SN 9.14 — Gandhatthena Sutta: The Thief of a Scent

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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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

I have heard that on one occasion a certain monk was dwelling among the Kosalans in a forest thicket. Now at that time, after his meal, returning from his almsround, he went down to a lotus pond and sniffed a red lotus.

Then the devata inhabiting the forest thicket, feeling sympathy for the monk, desiring his benefit, desiring to bring him to his senses, approached him and addressed him with this verse:

You sniff this water-born flower that hasn't been given to you. This, dear sir, is a factor of stealing. You are a thief of a scent.

[The monk:]

I don't take, don't damage. I sniff at the lotus from far away. So why do you call me a thief of a scent? One who digs up the stalks, damages flowers, one of such ruthless behavior: why don't you say it of him?

[The devata:]

A person ruthless & grasping, smeared like a nursing diaper: to him I have nothing to say. It's you to whom I should speak. To a person unblemished, constantly searching for purity, a hair-tip's worth of evil seems as large as a cloud.

[The monk:]

Yes, yakkha, you understand me and show me sympathy. Warn me again, yakkha, whenever again you see something like this.

[The devata:]

I don't depend on you for my living nor am I your hired hand. You, monk, you yourself should know how to go to the good destination.

The monk, chastened by the devata, came to his senses.

See also: SN 9.1; SN 9.9.