pli-tv-bu-vb-pc41 — Giving food to non-Buddhist monastics

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on naked ascetics

Giving food to non-Buddhist monastics

Origin story

At one time when the Buddha was staying in the house with the peaked roof in the Great Wood near Vesālī, the Sangha had an abundance of fresh food. Venerable Ānanda told the Buddha, who said, "Well then, Ānanda, give the cookies to those who take leftovers."

"Yes, sir." Ānanda had them sit in a row and gave them one cookie each, until he accidentally gave two to a female wanderer. The female wanderers sitting next to her said to her, "This monastic is your lover."

"He's not. He gave me two, thinking they were one."

And a second time … And a third time Ānanda gave them one cookie each, until he accidentally gave two to that same female wanderer. Once again the female wanderers sitting next to her said to her, "This monastic is your lover."

"He's not. He gave me two, thinking they were one."

And they started to argue about whether or not they were lovers.

A certain Ājīvaka ascetic, too, went to that distribution of food. A monk mixed rice with a large amount of ghee and gave him a large lump. He took it and left. Another Ājīvaka asked him, "Where did you get that lump?"

"From the food distribution of the ascetic Gotama, that shaven-headed householder."

Some lay followers overheard that conversation between those Ājīvaka ascetics. They then went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down, and said, "Sir, these monastics of other religions want to disparage the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Sangha. It would be good if the monks didn't personally give anything to the monastics of other religions."

After the Buddha had instructed, inspired, and gladdened those lay followers with a teaching, they got up from their seats, bowed down, circumambulated him with their right sides toward him, and left. Soon afterwards the Buddha gave a teaching and addressed the monks: "Well then, monks, I will lay down a training rule for the following ten reasons: for the well-being of the Sangha, for the comfort of the Sangha, for the restraint of bad people, for the ease of good monks, for the restraint of the corruptions relating to the present life, for the restraint of the corruptions relating to future lives, to give rise to confidence in those without it, to increase the confidence of those who have it, for the longevity of the true Teaching, and for supporting the training. And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

'If a monk personally gives fresh or cooked food to a naked ascetic, to a male wanderer, or to a female wanderer, 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. A naked ascetic: any wanderer who is naked. A male wanderer: any male wanderer apart from Buddhist monks and novice monks. A female wanderer: any female wanderer apart from Buddhist nuns, trainee nuns, and novice nuns. Fresh food: apart from the five cooked foods, water, and tooth cleaners, the rest is called "fresh food". Cooked food: there are five kinds of cooked food: cooked grain, porridge, flour products, fish, and meat. Gives: if he gives by body or by what is connected to the body or by releasing, he commits an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If it is a monastic of another religion, and he perceives them as such, and he personally gives them fresh or cooked food, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a monastic of another religion, but he is unsure of it, and he personally gives them fresh or cooked food, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a monastic of another religion, but he does not perceive them as such, and he personally gives them fresh or cooked food, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he gives water or a tooth cleaner, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not a monastic of another religion, but he perceives them as such, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not a monastic of another religion, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not a monastic of another religion, and he does not perceive them as such, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he does not give, but has it given; if he gives by placing it near the person; if he gives ointments for external use; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on giving food to non-Buddhist monastics, the first, is finished.