

Chapter 1 : Encyclopedia of Monasticism | Citydesert

The Encyclopedia of Monasticism presents these contributions as well, making it a reference tool of use to interests other than religion. Highly recommended for all academic and large public libraries.

Eastern Christian monasticism Orthodox monasticism does not have religious orders as in the West, [19] so there are no formal Monastic Rules *Regulae* ; rather, each monk and nun is encouraged to read all of the Holy Fathers and emulate their virtues. There is also no division between the "active" and "contemplative" life. Orthodox monastic life embraces both active and contemplative aspects. Within the Eastern Orthodox Church , there exist three types of monasticism: The *skete* is a very small community, often of two or three *Matthew* They pray privately for most of the week, then come together on Sundays and Feast Days for communal prayer, thus combining aspects of both eremitic and coenobitic monasticism. Historical development[edit] Even before Saint Anthony the Great the "father of monasticism" went out into the desert, there were Christians who devoted their lives to ascetic discipline and striving to lead an evangelical life i. As monasticism spread in the East from the hermits living in the deserts of Egypt to Palestine, Syria, and on up into Asia Minor and beyond, the sayings *apophthegmata* and acts *praxeis* of the Desert Fathers and Desert Mothers came to be recorded and circulated, first among their fellow monastics and then among the laity as well. Among these earliest recorded accounts was the *Paradise*, by *Palladius of Galatia* , Bishop of *Helenopolis* also known as the *Lausiac History* , after the prefect *Lausus*, to whom it was addressed. Saint *Athanasius of Alexandria* whose *Life of Saint Anthony the Great* set the pattern for monastic hagiography , Saint *Jerome* , and other anonymous compilers were also responsible for setting down very influential accounts. Also of great importance are the writings surrounding the communities founded by Saint *Pachomius*, the father of cenobiticism , and his disciple Saint *Theodore*, the founder of the *skete* form of monasticism. Among the first to set forth precepts for the monastic life was Saint *Basil the Great* , a man from a professional family who was educated in *Caesarea* , *Constantinople* , and *Athens*. Saint *Basil* visited colonies of hermits in Palestine and Egypt but was most strongly impressed by the organized communities developed under the guidance of Saint *Pachomius*. His teachings set the model for Greek and Russian monasticism but had less influence in the Latin West. At the height of the East Roman Empire, numerous great monasteries were established by the emperors, including the twenty "sovereign monasteries" on the Holy Mountain , [20] an actual "monastic republic" wherein the entire country is devoted to bringing souls closer to God. In this milieu, the *Philokalia* was compiled. As the Great Schism between East and West grew, conflict arose over misunderstandings about *Hesychasm*. Saint *Gregory Palamas* , bishop of *Thessalonica* , an experienced *Athonite* monk, defended Orthodox spirituality against the attacks of *Barlaam of Calabria* , and left numerous important works on the spiritual life. Present[edit] Christian monasticism was and continued to be a lay condition—monks depended on a local parish church for the sacraments. However, if the monastery was isolated in the desert, as were many of the Egyptian examples, that inconvenience compelled monasteries either to take in priest members, to have their abbot or other members ordained. A priest-monk is sometimes called a *hieromonk*. In many cases in Eastern Orthodoxy , when a bishopric needed to be filled, they would look to nearby monasteries to find suitable candidates, being good sources of men who were spiritually mature and generally possessing the other qualities desired in a bishop. Eventually, among the Orthodox Churches it became established by canon law that all bishops must be monks. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain , a great renaissance of monasticism has occurred, and many previously empty or destroyed monastic communities have been reopened. Monasticism continues to be very influential in the Eastern Orthodox Church. According to the Sacred Canons , all Bishops must be monks not merely celibate , and feast days to Glorified monastic saints are an important part of the liturgical tradition of the church. Fasting , *Hesychasm*, and the pursuit of the spiritual life are strongly encouraged not only among monastics but also among the laity. Types of monks[edit] Main article: Degrees of Eastern Orthodox monasticism There are also three levels of monks: Each of the three degrees represents an increased level of asceticism. In the early days of monasticism, there was only one level—the Great Schema—and even Saint *Theodore the Studite* argued against the establishment of

intermediate grades, but nonetheless the consensus of the church has favored the development of three distinct levels. When a candidate wishes to embrace the monastic life, he will enter the monastery of his choice as a guest and ask to be received by the Hegumen Abbot. After a period of at least three days the Hegumen may at his discretion clothe the candidate as a novice. There is no formal ceremony for the clothing of a novice; he or she would simply be given the Podraznik , belt and skoufos. After a period of about three years, the Hegumen may at his discretion tonsure the novice as a Rassophore monk, giving him the outer garment called the Rassa Greek: A monk or nun may remain in this grade all the rest of his life, if he so chooses. But the Rite of Tonsure for the Rassophore refers to the grade as that of the "Beginner", so it is intended that the monk will advance on to the next level. The Rassophore is also given a klobuk which he wears in church and on formal occasions. In addition, Rassophores will be given a prayer rope at their tonsure. The next rank, Stavrophore, is the grade that most Russian monks remain all their lives. The title Stavrophore means "cross-bearer", because when Tonsured into this grade the monastic is given a cross to wear at all times. This cross is called a Paramandâ€”a wooden cross attached by ribbons to a square cloth embroidered with the Instruments of the Passion and the words, "I bear upon my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" Galatians 6: The Paramand is so called because it is worn under the Mantle Greek: Mantya , which is a long cape which completely covers the monk from neck to foot. Among the Russians, Stavrophores are also informally referred to as "mantle monks". At his Tonsure, a Stavrophore is given a wooden hand cross and a lit candle, as well as a prayer rope. Anthony of Kiev wearing the Great Schema. The highest rank of monasticism is the Great Schema Greek: Attaining the level of Schema monk is much more common among the Greeks than it is among the Russians, for whom it is normally reserved to hermits, or to very advanced monastics. The Schema monk or Schema nun wears the same habit as the Rassophore, but to it is added the Analavos Church Slavonic: Analav , a garment shaped like a cross, covering the shoulders and coming down to the knees or lower in front and in back. This garment is roughly reminiscent of the scapular worn by some Roman Catholic orders, but it is finely embroidered with the Cross and instruments of the Passion see illustration, above. The Klobuk worn by a Schema monk is also embroidered with a red cross and other symbols. The skufia worn by a Schema monk is also more intricately embroidered. The religious habit worn by Orthodox monastics is the same for both monks and nuns, except that the nuns wear an additional veil, called an apostolnik. The central and unifying feature of Orthodox monasticism is Hesychasm , the practice of silence, and the concentrated saying of the Jesus Prayer. All ascetic practices and monastic humility is guided towards preparing the heart for theoria or the "divine vision" that comes from the union of the soul with God. It should be noted, however, that such union is not accomplished by any human activity. All an ascetic can do is prepare the ground; it is for God to cause the seed to grow and bear fruit. Western Christian monasticism[edit] History[edit] The introduction of monasticism into the West may be dated from about A. The publication of the "Vita Antonii" some years later and its translation into Latin spread the knowledge of Egyptian monachism widely and many were found in Italy to imitate the example thus set forth. The first Italian monks aimed at reproducing exactly what was done in Egypt and not a few â€” such as St. Jerome, Rufinus, Paula, Eustochium and the two Melanias â€” actually went to live in Egypt or Palestine as being better suited to monastic life than Italy. He was called to become Bishop of Tours in , where he established a monastery at Marmoutiers on the opposite bank of the Loire River , a few miles upstream from the city. His cell was a hut of wood, and round it his disciples, who soon numbered eighty, dwelt in caves and huts. His monastery was laid out as a colony of hermits rather than as a single integrated community. The type of life was simply the Antonian monachism of Egypt. The monastery combined a community with isolated hermitages where older, spiritually-proven monks could live in isolation. John Cassian began his monastic career at a monastery in Palestine and Egypt around to study monastic practice there. In Egypt he had been attracted to the isolated life of hermits, which he considered the highest form of monasticism, yet the monasteries he founded were all organized monastic communities. About he established two monasteries near Marseilles , [21] one for men, one for women. In time these attracted a total of 5, monks and nuns. Celtic monasticism[edit] It seems that the first Celtic monasteries were merely settlements where the Christians lived together â€” priests and laity, men, women, and children alike â€” as a kind of religious clan. Kenney, every important church was a monastic establishment, with a small walled

village of monks and nuns living under ecclesiastical discipline, and ministering to the people of the surrounding area. Its spirituality was heavily influenced by the Desert Fathers, with a monastic enclosure surrounding a collection of individual monastic cells. Next in importance to the abbot was the scribe, in charge of the scriptorium, the teaching function of the monastery, and the keeping of the annals. The role of scribe was often a path to the position of abbot. Buildings would generally have been of wood, wattle and thatch. Monasteries tended to be cenobitical in that monks lived in separate cells but came together for common prayer, meals, and other functions. Celtic monasticism was characterized by a rigorous asceticism and a love for learning. The nuns had to do everything themselves, unless they had a couple of tenant-farmers to supply food, or pious who made donations. They spun and wove, kept their huts clean, milked their cows, and made their own meals, which could be meager. Scotland[edit] Around , Ninian , a Briton probably from the area south of the Firth of Clyde, dedicated his church at Whithorn to St. According to Bede , Ninian evangelized the southern Picts. Due to anti-Christian sentiment he re-located for a time to Wales, where he established a monastery at St. Here he divided the monks into three groups. The unlettered were assigned to the duty of agriculture, the care of cattle, and the other necessary duties outside the monastery. He assigned to duties within the cloister of the monastery, such as doing the ordinary work, and preparing food, and building workshops. The remaining monks, who were lettered, he appointed to the celebration of Divine service in church by day and by night. Wales[edit] Cadoc founded Llancarfan in the latter part of the fifth century. He received the religious habit from an Irish monk, St. Tathai, superior of a small community near Chepstow, in Monmouthshire. Returning to his native county, Cadoc built a church, and monastery, which was called Llancarfan, or the "Church of the Stags". There he also established a college and a hospital. When thousands left the world and became monks, they very often did so as clansmen, dutifully following the example of their chief. Bishoprics, canonries, and parochial benefices passed from one to another member of the same family, and frequently from father to son. Their tribal character is a feature which Irish and Welsh monasteries had in common. He founded the monastery at Llanilltyd Fawr. One of his students was Paul Aurelian , a key figure in Cornish monasticism.

Chapter 2 : [PDF/ePub Download] encyclopedia of monasticism eBook

Encyclopedia of monasticism User Review - Not Available - Book Verdict. Edited by Johnston (Recent Reference Books in Religion), this work is unique in its focus on monasticism, defined as "a single-minded commitment to religious life conducted apart from the surrounding.

Monasticism originated in the East. It was introduced in the West during the 4th century and was developed in Gaul, mainly in the west St. Martin of Tours and southeast St. In the 6th century the number of monasteriesâ€ Nature and significance Monastics have been instrumental in creating, preserving, and enhancing institutions of religious and secular learning and in transmitting cultural goods, artifacts , and intellectual skills down through the generations. Monastic institutions have also fulfilled medical, political, and military functions, though since the latter two have become completely secularized in most societies. A definition of monasticism that covers all its forms would be so broad that particulars would have to be relegated to the analysis of specific monastic systems. Such a definition might be: Such behaviour derives from the example of religious and spiritual founders who interpreted more radically the tenets that apply to all believers or to the whole society. Beyond such a statement, one can speak only of the principal characteristics of the monastic life and its institutions, since none of them is universal. Another characteristic, asceticism , is universal, provided the term is defined widely enough so as to include all supererogatory voluntarily undertaken rather than wholly prescribed religious practices. The truly universal characteristic of monasticism follows from its definition: Monasticism does not exist in societies that lack a written transmitted lore. Nonliterate societies cannot have monastic institutions, because the monastic responds to an established written body of religious doctrine, which has undergone criticism and then generated counter criticism in a dialectic process that presupposes a literate, codified manipulation of the doctrine. The monastic founders and their successors may either support or oppose the official religious tradition, but the presence of such a tradition is indispensable as the matrix of all monastic endeavour. The ego with which the layperson and the seeking neophyte identifies is not the true self, which must be discovered or uncovered. Barriersâ€ differently conceived as matter, individuated mind, or a soul- mind aggregate defiled by sin, ignorance, and perversionâ€ must be broken through, or a veil lifted, so that the true self, the primordial spirit, may shine forth. In most traditions this breakthrough is held to be unattainable through a conventionally good life in society, and thus a new approach must be sought. The body and the mind, which are part or all of the impediment, have to be controlled, disciplined , and chastised; hence, monastics advocate either asceticism or a set of psychophysical practices that differ radically from the normal routines of life. Spiritual perfection The quest for spiritual intensification is elitistâ€ even when, as within Christian monastic orders, humility is required. Withdrawal from society is necessary because the instrumentalities of perfection cannot normally be acquired and activated in the surroundings of everyday life. The basis of monastic life is a set of spiritual precepts that either articulate the supreme value or provide support for the body and the mind on their journey toward whatever supreme consummation may be envisioned. Intense contemplation, often accompanied by physical rigours, constitutes ascetic practiceâ€ i. Monastics pursue all these forms of orthopraxy in enormously varied forms and degrees. Emancipation of the self Salvation The ultimate purpose of the monastic endeavour is to attain a state of freedom from bondage, where both bondage and freedom are defined in theological terms. The languages of most cultures with monastic traditions possess special terms to denote bondage and freedom; a few languages adapt terms of common parlance that are then understood by members of society to refer to theologically adumbrated types of bondage and freedom. In Christianity and Islam, but not in Rabbinic Judaism , salvation cannot be fully achieved as long as the body exists. Thus, salvation and its semantic equivalents in other languages refer to both the present and the future in the South Asian religions but to the future above all in two of the Abrahamic ones. Redemption The concept of redemption as deliverance from the spiritual effect of past transgressions may or may not be identical with salvation, though the terms are synonymous in many contexts , notably within Christianity. As part of a vocation, the monastic seeks redemption from his or her sins and usually intercedes for others to advance their redemption. This is accomplished through personal sacrifice and may

involve forms of self-mortification. The practice of self-mortification, which intensifies or stabilizes the austerities required of the monastic, is found in all monastic traditions. Whether the autocentric or the vicarious aspect of the quest is emphasized depends entirely on the doctrinal framework within which the monastic functions. In either case, however, monastics improve their chances of redemption because, in mortifying their own bodies and minds for the benefit of others, they also help their own advancement along the spiritual path. When a Franciscan friar a follower of Francis of Assisi, the 12th–13th-century Italian mendicant leader serves the poor and the sick, he also exercises his own virtues of service and humility, all of which are signs or instruments of his own redemption. Liberation When liberation moksha from cycles of birth and death constitutes the foundation of a belief system, as in the basic Indian pattern of samsara the ineluctable process of death and rebirth that can be broken only through supererogatory efforts of asceticism, monastics become disseminators of methods of liberation. In India, Tibet, and Southeast Asia the monk stood at the centre of religious life, whereas in the Western Christian world he was and is marginal to the main liturgical and ideological thrust, albeit not always deprived of high social status. In principle, the importance of the monastic life in a religious system if not always in the social system is related to its eschatology doctrine of last things. Thus, if the state of existence after salvation is continuous with the present life, as in the Abrahamic religions, then the monastic will have less prominence than would be had in belief systems, such as those of South Asia, in which salvation implies a different state that cancels finitude and eradicates all traces of separate individual existence. The earliest Christian hermits of the Egyptian desert c. The community was viewed as composed of soldiers of the spirit, who were combatting the forces of evil by facing the temptations of the Devil in the desert. Early Christian monasticism spread beyond Egypt and assumed different forms, most famously in the example of the Syrian ascetic Simeon Stylites c. The community is usually identified with the Essenes, a religious group that flourished in the Judean desert between bce and 70 ce and was the chief exemplar of Jewish monasticism. This may have been the first conflict between a proto-monastic elite and an urban sacerdotal establishment in which the interpretation of the canonical teachings was under dispute. Rigorous asceticism, communal prayer, and common work were the rule, though celibacy may not as yet have been expected of members of the community. Improvement of society By and large, monastic institutions may have aided the progress of civilization, even though they often have been blamed for obstructing and retarding it. As an instrument for the creation, preservation, and transmission of secular and religious traditions, monasticism played an important role in society, especially in those cultures that favoured cenobite institutions. The role of monks and mendicant friars and their orders in the arts, sciences, and letters, as well as in the pedagogical and the therapeutic social services, is thus discussed under the headings of the diverse monastic systems see below Varieties of monasticism in the religions of the world. Institutional centres for religious leadership In some religions, monasteries serve as training centres for institutional religious leaders. There is, however, a clear dichotomy between training secular clergy e. Even though the distinction may seem to be blurred in the Roman Catholic and Eastern both Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox traditions, most Christian monastics, both men and women, continue to be laypersons i. Indeed, the Christian tradition is unique in that its monastic training produces priests as well as monastics. In all Indian religions, by contrast, there is an unbridgeable gulf between the priestly and the monastic careers and their concomitant institutions. The common denominator lies in the supererogatory status of the monastic life. If churches and seminaries prepare ecclesiastical leaders, teachers, and intellectuals, monasteries may train people to whom the same terms apply but with a difference: Other purposes Apart from the redemptive, spiritual, and social goals of monastic systems, most of them tolerate peripheral goals that may be rather mundane. A Tibetan Vajrayana Tantric or Esoteric Buddhist lamasery monastic religious centre, for example, may serve not only as a dispenser of spiritual counsel but also as a bank, a judicial court, a school, and a social centre for the laity. Types of monasticism Eremitic There have been a variety of types of monastic institutions. Some European and American neo-mystics also should be included in this class. Common to all true hermits and eremitical institutions is an emphasis on living alone, on pursuing a highly regularized contemplative life with individually generated, often experimental spiritual disciplines, and on frequently idiosyncratic and sometimes heretical interpretations of scriptural or disciplinary codes. Self-mortification and individual

austerities can be detected, but these are incidental to the eremitical style. Quasi-eremitic The lauras communities of anchorites of early Christianity in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece, and Cyrenaicaâ€”perpetuated today in the Mount Athos a monastic complex founded in Greece in the 10th century traditionâ€”as well as the small-scale ashrams religious retreats of monastic Hinduism since at least bce are best called quasi-eremitic. Similar in function were the semiformal congregations of the early Buddhist monks and nuns, which preceded the establishment of the sangha monastic order or community. Common elements of quasi-eremitic monasticism include a loose organizational structure with no administrative links to mother institutions and no external hierarchies. This type of monasticism marks a transition between the eremitic and the cenobitic; in many cases, certain groups displayed eremitic and cenobitic features alternately, either during different annual seasons or on the occasion of special gatherings. For example, in early 4th-century Egypt and Syria, hermits attached to the Christian lauras lived alone during the week but gathered on Sunday sometimes also on Saturday for worship and fellowship. In the 20th century some Nepalese followers of Gorakhnath 8th century ce lived as recluses most of the time but formed a quasi-military association on certain occasionsâ€”such as the Kumbh Mela , or all-Indian monastic assemblies, held every sixth year at certain pilgrimage centres. During these periods they were organizationally indistinguishable from the most highly structured cenobitic units at the conventions. In fact, the first Christian cenobitical communities were based on a rule prepared by Pachomius c. Smaller monasteries for men and women emerged in Cappadocia under the influence of the Greek theologian St. Basil the Great c. The basis for all subsequent Eastern Christian Greek monastic institutions, it was simpler than some of the regulae of the orders founded in later centuries in western Europe. Avoiding the extreme austerities of the Desert Fathers, St. Its asceticism was dedicated to the service of God, which was to be pursued through community life and obedience. Liturgical prayer and manual and mental work were obligatory. The Rule of St. Basil also enjoined or implied chastity and poverty, though these were far less explicitly stated than in the later regulae. Benedict of Nursia c. His regula, which enjoined poverty , chastity , obedience , and stability, was followed until the 13th century by diverse orders, including the Knights Templars and most other paramilitary aristocratic orders, and it remains the rule of the Benedictine order today. It is notable for providing an effective model of monastic government and for its requirement, adopted by all subsequent Roman Catholic monastic orders, that the individual monk not own property. The core of canonical literature in the southern Buddhist Theravada Pali: These regulations constitute the distinguishing feature of Buddhist particularly Theravada monasticism; strictly speaking, there is no Buddhist monasticism apart from the life lived according to the vinaya. The vinaya has always exacted more intense asceticism from women than from men because, according to tradition, the historical Buddha did not at first desire women monastics and laid extra obligations on them when he conceded their existence. The number of requirements in the rules of the monastic traditions of South Asia varies greatly. They were highly formalistic, emphasizing ritualistic purity, with ablutions prescribed for the members, and they maintained a rigorous adherence to the letter of the Jewish ritualistic and legal books Leviticus and the Deuteronomy. At the opposite pole of rigour, certain hippie communes of the s and later, insofar as they sought religious experience , can be classified as cenobitic organizations. In their case, growing food, preparing and consuming it jointly, and sharing common dormitory facilities were essential elements of the cenobitic structure, though they failed to take a vow of chastity or indeed any formal vow. Quasi-monastic Paramilitary, or quasi-monastic, associations are another type of monastic group. Whereas most Christian orders of this sort also fulfilled medical or healing commitments, non-Christian monastic orders of this type did not cater to the sick. The Knights Templars , a Crusading order founded in the Holy Land in the early 12th century, became the most prestigious and later the most defamed aristocratic organization in medieval Europe. The military model was evident in their hierarchical structureâ€”there were chaplains, knights, and sergeants under a grand masterâ€”and their numbers grew rapidly, in part because of the support of St. Bernard of Clairvaux , who wrote their rule. John of Jerusalem , founded at the end of the 11th century. The classic nursing order, the Hospitallers were probably the first to provide genuine medical and hospital services, initially for pilgrims to Jerusalem. Their first foundation was the Hospital Saint-Antoine-de-Viennois c. Changing conditions in the eastern Mediterranean forced the Hospitallers to move their headquarters from Jerusalem to Acre and then to

Cyprus and Rhodes. After moving to Malta in , they became known as the Knights of Malta. The Teutonic Order German: This arrangement was specially defined by more than papal bulls. After the fall of Acre, the order moved its headquarters to various places in Europe.

"This magnificent work on monasticism is the first of its kind the first time under one cover that an extensive encyclopedic work is dedicated to monasticism in both the Christian (Eastern and Western) traditions, with Buddhist traditions treated on a par.

Monasticism or monachism, literally the act of "dwelling alone" Greek monos, monazein, monachos , has come to denote the mode of life pertaining to persons living in seclusion from the world, under religious vows and subject to a fixed rule, as monks , friars , nuns , or in general as religious. The basic idea of monasticism in all its varieties is seclusion or withdrawal from the world or society. The object of this is to achieve a life whose ideal is different from and largely at variance with that pursued by the majority of mankind ; and the method adopted, no matter what its precise details may be, is always self-abnegation or organized asceticism. Taken in this broad sense monachism may be found in every religious system which has attained to a high degree of ethical development, such as Brahmin, Buddhist , Jewish, Christian , and Moslem religions , and even in the system of those modern communistic societies , often anti-theological in theory, which are a special feature of recent social development especially in America. Hence it is claimed that a form of life which flourishes in environments so diverse must be the expression of a principle inherent in human nature and rooted therein no less deeply than the principle of domesticity, though obviously limited to a far smaller portion of mankind. Its growth and method Origin Any discussion of pre-Christian asceticism is outside the scope of this article. It has already been pointed out that the monastic ideal is an ascetic one, but it would be wrong to say that the earliest Christian asceticism was monastic. While admitting this, however, it is equally certain that monasticism, when it came, was little more than a precipitation of ideas previously in solution among Christians. For asceticism is the struggle against worldly principles, even with such as are merely worldly without being sinful. The world desires and honours wealth, so the ascetic loves and honours poverty. If he must have something in the nature of property then he and his fellows shall hold it in common, just because the world respects and safeguards private ownership. In like manner he practises fasting and virginity that thereby he may repudiate the licence of the world. Hereafter the various items of this renunciation will be dealt with in detail, they are mentioned at this time merely to show how the monastic ideal was foreshadowed in the asceticism of the Gospel and its first followers. Such passages as I John, ii, If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the father but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof. And this is precisely what the early ascetics did. We read of some who, driven by the spirit of God , dedicated their energies to the spread of the Gospel and, giving up all their possessions passed from city to city in voluntary poverty as apostles and evangelists. Of others we hear that they renounced property and marriage so as to devote their lives to the poor and needy of their particular church. If these were not strictly speaking monks and nuns , at least the monks and nuns were such as these; and, when the monastic life took definite shape in the fourth century, these forerunners were naturally looked up to as the first exponents of monachism. Besides a desire of observing the evangelical counsels, and a horror of the vice and disorder that prevailed in a pagan age, two contributory causes in particular are often indicated as leading to a renunciation of the world among the early Christians. The first of these was the expectation of an immediate Second Advent of Christ cf. That this belief was widespread is admitted on all hands, and obviously it would afford a strong motive for renunciation since a man who expects this present order of things to end at any moment, will lose keen interest in many matters commonly held to be important. This belief however had ceased to be of any great influence by the fourth century, so that it cannot be regarded as a determining factor in the origin of monasticism which then took visible shape. A second cause more operative in leading men to renounce the world was the vividness of their belief in evil spirits. The first Christians saw the kingdom of Satan actually realized in the political and social life of heathendom around them. In their eyes the gods whose temples shone in every city were simply devils, and to participate in their rites was to join in devil worship. When Christianity first came in touch with the Gentiles the Council of Jerusalem by its decree

about meat offered to idols Acts But the difficulty existed for private individuals also. To honour these was idolatry, to ignore them would attract inquiry, and possibly persecution. And so when, to men placed in this dilemma, St. John wrote, "Keep yourselves from idols" 1 John 5: By certain writers the communitarian element seen in the Church of Jerusalem during the years of its existence Acts 4: Probably the community of goods was simply a natural continuation of the practice, begun by Jesus and the Apostles, where one of the band kept the common purse and acted as steward. There is no indication that such a custom was ever instituted elsewhere and even at Jerusalem it seems to have collapsed at an early period. It must be recognized also that influences such as the above were merely contributory and of comparatively small importance. So we find monachism at first instinctive, informal, unorganized, sporadic; the expression of the same force working differently in different places, persons, and circumstances; developing with the natural growth of a plant according to the environment in which it finds itself and the character of the individual listener who heard in his soul the call of "Follow Me". Means to the end It must be clearly understood that, in the case of the monk, asceticism is not an end in itself. For him, as for all men, the end of life is to love God. Monastic asceticism then means the removal of obstacles to loving God, and what these obstacles are is clear from the nature of love itself. Love is the union of wills. No one understands better than the monk those words of the beloved disciple, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life", for in his case life has come to mean renunciation. Broadly speaking this renunciation has three great branches corresponding to the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The argument based on such passages as Matthew If a man wish to attain eternal life it is better for him to renounce his possessions than to retain them. Augustine points out, the disciples evidently understood Jesus to include all who covet riches in the number of "the rich", otherwise, considering the small number of the wealthy compared with the vast multitude of the poor, they would not have asked, "Who then shall be saved"? Man cannot sate his nature with the temporal and yet retain an appetite for the eternal; and so, if he would live the life of the spirit, he must flee the lust of the earth and keep his heart detached from what is of its very nature unspiritual. The extent to which this spiritual poverty is practised has varied greatly in the monachism of different ages and lands. In Egypt the first teachers of monks taught that the renunciation should be made as absolute as possible. Abbot Agathon used to say, "Own nothing which it would grieve you to give to another". Macarius once, on returning to his cell, found a robber carrying off his scanty furniture. Another monk had so stripped himself of all things that he possessed nothing save a copy of the Gospels. After a while he sold this also and gave the price away saying, "I have sold the very book that bade me sell all I had". As the monastic institute became more organized legislation appeared in the various codes to regulate this point among others. That the principle remained the same however is clear from the strong way in which St. Benedict speaks of the matter while making special allowance for the needs of the infirm, etc. Let no one presume either to give or to receive anything without leave of the abbot, nor to keep anything as his own, neither book, nor writing tablets, nor pen, nor anything whatsoever, since it is unlawful for them to have their bodies or wills in their own power". The principle here laid down, viz. No matter to what extent any individual monk may be allowed the use of clothing, books, or even money, the ultimate proprietorship in such things can never be permitted to him. Hence in the ascending order chastity is the second of the evangelical counsels, and as such it is based upon the words of Jesus, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters yea and his own soul also, he cannot be my disciple" Luke It is obvious that of all the ties that bind the human heart to this world the possession of wife and children is the strongest. Moreover the renunciation of the monk includes not only these but in accordance with the strictest teaching of Jesus all sexual relations or emotion arising therefrom. The monastic idea of chastity is a life like that of the angels. Hence the phrases, "angelicus ordo", "angelica conversatio", which have been adopted from Origen to describe the life of the monk, no doubt in reference to Mark It is primarily as a means to this end that fasting takes so important a place in the monastic life. Among the early Egyptian and Syrian monks in particular fasting was carried to such lengths that some modern writers have been led to regard it almost as an end in itself, instead of being merely a means and a subordinate one at that. This error of course is confined to writers about monasticism, it has never been countenanced by any monastic teacher. This benefits those who count nothing dearer to them than Christ on account of the holy

service which they have undertaken At the same time it is the most essential of all as Jesus said Matthew The most essential also because by this means the monk achieves that perfect liberty which is only to be found where is the Spirit of the Lord. In Egypt at the dawn of monasticism the custom was for a young monk to put himself under the guidance of a senior whom he obeyed in all things. Although the bond between them was wholly voluntary the system seems to have worked perfectly and the commands of the senior were obeyed without hesitation. As the monastic life came to be organized by rule, the insistence on obedience remained the same, but its practice was legislated for. Benedict at the very outset, in the Prologue to his Rule, reminds the monk of the prime purpose of his life, viz. Later he devotes the whole of his fifth chapter to this subject and again, in detailing the vows his monks must take, while poverty and chastity are presumed as implicitly included, obedience is one of the three things explicitly promised. Indeed the saint even legislates for the circumstance of a monk being ordered to do something impossible. If, however, after this the superior still persist in his command, let the younger know that it is expedient for him, and let him obey the law of God trusting in His assistance" Reg. Moreover "what is commanded is to be done not fearfully, tardily, nor coldly, nor with murmuring, nor with an answer showing unwillingness, for the obedience which is given to superiors is given to God , since He Himself hath said, He that heareth you heareth Me" Reg. It is not hard to see why so much emphasis is laid on this point. The object of monasticism is to love God in the highest degree possible in this life. In true obedience the will of the servant is one with that of his master and the union of wills is love. Thomas , in chapter xi of his *Opusculum "On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life"*, points out that the three means of perfection, poverty, chastity, and obedience, belong peculiarly to the religious state. For religion means the worship of God alone, which consists in offering sacrifice, and of sacrifices the holocaust is the most perfect. Consequently when a man dedicates to God all that he has, all that he takes pleasure in, and all that he is, he offers a holocaust ; and this he does pre-eminently by the three religious vows. The different kinds of monks It must be clearly understood that the monastic order properly so-called differs from the friars , clerks regular, and other later developments of the religious life in one fundamental point. The latter have essentially some special work or aim, such as preaching, teaching, liberating captives, etc. This is not so in the case of the monk. He lives a special kind of life for the sake of the life and its consequences to himself. In a later section we shall see that monks have actually undertaken external labours of the most varied character, but in every case this work is extrinsic to the essence of the monastic state. Christian monasticism has varied greatly in its external forms, but, broadly speaking, it has two main species a the eremitical or solitary, b the cenobitical or family types. Anthony may be called the founder of the first and St. Pachomius of the second. In consequence it prevailed chiefly in northern Egypt from Lycopolis Asyut to the Mediterranean, but most of our information about it deals with Nitria and Scete. Cassian and Palladius give us full details of its working and from them we learn that the strictest hermits lived out of earshot of each other and only met together for Divine worship on Saturdays and Sundays , while others would meet daily and recite their psalms and hymns together in little companies of three or four. There was no Rule of Life among them but, as Palladius says, "they have different practices, each as he is able and as he wishes". The elders exercised an authority, but chiefly of a personal kind, their position and influence being in proportion to their reputation for greater wisdom. The monks would visit each other often and discourse, several together, on Holy Scripture and on the spiritual life. General conferences in which a large number took part were not uncommon.

Chapter 4 : Ebook Encyclopedia Of Monasticism Epub PDF

Encyclopedia of Monasticism - Kindle edition by William M. Johnston. Download it once and read it on your Kindle device, PC, phones or tablets. Use features like bookmarks, note taking and highlighting while reading Encyclopedia of Monasticism.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Edited by William M. Johnston; photo editor, Claire Renkin. Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, Most librarians in their heart of hearts believe that the importance of monasteries is not primarily ecclesiastical but rather bibliographical. This two-volume set claims to be the "first work in any language to examine monasticism past and present" ix. The editorial staff and contributors focus on the three "great" strands of monasticism: Buddhist monasticism, Eastern Christian monasticism, and Western Christian monasticism ix. In his introduction, Johnston readily admits that this work does no more than minimally address "Hindu, Jain, Daoist, or Islamic monastics or confraternities," but that such omissions were intentional given the focus on the "religious traditions that most conspicuously foster monasticism: Buddhism and Christianity" xi. Much of the information presented here on Eastern Orthodox and Buddhist monasticism is largely unavailable in other standard resources and is made even more valuable by its presentation in direct juxtaposition to the Western Christian traditions. The individual entries are somewhat uneven. The entry on "Libraries: Martin, Lancaster, is surprisingly short--barely two full pages --with only two black-and-white photographs--one of two buildings identified as halls containing woodblocks, the other of a cabinet containing the Tibetan canon--with little explanation. However, the text of the entry, if scant, contains engaging items. Written texts were given such devotion in monasteries in Japan that the books "are placed on specially constructed stands for reading purposes, and women are forbidden from resting them in their laps" Allison, associate professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Bates College, Maine, crafted a lengthy entry on "Libraries: Eastern Christian" that for some inexplicable reason has no illustrations at all. Despite the lack of photographs, Allison has constructed a believable presentation of the Eastern struggles to sustain libraries: According to chronicler Theodore Skoutariotes B. David Stewart, electronic services librarian at Princeton Theological Seminary, writes on "Libraries: Furthermore, Stewart uses the "See Also" and "Further Reading" sections to encourage readers to explore related topics. Two rich images of doors and doorways on the facing pages of complement the entry. A photograph of a book cupboard in a curiously shadowed hallway and one of a stark [End Page] library anteroom seem to hint to the reader that encyclopedia entries, like doors or doorways, are meant to lead into a topic, not satisfy one. This entry, too, is without photographs. Stewart ends this entry with the hope that the World Wide Web, which has provided "unimaginable" access

Chapter 5 : Encyclopedia of Monasticism: 1st Edition (e-Book) - Routledge

Monasticism or monachism, literally the act of "dwelling alone" (Greek monos, monazein, monachos), has come to denote the mode of life pertaining to persons living in seclusion from the world, under religious vows and subject to a fixed rule, as monks, friars, nuns, or in general as religious.

The "idea of monasticism" invites a misconception, because monasticism is not an idea but a practice. It is a discipline of life, encapsulated in a vow to obey a rule. Monasticism is not a theory about the good life, and still less an escape from practicality, but rather a commitment to live according to a rule handed down from a founder. In its classical Western form deriving from St. Basil, this secluded way of life begets institutions, some of them highly complex, and these in turn nurture the kind of inner life that in the early twenty-first century is called "spirituality. Implausible though it may seem, a rule shields monastics from obsession with theorizing. Day in and day out, monastics live an ethos that others may merely preach. To this extent Christian monasticism resembles Rabbinic Judaism. Both pivot on obeying rules, and both tend to disregard niceties of belief. A crucial difference pertains, however. Whereas Jews affirm that the mandates of Torah come from God, Christians acknowledge that any rule comes from a human lawgiver. History As a mode of life that vows obedience to a rule, monasticism originated not in the Near East but in India with Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha c. 500. Nine months of the year they wandered, but during the three months of the monsoon they settled in a vihara or monastery. Eventually the Buddha delivered a separate rule for women. Parallel phenomena coexisted within Jainism and Hinduism. Christian monasticism emerged six or seven centuries later in the deserts of the Eastern Mediterranean. Although Rabbinic Judaism together with Islam repudiates asceticism, Jewish precedents for Christian extremism emerged in a wanderer such as John the Baptist c. 30. Christian ascetics of whom little is known roved the deserts of Syria and Egypt. The lifestyle of these spiritual "athletes" crystallized in figures such as Anthony of Egypt c. 350. Experience as a soldier equipped Pachomius to write a rule for, as it were, an army-camp of ascetics. By mid-fourth century in Egypt, hermits living alone or in loose groups practiced eremitical monasticism, while desert fathers and mothers living in community practiced cenobitical monasticism. The head of a consecrated community was called an abba father or amma mother. From the start monks were copying manuscripts, as they would continue to do for the next twelve centuries. Eastern desert monasticism passed to France through fourth-century intermediaries such as Martin of Tours c. 350. Epitomized in the disputed figure of St. Columbanus, in sixth- and seventh-century Ireland, an island that had never known Roman cities, an abbot ruled as a kind of tribal chieftain who outranked bishops. No amount of asceticism could, however, prevent Celtic monasticism from collapsing in the Viking raids of the ninth century. By the sixth century, Eastern Christian monasticism was coalescing not just in the desert but also in cities such as Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, while its Western counterpart kept spreading in self-sufficient rural communities. Monastics lived in an enclosure or cloister that fenced a church, a refectory, a library, dormitories, and subsistence farming. Monasticism produced vastly more varieties in Western Europe than anywhere else. Proliferation of types— notably during two periods, one from 500 to 600 and the other from 1000 to 1200— complicates the task of classifying Western monasticism. Fundamental differences separate cloistered orders who, at least until the thirteenth century, preferred to dwell in the country and Mendicant friars who, in the wake of St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1200), frequented cities and towns preaching and begging for alms. Stemming from the Black Monks, who only in the seventeenth century acquired the name of Benedictines, other rural orders were the Carthusians founded c. 840 and the Cistercians founded c. 1098. Following the example of the Franciscan friars organized c. 1200, thirteenth-century Mendicants came to include three other orders: Whereas the pre-Benedictines had cultivated son-to-father obedience to an abbot, Mendicants cultivated sibling-to-sibling relations to one another. Excelling all these in martial vigor were the warrior monks of Crusader Palestine, including the Knights Templar who emerged c. 1119. A second crucial distinction differentiates contemplative orders founded before 1000 from post-Reformation active orders and congregations such as the Jesuits founded c. 1540 or Oratorians founded c. 1580. The latter comprise not monastics but clerks regular: Having no lay brothers, the Jesuits and Oratorians are not monastics, and neither are the numerous post female teaching or nursing congregations

such as the Ursulines founded or Sisters of Charity founded. A third distinction pertains to Eastern and Western Christianity. In contrast to Western organizational fecundity, Eastern Christian monasticism functions under just one rule: Basil the Great. As a result, Eastern Christian monasticism has upheld one model through sixteen centuries, while Western monasticism has initiated reforms in nearly every generation. To be sure, monastic reform means not launching a fresh departure but rather attempting to install a better version of the past. When the Buddha founded his religion, he conceived it solely as a monasticism. Lay Buddhism emerged after his lifetime and in Asia still presupposes proximity to a sangha. In Christianity and Hinduism, by way of contrast, monasticism competes with many other embodiments of the religion. This means that at least until the late twentieth century, classification of types of Buddhist monasticism amounts to classification of the religion as a whole, whereas classification of Christian monasticism does not. Three major types of Buddhism stand out: It offers to individual monastics rules for working out during this or later lifetimes gradual passage to enlightenment. Some schools promised enlightenment to laypeople and not just to monastics, while innovative "pure land" leaders in Japan such as Shinran discarded monasticism. Under the leadership of the present Dalai Lama, leader of the Gelukpa school, Tibetan Buddhism has spread throughout the world. Many non-Buddhists in the early twenty-first century mistakenly regard Tibetan forms as synonymous with Buddhism per se. This misperception overlooks the dozens of schools of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana that thrive throughout Asia and increasingly in the West. Twentieth-Century Changes Asian Buddhism enforces the vinaya strictly, not least because that is what the historical Buddha did. In order to promote meditation, traditional Asian Buddhism imposes a life of renunciation including dietary restrictions, memorization of texts, and attendance at ceremonies with a stringency that Western adepts often evade. In consequence monastic rigor is diminishing among new Buddhists in North America, Europe, and Australia. Many so-called Western Buddhists appear intent to de-monasticize their religion. As a countertrend, since the s Buddhist and Christian monastics have delighted in comparing their ways of life. The Trappist monk Thomas Merton and the Dalai Lama helped to initiate joint scholarly meetings and other intermonastic encounters. In Eastern Christianity, monastics retain authority not least because most bishops come from their ranks. Moreover, liturgies remain quintessentially monastic through use of chant, an unhurried pace, and lay adherence to monastic rules for fasting. Characteristically, Eastern Christianity boasts a "monastic republic" of male monasteries on the Holy Mountain of Athos the easternmost arm of the Chalcidice Peninsula in northeastern Greece. In order to uphold an autonomy that excludes women, the Holy Mountain enjoys exemption from laws of Greece and of the European Community. No Western monastic site and least of all the rebuilt Monte Cassino south of Rome so resoundingly epitomizes the idea of Western monasticism as Mount Athos does for the Eastern idea. As the English classicist Graham Speake explains, that idea entails a process of inner transformation known as theosis, whereby the image of God nurtured in each adept gradually transfigures, indeed divinizes him or her, in body, mind, and spirit. The prestige of Western monasticism once stood equally high. The period of medieval history from to is frequently labeled the "Monastic Era," and the reforms inaugurated by monastic popes such as Gregory VII; ruled as pope can be viewed as having imposed on all priests the practice of celibacy previously reserved to monastics. Needless to say, Roman Catholic monastics no longer command such attention. Nevertheless, apart from pilgrimages, the institutions of contemplative monasticism engage only a tiny minority of Western Christians, while the spirituality that developed there wins ever-greater admiration. Meanwhile, gender studies has transformed the understanding of the idea of monasticism. Since the s researchers have reclaimed phenomena as diverse as the Desert Mothers of fourth-century Egypt, double houses of male and female monastics in twelfth-century France and England, and the rather widespread acknowledgement before of the spiritual equality of women and men. The Benedictine Hildegard of Bingen has come to be hailed widely as one of the most original Christian writers ever. The constraint remained in force until the early s. As the American historian Jo Ann Kay McNamara and the English philosopher Grace Jantzen, among others, show, almost everywhere in the West women monastics have proven to be at least as creative as men. At first nearly every branch of Eastern Christianity fostered autonomous houses for women, but many of these communities withered under Islamic occupation. In Theravada Buddhism and in Tibetan Buddhism, by way of contrast, a

millennium ago women lost permission to receive the highest ordination as nuns bhikkuni , while in Mahayana countries such as China, Japan, and, above all, Korea nuns have held their own. Monasticism as the Institutional Matrix of Spirituality During the last decades of the twentieth century, postmodernists began to conflate the idea of monasticism with that of spirituality. The latter word means a process of inner transformation in the presence of God such as Christian monastics pioneered from the fourth century onward. In the twelfth century the Latin word spiritualitas came into use among Cistercians to denote the presence of the Holy Spirit within a monastic. Both the adjective spiritual and the noun mysticism sprouted in seventeenth-century France to describe inner religious experience of monastics and laity alike. Although many Eastern Christian monastics hesitate to apply this Latin-derived word to the process of inner re-conditioning that they call theosis i. What Do We Know about St. A scholarly controversy of utmost delicacy affects interpretation of the reputed founder of Western monasticism, the author of its major rule, St. Benedict of Nursia c. The words of his Rule have been pondered in thousands of monasteries, and episodes from his life have animated countless paintings and hagiographies. Regrettably, apart from his Rule, all record of St. These genuine passages comprise 25 percent of the whole, half of them in Book IV. In themes, allusions, and word frequencies, the Dialogues differ from every known work by Gregory. Moreover, the tales glorify many persons, including St. In his view its true creators were not, as previously believed, monastics at Monte Cassino in the s or at the Gregorian papal court of the s, but rather Italian and French monastics of the s who drew inspiration from the newly available Dialogues. One can no longer affirm the traditional account of how Benedictine monasticism began. All that is known is that a rule ascribed to a certain Benedict had surfaced by the s and had begun to establish its preeminence by The idea of Western monasticism no longer enjoys an agreed-upon foundational story. Seldom has a legend accepted for so long dissolved so abruptly. A gigantic task of rethinking looms. The Dutch literary scholar M. Pranger calls into question postmodern infatuation with spirituality by contrasting its eclecticism with the monotony of textual memory within pre monasteries.

MONASTICISM. The "idea of monasticism" invites a misconception, because monasticism is not an idea but a practice. It is a discipline of life, encapsulated in a vow to obey a rule.

In the early church, monasticism was based on the identification of perfection with world-denying asceticism and on the view that the perfect Christian life would be centred on maximum love of God and neighbour. Monasticism emerged in the late 3rd century and had become an established institution in the Christian church by the 4th century. The first Christian monks, who had developed an enthusiasm for asceticism, appeared in Egypt and Syria. Anthony, the founder of Christian monasticism, they appeared as solitary figures who, out of a desire for further and more advanced isolation, established themselves in tombs, in abandoned or half-deteriorated human settlements, in caves, and, finally, in the wilderness of the desert to do battle against the desires of the flesh and the wiles of the devil. Soon there were great numbers of desert anchorites, living solitary lives of devotion to God and coming together for weekly prayer services. The pious lifestyle of these earliest holy men attracted numerous imitators and admirers. Certain writings that captured the spirit of monasticism were essential for the development of this way of life in the church. Antony, which described the eremitic hermit life in the desert and the awesome struggle of ascetics with demons as the model of the life of Christian perfection. The Life had a profound impact on its many readers and was one of the first great testimonials praising the emerging monastic tradition. A former Roman soldier of the 4th century, Pachomius, created the first cenobitic, or communal, monastery. He united the monks under one roof and one abbot father, or leader. In he founded the first true monastic cloister in Tabennisi, north of Thebes, in Egypt, and joined together houses of 30 to 40 monks, each with its own superior. Pachomius also created a monastic rule, though it served more as a regulation of external monastic life than as spiritual guidance. During the remainder of the 4th century, monasticism soon developed in areas outside Egypt. Athanasius brought the monastic rule of Pachomius to the West during his banishment to Trier, Germany as a result of his opposition to the imperially sanctioned doctrines of Arianism. Mar Awgin, a Syrian monk, introduced the monastic rule in Mesopotamia, and Jerome established a monastic cloister in Bethlehem. Basil the Great, one of the three Cappadocian Fathers of the 4th century, definitively shaped monastic community life in the Byzantine Church. He was the creator of a monastic rule that, through constant variations and modifications, became authoritative for later Orthodox monasticism. The Rule of Basil has preserved the Orthodox combination of asceticism and mysticism into the 21st century. Western monasticism, which has been shaped by the rule of Benedict of Nursia, has been characterized by two distinct developments. The first consists of its clericalization. In modern Roman Catholic cloisters, monks are, except for the serving brothers fratres, ordained priests and are thereby drawn in a direct way into the ecclesiastical tasks of the Roman Church. Originally, however, monks were laymen. Even in the 21st century, monks of the Orthodox Church are, for the most part, from the laity; only a few fathers abbots of each cloister are ordained priests hieromonachoi, who are thus allowed to administer the sacraments. The second special development in Roman Catholicism consists of the functional characteristics of its many orders. The individual orders aid the church in its various areas of activity. Developing a wide-ranging diversification in its structure and sociological interests, Roman Catholic monasticism has extended all the way from the knightly orders to orders of mendicant friars, and it has included orders of decided feudal and aristocratic characteristics alongside orders of purely bourgeois characteristics. To the degree that special missionary, pedagogical, scholarly-theological, and ecclesiastically political tasks of the orders increased in the West, the character of ancient monasticism originally focused completely on prayer, meditation, and contemplation receded more and more in importance. Few monastic orders the Benedictines and the Carmelites are notable exceptions still attempt to preserve the ancient character and purposes of monasticism in Roman Catholicism.

Chapter 7 : Christian monasticism - Wikipedia

Encyclopedia of Monasticism. Edited by William M. Johnston. 2 volumes. (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers. Pp. xxxiv, ; xii, \$) The torrent of research in many disciplines over the last thirty-five years has brought us to the age of synthesis or synopsis. In the last two.

Encyclopedia of Monasticism William M. That pursuit, the monastic life, is the subject of a wonderful new reference work. Buddhist, Eastern Christian, and Western Christian. More than entries are alphabetically arranged and cover important persons, such as the founders of particular orders or great reformers; concepts; doctrines; practices; and the monastic history of places, whether country, city, or individual monastery. Aspects of monastic life such as celibacy and fasting are described in both their Buddhist and Christian contexts. One would expect entries for the various monastic rules that have guided Buddhist and Christian communities, but this work includes entries one might not expect, such as monastic attitudes toward animals Animals, Attitude toward: Buddhist Perspectives; Animals, Attitude toward: Christian Perspectives and the contributions of Western Christian monasteries to the development of pharmacology. The encyclopedia is historical in scope but includes specific concerns of the twentieth century as well, including intermonastic dialogue between Buddhists and Christians, the growth of Buddhism in the U. The entry Internet, Buddhist and Christian even includes Web and e-mail addresses, demonstrating just how contemporary ancient lifestyles can be. Entries conclude with supplemental bibliographies and are signed by the scholars who wrote them. Cross-references lead readers to appropriate headings or related text. The work is illustrated throughout, including 48 pages of well-chosen color plates, and concludes with a thorough index. An alphabetical list of entries and an outline of entries by theme precede the main text. Interested readers will have to rely upon the Encyclopedia of Religion Macmillan, and the Encyclopedia of Islam Brill, Withdrawal from society and its cares is a hallmark of monastic life, but this is not to say that monastic seclusion has had no influence on the broader society. The contributions of monastics to art, architecture, agriculture, philosophy, theology, and even the brewing of beer covered in Brewing, Western Christian are immense. The Encyclopedia of Monasticism presents these contributions as well, making it a reference tool of use to interests other than religion. Related This entry was posted on January 2, at 8: You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2. You can leave a response , or trackback from your own site.

Chapter 8 : Monasticism - New World Encyclopedia

MONASTICISM: BUDDHIST MONASTICISM. The myth of the historical Buddha's life provides the basic model for Buddhist monasticism. Prince Siddh Ā• rtha Gautama went, in Buddhist language, on the "Middle Way," a life of moderate asceticism, between lay life and extreme asceticism.

Jain monasticism In Jainism , monasticism is encouraged and respected. Rules for monasticism are rather strict. A Jain ascetic has neither a permanent home nor any possessions, wandering barefoot from place to place except during the months of Chaturmas. The quality of life they lead is difficult because of the many constraints placed on them. Nazirite Judaism does not encourage the monastic ideal of celibacy and poverty. However, until the Destruction of the Second Temple , about two thousand years ago, taking Nazirite vows was a common feature of the religion. Nazirite Jews in Hebrew: Unique among Jewish communities is the monasticism of the Beta Israel of Ethiopia, a practice believed to date to the 15th century. Its principal expression was prishut, the practice of a married Talmud student going into self-imposed exile from his home and family to study in the kollel of a different city or town. The Essenes in Modern but not in Ancient Hebrew: Many separate but related religious groups of that era shared similar mystic , eschatological , messianic , and ascetic beliefs. These groups are collectively referred to by various scholars as the "Essenes". Josephus records that Essenes existed in large numbers, and thousands lived throughout Roman Judaea. These documents include multiple preserved copies of the Hebrew Bible which were untouched from as early as years before Christ until their discovery in Some scholars, however, dispute the notion that the Essenes wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls. Taoist philosophy and White Cloud Monastery Taoism is considered to have originally taken up the idea of monasticism under the influence of Buddhism, but has throughout the centuries developed its own extensive monastic traditions and practices. Ananda Marga has both monks and nuns i. The monks and nuns are engaged in all kinds of direct services to society, so they have no scope for permanent retreat. They do have to follow strict celibacy, poverty and many other rules of conduct during as well as after they have completed their training. Manichaeism had two types of followers, the auditors, and the elect. The elect lived apart from the auditors to concentrate on reducing the material influences of the world. They did this through strict celibacy, poverty, teaching, and preaching. Therefore, the elect were probably at least partially monastic. Scientology maintains a "fraternal order" called the Sea Organization or just Sea Org. They work only for the Church of Scientology and have signed billion year contracts. Sea Org members live communally with lodging, food, clothing, and medical care provided by the Church. Way of Former Heaven sect of Zhaijiao.

Chapter 9 : Monasticism - Wikipedia

Monasticism (from Greek μόνος, monachos, derived from μόνος, monos, "alone") or monkhood is a religious way of life in which one renounces worldly pursuits to devote oneself fully to spiritual work.

FREE Catholic Classes Monasticism or monachism, literally the act of "dwelling alone" Greek monos, monazein, monachos , has come to denote the mode of life pertaining to persons living in seclusion from the world, under religious vows and subject to a fixed rule, as monks, friars, nuns, or in general as religious. The basic idea of monasticism in all its varieties is seclusion or withdrawal from the world or society. The object of this is to achieve a life whose ideal is different from and largely at variance with that pursued by the majority of mankind ; and the method adopted, no matter what its precise details may be, is always self-abnegation or organized asceticism. Taken in this broad sense monachism may be found in every religious system which has attained to a high degree of ethical development, such as Brahmin, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Moslem religions, and even in the sytem of those modern communistic societies, often anti-theological in theory, which are a special feature of recent social development especially in America. Hence it is claimed that a form of life which flourishes in environments so diverse must be the expression of a principle inherent in human nature and rooted therein no less deeply than the principle of domesticity, though obviously limited to a far smaller portion of mankind. It has already been pointed out that the monastic ideal is an ascetic one, but it would be wrong to say that the earliest Christian asceticism was monastic. While admitting this, however, it is equally certain that monasticism, when it came, was little more than a precipitation of ideas previously in solution among Christians. For asceticism is the struggle against worldly principles, even with such as are merely worldly without being sinful. The world desires and honours wealth, so the ascetic loves and honours poverty. If he must have something in the nature of property then he and his fellows shall hold it in common, just because the world respects and safeguards private ownership. In like manner he practises fasting and virginity that thereby he may repudiate the licence of the world. Hereafter the various items of this renunciation will be dealt with in detail, they are mentioned at this time merely to show how the monastic ideal was foreshadowed in the asceticism of the Gospel and its first followers. Such passages as I John, ii, "If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the father but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" -- passages which might be multiplied, and can bear but one meaning if taken literally. And this is precisely what the early ascetics did. We read of some who, driven by the spirit of God, dedicated their energies to the spread of the Gospel and, giving up all their possessions passed from city to city in voluntary poverty as apostles and evangelists. Of others we hear that they renounced property and marriage so as to devote their lives to the poor and needy of their particular church. If these were not strictly speaking monks and nuns, at least the monks and nuns were such as these; and, when the monastic life took definite shape in the fourth century, these forerunners were naturally looked up to as the first exponents of monachism. Besides a desire of observing the evangelical counsels, and a horror of the vice and disorder that prevailed in a pagan age, two contributory causes in particular are often indicated as leading to a renunciation of the world among the early Christians. The first of these was the expectation of an immediate Second Advent of Christ cf. That this belief was widespread is admitted on all hands, and obviously it would afford a strong motive for renunciation since a man who expects this present order of things to end at any moment, will lose keen interest in many matters commonly held to be important. This belief however had ceased to be of any great influence by the fourth century, so that it cannot be regarded as a determining factor in the origin of monasticism which then took visible shape. A second cause more operative in leading men to renounce the world was the vividness of their belief in evil spirits. The first Christians saw the kingdom of Satan actually realized in the political and social life of heathendom around them. In their eyes the gods whose temples shone in every city were simply devils, and to participate in their rites was to join in devil worship. When Christianity first came in touch with the Gentiles the Council of Jerusalem by its decree about meat offered to

idols Acts But the difficulty existed for private individuals also. To honour these was idolatry, to ignore them would attract inquiry, and possibly persecution. And so when, to men placed in this dilemma, St. John wrote, "Keep yourselves from idols" I John,v,21 he said in effect "Keep yourselves from public life, from society, from politics, from intercourse of any kind with the heathen ", in short, "renounce the world". By certain writers the communitarian element seen in the Church of Jerusalem during the years of its existence Acts 4: Probably the community of goods was simply a natural continuation of the practice, begun by Jesus and the Apostles, where one of the band kept the common purse and acted as steward. There is no indication that such a custom was ever instituted elsewhere and even at Jerusalem it seems to have collapsed at an early period. It must be recognized also that influences such as the above were merely contributory and of comparatively small importance. So we find monachism at first instinctive, informal, unorganized, sporadic; the expression of the same force working differently in different places, persons, and circumstances; developing with the natural growth of a plant according to the environment in which it finds itself and the character of the individual listener who heard in his soul the call of "Follow Me". For him, as for all men, the end of life is to love God. Monastic asceticism then means the removal of obstacles to loving God, and what these obstacles are is clear from the nature of love itself. Love is the union of wills. No one understands better than the monk those words of the beloved disciple, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life", for in his case life has come to mean renunciation. Broadly speaking this renunciation has three great branches corresponding to the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The argument based on such passages as Matthew If a man wish to attain eternal life it is better for him to renounce his possessions than to retain them. Augustine points out, the disciples evidently understood Jesus to include all who covet riches in the number of "the rich", otherwise, considering the small number of the wealthy compared with the vast multitude of the poor, they would not have asked, "Who then shall be saved"? Man cannot sate his nature with the temporal and yet retain an appetite for the eternal ; and so, if he would live the life of the spirit, he must flee the lust of the earth and keep his heart detached from what is of its very nature unspiritual. The extent to which this spiritual poverty is practised has varied greatly in the monachism of different ages and lands. In Egypt the first teachers of monks taught that the renunciation should be made as absolute as possible. Abbot Agathon used to say, "Own nothing which it would grieve you to give to another". Macarius once, on returning to his cell, found a robber carrying off his scanty furniture. Another monk had so stripped himself of all things that he possessed nothing save a copy of the Gospels. After a while he sold this also and gave the price away saying, "I have sold the very book that bade me sell all I had". As the monastic institute became more organized legislation appeared in the various codes to regulate this point among others. That the principle remained the same however is clear from the strong way in which St. Benedict speaks of the matter while making special allowance for the needs of the infirm, etc. Let no one presume either to give or to receive anything without leave of the abbot, nor to keep anything as his own, neither book, nor writing tablets, nor pen, nor anything whatsoever, since it is unlawful for them to have their bodies or wills in their own power". The principle here laid down, viz. No matter to what extent any individual monk may be allowed the use of clothing, books, or even money, the ultimate proprietorship in such things can never be permitted to him. Hence in the ascending order chastity is the second of the evangelical counsels , and as such it is based upon the words of Jesus, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters yea and his own soul also, he cannot be my disciple " Luke It is obvious that of all the ties that bind the human heart to this world the possession of wife and children is the strongest. Moreover the renunciation of the monk includes not only these but in accordance with the strictest teaching of Jesus all sexual relations or emotion arising therefrom. The monastic idea of chastity is a life like that of the angels. Hence the phrases, "angelicus ordo", "angelica conversatio", which have been adopted from Origen to describe the life of the monk, no doubt in reference to Mark, xii, It is primarily as a means to this end that fasting takes so important a place in the monastic life. Among the early Egyptian and Syrian monks in particular fasting was carried to such lengths that some modern writers have been led to regard it almost as an end in itself, instead of being merely a means and a subordinate one at that. This error of course is confined to writers about monasticism, it has never been countenanced by any monastic teacher. This benefits those who

count nothing dearer to them than Christ on account of the holy service which they have undertaken At the same time it is the most essential of all as Jesus said Matthew The most essential also because by this means the monk achieves that perfect liberty which is only to be found where is the Spirit of the Lord. In Egypt at the dawn of monasticism the custom was for a young monk to put himself under the guidance of a senior whom he obeyed in all things. Although the bond between them was wholly voluntary the system seems to have worked perfectly and the commands of the senior were obeyed without hesitation. As the monastic life came to be organized by rule, the insistence on obedience remained the same, but its practice was legislated for. Benedict at the very outset, in the Prologue to his Rule, reminds the monk of the prime purpose of his life, viz. Later he devotes the whole of his fifth chapter to this subject and again, in detailing the vows his monks must take, while poverty and chastity are presumed as implicitly included, obedience is one of the three things explicitly promised. Indeed the saint even legislates for the circumstance of a monk being ordered to do something impossible. If, however, after this the superior still persist in his command, let the younger know that it is expedient for him, and let him obey the law of God trusting in His assistance" Reg. Moreover "what is commanded is to be done not fearfully, tardily, nor coldly, nor with murmuring, nor with an answer showing unwillingness, for the obedience which is given to superiors is given to God, since He Himself hath said, He that heareth you heareth Me" Reg. It is not hard to see why so much emphasis is laid on this point. The object of monasticism is to love God in the highest degree possible in this life. In true obedience the will of the servant is one with that of his master and the union of wills is love. Thomas, in chapter xi of his Opusculum "On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life", points out that the three means of perfection, poverty, chastity, and obedience, belong peculiarly to the religious state. For religion means the worship of God alone, which consists in offering sacrifice, and of sacrifices the holocaust is the most perfect. Consequently when a man dedicates to God all that he has, all that he takes pleasure in, and all that he is, he offers a holocaust ; and this he does pre-eminently by the three religious vows. The latter have essentially some special work or aim, such as preaching, teaching, liberating captives, etc. This is not so in the case of the monk. He lives a special kind of life for the sake of the life and its consequences to himself. In a later section we shall see that monks have actually undertaken external labours of the most varied character, but in every case this work is extrinsic to the essence of the monastic state. Christian monasticism has varied greatly in its external forms, but, broadly speaking, it has two main species a the eremitical or solitary, b the cenobitical or family types. Anthony may be called the founder of the first and St. Pachomius of the second. In consequence it prevailed chiefly in northern Egypt from Lycopolis Asyut to the Mediterranean, but most of our information about it deals with Nitria and Scete. Cassian and Palladius give us full details of its working and from them we learn that the strictest hermits lived out of earshot of each other and only met together for Divine worship on Saturdays and Sundays, while others would meet daily and recite their psalms and hymns together in little companies of three or four. There was no Rule of Life among them but, as Palladius says, "they have different practices, each as he is able and as he wishes". The elders exercised an authority, but chiefly of a personal kind, their position and influence being in proportion to their reputation for greater wisdom. The monks would visit each other often and discourse, several together, on Holy Scripture and on the spiritual life. General conferences in which a large number took part were not uncommon. Gradually the purely eremitical life tended to die out Cassian, "Conf. It was about the year that St.