pli-tv-bu-vb-pc48 — Going to see a mobilized army

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on naked ascetics

Going to see a mobilized army

Origin story

First substory

On one occasion when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, King Pasenadi of Kosala was marching out with the army, and the monks from the group of six went to see it. When King Pasenadi saw the monks coming, he summoned them and said, "Venerables, why have you come here?"

"We wish to see the great king."

"What's the use of seeing me finding pleasure in battle? Shouldn't you see the Buddha?"

And people complained and criticized them, "How can the Sakyan monastics go to see the army? It's our misfortune that we must go out with the army for the sake of our livelihoods and because of our wives and children."

The monks heard the complaints of those people, and the monks of few desires complained and criticized those monks, "How could the monks from the group of six go to see the army?" … "Is it true, monks, that you did this?"

"It's true, sir."

The Buddha rebuked them … "Foolish men, how could you do this? This will affect people's confidence …" … "And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

Preliminary ruling

'If a monk goes to see an army, he commits an offense entailing confession.'"

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

Second substory

Soon afterwards a certain monk had a sick uncle in the army. The uncle sent a message to that monk: “I’m with the army and I’m sick. Please come, venerable. I want you to come.”

Knowing that the Buddha had laid down a rule against going to see an army, that monk thought, “I have a sick uncle in the army. What should I do now?” And he told the Buddha. Soon afterwards the Buddha gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

“Monks, I allow you to go to the army when there’s a suitable reason.

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

Final ruling

‘If a monk goes to see an army, except if there is a suitable reason, 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. An army: it has left the inhabited area and is either encamped or marching. An army: elephants, horses, chariots, infantry. An elephant has twelve men; a horse has three men; a chariot has four men; an infantry unit has four men with arrows in hand.

If he is on his way to see it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. Wherever he stands to see it, he commits an offense entailing confession. Every time he goes beyond the range of sight and then sees it again, he commits an offense entailing confession.

Except if there is a suitable reason: unless there is a suitable reason.

Permutations

If it is an army, and he perceives it as such, and he goes to see it, except if there is a suitable reason, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is an army, but he is unsure of it, and he goes to see it, except if there is a suitable reason, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is an army, but he does not perceive it as such, and he goes to see it, except if there is a suitable reason, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he is on his way to see one division of a fourfold army, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. Wherever he stands to see it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. Every time he goes beyond the range of sight and then sees it again, he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

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

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he sees it while standing in a monastery; if the army comes to where the monk is standing, sitting, or lying down; if he sees it while walking in the opposite direction; if he has a suitable reason; if there is an emergency; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on going to see a mobilized army, the eighth, is finished.