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Tray

Tray are special handmade coverings placed over new robes offered to monks during the Theravada Buddhist *Kathin* celebration. *Kathin* is usually observed in October at the end of the three-month rainy season retreat. Monks may not leave the temple grounds during the rainy season because they may unintentionally step on insects that come out during the rain. The *Kathin* celebration marks the time when the monks may once again go about their daily activities. It is also a time when lay people express generosity and show appreciation to the monks by bringing gifts, especially new robes.

A *tray* is constructed from a rectangular board that is approximately 2'x1'. Padding is affixed on the top of the board and the padding and board are wrapped in a yellow cloth. Beaded designs are sewn onto the top of the *tray* and a beaded fringe is sewn around the board's edges. Beads can be plastic, glass, or precious gems. Creating a *tray* is an act of merit making and the artisan will use the finest materials they can afford. As they make the *tray* for the monks, the artisan is mindful of the Buddha. The new robes are folded to



match the dimensions of the *tray*. The robes are then laid across the top of a silver offering bowl. The *tray* is then placed over the top of the robe. The beaded fringe hangs over the edge and covers the robes.