SN 3.15 — SN 3:15 A Battle (2) | Saṅgāma 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

A Battle (2)

Saṅgāma Sutta (SN 3:15)

Staying near Sāvatthī. Then King Ajātasattu of Magadha, the son of Queen Videha, raising a fourfold army, marched toward Kāsi against King Pasenadi Kosala. King Pasenadi heard, “King Ajātasattu of Magadha, the son of Queen Videha, they say, has raised a fourfold army and is marching toward Kāsi against me.” So King Pasenadi, raising a fourfold army, launched a counter-attack toward Kāsi against King Ajātasattu. Then King Ajātasattu & King Pasenadi fought a battle, and in that battle King Pasenadi defeated King Ajātasattu and captured him alive.

The thought then occurred to King Pasenadi: "Even though King Ajātasattu has wronged me when I have done him no wrong, still he is my nephew. What if I, having confiscated all his elephant troops, all his cavalry, all his chariots, & all his infantry, were to let him go with just his life?" So King Pasenadi—having confiscated all his elephant troops, cavalry, chariots, & infantry—let King Ajātasattu go with just his life.

Then in the early morning, a large number of monks, having adjusted their lower robes and taking 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 [reported these events to the Blessed One].

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

"A man may plunder

as long as it serves his ends,

but when others are plundered,

he who has plundered

gets plundered in turn.

A fool thinks,

'Now's my chance,'

as long as his evil

has yet to ripen.

But when it ripens,

the fool

falls

into pain.

Killing, you gain

your killer.

Conquering, you gain one

who will conquer you;

insulting, insult;

harassing, harassment.

And so, through the cycle of action,

he who has plundered

gets plundered in turn.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: Mv X.2.3–20; SN 42:3; Dhp 69.