pli-tv-bu-vb-np20 — Bartering

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on relinquishment

The subchapter on silk

Bartering

Origin story

At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery. At that time Venerable Upananda the Sakyan had become skilled at making robes. He made an upper robe of old cloth, well-dyed and beautifully made, and he wore it.

Just then a certain wanderer who was wearing an expensive robe went up to Upananda and said, "Your upper robe is beautiful. Please give it to me in exchange for my robe."

"Are you sure?"

"I am."

Saying, "Alright, then," he gave it.

The wanderer put on the upper robe and went to the wanderers' monastery. The wanderers said to him, "This upper robe of yours is beautiful. Where did you get it?"

"I traded it for my robe."

"But how long will it last? Your other robe was better."

The wanderer realized they were right, and so he returned to Upananda and said, "Here's your upper robe. Please give me back mine."

"But didn't I ask you if you were sure? I won't give it back."

Then that wanderer complained and criticized him, "Even householders give back to each other when they regret a trade. How, then, can a monastic not do the same?"

The monks heard the complaints of that wanderer, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized Upananda, "How could Venerable Upananda barter with a wanderer?"

After rebuking him in many ways, they told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he had the Sangha gathered and questioned Upananda: “Is it true, Upananda, that you did this?”

“It’s true, sir.”

The Buddha rebuked him … “Foolish man, how could you do this? This will affect people’s confidence …” … “And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

‘If a monk engages in various kinds of barter, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.’”

Definitions

A: whoever … Monk: … The monk who has been given the full ordination by a unanimous Sangha through a legal procedure consisting of one motion and three announcements that is irreversible and fit to stand—this sort of monk is meant in this case. Various kinds: robes, almsfood, a dwelling, or medicinal supplies; even a bit of bath powder, a tooth cleaner, or a piece of string. Engages in barter: if he misbehaves, saying, “Give that for this,” “Bring that for this,” “Trade that with this,” “Exchange that for this,” he commits an offense of wrong conduct. When it has been bartered—his own goods are in the hands of the other and the other’s goods are in his own hands—it becomes subject to relinquishment.

The goods should be relinquished to a sangha, a group, or an individual. “And, monks, they should be relinquished like this. …” (To be expanded as in Bu NP 1:3.2.5–3.2.29, with appropriate substitutions.)

“Venerables, I have engaged in various kinds of barter. This 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 bartering, and he perceives it as such, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it is bartering, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If it is bartering, but he does not perceive it as such, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.

If it is not bartering, but he perceives it as such, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not bartering, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is not bartering, and he does not perceive it as such, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he asks about the value; if he tells an attendant; if he says, “I have this and I have need of such-and-such;” if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on bartering, the tenth, is finished.

The second subchapter on silk is finished.

This is the summary:

“Silk, entirely, two parts,

Six years, sitting blanket;

And two on wool, should take,

Two on various kinds.”