pli-tv-bu-vb-pc45 — Sitting alone with a woman

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on naked ascetics

Sitting alone with a woman

Origin story

On one occasion when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, Venerable Upananda the Sakyan went to the house of a friend and sat down in private alone with his wife. The husband complained and criticized him, "How could Venerable Upananda sit down in private alone with my wife?"

The monks heard the complaints of that man, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized Upananda, "How could Venerable Upananda sit down in private alone with a woman?" … "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 sits down in private alone with a woman, 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. A woman: a human female, not a female spirit, not a female ghost, not a female animal. She understands and is capable of discerning good and bad speech, what is decent and what is indecent. With: together. Alone: just the monk and the woman. In private: private to the eye and private to the ear. Private to the eye: one is unable to see them winking, raising an eyebrow, or nodding. Private to the ear: one is unable to hear ordinary speech. Sits down: if the monk sits down or lies down next to the seated woman, he commits an offense

entailing confession. If the woman sits down or lies down next to the seated monk, he commits an offense entailing confession. If both are seated or both are lying down, he commits an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If it is a woman, and he perceives her as such, and he sits down in private alone with her, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a woman, but he is unsure of it, and he sits down in private alone with her, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a woman, but he does not perceive her as such, and he sits down in private alone with her, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he sits down in private alone with a female spirit, a female ghost, a paṇḍaka, or a female animal in the form of a woman, he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

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

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he has a male companion who understands; if he stands and does not sit down; if he is not seeking privacy; if he sits down preoccupied with something else; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on sitting alone with a woman, the fifth, is finished.