SN 45.2 — SN 45:2 Half (of the Holy Life) | Upaḍḍha Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Half (of the Holy Life)

Upaḍḍha Sutta (SN 45:2)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans. Now there is a Sakyan town named Sakkara. There Ven. Ānanda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One, "This is half of the holy life, lord: having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues."1

"Don't say that, Ānanda. Don't say that. Having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as

friends, companions, & colleagues, he can be expected to develop & pursue the noble eightfold path.

“And how does a monk who has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, develop & pursue the noble eightfold path? There is the case where a monk develops right view dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in relinquishment. He develops right resolve… right speech… right action… right livelihood… right effort… right mindfulness… right concentration dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in relinquishment. This is how a monk who has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, develops & pursues the noble eightfold path.

“And through this line of reasoning one may know how having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the whole of the holy life: It is in dependence on me as an admirable friend that beings subject to birth have gained release from birth, that beings subject to aging have gained release from aging, that beings subject to death have gained release from death, that beings subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair have gained release from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. It is through this line of reasoning that one may know how having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the whole of the holy life.”

Note

1. As AN 8:54 points out, this means not only associating with good people, but also learning from them and emulating their good qualities.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 95; AN 4:192; AN 8:54; AN 9:1; Ud 4:1; Iti 17