Dhp 44-59 — Chapter on Flowers

English translation by Bhante Suddhāso.
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Text

Collection of Minor Texts

Verses of Dhamma

Chapter on Flowers

Who will investigate this earth,

this world of death and angels?

Who will collect the well-taught verses of truth,

as a skilled florist collects flowers?

A trainee will investigate this earth,

this world of death and angels.

A trainee will collect the well-taught verses of truth,

as a skilled florist collects flowers.

Having understood that this body is like foam,

one who is aware that it is like a mirage,

having cut Māra’s flower strands,

goes where the Lord of Death does not see.

As if they were collecting flowers,

a person collects mental attachments;

like a sleeping village taken away by a great flood,

they are taken away by death.

As if they were collecting flowers,

a person collects mental attachments;

never sated when it comes to sensuality,

they are dominated by the Ender.

Just as a bee

takes nectar from a flower

without harming its beauty or fragrance—

a sage behaves the same way when in a village.

Do not look at the faults of others—

what they have or have not done;

Look only at yourself—

what you have or have not done.

Just like a lovely flower

that has beauty but no fragrance,

well-spoken words

are fruitless when not acted out.

Just like a lovely flower

that has both beauty and fragrance,

well-spoken words

are fruitful when acted out.

Just as one might make many garlands

from a heap of flowers,

in the same way, between birth and death

one can do much that is wholesome.

The fragrance of a flower does not go against the wind;

nor does the fragrance of sandalwood, milkwood, or jasmine.

However, the fragrance of goodness does go against the wind;

a good person diffuses it in all directions.

Sandalwood or milkwood,

lotus or jasmine,

compared to these kinds of fragrances,

the fragrance of virtue is unsurpassed.

The fragrance of milkwood and sandalwood
is insignificant;
the fragrance of virtue is the highest—
it drifts amidst the angels.
The path of those who have perfect virtue,
live without negligence,
and are liberated through right knowledge
cannot be found by Māra.
Just as in a trash-heap
discarded by the side of the road,
a lotus might bloom—
of pure fragrance and delightful to the mind—
in the same way, amidst the trash-heap of beings—
the blind commoners—
a disciple of the Completely Awakened One
outshines them with wisdom.