

The diploma thesis presented here informs the academic public on a specific social group of Theravadian monks in Sri Lanka. The paper focuses mainly on providing a detailed survey of the present situation of Theravadian forest monks and their relations to the main-stream modern society of Sri Lanka. The author of the thesis presents the findings, which he collected during his field research between October 2004 and September 2006. The method he had chosen, the "living-in research" enabled him to become a full member of the monastic community. Therefore, besides from being an involved observer of the examined phenomena, he was able to participate in the action himself. The synchronous aspect of this work consists in a detailed examination of the present situation of the individual subjects and relations among them. The position of a monk (bhikkhu) and that of the monastic community (Sangha) in Sri Lanka traces back to 2000 years ago and the mutual monk-laymen relations have undergone many changes. For this reason, a part of the thesis is dedicated to monitoring the development of the Sangha and its position from the very beginning to the present times. Within this part, the author goes into more depth when describing the dynamic phenomena related to the culmination of colonialism in the second half of 19th century. In anthropology literature, these phenomena have been described as "Protestant Buddhism" and "Buddhist Revival" and include the crucial period of around the year of 1956, a period in which Buddhists celebrated 2 500 years of the existence of the Buddha's teaching, "Buddha Jayanti". In that time, the forest monastic tradition in Sri Lanka experienced a major revival and there was a follow-up new development which has continued even until today. In this part of the thesis, a diachronous aspect of examination is used. Another important part of the work consists in a written source analysis and criticism.