SN 7.14 — SN 7:14 Very Rich | Mahāsāla 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

Very Rich

Mahāsāla Sutta (SN 7:14)

Near Sāvatthī. Then a certain very rich brahman—shabby, shabbily dressed—went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After this exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there the Blessed One said to him, “Why, brahman, are you shabby & shabbily dressed?”

“Just now, Master Gotama, my four sons—at their wives instigation—threw me out of the house.”

“In that case, brahman, memorize these verses and then recite them when a large assembly of people have gathered in the town hall and your sons are sitting there, too.

“Those whose birth
I delighted in
—whose growth I desired—
at their wives instigation
have chased me away,
as dogs would swine.

Wicked & vile,
though they call me ‘Dad’:
demons in the disguise of sons
who abandon me in old age.

As an old horse
of no more use
is deprived of fodder,
so the elderly father
of those foolish boys
begs at other people’s homes.

My staff serves me better
than those disobedient sons.
It fends off
ferocious bulls
& ferocious curs.
In the dark it goes before me;
down steep slopes, it gives support.
Through the power of my staff,
when I stumble
I still stand firm.”

Then the very rich brahman, having memorized these verses in the presence of the Blessed One, recited them when a large assembly of people had gathered in the town hall and his sons were sitting there, too:

“Those whose birth
I delighted in
—whose growth I desired—
at their wives instigation
have chased me away,
as dogs would swine.

Wicked & vile,
though they call me ‘Dad’:
demons in the disguise of sons
who abandon me in old age.

As an old horse
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down steep slopes, it gives support.
Through the power of my staff,
when I stumble
I still stand firm.”

Then the brahman's sons, having led him home, bathed him, and each provided him in a pair of cloths. So the brahman, taking one pair of cloths, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After this exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, "We brahmans, Master Gotama, look for a teacher's fee for our teacher. May Master Gotama accept this teacher's portion from me."

The Blessed One accepted it out of sympathy.

Then the very rich brahman said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, Master Gotama! 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 Master Gotama—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the Saṅgha of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 2:31–32; Iti 74; Iti 106