



# The season of Katina Robe Offering

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Origin of the tradition:-The tradition of offering the Katina Robe is related with the 'Vassana' Precept, or the precept that the Buddhist monks should observe during the rainy season, and the history goes back to the days of the Buddha. It is a common practice that the precept has to be observed by all the Higher Ordained monks and the observing of the rainy retreat is now popular among all countries where the Theravada tradition of Buddhism is available.

India, where Buddhism was originated, experiences three seasons within a year, namely, autumn, summer, and spring, and the latter is the rainy season in India. During this period, the whole living beings including birds keep on to their usual habitats until the rainy season is over and that was the general practice of all ascetics, hermits, recluses and solitary persons too and they too kept at their due abodes during the rainy season. But the disciples of the Buddha denied this and kept on their mission to propagate the Dhamma. When the people found this anti-traditional behavior of monks, there came up unrest in society and the disciples were blamed on this conduct. Ultimately, this was brought to the attention of the Buddha and He, the Buddha enacted the 'Vassana' Precept and this gave origin to the tradition of Observation of Vassana Precept.

## Granting approval to use of Katina Robe:-

Once, while the Buddha was living at the 'Jetavana Vihara' in 'Savatti', a group of thirty monks from the city of 'Pava', began an expedition to visit the Buddha to pay respect and when they were on the way to 'Savatti', the Vassana season came over and they temporarily stopped the journey and decided to observe 'Vassana' Precept and spend the three months of rains in the city of 'Saketa'. When the rainy season was over, the group of monks, again, started their journey and in the mean time, a heavy shower fell on the way and they got wet and arrived the Jetavana Viharaya with damped robes. The Buddha with compassion, took measures to vary the order that He had previously enacted for the monks to use 'Thri Civara' or the collection of three kinds of robes (the single robe, double robe and under-garment). Instead, the Buddha established exceptional rule that the disciples who have already observed the Vassana precept could be with two robes out of the three, namely, the single robe



and under garment.

## Basic requirements for offering of a Katina Robe:-

1. Observing of the Vassana Precept by a Higher Ordained monk either on the day after the full-moon day in the month of July.



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(Though it is permitted for higher ordained monks to observe the Vassana Precept on the day after the full-moon day in the month of August, that does not provide with an opportunity to offer a Katin Robe).

2. The monk who observed the precept shouldn't have infringed the rule of 'Sattahakarana'. (a monk that has observed the Vassana Precept is not permitted to go away from the abode for more than seven consecutive days and this is a rule) Customs associated with Katina Religious Function:-1. To arrange an appropriate abode for higher

ordained monk/monks so that he/they could observe the Precept in the rainy season and make the due invitation by a devotee or devotees for the monk/s to observe the precept and keep on there during the rainy season and it is also a fraction of this custom to offer an adequate piece of saffron cloth recommended by the Buddha, to each monk that are invited. 2. To attend all four basic

made and if it were a length of white fabric, the robe, after it being made, has to be dyed with a liquid made out of particular herbs boiled together (including roots of special type of jack trees), the colour of which is saffron. Here, a few lengths of material could also be presented for, but with the mutual consent of the retinue, the best one is selected to make the Katina Robe. Also the devotees offer the required thread and needles for the process of making the 'Katina Civara'.

5. Anybody could just add any other offering item/s with the Katina Civara and it is said that the similar effect of merits in offering of Katina Civara could be accumulated even with such an offering and this is another remarkable quality of the meritorious effect of the pious action.

6. The Katina Civara is a collective offering made to all members of Maha Sangha, the retinue of disciples of the Buddha belonging to all the three periods, the past, present and future. After the robe is offered to the company of Maha Sangha, present at the moment, as a collective oblation, by the lay-devotees, the first step of mass is over.

necessities of the monks, i.e. Robes, Food, Abode and Medicinal stuff, (probably in liquid form) during the period of three months.

3. During the period of three months, it is the duty of the devotee to make all necessary arrangements to hold the Katina Offering function and this may include renovations of the abodes etc.

4. During the period of three months, it is important for the devotees to have been attending in all possible religious deeds such as listening to Dhamma speeches, involving in Dhamma discussions, attending in meditation etc and all this makes the meritorious effect of the 'Katina Civara' offering more efficient, which is yet to be conducted at the end of the three months.

Exceptional features one must know about a Katina offering accomplishment:-

1. The meritorious deed of Katina Offering could be conducted only between the day after the full moon day in the month of July and the full moon day in the month of November.

2. This could be conducted only one time at one place in a year.

3. The meritorious effect of the deed could be shared by anybody that wills to.

4. The robe could be collected as a ready-made one or as an ample length of white or saffron fabric, with what a robe could be

7. Next, it is time for the company of monks to transfer the Katina robe to an appropriate monk and there ought to be, at least, five higher ordained monks to witness the occasion. It is a long term practice of Buddhists to attend the monks that are present in the event of Katina accreditation with all four requisites.

Katina Pinkama or the accreditation of Katina is the most picturesque and charming religious program in the annual plan of a Buddhist temple, not only in Sri Lanka but in all Theravada Buddhist countries. There, to make the event more gorgeous, a number of religious activities such as whole-night Paritha chanting, pageants with elephants, tuskers and dancers, 'Kap Ruk Pooja', etc are also organized.

Generally, a very alluring pageant is prepared to bring Katina Civara to the place where the monks had spent the retreat with great adoration. When the robe is brought to the abode, it is placed somewhere higher and with the mutual consent of the higher ordained monks that gathered there, one monk, whose robe has gone feeble or older, is selected to be conferred the Katina robe. Once the robe is conferred, the monk who obtained it has got to make a mark known as 'Kap Binduwa' or the special mark imprinted by the size of an eye of a peacock, placing a leaf of betel on one edge of the robe and this is done to make it worn.

