

Ordination at Santi Forest Monastery

The general flow of the ordination process is listed below, starting as a long-term lay guest, and culminating in Bhikkhuni or Bhikkhu ordination. An applicant or the Sangha can delay or refuse ordination (both novice & full ordination). Taking Anagarika precepts is also a process to be determined by individuals with the approval of the Sangha. Please refer to the last page for a diagrammatic representation of the ordination process.

Short-Term Lay Guest

A person who has applied, and has been granted permission to stay at Santi for less than 4 weeks is considered to be a Short-Term Lay Guest.

Long-Term Lay Guest

A person who has applied for and has been granted permission to stay at Santi continuously for more than four weeks, is considered to be a Long-Term Lay Guest. The application to stay longer than 4 weeks can be made after two weeks of stay. The application to become a Long-Term Lay Guest is dependent on review by the community at the 4-week mark.

Unsuccessful Applications

A Short-Term Lay Guest who has applied for long-term stay but has been declined long-term stay at Santi FM, will need to leave at the end of their current accommodation booking or earlier if deemed necessary by the Sangha (ie. staying for a maximum of 4 weeks).

At this point, if the applicant is deemed suitable to stay as a Long-Term Lay Guest, but due to accommodation shortages cannot stay, the applicant will be placed on a **Waiting List** and notified of any vacancy should one arise. Should a vacancy in accommodation occur, the candidate will then be invited back to Santi where they can practice as a Long-Term Lay Guest.

Anagarika (Homeless One)

An Anagarika at Santi Forest Monastery is a Long-Term Lay Guest who has stayed at Santi for three months (or longer) and has been approved by the resident Sangha to undertake training towards Samaneri/Samanera ordination.

A Long-Term Lay Guest who is interested in Anagarika training asks the Sangha for permission to undertake training. This request takes place at a Sangha meeting where the Long-Term Lay Guest puts forward their expression of interest in Anagarika training to the Sangha.

Application

At this stage, the potential Anagarika will be asked to meet some criteria. The criteria are:

1. To undergo a psychological interview (from a monastery approved counsellor/psychologist),
2. To supply a police report and
3. To provide a health report (letter of good health from GP) and blood test (via normal blood donation where possible) indicating the absence of any chronic illness.

The reports gained from these assessments will be used by the resident Sangha in determining the suitability of the candidate for monastic life. The three reports are used in conjunction with other criteria and are not the sole criteria for ordination suitability. For example, the candidate may have a chronic illness, but this doesn't automatically disqualify them from Anagarika training.

These reports are confidential documents used in determining the suitability of the candidate. **The cost of gaining these reports are to be borne by the applicant.**

The candidate will be advised of the decision after the Sangha has had time to confer in private about the application. Once the decision has been made, the police and health reports are returned to the applicant. The psychological report is destroyed. All such documentation and information in this process is strictly confidential and limited to members of the resident Sangha.

Acceptance as an Anagarika

If the Sangha approves the Long-Term Lay Guests request to train as an Anagarika, the Long-Term Lay Guest will attend a ceremony with the Sangha present. This act confirms the applicants decision to take on Anagarika training, and the Sangha's approval of such training.

At the ceremony, the Long-Term Lay Guest will wear white (having shaven their head) and will take refuge & recite the 8 Precepts. The wearing of white for the candidate will now be compulsory inside and outside of the monastery. The candidate is now considered to be in training as an Anagarika. They will shave their heads regularly (approximately on uposatha days) and attend to their training as deemed fit by the Teacher and /or resident Sangha.

The Anagarika is asked to train for approximately 12 months at Santi before seeking Samaneri/Samanera ordination. This allows the Anagarika time to adjust to monastic-styled practice, and to familiarise themselves with monastic etiquette.

Financial/Material Support

Anagarikas must be self-sufficient in terms of their financial needs during their stay at Santi FM. Santi FM provides accommodation and meals as provided through the generosity of lay-supporters. Santi FM does not provide any other financial support for an Anagarika during their 12 month training period. International visitors approved for Anagarika training must ensure they have sufficient funds for visa extensions as well as any other administrative expenses which they incur during their stay. International guests must ensure that they arrive in Australia with sufficient funds to meet Australian Immigration Department requirements.

Dress & Decorum

Anagarikas wear white clothes when living in and outside of the monastery. This reminds the candidate about their commitment to the eight precepts, aspiration for higher ordination, and delineates the candidate from other Lay Guests who may wear white clothes occasionally (such as on uposatha days). Wearing of white clothes in all situations also mirrors how monastics wear the same type of clothing regardless of where they go.

During more formal occasions, such as Dhamma talks or when eating, Anagarikas wear a robe

on the outside of their clothes and use a white sitting cloth. This is similar to monastic dressing etiquette on more formal occasions, and reinforces the connection that the Anagarika has with the Sangha as a person in training.

The robe will be in the Pavian style (Thai – Pahkrong) for females. Male Anagarikas will wear a white Ansa (shoulder cloth similar to the Thai style for monks). Anagarikas are expected to attend all classes given by monastics as part of their ongoing training and development.

If a practitioner has come from another tradition on a short-term visit to Santi, they may continue to wear their traditional dress/robe (e.g. a Mae Chee or Dasa-Sila nun).

Unsuccessful Applications

An Anagarika who:

- 1) Does not want to be an Anagarika of their own volition, or
- 2) Has had their training ended by the Sangha, or
- 3) Has been declined novice ordination,

is no longer recognised as an Anagarika at Santi FM.

Former Anagarikas are to leave Santi Forest Monastery within 2 weeks of ceasing Anagarika training.

Former Anagarikas can continue to wear white clothing if they wish. The formal white robe and sitting cloth used by an Anagarika is not to be used by laymen/laywomen.

Samaneri/Samanera (Novice)

A Samaneri/Samanera is a novice nun or monk who is usually in training for higher ordination. Some novices however have no interest in higher ordination, and may remain as novices for the rest of their life.

A novice at Santi has taken refuge (formally) in the Triple Gem, and has been given the 10 precepts to follow. A Novice will also observe the 75 Sekhiya (training rules) observed by fully-ordained nuns and monks.

New Applications

Upon request by an Anagarika who has completed approximately 12 months of Anagarika training at Santi, the Sangha will consider their application for novice ordination. This application is to be made in person with the Teacher.

If the Anagarika is not approved for Novice ordination:

1. A delay may be implemented (with reasons given), or
2. The candidate will be denied the going-forth (with reasons given).

Acceptance as an Novice

If approved, the Anagarika will undergo further training in preparation for novice ordination. The ordination date will be considered by the Sangha, and a nominal date will be announced. The actual date may change slightly according to the challenge of assembling other monks and

nuns if required.

The novice will usually be dependent on the resident teacher, or another senior (10 rains or more) and capable resident monastic.

Financial/Material Support

Novices are supported by Santi FM for their spiritual, material and physical needs where practicable. This support covers medicines, food, lodgings and robes. Novices do not have or use personal funds (e.g. Credit cards or money). Those in novice training who have concerns regarding financial backing/support, or who have any debts, should speak with the teacher.

Novices should try to reduce their worldly concerns and commitments before taking on novice ordination. This may involve sorting out retirement funds, superannuation, shares & investments, and debts such as mortgages, car loans, and credit card balances. Reducing commitments includes advising family and friends of your vocational direction.

Novices are expected to meditate, study and have basic familiarity with the monastic conduct taught in the vinaya. This provides an inspiring glimpse into higher ordination, and the benefits of a more refined practice.

Bhikkhuni/Bhikkhu (Fully Ordained Nun/Monk)

Bhikkhunis/Bhikkhus are fully ordained nuns/monks who have left the lay life to attain Nibbana. Their training includes the monastic rules found in the Patimokha (311 rules for nuns and 227 for monks) and other guidelines in the vinaya.

Applications

A novice asks for higher ordination from the Sangha. The Sangha will check the candidates vocation for higher ordination. If the candidate is suitable, then the novice will be advised of the date for full-ordination and will undergo further training as required. The candidate will also need to ask the teacher for permission, as they will be dependent on the teacher for their training and future guidance (ideally for 5 years).

Acceptance as an Bhikkhuni/Bhikkhu

Conferring higher ordination involves a great deal of effort and time on behalf of the Sangha, and the candidates teacher, and thus is taken seriously.

Those who take higher ordination at Santi are expected to practice at Santi FM as a Bhikkhuni/Bhikkhu for a two year minimum. This time will allow the applicant to develop some basic monastic skills before moving on to another monastery under the guidance of a reputable teacher. The request to relocate to another monastery is made to the teacher and based on their advice is approved or declined.

Santi FM does not conduct temporary ordinations for novices or for higher ordination.

Financial/Material Support

All fully ordained monastics at Santi FM will be supported as is practicable, for their requisite needs i.e. medicines, food, lodgings and robes. Any needs outside of these is supported at the

discretion of the Sangha and/or the monastery attendant (Santi Forest Monastery INC.) or other supporters.

The basic flow of the ordination process is outlined below.

Ordination Process

