pli-tv-bu-vb-np7 — Accepting too many robes

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on relinquishment

The subchapter on robes

Accepting too many robes

Origin story

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, the monks from the group of six said to the monks whose robes had been stolen, "The Buddha has allowed a monk whose robes have been stolen or lost to ask an unrelated householder for a robe. You should ask for a robe."

"It's not necessary. We've already gotten robes."

"We'll ask for you."

"Do as you please."

The monks from the group of six then went to householders and said, "Monks have arrived whose robes have been stolen. Please give them robes." And they asked for many robes.

Soon afterwards in the public meeting hall a certain man said to another, "Sir, monks have arrived whose robes have been stolen. I've given them robes."

The other replied, "So have I." And another said the same.

They complained and criticized those monks, "How can the Sakyan monastics ask for many robes without moderation? Are they going to trade in cloth or set up shop?"

The monks heard the complaints of those people, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized those monks, "How could the monks from the group of six ask for many robes without moderation?"

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

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked them … “Foolish men, how could you do this? This will affect people’s confidence …” … “And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

‘If an unrelated male or female householder invites that monk to take many robes, he should accept at most one sarong and one upper robe. If he accepts more than that, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.’”

Definitions

That monk: the monk whose robes have been stolen. Unrelated: anyone who is not a descendant of one’s male ancestors going back eight generations, either on the mother’s side or on the father’s side. A male householder: any man who lives at home. A female householder: any woman who lives at home. Many robes: a lot of robes. Invites to take: saying, “Take as many as you like.” He should accept at most one sarong and one upper robe: if three robes are lost, he should accept two; if two robes are lost, he should accept one; if one robe is lost, he should not accept any. If he accepts more than that: if he asks for more than that, then for the effort there is an act of wrong conduct. When he gets the robe, it becomes subject to relinquishment.

The robe should be relinquished to a sangha, a group, or an individual. “And, monks, it should be relinquished like this. …” (To be expanded as in Bu NP 1:3.2.5–3.2.29, with appropriate substitutions.)

“Venerables, this robe, which I received after asking an unrelated householder for too many, is to be relinquished. I relinquish it to the Sangha.” … “the Sangha should give …” “you should give …” “I give this robe back to you.”

Permutations

If the person is unrelated and the monk perceives them as such, and he asks them for too many robes, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If the person is unrelated, but the monk is unsure of it, and he asks them for too many robes, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If the person is unrelated, but the monk perceives them as related, and he asks them for too many robes, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.

If the person is related, but the monk perceives them as unrelated, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If the person is related, but the monk is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If the person is related and the monk perceives them as such, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he takes too much, but with the intention of returning the remainder; if they give, saying, “The remainder is for you;” if they give, but not because his robes were stolen; if they give, but not because his robes were lost; if it is from relatives; if it is from those who have given an invitation; if it is by means of his own property; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on accepting too many robes, the seventh, is finished.