AN 3.26 — Associates

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Text

Numbered Discourses 3.26

3. Individuals

Associates

“These three individuals are found in the world. What three? There is an individual you shouldn’t associate with, accompany, or attend. There is an individual you should associate with, accompany, and attend. There is an individual you should associate with, accompany, and attend with honor and respect.

Who is the individual you shouldn’t associate with, accompany, or attend? It’s an individual who is inferior in terms of ethics, immersion, and wisdom. You shouldn’t associate with, accompany, or attend such an individual, except out of kindness and sympathy.

Who is the individual you should associate with, accompany, and attend? It’s an individual who is similar in terms of ethics, immersion, and wisdom. You should associate with, accompany, and attend such an individual. Why is that? Thinking, ‘Since our ethical conduct is similar, we can discuss ethics, the conversation will flow, and we’ll both be at ease. Since our immersion is similar, we can discuss immersion, the conversation will flow, and we’ll both be at ease. Since our wisdom is similar, we can discuss wisdom, the conversation will flow, and we’ll both be at ease.’ That’s why you should associate with, accompany, and attend such an individual.

Who is the individual you should associate with, accompany, and attend with honor and respect? It’s an individual who is superior in terms of ethics, immersion, and wisdom. You should associate with, accompany, and attend such an individual with honor and respect. Why is that? Thinking, ‘I’ll fulfill the entire spectrum of ethical conduct I haven’t yet fulfilled, or support with wisdom in every situation the ethical conduct I’ve already fulfilled. I’ll fulfill the entire spectrum of immersion I haven’t yet fulfilled, or support with wisdom in every situation the immersion I’ve already fulfilled. I’ll fulfill the entire spectrum of wisdom I haven’t yet fulfilled, or support with wisdom in every situation the wisdom I’ve already fulfilled.’ That’s why you should associate with, accompany, and attend this individual with honor and respect.

These are the three individuals found in the world.

A man who associates with an inferior goes downhill,

but associating with an equal, you’ll never decline;

following the best, you'll quickly rise up,

so you should keep company with people better than you."