pli-tv-bu-vb-pc40 — Eating ungiven food

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on eating

Eating ungiven food

Origin story

First substory

At one time the Buddha was staying in the house with the peaked roof in the Great Wood near Vesālī. At that time a monk who only used discarded things was staying in a charnel ground. He disliked receiving things from people. Instead he would take whatever was offered to the dead at the charnel ground, at the foot of trees, or at the threshold, and he would use that. People complained and criticized him, “How can this monk take the offerings to our ancestors and use them? This monk is big and strong. He probably eats human flesh too!”

The monks heard the complaints of those people, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized him, “How can this monk eat food that hasn’t been given?” … “Is it true, monk, that you do this?”

“It’s true, sir.”

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

Preliminary ruling

‘If a monk eats food that has not been given, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

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

Second substory

Soon afterwards the monks did not use water or tooth cleaners because they were afraid of wrongdoing. They told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

“Monks, I allow you to use water and tooth cleaners after taking them yourselves.

And so, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Final ruling

‘If a monk eats food that has not been given, except for water and tooth cleaners, he commits an offense entailing 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. That has not been given: what has not been received is what is meant. Given: standing within arm’s reach of one giving by body or by what is connected to his body or by releasing, he receives it by body or by what is connected to his body—this is called “given”. Food: whatever is edible, apart from water and tooth cleaners—this is called “food”. Except for water and tooth cleaners: apart from water and tooth cleaners.

If he takes it with the intention of eating it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. For every mouthful swallowed, he commits an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If it has not been received, and he does not perceive it as such, and he eats it, except for water and tooth cleaners, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it has not been received, but he is unsure of it, and he eats it, except for water and tooth cleaners, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it has not been not received, but he perceives it as such, and he eats it, except for water and tooth cleaners, he commits an offense entailing confession.

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

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if it is water or tooth cleaners; if, when there is a reason, but there is no attendant, he himself takes the four foul edibles and eats them; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on eating ungiven food, the tenth, is finished.

The fourth subchapter on eating is finished.

This is the summary:

“Alms, group, another, cookie,

And two are spoken on invitations;

At the wrong time, store, milk,

With tooth cleaner—those are the ten.”