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LIVING ON BORROWED IDENTITY: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY SRI LANKAN BUDDHIST MONKS IN THEIR *PIRIVENA* EDUCATION

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The Buddhist education tradition is pedagogically sound and well organised as many other education systems in Sri Lanka. The Buddhist education system facilitates both Buddhist monks and male-laities to become well-educated citizens. Traditionally, the education of Buddhist monks had been a matter of studying under older, intelligent, and well-disciplined monks (*Sthavira*) within monasteries. The Sri Lankan Buddhist education system was well integrated into Sri Lankan intelligence tradition, even though its importance was declined soon after the lay-focus missionary education system was established during the British colonisation period. Because the government of Sri Lanka mainstreamed and facilitated a lay-focused education system as a priority welfare concern, the *Pirivena* education system has been neglected and under-facilitated. However, the contribution of *Pirivena* is still important for student- Buddhist monks as the education of Buddhist monks often relies on the *Pirivena* education system, even though it faces several challenges. Therefore, identifying the challenges of *Pirivena* education of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka was the main objective of this study. A qualitative case study design was employed for this research, and thematic analysis was applied. The analysis indicates that the internal culture of the *Pirivena* education institution has important implications for Bhikkhus' education. The influence of hierarchical organisation of power and authority with educational institutions has been recognised as critical for education among student-Buddhist monks. Conscious behavioural changes undergone during the transition from laity to monkhood is another important determinant that causes challenges in *Pirivena* education. Overall, it is argued that there is an urgent need of revising the existing *Pirivena* education system whilst reflecting the dynamics of changing Sri Lankan society.

Keywords: Behavioural changes, Novice Buddhist monks, *Pirivena* education, Reflective identity, Subculture