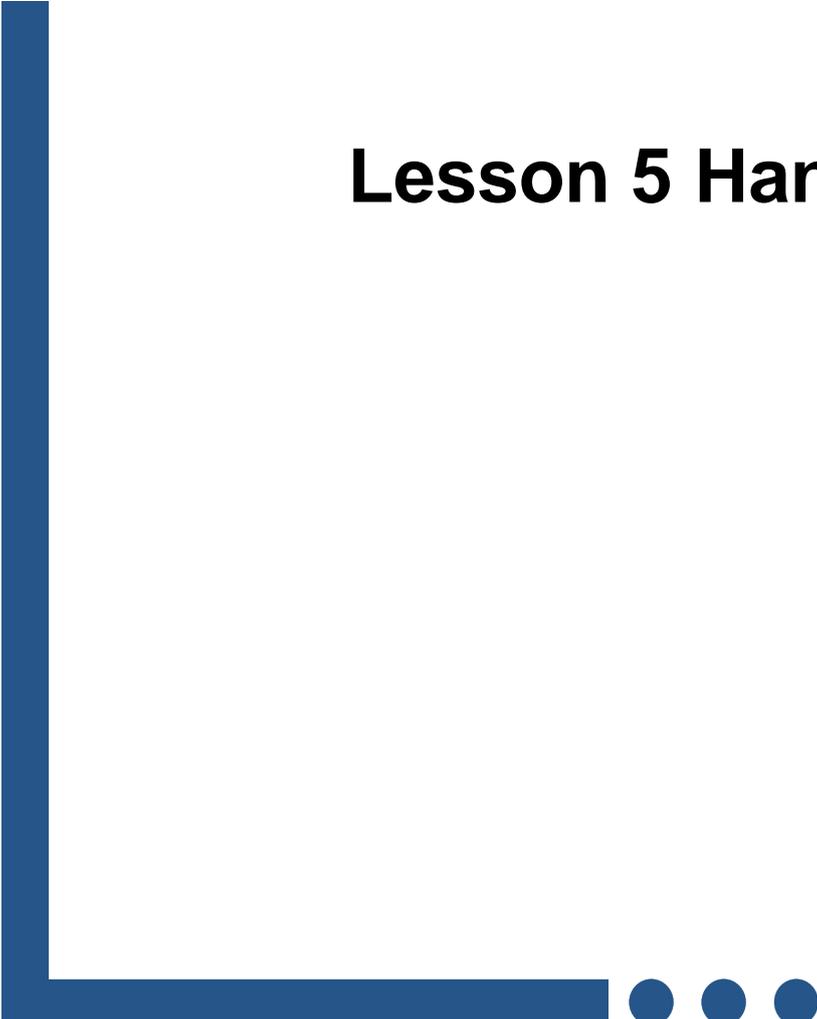




University Learning in Schools

RE

Buddhists in the World



Lesson 5 Handouts

Sheet 5a: The Monastic Day

You will watch a video called: *The Monk Story*. The video describes a day in the life of a Theravada monk.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRHkivEzCfw>

Whilst watching the video, answer the following questions:

- 1) What are three activities that the Buddhist monk undertakes?

- 2) Does the typical day of a Buddhist provide a lot of time to obtain resources?

- 3) Why might people be happy to give to Buddhists? What do they do with the gifts?

- 4) Write down how you think Buddhists might obtain the resources that we have discussed.

Sheet 5b

Buddhist Alms Round

- What is the overall goal for members of the monastic community in their lives?
- What activities does the monastic community take part in? How is this different to the lives of homeless people in London?
- What might the homeless people do with what they receive that the monastic community would not?

Answer each question by writing on the bottom of the sheet in the corresponding section to the quotes.

'The bhikkhu lifestyle is for the sole purpose of realizing Nirvana (or enlightenment). In striving towards this end, certain kinds of behavior are .. unhelpful, and are also unsuitable for an alms-mendicant. Many kinds of improper behavior are not actually immoral, but rather put energy in the wrong direction ... some are immature or childish, some

bad or ugly, and some, quite malicious or nasty.'
(*Heritage of the Sangha*, chapter 17.)

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org>

'There are these four stains because of which monks and priests glow not, shine not, blaze not. What are these four? Drinking alcohol... indulging in sexual intercourse... accepting gold or money... obtaining one's requisites through a wrong mode of livelihood..'(Anguttara Nikaya, volume 2, page 53.)

'The bhikkhu's life should be wholly preparing him to gain insight.'
(Access to Insight)



Activity Sheet 5c

Case Study: Theravada Begging Ethnography

Read this extract on begging by the Theravada monastic sangha and show the accompanying slides of Theravada begging.

'Today, in many predominantly Theravada countries like Thailand, monks still rely on receiving alms for most of their food. The monks leave the monasteries early in the morning. They walk single file, oldest first, carrying their alms bowls in front of them. Laypeople wait for them, sometimes kneeling, and place food, flowers or incense sticks in the bowls. Women must be careful not to touch the monks.

The monks do not speak, even to say thank you. The giving of alms is not thought of as charity. The giving and receiving of alms creates a spiritual connection between the monastic and lay communities. Laypeople have a responsibility to support the monks physically, and the monks have a responsibility to support the community spiritually.'

(<http://buddhism.about.com/od/becomingabuddhist/a/foodoffering.htm>)

Write two paragraphs that answer the following questions:

- 1) Why does the Buddhist monastic community need to beg?
- 2) What do the monks gain from begging?
- 3) Why is the laity happy to give to the monastic community?

Use quotes from the extracts on activity sheet 5b to substantiate your answer. Use the key words: laity, monastic community, begging, ethnography.

Homework

Complete the two paragraphs for homework plus this extension activity.

Extension: Read this edited extract from Rudyard Kipling's 'Kim'.

Explain in a paragraph, in your own words, why the woman (the Kunjiri, or vegetable seller) does not want to give food to the beggar.

Clue: Kim is helping a holy man or yogi who begs in India, just like a Buddhist.

Clue: The bowl is a begging bowl, which is where offerings from the laity such as food are placed.

Clue: How does Kim beg? Does he go out and ask for food, or does he wait to be given the food? See sections marked in purple.

Clue: In your answer, focus on whether the woman vegetable seller is happy to provide charity. These sections are marked in red.

'And what dost thou do?'

'I beg. I remember now it is long since I have eaten or drunk. What is the custom of charity in this town? In silence, as we do of Tibet, or speaking aloud?'

'Those who beg in silence starve in silence,' said Kim, quoting a native proverb. The lama tried to rise, but sank back again, sighing for his disciple, dead in far-away Kulu. Kim watched head to one side, considering and interested.

'Give me the bowl. I know the people of this city—all who are charitable. Give, and I will bring it back filled.'

Simply as a child the old man handed him the bowl.

'Rest, thou. I know the people.'

He trotted off to the open shop of a kunjri, a low-caste vegetable-seller, which lay opposite the belt-tramway line down the Motee Bazar. She knew Kim of old.

'Oho, hast thou turned yogi with thy begging-bowl?' she cried.

'Nay,' said Kim proudly. 'There is a new priest in the city—a man such as I have never seen.'

'Old priest—young tiger,' said the woman angrily. 'I am tired of new priests! They settle on our wares like flies. Is the father of my son a well of charity to give to all who ask?'

'No,' said Kim. 'Thy man is rather yagi [bad-tempered] than yogi [a holy man]. But this priest is new. The Sahib in the Wonder House has talked to him like a brother. O my mother, fill me this bowl. He waits.'

'That bowl indeed! That cow-bellied basket! Thou hast as much grace as the holy bull of Shiv. He has taken the best of a basket of onions already, this morn; and forsooth, I must fill thy bowl. He comes here again.'

.....

'See! I have saved more than the bowl will cost thrice over. Now, mother, a little rice and some dried fish atop—yes, and some vegetable curry.'

A growl came out of the back of the shop, where a man lay.

'He drove away the bull,' said the woman in an undertone. 'It is good to give to the poor.' She took the bowl and returned it full of hot rice.

'But my yogi is not a cow,' said Kim gravely, making a hole with his fingers in the top of the mound. 'A little curry is good, and a fried cake, and a morsel of conserve would please him, I think.'

'It is a hole as big as thy head,' said the woman fretfully. But she filled it, none the less, with good, steaming vegetable curry, clapped a fried cake atop, and a morsel of clarified butter on the cake, dabbed a lump of sour tamarind conserve at the side; and Kim looked at the load lovingly.' (Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, p. 61 Penguin edition, 1987)

Homework Sheet 5d

Read this extract from Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. Explain in your own words why the woman does not want to give food to the beggar. Write at least one paragraph.

'And what dost thou do?'

'I beg. I remember now it is long since I have eaten or drunk. What is the custom of charity in this town? In silence, as we do of Tibet, or speaking aloud?'

'Those who beg in silence starve in silence,' said Kim, quoting a native proverb. The lama tried to rise, but sank back again, sighing for his disciple, dead in far-away Kulu. Kim watched head to one side, considering and interested.

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'Old priest—young tiger,' said the woman angrily. 'I am tired of new priests! They settle on our wares like flies. Is the father of my son a well of charity to give to all who ask?'

'No,' said Kim. 'Thy man is rather yagi [bad-tempered] than yogi [a holy man]. But this priest is new. The Sahib in the Wonder House has talked to him like a brother. O my mother, fill me this bowl. He waits.'

'That bowl indeed! That cow-bellied basket! Thou hast as much grace as the holy bull of Shiv. He has taken the best of a basket of onions already, this morn; and forsooth, I must fill thy bowl. He comes here again.'

The huge, mouse-coloured Brahmini bull of the ward was shouldering his way through the many-coloured crowd, a stolen plantain hanging out of his mouth. He headed straight for the shop, well knowing his privileges as a sacred beast, lowered his head, and puffed heavily along the line of baskets ere making his choice. Up flew Kim's hard little heel and caught him on his moist blue nose. He snorted indignantly, and walked away across the tram-rails, his hump quivering with rage.

'See! I have saved more than the bowl will cost thrice over. Now, mother, a little rice and some dried fish atop—yes, and some vegetable curry.'

A growl came out of the back of the shop, where a man lay.

'He drove away the bull,' said the woman in an undertone. 'It is good to give to the poor.' She took the bowl and returned it full of hot rice.

'But my yogi is not a cow,' said Kim gravely, making a hole with his fingers in the top of the mound. 'A little curry is good, and a fried cake, and a morsel of conserve would please him, I think.'

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