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THE PLACE OF NON-OFFENDERS: A STUDY BASED ON *PĀRĀJIKA ĀPATTI*

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The *Pārājikadharmā*, or sins involving expulsion from the *Samaṇa*-ship, are the most heinous offences depicted in the *Vinaya*. These offences have not only been placed out at the top of the list of 227 *Vinaya* rules recommended for the *bhikkhus*, but also at the top of the list of 311 *Vinaya* rules of the *bhikkhunīs*. These offences are known as *pārājikā*-s (lit. “Defeats”), “that which involve expulsion.” There are four in number, *i.e.*, fornication, theft, depriving a human being of life, and, falsely laying claim to the possession of *Arahant*-ship or any of the other supernatural gifts. This research is mainly focused on the first of the four *pārājika āpatti*-s of the *bhikkhu*-s depicted in the *Pārājikapāḷi* of the *Vinaya-piṭaka*. The research is on 6 individuals engaged in different conditions at different stages, who have not committed offences. They are not called *pārājiko*, *i.e.* they do not involve expulsion. They are: if one is ignorant, if one has not agreed, if one is mad, if one is unhinged, if one is afflicted with pain, and if one is a beginner. This substitute imposed by the Buddha is explained in the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* (*Samantapāsādikā*) in detail. The methodology of the research follows a qualitative approach, and it primarily depends on the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and its commentarial descriptions. The results of the research show the Buddha’s enlightened vision on the offence (*āpatti* in Pali) and justice, and also his noble quest towards the “defendant”- the person or entity that is being sued, and “plaintiff”- the person or entity filing the lawsuit. It is recorded in the VIN. I: 36-37 that Venerable *Sudinna* who held no offence as the first-doer (*ādikattā pubbaṅgamo*) of many wrong things was rebuked by the Buddha via seven advises, *i.e.*, you will enter upon what is not verily *dhamma*, upon village *dhamma*, upon low *dhamma*, upon wickedness, upon final ablution, upon secrecy, and upon having obtained in couples. On account of this, for the first time, the Buddha set forth the rules on *Pārājika āpatti* for monks based on ten reasons. The commentarial definition on non-offenders related to *Pārājika āpatti* elaborates the utmost words of the Buddha on legitimacy.

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