pli-tv-bu-vb-np8 — Requesting a fine robe from a fund

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on relinquishment

The subchapter on robes

Requesting a fine robe from a fund

Origin story

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, a certain man said to his wife, "I'm going to give robe-cloth to Venerable Upananda."

An alms-collecting monk heard that man making that statement. He then went to Upananda the Sakyan and said, "Upananda, you have much merit. In such-and-such a place I heard a man tell his wife that he's going to give you robe-cloth."

"He's my supporter."

Upananda then went to that man and said, "Is it true that you want to give me robe-cloth?"

"Yes, that's just what I was thinking."

"If that's the case, give me such-and-such robe-cloth. For what's the point of giving robe-cloth that I won't use?"

That man 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 come to me and say what kind of robe-cloth he wants without first being invited by me to do so?"

The monks heard the complaints of that man, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized him, "How could Venerable Upananda go to a householder and say what kind of robe-cloth he wants without first being invited to do so?"

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.”

“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 has set aside a robe fund for an unrelated monk, thinking, “With this robe fund I will buy robe-cloth and give it to monk so-and-so;” and if that monk, without first being invited, goes to them and specifies the kind of robe-cloth he wants, saying, “Please use this robe fund to buy such-and-such robe-cloth and then give it to me,” and he does so because he wants something fine, 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. A robe fund: money, gold, a pearl, a gem, a coral, a crystal, cloth, thread, or cotton wool. With this robe fund: with that which is at one’s disposal. I will buy: having traded. I will give: I will donate. If that monk: the monk the robe fund has been set aside for. Without first being invited: he or she has not said beforehand: “Venerable, what kind of robe-cloth do you need? What kind of robe-cloth can I buy for you?” Goes to them: having gone to their house or having gone wherever. Specifies the kind of robe-cloth he wants: please make it long or wide or closely woven or soft. This robe fund: that which is at one’s disposal. Such-and-such: long or wide or closely woven or soft. To buy: having traded. Give: donate. Because he wants something fine: wanting something good, wanting something expensive.

If that householder buys robe-cloth that is long, wide, closely woven, or soft 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, which I received after going to an unrelated householder and saying 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 them 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 them 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 them 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 another; if it is by means of his own property; if the householder wishes to buy something expensive, but the monk has them buy something inexpensive; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on requesting a fine robe from a fund, the eighth, is finished.