pli-tv-bu-vb-pc57 — Bathing too often

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on drinking alcohol

Bathing too often

Origin story

First substory

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the monks were bathing in the hot springs. Just then King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha went to the hot springs, intending to wash his hair. He waited respectfully for the monks to finish, but they kept on bathing until dark. Only then was King Bimbisāra able to wash his hair. And because the town gates had been shut, he had to spend the night outside the city.

In the morning, with his make-up still on, he went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down. The Buddha said to him, “Great king, why have you come so early in the morning, with your make-up still on?” The king told him what had happened. The Buddha then instructed, inspired, and gladdened him with a teaching, after which the king got up from his seat, bowed down, circumambulated the Buddha with his right side toward him, and left.

Soon afterwards the Buddha had the Sangha gathered and questioned the monks: “Is it true, monks, that monks bathed without moderation, even after seeing the king?”

“It’s true, sir.”

The Buddha rebuked them … “How could those foolish men act in this way? This will affect people’s confidence …” … “And, monks, this training rule should be recited like this:

First preliminary ruling

‘If a monk bathes at intervals of less than a half-month, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

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

Second substory

Soon afterwards, because they were afraid of wrongdoing, the monks did not bathe when it was hot or when they had a fever, and they went to sleep covered in sweat. As a consequence, their robes and beds got dirty. They told the Buddha. Soon afterwards he gave a teaching and addressed the monks:

"Monks, if it's hot or you have a fever, I allow you to bathe at intervals of less than a half-month.

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

Second preliminary ruling

'If a monk bathes at intervals of less than a half-month, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. This is the appropriate occasion: it is the two-and-a-half-month period of summer and the fever season, comprising the last one-and-a-half months of summer and the first month of the rainy season.'"

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

Third substory

Soon afterwards some monks were sick. The monks who were looking after them asked, "I hope you're bearing up? I hope you're getting better?"

"Previously we bathed at intervals of less than a half-month, and then we were comfortable. But now that the Buddha has prohibited this, we don't bathe because we're afraid of wrongdoing. Because of that we're not comfortable."

They told the Buddha. …

"Monks, I allow a sick monk to bathe at intervals of less than a half-month.

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

Third preliminary ruling

'If a monk bathes at intervals of less than a half-month, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: it is the two-and-a-half-month period of summer and the fever season, comprising the last one-and-a-half months of summer and the first month of the rainy season; he is sick.'"

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

Fourth substory

Soon afterwards the monks were doing building work, but because they were afraid of wrongdoing they did not bathe. As a consequence, they went to sleep covered in sweat, and their robes and beds got dirty. They told the Buddha. …

"Monks, I allow you to bathe at intervals of less than a half-month when you're working.

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

Fourth preliminary ruling

‘If a monk bathes at intervals of less than a half-month, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: it is the two-and-a-half-month period of summer and the fever season, comprising the last one-and-a-half months of summer and the first month of the rainy season; he is sick; he is working.’”

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

Fifth substory

Soon afterwards the monks were traveling, but because they were afraid of wrongdoing they did not bathe. As a consequence, they went to sleep covered in sweat, and their robes and beds got dirty. They told the Buddha. …

“Monks, I allow you to bathe at intervals of less than a half-month when you’re traveling.

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

Fifth preliminary ruling

‘If a monk bathes at intervals of less than a half-month, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: it is the two-and-a-half-month period of summer and the fever season, comprising the last one-and-a-half months of summer and the first month of the rainy season; he is sick; he is working; he is traveling.’”

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

Sixth substory

Soon afterwards a number of monks were making robes out in the open, when they were hit by dusty winds and fine rain. But because they were afraid of wrongdoing, they did not bathe afterwards, and they went to sleep while still wet. As a consequence, their robes and beds got dirty. They told the Buddha. …

“Monks, if there is wind and rain, I allow you to bathe at intervals of less than a half-month.

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

Final ruling

‘If a monk bathes at intervals of less than a half-month, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. These are the appropriate occasions: it is the two-and-a-half-month period of summer and the fever season, comprising the last one-and-a-half months of summer and the first month of the rainy season; he is sick; he is working; he is traveling; there is wind and rain.’”

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. At intervals of less than a half-month: after less than a half-month. Bathes: if he bathes with bath powder

or soap, then for every effort there is an act of wrong conduct. When the bath is finished, he commits an offense entailing confession. Except on an appropriate occasion: unless it is an appropriate occasion. Summer: the last month-and-a-half of summer. The fever season: the first month of the rainy season. During the two-and-a-half-month period of summer and the fever season, he may bathe. He is sick: he is not comfortable without bathing. If he is sick, he may bathe. He is working: even if he just sweeps the yard of a building. If he is working, he may bathe. He is traveling: if he intends to travel six kilometers, he may bathe; while traveling, he may bathe; after he has traveled, he may bathe. There is wind and rain: monks are hit by dusty winds, and two or three drops of rain fall on their bodies. If there is wind and rain, they may bathe.

Permutations

If it is an interval of less than a half-month, and he perceives it as less, and he bathes, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is an interval of less than a half-month, but he is unsure of it, and he bathes, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is an interval of less than a half-month, but he perceives it as more, and he bathes, except on an appropriate occasion, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If it is an interval of more than a half-month, but he perceives it as less, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is an interval of more than a half-month, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is an interval of more than a half-month, and he perceives it as more, there is no offense.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if it is an appropriate occasion; if he bathes at intervals of a half-month; if he bathes at intervals of more than a half-month; if he bathes while crossing a body of water; if he is outside the central Ganges plain; if there is an emergency; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on bathing too often, the seventh is finished.