pli-tv-bu-vb-pc23 — Instructing nuns in a nunnery

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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 in a nunnery

Origin story

First substory

At one time when the Buddha was staying in the Sakyan country in the Banyan Tree Monastery at Kapilavatthu, the monks from the group of six went to the nunnery and instructed the nuns from the group of six.

Soon afterwards, other nuns said to the nuns from the group of six, “Come, venerables, let’s go to the instruction.”

“There’s no need. The monks from the group of six came and instructed us right here.”

The nuns complained and criticized the monks from the group of six, “How could the monks from the group of six go to the nunnery and instruct the nuns?” Then those nuns told the monks.

The monks of few desires complained and criticized those monks, “How could those monks do this?”… “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:

Preliminary ruling

‘If a monk goes to a nunnery and instructs the nuns, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

In this way the Buddha laid down this training rule for the monks.

Second substory

Soon afterwards Mahāpajāpati Gotamī became sick. The senior monks went to see her and said, "We hope you're bearing up, Gotamī, we hope you're getting better?"

"I'm not bearing up, venerables, and I'm not getting better. Please give me a teaching."

"It's not allowable for us to go a nunnery and teach the nuns." And being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not teach her.

Soon afterwards, after robing up in the morning, the Buddha took his bowl and robe and went to Mahāpajāpati Gotamī where he sat down on the prepared seat. He said to her, "I hope you're bearing up, Gotamī, I hope you're getting better?"

"Previously, sir, the senior monks would come and teach me, and because of that I would be comfortable. But now that this has been prohibited by the Buddha, they don't teach because they're afraid of wrongdoing. Because of that I'm not comfortable."

After instructing, inspiring, and gladdening her with a teaching, the Buddha got up from his seat and left. Soon afterwards the Buddha gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

"Monks, I allow you to go a nunnery and instruct a sick nun.

And so, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

'If a monk goes to a nunnery and instructs the nuns, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. This is the appropriate occasion: a nun is sick.'"

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. A nunnery: wherever nuns stay, even for a single night. Goes to: goes there. The nuns: they have been given the full ordination by both Sanghas. Instructs: if he instructs about the eight important principles, he commits an offense entailing confession. Except on an appropriate occasion: unless it is an appropriate occasion. A sick nun: she is not able to go to the instruction or to a formal meeting of the community.

Permutations

If she is fully ordained, and he perceives her as such, and he goes to the nunnery and instructs her, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. If she is fully ordained, but he is unsure of it, and he goes to the nunnery and instructs her, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. If she is fully ordained, but he does not perceive her as such, and he goes to the nunnery and instructs her, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he instructs her with another teaching, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If he instructs a nun who is fully ordained only on one side, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If she is not fully ordained, but he perceives her as such, he commits an offense

of wrong conduct. If she is not fully ordained, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If she is not fully ordained, and he does not perceive her as such, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if it is an appropriate occasion; 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 in a nunnery, the third, is finished.