

Dhammapada

The Path of Truth

Translated by Bhante Saddhāso

Puppha-Vagga *The Flower Chapter*

(44)

Who will investigate¹ this earth, this world of death and devas?
Who will understand the well-taught path of truth,
As a skilled florist understands flowers?

(45)

A trainee² will investigate this earth, this world of death and devas.
A trainee will understand the well-taught path of truth,
As a skilled florist understands flowers.

(46)

Having understood that this body is like foam,
Aware that phenomena are like mirages,
Having cut Māra's flower-strands,
Go where the Lord of Death does not see.

(47)

Like a person gathering flowers, people gather mental attachments;
Like a sleeping village in a great flood, they are taken away by death.

(48)

Like a person gathering flowers, people gather mental attachments;
Never satisfied in the domain of sensuality, they are dominated by the Ender³.

(49)

Just as a bee takes a flower's nectar without harming its color or fragrance,
A sage behaves the same way when in a village.

(50)

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.

(51)

Just as a beautiful flower may be colorful but lack fragrance,
In the same way, well-spoken⁴ words are fruitless when not acted upon.

1 There are two variant readings for this: *vicessati* (investigate) and *vijessati* (conquer).

2 *Sekha*. Any unenlightened being who is practicing the Buddhist path.

3 *Antaka*. An epithet of Māra.

4 *Subhāsita*. This connotes beneficial, wholesome statements (not merely eloquent).

(52)

Just as a beautiful flower may be colorful and fragrant,
In the same way, well-spoken words are fruitful when acted upon.

(53)

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.

(54)

The fragrance of a flower does not go against the wind;
Nor does the fragrance of sandalwood, milkwood, or jasmine.
However, the fragrance of a good person's virtue does go against the wind -
It spreads in all directions.

(55)

Sandalwood or milkwood, lotus or jasmine -
Among these kinds of fragrances, the fragrance of virtue is unsurpassed.

(56)

Insignificant is the fragrance of milkwood and sandalwood.
The fragrance of virtue is utmost - it even reaches the devas.

(57)

Those who perfect virtue, who live vigilantly,
Who are liberated through right knowledge -
Māra cannot find their path.

(58)

Just as, in a heap of trash discarded by the side of a road,
A lotus might bloom - of pure fragrance and delightful to the mind;

(59)

In the same way, in the trash-heap of blind, ordinary beings,⁵
One may outshine them with wisdom: a disciple of the Enlightened One.

5 *Śaṅkāra-bhūtesu andha-bhūte puthujjane*. Lit. "amidst the trash-beings, the blind beings, the ordinary people."