AN 2.44 — AN 2.44

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

44. “Bhikkhus, there are two types of gatherings. Which two?

“The rotten gathering and the excellent gathering.

“Now what, Bhikkhus, is the rotten gathering?

“Bhikkhus, there is the gathering where the senior-most Bhikkhus live in luxury and opulence, with so much abundance surrounding them, where they live without The Dhamma in their hearts; drenched in lethargy and careless about The Training, they continuously deviate from the teachings; giving up seclusion, they do not make any effort to pursue that which is yet to be attained, and to realize the Goal of this Holy Life that is yet to be realized. Thus, they serve as rotten and decrepit examples of a recluse, which then the younger Bhikkhus emulate.

“Now, as expected, in witnessing the neglect and indifference demonstrated by the senior Bhikkhus towards living the Holy Life proper, the next generation of Bhikkhus also yearns for and makes it their goal to strive to live in luxury and opulence, with so much abundance surrounding them, where they live without The Dhamma in their hearts; drenched in lethargy and careless about the Training, as they too continuously deviate from the teachings; giving up seclusion, they do not make any effort to pursue that which is yet to be attained; to realize the Goal of this Holy Life that is yet to be realized. Thus, they all serve as rotten and decrepit examples of what a true Bhikkhu is, and how he should really live and strive.

“This therefore, Bhikkhus, is the rotten gathering.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the excellent gathering?

“Bhikkhus, there is the gathering where the senior-most Bhikkhus do not live in luxury nor opulence, nor look for abundance to surround them with, as they live with The Dhamma in their hearts; drenched in resolute commitment and heedful dedication to The Training, they continuously maintain their strong adherence to The Teaching and become inspired by it constantly; rejoicing in seclusion, they are always engaged in the effortful pursuit to

attain that which is yet to be attained, and to realize the Goal of this Holy Life that is yet to be realized. Thus, they serve as excellent examples of being a true recluse, which then the younger Bhikkhus emulate with delight.

“Now, in witnessing the attention and care demonstrated by the senior Bhikkhus towards living the Holy Life proper, the next generation of Bhikkhus also does not live in luxury nor opulence, nor looks for abundance to surround themselves with, as they too live with The Dhamma in their hearts; drenched in resolute commitment and heedful dedication to The Training, they continuously maintain their strong adherence to The Teaching and become inspired by it constantly; rejoicing in seclusion, they are always engaged in the effortful pursuit to attain that which is yet to be attained, and to realize the Goal of this Holy Life that is yet to be realized. Thus, they serve as excellent examples of what a true Bhikkhu is, and how he should really live and strive.

“This therefore, Bhikkhus, is the excellent gathering.

“Bhikkhus, these are the two types of gatherings. And out of these two, the excellent gathering is indeed the greatest.”