

## Pācittiya #84: Picking Up Valuable Objects

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Sāvatti, at Jeta's grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's park. Furthermore, on this occasion, a certain monk was bathing in the Aciravatī River. After setting a bag of five hundred [coins] on dry land, a certain brahmin also bathed in the Aciravatī River. Having forgotten [the bag], he left. Then that monk, [thinking] "This is that brahmin's bag; may it not be lost here," picked it up. Then that brahmin, after remembering [the bag] and running quickly back, said to that monk, "Sir, perhaps you saw a bag?" [Saying] "Here, Brahmin," he gave [it back]. Then it occurred to that brahmin, "By what expedient may I avoid giving a reward to this monk?" [He said,] "Sir, it was not five hundred, I had a thousand!" After restraining [that monk], he let him go. Then that monk, after going to the monastery, reported this matter to the monks. Those monks who were of few wishes... denounced, criticized, and castigated: "How is it that a monk will pick up a valuable object<sup>679</sup>?" ... "Is it true that you, monk, picked up a valuable object?" "It is true, Blessed One." The Buddha, the Blessed One, reprimanded... "How is it that you, foolish man, will pick up a valuable object? This is not, foolish man, for the faith of the faithless... And thus, monks, you may recite this training-rule:

**"If any monk picks up or causes to be picked up an object that is valuable or considered valuable: a Pācittiya."**

And thus this training-rule was designated for the monks by the Blessed One.

On a [later] occasion there was a festival at Sāvatti. Made up with adornments, people went to the park. Visākhā, Migāra's mother<sup>680</sup>, also made up with adornments, [thinking] "I will go the park," left the village. [Thinking] "What will I do after going to the park? Why don't I visit the Blessed One?" After taking off her jewelry and wrapping it in an upper garment, she gave it to a slave, [saying] "Hey you, take this bundle." Then Visākhā approached the Blessed One; after approaching and paying respects to the Blessed One, she sat to one side. When she was seated to one side, the Blessed One instructed, encouraged, energized, and gladdened Visākhā with a Dhamma talk. When Visākhā had been instructed, encouraged, energized, and gladdened by the Blessed One's Dhamma talk, she rose from her seat, paid respects to and venerated the Blessed One, and left. Then that slave, forgetting the bundle, [also] left. After seeing it, monks reported this matter to the Blessed One. "Therefore, monks, after picking it up, set it aside." Then the Blessed One, on account of this matter, on account of this incident, after giving a Dhamma talk, addressed the monks: "Monks, I allow [you] to set aside an object that is valuable or considered valuable after picking it up in a monastery, [thinking] 'Whoever this belongs to will take it away.'" And thus, monks, you may recite this training-rule:

<sup>679</sup> *Ratana*. Lit. "gem" or "jewel."

<sup>680</sup> In the text the identifier "Migāra's mother" is included every time Visākhā's name is mentioned. This repetition has been omitted beyond this point.

**“If any monk picks up or causes to be picked up an object that is valuable or considered valuable, except in a monastery: a Pācittiya.”**

And thus this training-rule was designated for the monks by the Blessed One.

On a [later] occasion there was a work-camp<sup>681</sup> belonging to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika in the countryside among the Kāsis. An apprentice was ordered by the housemaster, “If the Auspicious Ones come you may prepare a meal.” Furthermore, on this occasion, many monks were traveling on a journey in the countryside among the Kāsis; they approached the householder Anāthapiṇḍika's work-camp. That man saw the monks coming from afar. After seeing them, he approached those monks; after approaching and paying respects to the monks, he said, “Bhante, let the gentlemen consent to a meal for tomorrow from the housemaster.” The monks consented with silence. Then at the end of the night, after preparing a variety of excellent food, that man announced the time [of the meal], took off his signet-ring, and served the monks with a meal, [saying] “After eating, the gentlemen may go; I will go to work,” and, forgetting the signet-ring, he left. Monks, after seeing [it], [thought] “If we go, this signet-ring will be lost.” They sat down right there. Then that man, returning from work, saw those monks and said, “Bhante, why are the gentlemen sitting right here?” Then those monks, after reporting this matter to that man, went to Sāvatti and reported this matter to the monks. The monks reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this matter, on account of this incident, after giving a Dhamma talk, addressed the monks: “Monks, I allow [you] to set aside an object that is valuable or considered valuable after picking it up in a monastery or a residence, [thinking] ‘Whoever this belongs to will take it away.’” And thus, monks, you may recite this training-rule:

**“If any monk picks up or causes to be picked up an object that is valuable or considered valuable, except in a monastery or a residence: a Pācittiya. Furthermore, after picking up or causing to be picked up an object that is valuable or considered valuable, it is to be set aside by [that] monk, [thinking] ‘Whoever this belongs to will take it away.’ This is the proper [course] here.”**

**Any monk:** ...

**Valuable object:** Pearl, gem, beryl, conch shell, quartz, coral, silver, gold, ruby, cat's-eye.

**An object considered valuable:** Whatever is profitable and enjoyable for people is called “considered valuable.”

**Except in a monastery or a residence:** Having set aside in a monastery [and] in a residence.

**In a monastery:** For an enclosed monastery, inside the monastery; for an unenclosed [monastery], in the vicinity.

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<sup>681</sup> *Kammantaḡāma*. Lit. “working village.”

**In a residence:** For an enclosed residence, inside the residence; for an unenclosed [residence], in the vicinity.

**Picks up:** One picks it up oneself: a Pācittiya offense.

**Causes to be picked up:** One causes another to pick it up: a Pācittiya offense.

**Furthermore, after picking up or causing to be picked up an object that is valuable or considered valuable, it is to be set aside by [that] monk, [thinking] 'Whoever this belongs to will take it away':** After memorizing<sup>682</sup> its appearance or characteristic[s] and setting it aside, one is to announce, “May he who has lost property come.” If he comes there, he is to be told, “Sir, what is your property like?” If he succeeds [at describing] its appearance or characteristic[s], it is to be given [to him]. If he does not succeed, he is to be told “May you find it, Sir.” When leaving from a residence, if there are suitable monks there, then after depositing it in their hands one may leave. If there are no suitable monks there, but there are suitable householders there, then after depositing it in their hands one may leave.

**This is the proper [course] here:** This is in accordance with Dhamma here.

**Non-offense[s]:** After picking up or causing to be picked up an object that is valuable or considered valuable in a monastery or a residence, one sets it aside, [thinking] “Whoever this belongs to will take it away”; one takes on trust an object that is considered valuable; one takes [an object] temporarily; for one who perceives it as discarded; for one who is crazy; for the first offender.

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<sup>682</sup> *Saññāṇaṃ katvā*. An unusual idiom. Lit. “after preparing a recognition.”