pli-tv-bu-vb-pc22 — Instructing nuns after sunset

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on the instruction

Instructing nuns after sunset

Origin story

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, the senior monks were taking turns instructing the nuns. Then, on one occasion, it was Venerable Cūḷapanthaka's turn. The nuns said, "Today the instruction won't be effective. Venerable Cūḷapanthaka will just be repeating the same thing over and over."

Soon afterwards those nuns went to Cūḷapanthaka, bowed, and sat down. Cūḷapanthaka then said to them, "Are you all here, sisters?"

"We're all here, venerable."

"Are you keeping the eight important principles?"

"We are."

After saying, "This is the instruction," he uttered the same heartfelt exclamation again and again:

"For the heedful one possessed of the higher mind,

For the sage training on the path to sagacity—

There are no sorrows for such a one,

The peaceful one, who is always mindful."

And the nuns said, "Didn't we say that the instruction wouldn't be effective, that Venerable Cūḷapanthaka would just be repeating the same thing over and over?" Cūḷapanthaka overheard that conversation between the nuns. He then rose up into the air, walked back and forth in space, and he stood, sat down, and lay down there. He emitted smoke and fire, and he disappeared, all the while uttering the same heartfelt exclamation and many other sayings by the Buddha. The nuns said, "It's astonishing and amazing! No previous

instruction has been as effective as this one from Venerable Cūḷapanthaka!" And Cūḷapanthaka kept on instructing those nuns until the dark of night and then dismissed them, saying, "Go, sisters."

But because the gates to town were closed, those nuns spent the night outside and only entered early in the morning. People complained and criticized them, "These nuns aren't celibate. They spend the night in the monastery with the monks and only now do they enter town."

The monks heard the complaints of those people, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized Cūḷapanthaka, "How could Venerable Cūḷapanthaka instruct the nuns after the sun has set?"... "Is it true, Cūḷapanthaka, that you did this?"

"It's true, sir."

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

Final ruling

'Even if he has been appointed, if a monk instructs the nuns after sunset, he commits an offense entailing confession.'"

Definitions

Has been appointed: has been appointed through a legal procedure consisting of one motion and three announcements. After sunset: after the sun has gone down. The nuns: they have been given the full ordination by both Sanghas. Instructs: if he instructs in the eight important principles or he gives any other teaching, he commits an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If the sun has set, and he perceives that it has, and he instructs the nuns, he commits an offense entailing confession. If the sun has set, but he is unsure of it, and he instructs the nuns, he commits an offense entailing confession. If the sun has set, but he perceives that it has not, and he instructs the nuns, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he instructs a nun who is fully ordained only on one side, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If the sun has not set, but he perceives that it has, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If the sun has not set, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If the sun has not set, and he perceives that it has not, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he recites; if he tests them; if he recites when asked to do so; if he asks a question; if he replies when asked a question; if he is speaking for the benefit of someone else and the nuns listen in; if it is to a trainee nun; if it is to a novice nun; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on instructing nuns after sunset, the second, is finished.