should encourage them to be ordained first. You will then follow through with your duty as good parents, and bring happiness to those you love and care for. Lord Buddha once said.

"Come and become a monk, for the Dhamma is good. We must cleanse ourselves so that we may be free from all worldly suffering"

Duties and Responsibilities for Monks

The main purpose of ordaining is to free yourself from worldly commitments and worries so that you may have the opportunity fully to commit yourself to meditation and break away from the shackles of desire so that you may find true happiness.

How do Monks Free themselves from Worldly Desire?

The answer to the above question is: *Once ordained as a monk, you must fulfill all required and recommended duties based on tenets clearly specified by Lord Buddha.*

Kiccavatta (Duty) derives from the combination of two words...

Kicca and vatta

Kicca means things that one MUST do, otherwise you will surely regret not having done so.

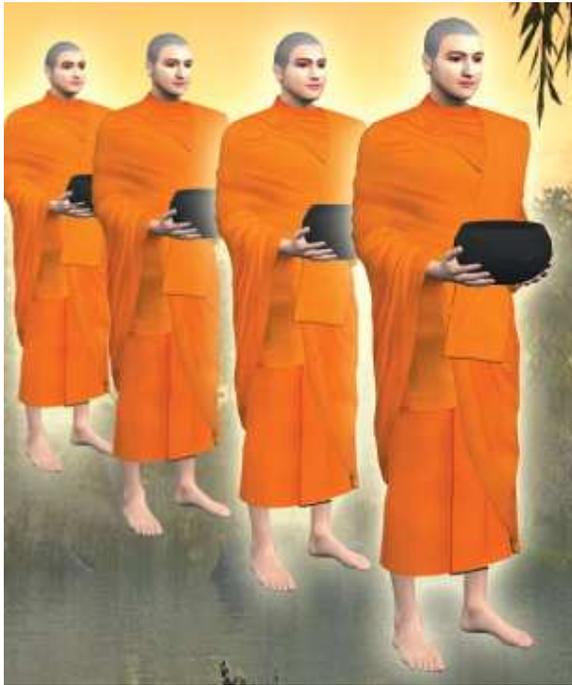
Vatta means things that you SHOULD do, although it is not required. If you do not do these things, the consequences are not detrimental. It will not bar you from monkhood, but it could result in the lessening of respect for your station as a monk. If you do these things, the level of respect people will accord on you will only improve and strengthen. These duties will also help to free you from worldly desire. '

Senior monks have developed the following ten primary duties for monks to fulfill:

1. Alms Gathering
2. Temple cleaning
3. Confession
4. Chanting and Meditation
5. Reflection
6. Caring for Your Preceptor
7. Management, Maintenance, Exercise
8. Dhamma and Monastic Studies
9. Caring for Temple Property and Responsibility
10. Behaviour Worthy of Respect

Any monk who can fulfill these duties may not yet be free from worldly desire but will surely lessen the influence of such desires.

1. Alms Gathering (*Pindapda*)



Pindapda is a Pali word literally meaning the receiving of rice in an alms bowl. Monks are forbidden to cook or prepare their own meals. Monks must wait for food to be offered to them, if none is offered, then they must fast.

Lord Buddha stated that monks must seek alms so that they will have enough time to meditate and study the teachings. This was to ensure that they were not tired from the preparing of food. If monks spent their time worrying about making food everyday, it would be more difficult for them to focus their mind on meditation. Lord Buddha taught that seeking alms was an integral part of being a monk.

Bhikkhu means someone who depends on alms gathering.

What then is the difference between a monk, and a regular beggar on the street? Monks also depend on alms gathering, and although this same word is used for beggars, the act in itself, is entirely different. Begging on the street is an act of desperation and humiliation. A monk on the other hand, goes about begging (seeking alms) with humility and in a serene manner. A monk, does not 'ask' in the manner of a regular beggar, but presents himself in modest fashion to receive offerings. Even the manner, in which monks eat their food is more composed and dignified.

Seeking Alms can take many forms:

1. Monks may travel around his community (door to door) and seek alms
2. Relatives or friends may visit the temple to offer alms to monks

3. Monks may be invited to the home of relatives or friends to be offered alms

It is understood among many men that when another person gives you something, you should return in kindness. However, when a monk is offered alms, does he have anything to offer in return?

Lord Buddha stated that once monks receive alms from people, they must focus on meditation in order to offer something back to alms givers. If monks do not take care, and conduct themselves diligently in their meditation, then it amounts to ungratefulness for the alms they have received. If monks conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, then they can then use what they learn through meditation to teach almsgivers the Dhamma so that they may better their lives. In order to do this, monks must work hard and study the Dhamma to the best of their ability. By passing on the knowledge monks learn from the teachings of Lord Buddha, monks are in return offering a gift that is more valuable than anything that they receive through alms.

Since we all live together in a shared society, we must learn to "give and take" from one another, not only to simply take all the time. For example, having just received alms from all of you here today; the present author is now returning thanks and expressing my gratitude to you by offering my knowledge and teachings in this book for your benefit. It is the present author's hope that the teachings and words that I offer you today will go far in helping to improve and better your life, so that you may become a better person. Such is the purpose of my sermon and lecture today, to thank you for your support. The Buddha established this tradition of offering alms, and receiving of sermons in return, not only as an indirect way of ensuring that the community learned the Dhamma, but also as a method of making sure monks diligently studied the Dhamma in order to have something to offer the community in return for their alms giving.

One particular experience that I would like to share with you left a lasting impression on me. I was ordained on Decem-ber19 in the year 2514 BE.. On New Year's Day 2515 BE. I went to seek alms for the very first time. I have never before begged for food in my entire life, so this first time was very embarrassing for me. However, when I was seeking alms with many other fellow monks, I felt less uncomfortable about it.

That day, I did not look at the face of the first person that offered me alms because one of the tenets of monkhood is that you must not look at the face of the person offering alms. All I saw was the food offered. Based on the food offered to me, I thought that the person must have been from the middle class. The second person that offered food was probably from a wealthier background since the quality of the food was higher. At the time, I did not think of anything else, when I approached the third person, she was a young girl of four or five years of age who only wore pants and no blouse. She was standing there offering alms despite having an unkempt appearance. The reason I know this is because the little girl was short and so I managed to see her even though I was looking down. The little girl gave a little rice, and followed that with a plastic bag with more food and dessert wrapped in banana leaves. By observing her offering and her clothing and appearance, I could discern that she was from a poor family. This act of kindness from a girl who most likely did not have much money or means at all moved me. This act of selflessness left an impression on me.

Before I was ordained, I rarely noticed how poor people lived their lives as I almost never looked at them. After this experience of alms giving, I thought that this simple girl possessed a bigger heart than mine before i was ordained. Instead of running and playing in the early

morning hours like other children, this young girl chose to stand and give alms. If I had been in her situation, I most likely would not have stood there giving alms, but would instead have eaten the food myself. Thinking about it now, brings me chills. I felt that the alms I ate that day was almost like taking away from the child that food that she deserved to eat herself. If I eat this food and use the energy to go about and talk needlessly, or lie about in a lazy manner, then I failed to respect this girl's act of generosity.

Having thought more about that, and I returned to my simple monks' quarters (kuti), I felt I had no time to rest. I immediately started meditating with diligence. After I finished meditating, I studied even more. Even if I did not eventually go back and teach this girl what I learned, I can still pass on my knowledge to all of you. If I failed to do this, I would forever be indebted to this girl, and her act of selflessness.

When we give to beggars, beggars usually express their gratitude by offering a very deep and almost exaggerated gesture of thanks, or a *wai*. However, when lay people offer alms to monks, not only do monks refrain from a *wai*, but lay people are expected to *Wai* in return, why is this so? It took many years for people to understand why this is. Recently, a newspaper in Japan commented that in Thailand we have a strange tradition - offering alms to monks so that they may live comfortably, but instead of the monks expressing thanks through a *Wai*, lay people must give the monks a *wai*. Thailand was surely an unusual country indeed. Despite the fact that many in Japan are Buddhists, they felt that our tradition was odd. Outwardly, many people may agree that this is a strange tradition, however, it is a tradition founded on deep historical principles that at first glance may not appear obvious. The act of giving alms is not merely, as it outwardly seems an act of generosity by lay people.

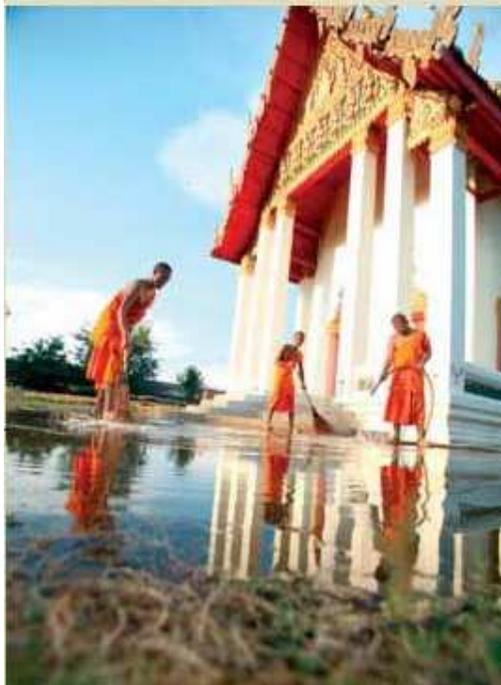
It is also a privilege for lay people to offer alms to monks, because monks will then have the energy and strength to focus on meditation and the teaching of the Dhamma to the community. This way, the lay people will be able to better their lives. The teaching of the Dhamma is more valuable than anything lay people can offer to the monks. That is why lay people *Wai* monks as an expression of their gratitude. This tradition is carried on even to this present day.

The seeking of Alms is the way in which all monks acquire all of the things that they require to live. This is not just restricted to food, but also applies to clothing, medicine, and shelter. All of these are acquired through the seeking of alms.

Lord Buddha set a good example for seeking alms. The Buddha would set out and seek alms, but would then follow the offering with a sermon. The Buddha felt that the act of seeking alms was a way in which he could meet people and spread the word of the Dhamma. The Buddha would often be invited to people's home for the offering of alms, and the Buddha would always use this opportunity to conduct a sermon.

Duties and Responsibilities for Monks - Temple cleaning

2. Temple cleaning



Once monks have returned from seeking alms and have finished their meal, their next duty is to sweep the temple grounds. They should sweep from the main chapel, all the way to their quarters.

One might ask what monks gain from sweeping, cleanliness is the first benefit. All monks must uphold certain standards of cleanliness. There were three main principles espoused by the Buddha in the Ovadapatimokkha.

Firstly, one should avoid all evil deed, Secondly, one should perform wholesome deeds to the utmost of one's ability. Thirdly, one should purify one's mind. However, before you can cleanse your mind, you must first cleanse your surroundings. This is the reason why, monks must train themselves to love cleanliness in their everyday life.

At Dhammakaya Temple, we have a policy of cleanliness that applies right from the front gates to every inch of temple grounds. Every morning, when I leave my kuti, I come across pieces of paper, trash, and even cigarette butts. Even though we have signs all around the temple telling people to refrain from smoking yet people still sneak around a corner and smoke, when I find cigarette butts, I do not know whom to blame. I pick these things up as I go along, and I clean up whatever I can, as I make my way around the temple, when I clean and take care of things around the temple I am happy that the grounds are clean. My mind is clean when my surroundings are clean.

There are senior monks whose duty is to inspect temples in the rural provinces. The monks at these temples are often afraid of the inspecting monk because they believe that he knows about everything going on in the temple. In reality, however the monk hardly knows anything about what is going on. However, when he reaches the temple, instead of looking at the main

chapel, he will go directly to the toilets. If the toilets are not clean, this will tell that everyone from the abbot, down on to the temple's followers are not upholding appropriate standards of cleanliness, and not taking care of the temple. Moreover, the fact of cleanliness reflects poorly on the temple's adherence to the Dhamma.

If a temple lacks cohesion and community spirit, you can usually get a sense of this by the graffiti on the walls of the toilets. This is true not only for temples, but for all private work places, schools, and government buildings, when people are unhappy with their work, or their boss, they typically vent their opinions on the walls. The inspecting monk can often gather valuable information about what is going on and can use this information, along with other things he has observed to form a picture of the quality of life in any temple.

However, for temples that are clean and well organized and where the community coexists in harmony, the inspecting monk does not need to address many issues. He can then spend more time on his visit to teach about the Dhamma, bless them, praise them on their good conduct, and offer words of encouragement to continue to keep their high standards.

When I was about to move from Wat Paknam to help build Wat PhraDhammakaya, I went to pay my farewell respects to my preceptor. My Preceptor told me that when the late Abbot of Wat Paknam was alive, he would say, "in order to build a temple, you need lots of money. Nevertheless, there are two ways of raising money. If you do not know how to raise money, then you must spend a lot of time seeking money out. But if you know how to raise money, then money seeks you out."

If a layman builds a temple and living quarters for monks, and he returns to find that the temples is littered with trash, with dust everywhere, stray dogs lying about in the temple and grounds covered with dog dirt, he will turn around and leave the temple, never to return.

If the temple should need further construction work and this same laymen is asked for his help again, the layman may politely decline by saying that business right now is not good, asking the temple to wait. However, if the layman is a person of honest and frank disposition, then he may reply, "why are you asking for more, you can't even look after the one you already have. There is trash everywhere." Therefore, as you can imagine, it would be very embarrassing for monks to have to ask for help in that manner.

If this is how the original sponsor of the temple comments, and you are thinking to build additional temple buildings, you will forever be asking for money in vain. If the gates to the temple are strewn with litter not to speak of the main chapel, and the path towards the living quarters too, even those originally intending to make merit by donating 100 Baht, may decide to give only 10 Baht, and most likely will not return to the temple again because it is unclean. The temple will forever lose these patrons.

On the other hand, if laypeople visit a temple that is clean, seeing a main chapel that is beautiful, and feeling at ease when sitting there in an environment that is soothing to the mind. Should the layman have extra money, he might very well ask the Abbot, "How about another building?" without having to be prompted. That is how money seeks one out.

This is, how financial support goes hand in hand with temple cleanliness. If a temple can attract financial support simply through the act of daily sweeping and picking up litter, imagine what can be achieved if you have cleanliness of mind!

The Benefits of Sweeping the Temple

1. Sweeping can be a sort of moving meditation that allows us to ponder and calm the mind. Thereby, little by little, we can learn about the Dhamma within ourselves.
2. Those who see monks diligently sweeping the temple will have a higher level of respect for monks and Buddhism.
3. Even our guardian deities rejoice in our merit for they also love cleanliness. There is a story about a monk who would often meditate in the woods. He would often use the base of trees for relieving himself. One night, as the monk sat there meditating, he overheard two angels talking in the treetops. The first once said, "This monk is truly great in everything he does, except for one thing, he relieves himself on so many different trees, that the smell is everywhere. The second angel commented, "Well it has to be that way since you can't expect him to carry a toilet around with him." The first angel replied, "I don't mind that the monk relieves himself, its just that he should restrict himself to one place, not at the base of every tree in the forest. The smell is everywhere and I do'a know how to get away from it!" The moral of this story is that you should respect cleanliness because even the Angels are watching what you are doing.
4. You will earn the reputation of being one who collects merit. This will result in your having a fair complexion. Those who love cleanliness will have a clean mind, and as a result, your body and mind will be a place for faith in Dhamma and in Buddhism.
5. Once you pass on from this life, due to your love of cleanliness, you will pass away into the heavenly afterlife.

A monk who develops the habit of sweeping the temple grounds, and loves cleanliness, will also most likely have robes and living quarters that are clean. In the end, this means his mind is clean as well, and this will reflect his cleanliness of thought, words, and actions.

Duties and Responsibilities for Monks - Confession

3. Confession



The act of Confession involves a monk who has transgressed his monastic discipline and who wishes to express regret over his misdeed to his preceptor, and who now promises to never repeat the transgression again.

The Buddha taught his disciples not to hide their misdeeds. If they did something wrong, then they should admit to it, and confess. This was to ensure that monks would not lie to the world. If the wrongdoing was severe, then the monk must accept the consequences whatever that may be, even if it meant leaving the monkhood. Should the monk commit a severe transgression, he would be showing his inability to uphold the monastic life, and therefore he must leave it for a less serious offence he must humble himself before his peers and accept his personal shame so that he may ask for forgiveness. Punishment in this case might entail temporary confinement to a limited area.

The Benefits of Confession

1. It helps monks to recognize any wrongdoings.
2. It helps monks to solve problems rather than hide it, and accept the consequences
3. It prevents monks from being deceitful, and clears the mind for making merit and receiving the knowledge in the Dhamma

4. Chanting and Meditating



when the Buddha was alive, his disciples could listen to him preach and extol the virtues of the Dhamma everyday. However, after the Buddha passed away from this world, his disciples had to revise the Dhamma themselves through the practice of chanting and meditation.

Vatta means things that one should do.

To perform Vatta means to chant in and pay homage to the Triple Gem; the Buddha, the Dhamma, and Sangha. In order to reap the full benefits of this chanting, monks must envision that they are in the presence of Lord Buddha himself. As you chant, your mind will clear and be open to receive merit. Your thoughts, speech, and action will not be led astray by temptation.

Performing Vatta serves constantly to remind us of the virtues of the Triple Gem, frees our mind for the merits that we will receive, and strengthens our faith. Once you strengthen your faith over and over again, you will be instilled with a strong desire to do good and make merit.

Chanting also serves the purpose of chanting the teachings of the Buddha and aloud—a way of memorizing the records of the Buddha's sermons found in the Pali Canon. For example, the *Dhamacakkapavattana Sutta* was the sermon that the Buddha gave to his first five disciples.

The *Aditaya Sutta* comes from the sermon that Lord Buddha gave to three holy men from another religion, and because of that sermon, the three became Buddhist Arahants.

Chanting should be done both morning and evening in order to constantly strengthen one's faith in a concrete way. For this reason, people in the ancient times, both lay people and monks alike, viewed chanting as an essential part of daily life.

After the second Sacking of Ayuddhaya, the city was completely burnt by the Burmese resulting in the destruction of religious documents and the Pali Canon. Nevertheless, our forefathers were able to reproduce the Pali Canon exactly as it was before, because the entire text had been ingrained in the minds of the monks through daily chanting. It is because of this that we have these religious texts to study for our present and future benefits.

The Benefits of chanting

1. Clarity of mind and mental focus while chanting
2. Promotion of a spirit of unity among those chanting
3. Helping to preserve tradition and to promote community spirit
4. Helping to preserve and pass on the teachings of Lord Buddha
5. Helping to improve self-confidence
6. Helping to cure stuttering, because Pali chanting employs long vowel sounds that are easily to pronounce, and when these basic notes are chanted, they come from the centre of your body.

Meditating is a form of mental exercise for attaining Dhammakaya (the ultimate body of Truth), or enlightenment. Those who practice often and meditate daily will have clarity of mind and a heightened sense of mindfulness towards all things around them. Once you have a mind that is kind and sensitive, you will have a mind that is strong and unwavering against obstacles and tribulations.

The human mind is like a muscle^ if you sprain or over exert it, it will be tight and cramped. The energy flow will be stunted. A healthy muscle must be soft, firm and flexible. Take the rubber band on a slingshot for example, If it is dry and tight, it can break or not be of much use. However, if it is flexible, then it can indeed be a powerful tool. The human mind is the same. The more soft and gentle it is, the more powerful it will be in tackling life's tasks and duties successfully. Whereas, the stubborn mind will encounter hardship, feel despair, anger, and frustration. Therefore it is hard to succeed in life with such a state of mind.

Duties and Responsibilities for Monks - 5. (Reflection (Paccavekkhana))

5. Reflection (Paccavekkhana)



Being reflective means being attentive to details. Such a quality is important for all of those who wish to progress in both the physical and spiritual world. If a person goes about their life half-heartedly, never applying themselves fully, they cannot expect to succeed in life. However, those who are diligent and who follow through¹ with their commitments will find happiness and thrive no matter where life takes them.

How does one become reflective?

Lord Buddha encouraged his disciples to value the life's four basic requisites-the four basic needs being food, shelter, clothing and medicine.

Since we live in the physical world, we tend to think of the four basic requisites only in physical terms, for example food. We often think only whether or not it is clean, tasty, nutritious or healthy. This is all most of us think about when it comes to food, but this is not enough. If we think only in this manner, then we utilize our mind merely at the amateur level.

The act of becoming a person who is reflective involves three phases.

1. You must be conscious and aware. You must learn how to accept things from people with gratitude and not out of greed. Otherwise, you will ruin your reputation as a monk. You must learn how to be gracious in receiving alms. For example, when you seek alms, and your bowl is almost full, you must learn when to say enough is enough. Alternatively, after you finish your second plateful, if someone tries to offer you more food, you must learn how to decline politely. This applies to any offering to you as a monk that does not go towards meeting either

your needs, or helping in furthering your study of the Dhamma. As a monk, you are not supposed to have more than you need.

2. You must be deliberate and perceptive. For example, when you are eating, you must recognize that you are eating for energy so that you may have the strength to study the Dhamma, and not for the fact that the food will improve your appearance, or whether it is tasty or not. Even your robes and your living quarters, the same principles should be applied. Those items exist not for your comfort, but to meet your basic needs so that you may further your study of the Buddha's teachings.

3. You must be reflective. Once you have finished consuming your meal, and have energy, you must ask yourself whether you have used the strength gained from your meal to focus on learning the Dhamma. If not, then you have not conducted yourself in a manner befitting the layman's act of merit making. The more you reflect on this, the more you will come to understand and appreciate your responsibilities as a monk. Afterwards, you will grow to be reflective of all your actions.

The Benefits of Mindfulness

Reflection helps us to be a person who is attentive and diligent. Such a person is one who possesses clarity of mind, self-restraint and who does not suffer from the affliction of greed. The more you practice reflection, the more you will have self-awareness. Your sense of perception will improve along with your ability to judge other peoples' character with greater precision.

6. Caring for Your Preceptor



Your preceptor is one whom you owe much. Your preceptor spends countless hours instructing you on the ways of the Dhamma tirelessly. You should express your gratitude by respecting him, helping him in all areas possible, including his personal matters. Those who have had a preceptor before will know that in return for all this care, we will derive great benefits.

The Benefits of Caring for Your Preceptors

1. Instills a sense of humility, especially for those who may have come from a family of high social/economic standing. Your arrogance will subside. A parable on humility tells how a ripe head of rice, bends low under its weight. The head of rice that stands tall and proud possesses only a miserable harvest. Those who have a sense of humility are willing to open their minds to all of their preceptor's teachings. Such self-effacing modesty is a quality much admired everywhere. The preceptor will see this and feel will-ing to pass on all of his knowledge.

The most important things being to have an open mind. Those who are arrogant will not be in a position to receive proper teaching."

2. Facilitates understanding & learning: Your closeness to your preceptor will help to facilitate understanding and allow you to learn more effectively from him. Learning that is more effective will ensure that your knowledge increases and that you have a better understanding of your lessons.

For example, when I first went to Wat Paknam, my first preceptor was Khun Yay Upasika Candra Khonnokyoong. She had a spittoon into which she would drop little pieces of torn paper. When ever she washed her hands into the spittoon, she would put a torn piece of paper on top of the wet tissues. I asked her why she did that, she replied that she was an old woman now, and she needed to rely on youngsters to care for her. she felt sorry for those who had to clean up after her, so she wanted to do her best to make the job less unappealing. The paper floated on top of the spittoon, so that people would not have to see the dirty tissues below. Dhammaprasit House was a large building housing many people, but having only one bathroom, whenever Khun Yay used the bathroom, she would leave the floor completely dry. Again, I asked her why she did that. She replied that many old people hurt themselves by slipping on wet bathroom floors, she did not want to be one of those people, "If the floor is dry" she said, it can be assured that even if you live for a hundred years, you won't slip and fall in that bathroom. Sometimes the younger students would do something wrong, but Khun Yay would rarely scold them. She would say that she had already scolded them once or twice today, if they were scolded more, they would grow tired of this, and they will not remember why she scolded them in the first place, she always knew when, where, and how to talk to her students. She would often remark that once you pass the age 50, you had to watch what you say. Many people of advanced age think they already know everything, but if old people speak too often, then their grandchildren and young relatives will become annoyed by this, and perhaps even resentful and leave such old people alone. As you can see, being close to your ciders and preceptor will allow you to learn many beneficial lessons about life.

7. Management, Maintenance, Exercise

As a monk, you must learn to care for your personal effects, as well as temple property. You must understand the principles of efficiency, good organization, and caring for things so that they last. All the items in a temple belong to Lord Buddha, from the straw mats, down to the needles and brooms; all these items have been donated to Lord Buddha out of good faith and respect. As a monk, you are merely steward to these things on His behalf. Monks use these

things because they are the heirs to the traditions and teachings of Lord Buddha, when people donate items to the temple, they do so after making a wish and a resolution. Therefore, when a monk uses any of these items, he does so upon the good faith and respect of common people. If you show disregard for these items, then you are showing disregard for Lord Buddha and people's faith in Buddhism.

Monks are not the sole people responsible for taking care of the temple. Laymen also play an important part in caring for and maintaining temple property. Long ago at the Dhammakaya Temple, the floor mats were not as neatly trimmed with cloth as they are now. In those days, people would come to listen to the abbot's sermons, but during the sermon, they would pick at the edges of mat. That is why nowadays, we put cloth trimming on them, to ensure that the mats have a longer life. Thus, you can begin to see how everyone must share in caring for temple property, if you help, then you are helping to make merit for yourself as well, if you do not, then you may lose that opportunity for merit.

There is a story from the time of Lord Buddha, about a King named Fayasi, who had a face discolored by a dark birthmark. In his previous life, he had been a generous temple goer who would often make merit. He especially loved his talent for cooking. However, in his work as a cook, he cared only for meal he was preparing, and not about the cleanliness and the maintenance of the temple kitchen. Thus the smoke from his cooking would dirty the kitchen. Due to his generous merit making, he was reborn in his next life as a King. However, because of his negligence in taking care of the temple kitchen, he was born with a dark discolored face.

As laymen, there are not many principles to abide by, but as a monk, there are many more rules by which one must conduct one's life. As a monk, if you break these rules, then the consequences are even more severe than for laypeople.

Not only should you care for your possessions—you must care for your body and health as well. You must maintain your good health and strength. Do not allow your health to deteriorate, because to do so means that you will may not be able to fully commit yourself to meditation and the study of the Dhamma. Not only monks, but laymen as well, should take care of their health. Most of us, once we come to the temple, try hard to make merit, while paying little attention to our health. Some might have a problem with ulcers. Even when we tell them to go and seek medicine to heal it, some will ignore this because they want to use the Dhamma to cure it. They expect that meditation will cure the ulcer. Meditation does have the potential to cure illness if you have the ability to focus all of your mental energy towards curing yourself, however, most people do not have this ability. You may be able to do this, however in the meantime, your ulcer may grow worse and could eventually kill you before you succeed in your meditation. This does not mean that you should become obsessed with personal health, or that you place it above your faith in religion as a sign of personal vanity. You should protect your faith, your mind and your body. Even the present author must find time to exercise and take care of his health— Some days, doing yoga, but not to the point where one can do acrobatics like in Chinese movies. Physical exertion for monks should not be at the level that some laymen desire. After your meditation, especially after several hours, you should get up and walk around, or sweep the temple grounds. The present author likes to travel to the mountains in order to meditate. After meditating, it is possible to hike around the hills for an hour or so.

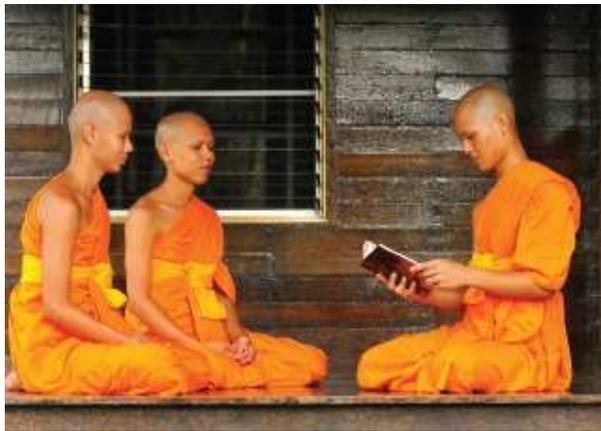
When one sits still for a long period, as is required by meditation, one's internal organs are constricted, and this can cause digestive problems. Therefore, one must train oneself to move around after meditation to restore one's circulation.

The Benefits of Management, Maintenance, and Exercise

1. Encourages you to be a person who is prudent and economical
2. Encourages you **to** be active. A person who is healthy and strong, and who does not easily succumb to illness and ailments.

Duties and Responsibilities for Monks - 'Dhamma and Monastic 'Disciplines

8. *Dhamma and Monastic 'Disciplines*



Dhamma has two meanings.

First: it means that tilings are right and good, such as kindness and respect, tolerance and patience, avoidance of whining and impatience.

Second: it means things that are true, such as the reality of life, birth, ageing, sickness and death.

Dhamma can have this double meaning, depending on the circumstances, and context.

All the teachings in the Pali Canon and natural phenomenon, are all considered to be "Dhamma".

'*Vinaya*' means 'code of conduct', 'discipline' and 'regulations'on the behaviour of individuals. As a collection, it is the name of the first portion of the Buddhist Canon [*Vinaya-pj/aka*] which deals with the proper behaviour of the members of the Buddhist community, such as monks and nuns. The number of rules a Buddhist layman should observe is five—known as the Five Precepts. Novices must abide by the Ten Precepts of orderly conduct.

The *Vinaya* or the code of behaviour for monks contains 227 precepts, which serves as the foundation for Buddhist conduct. Of these 227 precepts, all of them can be broken down in detail and can be expanded into 21,000 individual teachings.

Athletes must train and warm-up before competing. However, the training ground may not be the same as the actual competition venue. The training ground should be difficult and more challenging of the two so that muscles can develop effectively, and so that he can perform even better in the real race. This applies also to our minds. In order to improve and strengthen the mind, you must practice and exercise it. Instead of running on a track, we use the 227 precepts that have been expanded into 21,000, as a method of training the mind and instilling discipline and mental conviction.

Vinaya exists to help monks achieve disciplined minds, and if they adhere to *Vinaya* with diligence, then they will have the opportunity to become an Arahant. Nevertheless, **even** if they decide to leave monkhood, they will still have a good mind and go about their worldly tasks with success.

Dhamma Vinaya means, the wisdom and instruction contained in the Pali Canon of which there are two types.

1. One is the rules and code of conduct, *Vinaya*, which must be strictly refrained from, or else you are breaking your vows of monkhood.
2. The other is for doing to the best of one's ability, teaching which is also known as *Dhamma*. These suggestions are good for those who do them, but they are not compulsory.

There are a total of 84,000 lessons [dhammakhandha] for discipline in the Pali Canon, which monks must learn in both theory and practice. Everything refined by the present author so far is no more than theory, which in monastic terms is called '*Pariyatt*'. The part where you take what you learn and practice it in your daily life is called '*Patipatti*'.

Why do you have to be ordained as monks?

You are ordained in order to practice discipline (*Palipatti*). Once you learn what is good, then you will be able to apply those things to your life, beginning with the Precepts. In theory, you know that '*Khant*' means patience and perseverance. But as a layman, you cannot truly succeed in instilling true patience. Only as a monk can you develop the skills and ability to practice true patience. If you know how to exercise your mind, how to spread loving kindness, and how to forgive your fellow man, then you should do so immediately.

When I was a student, I wondered why Thailand, a country with a good religion had not advanced as far as Europe or America.

Does it mean that our religion is not as good as we think it is? After I had the opportunity to visit those foreign countries, I realized that it is not that Buddhism that is bad, but the people. Thai discipline, when compared to those of Americans or Europeans, does not match up. Moreover, even though westerners do not even know about Buddhism, and yet they possess more discipline than many Buddhists do. Buddhism teaches us all the right principles, and rules for good conduct, but we do not practice it in our daily lives.

9. Caring for Temple Property and Responsibility



Temple property means anything that has been donated to, or built for in the name of religion.

Every monk in the temple must co-operate to help care for all these things. Otherwise laymen will not continue to make merit by donating goods. You will see that some temples have been abandoned, and the reason for this is that the monks did not take proper care of the temple. Taking care of the temple will instill a desire for fixing and looking after things.

If one screw falls out of a car engine, for example, there might be a squeaking noise. If left uncorrected, it might lead to greater problems that can have more serious consequences, when you actually get around to fix it, it might cost much more money than if you had simply replace that first missing screw. Moreover,

this all could have been avoided if you have the inclination to fix problems when they occur, rather than procrastinating. How can we avoid all these problems? when you become a monk you should yourself by constantly be aware of things that need to be done and doing them sooner rather than later.

Monk's responsibilities are things that he must do, on top of all the usual daily routine he must perform, such as chanting in the assembly hall, chanting for special occasions, or any sort of activity that must be done for the temple. Paying attention to one's duty means paying attention to all of the needs of the temple.

The Benefits of Caring for Temple Property and Responsibility

It helps you to become a person who has self-sacrifice and consideration. Even if you leave the monkhood, people will respect you and care about you for these qualities.

10. *Behaviour Worthy of Respect*



A person worthy of homage and respect is a person who develops himself and succeeds in his desire to be ordained as a monk— in other words, he must successfully rid himself of mental defilements.

There are three types of mental defilements.

1. Greed
2. Hatred
3. Delusion

what can you do to rid yourself of these three defilements?

This last duty exists to remind a monk to practice wholeheartedly the first nine monastic duties in order to gain respect from laymen.

The Benefits of Behavior worthy of Respect

You will be a person who is happy because you live your life in a true and proper way. The most important thing is being able to conduct yourself in a manner befitting the true purpose of ordination.

Ordination Traditions during the Time of the Buddha

Ordination Traditions during the Time of the 'Buddha

In the early Buddhist era, all of Lord Buddha's disciples were monks, without any novices, when young Prince Siddhattha was ordained, his ordination was referred to as "lower ordination" (pabbajja), a term which nowadays is used to refer to novices who were ordained. However, he was already too old to be considered a novice. From the time Lord Buddha allowed novices to be ordained, the ordination of monks became known as higher ordination or {upasampada).

The very first novice ordained during the time of Lord Buddha, was his son Rahula. He was ordained when Buddha returned to his hometown of Kapilavastu, to give a sermon to his parents and relatives. The reason Rahula became a novice was due to his mother's encouragement for him to seek out Buddha, and asked him for his inheritance and throne, over which Lord Buddha could still lay claim despite his being a monk. Lord Buddha felt that his son deserved more than mere worldly riches, and that his son deserved true happiness, which was worth more than all the world's riches. Lord Buddha asked Sariputta, a disciple, to ordain Rahula as a novice according to the ritual of "Taking the Three Refuges" Ever since then, Taking Refuge has remained the standard by which all novices are ordained, even to this day.

The process of ordaining novices according by "Taking Refuge" entails the following: Novices must have their heads and moustache shaved and don saffron robes. After that, they must pay respect to their preceptor, in order to seek permission to be ordained as a novice. The preceptor then leads the novice in a chanting ceremony to remind the novice of the Triple Gem. The novice must then respond with his own chant taking refuge in the Triple Gem. As follows.

I take refuge in Lord Buddha
I take refuge in the Teaching
I take refuge in the Monastic Order

For a second time I take refuge in Lord Buddha
For a second time I take refuge in the Teaching
For a second time I take refuge in the Monastic Order

For a third time I take refuge in Lord Buddha
For a third time I take refuge in the Teaching
For a third time I take refuge in the Monastic Order



The reason for the three repetitions is due to the fact that sometimes, we say things without paying careful attention to our own words. The purpose of these repetitions is to ensure that the novice fully understands what he is saying. Following the chanting, for the novice to become fully ordained, he must then take the Ten Precepts, which are:

1. Abstaining from killing
2. Abstaining from stealing
3. Abstaining from sexual behavior
4. Abstaining from lying speech
5. Abstaining from consuming substances which cloud the mind
6. Abstaining from eating meals after midday
7. Abstaining from singing and dancing and other activities that may lead you to temptation
8. Abstaining from immodest dressing and appearance

9. Abstaining from indolent sleeping habits
10. Abstaining from accepting gifts or money for personal gain

Even though the novices' ordination entails only "Taking Refuge," the ten precepts serve as important guidelines for personal conduct. Should any novice break any of these precepts, especially the first five, then the novicehood will then be taken away from him, and he will no longer be entitled to novicehood.

The act of ordaining has been in existence since the very beginning of the Buddhist era. Shortly after reaching enlightenment, Lord Buddha ordained his disciples himself. This act was called 'ebbi-bhikkhu' higher ordination'- Lord Buddha declared:

"Become a monk, for the Dhamma is good. We must cleanse ourselves so that we may be free from all worldly suffering"

The first monk ordained by the Buddha personally, was Kondanna. He was the first of Lord Buddha's disciples, and Buddhism's first monk. He was ordained following Lord Buddha's first Sermon entitled the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta given in a deer forest known as Isipatana. The Buddha's sermon brought upon Kondanna a revelation, and allowed him to see the light of the Dhamma, thus allowing him to become a Stream-enterer, or holy one.

Later on, Lord Buddha gave permission to monks' ordination using "Taking Refuge," which is based on the same ceremony for novices-the difference being the number of precepts that Monks must abide by. In time, this process became known as 'ordination by chanting of a motion', which is used to this present day.

Ordination Procedures for Novices and Bhikkhus

There are two types of ordination, the first is those who are ordained while not yet twenty years of age, the second being the beginning stages of those who take higher ordination.

Higher ordination is the act of ordaining monks in Buddhism. This process involves ten steps.

1. The individual must first be ordained as a novice.
2. The individual must request dependence from the Preceptor
3. Paying respects to the Preceptor
4. The Preceptor tells him his own name and the novices in Pali
5. The Preceptor presents the novice with his alms bowl and saffron robes
6. The Preceptor then requests the novice to retire to a point outside the assembly hall
7. Appointed monks assemble outside the assembly to ask the novice examination questions (antarayikadhamma)
8. Ask the novices to reenter the assembly hall after the exam
9. The novice must then request permission to be ordained
10. The novice must then be asked examination questions again in the assembly hall

Qualifications for those to be Ordained

Those who wish to be ordained as a monk must be at least 20 years of age.



The persons forbidden from being ordained are:

First, those fall under the following categories:

1. Those who are homosexuals
2. Those who are hermaphrodites

Second, those who have done wrong against Buddhism:

1. Those who have killed an arahant.
2. Those who have harmed or assaulted nuns
3. Those who have been falsely ordained before
4. Those who have been ordained previously, but have since changed religions, and now wish to be ordained again.
5. Those who have been ordained previously, but have broken the ten precepts, and were asked to leave monkhood.
6. Those who have caused schism in the monastic community
7. Those who have caused harmed a Buddha

Third, those who have killed their parents or guardians.

Those who fall into any of these categories are unworthy of ordination and strictly forbidden from going forth into the monkhood.

Those who are not eligible, but not forbidden from being ordained

Although not expressly forbidden from being ordained, those who fall under the following categories are not deemed recommendable. However, if they are already ordained, it does not mean that they must disrobe if they suffer from these handicaps:

1. Those who suffer from the following diseases
 - a. Leprosy
 - b. Measles or Pox - related illness
 - c. Fungus of the skin
 - d. Throat and lung disease
2. Those whose limbs are missing

3. Those who suffer from skeletal deformity
4. Those who are handicapped, blind, or deaf
7. Those who have outstanding debts
8. Those who have been convicted of a crime.
9. Those who are notorious for wrongdoings and mis deeds.

Those who are eligible though may not yet be ready to be ordained.

Those who may not yet be ready to be ordained, but are eligible, and not forbidden from doing so, are as follows:

1. Those who lack a preceptor
2. Those who do not have an alms bowl
3. Those who do not have saffron robes
4. Those who do not have both of the previous items
5. Those who borrow an alms bowl
6. Those who borrow saffron robes
7. Those who borrow both of the previous items