

Prātimokṣa (Patimokkha) Vows: An Informative Study based on Abhidharmakośakārikā by Vasubandhu

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Abstract

The entire teachings of Tathāgata Buddha that He spoke in the Wheels of Dharma are subsumed into two corpuses: doctrine and tenets or conduct and view. Regarding the practitioners who are to practice the doctrine and tenets, there are two types: those whose minds have not been inspired by tenets and those minds have been inspired by tenets. Between the two, the former seeks only the pleasures of this life with the inborn intellect which, since they have never studied a system of tenets, neither examines nor analyzes while the latter refers to them who have studied some system. By citing scripture and reasoning they propound a way of establishing a presentation of the three—basis, paths and results— which accord to their own knowledge. All sentient beings have been wandering in the saṃsāra due to the grasping at self and the grasping at phenomena. In order to get rid of them, they definitely need to realize its antidote. Though the antidotes which He elucidated in his teachings seem different, but has sole aim, i.e., to free our mind from the control of delusion and karmas motivated by delusions. Getting control over the mind keeps us away from suffering and provides genuine happiness. Tathāgata Buddha introduced lot of rules to make our body, speech and mind disciplined and tamed. The rules are popularly known as disciplines, precepts or vows. These disciplines also have various forms and have difference in nomenclatures and recognitions as well. However, in general, vows are divided into three— Prātimokṣa Vows, Bodhisattva Vows and Tantra Vows. On the other hand, as per the school of Theravāda, vows are of three types: Prātimokṣa (individual liberation) vows, Dhyāna (meditative concentration) vows, and Anāsrava (uncontaminated) vows. The term 'vow' is explained as 'restraining improper actions of body, speech and mind', i.e., that which restrains our body, speech and mind from doing wrong actions done through our body, speech and mind is called vow. But according to Abhidharmakośakārikā, the term 'vow' is defined as "due to restraining improper actions of body and speech, they are called vows".

Keywords: abhidharmakośakārikā, vows of individual liberation, kashmiri Vaibhāṣikas, Laṅkāvatārasūtra, Poṣadha, Prātimokṣa, uncontaminated vows.

Introduction

There is no doubt that followed by the attainment of perfect and complete Buddhahood, Gautama the Buddha, turned the Wheels of Dharma at various places for the sake of welfare of sentient beings. Though initially He remained silent for seven weeks without expressing any word¹, but later at the request of Brahmā², He decided to bring

welfare through showing them the right path to liberation. Being a matchless and skillful Guide, He never tried to attract and establish His disciples to path by means of His miraculous power by saying 'Tathāstu (So be it)!'³. Instead, He just introduced and showed the right path according to the wish, temperament and capacity of His disciples⁴.

The entire teachings of Tathāgata Buddha that He spoke in the Wheels of Dharma are subsumed into two corpuses: doctrine and tenets or conduct and view.

¹I have gained the cognition of the Truth, profound, Free from defilement, illuminating, eternal, and like nectar. But, if I should demonstrate it to others, they will not understand. Free from defilement, illuminating, eternal, and like nectar. But, if I should demonstrate it to others, they will not understand. Therefore, I shall abide in solitude in the forest." *Lalitavistara*, 25.1

²With my infinite compassion for the whole world, I will not stand for just anyone to supplicate. These beings all have faith in Brahmā;

Thus, when he supplicates, I will turn the wheel of Dharma. *Lalitavistara*, 25.7

³*nakṣālayantimunayojalenapāpam/Naivapakarṣantikareṇajagadd ukham//*

Naivacasamkramantehyanyesvadhigamam/Saddharmatādeśana yavimocayanti//, (Trans. & Ed.). Negi, Wanghuck Dorje *Dhammapada*. p. 207

⁴*Dhammapada*, 12.4

Buddha himself spoke in *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (The Descent to Laṅkā Sūtra):

My doctrine has two modes
 Doctrine and tenets.
 To children I speak doctrine
 And to yogis, tenets.⁵

Regarding the practitioners who are to practice and enter the doctrine and tenets respectively, there are two types: those whose minds have not been inspired by tenets and those minds have been inspired by tenets. Those whose minds have not been inspired by tenets seek only the pleasures of this life with the inborn intellect which, since they have never studied a system of tenets, neither examines nor analyzes. Those whose minds have been affected by tenets are those who have studied some system. By citing scripture and reasoning they propound a way of establishing a presentation of the three— basis, paths and results— which accord to their own knowledge.

In fact, all sentient beings have been wandering in the *saṃsāra* since time immemorial due to the grasping at self and the grasping at phenomena. In order to get rid of the grasping, they definitely need to realize its antidote referring to emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of the three doors (body, speech and mind) of emancipation subsuming in the selflessness of person and phenomena. Therefore, those who seek liberation should look for realizing emptiness, the reality of phenomena among all teachings of the Buddha. However, even the Buddha's teachings are based on two thoughts: that of completely maturing the disciples and that of particular intention. It is because there are various sūtras explaining the subject matter in disagreement of the ultimate nature of phenomena and there are several sūtras explaining the emptiness of selflessness through different subtle and coarse aspects of emptiness. Thus, the teachings of the Buddha are categorized into two— definitive teachings or sūtras which do not acquire interpretation or those which are mainly associated with the teachings of ultimate truth, the absolute system and interpretative sūtras or teachings or those which are mainly associated with the teachings of conventional truth.

Therefore the disciples, having acknowledged whatever has been spoken in his teaching as being valid, should not accept it literally. Rather, those who are engaged in search of emptiness, the ultimate nature of phenomena, should specifically distinguish the definitive sūtras explaining the ultimate definitive meaning and the interpretative sūtras not explaining the meaning in that way. And then having followed the sūtras explaining the definitive meaning they should enter in search of emptiness, the definitive aspect of phenomena. Without distinguishing the interpretative and definitive meanings of sūtras, the essential nature of phenomena cannot be realized just by depending upon scriptures whatever it may be, particularly comprehending their meaning literally.

All the above-mentioned means are just for the uplift all sentient beings from the realm of suffering and provide actual happiness. He gave his teaching in a very skillful manner with the understanding about the level of mental states and capacity of His disciples stressing only on applying his teaching in their life. Although the subject matter which He elucidated in his teachings are different, but has sole aim, i.e., to free our mind from the control of delusion and *karmas* motivated by delusions. Getting control over the mind keeps us away from suffering and provides genuine happiness. Buddha says in *Dhammapada*:

Restraint over the body is good;
 Restraint over the speech is good;
 Restraint over the mind is good;
 Restraint over all is good;
 The Bhikkhu who restrains all (senses and mind)
 Becomes thoroughly free from all suffering. (25:2)⁶

In fact, Tathāgata Buddha introduced lot of rules to make our body, speech and mind disciplined and tamed. The rules, popularly known as disciplines, precepts or vows, for controlling one's three doors, are mentioned in different ways and aspects in different scriptures and treatises. These disciplines also have various forms and have difference in nomenclatures and recognitions as well. However, in general, vows are divided into three— *Prātimokṣa* Vows, Bodhisattva Vows and Tantra Vows. On

⁵ Konchok Jigme Wangpo. (Trans. & Ed.) Geshe Lhundup and Jeffrey Hopkins (1997), *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (English), New Delhi: B.I. Publication, p. 2

⁶ *Kāyena saṃvarosādhu, sādhu vācāya saṃvaro/Manasā saṃvarosādhu, sādhusabbatthasaṃvaro/Sabbatthasaṃvaro bhikkhusabbadukkhāpamuccatill 25.2)*

the other hand, as per the school of Theravāda, vows are of three types: *Prātimokṣa* (individual liberation) vows, *Dhyāna* (meditative concentration) vows, and *Anāsrava* (uncontaminated) vows.

The term 'vow' is explained as 'restraining improper actions of body, speech and mind', i.e., that which restrains our body, speech and mind from doing wrong actions done through our body, speech and mind is called vow. But according to *Abhidharmakośakārikā*, the term 'vow' is defined as "due to restraining improper actions of body and speech, they are called vows". The reason is that all vows, particularly the vow of individual liberation (*prātimokṣa*) are related to actions of body and speech. On the other hand, the *dhyāna saṃvara* and *anāsrava saṃvara* are associated with the mind.

Among the above-mentioned vows, here special emphasis is being given to discuss the *Prātimokṣa* vows in the following ways:

- Meaning of *Prātimokṣa* vows
- Definition of *Prātimokṣa* vows
- Division of *Prātimokṣa* vows
- Definition of the divided ordination of *Prātimokṣa* vows
- Entities of the eightfold vows
- Synonyms of Vows
- *Prātimokṣa* vow is not harmonious with mind
- Way of receiving the *Prātimokṣa* vows
- Method for taking the one-day precepts
- Reason that the number of branches is definitely eight
- Foundation of *Prātimokṣa* Vows
- Acquiring *Prātimokṣa* Vows
- Modes of relinquishing the *Prātimokṣa* Vows

Meaning

A category of precepts is called *Prātimokṣa* vows because an individual becomes free from the suffering and the origin of suffering of *saṃsāra* because of observing it.

Definition

It is a precept received with a motivation wishing to gain renunciation or definite release from *saṃsāra*; not merely a prayer for blessing or protection from fear, but aspiration for peace for oneself. The *Prātimokṣa* vows are to refrain from harming others as well as the primary and secondary thoughts to do so. The *Abhidharmakośakārikā* and its

commentary say: "The *Prātimokṣa* vow is the morality of renunciation (definite emergence) included in the desire realm. It is elaborated by explaining that the ordination which is caused from the particular signing communication and is obtained only by human beings of three continents⁷ except the human beings of northern continent (Uttarakuru) with the purpose of seeking freedom from suffering and its cause for oneself is called the *Prātimokṣa* vows"⁸.

Division

Vasubandhu says that the *Prātimokṣa* vows are classified into eight according to holder: They are: (1) the fully ordained monk vows (2) the fully ordained nun vows (3) the novice monk vows (4) the novice nun vows (5) the layman vows (6) the lay woman vows (7) the probationary nun vows and (8) the one-day vows. This eightfold vow becomes four when they are condensed into substances. They are:

1. The vows of fully-ordained monks and fully-ordained nuns are one substance.
2. The vows of probationary nuns and those of novice monks and nuns are one substance.
3. The vows of laymen and laywomen are one substance.
4. The vows of one-day preceptors are one substance.

He says in *Abhidharmakośakārikā*:

Those called "individual liberation" are of eight types. As substances they are four types. (4.14ab)

However, the latter is not divided into two male and female vows because it is taken for a short time, just for one day. When a fully-ordained monk relinquishes his vows, he still maintains the vows of a novice monk. If he

⁷ In Buddhist cosmology, there are four large continents, each of which has two smaller continents next to it: In the center, is the monarch of mountains, Mount Meru. The four continents and eight smaller continents are: (1) Videha, the eastern continent "land of (those with) superior/large bodies" with *deha* and *videha*; (2) Jambūdvīpa, the southern continent "Jambu-tree land" with *Chāmara* and *Aparachāmara*; (3) Godāniya, the western continent "land of using cattle" with *sāḥā* and *Uttaramantrīna*; (4) Kuru, the northern continent "land of unpleasant sound" with *Kurava* and *Kaurava*. Surrounding all of these is an outer rim of iron mountains.

⁸ Unpublished dissertation, 2013

also gives up the vows of a novice monk, he remains a lay vow holder. The male and female vows are one substance because if a fully-ordained monk changes gender, although he comes to be called a “fully-ordained nun” for the vows themselves are not given up.

Definition of the Divided *Prātimokṣa* Vows

- 1) A male practitioner who has renounced household life and has taken the vows to observe the 253 precepts⁹ of a fully ordained monk (Skt. Bhikṣu; Pāli. Bhikkhu) in order to attain liberation from *saṃsāra*. It is also elaborated by saying that the fully ordained monk vows is an ordination taken through signing communication for abandoning all the bodily and verbal non-virtuous actions till death which is based in the mind of a male.
- 2) A female practitioner who has renounced household life and has taken the vows to observe 364 precepts¹⁰ of a fully ordained nun (Skt. Bhikṣuṇī; Pāli. Bhikkhuni) in order to attain liberation from *saṃsāra*. It is also elaborated by stating that the meaning of the fully ordained nun vows is an ordination taken through signing communication for abandoning all the bodily and verbal non-virtuous actions till death which is based in the mind of a female.
- 3) The meaning of the novice monk (Skt. Śrāmaṇera; Pāli. Sāmaṇera) vows is an ordination taken through signing communication for abandoning ten types of non- virtuous acts¹¹ till the last breath based in the mind of a male.
- 4) The meaning of the novice nun vows (Skt. Śrāmaṇerī; Pāli. Sāmaṇerī) is an ordination taken through signing communication for the thirty-six precepts of observation and abandonments till the last breath

based in the mind of a female. The thirty-six are subsumed into ten, popularly known as the ten fundamental precepts¹².

- 5) The meaning of the layman vows (Skt. Upāsaka; Pāli. Upasaka) is distinguished as the vows taken through signing communication for abandoning five types of non-virtuous acts¹³ till last breath in the mind of a male.
- 6) The meaning of the laywoman vows (Skt. Upāsikā; Pāli. Upāsikā) is distinguished as the vows taken through signing communication for abandoning five types of non-virtuous acts¹⁴ till the last breath based in the mind of a female.
- 7) The meaning of the probationary nun vows (Skt. Śikṣmāṇā; Pāli. Sikkhamāṇā) for females is in between a fully ordained monk and a fully ordained nun. It is type of vow taken for two years before becoming a fully ordained nun. The ordination is taken through signing communication for abandoning the main six objects of refutation¹⁵ and the six secondary objects of refutation¹⁶ till the last of breath based in the mind of a female.
- 8) A set of eight vows¹⁷ for lay practitioners (Skt. Upavāsa; Pāli. Upavāsa) usually taken on special days. The one-day vow and is kept till the end of the day householder's particular *Prātimokṣa* vows.

Among the eight, even the *Upāsaka* vows are classified into seven by the way of expression. They are: someone who holds the Threefold Refuge, *Upāsaka* practising only one precept, *Upāsaka* practising few precepts, *Upāsaka* taking most of the precepts, *Upāsaka*

¹² Ibid

¹³ Not killing, not stealing, not indulging in sexual misconduct, not telling lies and not taking alcohol.

¹⁴ Not killing, not stealing, not indulging in sexual misconduct, not telling lies and not taking alcohol.

¹⁵ Not going alone on the road, not swimming across the other shore, not touching a male person, not sitting with a male person, not concealing a transgression of misdeeds and not acting as a go-between (match-maker).

¹⁶ Resignation to natural consequence, character, disposition to view a thing properly, remorse, sorrow for good as well as bad acts and right ambition.

¹⁷ Refraining from killing, stealing, indulging in sexual misconduct, telling lies, taking alcohol, taking food in the afternoon, singing and dancing and using of high and luxurious seat or bed.

⁹ Four defeats, thirteen remainders, thirty propelling downfalls, ninety solitary downfalls, four individual confessions and one hundred twelve faults.

¹⁰ Eight defeats, twenty remainders, thirty-three propelling downfalls, one hundred and eighty solitary downfalls, eleven individual confessions and one hundred twelve faults.

¹¹ Keeping the five root precepts (refraining from killing, stealing, telling lies, indulging sexual misconduct and taking alcohol) with the addition of afternoon food, singing and the wearing of ornaments, the ten to be renounced by novices are the above eight with the addition of precious gems and high thrones or beds.

keeping the four root precepts and alcohol, *Upāsaka* of pure conduct and Gomi *Upāsaka*—As long as one lives he observes the eight *Upāsaka* vows (four precepts and four limbs) and wears the monk robes.

Entities

A question may arise here as what the entities of the eightfold vows are. Those who have five abandonments are lay vow holders; those with eight are one-day preceptors; those with ten are novice monks and nuns; and those with all abandonments are fully-ordained monks and nuns. The five abandonments are the abandonments of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, and taking alcohol. The additional three are the abandonments of dancing and so forth and garlands and so forth taken as one, large and high beds taken as one, and eating food after noon. The lay vows are taken for life, whereas the one-day precepts are taken for twenty-four hours. The one-day precepts involve the abandonment of all sexual conduct whereas the lay vows involve the abandonment of sexual misconduct. Taking the one-day precepts acts as a Restoring and Purifying Ceremony (Poṣadha) for the lay vows. Those who accept to abandon all the abandonments of body and speech for as long as they live are the fully-ordained, these being the three abandonments of the non-virtues of body and the four abandonments of the non-virtues of speech. Among the fourfold, one of them is called *Upāsaka* (lay vows) because he is suitable to serve a fully ordained monk or nun; one is called an *Upavāsa* because he abides by approaching the prescribed rules for life; one is called a Śrāmaṇera because he is tired due to heavy activities; and one is called a Bhikṣu because he abandons all objects of abandonment of body and speech for life. He is also called an *Upasampad* because *Sampad* refers to the ultimate renunciation of nirvāṇa or the nirvāṇa being free from all sorts of harms of the *samsāra*. Since one is close to that state, he is called an *Upasampad*. All vows are related to actions of body and speech. There are no vows related to the mind because it is not material and therefore cannot be restrained by the material.

Abhidharmakośakārikā States:

Through accepting to abandon
Five, eight, ten, and all abandonments,
They are lay vow-holders, one-day preceptors,
Novices, and the fully-ordained. (4.15)

Synonyms

Again another question arises here as to why those vows are called morality, good conduct, action and vow. It is responded by explaining that it is morality because it redresses that which is “unjust,” for transgressors conduct themselves in an unjust manner with regard to beings. Etymologically, because it cools, as it says in the stanza, “Happy is the undertaking of morality, because morality does not burn.” 2. Good conduct, because it is praised by the wise. 3. Action (*karma*), because it is action (*kriya*) by nature. 4. Vow (*saṃvara*), because it restrains improper actions of body and speech. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

They are called “morality,”

“Good conduct,” “actions,” and “vows.” (4.16ab)

When vows are received, the first revelatory and non-revelatory are called “individual liberation” (*prātimokṣa*) because they individually liberate one from negativities. They are “activities” because they are the basis for engaging in intended actions, and they are called “paths” because they are the paths of those activities. Therefore, if it is a *Prātimokṣa* vow, it is not pervaded by being an individual liberation; for example, the second instant onward of a *Prātimokṣa* vow. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

The first revelatory and non-revelatory

Are individual liberation and paths of activities.
(4.16cd)

Prātimokṣa Vows are not Harmonious with Mind

Among the three types of vows, the latter two pertain to the mind which means these two remain existed during the state of absorption, but not during the state of non-absorption. Further, the *Prātimokṣa* are not followers of mind because they also exist on the occasion of being distracted and the occasion of the two mindless states. The text mentions that the latter two vows are the followers of the mind, not the *Prātimokṣa*. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

These latter two vows are followers of mind (4.17d)

Way of Receiving the Prātimokṣa Vows

The seven types of *Prātimokṣa* vows are acquired in dependence on the revelatory of another such as an abbot and so forth. There are ten ways or rituals for acquiring the vows of full ordination. For example, the Buddha and Self-

Buddha became an *Upasampad*, a fully-ordained monk, by self-arising as the vows of full ordination arises when they just achieve the selfself-originated primordial wisdom; the group of five ascetics became *Upasampad* by entering certainty, that is, by attaining the path of seeing; Ājñāta and others became *Upasampad* by the power of the Tathāgata commanding “Come here!” in that instantly their heads were shaved, their lay clothes disappeared, and they were dressed in monk’s robes; Mahākaśyapa became *Upasampad* by recognizing the Buddha as master; Sodayin became an *Upasampad* by satisfying the Buddha; Mahāprajapati became an *Upasampad* by accepting the special obligation of monks and nuns; Dharmadinna became an *Upasampad* by a messenger; one can become an *Upasampad* by an official action as the fifth, that is, ordination before a Saṅgha of five Bhikṣus, as in frontier lands; one becomes an *Upasampad* by ten Bhikṣus, as in Madhyadeśa; and one becomes an *Upasampad* by repeating three times the formula of Taking Refuge, as in the case of the sixty well-disciplined hosts, ordained in a group.

The seven *Prātimokṣa* vows are taken for as long as one lives, whereas the vows of one-day precepts are taken for one full day. There are no non-vows for one day because non-vows are not received like the vows of one-day precepts. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

The vows are to be correctly taken

For as long as one lives and for a full day.(4.27ab)

There are no non-vows for one day;

They are not received like them – so it is renowned.
(4.27cd)

Method for Taking the One-Day Precepts

One should kneel lower than the person conferring the vows, fold one’s hands, and repeat what he says three times.¹⁸ On that day one should not wear new ornaments. These precepts are taken until the next morning. The one-day precepts are received with the eight branches in their entirety. They are received from another, a fully-ordained monk and so forth. They are to be taken in

the morning prior to eating breakfast. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

By staying lower and repeating what is said,

Unadorned, until the next morning,

The one-day precepts with the eight branches in their entirety

Are to be received from another in the morning. (4.28)

Reason that the Number of Branches is Definitely Eight

The branch of morality is the four roots, the abandonments of killing, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, and lying, that abandon improper mental attention. The branch of conscientiousness is the abandonment of intoxicants because they make one non-conscientious in that due to drinking alcohol one forgets what is to be done and what is not to be done. The branch of asceticism is the last three abandonments which if not abandoned make one arrogant.

Abhidharmakośakārikā states:

The branch of morality, the branch of

Conscientiousness, and the branch of asceticism are

The four, the one, and likewise the three respectively.

By them mindfulness degenerates and one becomes arrogant. (4.29)

One may ask whether the one-day precepts exist only in lay vow-holders. It is described that while the one-day precepts are not necessarily taken only by lay vow-holders, it is necessary to have gone for refuge in order to take them. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

The one-day precepts indeed also exist in others,

But they do not exist in those who have not gone for refuge. (4.30ab)

Foundation

As per the system, initially on the foundation of a human being of the three continents, except that of Uttarakuru, one needs to have taken refuge in the Three Jewels, which is the demarcation of being a Buddhist, in order to be entitled for receiving the *Prātimokṣa* vows. Those who have not taken refuge in the Triple Jewel are not entitled to receive the *Prātimokṣa* vows. It is stated in *Abhidharmakośakārikā*:

¹⁸ Have sincere faith in the Three Jewels, Kneel down with one knee on the ground, Then join your palms, and first of all Go three times for refuge., *Bodhīpathpradīpaṃ*, Verse no. 9

The one-day precepts indeed also exist in others,
But they do not exist in those who have not gone for
refuge. (4.30ab)

.....to.....

Whoever takes refuge to the three.

Takes refuge in the Dharma.

That is taken in to be the Buddha and the Saṅgha –
No-more-learning and both – and the Dharma,
nirvāṇa. (4.32)

Acquiring *Prātimokṣa* Vows

The *Prātimokṣa* vows included in the desire realm are acquired in relation to all three: the preparation, actual action, and the conclusion, that is, the abandonment of the preparation, actual action, and conclusion of non-virtue. They are acquired in relation to the abandonments of both the natural misdeeds and formulated misdeeds. They are also acquired in relation to both bases that are sentient beings and those that are non-sentient. A vow that is acquired in relation to an abandonment of a natural misdeed supported on a basis that is a sentient being is, for example, the abandonment of killing. A vow that is acquired in relation to an abandonment of a natural misdeed that is supported on the non-sentient is, for example, stealing gold. A formulated misdeed supported on a basis that is a sentient being is, for example, for a fully-ordained monk to touch a woman. One supported on the non-sentient is, for example, for a fully-ordained monk to cut grass. They are acquired in relation to sentient beings of the present, but are not acquired in relation to sentient beings of the past or future. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

Those included in the desire realm are acquired
In relation to all, to both, and to those of the present.
(4.35ab)

Modes of Relinquishing *Prātimokṣa* Vows

The *Prātimokṣa* vows are relinquished by offering back the precepts to a human being who knows how to speak and who comprehends meanings. They are also given up at the time of death because the support of the vows becomes non-existent. They are also given up when the two signs occur simultaneously because the support degenerates. The *Prātimokṣa* vows are also given up

through cutting the roots of virtue. In addition, the vows of the one day precepts are given up with the passing of the night. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* says:

Through offering back the trainings, death,

The two signs occurring,

The cutting of the roots, and the passing of the night,

The discipline of *Prātimokṣa*s relinquished. (4.38)

Besides Vasubandhu, the *Aparāntikas* say that all the vows are relinquished when any of the root downfalls occurs. Others say that when the holy Dharma declines the *Prātimokṣa* vows are relinquished because at that time there will be no demarcation of the trainings and no action rituals. It is stated in *Abhidharmakośakārikā*:

Some say that it is through a downfall.

Others that it is through the holy dharma vanishing.
(4.39ab)

Similarly, the Kashmiris assert that those in whom a root downfall has occurred have both immorality and morality, like a single human being has both debts and wealth. Our own system is that the vows are not relinquished by committing a defeat, thus a fully-ordained monk who has a defeat continues to possess the remaining vows. *Sūtra* sets out four fully-ordained monks: nominal fully-ordained monks, fully-ordained monks of promise, fully-ordained monks due to begging, and fully-ordained monks due to destroying the foes. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* states:

The Kashmiri *Vaibhāṣikas* assert that those in whom it has occurred,

Like one who has debts and wealth, have the two.
(4.39cd)

Does this mean that non-Buddhists cannot possess a vow that they have undertaken? They can possess a vow, but they cannot possess the *Prātimokṣa* vow. In fact, the vow that they undertake (“I shall abstain from killing,” etc), rests on an idea of existence; even when they have in view, not a heavenly existence, but that which they call “deliverance or liberation”, they conceive of deliverance as a certain type of existence. Hence transgression is not absolutely “rejected” by them, nor can they be “released” through the discipline they have undertaken.

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