pli-tv-bi-vb-pc72 — Ordaining an untrained unmarried woman

English translation by Bhikkhu Brahmali.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/pli-tv-bi-vb-pc72/en/brahmali
Source revision: 6a395ceb6f28549111d7d96859f7f6f6610afc01
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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Nuns' Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on unmarried women

Ordaining an untrained unmarried woman

Origin story

At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery. At that time the nuns were giving the full admission to unmarried women who were more than twenty years old, but who had not trained for two years in the six rules. They were ignorant and incompetent, and they did not know what was allowable and what was not.

The nuns of few desires complained and criticized them, "How can nuns give the full admission to unmarried women who are more than twenty years old, but who haven't trained for two years in the six rules?" … "Is it true, monks, that nuns do this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked them … "How can nuns do this? This will affect people's confidence …" After rebuking them … he gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

"Monks, approval is required for an unmarried woman who is eighteen years old to train for two years in the six rules.

And the approval is to be given like this.

After approaching the Sangha of nuns, that unmarried woman who is eighteen years old should arrange her upper robe over one shoulder and pay respect at the feet of the nuns. She should then squat on her heels, raise her joined palms, and say:

'Venerables, I, so-and-so, an unmarried woman who is eighteen years old, am training under venerable so-and-so. I ask the Sangha for approval to train for two years in the six rules.'

And she should ask a second and a third time.

A competent and capable nun should then inform the Sangha:

‘Please, venerables, I ask the Sangha to listen. The unmarried woman so-and-so, who is eighteen years old, is asking the Sangha for approval to train for two years in the six rules under venerable so-and-so. If the Sangha is ready, it should give approval to the unmarried woman so-and-so, who is eighteen years old, to train for two years in the six rules. This is the motion.

Please, venerables, I ask the Sangha to listen. The unmarried woman so-and-so, who is eighteen years old, is asking the Sangha for approval to train for two years in the six rules under venerable so-and-so. The Sangha gives approval to the unmarried woman so-and-so, who is eighteen years old, to train for two years in the six rules. Any nun who approves of giving approval to the unmarried woman so-and-so, who is eighteen years old, to train for two years in the six rules should remain silent. Any nun who doesn’t approve should speak up.

The Sangha has given approval to the unmarried woman so-and-so, who is eighteen years old, to train for two years in the six rules. The Sangha approves and is therefore silent. I will remember it thus.’

That unmarried woman who is eighteen years old should be told to say this: ‘I undertake to abstain from killing living beings for two years without transgression. … I undertake to abstain from eating at the wrong time for two years without transgression.”’

Then, after rebuking those nuns in many ways, the Buddha spoke in dispraise of being difficult to support … “And, monks, the nuns should recite this training rule like this:

Final ruling

‘If a nun gives the full admission to an unmarried woman who is more than twenty years old, but who has not trained for two years in the six rules, she commits an offense entailing 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. Who is more than twenty years old: who has reached twenty years of age. An unmarried woman: a novice nun is what is meant. Two years: two twelve-month periods. Who has not trained: the training has not been given to her, or the training has been given to her, but she has failed in it. Gives the full admission: gives the full ordination. If, intending to give the full admission, she searches for a group, a teacher, a bowl, or a robe, or she establishes a monastery zone, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. After the motion, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. After each of the first two announcements, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. When the last announcement is finished, the preceptor commits an offense entailing confession, and the group and the teacher commit an offense of wrong conduct.

Permutations

If it is a legitimate legal procedure, and she perceives it as such, and she gives the full admission, she commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a legitimate legal procedure, but she is unsure of it, and she gives the full admission, she commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a legitimate legal procedure, but she perceives it as illegitimate, and she gives the full admission, she commits an offense entailing confession.

If it is an illegitimate legal procedure, but she perceives it as legitimate, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is an illegitimate legal procedure, but she is unsure of it, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is an illegitimate legal procedure, and she perceives it as such, she commits an offense of wrong conduct.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if she gives the full admission to an unmarried woman who is more than twenty years old, and who has trained for two years in the six rules; if she is insane; if she is the first offender.

The second training rule is finished.