SN 3.9 — SN 3:9 Sacrifice | Yaññā Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

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

Sacrifice

Yaññā Sutta (SN 3:9)

At Sāvatthī. Now on that occasion a great sacrifice had been arranged for King Pasenadi Kosala. Five hundred bulls, five hundred bullocks, five hundred cows, five hundred goats, & five hundred rams had been led to the pillar for the sacrifice. And his slaves, servants, & workers—threatened with punishment, threatened with danger—were making preparations, weeping, their faces stained with tears.

Then in the early morning, a large number of monks adjusted their under robes and—carrying their bowls & outer robes—went into Sāvatthī for alms. Having gone for alms in Sāvatthī, after the meal, returning from their alms round, they went to the Blessed

One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they said to the Blessed One, “Lord, a great sacrifice has now been arranged for King Pasenadi Kosala. Five hundred bulls, five hundred bullocks, five hundred cows, five hundred goats, & five hundred rams have been led to the pillar for the sacrifice. And his slaves, servants, & workers—threatened with punishment, threatened with danger—are making preparations, weeping, their faces stained with tears.”

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion spoke these verses:

The horse sacrifice, the human sacrifice,

sammāpāsa, vājapeyya, niraggaḷa1

—great sacrifices, greatly violent—

bear no great fruit.

Where goats, rams, & cattle

of various kinds are killed:

Those of right conduct, great seers,

don’t attend that sacrifice.

But sacrifices free from violence,

offered always in line with family custom,

where goats, rams, & cattle

of various kinds are not killed:

Those of right conduct, great seers,

attend that sacrifice.

The wise person should offer that.

This sacrifice bears great fruit.

For one who offers this,

things get better, not worse.

The sacrifice is abundant,

and the devatās are appeased.

Note

1. Three types of sacrifice defined by details in the equipment used.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 60; Sn 2:7