# Ja 39 — Nanda Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja39.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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Edited by E. B. Cowell

Original edition: Cambridge University Press, volume 1, 1895

Pinned source revision: https://github.com/suttacentral/sc-data/commit/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

Scope: Complete numbered source article from the traditional Jātaka commentary; canonical verses appear in story context. This is not a verse-only edition.

Changes: Converted the pinned SuttaCentral HTML article to plain text; removed inline print page-reference labels and normalized whitespace. The original source retains references.

## Text

“Methinks the gold.”—This story was told by the Master while at Jetavana, about a co-resident pupil of Sariputta.

Tradition says that this Brother was meek and docile, and was zealous in ministering to the Elder. Now, on one occasion the Elder departed with the leave of the Master, on an alms-pilgrimage, and came to South Magadha. When he got there, that Brother grew so proud-stomached that he would not do what the Elder told him. Moreover, if he was addressed with, “Sir, do this,” he quarrelled with the Elder. The Elder could not make out what possessed him.

After making his pilgrimage in those parts, he came back again to Jetavana. The moment he got back to the monastery at Jetavana, the Brother became again what he had always been.

The Elder told this to the Buddha, saying, “Sir, a co-resident of mine is in one place like a slave bought for a hundred pieces, and in another so proud-stomached that an order to do anything makes him quarrel.”

Said the Master, “This is not the first time, Sariputta, that he has shewn this disposition; in the past too, if he went to one place, he was like a slave bought for a hundred pieces, whilst, if he went to another place, he would become quarrelsome and contentious.” And, so saying, by request of the Elder, he told this story of the past.

Once on a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life again as a squire. Another squire, a friend of his, was an old man himself, but had a young wife who had borne him a son and heir. Said the old man to himself, “As soon as I am dead, this girl, being so young as she is, will marry heaven knows whom, and spend all my money, instead of handing it over to my son. Wouldn’t it be my best course to bury my

money safely in the ground?"

So, in the company of a household slave of his named Nanda, he went to the forest and buried his riches at a certain spot, saying to the slave, "My good Nanda, reveal this treasure to my son after I am gone, and don't let the wood be sold."

After giving this injunction to his slave, the old man died. In due course the son grew up, and his mother said to him, "My son, your father, in the company of Nanda, buried his money. Get it back and look after the property of the family." So one day he said to Nanda, "Nunky, is there any treasure which my father buried?" "Yes, my lord." "Where is it buried?" "In the forest, my lord." "Well, then, let us go there." And he took a spade and a basket, and going to the scene, said to Nanda, "Well, nunky, where's the money?" But by the time Nanda had got up to the treasure and was standing right over it, he was so puffed up by the money that he abused his master, saying, "You servant of a slave-wench's son! how should you have any money here?"

The young gentleman, pretending not to have heard this insolence, simply said, "Let us be going then," and took the slave back home with him. Two or three days later, he returned to the place; but again Nanda abused him, as before. Without any abusive rejoinder, the young gentleman came back and turned the matter over in his mind. Thought he to himself, "At starting, this slave always means to reveal where the money is; but no sooner does he get there, than he falls to abusing me. The reason of this I do not see; but I could find out, if I were to ask my father's old friend, the squire." So he went to the Bodhisatta, and laying the whole business before him, asked his friend what was the real reason of such behaviour.

Said the Bodhisatta, "The spot at which Nanda stands to abuse you, my friend, is the place where your father's money is buried. Therefore, as soon as he starts abusing you again, say to him, 'Whom are you talking to, you slave?' Pull him from his perch, take the spade, dig down, remove your fancily treasure, and make the slave carry it home for you." And so saying, he repeated this stanza—

Methinks the gold and jewels buried lie

Where Nanda, low-born slave, so loudly bawls!

Taking a respectful leave of the Bodhisatta, the young gentleman went home, and taking Nanda went to the spot where the money was buried. Faithfully following the advice he had received, he brought the money away and looked after the family property. He remained steadfast in the Bodhisatta's counsels, and after a life spent in charity and other good works he passed away to fare according to his deserts.

Said the Master, "In the past too this man was similarly disposed." His lesson ended, he shewed the connexion, and identified the Birth, by saying, Sariputta's co-resident was the Nanda of those days, and I the wise and good squire,"

The Jātaka, or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births, edited by E.B. Cowell, published by The Cambridge University Press.

Vol. 1, translated by Robert Chalmers, 1895.

Vol. 2, translated by W.H.D. Rouse, 1895.

Vol. 3, translated by H.T. Francis and R.A. Neil, 1897.

Vol. 4, translated by W.H.D. Rouse, 1901.

Vol. 5, translated by H.T. Francis, 1905.

Vol. 6, translated by E.B. Cowell and W.H.D. Rouse, 1907.

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Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.