SN 3.15 — Battle (2nd)

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 3.15

2. Childless

Battle (2nd)

Then King Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of the princess of Videha, mobilized an army of four divisions and marched to Kāsi to attack King Pasenadi of Kosala. When King Pasenadi heard of this, he mobilized an army of four divisions and marched to Kāsi to defend it against Ajātasattu. Then the two kings met in battle. And in that battle Pasenadi defeated Ajātasattu and captured him alive.

Then King Pasenadi thought, "Even though I've never betrayed this King Ajātasattu, he betrayed me. Still, he is my nephew. Now that I've vanquished all of Ajātasattu's elephant troops, cavalry, chariots, and infantry, why don't I let him loose with just his life?"

And that's what he did.

Then several mendicants … told the Buddha what had happened.

Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha recited these verses:

"A man goes on plundering

as long as it serves his ends.

But as soon as others plunder him,

the plunderer is plundered.

For the fool thinks they're on solid ground,

so long as their wickedness has not ripened.

But as soon as that wickedness ripens,

they fall into suffering.

A killer creates a killer;

a conqueror creates a conqueror;

an abuser creates abuse,

and a bully creates a bully.

And so as deeds unfold

the plunderer is plundered.”