

Saṅghādisesa #10: Attempting to Cause Schism in the Saṅgha

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, at a the squirrel's feeding-ground. Then Devadatta approached Kokālika Kaṭamodakatissaka Khaṇḍadeviyāputta Samuddadatta²⁴²; after approaching, he said to Kokālika, “Come, Venerable, we will make a schism²⁴³ in the contemplative Gotama's Saṅgha, a schism in [his] circle.” When this was said, Kokālika said to Devadatta, “Venerable, the contemplative Gotama has great power and authority. How will we make a schism in the contemplative Gotama's Saṅgha, a schism in [his] circle?” “Come, Venerable, after approaching the contemplative Gotama we will ask for five points²⁴⁴: 'Bhante, in many ways the Blessed One speaks in praise of having few wishes, of contentment, of self-effacement, of austerity²⁴⁵, of inspirational [conduct], of diminution²⁴⁶, of the initiating energy. Bhante, in many ways these five things are conducive to fewness of wishes, to contentment, to self-effacement, to shaking off, to inspirational [conduct], to diminution, to initiation of energy. Bhante, it would be excellent if:

[1] 'Monks must be forest-dwellers for the duration of [their] lives; one who goes to [live in] a village makes an error.²⁴⁷

[2] 'They must be reliant on alms-round for the duration of [their] lives; one who accepts an invitation[-meal] makes an error.

[3] 'They must use cast-off [robes] for the duration of [their] lives; one who accepts a robe from a householder makes an error.

[4] 'They must live at the root of a tree for the duration of [their] lives; one who goes to [live at a] covered [dwelling place] makes an error.

[5] 'They must not eat fish or meat for the duration of [their] lives; one who eats fish or meat makes an error.'

“The contemplative Gotama will not permit these. We will teach²⁴⁸ the populace using these five points. Venerable, using these five points, it is possible to make a schism in the contemplative Gotama's Saṅgha, a schism in [his] circle. Because, Venerable, people are inspired by rough²⁴⁹ [practices].”

²⁴² Henceforth referred to as Kokālika.

²⁴³ *Bheda*. Lit. “break” or “breach.”

²⁴⁴ *Vatthu*.

²⁴⁵ *Dhuta*. Lit. “shaken off.” Presumably this means “shaking off defilement.” This is where the word *dhutaṅga* (austere practice) comes from.

²⁴⁶ That is, diminution of unwholesome states.

²⁴⁷ *Vajjam nam phuseyya*. Lit. “An error touches him.” A decidedly unusual phrase; accordingly, the given translation is a somewhat free rendering.

²⁴⁸ *Saññāpeti*. Lit. “cause to perceive.” That is, cause them to perceive that these five practices are good.

²⁴⁹ *Lūkha*.

Then Devadatta, along with his assembly, approached the Blessed One; after approaching and paying respects to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. When he was seated to one side, Devadatta said to the Blessed One, “Bhante, in many ways the Blessed One speaks in praise of having few wishes... one who eats fish or meat makes an error.” “Enough, Devadatta. Let [a monk] be a forest-dweller if he wishes to; [and] let him dwell at a village if he wishes to. Let him be reliant on alms-round if he wishes to; [and] let him accept invitation[-meals] if he wishes to. Let him use cast-off [robes] if he wishes to; [and] let him accept robes from householders if he wishes to. Devadatta, in eight months²⁵⁰ [of the year], sleeping and sitting at the root of a tree has been allowed me. [I allow] fish and meat that is pure in three ways – not seen, not heard, [and] not suspected²⁵¹.” Then Devadatta, [thinking] “The Blessed One does not permit these five points” – excited, exultant – rose from his seat along with his assembly, paid respects to and venerated the Blessed One, and left.

Then Devadatta and his assembly, after entering Rājagaha, taught the populace using [those] five points, [saying] “Sir, after approaching the contemplative Gotama, we asked for five points: ‘Bhante, in many ways the Blessed One speaks in praise of having few wishes... one who eats fish or meat makes an error.’ The Blessed One does not permit these. All of us²⁵² have taken up these five points and live [by them].” Those people there who were faithless, unconfident [in the Buddha], and unintelligent said, “These Sakyan-son contemplatives²⁵³ are austere and committed to self-effacement. However, the contemplative Gotama is a luxuriant who plans for luxury.” However, those people who were faithful, confident [in the Buddha], wise, experienced, and intelligent denounced, criticized, and castigated: “How is it that Devadatta will attempt to cause a schism in the Blessed One’s Saṅgha, a schism in [his] circle?” Monks heard of those people – denouncing, criticizing, and castigating. Those monks who were of few wishes... denounced, criticized, and castigated: “How is it that Devadatta will attempt to cause a schism in the Saṅgha, a schism in the circle?” Then those monks, after reprimanding Devadatta in many ways, reported this matter to the Blessed One... “Is it true that you, Devadatta, attempted to cause a schism in the Saṅgha, a schism in the circle?” “It is true, Blessed One.” The Buddha, the Blessed One, reprimanded... “How is it that you, foolish man, will attempt to cause a schism in the Saṅgha, a schism in the circle? This is not, foolish man, for the faith of the faithless... And thus, monks, you may recite this training-rule:

“If any monk attempts to cause a schism in a unified Saṅgha, or persists in holding to an issue [he] has taken up that is conducive to schism, that monk is to be spoken to by the [other] monks: ‘The Venerable should not attempt to cause a schism in a unified Saṅgha or persist in holding to an issue [he] has taken up that is conducive to schism. Let the Venerable come together with the Saṅgha.

²⁵⁰ This refers to the four-month rainy season, during which monks are expected to spend the Rains Retreat in an enclosed dwelling for three months.

²⁵¹ A monk may not eat fish or meat if the animal was killed specifically for that monk, unless he has not seen or heard that it was killed for him and does not suspect that it was.

²⁵² *Te mayam*. That is, all of Devadatta’s followers.

²⁵³ *Samaṇā sakyaputtiyā*. This phrase usually refers to Buddhist monks in general; in this context, however, it appears to be referring specifically to Devadatta and his assembly.

For a unified Saṅgha that rejoices together, does not dispute, and has one recitation²⁵⁴ dwells comfortably.' And when that monk is being spoken to in this way by the [other] monks, if he holds on to that same [position], that monk is to be admonished by the [other] monks up to a third time for the relinquishment of that [position]. When admonished up to the third time, if he relinquishes that [position] that is skillful.²⁵⁵ If he does not relinquish [that position]: a Saṅghādisesa."

Any monk: ...

Unified Saṅgha: Established in the same affiliation²⁵⁶ and in the same district.²⁵⁷

Attempts to cause a schism: [Thinking] "How might they become at variance? [How] might they become separated? [How] might they become factious?" one seeks a faction, one coalesces²⁵⁸ a group.

An issue that is conducive to schism: The eighteen grounds for making a schism.

[He] has taken up: After taking up.

Holding to: Elucidates.²⁵⁹

Persists: He does not relinquish [that position].

That monk: The monk who is breaking²⁶⁰ the Saṅgha.

By the [other] monks: By other monks.

This is to be said by those who see [and] those who hear:²⁶¹ "The Venerable should not attempt to cause a schism in a unified Saṅgha or persist in holding to an issue [he] has taken up that is conducive to schism. Let the Venerable come together with the Saṅgha. For a unified Saṅgha that rejoices together, does not dispute, and has one recitation dwells comfortably." 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: a Dukkaṭa offense. After taking that monk to the midst of the

²⁵⁴ *Ekuddesa*. This refers to the recitation of the Pātimokkha. "One recitation" means that, in the monastery, everyone attends the same Pātimokkha recitation, rather than multiple groups each holding their own recitation ceremony.

²⁵⁵ *Kusala*.

²⁵⁶ *Samvāsa*. Lit. "Living together." In the Canon this term is used to refer to a group of monastics that are living in the same monastery and performing communal business (*saṅghakamma*) together.

²⁵⁷ *Sīma*.

²⁵⁸ *Bandhati*. Lit. "binds."

²⁵⁹ *Dīpeyya*. Lit. "Lights up."

²⁶⁰ *Bhedaka*.

²⁶¹ That is, who see or hear that a monk is attempting to cause a schism.

Saṅgha, this is to be said: “The Venerable should not attempt to cause a schism... and has one recitation dwells comfortably.” 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. 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. This monk, named such-and-such, attempts to cause a schism in a unified Saṅgha. He does not relinquish that point. 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. This monk, named such-and-such, attempts to cause a schism in a unified Saṅgha. He does not relinquish that point. The Saṅgha admonishes the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that point. Any Venerable who approves of admonishing the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that point may be silent; whoever does not approve may speak.

“A second time as well I speak of this matter...

“A third time as well I speak of this matter. Bhantes, may the Saṅgha hear me. This monk, named such-and-such, attempts to cause a schism in a unified Saṅgha. He does not relinquish that point. The Saṅgha admonishes the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that point. Any Venerable who approves of admonishing the monk named such-and-such to bring about the relinquishing of that point 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 point. The Saṅgha approves, therefore it is silent; thus do I hold it.”

With the notification: a Dukkaṭa. With the two proclamations: [two] Thullaccayas. When the proclamations are finished: a Saṅghādisesa offense. For one who commits [this] Saṅghādisesa, the Dukkaṭa with the notification and the Thullaccayas with the two proclamations subside.

Saṅghādisesa: ...

Perceiving it as a valid act²⁶² when it is a valid act, one does not relinquish: a Saṅghādisesa offense.

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

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

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

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.

²⁶² *Dhamma-kamma*. One could render this “An act that is in accordance with Dhamma.”

Non-offense[s]: For one who is not admonished; for one who relinquishes; for one who is crazy; for one who is deranged; for one tormented by pain; for the first offender.