AN 2.47 — AN 2.47

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

Source: https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Book-2_Anguttara-Nikya-A-New-Translation.pdf#page=65

Source revision: 95439bcf66d6295a952d574a8501d2d31edc03ca3ed8eb1e5889f079f7b658c9

License: Candana — free distribution, unaltered contents — https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Book-2_Anguttara-Nikya-A-New-Translation.pdf

Copyright © Bhikkhu Candana, 2020, 2026. Free distribution only; do not alter the contents. The original book, including its complete permission notice, accompanies this text.

Candana source labels: 47. Site text ID: AN 2.47.

Text

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

“The gathering that is engaged in pointless talk, where no discussion about The Dhamma ever takes place, and the gathering where all talk is about The Dhamma, and where no pointless talk could ever take place.

“Now what, Bhikkhus, is the gathering that is engaged in pointless talk, where no discussion about The Dhamma ever takes place?

“Bhikkhus, it is the gathering where the assembled Bhikkhus are neither interested nor want to listen to the deeply insightful suttas, especially those that deal with the supramundane, nor to discuss the transcendental nature of phenomena, such as those discourses that pertain to experiencing the emptiness or the voidness in all things as taught by The Tathāgata. Thus, even when such suttas are recited, taught or explained, these Bhikkhus do not lend an ear to try to understand the depth of The Dhamma found in them. This, because in their foolish arrogance, they presume that they have learned enough, and that these discourses are not necessary to be studied or learned.

“Instead, however, they go on listening eagerly to verses that are composed by others and outsiders; seeking out phrases and poetic expressions and ornately structured words and phrases that make them feel a certain way, such as beautifully arranged, sequenced, and delightful sounding expressions that undulate and thus please the ears, filling up the heart and body with high emotionality in their expressive overtones.

“It is this kind of suttas that they find worthy of memorizing and reciting, showing off their musicality as they chant. As a result, they learn and focus only on those verses composed by others, poets and outsiders, with their poetic expressions and beautifully arranged sequences that delight the ear. But even after having learned and memorized these, they still are not eager to probe them, to question and interrogate as to what is meant by those phrases and words. So, they live satisfied in being indifferent and uninterested to delve deeper, or to examine and uncover any possible hidden meanings that might be laying there behind those words that they learned. In this manner, they remain ignorant and unable to remove any doubts from the heart, given their lack of true knowledge and

understanding of any Dhamma, their lack in desiring to uncover and understand any Dhamma, let alone to truly taste The Dhamma.

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the gathering that is engaged in pointless talk, where no discussion about The Dhamma ever takes place.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the gathering where all talk is about The Dhamma, and where no pointless talk could ever take place?

“Bhikkhus, it is the gathering where the assembled Bhikkhus are neither interested nor want to listen to any verses composed by others, poets, or outsiders, while considering their poetic expressions and beautifully arranged sequences, that delight the ear of putujjanas, simply a waste of time. Therefore, they shun listening to, let alone trying to learn or memorize, phrases and poetic expressions and other ornately structured words and phrases that make an average person feel a certain way, filling up the heart and body with high emotionality in their expressive overtones. In this manner, these Bhikkhus are not interested in such verses.

“Instead, they keep seeking out and find discourses that were actually taught by The Tathāgata, and not those ones weaved together by some poet or commentator. Thus, they go on listening eagerly to the deeply insightful suttas, especially those that deal with the supramundane, as well as discussing the transcendental nature of phenomena, such as those discourses that pertain to experiencing emptiness or the voidness in all things, as taught by The Tathāgata.

“Thus, when such suttas are being recited, taught or explained, they are fully present, listening not only with their ears but with their hearts, trying to learn and understand the depth of The Dhamma in them! This, because in their fervent thirst for The Dhamma, they know there is much to study and learn, so as to understand and benefit from such deeply rich suttas.

“As a result, they learn and focus only on the discourses of The Noble Ones, not the poets, or outsiders. By actively engaging in listening and learning, they then question and examine their meanings, the intended message and teachings found within those discourses, as they try to penetrate and gain a better understanding of The Dhamma. Thus, after having learned and memorized these suttas and the phrases presented in them, they continue to probe further, examining by questioning each other with genuine curiosity and fervent thirst, to uncover any possible hidden meanings that might be laying there behind those words that they learned, which they then apply into their practice immediately.

“In this manner, they continuously grow in their understanding and penetrative wisdom, and thus are able to remove any doubts from the heart, given their wealth of true knowledge and understanding of The Dhamma, their drive and purity of heart in wanting to keep finding out what they still do not know about The Dhamma, as a result of which, in time they come to truly taste The Dhamma.

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the gathering where all talk is about The Dhamma, and where no pointless talk could ever take place.

“Bhikkhus, these are the two types of gatherings. And out of these two, the gathering where all talk is about The Dhamma and where no pointless talk could ever take place, is indeed the greatest.”