SN 42.3 — Yodhajiva Sutta: To Yodhajiva (The Warrior)

English translation by Thanissaro 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

Then Yodhajiva[1] the headman went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Lord, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of warriors that 'When a warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.' What does the Blessed One have to say about that?"

"Enough, headman, put that aside. Don't ask me that."

A second time... A third time Yodhajiva the headman said: "Lord, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of warriors that 'When a warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.' What does the Blessed One have to say about that?"

"Apparently, headman, I haven't been able to get past you by saying, 'Enough, headman, put that aside. Don't ask me that.' So I will simply answer you. When a warrior strives &

exerts himself in battle, his mind is already seized, debased, & misdirected by the thought: 'May these beings be struck down or slaughtered or annihilated or destroyed. May they not exist.' If others then strike him down & slay him while he is thus striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the hell called the realm of those slain in battle. But if he holds such a view as this: 'When a warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle,' that is his wrong view. Now, there are two destinations for a person with wrong view, I tell you: either hell or the animal womb."

When this was said, Yodhajiva the headman sobbed & burst into tears. [The Blessed One said:] "That is what I couldn't get past you by saying, 'Enough, headman, put that aside. Don't ask me that.'"

"I'm not crying, lord, because of what the Blessed One said to me, but simply because I have been deceived, cheated, & fooled for a long time by that ancient teaching lineage of warriors who said: 'When a warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.'

"Magnificent, lord! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life."

Notes

1.

= "warrior."

See also: SN 42.2