pli-tv-bu-vb-ay2 — Sitting alone with a woman

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on undetermined offenses

Sitting alone with a woman

Origin story

At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery. At this time Venerable Udāyī heard that the Buddha had prohibited sitting alone with a woman on a private and concealed seat suitable for the deed, and so instead he sat down in private alone with the same girl. When they were able, they just chatted; otherwise he gave her a teaching.

A second time Visākhā had been invited to that family. When she arrived, she saw Udāyī sitting in private alone with the same girl, and she said to Udāyī, "Venerable, it's not appropriate for you to sit down in private alone with a woman. You may not be aiming at that act, but it's hard to convince people with little confidence." But Udāyī did not listen. After leaving, Visākhā told the monks what had happened. The monks of few desires complained and criticized him, "How could Venerable Udāyī sit down in private alone with a woman?"

After rebuking Udāyī in many ways, they told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he had the Sangha gathered and questioned Udāyī: "Is it true, Udāyī, that you did this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked him … "Foolish man, how could you do this? This will affect people's confidence …" … "And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

'Although a seat is not concealed, nor suitable for the deed, it may be suitable for speaking indecently to a woman. If a monk sits down on such a seat in private alone with a woman, and a trustworthy female lay follower sees him and accuses him of an offense entailing suspension or an offense entailing confession, then, if he admits to the sitting, he is to be dealt with according to one of these two or according to what that trustworthy female lay follower has said. This rule too is undetermined.'"

Definitions

Although a seat is not concealed: it is not concealed by a wall, a screen, a door, a cloth screen, a tree, a pillar, a grain container, or anything else. Nor suitable for the deed: one is not able to have sexual intercourse. It may be suitable for speaking indecently to a woman: one is able to speak indecently to a woman. A: whoever … Monk: … The monk who has been given the full ordination by a unanimous Sangha through a legal procedure consisting of one motion and three announcements that is irreversible and fit to stand—this sort of monk is meant in this case. On such a seat: on that sort of seat. A woman: a human female, not a female spirit, not a female ghost, not a female animal. She understands and is capable of discerning good and bad speech, what is decent and what is indecent. With: together. Alone: just the monk and the woman. In private: private to the eye and private to the ear. Private to the eye: one is unable to see them winking, raising an eyebrow, or nodding. Private to the ear: one is unable to hear ordinary speech. Sits down: the monk sits down or lies down next to the seated woman. The woman sits down or lies down next to the seated monk. Both are seated or both are lying down. Trustworthy: she has attained the fruit, she has broken through, she has understood the instruction. Female lay follower: she has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Sangha. Sees: having seen. If she accuses him of an offense entailing suspension or an offense entailing confession, then, if he admits to the sitting, he is to be dealt with according to one of these two or according to what that trustworthy female lay follower has said.

If she accuses him like this: "I've seen you seated, making physical contact with a woman," and he admits to that, then he is to be dealt with for the offense. If she accuses him like this: "I've seen you seated, making physical contact with a woman," but he says, "It's true that I was seated, but I didn't make physical contact," then he is to be dealt with for the sitting. … "I wasn't seated, but lying down," then he is to be dealt with for the lying down. … "I wasn't seated, but standing," then he is not to be dealt with.

If she accuses him like this: "I've seen you lying down, making physical contact with a woman," and he admits to that, then he is to be dealt with for the offense. … "It's true that I was lying down, but I didn't make physical contact," then he is to be dealt with for the lying down. … "I wasn't lying down, but seated," then he is to be dealt with for the sitting. … "I wasn't lying down, but standing," then he is not to be dealt with.

If she accuses him like this: "I've heard you speaking indecently to a woman while seated," and he admits to that, then he is to be dealt with for the offense. If she accuses him like this: "I've heard you speaking indecently to a woman while seated," but he says, "It's true that I was seated, but I didn't speak indecently," then he is to be dealt with for the sitting. … "I wasn't seated, but lying down," then he is to be dealt with for the lying down. … "I wasn't seated, but standing," then he is not to be dealt with.

If she accuses him like this: "I've heard you speaking indecently to a woman while lying down," and he admits to that, then he is to be dealt with for the offense. … "It's true that I was lying down, but I didn't speak indecently," then he is to be dealt with for the lying down. … "I wasn't lying down, but seated," then he is to be dealt with for the sitting. … "I wasn't lying down, but standing," then he is not to be dealt with.

If she accuses him like this: "I've seen you seated in private alone with a woman," and he admits to that, then he is to be dealt with for the sitting. … "I wasn't seated, but lying

down,” then he is to be dealt with for the lying down. … “I wasn’t seated, but standing,” then he is not to be dealt with.

If she accuses him like this: “I’ve seen you lying down in private alone with a woman,” and he admits to that, then he is to be dealt with for the lying down. … “I wasn’t lying down, but seated,” then he is to be dealt with for the sitting. … “I wasn’t lying down, but standing,” then he is not to be dealt with.

This rule too: this is said with reference to the previous undetermined rule. Undetermined: not determined. It is either an offense entailing suspension or an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If he admits to going, and he admits to sitting, and he admits to an offense, he is to be dealt with for the offense. If he admits to going, but he does not admit to sitting, yet he admits to an offense, he is to be dealt with for the offense. If he admits to going, and he admits to sitting, but he does not admit to an offense, he is to be dealt with for the sitting. If he admits to going, but he does not admit to sitting, nor does he admit to an offense, he is not to be dealt with.

If he does not admit to going, but he admits to sitting, and he admits to an offense, he is to be dealt with for the offense. If he does not admit to going, nor does he admit to sitting, but he admits to an offense, he is to be dealt with for the offense. If he does not admit to going, but he admits to sitting, yet he does not admit to an offense, he is to be dealt with for the sitting. If he does not admit to going, nor does he admit to sitting, nor does he admit to an offense, he is not to be dealt with.

The second undetermined offense on sitting alone with a woman is finished.

“Venerables, the two undetermined rules have been recited. In regard to this I ask you, ‘Are you pure in this?’ A second time I ask, ‘Are you pure in this?’ A third time I ask, ‘Are you pure in this?’ You are pure in this and therefore silent. I will remember it thus.”

This is the summary:

“Suitable for the deed,

And then not so—

The undetermined offenses have been well laid down,

By the Stable One, the Buddha who is the best.”

The chapter on undetermined offenses is finished.