# pli-tv-bu-vb-pc31 — Eating excessively at a public guesthouse

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## Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on eating

Eating excessively at a public guesthouse

Origin story

First substory

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, a certain association was preparing an almsmeal at a public guesthouse not far from Sāvatthī.

Then, after robing up in the morning, the monks from the group of six took their bowls and robes and entered Sāvatthī for alms. Not getting anything, they went to that public guesthouse. Because it was a long time since they had been there, people served them respectfully.

A second and a third day those monks did the same thing. Then they thought, "What's the point of returning to the monastery? Tomorrow we'll just have to come back here." So they stayed on and on right there, eating alms at the guesthouse, while the monastics of other religions left. People complained and criticized them, "How can the Sakyan monastics stay on and on, eating alms at the guesthouse? We don't prepare the almsfood just for them; we prepare it for everyone."

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 stay on and on, eating alms at a public guesthouse?" … "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 eats more than one almsmeal at a public guesthouse, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

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

Second substory

Soon afterwards Venerable Sāriputta was traveling through the Kosalan country on his way to Sāvatthī when he came to a public guesthouse. Because it was a long time since he had been there, people served him respectfully. After he had eaten, Sāriputta became severely ill, and he was unable to leave that guesthouse.

On the second day, too, those people said to him, “Please eat, venerable.” But since he knew that the Buddha had prohibited eating alms at a public guesthouse after staying on and on, and because he was afraid of wrongdoing, he did not accept. As a consequence, he missed his meal.

When he arrived at Sāvatthī, he told the monks what had happened, and they in turn told the Buddha.

Soon afterwards the Buddha gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

“Monks, I allow a sick monk to stay on at a public guesthouse and eat alms there.

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

Final ruling

‘If a monk who is not sick eats more than one almsmeal at a public guesthouse, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

Definitions

Who is not sick: who is able to leave that public guesthouse. Who is sick: who is unable to leave that public guesthouse. Almsmeal at a public guesthouse: as much as one needs of any of the five cooked foods, prepared for the general public, in a building, under a roof cover, at the foot of a tree, or out in the open. A monk who is not sick may eat there once. If he receives food beyond that with the intention of eating it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. For every mouthful swallowed, he commits an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If he is not sick, and he perceives himself as not sick, and he eats more than one almsmeal at a public guesthouse, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he is not sick, but he is unsure of it, and he eats more than one almsmeal at a public guesthouse, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he is not sick, but he perceives himself as sick, and he eats more than one almsmeal at a public guesthouse, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he is sick, but he perceives himself as not sick, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If he is sick, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If he is sick,

and he perceives himself as sick, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he is sick; if he is not sick and he eats once; if he eats while coming or going; if he eats after being invited by the owners; if the food is prepared specifically for him; if there is not as much as he needs; if it is anything apart from the five cooked foods; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on eating excessively at a public guesthouse, the first, is finished.