

What is a monk? Tour

What are you?

I'm a Buddhist monk. I follow the teachings of the Buddha.

Why do you shave your head?

The Buddha made many good rules about how to be a Buddhist monk. One of those rules is that we should shave our heads. Out of respect for the Buddha, I shave my head. In the time of the Buddha, some people who led a religious life grew long hair, and some of them shaved their heads.

What are the clothes you are wearing?

These are our robes. This is another rule the Buddha laid down: monks should have a set of three robes. This makes life very simple for us.

How do you get your robes?

Robes are usually given by lay people, either as cloth or finished robes. When we get extra robes we share them with the other monks in our community.

Why are your robes this colour?

Well, the Buddha also made a rule about what colour robes could be. Those days monks used parts of trees to make dyes and they were all some shade of yellow, orange, or brown. So these are the colours the Buddha allowed. But these days most robes are dyed from synthetic chemicals. That's fine too.

Are all Buddhists monks?

No. Most Buddhists are what are known as lay people. This means they follow the Buddha's teachings while living a normal life at home. Sometimes they wear white when they visit the monastery.

Why did you become a monk?

I think that the monk life the Buddha created is the best way to be happy in this life and also to attain Nibbana. When I really learned the Buddha's teachings, it seemed like the Buddha knew the proper way to put an end to suffering.

Are there other rules that monks have to follow?

Yes, monks have to follow more than two hundred and twenty seven rules. One rule is that we only eat meals in the morning time, before twelve o'clock. Another is that we cannot accept or use money. All the money donated to the monastery is handled by lay people. Also, like lay Buddhists, we don't use intoxicants like alcohol. All of these things help to make life simple and safe and easy to practice meditation.