AN 5.167 — AN 5:167 Accusing | Codanā Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Accusing

Codanā Sutta (AN 5:167)

The text to Saṅghādisesa 12, one of the rules in the Vinaya, states: “Let the venerable one admonish the monks in accordance with what is Dhamma, and the monks will admonish the venerable one in accordance with what is Dhamma; for it is thus that the Blessed One’s following is nurtured: through mutual admonition, through mutual rehabilitation.”

This sutta discusses the proper way in which an accusation should be handled to be in keeping with this principle.

There Ven. Sāriputta addressed the monks, "Friends, an accusing monk, when he wants to accuse another [of a wrong-doing], is fit to do so after having established five things in himself. Which five?

"'I will speak at the right time, not at the wrong time.'

"'I will say what is factual, not what is not unfactual.'

"'I will speak gently, not harshly.'

"'I will say what is connected with the goal [or: the matter at hand], not what is unconnected to the goal [the matter at hand].'

"'I will speak with an attitude of goodwill, not with inner aversion.'

"Monks, an accusing monk, when he wants to accuse another, is fit to do so after having established these five things in himself.

"There is the case, friends, where I see a certain person accused at the wrong time and not called to task at the right time; accused with what is unfactual and not called to task with what is factual; accused harshly and not called to task gently; accused with what is unconnected with the goal and not called to task with what is connected with the goal; accused with an attitude of inner aversion and not called to task with an attitude of goodwill.

"Friends, when a monk has been accused with what is not-Dhamma, non-remorse should be encouraged in him in five ways: 'Venerable sir, you were accused at the wrong time, not at the right time. That's enough for you to feel no remorse. You were accused with what is unfactual, not with what is factual. That's enough for you to feel no remorse. You were accused harshly, not gently. That's enough for you to feel no remorse. You were accused with what is unconnected with the goal, not with what is connected with the goal. That's enough for you to feel no remorse. You were accused with an attitude of inner aversion, and not with an attitude of goodwill. That's enough for you to feel no remorse.'

"When a monk has been accused with what is not-Dhamma, non-remorse should be encouraged in him in these five ways.

"When a monk has accused [another] with what is not-Dhamma, remorse should be encouraged in him in five ways: 'Friend, you made an accusation at the wrong time, not at the right time. That's enough for you to feel remorse. You made an accusation with what is unfactual, not with what is factual. That's enough for you to feel remorse. You made an accusation harshly, not gently. That's enough for you to feel remorse. You made an accusation with what is unconnected with the goal, not with what is connected with the goal. That's enough for you to feel remorse. You made an accusation with an attitude of inner aversion, not with an attitude of goodwill. That's enough for you to feel remorse.'

“When a monk has made an accusation with what is not-Dhamma, remorse should be encouraged in him in these five ways. Why is that? So that no other monk would think that he, too, should make an accusation with what is unfactual.

“There is the case, friends, where I see a certain person accused at the right time and not called to task at the wrong time; accused with what is factual and not called to task with what is unfactual; accused gently and not called to task harshly; accused with what is connected with the goal and not called to task with what is unconnected with the goal; accused with an attitude of goodwill and not called to task with an attitude of inner aversion.

“Friends, when a monk has been accused with what is Dhamma, remorse should be encouraged in him in five ways: ‘Venerable sir, you were accused at the right time, not at the wrong time. That’s enough for you to feel remorse. You were accused with what is factual, not with what is unfactual. That’s enough for you to feel remorse. You were accused gently, not harshly. That’s enough for you to feel remorse. You were accused with what is connected with the goal, not with what is unconnected with the goal. That’s enough for you to feel remorse. You were accused with an attitude of goodwill, not with an attitude of inner aversion. That’s enough for you to feel remorse.’

“When a monk has been accused with what is Dhamma, remorse should be encouraged in him in these five ways.

“When a monk has accused [another] with what is Dhamma, non-remorse should be encouraged in him in five ways: ‘Friend, you made an accusation at the right time, not at the wrong time. That’s enough for you to feel no remorse. You made an accusation with what is factual, not with what is unfactual. That’s enough for you to feel no remorse. You made an accusation gently, not harshly. That’s enough for you to feel no remorse. You made an accusation with what is connected with the goal, not with what is unconnected with the goal. That’s enough for you to feel no remorse. You made an accusation with an attitude of goodwill, not with an attitude of inner aversion. That’s enough for you to feel no remorse.’

“When a monk has made an accusation with what is Dhamma, non-remorse should be encouraged in him in these five ways. Why is that? So that another monk would think that he, too, should make an accusation with what is factual.

“Friends, a person being accused should be established in two qualities: in truth and in being unprovoked:

‘If another were to accuse me in five ways—

at the right time or at the wrong time,

with what is factual or with what is unfactual,

gently or harshly,

with what is connected with the goal or with what is unconnected to the goal,

with an attitude of goodwill or with an attitude of inner aversion—

I will be established in two qualities: in truth and in being unprovoked.

"'If I know, "This quality is within me," I should tell him, "It is. This quality is found within me." If I know, "This quality is not within me," I should tell him, "It isn't. This quality is not found within me.'"

[The Blessed One said,] "Sāriputta, even though you are speaking in this way, still there are some worthless men who don't accept it respectfully."

"Lord, those who have no confidence, who have gone forth from home into the homeless life not out of confidence but to make a living—sly, crafty, deceptive, restless, rowdy, unruly, talkative, of loose words, their senses unguarded, knowing no moderation in food, not committed to wakefulness, indifferent to the qualities of a contemplative, with no strong respect for the training, luxurious & lax, leaders in backsliding, discarding the duties of solitude, lazy, weak in their efforts, of muddled mindfulness, unalert, unconcentrated, their minds scattered, of poor discernment, stupid: They, when I have spoken to them in this way, don't accept it respectfully.

"But those sons of good families who have confidence, who have gone forth from home into the homeless life out of confidence—not sly, not crafty, not deceptive, not restless, not rowdy, not unruly, not talkative, not of loose words, their senses guarded, knowing moderation in food, committed to wakefulness, not indifferent to the qualities of a contemplative, with strong respect for the training, not luxurious or lax, leaders in going forward, taking on the duties of solitude, aroused in their efforts, resolute, of unmuddled mindfulness, alert, concentrated, their minds unified, discerning, not stupid: They, when I have spoken to them in this way, accept it respectfully."

"Sāriputta, leave aside those who have gone forth from home into the homeless life not out of confidence but to make a living… of poor discernment, stupid. But as for those who have gone forth from home into the homeless life out of confidence… resolute, of unmuddled mindfulness, alert, concentrated, their minds unified, discerning, not stupid: Those are the ones to whom you should speak.

"Exhort your fellow monks, Sāriputta! Instruct your fellow monks, Sāriputta! [Thinking,] 'I will raise my fellow monks out of what is not True Dhamma and establish them in True Dhamma.' That's how you should train yourself."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 66; MN 70; AN 5:30, AN 6:42; AN 8:103; Dhp 76–77; Dhp 379; Ud 3:3; Ud 4:2