

The Controversy on the Number of the Rules of Discipline for the Monks in Pātimokkha at the First Buddhist Council

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1. Introduction

It is believed that the Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules were the result of a process of growth and gradual development. This is accepted by many scholars.¹ It is also recorded that if the Buddha laid down all rules at once, there would be someone who did not want to go forth through their fear of many rules, therefore the Buddha gradually pointed out the monastic rules when it was necessary.² In the course of time, these rules were formed together as so called *Pātimokkha* for the monks to be observed and recited every half month.

There are some researches³ regarding the number of the rules for the monks in *Pātimokkha* with the references of *Āṅguttara Nikāya* and *Milindapañha*. However, on this argument, more evidences are to be found in: *Mahāvagga*, *Cullavagga*, *Suttavibhaga*, *Parivāra* and Chinese text *Upāliṅgaparipucchāsūtra*.

2. Mahāvagga

Regarding the number of the rules for the monks in *Pātimokkha*, the Buddha does not give the exact number in a set form in Canonical texts. However, *Mahāvagga* says:

Then this occurred to the monks at that time, "how many ways of the recitation of the Pātimokkha are there?" They told this matter to the Buddha. Then the Buddha said: "Monks, there