pli-tv-bi-vb-np1 — The training rule on collecting almsbowls

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Nuns' Analysis

The chapter on relinquishment

The subchapter on almsbowls

The training rule on collecting almsbowls

Venerables, these thirty rules on relinquishment and confession come up for recitation.

Origin story

At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery. At that time the nuns from the group of six had collected a large number of almsbowls. When people walking about the dwellings saw this, they complained and criticized those nuns, "How can the nuns collect a large number of bowls? Will they start up as bowl merchants or set up a bowl shop?"

The nuns heard the complaints of those people, and the nuns of few desires complained and criticized those nuns, "How can the nuns from the group of six collect bowls?" … "Is it true, monks, that the nuns from the group of six do this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked them … "How can the nuns from the group of six collect bowls? This will affect people's confidence …" … "And, monks, the nuns should recite this training rule like this:

Final ruling

'If a nun collects almsbowls, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.'"

Definitions

A: whoever … Nun: … The nun who has been given the full ordination in unanimity by both Sanghas through a legal procedure consisting of one motion and three announcements that is irreversible and fit to stand—this sort of nun is meant in this case. An almsbowl: there are two kinds of bowls: the iron bowl and the ceramic bowl. And there are three sizes

of bowls: the large bowl, the medium bowl, and the small bowl. The large bowl: it holds half an āḷhaka measure of cooked rice, a fourth part of fresh food, and a suitable amount of curry. The medium bowl: it holds a nāḷika measure of cooked rice, a fourth part of fresh food, and a suitable amount of curry. The small bowl: it holds a pattha measure of cooked rice, a fourth part of fresh food, and a suitable amount of curry. Anything larger than this is not a bowl, nor anything smaller. Collects: almsbowls that have neither been determined nor assigned to another. Entailing relinquishment: entailing relinquishment at dawn.

The bowl should be relinquished to a sangha, a group, or an individual nun. “And, monks, it should be relinquished like this. After approaching the Sangha, that nun should arrange her upper robe over one shoulder and pay respect at the feet of the senior nuns. She should then squat on her heels, raise her joined palms, and say:

‘Venerables, this almsbowl, which I have kept for more than one day, is to be relinquished. I relinquish it to the Sangha.’”

After relinquishing it, she should confess the offense. The confession should be received by a competent and capable nun. The relinquished bowl is then to be given back:

“Please, venerables, I ask the Sangha to listen. This almsbowl, which was to be relinquished by the nun so-and-so, has been relinquished to the Sangha. If the Sangha is ready, it should give this bowl back to nun so-and-so.”

Or: after approaching several nuns, that nun should arrange her upper robe over one shoulder and pay respect at the feet of the senior nuns. She should then squat on her heels, raise her joined palms, and say:

“Venerables, this almsbowl, which I have kept for more than one day, is to be relinquished. I relinquish it to you.”

After relinquishing it, she should confess the offense. The confession should be received by a competent and capable nun. The relinquished bowl is then to be given back:

“Please, venerables, I ask you to listen. This almsbowl, which was to be relinquished by the nun so-and-so, has been relinquished to you. If the venerables are ready, you should give this bowl back to nun so-and-so.”

Or: after approaching a single nun, that nun should arrange her upper robe over one shoulder, squat on her heels, raise her joined palms, and say:

“This almsbowl, which I have kept for more than one day, is to be relinquished. I relinquish it to you.”

After relinquishing it, she should confess the offense. The confession should be received by that nun. The relinquished bowl is then to be given back:

“I give this almsbowl back to you.”

Permutations

If it is more than one day and she perceives it as more, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it is more than one day, but she is unsure of it, she

commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it is more than one day, but she perceives it as less, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.

If it has not been determined, but she perceives that it has, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it has not been assigned to another, but she perceives that it has, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it has not been given away, but she perceives that it has, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it has not been not lost, but she perceives that it has … If it has not been destroyed, but she perceives that it has … If it has not been broken, but she perceives that it has … If it has not been stolen, but she perceives that it has, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.

If she uses an almsbowl that should be relinquished without first relinquishing it, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is less than one day, but she perceives it as more, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is less than one day, but she is unsure of it, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is less than one day and she perceives it as less, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if, before dawn, it has been determined, assigned to another, given away, lost, destroyed, broken, stolen, or taken on trust; if she is insane; if she is the first offender.

Soon afterwards the nuns from the group of six did not give back a relinquished bowl. They told the Buddha.

“Monks, a relinquished almsbowl should be given back. If a nun doesn’t give it back, she commits an offense of wrong conduct.”

The first training rule is finished.