

Buddhist Monks and their possessions

✿ LO: Know what the life of a Buddhist monk is like.

Knowledge Burst:

There are two main Buddhist traditions: Theravada and Mayahana. Theravada Monks give up worldly goods. They are established in Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Sri Lanka, also in parts of Viet Nam. They have two robes: Inner (for modesty) and Outer (for warmth): sandals, an alms bowl (for gifts of food from people) and a razor (for shaving their heads).

Why do you think the monks need these things and what are they used for?

Buddhist monks train themselves to give up all but a few necessary possessions so that are not distracted by clinging to worldly possessions and can concentrate on finding enlightenment.

Remember the Middle path of the Buddha, he gave up his wealth in the Palace to live on nothing. He realised that possessions don't make you happy, you get attached to them and unhappy when you lose them. Buddhist Monks therefore only own the essential things to carry on their life, they are provided with a place to live and a bed so they things they own are the minimum of what is needed to live.

They used to wander around and teach the Dharma this meant they did not live in monasteries so these things are what they would need to survive in their wandering life. Nowadays, it is not really necessary for every monk to own their own razor in the monastery.

