

## Pācittiya #11: Damaging Plants

On this occasion the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Āḷavi, at the Aggāḷava Cetiya. Furthermore, on this occasion, Āḷavi monks were performing new work, cutting trees and causing them to be cut. A certain Āḷavi monk cut a tree. The deva living in that tree said to that monk, “Bhante, don't cut my dwelling-place out of a desire to make a dwelling-place for yourself.” The monk, not taking heed, cut anyway, and that deva's son's arm was struck. Then that deva thought, “What if I were to deprive this monk of life right here?” Then that deva thought, “That would not be proper for me, if I were to deprive this monk of life right here. What if I were to report this matter to the Blessed One?” Then that deva approached the Blessed One; after approaching, she reported this matter to the Blessed One. “Excellent, excellent, deva! It is very good that you, deva, did not deprive that monk of life. Deva, if you had deprived that monk of life today, you would have accumulated much demerit<sup>450</sup>. Go, deva, in that open space there is a solitary tree; you may take that [tree].” People denounced, criticized, and castigated: “How is it that Sakyan-son contemplatives will cut trees and cause them to be cut? Sakyan-son contemplatives are damaging single-faculty life!”

Monks heard of the people denouncing, criticizing, and castigating. Those monks who were of few wishes... denounced, criticized, and castigated: “How is it that Āḷavi monks will cut trees and cause them to be cut?” ... “How is that you, foolish men, will cut trees and cause them to be cut! People perceive life in trees, foolish men. This is not, foolish men, for the faith of the faithless... And thus, monks, you may recite this training rule --

**“In destroying<sup>451</sup> plant-life<sup>452</sup>: a Pācittiya.”**

**Plant-life:** Five kinds of propagation<sup>453</sup> – root-propagation, trunk-propagation, joint-propagation, tip-propagation, just-seed-propagation as the fifth.

**Root-propagation:** Turmeric, ginger, sweet fig, orris root, *ativisā*, black hellebore, Andropogon Muricatum, Cyperus rotundus, or whatever others there are that arise in a root, are produced in a root – that is called “root-propagation.”

**Trunk-propagation:** Bodhi tree, banyan tree, wave-leaf fig tree, glomerous fig tree {*udumbara*}, Cedrela toona tree, Thespesia populneoides tree, or whatever others there are that arise in a trunk, are produced in a trunk – that is called “trunk-propagation.”

**Joint-propagation:** Sugarcane, bamboo, reed, or whatever others there are that arise in a stalk, are produced in a stalk – that is called “joint-propagation.”

<sup>450</sup> *Apuñña*.

<sup>451</sup> *Pātabyatā*. An uncommon word. Literally “felling”.

<sup>452</sup> *Bhūtagāma*. While it literally means “village of a being,” the word-analysis below appears to limit the meaning to plant-life. That said, the exact identities of some of the listed plants have been lost in time, and are left untranslated.

<sup>453</sup> *Bīja*. While this literally means “seed”, in this context it refers to propagation method.

**Tip-propagation:** *Ocimum Gratissimum*, *phañijjaka*, *hirivera*, or whatever others there are that arise in a tip, are produced in a tip<sup>454</sup>, that is called “tip-propagation.”

**Seed-propagation:** Grains, vegetables, or whatever others there are that arise in a seed, are produced in a seed – that is called “seed-propagation.”

Perceiving vegetation<sup>455</sup> as vegetation, one cuts or causes to cut, breaks or causes to break, cooks or causes to cook: a Pācittiya offense.

Doubtful about vegetation, one cuts or causes to cut...: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Perceiving vegetation as non-vegetation, one cuts or causes to cut...: non-offense.

Perceiving non-vegetation as vegetation: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Doubtful about non-vegetation: a Dukkaṭa offense.

Perceiving non-vegetation as non-vegetation: non-offense.

**Non-offense[s]:** One says, “Know this, provide this, bring this, with this purpose – make this allowable<sup>456</sup>”; for one who [acts] unintentionally, unmindfully, or unknowingly; for one who is insane; for the first offender.

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<sup>454</sup> PED: “propagated by slips or cuttings.” BMCp.328 suggests this means propagated “from runners”.

<sup>455</sup> *Bīja*. Again, literally “seed”. In this context this appears to more generally mean “vegetation” – synonymous with the word “plant-life” used above – that makes use of any of the various propagation methods listed above.

<sup>456</sup> “*Imaṃ kappiyaṃ karohi*.” As under the preceding rule, one may hint to a layperson using a statement of this sort and hope that they act of their own accord.