pli-tv-bu-vb-pc13 — Complaining

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Text

Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law

The Great Analysis

The chapter on offenses entailing confession

The subchapter on plants

Complaining

Origin story

First substory

At one time the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrel sanctuary. At that time Venerable Dabba the Mallian was assigning the dwellings and designating the meals, and the monks Mettiya and Bhūmajaka were newly ordained. They had little merit, getting inferior dwellings and meals. They then complained about Dabba to other monks, “Dabba the Mallian assigns dwellings and designates meals based on favoritism.”

The monks of few desires complained and criticized them, “How can the monks Mettiya and Bhūmajaka complain about Venerable Dabba to other monks?”… “Is it true, monks, that you do this?”

“It’s true, sir.”

The Buddha rebuked them … “Foolish men, 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 complains, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

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

Second substory

Knowing that the Buddha had prohibited complaining, the monks Mettiya and Bhūmajaka thought of other ways of getting the monks to hear about their grievances. They then criticized Dabba the Mallian in the vicinity of other monks, “Dabba assigns dwellings and designates meals based on favoritism.”

The monks of few desires complained and criticized them, “How can the monks Mettiya and Bhūmajaka criticize Venerable Dabba?”… “Is it true, monks, that you do this?”

“It’s true, sir.”

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

Final ruling

‘If a monk complains or criticizes, he commits an offense entailing confession.’”

Definitions

Complaining: when someone who is fully ordained is the assigner of dwellings or the designator of meals or the distributor of congee or the distributor of fruit or the distributor of fresh foods or the distributor of minor requisites, and he has been appointed by the Sangha as such, then if a monk complains about him or criticizes him to one who is fully ordained—desiring to disparage him, desiring to give him a bad reputation, desiring to humiliate him—he commits an offense entailing confession.

Permutations

If it is a legitimate legal procedure, and he perceives it as such, and he complains or criticizes, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a legitimate legal procedure, but he is unsure of it, and he complains or criticizes, he commits an offense entailing confession. If it is a legitimate legal procedure, but he perceives it as illegitimate, and he complains or criticizes, he commits an offense entailing confession.

If he complains or criticizes him to one who is not fully ordained, he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

When someone who is fully ordained is the assigner of dwellings or the designator of meals or the distributor of congee or the distributor of fruit or the distributor of fresh foods or the distributor of minor requisites, but he has not been appointed by the Sangha as such, then if a monk complains about him or criticizes him to one who is fully ordained or to one who is not fully ordained—desiring to disparage him, desiring to give him a bad reputation, desiring to humiliate him—he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

When someone who is not fully ordained is the assigner of dwellings or the designator of meals or the distributor of congee or the distributor of fruit or the distributor of fresh foods or the distributor of minor requisites, whether he has been appointed by the Sangha as such or not, then if a monk complains about him or criticizes him to one who is fully ordained or to one who is not fully ordained—desiring to disparage him, desiring to give him a bad reputation, desiring to humiliate him—he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

If it is an illegitimate legal procedure, but he perceives it as legitimate, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is an illegitimate legal procedure, but he is unsure of it, he commits an offense of wrong conduct. If it is an illegitimate legal procedure, and he perceives it as such, he commits an offense of wrong conduct.

Non-offenses

There is no offense: if he complains about or criticizes one who regularly acts out of favoritism, ill will, confusion, or fear; if he is insane; if he is the first offender.

The training rule on complaining, the third, is finished.