pli-tv-bi-vb-pj6 — The training rule on concealing an expulsion offense

English translation by Bhikkhu Brahmali.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/pli-tv-bi-vb-pj6/en/brahmali
Source revision: 6a395ceb6f28549111d7d96859f7f6f6610afc01
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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Nuns' Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing expulsion

The training rule on concealing an expulsion offense

Origin story

At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery. At that time the nun Sundarīnandā was pregnant by Migāra's grandson Sāḷha. When the fetus got large, she concealed her condition. And when the fetus was fully grown, she disrobed and gave birth.

The nuns said to the nun Thullanandā, "Venerable, Sundarīnandā gave birth shortly after disrobing." "Could it be that she was pregnant while she was still a nun?"

"Yes, venerables."

"But, venerable, when you knew that a nun had committed an offense entailing expulsion, why didn't you either confront her yourself or tell the community?"

"Her disrepute is my disrepute, her infamy is my infamy, her notoriety is my notoriety, her loss is my loss. Why would I tell others of my own disrepute, infamy, notoriety, and loss?"

The nuns of few desires complained and criticized her, "How could Venerable Thullanandā, knowing that a nun had committed an offense entailing expulsion, neither confront her herself nor tell the community?"

Then those nuns told the monks what had happened, and the monks in turn told the Buddha. Soon afterwards the Buddha had the Sangha gathered and questioned the monks: "Is it true, monks, that the nun Thullanandā acted like this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked her … "How could the nun Thullanandā, knowing that a nun had committed an offense entailing expulsion, neither confront her herself nor tell the community? This will affect people's confidence …" … "And, monks, the nuns should recite this training rule like this:

Final ruling

‘If a nun knows that a nun has committed an offense entailing expulsion, but she neither confronts her herself nor tells the community, and afterward—whether that nun remains or has died or has been expelled or has converted—she says, “Venerables, although I previously knew that this nun was like this, I thought, ‘I will neither confront her myself nor tell the community,’” she too is expelled and excluded from the community. The training rule on those who conceal offenses.’”

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. Knows: she knows by herself or others have told her or she has told her. Has committed an offense entailing expulsion: she has committed any one of the eight offenses entailing expulsion. She neither confronts her herself: she does not herself accuse her. Nor tells the community: she does not tell other nuns. Whether that nun remains or has died: Remains: what is meant is that she remains as a nun. Has died: what is meant is that she has passed away. Has been expelled: she has either disrobed herself or been expelled by others. Has converted: what is meant is that she has joined another religious community. Afterward she says, “Venerables, although I previously knew that this nun was like this, I thought, ‘I will neither confront her myself’”: “I won’t accuse her myself.” “Nor tell the community”: “Nor tell other nuns.” She too: this is said with reference to the preceding offenses entailing expulsion. Is expelled: just as a fallen, withered leaf is incapable of becoming green again, so too is a nun who knows that a nun has committed an offense entailing expulsion, but who thinks, “I will neither confront her myself nor tell the community,” by the mere fact of abandoning her duty, not a monastic, not a daughter of the Sakyan. Therefore it is said “she is expelled.” Excluded from the community: Community: joint legal procedures, a joint recitation, the same training—this is called “community”. She does not take part in this—therefore it is called “excluded from the community”.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if she does not tell because she thinks there will be quarrels or disputes in the Sangha; if she does not tell because she thinks there will be a schism or fracture in the Sangha; if she does not tell because she thinks the person she is telling about is cruel and harsh and that she might become a threat to life or the monastic life; if she does not tell because she does not see any suitable nuns; if she does not tell, but not because she wants to conceal; if she does not tell because she thinks the other person will be known through her own actions; if she is insane; if she is deranged; if she is overwhelmed by pain; if she is the first offender.

The sixth offense entailing expulsion is finished.