



Rules of the Pátimokkha regarding money:

Before he passed away the Buddha said that after his death the sangha could, if it wished, revoke the lesser or minor rules of the Vinaya. Some cite this as an excuse to support the acceptance of money, but the following quotes from the suttas show that the rules prohibiting money are not lesser or minor rules, but are fundamental to the attainment of enlightenment:

'Stained by lust, anger, and blinded by ignorance some monks and brahmins take delight in sense pleasures. Those foolish monks and brahmins drink alcohol, engage in sexual intercourse, accept gold, silver, and money, and obtain their requisites by wrong livelihood. All of these are called corruptions by the Buddha who shines like the sun. Those foolish monks and brahmins who are corrupted by these corruptions, impure, and defiled, do not blaze or shine. But instead bewildered, blinded, slaves to desire, and full of craving they increase the size of cemeteries by taking birth again and again.' (Anguttara Nikaya, volume 2, page 53).

Money is a measure of wealth and to many people material wealth is the goal of life. The non-acceptance of money is therefore, unsurprisingly, one of the fundamental observances of monks which emphatically demonstrates their complete rejection of worldly pursuits.

'Whoever agrees to gold or silver (money), headman, also agrees to the five strands of sensual pleasure, and whoever agrees to the five strands of sensual pleasure, headman, you may take it for certain that this is not the way of a recluse, that this is not the way of a Buddhist monk.' (Samyutta Nikaya, volume 4, page 326).

Nissaggiya 18

A monk is not to accept money.

Buddhist monks are not allowed to accept money for themselves, nor are they permitted to tell a trustworthy layperson to receive it on their behalf and keep it for them (e.g. keeping a personal bank account). Such practices are explicitly prohibited by the 18th rule.

If a monk accepts or receives gold or silver it must immediately be relinquished. This entails a pácittiya (usually a fault committed deliberately caused by letting oneself go - often owing to a lack of attention).

Gold or silver includes all precious metals, coins, bank notes, cheques, credit cards, or all other monetary means enabling one to purchase or acquire something.

The main reason the Buddha forbade a monk to possess money is stated in SN 42.10 where the Buddha said, “ ... *for whoever money is allowable, then for him the five sense pleasures are also allowable; for whoever the five sense pleasures are allowable, you can be certain he is not of the nature of a monk...*”

Nissaggiya 19

A monk is not to use money to buy and sell things for himself.

If a monk uses gold or money or other monetary means to proceed in the exchange of anything whatsoever, he must abandon all that obtained by these means. This also entails a pácittiya.

Nissaggiya 20

A monk is not to exchange things or barter.

A monk may not barter directly with lay people and if a monk proceeds in an exchange, to a purchase or a sale, the object purchased in this way must be abandoned. This also entails a pácittiya.

Source, acknowledgements and useful sites:

<http://www.dhammadana.org/en/samgha/vinaya/227.htm>

Access to Insight: <http://tinyurl.com/n4cd2f>

Wat Samyaek (English): <http://tinyurl.com/3xnue9v>

Buddhanet.net: <http://tinyurl.com/384xvam>

<http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/>

<http://www.dhammadweb.net/>