



*Scent of flower or sandal goes not against the wind. But fragrance of virtue blows everywhere.*

54. *Na pupphagandhō paṭivātamēti  
na candanaṃ tagaramallikā vā  
satañca gandhō paṭivātamēti  
sabbā disā sappurisō pavāti. (4:11)*

The fragrance of flowers drifts with the wind as sandalwood, jasmine or lavender. The fragrance of virtue o'ersweeps the wind, all pervasive is virtue of the good.

## FRAGRANCE OF VIRTUE SPREADS EVERYWHERE

### 4 (9) The Story of the Question Raised by the Venerable Ānanda (Verses 54 & 55)

**W**hile residing at the Jētavana Monastery, the Buddha spoke these verses, with reference to a question raised by the Venerable Ānanda.

One evening, absorbed in meditation, Venerable Ānanda pondered the following thought: “The Buddha possesses the three perfumes of excellence; namely, the perfume of sandal, the perfume of roots, and the perfume of flowers. However, each of these perfumes goes only with the wind. Is there possibly a substance whose perfume goes against the wind, or is there possibly a substance whose perfume goes both with the wind and against the wind?” Then the following thought occurred to him: “What is the use of my trying to determine this question all by myself? I will ask the Buddha, and the Buddha alone.” Accordingly he would approach the Buddha and put the question to him. The story goes:

Now one evening the Venerable Ānanda arose from profound meditation and drew near to the place where sat the Buddha, and when he had drawn near, he addressed the Buddha as follows, “Venerable, there are these three substances whose perfume goes only with the wind and not against the wind. What are the three? The perfume of roots, the perfume of sandal, and the perfume of flowers. These are the three substances whose perfume goes only with the wind and not against the wind. But, Venerable, is there possibly a substance whose perfume goes both with the wind and against the wind?”

Said the Buddha in answer to the question, “Ānanda, there is a substance whose perfume goes with the wind, a substance whose perfume goes both with the wind and against the wind.” “But, Venerable, what is that substance whose perfume goes with the wind, that substance whose perfume goes both with the wind and against the wind?” “Ānanda, if in any village or market-town in this world any person seeks refuge in the Buddha, seeks refuge in the Dhamma, seeks refuge in the Sangha; if he refrains from taking life, from taking that which is not given, from indulgence in the sins of the flesh and from lying, and avoids occasions of heedlessness through the use of liquor or spirits or other intoxicants; if he is virtuous; if he lives the life of a householder in righteousness, with a heart free from the stain of avarice; if he is liberal and generous, if he is open-handed, if he takes delight in giving, if he is atten-

tive to petitions, if he takes delight in the distribution of alms, in all parts of the world monks utter his praise. If in such and such a village or market-town either a man or a woman seeks refuge in the Buddha,... if he takes delight in the distribution of alms, deities and spirits speak his praise. If in such and such a village or market-town either a man or a woman seeks refuge in the Buddha,... if he takes delight in the distribution of alms, such acts as these, Ānanda, are the substance whose perfume goes both with and against the wind.”

#### Explanatory Translation (Verse 54)

*pupphagandhō paṭivātaṃ na ēti candanaṃ tagaramallikā vā na paṭivātaṃ ēti sataṃ gandhō ca paṭivātaṃ ēti sappurisō sabbādisā pavāti*

*pupphagandhō*: the fragrance of the flowers; *paṭivātaṃ*: against the wind; *na ēti*: does not waft; *candanaṃ*: sandal wood; *tagara*: lavender; *mallikā vā*: or jasmine; *na*: does not (waft against the wind); *sataṃ*: (but of such noble individuals as the) Buddha; *gandhō*: the sweet smell (of virtue); *ca paṭivātaṃ ēti*: wafts against the wind; *sappurisō*: the virtuous person; *sabbādisā pavāti*: blows in all directions

The world knows, many a sweet smelling flower and fragrant object. But, the fragrance of all these moves only leeward. None of these, however strong their fragrance may be, spread their sweet smell against the wind. But, in contrast, the sweet smell of virtue of a spiritually evolved individual spreads in all directions and is universally experienced.

#### Explanatory Translation (Verse 55)

*candanaṃ tagaraṃ vā api uppalaṃ aṭṭha vassikī ētēsaṃ gandhajātānaṃ sīlagandhō anuttarō*

*candanaṃ*: sandal wood; *tagaraṃ*: lavender; *vā api*: also; *uppalaṃ*: water lily; *aṭṭha*: and again; *vassikī*: jasmine; *ētēsaṃ gandhajātānaṃ*: of all these fragrances; *sīlagandhō*: the sweet smell of virtue; *anuttarō*: is supreme