pli-tv-bu-vb-pc32 — Eating in a group

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on eating

Eating in a group

Origin story

First substory

At one time the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrel sanctuary. At that time, because of his loss of material support and honor, Devadatta and his followers had to ask families repeatedly to get invited to meals. People complained and criticized him, "How can the Sakyan monastics repeatedly ask families to get invited to meals? Who doesn't like nice food? Who doesn't prefer tasty food?"

The monks heard the complaints of those people, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized those monks, "How can Devadatta and his followers repeatedly ask families to get invited to meals?" … "Is it true, Devadatta, that you do this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked him … "Foolish man, how can you do this? This will affect people's confidence …" … "And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

First preliminary ruling

'If a monk eats in a group, he commits an offense entailing confession.'"

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

Second substory

Soon afterwards people invited sick monks to a meal. But knowing that the Buddha had prohibited eating in a group and being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not accept. They told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

"Monks, I allow a sick monk to eat in a group.

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

Second preliminary ruling

‘If a monk eats in a group, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. This is the appropriate occasion: he is sick.’”

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

Third substory

Soon afterwards, during the robe-giving season, people prepared a meal together with robe-cloth and then invited the monks, saying, “We wish to offer a meal and then give robe-cloth.” But knowing that the Buddha had prohibited eating in a group and being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not accept. As a result, they only got a small amount of robe-cloth. They told the Buddha. …

“Monks, I allow you to eat in a group during the robe-giving season.

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

Third preliminary ruling

‘If a monk eats in a group, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: he is sick; it is the robe-giving season.’”

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

Fourth substory

Soon afterwards people invited the robe-making monks for a meal. But knowing that the Buddha had prohibited eating in a group and being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not accept. They told the Buddha. …

“Monks, I allow you to eat in a group at a time when you are making robes.

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

Fourth preliminary ruling

‘If a monk eats in a group, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: he is sick; it is the robe-giving season; it is a time of making robes.’”

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

Fifth substory

Soon afterwards some monks went traveling with a group of people. The monks said to those people, “Please wait a moment while we walk for alms.” They replied, “Venerables, please eat right here.” But knowing that the Buddha had prohibited eating in a group and being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not accept. They told the Buddha. …

“Monks, I allow you to eat in a group when you’re traveling.

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

Fifth preliminary ruling

'If a monk eats in a group, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: he is sick; it is the robe-giving season; it is a time of making robes; he is traveling.'"

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

Sixth substory

Soon afterwards some monks were traveling by boat with a group of people. The monks said to those people, "Please go to the shore for a moment while we walk for alms." They replied, "Venerables, please eat right here." But knowing that the Buddha had prohibited eating in a group and being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not accept. They told the Buddha. …

"Monks, I allow you to eat in a group when on board a boat.

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

Sixth preliminary ruling

'If a monk eats in a group, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: he is sick; it is the robe-giving season; it is a time of making robes; he is traveling; he is on a boat.'"

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

Seventh substory

Soon afterwards monks who had completed the rainy-season residence in various regions were coming to Rājagaha to visit the Buddha. People saw those monks who had come from various countries and invited them for a meal. But knowing that the Buddha had prohibited eating in a group and being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not accept. They told the Buddha. …

"Monks, I allow you to eat in a group on big occasions.

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

Seventh preliminary ruling

'If a monk eats in a group, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: he is sick; it is the robe-giving season; it is a time of making robes; he is traveling; he is on a boat; it is a big occasion.'"

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

Eighth substory

Soon afterwards a relative of King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha who had gone forth with the Ājīvaka ascetics went to the king and said, "Great king, I wish to make a meal for the

monastics of all religions."

"That's fine, sir, if you first feed the Sangha of monks headed by the Buddha."

"I'll do that."

And he sent a message to the monks: "Please accept a meal from me tomorrow." But knowing that the Buddha had prohibited eating in a group and being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not accept. That Ājīvaka ascetic then went to the Buddha, exchanged pleasantries with him, and said, "Good Gotama has gone forth and so have I. One who has gone forth should receive alms from another who has gone forth. Good Gotama, please accept a meal from me tomorrow together with the Sangha of monks." The Buddha consented by remaining silent. The Ājīvaka understood that the Buddha had consented, and he left.

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

"Monks, I allow you to eat in a group when the meal is given by a monastic.

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

Final ruling

'If a monk eats in a group, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: he is sick; it is the robe-giving season; it is a time of making robes; he is traveling; he is on a boat; it is a big occasion; it is a meal given by a monastic.'"

Definitions

Eats in a group: wherever four monks, after being invited, eat any of the five cooked foods—this is called "eats in a group". Except on an appropriate occasion: unless it is an appropriate occasion. He is sick: even if he has cracked feet, he may eat in a group. It is the robe-giving season: if he has not participated in the robe-making ceremony, he may eat in a group during the last month of the rainy season. If he has participated in the robe-making ceremony, he may eat in a group during the five month period. It is a time of making robes: when he is making robes, he may eat in a group. He is traveling: he may eat in a group if he intends to travel at least six kilometers, while traveling, and after traveling. He is on a boat: he may eat in a group if he intends to board a boat, while on board, and after disembarking. It is a big occasion: if two or three monks can get by on walking for alms, but not a group of four, he may eat in a group. It is a meal given by a monastic: if any kind of wanderer is making the meal, he may eat in a group.

If he receives something intending to eat it, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. For every mouthful swallowed, he commits an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If he eats in a group, and he perceives it as such, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he eats in a group, but he is unsure of it, except

on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he eats in a group, but he does not perceive it as such, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession.

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

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if it is an appropriate occasion; if two or three eat together; if they eat together after walking for alms; if it is a regular meal invitation; if it is a meal for which lots are drawn; if it is a half-monthly meal; if it is on the observance day; if it is on the day after the observance day; 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 in a group, the second, is finished.