AN 4.259 — A Thoroughbred (1st)

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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.259

26. Insight

A Thoroughbred (1st)

“Mendicants, a fine royal thoroughbred with four factors is worthy of a king, fit to serve a king, and reckoned a factor of kingship. What four? It’s when a fine royal thoroughbred is beautiful, strong, fast, and well-proportioned. A fine royal thoroughbred with these four factors is worthy of a king. …

In the same way, a mendicant with four qualities is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of veneration with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world. What four? It’s when a mendicant is beautiful, strong, fast, and well proportioned.

And how is a mendicant beautiful? It’s when a mendicant is ethical, restrained in the monastic code, conducting themselves well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, they keep the rules they’ve undertaken. That’s how a mendicant is beautiful.

And how is a mendicant strong? It’s when a mendicant lives with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and embracing skillful qualities. They are strong, staunchly vigorous, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. That’s how a mendicant is strong.

And how is a mendicant fast? It’s when they truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ … ‘This is the origin of suffering’ … ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ … ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. That’s how a mendicant is fast.

And how is a mendicant well proportioned? It’s when a mendicant receives robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. That’s how a mendicant is well proportioned.

A mendicant with these four qualities … is the supreme field of merit for the world.”