pli-tv-bu-vb-pc78 — Eavesdropping

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on legitimate correction

Eavesdropping

Origin story

At one time when the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery, the monks from the group of six were arguing with the good monks. The good monks said, "These monks from the group of six are shameless; it's not possible to argue with them."

And the monks from the group of six said, "Why are you slandering us by calling us shameless?"

"How did you know?"

"We were eavesdropping on you."

The monks of few desires complained and criticized them, "How could the monks from the group of six eavesdrop on monks they are arguing and disputing with?" … "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:

Final ruling

'If a monk eavesdrops on monks who are arguing and disputing, thinking, "I'll hear what they say," and he does so only for this reason and no other, 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. On monks: on

other monks. Who are arguing and disputing: who are engaged in a legal issue. Eavesdrops: if he is on his way to eavesdrop, thinking, “After hearing what they say, I’ll accuse them,” “… I’ll remind them,” “… I’ll counter accuse them,” “… I’ll counter remind them,” “… I’ll humiliate them,” he commits an offense of wrong conduct. Wherever he stands to listen, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he is walking behind someone, and he speeds up with the intention to eavesdrop, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. Wherever he stands to listen, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he is walking in front of someone, and he slows down with the intention to eavesdrop, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. Wherever he stands to listen, he commits an offense entailing confession. If he goes to where a monk who is speaking privately is standing, sitting, or lying down, he should clear his throat or make his presence known. If he does not clear his throat or make his presence known, he commits an offense entailing confession. He does so only for this reason and no other: there is no other reason for eavesdropping.

Permutations

If it is one who is fully ordained, and he perceives him as such, and he eavesdrops on him, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is one who is fully ordained, but he is unsure of it, and he eavesdrops on him, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is one who is fully ordained, but he does not perceive him as such, and he eavesdrops on him, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he eavesdrops on one who is not fully ordained, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is one who is not fully ordained, but he perceives them as such, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is one who is not fully ordained, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is one who is not fully ordained, and he does not perceive them as such, he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he goes, thinking, “After hearing what they say, I’ll hold back,” “… I’ll abstain,” “… I’ll resolve it,” “… I’ll free myself;” if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on eavesdropping, the eighth, is finished.