# False Speech

* **Pc 1,** Intentional lie
* **Sg 8,** Unfounded parajika accusation
* **Sg 9,** Distorting evidence
* **Pc 76,** Unfounded sanghadisesa accusation
* **NP 30,** Diverting an offering for oneself
* **Pc 82,** Diverting an offering for a lay person

## Pc 1, Intentional lie

Origin: Ven. Hatthaka defeats philosophical opponents by means of lying.

**Intention:** to misrepresent the truth

**Effort:** to communicate it to sb. based on that aim

Result is not a factor. It doesn’t matter if the listener believes it or not.

*Telling a conscious lie* means: the words, the utterance, the speech, the talk, the language, the intimation, the (un-ariyan) statements of the person intent upon deceiving with words.

*Dukkata* for remaining silent when it implies a false message (e.g. during Patimokka recitation).

*Dukkata* for broken promises, where one is making the promise with pure intentions but later breaking it.

*White lies:* motivation is irrelevant.

*Remaining silent:*

During the patimokkha recitation: pacittiya.

Silence is a gesture, and fulfils effort as a factor.

Everyday context: sensitive information, or can’t be bothered to respond.

Example: “We can discuss it tomorrow” – (a) just to make him happy but not intending to meet (b) failing to remember or something comes up blocking the meeting.

One has to know *I am going to lie*, and *I am lying*.

Note: irony doesn’t intend to deceive, but satire does.

Cruel- or malign jokes: don’t let humour comprimise your highest values.

Example: “It was 100!” – intending to impress, but he doesn’t know.

Checking one’s statements before making them, different levels of confidence in a statement.

### Non-offenses

* unintentionally,
* speaking in haste (unconsidered)
* slip of the tongue (stupidity or carelessness)

### Jokes

Humorous, witty remarks which are true statements are not criticized even by the Buddha. There are cases of his humour in the suttas.

Irony, sarcasm, satire, boastful- and playful exaggeration are confusing because one makes physical signs to represent a false statement (effort).

One may claim not intending to lie, but one’s intention is often ambigous (jolly bantering, wanting to avoid a situation).

Result is not a factor, but others might miss the irony while picking up the resentment or malice.

The Commentary’s examples:

A novice asks a bhikkhu:

* Have you seen my preceptor?
* Your preceptor’s probably gone, yoked to a firewood cart.

A novice, on hearing the yapping of hyenas:

* What’s making that noise?
* That’s the noise of those who are lifting the stuck-in-the-mud wheel of the carriage your mother’s going in.

The Commentary assigns offence for these and other examples which could be exaggeration or sarcasm.

Note the Buddha’s instruction to Rahula: “Train yourself, ‘I will not utter a deliberate lie, even for a laugh.’”

Intention is fulfilled when the speaker wants the listener to believe a false statement, even if for a second, even while planning to reveal that one is only joking.

Practical jokes are *pacittiya* (e.g. telling sb. that their robes are lost to see their reaction).

Satire and boastful exaggeration are *pacittiya*.

Irony, sarcasm, playful exaggeration can sometimes fulfill intention, sometimes not. Such remarks are often made as a manner of speaking without the intention to deceive.

Example at Pr 2: a bhikkhu puts away sb’s item for safe-keeping. When the person is looking for it, he ironically responds “I stole it.” The Buddha says the bhikkhu committed no offence, as it was only a manner of speaking, not an acknowledgement of theft.

## Sg 8, Unfounded parajika accusation

It matters whether the person is present or not.

Insult, slander, lieing.

Spreading stories.

Saying something which may be false, but you believe it to be true.

“Not sure if this is true…” – enjoying gossip.

## Sg 9, Distorting evidence

Finding a statement which will be misinterpreted, but one can maintain it to be true.