Snp 2.8 — The Boat

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Text

Anthology of Discourses 2.8

The Boat

If you would learn the teaching from someone,

honor them as the gods honor Indra.

Then they will have confidence in you,

and being learned, they reveal the teaching.

Heeding well, an attentive one,

practicing in line with that teaching

grows intelligent, discerning, and subtle

through diligently sticking close to such a person.

But associating with a petty fool

who falls short of the goal, jealous,

then unable to discern the teaching in this life,

one proceeds to death still plagued by doubts.

It’s like a man who has plunged into a river,

a rushing torrent in spate.

As they are swept away downstream,

how could they help others across?

Just so, one unable to discern the teaching,

who hasn’t studied the meaning under the learned,

not knowing it oneself, still plagued by doubts,

how could they help others to contemplate?

But one who has embarked on a strong boat

equipped with rudder and oar,
would bring many others across there
with skill, care, and thoughtfulness.
So too one who understands—a knowledge master,
evolved, learned, and unflappable—
can help others to contemplate,
so long as they are prepared to listen carefully.
That’s why you should spend time with a true person,
intelligent and learned.
Having understood the meaning, putting it into practice,
one who understands the teaching would find happiness.