

Pācittiya #73: Falsely Claiming Ignorance of the Pātimokkha

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Sāvatti, at Jeta's grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's park. Furthermore, on this occasion, [some] group-of-six monks, after engaging in misconduct, [thinking] “Let them believe 'It was committed by one who didn't know,'” when the Pātimokkha was being recited, said, “Just now we know - apparently this Dhamma also comes in the text, is included in the text, [and] its recitation comes on the fortnight.” Those monks who were of few wishes... denounced, criticized, and castigated: “How is it that group-of-six monks, when the Pātimokkha is being recited, will say 'Just now we know - apparently this Dhamma also comes in the text, is included in the text, [and] its recitation comes on the fortnight'?” ... “Is it true that you, monks, when the Pātimokkha was being recited, said, 'Just now we know - apparently this Dhamma also comes in the text, is included in the text, [and] its recitation comes on the fortnight'?” “It is true, Blessed One.” The Buddha, the Blessed One, reprimanded... “How is it that you, foolish men, when the Pātimokkha is being recited, will say 'Just now we know - apparently this Dhamma also comes in the text, is included in the text, [and] its recitation comes on the fortnight'? This is not, foolish men, for the faith of the faithless... And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

“If any monk, when the Pātimokkha is being recited on the fortnight, says, 'Just now I know - apparently this Dhamma also comes in the text, is included in the text, [and] its recitation comes on the fortnight,' and if other monks know that this monk has previously sat with the monk[s] when the Pātimokkha was being recited [at least] two or three times, if not more, then there is no release on account of ignorance for that monk, and whatever offense had been committed is to be dealt with according to Dhamma, and furthermore he is to be charged with deception⁶⁵⁷: 'Venerable, it is not a gain for you, it is bad fortune for you, that when the Pātimokkha was being recited you did not give it importance and carefully pay attention.' In deceiving⁶⁵⁸ [like] this: a Pācittiya.”

Any monk: ...

Fortnight: On the Uposatha.

When the Pātimokkha is being recited: When [someone] is reciting.

Says: After engaging in misconduct, [thinking] “Let them believe 'It was committed by one who didn't know,'” when the Pātimokkha is being recited, one says, “Just now I know - apparently this Dhamma also comes in the text, is included in the text, [and] its recitation comes on the fortnight”: a Dukkaṭa offense.

⁶⁵⁷ *Moha*. Usually this refers to the self-deception that all non-enlightened beings engage in; however, in this particular context it appears to refer to deceiving others - namely, attempting to make them believe that one does not know the Pātimokkha well enough to be held accountable to it.

⁶⁵⁸ *Mohanaka*. A present-participle (-ing) form of *moha*.

If other monks know that the monk who is desiring to deceive has previously sat with the monk[s] when the Pātimokkha was being recited [at least] two or three times, if not more, then there is no release on account of ignorance for that monk, and whatever offense had been committed is to be dealt with according to Dhamma, and furthermore he is to be charged with deception. And thus, monks, he is to be charged: The Saṅgha is to be notified by an experienced, competent monk:

“Bhantes, may the Saṅgha hear me. This monk, named such-and-such, when the Pātimokkha was being recited, did not give it importance and carefully pay attention. When the Saṅgha is ready, the Saṅgha may charge the monk named such-and-such with deception. This is the notification.

“Bhantes, may the Saṅgha hear me. This monk, named such-and-such, when the Pātimokkha was being recited, did not give it importance and carefully pay attention. The Saṅgha charges the monk named such-and-such with deception. Any Venerable who approves of charging the monk named such-and-such with deception may be silent; whoever does not approve may speak.

“The monk named such-and-such has been charged by the Saṅgha with deception. The Saṅgha approves, therefore it is silent; thus do I hold it.”

One deceives when one has not been charged: a Dukkaṭa offense.
One deceives when one has been charged: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as a valid act when it is a valid act: a Pācittiya offense.
In doubt when it is a valid act: a Pācittiya offense.
Perceiving it as an invalid act when it is a valid act: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as a valid act when it is an invalid act: a Dukkaṭa offense.
In doubt when it is an invalid act: a Dukkaṭa offense.
Perceiving an invalid act as an invalid act: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Non-offense[s]: One has not heard it in detail; one has heard it in detail less than two or three times; for one not desiring to deceive; for one who is crazy; for the first offender.