

Pācittiya #65: Ordaining Someone Who Is Less Than Twenty Years Old

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, at the squirrel's feeding ground. Furthermore, on this occasion, [some] group-of-seventeen monks were friends with [some] boys in Rājagaha. The foremost of them was a boy named Upāli. Then it occurred to Upāli's mother and father, "By what expedient may Upāli live happily and not be troubled when our time comes?"⁶²⁹ Then it occurred to them, "If Upāli learns inscription, then when our time comes Upāli will live happily and not be troubled." Then it occurred to them, "If Upāli learns inscription, there will be pain for [his] fingers. If Upāli learns accounting, then when our time comes Upāli will live happily and not be troubled." Then it occurred to them, "If Upāli learns accounting, there will be pain for [his] chest. If Upāli learns form,⁶³⁰ then when our time comes Upāli will live happily and not be troubled." Then it occurred to them, "If Upāli learns form, then there will be pain for [his] eyes. These Sakyan-son contemplatives are habitually happy, [they] act happy, after eating good food they sleep on sheltered⁶³¹ beds. If Upāli were to go forth among the Sakyan-son contemplatives, then when our time comes Upāli will live happily and not be troubled."

The boy Upāli heard this conversation of his mother and father. Then the boy Upāli approached the [other] boys; after approaching, he said to them, "Come, gentlemen, we will go forth among the Sakyan-son contemplatives." "Sir, if you go forth, then we will also go forth." Then those boys, after approaching their parents one by one, said to them, "Allow me to go forth from the household life to homelessness." Then the parents of those boys, [thinking] "All these boys are of similar interest,⁶³² intent on wholesomeness⁶³³," they allowed [it]. After approaching the monks, they begged for the going-forth. The monks gave them the going-forth and full ordination. At night, as it neared dawn, they got up and wept, "Give us porridge, give us a meal, give us food." Monks said to them, "Venerables, wait until the night is over. If there is porridge, you will drink [it]. If there is a meal, you will eat it. If there is food, you will consume it. If there is no porridge, no meal, or no food, then after going for alms you will eat." While this was being said by the monks, the [new] monks kept weeping, "Give us porridge, give us a meal, give us food." They defecated and urinated⁶³⁴ on the furniture.

The Blessed One heard the sound of the boys after they rose at night as it neared dawn. After hearing this, he addressed Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, why is there the sound of boys?" Then Venerable Ānanda reported this matter to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, on account of this issue, on account of this incident, after convoking the community of monks, asked the monks, "Monks, is it true that monks knowingly ordained a person who was less than twenty years old?" "It is true, Blessed One." The Buddha, the

⁶²⁹ *Accayena*. A euphemism for death.

⁶³⁰ *Rūpa*. This may refer to visual art of some kind.

⁶³¹ *Nivāta*. Lit. "without wind."

⁶³² *Chanda*.

⁶³³ *Kalyāṇa*.

⁶³⁴ *Ūhadati* and *Ummihati*.

Blessed One, reprimanded... “How is it, monks, that these foolish men will knowingly ordain a person who is less than twenty years old? Monks, a person who is less than twenty years old is intolerant of cold; heat; hunger; thirst; contact with flies, mosquitoes, wind, [sun]burn, creeping things; [and] ill-spoken, unwanted courses of speech. They are not able to endure painful, sharp, rough, bitter, unpleasant, unpleasing, life-threatening bodily feelings that have arisen. Monks, a person [at least] twenty years old is tolerant of cold... feelings that have arisen. This is not, monks, for the faith of the faithless... And thus, monks, you may recite this training-rule:

“If any monk knowingly ordains⁶³⁵ a person who is less than twenty years⁶³⁶ old, that person is not ordained, those monks are blameworthy, and in this there is a Pācittiya.”

Any monk: ...

Knows: He knows [it] himself, or others report to him, or he reports.

Less than twenty years old: Not reached twenty years.

[Thinking] “I will ordain,” one seeks a group, a teacher⁶³⁷, a bowl, or a robe, or one selects an [ordination] territory: a Dukkaṭa offense. With the notification: a Dukkaṭa. With the two proclamations: [two] Dukkaṭas. When the proclamations are finished: a Pācittiya offense for the preceptor, a Dukkaṭa offense for the group and for the teacher.

Perceiving him as less than twenty years old when he is less than twenty years old, one ordains: a Pācittiya offense.

In doubt when he is less than twenty years old...: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Perceiving him as fully twenty years old when he is less than twenty years old...: non-offense.

Perceiving him as less than twenty years old when he is fully twenty years old: a Dukkaṭa offense.

In doubt when he is fully twenty years old: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Perceiving him as fully twenty years old when he is fully twenty years old: non-offense.

Non-offense[s]: Perceiving him as fully twenty years old when he is less than twenty years old, one ordains; perceiving him as fully twenty years old when he is fully twenty years old, one ordains; for one who is crazy; and for the first offender.

⁶³⁵ *Upasampādeti*. Thus this rule refers specifically to full ordination, not to novice ordination (*pabbajjā*).

⁶³⁶ *Vassa*. Lit. “Rainy [season].” This is different from the word for a full solar year (*saṁvacchara*). Thus a person who has lived through twenty *Vassa* seasons would appear to still qualify, even though they might be several months short of twenty solar years (*saṁvaccharā*).

⁶³⁷ *Ācariya*. A teacher for the newly ordained monk.