AN 2.51 — AN 2.51

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

Source: https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Book-2_Anguttara-Nikya-A-New-Translation.pdf#page=71

Source revision: 95439bcf66d6295a952d574a8501d2d31edc03ca3ed8eb1e5889f079f7b658c9

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Candana source labels: 51. Site text ID: AN 2.51.

Text

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

“The gathering that speaks adhamma (what is non-Dhamma), and behaves against The Dhamma; and the gathering that speaks what is Dhamma, while behaving according to The Dhamma.

“Now what, Bhikkhus, is the gathering that speaks adhamma (what is non-Dhamma), and behaves against The Dhamma?

“Bhikkhus, in such a gathering, the Bhikkhus dissent by disagreeing with some disciplinary issue, whether lawfully justified or not. As a result, the Bhikkhus adopt a hands-off and a non-interventionist attitude while they do not even try to speak to the disagreeing party, to express concern or reach a conclusive agreement in accordance with The Dhamma. Thus, each side leaves the other side be, in their desire to not intervene, as they placate without trying to convince each other or talk reason.

“Thus, in the absence of right view on either side, everyone holds on tenaciously to their wrong views, instead of attempting to rationally and reasonably challenge the conclusion that goes contrary to The Dhamma. In this way, the disciplinary issue gets left ‘as is’ and unaddressed, while each side proclaims: ‘I know my position is correct, while theirs’ is absolutely wrong!’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is called the gathering that speaks adhamma (what is non-Dhamma), and behaves against The Dhamma.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the gathering that speaks what is Dhamma, and behaves according to The Dhamma?

“Bhikkhus, in such a gathering, the Bhikkhus dissent by disagreeing with some disciplinary issue, whether lawfully justified or not. As a result, the Bhikkhus get to work by addressing the issue with sufficient interest and concern to settle the matter in a harmonious and reasonable manner. Thus, they try to speak to the disagreeing party, to express concern or reach a conclusive agreement in accordance with The Dhamma. In this way, through

proper protocol and consideration, along with their power of listening and persuasion, they reach an agreement that is satisfactory to all parties involved, having put the necessary effort to try and reason and thus convince each other.

“Thus, in the presence of Right View on both sides, no one holds on tenaciously to any wrong view for long, and instead, they attempt to rationally and reasonably challenge the conclusion that goes contrary to The Dhamma, all while working for the perpetuation of The Good and True Dhamma and Vinaya. In this way, the disciplinary issue is appropriately addressed, as none of

the opposing sides would proclaim: ‘I know my position is correct, while theirs’ is absolutely wrong!’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is called the gathering that speaks what is Dhamma, while behaving according to The Dhamma.

“Bhikkhus, these are the two types of gatherings.

“And out of these two, the gathering that speaks what is Dhamma, and behaves according to The Dhamma, is indeed the greatest.”