AN 5.75 — AN 5:75 The Professional Warrior (1) | Yodhājīva Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

The Professional Warrior (1)

Yodhājīva Sutta (AN 5:75)

This discourse is addressed to monks, and deals with their battle to maintain their celibacy and to come out victorious in the practice. The Buddha compares the victorious monk to a victorious warrior, an analogy that was probably intended to appeal to the monks’ masculine pride (see AN 7:48). In this analogy, a celibate is not a wimp, but is instead a warrior to the highest degree. Because the first confrontation for a man trying to maintain his celibacy involves his attraction to women, women play the role of first-line enemy in this discourse.

Unfortunately, we have no record of how the Buddha advised his nun followers on how to maintain their celibacy, so we don't know if he would have used a woman-warrior analogy when teaching them to resist their attraction to men, or if he would have replaced it with another analogy to appeal more specifically to their feminine pride (again, see AN 7:48). However, there are discourses in the Pali Canon that depict nuns as successfully maintaining their celibacy when confronted by men in the forest. A prime example is Therīgāthā 14; there are other examples of nuns resisting temptation in the Bhikkhunī Saṁyutta (SN 5).

Ultimately, of course, the true enemy lies not without but within. This is shown by the fact that the monk in this discourse has to go off alone and put an end to the effluent of sensual passion in his own mind before he can be considered truly victorious.

* * *

"Monks, there are these five types of warriors who can be found existing in the world. Which five?

"There is the case of a warrior who, on seeing a cloud of dust (stirred up by the enemy army), falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the first type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy's banner, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the second type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy's banner, but on hearing the tumult (of the approaching forces), he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the third type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. Some warriors are like this. This is the fourth type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, the tumult, & the hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the fifth type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

"These are the five types of warriors who can be found existing in the world.

"In the same way, monks, there are these five warrior-like individuals who can be found existing among the monks. Which five?

[1] “There is the case of the monk who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the cloud of dust for him? There is the case of the monk who hears, ‘In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.’ On hearing this, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the cloud of dust. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the first type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[2] “And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy’s banner, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the top of the banner for him? There is the case of the monk who not only hears that ‘In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.’ He sees for himself that in that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion. On seeing her, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the top of the banner. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy’s banner, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the second type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[3] “And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy’s banner, but on hearing the tumult (of the approaching forces), he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the tumult for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and giggles at him, calls out to him, laughs aloud, & teases him. On being giggled at, called out to, laughed at, & teased by the woman, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the tumult. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy’s banner, but on hearing the tumult he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the third type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[4] “And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. What is the hand-to-hand combat for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws

herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he—without renouncing the training, without declaring his weakness—engages in sexual intercourse. This, for him, is hand-to-hand combat. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. Some individuals are like this. This is the fourth type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[5] "And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, the tumult, & hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. What is victory in the battle for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he extricates himself, frees himself, and goes off where he will.

"He resorts to a secluded dwelling place: the wilderness, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a forest grove, the open air, a haystack. Having gone to the wilderness, the foot of a tree, or an empty building, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and brings mindfulness to the fore.

"Abandoning covetousness with regard to the world, he dwells with an awareness devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness. Abandoning ill will & anger, he dwells with an awareness devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will & anger. Abandoning sloth & drowsiness, he dwells with an awareness devoid of sloth & drowsiness, mindful, alert, percipient of light. He cleanses his mind of sloth & drowsiness. Abandoning restlessness & anxiety, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness & anxiety. Abandoning uncertainty, he dwells having crossed over uncertainty, with no perplexity with regard to skillful qualities. He cleanses his mind of uncertainty.

"Having abandoned these five hindrances, corruptions of awareness that weaken discernment, then—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—he enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

"With his mind thus concentrated, purified, & bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to the

knowledge of the ending of the effluents. He discerns, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress … This is the origination of stress … This is the cessation of stress … This is the way leading to the cessation of stress … These are effluents … This is the origination of effluents … This is the cessation of effluents … This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.' His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the effluent of sensuality, released from the effluent of becoming, released from the effluent of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"This, for him, is victory in the battle. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, the tumult, & hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the fifth type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

"These are the five warrior-like individuals who can be found existing among the monks."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 4:164—165; AN 4:181; AN 5:139—140; AN 8:13—14; Sn 3:2; Thag 2:27; Thag 2:37