AN 2.50 — AN 2.50

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

50. “Bhikkhus, there are two types of gatherings. What two?

“The gathering that exists and functions against The Dhamma, and the gathering that exists and functions for and according to The Dhamma.

“Now what, Bhikkhus, is the gathering that exists and functions against The Dhamma?

“Bhikkhus, in such a gathering, unlawful activities take place, where confusion prevails, as clearly defined disciplinary proceedings are not followed in accordance with The Dhamma and The Vinaya, the way they should be. Instead, participants engage in behaving and conducting proceedings that go against The Dhamma and The Vinaya.

“Furthermore, they explain and elaborate on disciplinary proceedings that are incongruent with the teachings, but present them as being more valuable and important than what is supposed to be followed as per The Dhamma and The Vinaya, taught by The Tathāgata. Thus, unlawful discipline prevails while lawful discipline does not. Unlawful activity and discipline become the norm, as they keep enacting disciplinary acts that go contrary to the Vinaya, while those lawful disciplinary acts that are in agreement with the Vinaya are discarded, not enacted, and in time fully tossed out. This, therefore, is the gathering that exists and functions against The Dhamma.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the gathering that exists and functions for and according to The Dhamma?

“In such a gathering, Bhikkhus, lawful activities take place, where clarity and proper protocol prevail, as clearly defined disciplinary proceedings are followed in accordance with The Dhamma and The Vinaya, the way they should be. Thus, participants engage in behaving and conducting proceedings that take place in harmony and are congruent with The Dhamma and The Vinaya.

“Furthermore, they explain and elaborate on disciplinary proceedings that are perfectly in line with the teachings, by presenting them as lawful and legitimate structures to protect The Sangha, and therefore as valuable and important, and thus to be followed as per The

Dhamma and The Vinaya, taught by The Tathāgata. In this manner, lawful discipline prevails while unlawful discipline does not. Lawful activity and discipline become the norm, as they continue enacting disciplinary acts that are in agreement with the Vinaya, while those unlawful disciplinary acts being suggested or argued for that go contrary to the Vinaya are discarded, not enacted, and immediately tossed out. This, therefore, is the gathering that exists and functions for and according to The Dhamma.

“Bhikkhus, these are the two types of gatherings. And out of these two, the gathering that exists and functions for and according to The Dhamma is indeed the greatest.”