pli-tv-bu-vb-pc7 — Teaching a woman alone

English translation by Bhikkhu Brahmali.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/pli-tv-bu-vb-pc7/en/brahmali
Source revision: 6a395ceb6f28549111d7d96859f7f6f6610afc01
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on lying

Teaching a woman alone

Origin story

First substory

At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery. At that time Venerable Udāyī was associating with and visiting a number of families in Sāvatthī. After robing up one morning, he took his bowl and robe and went to a certain family. Just then the housewife was sitting at the door to the house, while the daughter-in-law was sitting at the door to the guesthouse. Udāyī went up to the housewife and gave her a teaching, whispering in her ear. And the daughter-in-law thought, "Is this monastic my mother-in-law's lover, or is he speaking indecently?"

After teaching the housewife in this way, Udāyī went up to the daughter-in-law and gave her a teaching in the same way. Then the housewife thought, "Is this monastic my daughter-in-law's lover, or is he speaking indecently?"

When Udāyī had left, the housewife said to her daughter-in-law, "Hey, what did that monastic say to you?"

"He gave me a teaching, ma'am. But what did he say to you?"

"He gave me a teaching, too."

And they complained and criticized him, "How can Venerable Udāyī give teachings by whispering in the ear? Should not teachings be given audibly and openly?"

The monks heard the complaints of those women, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized Udāyī, "How can Venerable Udāyī give teachings to women?"

After rebuking him in many ways, they told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he had the Sangha gathered and questioned Udāyī: "Is it true, Udāyī, that you did 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 gives a teaching to a woman, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

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

Second substory

Soon afterwards some female lay followers saw some monks and said to them, “Venerables, please give a teaching.”

“It’s not allowable for us to teach women.”

“Just teach five or six sentences. That might be enough for us to understand.”

“It’s not allowable for us to teach women.” And being afraid of wrongdoing, they did not teach them.

Those female lay followers complained and criticized them, “How can they not teach us when asked?”

The monks heard the complaints of those female lay followers, and they told the Buddha. Soon afterwards the Buddha gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

“Monks, I allow you to teach five or six sentences to a woman.

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

Second preliminary ruling

‘If a monk gives a teaching of more than five or six sentences to a woman, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

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

Third substory

When the monks from the group of six heard that the Buddha had made this allowance, they taught women more than five or six sentences with a man who did not understand sitting nearby. The monks of few desires complained and criticized them, “How can the monks from the group of six teach women more than five or six sentences with a man who doesn’t understand sitting nearby?”

After rebuking those monks in many ways, they told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he had the Sangha gathered and questioned the monks: “Is it true, monks, that you do this?”

“It’s true, sir.”

The Buddha rebuked them … “Foolish men, how can you do this? This will affect people’s confidence …” … “And so, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

‘If a monk gives a teaching of more than five or six sentences to a woman, except in the presence of a man who understands, 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 woman: a human female, not a female spirit, not a female ghost, not a female animal. She understands and is capable of discerning good and bad speech, what is decent and what is indecent. More than five or six sentences: in excess of five or six sentences. A teaching: what has been spoken by the Buddha, what has been spoken by disciples, what has been spoken by sages, what has been spoken by gods, what is connected with what is beneficial, what is connected with the Teaching. Gives: if he teaches by the line, then for every line he commits an offense entailing confession. If he teaches by the syllable, then for every syllable he commits an offense entailing confession. Except in the presence of a man who understands: unless a man who understands is present. A man who understands: one who is capable of discerning good and bad speech, what is decent and what is indecent.

Permutations

If it is a woman, and he perceives her as such, and he teaches her more than five or six sentences, except in the presence of a man who understands, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a woman, but he is unsure of it, and he teaches her more than five or six sentences, except in the presence of a man who understands, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a woman, but he does not perceive her as such, and he teaches her more than five or six sentences, except in the presence of a man who understands, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he teaches more than five or six sentences to a female spirit, a female ghost, a paṇḍaka, or a female animal in the form of a woman, except in the presence of a man who understands, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not a woman, but he perceives them as such, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not a woman, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not a woman, and he does not perceive them as such, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if a man who understands is present; if he teaches five or six sentences; if he teaches fewer than five or six sentences; if he gets up, sits down again, and then teaches; if the woman gets up and sits down again, and he then teaches her; if he teaches another woman; if he asks a question; if he is asked a question and then speaks; if he is speaking for the benefit of someone else and a woman listens in; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on teaching a woman alone, the seventh, is finished.