

## Pācittiya #2: Abusive Speech

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Sāvatti, at Jeta's grove, in Anāthapiṇḍaka's park. Furthermore, on this occasion, group-of-six monks were quarreling with well-behaved<sup>384</sup> monks, abusing the well-behaved monks – by birth, by name, by clan, by work, by craft, by illness, by characteristic, by defilement, and by offenses; they abused and reviled [them] with base insults. Those monks who were of few wishes, contented, modest, conscientious, desirous of training, denounced, criticized, and castigated: “How is it that group-of-six monks, quarreling with well-behaved monks, will abuse well-behaved monks – by birth, by name, by clan, by work, by craft, by illness, by characteristic, by defilement, and by offenses; [how is it that] they will abuse and revile [them] with base insults?”

Then those monks, having reprimanded the group-of-six monks in various ways, reported this matter to the Blessed One... having reprimanded them... having given a Dhamma-talk, he addressed the monks:

“In a former time, monks, at Takkaṣilā, there was a bull named Nandivīsāla who belonged to a certain brahmin. Then, monks,<sup>385</sup> the bull Nandivīsāla said to that brahmin: “Go, brahmin, make a wager with a banker, using a thousand [coins] – ‘my bull can advance [even] when tied to a hundred carts.’” That brahmin made a wager with a banker, using a thousand – ‘my bull can advance [even] when bound to a hundred carts.’ That brahmin, having bound together a hundred carts and yoked them to the bull Nandivīsāla, said “Go, Hornless; carry on, Hornless.” The bull Nandivīsāla just stood there. The brahmin, having lost a thousand, became downcast. The bull Nandivīsāla said “For what reason, brahmin, are you downcast?” “Because I, sir, have lost a thousand through you.” “For what reason, then, brahmin, did you disgrace me – one who is not hornless – with the term ‘hornless’? Go, brahmin, make a wager with a banker, using two thousand – ‘my bull can advance [even] when bound to a hundred carts.’ And don’t disgrace me – one who is not hornless – with the term ‘hornless’.” That brahmin made a wager with a banker, using two thousand – ‘my bull can advance [even] when bound to a hundred carts.’ That brahmin, after binding together a hundred carts and yoking them to the bull Nandivīsāla, said “Keep going, Auspicious One; carry on, Auspicious One.” The bull Nandivīsāla advanced, bound to a hundred carts.

One may speak just what is pleasing, not what is unpleasing at any time.  
For one who spoke what was pleasing, he drew a heavy load.  
He acquired wealth, and by that was satisfied.

Then, also, monks, cursing and despising were unpleasing. Why would cursing and despising now be pleasing? This is not, monks, for the faith of the faithless... and thus, monks, you may recite this training rule:

<sup>384</sup> *Pesala*.

<sup>385</sup> The phrase “Then, monks...” is repeated at the beginning of every sentence in this story. All repetitions after the first have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

## **“In abusive speech: a Pācittiya.”**

**Abusive speech:** By ten factors one abuses – by birth, by name, by clan, by work, by craft, by illness, by characteristic, by defilement, by offense, and by insult.

**Birth:** Two [kinds of] birth – base<sup>386</sup> birth and exalted<sup>387</sup> birth.

**Base birth:** Outcast birth, basket-weaver<sup>388</sup> birth, hunter birth, cartwright birth, refuse-remover birth. This is called “base birth.”

**Exalted birth:** Khattiya<sup>389</sup> birth, brahmin birth. This is called “exalted birth.”

**Name:** Two [kinds of] name – base name and exalted name.

**Base name:** avakaṇṇaka, javakaṇṇaka, dhaniṭṭhaka, saviṭṭhaka, kulavaḍḍhaka<sup>390</sup>; or that which in any country is thought low of, despised, disdained, reviled, disrespected – this is called “base name.”

**Exalted name:** Connected with the Buddha, connected with the Dhamma, connected with the Saṅgha; or that which in any country is not thought low of, not despised, not disdained, not reviled, respected – this is called “exalted name.”

**Clan:** Two [kinds of] clan – base clan and exalted clan.

**Base clan:** Kosiya clan, Bhāradvāja clan; or that which in any country is thought low of, despised, disdained, reviled, disrespected – this is called “base clan.”

**Exalted clan:** Gotama clan, Moggallāna clan, Kaccāna clan, Vāsiṭṭha clan; or that which in any country is not thought low of, not despised, not disdained, not reviled, respected – this is called “exalted clan.”

**Work:** Two [kinds of] work – base work and exalted work.

**Base work:** Storage-person work, flower-discarder<sup>391</sup> work; or that which in any country is thought low of, despised, disdained, reviled, disrespected – this is called “base work.”

**Exalted work:** Agriculture, trade, cowherding; or that which in any country is not thought low of, not despised, not disdained, not reviled, respected – this is called “exalted work.”

**Craft:** Two [kinds of] craft – base craft and exalted craft.

**Base craft:** Basketmaker-craft, potter-craft, weaver-craft, tanner-craft, barber-craft; or that which in any country is thought low of, despised, disdained, reviled, disrespected – this is called “base craft.”

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<sup>386</sup> *Hīna* – base, inferior, contemptible. Literally, “diminished.”

<sup>387</sup> *Ukkatṭha* – exalted, glorious, prominent. Literally, “raised up.”

<sup>388</sup> *Veṇa*. Basket-maker, bamboo-worker.

<sup>389</sup> *Khattiya*. Warriors, aristocrats, rulers.

<sup>390</sup> The exact meaning of these five names has been lost in time, along with any emotive force they may once have carried. By context one may presume that they were demeaning terms of address at the Buddha's time.

<sup>391</sup> *Puppha* (flower) *chaḍḍaka* (discarder). CPD suggests this may mean “privy-cleaner.”

**Exalted craft:** Calculating, accounting, writing; or that which in any country is not thought low of, not despised, not disdained, not reviled, respected – this is called “exalted craft.”

Also, all illnesses are base, except perhaps diabetes is exalted.

**Characteristic:** Two [kinds of] characteristic – base characteristic and exalted characteristic.

**Base characteristic:** Too tall, too short, too dark, too light, that is called “base characteristic.”

**Exalted characteristic:** Not too tall, not too short, not too dark, not too light, that is called “exalted characteristic.”

Also, all defilements are base.

Also, all offenses are base, except perhaps the attainment of stream-entry<sup>392</sup> is exalted.

**Insult:** Two [kinds of] insults: base insult and exalted insult.

**Base insult:** “You are a camel”, “you are a sheep”, “you are a cow”, “you are an ass”, “you are an animal”, “you belong in hell”, “there is no good fate for you”, “only bad fate is expected for you”; by the application of “ya” or “bha”<sup>393</sup>; “you are a penis”, “you are a vagina”; this is called “base insult.”

**Exalted insult:** “You are wise”, “you are competent”, “you are intelligent”, “you are very learned”<sup>394</sup>, “you are a Dhamma-speaker”, “there is no bad fate for you”, “only good fate is expected for you”; this is called “exalted insult.”

### **{Method #1}**

An ordained<sup>395</sup> person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks base [words] to a base ordained person – an outcast, weaver, hunter, cartwright, or refuse-remover:<sup>396</sup> one says, “You are an outcast, you are a weaver, you are a hunter, you are a cartwright, you are a refuse-remover;” an offense by speech<sup>397</sup>, a Pācittiya by speech.

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks base [words] to an exalted ordained person – khattiya or brahmin: one says, “You

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<sup>392</sup> All offenses (*āpatti*) except stream-entry (*sotāpatti*). This Pāli pun is more or less unreproducible in English.

<sup>393</sup> Apparently at the time of the Buddha these were diminutive and disparaging forms of address. I.B. Horner suggests that they were applied to the end of the name of the person that one is insulting.

<sup>394</sup> *Bahussuta*. Literally “much-heard” – one who has learned much.

<sup>395</sup> *Upasampanna*. One who has had *upasampadā* – full ordination as a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni.

<sup>396</sup> This refers to the person's caste (born into a refuse-remover family) rather than to the person's current occupation.

<sup>397</sup> *Vācā*. This may also be rendered “statement” – i.e., one offense incurred for each statement made.

are an outcast, you are a weaver, you are a hunter, you are a cartwright, you are a refuse-remover;" an offense by speech, a Pācittiya by speech.

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks exalted [words] to a base ordained person – an outcast, weaver, hunter, cartwright, or refuse-remover: one says, "You are a khattiya, you are a brahmin;" an offense by speech, a Pācittiya by speech.

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks exalted [words] to an exalted ordained person – a khattiya or a brahmin: one says, "You are a khattiya, you are a brahmin;" an offense by speech, a Pācittiya by speech.

*...{As above for each of the ten kinds of verbal abuse}...*

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks exalted [words] to an exalted ordained person – one who is wise, competent, intelligent, very learned, a Dhamma-speaker: one says, "You are wise, you are competent, you are intelligent, you are very learned, you are a Dhamma-speaker, there is no bad fate for you, only good fate is expected for you;" an offense by speech, a Pācittiya by speech.

#### **{Method #2}**

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks thus to an ordained person, "There are those here who are outcasts, weavers, hunters, cartwrights, refuse-removers;" an offense by speech, a Dukkaṭa by speech.

*...{As above for each of the ten kinds of verbal abuse}...*

#### **{Method #3}**

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks thus to an ordained person, "Perhaps there are some outcasts, weavers, hunters, cartwrights, refuse-removers here;" an offense by speech, a Dukkaṭa by speech.

*...{As above for each of the ten kinds of verbal abuse}...*

#### **{Method #4}**

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks thus to an ordained person, "We are not outcasts, weavers, hunters, cartwrights, refuse-removers;" an offense by speech, a Dukkaṭa by speech.

*...{As above for each of the ten kinds of verbal abuse}...*

#### **{To an unordained person}**

An ordained person – desiring to abuse, desiring to revile, desiring to cause shame – speaks base [words] to a base unordained<sup>398</sup> person – an outcast, weaver, hunter, cartwright, or refuse-remover: one says, “You are an outcast, you are a weaver, you are a hunter, you are a cartwright, you are a refuse-remover;” an offense by speech, a Dukkaṭa by speech.

*...{As above for each of the ten kinds of verbal abuse, using any of the four methods listed above}...*

### **{Wrong Speech}**

An ordained person – not desiring to abuse, not desiring to revile, not desiring to cause shame, desiring to be playful<sup>399</sup> – speaks base [words] to a base ordained person – an outcast, weaver, hunter, cartwright, or refuse-remover: one says, “You are an outcast, you are a weaver, you are a hunter, you are a cartwright, you are a refuse-remover;” an offense by speech, a Dubbhāṣita by speech.

*...{As above for each of the ten kinds of verbal abuse, using any of the four methods listed above}...*

An ordained person – not desiring to abuse, not desiring to revile, not desiring to cause shame, desiring to joke – speaks base [words] to a base unordained person – an outcast, weaver, hunter, cartwright, or refuse-remover: one says, “You are an outcast, you are a weaver, you are a hunter, you are a cartwright, you are a refuse-remover;” an offense by speech, a Dubbhāṣita by speech.

*...{As above for each of the ten kinds of verbal abuse, using any of the four methods listed above}...*

**Non-offense[s]:** For one devoted to benefit; for one devoted to Dhamma; for one devoted to instructing; for one who is crazy; for one of deranged mind; for one tormented by pain; and for the first offender.

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<sup>398</sup> *Anupasampanna*. Ie, not a bhikkhu or bhikkhunī.

<sup>399</sup> *Davakamyatā*. For example, as a joke. Literally, “from a desire” (*kamyatā*) “to play” (*dava*)