

Pācittiya #32: Group Meals

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Rājagaha, at the Bamboo Grove, at the squirrel's feeding ground. Furthermore, on this occasion, Devadatta and [his] assembly, when their [receipt of] wealth and respect had dwindled, ate after appealing to families again and again. People denounced, criticized, and castigated: "How is it that Sakyan-son contemplatives will eat after appealing to families again and again?" ... "Is it true that you, Devadatta, ate with [your] assembly after appealing to families again and again?" "It is true, Blessed One." The Buddha, the Blessed One, reprimanded... "How is it that you, foolish man, will eat after appealing to families again and again? This is not, foolish man, for the faith of the faithless... And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

"In a group meal: a Pācittiya."

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

On a [later] occasion, people invited sick monks with a meal. The monks - regretfully - did not consent, [thinking] "A group meal is opposed by the Blessed One." They reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, having given a Dhamma talk, announced to the monks: "Monks, I allow a group meal to be eaten by a sick monk. And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

"In a group meal, except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya. Here the occasion is this: an occasion of illness - this is the occasion here."

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

On a [later] occasion, having prepared a meal with a robe, people invited monks at an occasion of robe-giving, [thinking] "After feeding them, we will clothe [them] with a robe." The monks - regretfully - did not consent, [thinking] "A group meal is opposed by the Blessed One." They reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, after giving a Dhamma talk, announced to the monks: "Monks, I allow a group meal to be eaten at an occasion of robe-giving. And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

"In a group meal, except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya. Here the occasion is this: an occasion of illness, [or] an occasion of robe-giving - this is the occasion here."

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

On a [later] occasion, people invited robe-making monks with a meal. The monks - regretfully - did not consent, [thinking] "A group meal is opposed by the Blessed One."

They reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, after giving a Dhamma talk, announced to the monks: “Monks, I allow a group meal to be eaten at an occasion of robe-making. And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

“In a group meal, except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya. Here the occasion is this: an occasion of illness, an occasion of robe-giving, [or] an occasion of robe-making - this is the occasion here.”

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

On a [later] occasion, [some] monks went on a journey with [some] people. Then those monks said to those people, “Venerables, wait for a moment; we will go for alms.” They said, “Eat right here, Bhante.” The monks - regretfully - did not consent, [thinking] “A group meal is opposed by the Blessed One.” They reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, after giving a Dhamma talk, announced to the monks: “Monks, I allow a group meal to be eaten at an occasion of going on a journey. And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

“In a group meal, except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya. Here the occasion is this: an occasion of illness, an occasion of robe-giving, an occasion of robe-making, [or] an occasion of going on a journey - this is the occasion here.”

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

On a [later] occasion, [some] monks went on a boat with [some] people. Then those monks said to those people, “Venerables, bring [the boat] up to the shore for a moment; we will go for alms.” They said, “Eat right here, Bhante.” The monks - regretfully - did not consent, [thinking] “A group meal is opposed by the Blessed One.” They reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, after giving a Dhamma talk, announced to the monks: “Monks, I allow a group meal to be eaten at an occasion of embarking on a boat. And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

“In a group meal, except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya. Here the occasion is this: an occasion of illness, an occasion of robe-giving, an occasion of robe-making, an occasion of going on a journey, [or] an occasion of embarking on a boat - this is the occasion here.”

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

On a [later] occasion, monks who had lived out the Rains in [various] regions came to Rājagaha to see the Blessed One. People, after seeing monks from various different countries, invited them to a meal. The monks - regretfully - did not consent, [thinking] “A group meal is opposed by the Blessed One.” They reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, after

giving a Dhamma talk, announced to the monks: “Monks, I allow a group meal to be eaten at a large event⁵²⁵. And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

“In a group meal, except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya. Here the occasion is this: an occasion of illness, an occasion of robe-giving, an occasion of robe-making, an occasion of going on a journey, an occasion of embarking on a boat, [or the occasion of] a large event - this is the occasion here.”

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

On a [later] occasion, a blood relative of the Māgadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra went forth among the Ājīvakas. Then that Ājīvaka approached the Māgadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra; after approaching, he said to the Māgadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra, “Great king, I wish to make a meal for all heretics⁵²⁶.” “Bhante, perhaps you could first feed the community of monks headed by the Buddha.” “That I could do.” Then that Ājīvaka sent a messenger into the presence of the monks, [saying] “Let the monks consent to a meal tomorrow with me.” The monks – regretfully – did not consent, [thinking] “A group meal is opposed by the Blessed One.” Then that Ājīvaka approached the Blessed One; after approaching, he exchanged friendly greetings⁵²⁷ with the Blessed One; having engaged in mutually pleasing, cordial conversation, he stood to one side. Standing to one side, that Ājīvaka said to the Blessed One, “The Honorable⁵²⁸ Gotama has gone forth, I have also gone forth; it is suitable for one who has gone forth to receive the almsfood of one who has gone forth. Let the Honorable Gotama consent to a meal tomorrow along with [his] community of monks.” The Blessed One consented with silence. Then that Ājīvaka, having ascertained the Blessed One's consent, departed. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, having given a Dhamma talk, announced to the monks: “Monks, I allow a group meal to be eaten on the occasion of a contemplative's meal. And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

“In a group meal, except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya. Here the occasion is this: an occasion of illness, an occasion of robe-giving, an occasion of robe-making, an occasion of going on a journey, an occasion of embarking on a boat, [the occasion of] a large event, [or] the occasion of a contemplative's meal - this is the occasion here.”

Group meal: Where four monks, invited with any of the five edibles, eat – that is called a “group meal”.

Except at the [proper] occasion: Having set aside the [proper] occasion.

An occasion of illness: Even when [the skin of] a foot is split, an “illness-occasion” [meal] can be eaten.

⁵²⁵ *Mahāsamaya*. This could also be rendered “great occasion” or “important occasion.”

⁵²⁶ *Pāsaṇḍika*.

⁵²⁷ *Sammodi*. Lit. “delighted together”. From the same root as *mudita* (sympathetic joy) and *anumodanā*.

⁵²⁸ *Bhavaṃ*. A polite term of address.

An occasion of robe-giving: When the Kaṭhina has not been spread, the last month of the Rains; [or] when the Kaṭhina has been spread, the five months [of Kaṭhina privileges]: a “robe-giving-occasion” [meal] can be eaten.

An occasion of robe-making: When a robe is being made, a “robe-making-occasion” [meal] can be eaten.

An occasion of going on a journey: [When thinking] “I will go half a *yojana*” a [meal] can be eaten; by one who is going, a [meal] can be eaten; by one who has gone, a [meal] can be eaten.

An occasion of embarking on a boat: [When thinking] “I will embark on a boat” a [meal] can be eaten; by one who has embarked, a [meal] can be eaten; by one who has disembarked, a [meal] can be eaten.

A large event: Where two [or] three monks get by having gone for alms, when a fourth has arrived who cannot get by, a “large event” [meal] can be eaten.

The occasion of a contemplative's meal: When someone who has become a religious wanderer prepares a meal, a “contemplative's-meal-occasion” [meal] can be eaten.

[Thinking] “Apart from the [proper] occasion, I will eat” one receives [food]: a Dukkaṭa offense.

For each ingestion: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as a group meal when it is a group meal, one eats except at the [proper] occasion: a Pācittiya offense.

In doubt when it is a group meal...: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as not a group meal when it is a group meal...: a Pācittiya offense.

Perceiving it as a group meal when it is not a group meal: a Dukkaṭa offense.

In doubt when it is not a group meal: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Perceiving it as not a group meal when it is not a group meal: non-offense.

Non-offense[s]: At the [proper] occasion; two or three [monks] eat together; having gone for alms and assembled, they eat together; a constant supply of food; a meal by ticket⁵²⁹; on the fortnight; on the lunar observance day⁵³⁰; on the first day of the fortnight; having set aside the five edibles, everything [else] is a non-offense; for one who is crazy; for the first offender.

⁵²⁹ *Salāka*.

⁵³⁰ *Uposatha*. I.e., the lunar quarters (half moon, full moon, new moon).