AN 3.79 — Gandhajāta Sutta (The Fragrances)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

79. Gandhajāta Sutta (The Fragrances) Once, having approached The Blessed One and after paying homage to Him, the Venerable Ānanda sat to one side and said to The Blessed One:

“Bhante, these three are the odors which permeate about and spread everywhere, while moving and being pushed here and there by the wind or the current of air, being carried in whichever direction it takes them. Thus, they cannot go against the wind. And what are these three?

“The repulsive smells; the fragrance of the heartwood; and the fragrance of flowers.

“Therefore, Bhante, these are the three smells which permeate about and spread everywhere, while moving and being pushed here and there by the wind or the current of air, being carried in whichever direction it takes them. Thus, they cannot go against the wind.

“But, Bhante, could there be an odor, a scent or a fragrance, which not only permeates about and spreads everywhere, while moving and being pushed here and there by the wind or the current of air, but also moves and permeates by going against the wind as well?”

“Ānanda, there is indeed such a fragrance, which not only permeates about and spreads everywhere, moving and being pushed here and there by the wind or the current of air, but also moves and permeates while going against the wind as well; a truly unique fragrance that is carried and moved with the wind, but also goes against the wind.”

“But, what Bhante, could that fragrance be? What is that fragrance which not only permeates about and spreads everywhere, moving and being pushed here and there by the wind or the current of air, but also moves and permeates while going against the wind, a truly unique fragrance that is carried and moved with the wind, but also goes against the wind?”

“Ānanda, think of a situation where there happens to be a man or a woman in a certain village or town, who has taken Refuge in The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Noble Saṅgha.

“Now, being dedicated to the Path, this person develops a virtuous character, whereby he or she abstains from destroying or harming living beings; abstains from stealing or taking what is not given; does not engage in sexual misconduct of any kind; does not tell lies or speak falsehood; and does not take or consume any mind-altering or intoxicating substances, which delude the mind, seeing that they are the basis for heedlessness.

“Such a person, Ānanda, starts living with a heart that is generous, one that is without the stain of stinginess. This open-handed person becomes truly kind and benevolent, always ready to give to the needy, and devoted to charity. Then, people, recluses, and brahmins from all directions happen to discuss this individual, by speaking words of praise about him, in this manner:

‘In a certain village or town, there happens to be such and such a person, who has taken Refuge in The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Noble Saṅgha. Being dedicated to the Path, this person has developed a virtuous character, whereby he or she abstains from destroying or harming living beings; abstains from stealing or taking what is not given; does not engage in sexual misconduct of any kind; does not tell lies or speak falsehood; and does not take or consume any mind-altering or intoxicating substances, which delude the mind, seeing that they are the basis for heedlessness. Also, that person is now living with a heart that is generous, while being free from the stain of stinginess. Therefore, this open-handed person is truly benevolent and kind, always ready to give to the needy, and devoted to charity.’

“Also, Ānanda, even the Devas in the heavens praise this person thus:

‘In a certain village or town, there happens to be such and such a person, who has taken Refuge in The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Noble Saṅgha. Being dedicated to the Path, this person has developed a virtuous character, whereby he or she abstains from destroying or harming living beings; abstains from stealing or taking what is not given; does not engage in sexual misconduct of any kind; does not tell lies or speak falsehood; and does not take or consume any mind-altering or intoxicating substances, which delude the mind, seeing that they are the basis for heedlessness. Also, that person is now living with a heart that is generous, while being free from the stain of stinginess. Therefore, this open-handed person is truly benevolent and kind, always ready to give to the needy, and devoted to charity.’

“In fact, Ānanda, even non-human beings praise this person thus:

‘In a certain village or town, there happens to be such and such a person, who has taken Refuge in The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Noble Saṅgha. Being dedicated to the Path, this person has developed a virtuous character, whereby he or she abstains from destroying or harming living beings; abstains from stealing or taking what is not given;

does not engage in sexual misconduct of any kind; does not tell lies or speak falsehood; and does not take or consume any mind-altering or intoxicating substances, which delude the mind, seeing that they are the basis for heedlessness. Also, that person is now living with a heart that is generous, while being free from the stain of stinginess. Therefore, this open-handed person is truly benevolent and kind, always ready to give to the needy, and devoted to charity.'

"Therefore, Ānanda, this is that unique fragrance, which not only permeates about and spreads everywhere, moving and being pushed here and there by the wind or the current of air, but also moves and permeates while going against the wind as well; a truly unique fragrance that is carried and moved with the wind, but also goes against the wind.

'The fragrance of the loveliest of flowers cannot go against the wind, Neither that of the rare Sandalwood nor the Tagāra, Not even that of Mallikā (Jasmine); For, it is indeed only the fragrance of those great Beings That spreads and goes even against the wind, Permeating in all directions unobstructed, as it exudes everywhere.'