AN 3.96 — Paṭhama Ājānīya Sutta (The Thoroughbred – Part 1)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

94. Paṭhama Ājānīya Sutta (The Thoroughbred – Part 1) Bhikkhus, endowed with three qualities, the king’s thoroughbred stallion becomes worthy of him, while also being the king’s prized possession, a genuine sign of his kingship.

What are these three qualities?

Here, Bhikkhus, the king’s thoroughbred stallion is endowed with beauty, power, and speed.

Endowed with these three qualities, the king’s thoroughbred stallion thus becomes worthy of him, while also being the king’s prized possession, a genuine sign of his kingship.

In the same manner, Bhikkhus, endowed with three qualities, the Bhikkhu becomes worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, and worthy of reverential salutation with clasped hands in front of one’s heart, truly being the highest and unsurpassed field of merits throughout existence.

And what are these three qualities?

Here, Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhu is endowed with beauty, power, and speed.

And how, Bhikkhus, is the Bhikkhu endowed with ‘beauty’?

Here, Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhu lives and behaves virtuously while observing the Pātimokkha’s rules, practicing right conduct in all of his behavior. He observes the training rules, while being scrupulous, seeing fear and disgust in the slightest of faults. Thus, by undergoing such training, the Bhikkhu becomes endowed with beauty.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the Bhikkhu become powerful?

Here, Bhikkhus, with applied effort, the Bhikkhu is vigorously dedicated to his training, as he dispels any unwholesome and damaging (akusala) traits in himself, while developing

wholesome and beneficial (kusala) ones instead, maintaining firm resolve by exerting himself, sustaining his heedfulness as he develops wholesome characteristics, without ever becoming deterred from the single and primary aim of the Holy Life, for which he has gone forth. It is therefore in this manner, that the Bhikkhu becomes powerful.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the Bhikkhu become endowed with speed?

Here, Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhu knows and sees directly, how suffering comes to be. He knows and sees directly, how suffering is conditioned and thus the manner in which its origination unfolds and comes to be. He also knows and sees directly, how the very cessation of suffering comes to be. Furthermore, he knows and sees directly, how the Path of Practice itself puts an end to grief and sorrow, thereby bringing suffering to its cessation, as it too, takes place and unfolds. In this manner, the Bhikkhu becomes endowed with speed.

Therefore, it is in this manner, Bhikkhus, that being thus endowed with these three qualities, the Bhikkhu becomes worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, and worthy of reverential salutation with clasped hands in front of one’s heart, truly being the highest and unsurpassed field of merits throughout existence.