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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Nuns' Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing acknowledgment

2–8. Asking for oil … for honey … for syrup … for fish … for meat … for milk … for curd

Origin story

First substory

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, the nuns from the group of six were eating oil that they had asked for. … were eating honey that they had asked for. … were eating syrup that they had asked for. … were eating fish that they had asked for. … were eating meat that they had asked for. … were drinking milk that they had asked for. … were eating curd that they had asked for.

People complained and criticized them, "How can nuns eat curd that they have asked for? Who doesn't like nice food? Who doesn't prefer tasty food?"

The nuns heard the complaints of those people. The nuns of few desires complained and criticized them, "How can the nuns from the group of six eat curd that they have asked for?" … "Is it true, monks, that those nuns do this?"

"It's true, sir."

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

First preliminary ruling

'If a nun asks for curd and then eats it, she must acknowledge it: "I have done a blameworthy and unsuitable thing that is to be acknowledged. I acknowledge it."'"

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

Second substory

Soon afterwards a number of nuns were sick. The nuns who were looking after them asked, "I hope you're bearing up? I hope you're getting better?"

“Previously we ate curd that we had asked for, and then we were comfortable. But now that the Buddha has prohibited this, we don’t ask because we’re afraid of wrongdoing. And because of that we’re not comfortable.” …

They told the Buddha. Soon afterwards the Buddha had the Sangha gathered and addressed the monks:

“Monks, I allow a sick nun to eat curd that she has asked for.

And so, monks, the nuns should recite this training rule like this:

Final ruling

‘If a nun who is not sick asks for (oil …

honey …

syrup …

fish …

meat …

milk …)

curd and then eats it, she must acknowledge it: “I have done a blameworthy and unsuitable thing that is to be acknowledged. I acknowledge it.”’”

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 not sick: who is comfortable without curd. Who is sick: who is not comfortable without curd. Oil: sesame oil, mustard oil, honey-tree oil, castor oil, oil from fat. Honey: honey from bees. Syrup: from sugarcane. Fish: what lives in water is what is meant. Meat: the meat of those animals whose meat is allowable. Milk: milk from cows, milk from goats, milk from buffaloes, or milk from whatever animal whose meat is allowable. Curd: curd from those same animals.

If she is not sick and she asks for herself, then for the effort there is an act of wrong conduct. When she receives it with the intention of eating it, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. For every mouthful swallowed, she commits an offense entailing acknowledgment.

Permutations

If she is not sick, and she does not perceive herself as sick, and she eats curd that she has asked for, she commits an offense entailing acknowledgment. If she is not sick, but she is unsure of it, and she eats curd that she has asked for, she commits an offense entailing acknowledgment. If she is not sick, but she perceives herself as sick, and she eats curd that she has asked for, she commits an offense entailing acknowledgment.

If she is sick, but she does not perceive herself as sick, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If she is sick, but she is unsure of it, she commits an offense of wrong conduct. If she is sick, and she perceives herself as sick, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if she is sick; if she asked for it when she was sick, but eats it when she is no longer sick; if she eats the leftovers from one who is sick; if it is from relatives; if it is from those who have given an invitation; if it is for the benefit of someone else; if it is by means of her own property; if she is insane; if she is the first offender.

The eighth training rule entailing acknowledgment is finished.

“Venerables, the eight rules on acknowledgment have been recited. In regard to this I ask you, ‘Are you pure in this?’ A second time I ask, ‘Are you pure in this?’ A third time I ask, ‘Are you pure in this?’ You are pure in this and therefore silent. I will remember it thus.”

The chapter on offenses entailing acknowledgment in the Nuns’ Analysis is finished.