pli-tv-bu-vb-np27 — Bribing weavers

English translation by Bhikkhu Brahmali.
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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on relinquishment

The subchapter on almsbowls

Bribing weavers

Origin story

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, a man who was going away said to his wife, "Please weigh some thread, take it to the weavers, get them to weave robe-cloth, and put the robe-cloth aside. When I return, I'll give it to Venerable Upananda."

An alms-collecting monk heard that man speaking those words. He then went to Upananda the Sakyan and said, "Upananda, you have much merit. In such-and-such a place I heard a man, as he was going away, tell his wife to get robe-cloth woven so that he could give it to you when he returned."

"He's my supporter." And the weaver was Upananda's supporter too.

Upananda then went to that weaver and said, "This robe-cloth that you're weaving for me, make it long and wide. And make it closely woven, well-woven, well-stretched, well-scraped, and well-combed."

"Venerable, they've already weighed the thread and given it to me, telling me to weave the robe-cloth with that. I won't be able to make it long, wide, or closely woven. But I'm able to make it well-woven, well-stretched, well-scraped, and well-combed."

"Just make it long, wide, and closely woven. There'll be enough thread."

Then, when all the thread had been used up, that weaver went to that woman and said, "Ma'am, I need more thread."

"But didn't I tell you to weave the robe-cloth with that thread?"

"You did. But Venerable Upananda told me to make it long, wide, and closely woven. And he said there would be enough thread." That woman then gave him as much thread again as she had done the first time.

When Upananda heard that her husband had returned from his travels, he went to his house and sat down on the prepared seat. That man approached him, bowed, and sat down. He then said to his wife, “Has the robe-cloth been woven?”

“Yes, it has.”

“Please bring it. I’ll give it to Venerable Upananda.”

She then got the robe-cloth, gave it to her husband, and told him what had happened. After giving the robe-cloth to Upananda, he complained and criticized him, “These Sakyan monastics have great desires; they’re not content. It’s no easy matter to give them robe-cloth. How could Venerable Upananda go to the weavers and say what kind of robe-cloth he wanted without first being invited by me?”

The monks heard the complaints of that man, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized Upananda, “How could Venerable Upananda go to a householder’s weavers and say what kind of robe-cloth he wants without first being invited?”

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.”

“Is he a relative of yours?”

“No, sir.”

“Foolish man, people who are unrelated don’t know what’s appropriate and inappropriate, what’s good and bad, in dealing with each other. And still you did this. This will affect people’s confidence …” … “And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

‘If a male or female householder is having robe-cloth woven by weavers for an unrelated monk and, without first being invited, that monk goes to those weavers and specifies the kind of robe-cloth he wants, saying, “This robe-cloth that you are weaving for me, make it long and wide; make it closely woven, well-woven, well-stretched, well-scraped, and well-combed, and perhaps I will even give you a small gift,” then, in saying that and afterwards giving them a small gift, even a bit of almsfood, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.’”

Definitions

For a monk: for the benefit of a monk; making a monk the object of consideration, one wants to give to him. Unrelated: anyone who is not a descendant of one’s male ancestors going back eight generations, either on the mother’s side or on the father’s side. A male householder: any man who lives at home. A female householder: any woman who lives at home. By weavers: by those who weave. Robe-cloth: one of the six kinds of robe-cloth, but not smaller than what can be assigned to another. Is having woven: is causing to weave. If that monk: the monk the robe-cloth is being woven for. Without first being invited: without it first being said, “Venerable, what kind of robe-cloth do you need? What kind of robe-cloth

should I get woven for you?" Goes to those weavers: having gone to their house, having gone up to them wherever. Specifies the kind of robe-cloth he wants: "This robe-cloth that you are weaving for me, make it long and wide; make it closely woven, well-woven, well-stretched, well-scraped, and well-combed; and perhaps I will even give you a small gift." Then in saying that and afterwards giving them a small gift, even a bit of almsfood—Almsfood: congee, a meal, fresh food, a bit of bath powder, a tooth cleaner, a piece of string, and even if he gives a teaching. If the weaver makes it long or wide or closely woven because of the monk's statement, then for the effort there is an act of wrong conduct. When he gets the robe-cloth, it becomes subject to relinquishment.

The robe-cloth should be relinquished to a sangha, a group, or an individual. "And, monks, it should be relinquished like this. …" (To be expanded as in Bu NP 1:3.2.5–3.2.29, with appropriate substitutions.)

"Venerables, this robe-cloth, for which I went to the weavers of an unrelated householder and specified what kind of robe-cloth I wanted without first being invited, is to be relinquished. I relinquish it to the Sangha." … "the Sangha should give …" "you should give …" "I give this robe-cloth back to you."

Permutations

If the householder is unrelated and the monk perceives them as such and, without first being invited, he goes to their weavers and specifies the kind of robe-cloth he wants, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If the householder is unrelated, but the monk is unsure of it and, without first being invited, he goes to their weavers and specifies the kind of robe-cloth he wants, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession. If the householder is unrelated, but the monk perceives them as related and, without first being invited, he goes to their weavers and specifies the kind of robe-cloth he wants, he commits an offense entailing relinquishment and confession.

If the householder is related, but the monk perceives them as unrelated, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If the householder is related, but the monk is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If the householder is related and the monk perceives them as such, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: 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 his own property; if someone wants to have expensive robe-cloth woven, but he has them weave inexpensive robe-cloth instead; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The long training rule on bribing weavers, the seventh, is finished.