AN 5.139 — AN 5:139 Not Resilient | Akkhama Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Not Resilient

Akkhama Sutta (AN 5:139)

“Endowed with five qualities, monks, a king’s elephant is not worthy of a king, is not a king’s asset, does not count as a very limb of his king. Which five? There is the case where a king’s elephant is not resilient to sights, not resilient to sounds, not resilient to aromas, not resilient to flavors, not resilient to tactile sensations.

“And how is a king’s elephant not resilient to sights? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, sees a troop of elephants, a troop of cavalry, a troop of chariots, a troop of foot soldiers, and so he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is not resilient to sights.

“And how is a king’s elephant not resilient to sounds? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, hears the sound of elephants, the sound of cavalry, the sound of chariots, the sound of foot soldiers, the resounding din of drums, cymbals, conchs, & tom-toms, and so he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is not resilient to sounds.

“And how is a king’s elephant not resilient to aromas? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, smells the stench of the urine & feces of those pedigreed royal elephants who are at home in the battlefield, and so he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is not resilient to aromas.

“And how is a king’s elephant not resilient to flavors? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, goes without his ration of grass & water for one day, two days, three days, four days, five, and so he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is not resilient to flavors.

“And how is a king’s elephant not resilient to tactile sensations? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, is pierced by a flight of arrows, two flights, three flights, four flights, five flights of arrows, and so he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is not resilient to tactile sensations.

“Endowed with these five qualities, monks, a king’s elephant is not worthy of a king, is not a king’s asset, does not count as a very limb of his king.

“In the same way, a monk endowed with five qualities is not deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, nor is he an unexcelled field of merit for the world. Which five? There is the case where a monk is not resilient to sights, not resilient to sounds, not resilient to aromas, not resilient to flavors, not resilient to tactile sensations.

“And how is a monk not resilient to sights? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a sight with the eye, feels passion for a sight that incites passion and cannot center his mind. This is how a monk is not resilient to sights.

“And how is a monk not resilient to sounds? There is the case where a monk, on hearing a sound with the ear, feels passion for a sound that incites passion and cannot center his mind. This is how a monk is not resilient to sounds.

“And how is a monk not resilient to aromas? There is the case where a monk, on smelling an aroma with the nose, feels passion for an aroma that incites passion and cannot center his mind. This is how a monk is not resilient to aromas.

“And how is a monk not resilient to flavors? There is the case where a monk, on tasting a flavor with the tongue, feels passion for a flavor that incites passion and cannot center his mind. This is how a monk is not resilient to flavors.

“And how is a monk not resilient to tactile sensations? There is the case where a monk, on touching a tactile sensation with the body, feels passion for a tactile sensation that incites passion and cannot center his mind. This is how a monk is not resilient to tactile sensations.

“Endowed with these five qualities, a monk is not deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, nor is he an unexcelled field of merit for the world.

“Now, a king’s elephant endowed with five qualities is worthy of a king, is a king’s asset, counts as a very limb of his king. Which five? There is the case where a king’s elephant is resilient to sights, resilient to sounds, resilient to aromas, resilient to flavors, resilient to tactile sensations.

“And how is a king’s elephant resilient to sights? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, sees a troop of elephants, a troop of cavalry, a troop of chariots, a troop of foot soldiers, but he doesn’t falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is resilient to sights.

“And how is a king’s elephant resilient to sounds? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, hears the sound of elephants, the sound of cavalry, the sound of chariots, the sound of foot soldiers, the resounding din of drums, cymbals, conchs, & tom-toms, but he doesn’t falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is resilient to sounds.

“And how is a king’s elephant resilient to aromas? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, smells the stench of the urine & feces of those pedigreed royal elephants who are at home in the battlefield, but he doesn’t falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is resilient to aromas.

“And how is a king’s elephant resilient to flavors? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, goes without his ration of grass & water for one day, two days, three days, four days, five, but he doesn’t falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is resilient to flavors.

“And how is a king’s elephant resilient to tactile sensations? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, is pierced by a flight of arrows, two flights, three flights, four flights, five flights of arrows, but he doesn’t falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is resilient to tactile sensations.

“Endowed with these five qualities, monks, a king’s elephant is worthy of a king, is a king’s asset, counts as a very limb of his king.

“In the same way, a monk endowed with five qualities is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the

world. Which five? There is the case where a monk is resilient to sights, resilient to sounds, resilient to aromas, resilient to flavors, resilient to tactile sensations.

“And how is a monk resilient to sights? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a sight with the eye, feels no passion for a sight that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to sights.

“And how is a monk resilient to sounds? There is the case where a monk, on hearing a sound with the ear, feels no passion for a sound that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to sounds.

“And how is a monk resilient to aromas? There is the case where a monk, on smelling an aroma with the nose, feels no passion for an aroma that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to aromas.

“And how is a monk resilient to flavors? There is the case where a monk, on tasting a flavor with the tongue, feels no passion for a flavor that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to flavors.

“And how is a monk resilient to tactile sensations? There is the case where a monk, on touching a tactile sensation with the body, feels no passion for a tactile sensation that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to tactile sensations.

“Endowed with these five qualities, a monk is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 28; MN 61; AN 4:164—165; AN 5:75—76; AN 8:13—14