Snp 2.8 — Sn 2:8 A Boat

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/StNp/StNp2_8.html

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

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

2:8 A Boat

Although often lost in translation, the overall structure of this poem is clearly articulated in the Pali. The first seven verses—coming under the “because” (yasmā)—state reasons, while the last verse, under the “so” (tasmā), draws the conclusion: Find a good teacher and practice the Dhamma.

Because:

When you honor

—as the devas, Indra—

one from whom

you might learn the Dhamma,

he, learned, honored,

confident in you,

shows you the Dhamma.

You, enlightened, heedful,

befriending a teacher like that,

practicing the Dhamma

in line with the Dhamma,

pondering,

giving it priority,

become

knowledgeable,

clear-minded,

subtle.

But if you consort with a piddling fool

who's envious,

hasn't come to the goal,

you'll go to death

without

having cleared up

the Dhamma right here,

with

your doubts unresolved.

Like a man gone down to a river—

turbulent, flooding, swift-flowing—

and swept away in the current:

How can he help others across?

Even so:

He who hasn't
cleared up the Dhamma,
attended to the meaning
of what the learned say,
crossed over his own doubts:
How can he get others
to comprehend?

But as one who's embarked
on a sturdy boat,
with rudder & oars,
would—thoughtful, skillful,
knowing the needed techniques—
carry many others across,

even so
an attainer-of-knowledge, learned,
developed in mind,1 unwavering
can get other people to comprehend—
when the conditions have arisen
for them to lend ear.

So:
You should befriend
a person of integrity—
learned, intelligent.
Practicing so
as to know the goal,
when you've experienced the Dhamma,

you get bliss.

vv. 316–323

Note

1. According to MN 36, “developed in mind” means able to experience painful feelings without their invading and remaining in the mind.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 22; SN 35:197; Sn 4:1