

Pācittiya #68: Slandering the Teachings of the Buddha

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Sāvatti, at Jeta's grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's park. Furthermore, on this occasion, an evil perspective⁶⁴¹ of this sort had arisen for a monk named Ariṭṭha, a former vulture-trapper: "As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things which are spoken of as obstructions⁶⁴² by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able⁶⁴³ to obstruct." Many monks heard, "Apparently an evil perspective of this sort has arisen for a monk named Ariṭṭha, a former vulture-trapper: 'As I understand... not able to obstruct.'" Then those monks approached Ariṭṭha the former vulture-trapper and said to him, "Is it true, Venerable Ariṭṭha, that an evil perspective of this sort has arisen for you - 'As I understand... not able to obstruct'?" "Venerable, certainly that is how I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One - those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct."

"Venerable Ariṭṭha, don't say that. Don't slander the Blessed One. Slandering the Blessed One is not good. The Blessed One would not say that. Venerable Ariṭṭha, in many ways those things which are obstructions are spoken of by the Blessed One as obstructions. And, furthermore, when engaged in they are able to obstruct. Sensuality is spoken of by the Blessed One as [providing] little gratification, much suffering, [and] much anguish; the disadvantage here is greater. Sensuality is spoken of by the Blessed One with the simile of a skeleton... a piece of meat... a grass torch... a pit of coals... a dream... a loan... a tree-fruit... a slaughterhouse... an edged pike... a snake's head, [providing] much suffering [and] much anguish; the disadvantage here is greater."

When Ariṭṭha Bhikkhu, the former vulture-trapper, was being spoken to by those monks, he obstinately clung to that same evil perspective, declaring "Venerable, certainly that is how I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One - those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct." And when those monks were not able to separate Ariṭṭha Bhikkhu, the former vulture-trapper, from that evil perspective, then those monks approached the Blessed One; after approaching the Blessed One they reported this matter to him. Then the Blessed One, on account of this matter, on account of this incident, after convoking the community of monks, questioned Ariṭṭha Bhikkhu, the former vulture-trapper: "Is it true, Ariṭṭha, that an evil perspective of this sort has arisen for you - 'As I understand... not able to obstruct'?" "Bhante, certainly that is how I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One - those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct."

"Foolish man, for what⁶⁴⁴ [reason] did you understand Dhamma taught by me in that way? Foolish man, of those things which are obstructions, have I not spoken in many ways [of

⁶⁴¹ *Diṭṭhigata*.

⁶⁴² *Antarāyikā*.

⁶⁴³ *Nālaṃ*. Lit. "not sufficient," "not enough."

⁶⁴⁴ *Kassa*. This could also be "for whom."

them] as obstructions? Sensuality is spoken of by me as [providing] little gratification, much suffering, [and] much anguish; the disadvantage here is greater. Sensuality is spoken of by me with the simile of a skeleton... a piece of meat... a grass torch... a pit of coals... a dream... a loan... a tree-fruit... a slaughterhouse... an edged pike... a snake's head, [providing] much suffering [and] much anguish; the disadvantage here is greater. And then you, foolish man, with yourself wrongly held, slander us; you dig⁶⁴⁵ yourself [deeper], you accumulate much demerit. Foolish man, this will be for your long-lasting detriment and suffering. This is not, foolish man, for the faith of the faithless... And thus, monks, you may recite this training-rule:

“If any monk says, ‘As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct,’ that monk is to be spoken to by the monks in this way: ‘Venerable, don't say that. Don't slander the Blessed One. Slandering the Blessed One is not good. The Blessed One would not say that. Venerable, in many ways those things which are obstructions are spoken of by the Blessed One as obstructions. And, furthermore, when engaged in they are able to obstruct.’ As that monk is being spoken to by the monks in this way, if he holds on to that same [assertion], that monk is to be admonished by the monks up to a third time for the relinquishment of that [assertion]. When admonished up to the third time, if he relinquishes that [assertion] that is skillful⁶⁴⁶. If he does not relinquish [that assertion]: a Pācittiya.

Any monk: ...

Says: “As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct.”

That monk: The monk who speaks thus.

By the monks: By other monks.

This is to be said by those who see [and] those who hear: “Venerable, don't say that. Don't slander the Blessed One. Slandering the Blessed One is not good. The Blessed One would not say that. Venerable, in many ways those things which are obstructions are spoken of by the Blessed One as obstructions. And, furthermore, when engaged in they are able to obstruct.” A second time as well it is to be said. A third time as well it is to be said. If he relinquishes, that is skillful. If he does not relinquish: a Dukkaṭa offense. After hearing they do not speak:⁶⁴⁷ a Dukkaṭa offense.

⁶⁴⁵ *Khaṇasi*. One might also render this “you dig yourself [up]” – that is, “you uproot yourself.”

⁶⁴⁶ *Kusala*.

⁶⁴⁷ This appears to refer to monks who hear a monk proclaiming the proscribed perspective but do not speak against it.

After taking that monk to the midst of the Saṅgha, this is to be said: “Venerable, don't say that. Don't slander the Blessed One. Slandering the Blessed One is not good. The Blessed One would not say that. Venerable, in many ways those things which are obstructions are spoken of by the Blessed One as obstructions. And, furthermore, when engaged in they are able to obstruct.” A second time it is to be said. A third time it is to be said. If he relinquishes, that is skillful. If he does not relinquish: a Dukkaṭa offense. The monk is to be admonished. And thus, monks, [he] is to be admonished: The Saṅgha is to be notified by an experienced, competent monk:

“Bhantes, may the Saṅgha hear me. An evil perspective of this sort has arisen for the monk named such-and-such: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct.' He does not relinquish that view⁶⁴⁸. When the Saṅgha is ready, the Saṅgha may admonish the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that view. This is the notification.

“Bhantes, may the Saṅgha hear me. An evil perspective of this sort has arisen for the monk named such-and-such: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct.' He does not relinquish that view. The Saṅgha admonishes the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that view. Any Venerable who approves of admonishing the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that view may be silent; whoever does not approve may speak.

“A second time I speak of this matter... A third time I speak of this matter. Bhantes, may the Saṅgha hear me. An evil perspective of this sort has arisen for the monk named such-and-such: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things which are spoken of as obstructions by the Blessed One, when engaged in, are not able to obstruct.' He does not relinquish that view. The Saṅgha admonishes the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that view. Any Venerable who approves of admonishing the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that view may be silent; whoever does not approve may speak.

“the monk named such-and-such has been admonished by the Saṅgha to bring about the relinquishing of that view. The Saṅgha approves, therefore it is silent; thus do I hold it.”

With the notification: a Dukkaṭa. With the two proclamations: [two] Dukkaṭas. When the proclamations are finished: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as a valid act when it is a valid act, one does not relinquish: a Pācittiya offense.

In doubt when it is a valid act...: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as not a valid act when it is a valid act...: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as a valid act when it is not a valid act: a Dukkaṭa offense.

⁶⁴⁸ *Diṭṭhi*.

In doubt when it is not a valid act: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Perceiving it as not a valid act when it is not a valid act: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Non-offense[s]: For one who is not admonished; for one who relinquishes; for one who is crazy.