pli-tv-bu-vb-pc10 — Digging the earth

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on lying

Digging the earth

Origin story

At one time the Buddha was staying at Āḷavī at the Aggāḷava Shrine. At that time the monks of Āḷavī were doing building work, and they dug the earth and had it dug. People complained and criticized them, "How can the Sakyan monastics dig the earth and have it dug? They are hurting one-sensed life."

The monks heard the complaints of those people, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized those monks, "How can those monks at Āḷavī dig the earth and have it dug?" … "Is it true, monks, that you do this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked them … "Foolish men, how can you do this? People regard the earth as conscious. This will affect people's confidence …" … "And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

'If a monk digs the earth or has it dug, he commits an offense entailing confession.'"

Definitions

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. The earth: there are two kinds of earth: productive earth and unproductive earth. Productive earth: pure soil, pure clay, with few stones, with few pebbles, with few potsherds, with little gravel, with little sand; mostly soil, mostly clay. If it is unburned, it is also called "productive earth". A pile of soil or clay that has been rained on for more than four months—this too is called "productive earth". Unproductive earth: just stones, just pebbles, just potsherds, just gravel, just sand, with little soil, with little clay; mostly stones, mostly pebbles, mostly

potsherds, mostly gravel, mostly sand. If it is burned, it is also called “unproductive earth”. A pile of soil or clay that has been rained on for less than four months—this too is called “unproductive earth”. Digs: if he digs it himself, he commits an offense entailing confession. Has dug: if he asks another, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he only asks once, then even if the other digs a lot, he commits one offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If it is earth, and he perceives it as such, and he digs it or has it dug, or he breaks it or has it broken, or he burns it or has it burned, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If it is earth, but he is unsure of it, and he digs it or has it dug, or he breaks it or has it broken, or he burns it or has it burned, he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

If it is earth, but he does not perceive it as such, and he digs it or has it dug, or he breaks it or has it broken, or he burns it or has it burned, there is no offense.

If it is not earth, but he perceives it as such, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not earth, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not earth, and he does not perceive it as such, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he says, “Consider this,” “Give this,” “Bring this,” “There’s need for this,” “Make this allowable;” if it is unintentional; if he is not mindful; if he does not know; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on digging the earth, the tenth, is finished.

The first subchapter on lying is finished.

This is the summary:

“Falsely, abusive, and malicious talebearing,

Memorizing, and two on beds;

Except with one who understands, true,

Grave offense, digging.”