pli-tv-bi-vb-np4 — Asking for something else

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Nuns' Analysis

The chapter on relinquishment

The subchapter on almsbowls

Asking for something else

Origin story

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, the nun Thullanandā was sick. A lay follower went to her and asked, "Venerable, what's wrong with you? What may I get you?"

"I need ghee."

That lay follower then brought back from a shop a kahāpaṇa's worth of ghee and gave it to Thullanandā. Thullanandā said, "I don't need ghee; I need oil." The lay follower returned to the shopkeeper and said, "It seems the nun doesn't need ghee, but oil. Here's your ghee; please give me oil."

"Sir, if we were to take back goods that have been sold, when would our goods be sold? When ghee is bought, ghee is taken away. Buying oil, you receive that, and you'll take that away."

That lay follower then complained and criticized her, "How could Venerable Thullanandā ask for one thing and then for something else?"

The nuns heard the complaints of that lay follower, and the nuns of few desires complained and criticized her … Those nuns then told the monks, who in turn told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he had the Sangha gathered and questioned the monks: "Is it true, monks, that the nun Thullanandā did this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked her … "How could the nun Thullanandā ask for one thing and then for something else? This will affect people's confidence …" … "And, monks, the nuns should recite this training rule like this:

Final ruling

‘If a nun asks for one thing and then for something else, 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. Asks for one thing: whatever she asks for. Then for something else: apart from that thing, if she asks for something else, then for the effort there is an act of wrong conduct. When she gets it, it becomes subject to relinquishment.

It should be relinquished to a sangha, a group, or an individual nun. “And, monks, it should be relinquished like this. …” (To be expanded as in Bi NP 1:2.1.21–2.1.43, with appropriate substitutions.)

“Venerables, this thing, which I asked for after asking for something else, is to be relinquished. I relinquish it to the Sangha.” … “the Sangha should give …” “you should give …” “I give this back to you.”

Permutations

If it is something else and she perceives it as such, and she asks for that, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it is something else, but she is unsure of it, and she asks for that, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it is something else, but she does not perceive it as such, and she asks for that, she commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.

If it is not something else, but she perceives it as such, and she asks for that, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not something else, but she is unsure of it, and she asks for that, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not something else, and she does not perceive it as such, and she asks for that, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if she asks for both at the same time; if she can show a benefit in asking; if she is insane; if she is the first offender.

The fourth training rule is finished.