

# 35

## Mahā,sāla Sutta

The Discourse on the Wealthy | S 7.14 [Ee S 7.2.4]  
 or Be **Lūkhapā,puraṇa Sutta**, The Discourse on the Shabby Cloaked  
 Theme: A father's love, and gratitude  
 Translated by Piya Tan ©2017

### 1 Highlights and significance

#### 1.1 MAHĀ,SĀLA SUTTA (S 7.14)

##### 1.1.1 The brahmin's sons

The **Mahā,sāla Sutta** (S 7.14) is about a wealthy (*mahā,sāla*) brahmin who is a loving father with 4 sons (SA 1:260,14). Having raised them, he has them married, but their wives induced their husbands to drive out the old brahmin from his own home [§§6, 12].

His sons, now “bad and mean,” abandon the old brahmin, their own father [§§7, 13]. They reject him because he is old and useless, and so he has to beg for his meals [§§8, 14]. He reflects how an inanimate object like his walking staff is more useful than his own sons in warding off fierce animals [§§9, 15], and keeping him safe wherever he walks [§§10, 16].

##### 1.1.2 The brahmin approaches the Buddha

One day, he approaches the Buddha and tells him of his own misfortune. The Buddha teaches him these 5 verses [§§6-10, 12-16], which he recites before the assembly in the public meeting-hall, where his own sons are present [§11]. After listening to him, his sons, fearing that their misdeed would become public knowledge, repent. They at once take him back home and start taking good care of him. [§17]

##### 1.1.3 The brahmin's gift

**1.1.3.1** The brahmin's sons each give him a number of **twin cloths**—the dhoti (*nivattha*) (lower garment) and the kurta or panjabi (*pāruta*) (long or short shirt)—which are the traditional clothing of the brahmins and higher class Indians.<sup>1</sup> Recalling the Buddha's kindness and wisdom, he returns to the Buddha and presents him with a set of twin cloths (which can be made into robes for monastics) as “a teacher's wealth” (*ācariya,dhana*) [§19].

**1.1.3.2** It is interesting that the term “**teacher's wealth**” (*ācariya,dhana*) is used by the wealthy brahmin instead of the traditional “teacher's fee” (*ācariya,dakkhiṇa*) or “honorarium” (*dakkhiṇa*).<sup>2</sup> The reason for this distinction is because the Buddha and monastics do not—and should not—do anything for a fee.<sup>3</sup> A monastic is not a hireling (*bhataka*).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See SD 43.8 (2.3.1.2). On the **dhoti**, etc, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing_in_India). On the **kurta**, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurta>.

<sup>2</sup> On *ācariya,dhana*, see M 1:353,8 (MA 3:15,20) = A 5:347,5 (AA 5:86,15); S 1:177.9-10; A 3:224,23 f (AA 3:308,-26); J 4:224,20+27. On *ācariya,dhana* = *ācariya,dakkhiṇa*, see AA 3:308,26 ad A 3:224,23.

<sup>3</sup> On right livelihood, see SD 37.8 (1.4.3).

<sup>4</sup> See Dhaniya S (Sn 25a), SD 50.20.

This money-free attitude is based, for example, on the Buddha’s teaching to the brahmin Kasi Bhāra,-dvāja, as recorded in **the Kasi Bhāra,dvāja Sutta** (S 7.1 = Sn 1.7) and **the Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja Sutta** (S 3.4), as follows:

*Gāthā’bhigitam me abhojaneyyam  
sampassatam brāhmaṇa n’esa dhammo*

Whatever is sung over with verses is improper for my use—  
this is not the proper way, brahmin, of those who truly see.

*gāthā’bhigitim panudanti buddhā  
dhamme satī brāhmaṇa vutti-r-esa*

Buddhas reject what has been sung over with verses:  
where there is Dharma, brahmin, this is the livelihood.

(S 641 = Sn 81 = Sn 480)

But with other food and drink serve  
whose influxes are destroyed,  
For, this is the field

a fully-accomplished great seer  
whose misconduct is calmed:  
for those looking for merit.

(S 642 = Sn 82 = 481)<sup>5</sup>

#### **1.1.4 Brief account**

The Mahā,sāla Sutta [1.1] story of the wealthy brahmin and his 4 sons is very brief. The Sutta’s focus is on the teachings, that is, the 5 verses on abandonment by children instigated by their wives, and on self-reliance for the aged, beautifully represented by the walking staff [§§9 f, 15 f]. A fuller account of the narrative is given in the Dhammapada Commentary on Dh 324. [1.2]

#### **1.2 PARIJĪṆA BRĀHMAṆA PUTTA VATTHU (DhA 23.3)**

A more elaborate version of the S 7.14 account is found on **the Parijīṇa Brāhmaṇa Putta Vatthu**, “The story of the old brahmin and his sons” (DhA 23.3), which is related in connection with Dh 324<sup>6</sup> [3]. The story of the old brahmin and his sons is also retold in the Saṃyutta Commentary.<sup>7</sup>

#### **1.3 SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

##### **1.3.1 Social sanction**

**1.3.1.1** When the old brahmin approaches the Buddha, telling him of how his own sons, on the instigation of their wives, have thrown him out of his own home, the Buddha resorts to a remarkable skillful means—that of social sanction. Instead of giving any religious teachings, the Buddha teaches the old brahmin how to invoke social justice.

**1.3.1.2** The Buddha teaches the old brahmin a set of 5 verses which essentially defines his case with poetic clarity. The first three verses state the injustices that the old brahmin faces: he has been thrown out of his own home [§15]; pretending to show love, the sons actually neglect their father [§16]; and deprived of even food, he has to beg for it from the public [§17]. The last two verses beautifully describe the old brahmin’s perseverance and self-reliance centering around the imagery of his walking staff (*daṇḍa*). The unloving towards those who deserve their love are no better “dead” things that are of some vital service.

<sup>5</sup> S 7.1 (S 641 f) = Sn 1.4/81 f (SD 69.6), also Sn 3.4/480 f (SD 22.2).

<sup>6</sup> DhA 23.3/4:7-15 (DhA:B 3:201-205). The story is retold in SA 1:260 f, 262, 263.

<sup>7</sup> SA 1:260 f, 262, 263.

**1.3.1.3** The Sutta account is silent on the role of **social sanction**, which is highlighted in the commentarial story (DhA 23.3) [3]. The commentarial account gives details only glossed over in the Sutta account [§17], which recounts that immediately after the old brahmin recites his verses, his sons then take him home and look after him well.

The Sutta account deliberately omits the *narrative* detail, it seems, to highlight the instructive and moral aspects of the story. These vital aspects are presented in the 5 verses [§§6-10, 12-16], which, in the Sutta account have instructive value. But in the commentarial account, these same 5 verses show both their literary and moral values.

**1.3.1.4** In fact, these verses have a powerful emotional appeal to the humanity of the assembled multitude. The actual impact that the verses on the multitude is explained by the Commentary itself ominously that “at that time, it was a customary law (*vatta*) amongst humans” that children, having been nurtured by parents, should, in their turn, support them [3.22].

The 5 verses, in fact, play a twin role of evoking both the power mode and the love mode, both the worldly and the spiritual. The **power** mode of the verses is in arousing the sanction of the public assembly that is ready to punish the ungrateful sons and their wives (invoking the legal mode, too). Their father at once forgives them and wishes that they would take him back and look after him—this is the **love** mode of the narrative.

While, according to customary law, the old brahmin’s children should be punished by death for rejecting and neglecting their father, he himself shows parental love that forgives them and reunites both parties. Hence, in the commentarial story, we see both **a moral lesson**—that children should in due course support their parents—and **a spiritual lesson**—that we should be forgiving to those who have done us injustice, especially when they are repentant of their errors and are contrite in turning over a new leaf.

### 1.3.2 Gratitude

**1.3.2.1** Another key theme of the Mahā,sāla Sutta is that of gratitude. This theme centres on the twin cloths (*dussa,yuga*) [1.1.3.1]. From the narratives of both the Sutta and the Dhammapada Commentary, we can deduce that the old brahmin is thrown out of his own home with his “twin cloths,” that is, dhoti and kurta. When he is taken back into his home, he is supplied with more than enough twin cloths for his use.

From his store of twin cloths, he donates a pair to the Buddha out of gratitude for being his teacher and companion (*sahāya*) [3.29+32+34], in teaching him the verses and the skillful means to regain his respect as a parent. These cloths will be dyed and then distributed to the monks for use as robes.

**1.3.2.2** Another expression of the old brahmin’s gratitude to the Buddha is that he offers the Buddha and his monks two of the 4 daily meals his sons gives him. This kind of alms-offering is known as “regular meals” (*dhuva,bhatta*) [3.32]. When the Buddha and 500 monks goes to each of the son’s houses, they each offer them alms-meals respectfully.

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2 Mahā,sāla Sutta (S 7.14)

## The Discourse on the Wealthy

S 7.14

1 Originating in Sāvattḥī.

The wealthy shabby brahmin

2 Then, a certain wealthy but shabby brahmin, shabbily clothed, [176] approached the Blessed One. Having approached, he exchanged greetings with the Blessed One.

3 When the courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, the wealthy brahmin sat down at one side.

Then, the Blessed One asked the wealthy brahmin:

“Why, brahmin, are you shabby, shabbily clothed?”<sup>8</sup>

4 “My two sons, master Gotama, instigated by their wives, have here thrown me out of the house!”<sup>9</sup>

The Buddha instructs the brahmin

5 “In that case, brahmin, learn these verses, and recite them before the multitude gathered in the assembly-hall, wherein your sons are seated:

6	<i>Yehi jātehi nandissarṃ yesañ ca bhavam icchisarṃ te maṃ dārehi saṃpuccha sā'va vārenti<sup>10</sup> sūkaraṃ.</i>	679	They, at whose births I rejoiced, of those whose existence I desired— they, goaded by their wives, keep me away as dogs would a hog. <sup>11</sup>	
7	<i>Asantā kira maṃ jammā tāta tātāti bhāsare. Rakkhasā putta,rūpena te jahanti vayo,gataṃ.</i>	680	They say, “Father, father!” but they are bad and mean to me. Ogres in the form of sons, they forsake me in my old age.	b a
8	<i>Asso va jiṇṇo nibbhogo khādanā apaniyati bālakānaṃ pitā thero par'āgāresu bhikkhati.</i>	681	Just as a horse, old and useless, is deprived of food, the elderly father of simpletons begs for food from other houses.	

<sup>8</sup> Kin nu tvaṃ brāhmaṇa lūkho lūkha,pāvuraṇo'ti.

<sup>9</sup> Idha me bho gotama cattāro puttā te maṃ dārehi saṃpuccha gharā nikkhāmentīti.

<sup>10</sup> *Vārenti*, pl of *vāreti* (caus of *vṛ* (1), to cover), “(they) hinder or obstruct (meaning ‘keep out’).” It appears to be a wordplay as *vāreti*, “to marry, ask in marriage,” from *vṛ* (2), to choose. On *vṛ* (1+2), see SED svv.

<sup>11</sup> A free tr. Comy says that they were like a pack of dogs barking at a hog to hinder it (*yathā sunakhā vagga,vag-gā hutvā bhussantā bhussantā sūkaraṃ vārenti*) and to drive him away (*palāpeti*) (SA 1:261,17-19). Apparently, here *sā* is an abridgement for *sunakhā*, “dogs.”

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|---|------------|--|
| <p><b>9</b> <i>Daṇḍo’va kira me seyyo<br/>yañ ce puttā anassavā.<sup>12</sup><br/>Caṇḍam pi goṇaṃ vāreti<br/>atho caṇḍam pi kukkuraṃ.</i></p> | <p>682</p> | <p>Better to me is this staff<br/>than such disobedient sons.<br/>It keeps away a fierce cow<br/>or a fierce dog, too.</p>                         |
| <p><b>10</b> <i>Andha,kāre pure hoti<br/>gambhīre gāḍham edhati.<br/>Daṇḍassa ānubhāvena<br/>khalitvā patitiṭṭhatīti.</i></p>                 | <p>683</p> | <p>In the dark, it goes before me;<br/>in the deep, it gives me a footing—<br/>by the power of this staff,<br/>after stumbling, I stand again.</p> |

### The public assembly

**11** Then, the wealthy brahmin, having learned these verses before the Blessed One, went before the multitude assembled, in which his sons were seated, in the meeting-hall, and said:

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|---|------------|---|
| <p><b>12</b> They, at whose births, I rejoiced,<br/>they, goaded by their wives,</p>    | <p>684</p> | <p>of those whose existence I desired—<br/>keep me away as dogs would a hog.</p>            |
| <p><b>13</b> They say, “Father, father!”<br/>Ogres in the form of sons,</p>             | <p>685</p> | <p>but they are bad and mean to me.<br/>they forsake me in my old age.</p>                  |
| <p><b>14</b> Just as a horse, old and useless,<br/>the elderly father of simpletons</p> | <p>686</p> | <p>is deprived of food,<br/>begs for food from other houses.</p>                            |
| <p><b>15</b> Better to me is this staff<br/>It keeps away a fierce cow</p>              | <p>687</p> | <p>than such disobedient sons.<br/>or a fierce dog, too.</p>                                |
| <p><b>16</b> In the dark, it goes before me;<br/>by the power of this staff,</p>        | <p>688</p> | <p>in the deep, it gives me a footing—<br/>after stumbling, I stand again. <b>[177]</b></p> |

### The old brahmin is rehabilitated

**17** Then, the sons led the wealthy brahmin to their house, washed him and gave him their own twin cloths to wear.<sup>13</sup>

**18** Then, the wealthy brahmin, bringing along a set of twin cloths, approached the Blessed One, and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side.

**19** Sitting at one side, the wealthy brahmin said to the Blessed One:

“Master Gotama, we brahmins seek a teacher’s wealth for the teacher. May master Gotama accept the teacher’s wealth.<sup>14</sup>

**20** The Blessed One accepted out of compassion.

<sup>12</sup> Opp *assavā*, “obedient” (of the army of a head-anointed kshatriya, **Yassaṃ Disaṃ S** (A 5.134/3:151.20), SD 103.4.

<sup>13</sup> Atha kho naṃ brāhmaṇa,mahā.sālaṃ puttā gharaṃ netvā nahāpetvā paccekaṃ dussa,yugena acchādesuṃ. See (1.1.3).

<sup>14</sup> Mayaṃ bho gotama brāhmaṇā nāma ācariyassa ācariya,dhanaṃ pariyesāma, paṭiggaṇhatu me bhavaṃ gota-mo ācariya,dhanan’ti. See (1.1.3).

## The refuge-going

**21** Then, the wealthy brahmin said to the Blessed One:  
 “Excellent, master Gotama! Excellent, master Gotama!  
 Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned,  
 or were to reveal what was hidden,  
 or were to show the way to one who was lost,  
 or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,  
 in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by master Gotama.  
 I go to master Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.  
 May master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge, from this day forth,  
 for life.”

— evaṃ —

### 3 Parijīṇa Brāhmaṇa Putta Vatthu (DhA 23.3)

SD 50.35(3)

## **Parijīṇa Brāhmaṇa Putta Vatthu**

The Story of the Old Brahmin and His Sons • DhA 23.3/4:7-15  
 Theme: An old man is rehabilitated by social action

### The rich brahmin and his 4 sons

**1** “**Dhana,pālaka**” and so on (Dh 324). This Dharma teaching is given by the Blessed One while staying at Sāvattḥī in connection with a certain old brahmin and his sons. **[7]**

**2** It is said that there was in Sāvattḥī a certain brahmin whose wealth amounted to 800,000 pieces of money. When his 4 sons came of age, he married them off and gave them 400,000 pieces of money.<sup>15</sup>

**3** When his wife, the brahminee, died, his son consulted amongst themselves, saying:  
 “If this brahmin marries again, the family will be divided on account of the issues of her womb.  
 Come now, let us succour our father and win his favour!”<sup>16</sup>

**4** So, they each waited on him, giving him the choicest food and finest clothing, rubbing his hands and feet, and various other household duties.

**5** One day, when they went to wait on him, they found him asleep in the middle of the day. As soon as he awoke, they rubbed his hand and feet, and while doing so, they each spoke to him about the disadvantage of living in separate houses.

<sup>15</sup> In other words, each of his sons received 100,000 pieces of money, half of his wealth, keeping the other half for himself.

<sup>16</sup> Sace ayaṃ aññaṃ brāhmaṇiṃ ānessati, tassā kucchiyaṃ nibbattānaṃ vasena kulaṃ (Be -santakaṃ) bhijjissati, handa taṃ (Be naṃ) mayāṃ saṅgaṇhāmāti (Be saṅgaṇhissāmāti).

## The old brahmin is driven out of his own home

6 They said, “We will look after you in this way for as long as you live. Give us the rest of your wealth, too.” So, the brahmin gave each of them 100,000 more. Keeping neither upper garment nor lower garment<sup>17</sup> for himself, he divided everything he had amongst them.

7 For a few more days, his eldest son looked after him. Then, one day, after returning from his bath at the river, [8] his daughter-in-law, standing at the gate, said to him:

“Why have you given your eldest son only 100,000 pieces of money more, but given all your other sons 200,000 each? Do you know the way to the house of any of your other sons?”<sup>18</sup>

8 “You vile woman!”<sup>19</sup> he scolded her, and went to the house of another of his sons.

But after a few days, he was driven out of each of the other sons’ houses in the same way. In the end, he could not find a single house to enter.

## The old brahmin renounces

9 Thereupon, the brahmin renounced the world to become a monk of the Paṇḍaraṅga ascetic community, going on almsround from door to door.<sup>20</sup> In due course, he was worn down with age, his body withered on account of poor food and bad sleeping places.

10 One day, having returned from his almsround, he lay down on his back and fell asleep. Then, he awoke and sat up. Surveying his situation, he reflected that none of his own sons is a refuge,<sup>21</sup> and thought,

“The recluse Gotama, it is said, is one whose countenance never frowns, open-faced, pleasant to speak with, hearty in his welcome.<sup>22</sup> It is possible that if I approach the recluse Gotama, I shall receive a warm welcome.”<sup>23</sup>

11 Having adjusted his lower and upper garments, and taking his almsbowl and staff, went before the Blessed One.

It is then said of this:<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> On lower garment and upper garment, see (1.1.3.1).

<sup>18</sup> *Kim tayā jeṭṭha,puttassa sataṃ vā sahaṣsaṃ vā atirekaṃ dinnāṃ atthi, nanu sabbesaṃ dve (Be dve dve) sata,-sahaṣṣāni dinnāni, kiṃ sesa,puttānaṃ gharassa maggaṃ na jānāsīti.* The brahmin’s daughter-in-law’s accusation is, of course, false, since he has distributed the rest of his wealth evenly amongst his 4 sons.

<sup>19</sup> *Vasālī*, lit, “outcaste,” a pejorative.

<sup>20</sup> *Paṇḍaraṅga,pabbajjāṃ pabbajitvā bhikkhāya caranto.* The Paṇḍaraṅga (*paṇḍara*, “white, yellow” + *aṅga*, “body”) renunciants, poss “white-clad ascetics.” DPPN says they were poss covered in ashes (like the naked ascetics). They are mentioned along with the wanderers, the Ājīvikas and the Jains (*paṇḍaraṅga,paribbājak’ājīvika,-nigaṇṭh’ādayo*) as existing even in Asoka’s time (VA 1:44, also 1:254; Dīpv 8.35).

<sup>21</sup> *Attānaṃ oloketvā puttesu attano paṭiṭṭhaṃ apassanto.* “Not a refuge” (*paṭiṭṭhaṃ a-*), lit “not a support, or not to be relied on.” Cf Dh 288.

<sup>22</sup> *Samaṇo kira gotamo abbhā,kūṭiko* (Ee *abbho,kuṭiko*) *uttāna,mukho sukha,sambhāso paṭisanthāra,kusalo.* Soṇa,daṇḍa S (D 4,6 @ SD 30.5) = D 5,7.1 (SD 22.8): “the recluse Gotama is one who bids, ‘Come, welcome,’ courteous, genial, unfrowning, open-faced, first to greet” (*samaṇo gotamo ehi,sāgata,vādī sakhilo sammodako abbhā,-kuṭiko uttāna,mukho pubba,bhāsī*, D 1:116,10 :: Sv 287,14: “while some are as if long-faced before a crowd, unable to say anything, having great difficulties finding the words, the recluse Gotama is not so ... he easily holds a conversation,” *yathā ekacce nikkujita,mukhā viya sampattāya parisāya na kiñci kathenti, atidullabha,kathā honti, na eva,rūpo ... samaṇo gotamo sulabha,katho*) ≈ V 2:11,3 = 3:181,9 ≈ Vism 9.18/299,27 (“not of contorted face, but radiant in countenance, on account of physical and mental joy,” *vikuṇṭita,mukho ahutvā pīti,somanassa,vasena vikasita,mukho*, MhṬ) ≈ DhA 4:8,12 = SA 1:261,8. See SD 22.8 (2.2.3); cf CA 287, 304.

<sup>23</sup> *Sakkā samaṇaṃ gotamaṃ upasaṅkamitvā paṭisanthāraṃ labhitun’ti.*

## The Mahā,sāla Sutta excerpt (S 7.14,1-10)

**12** [1] Then, a certain wealthy but shabby brahmin, shabbily clothed, approached the Blessed One. Having approached, he exchanged greetings with the Blessed One.

**13** [2] When the courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, the wealthy brahmin sat down at one side.

Then, the Blessed One asked the wealthy brahmin:

“Why, **[9]** brahmin, are you shabby, shabbily clothed?”

**14** [3] “My two sons, master Gotama, instigated by their wives, have here thrown me out of the house!”

**15** [4] “In that case, brahmin, learn these verses, and recite them before the multitude gathered in the assembly-hall, wherein your sons are seated:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>16</b> [5] They, at whose births, I rejoiced,<br>they, goaded by their wives,    | of those whose existence I desired—<br>keep me away as dogs would a hog.        |
| <b>17</b> [6] They say, “Father, father!”<br>Ogres in the form of sons,             | but they are bad and mean to me.<br>they forsake me in my old age.              |
| <b>18</b> [8] Just as a horse, old and useless,<br>the elderly father of simpletons | is deprived of food,<br>begs for food from other houses.                        |
| <b>19</b> [9] Better to me is this staff<br>It keeps away a fierce cow              | than such disobedient sons.<br>or a fierce dog, too.                            |
| <b>20</b> [10] In the dark, it goes before me,<br>by the power of this staff,       | in the deep, it supports me—<br>I regain my footing when I stumble. <b>[10]</b> |

## Before the assembly

**21** And the brahmin learned these verses from the Blessed One himself. On the day of the assembly for the brahmins, the sons plunged into the assembly, dressed in all their adornments, and sat down on their great and proper seats in the midst of the brahmins.

**22** Thought the brahmin, “This is the time for me!”

He entered the midst of the gathering, raised his hand, and said:

“Sirs, I have desire to speak these verses to you! Please listen!”

“Speak, then, brahmin, we will listen.”<sup>25</sup>

He stood right there and spoke (the 5 verses that the Buddha taught him).

## The public reaction and sanction

**23** Now at that time, it was a **customary law**<sup>26</sup> amongst humans,<sup>27</sup> that is to say, “Whoever, eating what rightly belongs to mother and father, but supports not them, he shall be put to death.”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> **Mahā,sāla S** (S 7.14,12-20) is here quoted in full.

<sup>25</sup> *Bhāsa* (Be *bhāsassu*) *brāhmaṇa suṇomāti vutte t̥hitako’va abhāsi*.

<sup>26</sup> See (1.3.1.3).

<sup>27</sup> *Tena* (Be adds *ca*) *samayena manussānaṃ vattaṃ hoti*.



**24** Hence, the brahmin's sons fell at their father's feet and begged: "Spare our lives, father!"<sup>29</sup> Out of his heart's softness of a father's heart, he said: "Sirs, destroy not my sons! They will support me."

**25** Then, the people said to the sons: "Sirs, if, from this day forth, you do not properly care for your father, we will kill you!"

### The father brought home

**26** The sons, terrified, seated their father on a chair, and raising it up, [11] carried him home. They anointed his body with oil, washed in fragrances, chunam and so on.<sup>30</sup>

**27** Then, they summoned their wives, the brahminees, and said:

"From this day forth, you are to watch our father well. If you are negligent, we will punish you." Then, they fed him with the choicest food.

**28** On account of good food, comfortable lodging and happiness, the brahmin, after a few days, regained his strength, refreshed his faculties, and gained some weight.<sup>31</sup>

**29** Looking at himself, he thought: "I've attained such gain on account of the recluse Gotama."

### The brahmin approaches the Buddha

**30** Desiring to make a gift, he approached the Blessed One with a set of twin cloths, showed his customary hospitality, placed the twin cloths at the Blessed One's feet, and sat down at one side:

**31** and said: "Master Gotama, we brahmins seek the teacher's treasure for a teacher. May master Gotama accept this teacher's wealth for a teacher. Having accepted out of compassion this teacher's wealth for a teacher, may master Gotama teach Dharma."

**32** At the end of the Dharma teaching, the brahmin, established in the refuges, said:

"Master Gotama, my sons make me a gift of 4 regular meals. Of these, I give two to you."

**33** The Blessed One then said to him: "That is good, brahmin. We will go (for the alms-offering) when the purpose is pleasing." Then, he dismissed him.<sup>32</sup>

**34** On returning home, the brahmin said to his sons: "My dears (*tātā*), the recluse Gotama [12] is my comrade (*sahāya*). I have given him two of the regular meals. When he arrives here, please do not be heedless."

"Very well," they replied.

<sup>28</sup> *Yo mātā,pitūnaṃ santakaṃ khādanto mātā,pitāro na poseti, so māretabbo'ti.*

<sup>29</sup> *Jīvitam no tāta dehīti yācimsu.*

<sup>30</sup> *Sarīraṃ telena abbhañjivā ubbaṭṭetvā gandha,cuṇṇ'ādīhi nhāpetvā. Abbañjivā*, absol of *abbhañjati*, "to smear, oil, lubricate, anoint." *Ubbattetvā*, absol of *ubbaṭṭeti*, "to clean the body by rubbing it with fragrant unguents; shampoo; remove (dirt). For similar actions, see SA 1:262,21 Cf D 2:324,14+16; M 1:344,32 ≈ Pug 56,14; DA 629,4 ≈ AA 1:178,8; J 5:89,18, 438,5; MA 3:63,5; SA 1:262,21, 2:185,27 = J 1:87,27 ≈ 238,7; 5:444,15; CA 252,31; DhA 3:211,9 = VvA 68,17; V 3:83,15.

<sup>31</sup> *Brāhmaṇo subhōjanañ ca sukha,samphassañ ca* [Be *sukha,seyyaṃ ca*] *āgamma katip'āh'accayena sañjāta,balo pīṇit'indriya* [Be *pīṇ'indriyo*]. *Sukha,samphassa*, lit "the touch of happiness"; *sukha,seyyam*, "sleeping quarters." *Pīṇit'indriya*, "energized faculties"; *pīṇ'indriya*, "fattened in faculties."

<sup>32</sup> The whole para: *Atha naṃ satthā, "Kalyāṇaṃ, brāhmaṇa, mayaṃ pana rucan'aṭṭhānam eva gamissāmāti vatvā uyyojesi.*

## The Buddha visits the brahmin's house

**35** On the next day, while going on almsround, the Teacher came to the door of the eldest son's house. When he saw the Teacher, he took his bowl and bid him enter his house. Having seated him on a worthy seat, he gave him exquisite food.

On the following days, the Teacher successively went to all the houses of the other sons. They all served him with just the same respect.

**36** One day, when a holy day had come up, the eldest son said to his father: "Dear father, to whom shall we offering blessing?"

**37** "I know none other than my companion, the recluse Gotama!"

"Well then, let us invite him along with 500 monks for tomorrow." The brahmin did so.

On the following day, the Teacher came with an entourage of monks to his house.

**38** The house had been smeared with fresh cow-dung and decked with all kinds of decorations.<sup>33</sup> The brahmins provided seats in the house for the community of monks with the Buddha at the head, and served them with milk-rice sweetened with honey with little water, and with exquisite foods, hard and soft.<sup>34</sup>

**39** In the midst of the meal, the brahmin's four sons seated themselves before the Teacher and said to him:<sup>35</sup>

"Master Gotama, we take good care of our father. We do not [13] neglect him—as you can see for yourself here!"<sup>36</sup>

## The Buddha's instructions

**40** The Teacher replied: "I do see<sup>37</sup> you have done good. The wise of old habitually cared for their parents."<sup>38</sup>

**41** So saying, he related in full **the Mātu, posaka Naga, raja Jātaka** (the birth-story of the royal elephant who supported his mother) (J 455),<sup>39</sup> found in the 11<sup>th</sup> book (*ekādasaka nipāta*), in which is told the story of the sallakī-tree and the kuṭaja-plant that grew and flowered in the elephant's absence.

Then, he uttered this verse:

**42** *Dhana, pālako*<sup>40</sup> *nāma kuñjaro,*  
*kaṭuka, pabhedano*<sup>41</sup> *dunnivārayo*

The elephant named Dhana, pālaka,  
with rut oozing from his temples, is hard to control.

<sup>33</sup> *Harit'upalitte sabb'ālaṅkāra, paṭimaṅḍite gehe*. CPD says that *harit'upalitta* is the lectio faciliior (simpler reading) for *haritūpatta*, on which, see Kandaraka S (M 51,10.2/1:344,35 n), SD 32.9 = M 2:162,9. The Subcomy explains *harit'upalitta* as "the floor was smeared with fresh cow-dung" (*alla, gomayena kata, paribhaṅḍaṃ*, SAṬ:Be 1:240).

<sup>34</sup> *App'odaka madhu, pāyasa*: DhA 1:400,21 (~*aṃ madhu, pāyāsaṃ*); 2:86,9 = 88,11 f = 101,8-10 (-*madhu, pāyāsaṃ*); U 38,26 (-*pāyāsaṃ*); —milk-rice without water (*nirudaka, pāyāsaṃ*, UA); *ib* 32 (-*pāyāsaṃ*); J 4:353,4', cakes that are like milk-rice (-*pāyāsa, sadise kummāse*); = "coloured, with little wader," *appōda, vaṅṅe*.

<sup>35</sup> It is obvious that the brahmin's sons are not fully familiar with Buddhist etiquette towards monks during their meals, when they eat mindfully and are not to be interrupted. Clearly, they are guilt-ridden and concerned about their social standing and reputation.

<sup>36</sup> *Bho gotama, mayāṃ amhākaṃ pitaraṃ paṭijaggāma na pamajjāma, passath'imassa atta, bhāvan'ti*.

<sup>37</sup> "I do see" (*passāmi*): Be omits.

<sup>38</sup> *Kalyāṇaṃ vo katarāṃ, mātā, pitu, posanaṃ nāma porāṇaka, paṅḍitānaṃ āciṅṅam evāti vatvā*.

<sup>39</sup> J 455/4:90-95. Cf **Māti'posaka Cariya** (C 2.1), "the conduct of the mother supporter," so called in CA 110, Be Ce; Ee: **Silava Nāga Cariya**, "the conduct of the virtuous elephant." Cf **Mātu, posaka J** (J 455/4:90-100) or **Māti, posaka J. Silava Nāga J** (J 72) differs from C 2.1.

<sup>40</sup> Be *dhana, pālo*.

*baddho kabaḷaṃ na bhuñjati*                      When bound, he eats not a morsel;  
*sumarati nāga,vanassa kuñjaro'ti.*    **Dh 324**    it ever recalls the elephant forest.

### Native commentary on Dh 324 (DhA 4:13-15)

**43** Therein, *Dhāna,pālaka nāma*, means “the one named Dhāna,pālaka [Treasure-warder].” At that time, the king of Kāsī sent an elephant-trainer to a delightful elephant forest, and had an elephant captured.

**44** *Kaṭuka,pabhedano'ti*, “with rut oozing from his temples [deep in rut],” that is, pungent rut. During rut, the elephant’s temples rupture. At that time, the elephants are naturally fierce, and they break the goads, [14] the spikes or the lances. This elephant was exceptionally fierce. Hence, it is said to be **deep in rut and hard to control**.

**45** *Baddho kabaḷaṃ na bhuñjatīti*, “when bound, he eats not a morsel.” It is said in this connection: Being bound, led to the stable, and made to stand in a place covered with a beautiful awning and whose floor was strewn with fragrance, encircled with a fine curtain—it refuses to eat anything—even when various foods of the king’s foremost taste, worthy of a king.

**46** *Sumarati nāga,vanassāti*. He keeps recalling the elephant forest, thus: “That delightful dwelling-place of mine!” He thought only of the duty of looking after his mother, thinking, “My mother!” He fell into grief, thinking, “I have not fulfilled my duties in supporting my parents. Recalling this duty towards his parents undone, he was naturally inclined to have no appetite for any food. For, this duty [15] can only be fulfilled in the elephant forest. Hence, it is said “He keeps recalling the elephant forest.”

### The brahmin and his sons are liberated

**47** As the Teacher related his past conduct (*pubba,cariya*) in detail, they shed floods of tears. On account of the softness of their hearts, they were all ears. Thus, the Blessed One, knowing full well what would benefit them, proclaimed truths and taught the Dharma.

At the conclusion of the teaching, the brahmin, his sons and daughters-in-law attained the fruit of streamwinning.

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<sup>41</sup> Be *-bhedano* throughout.