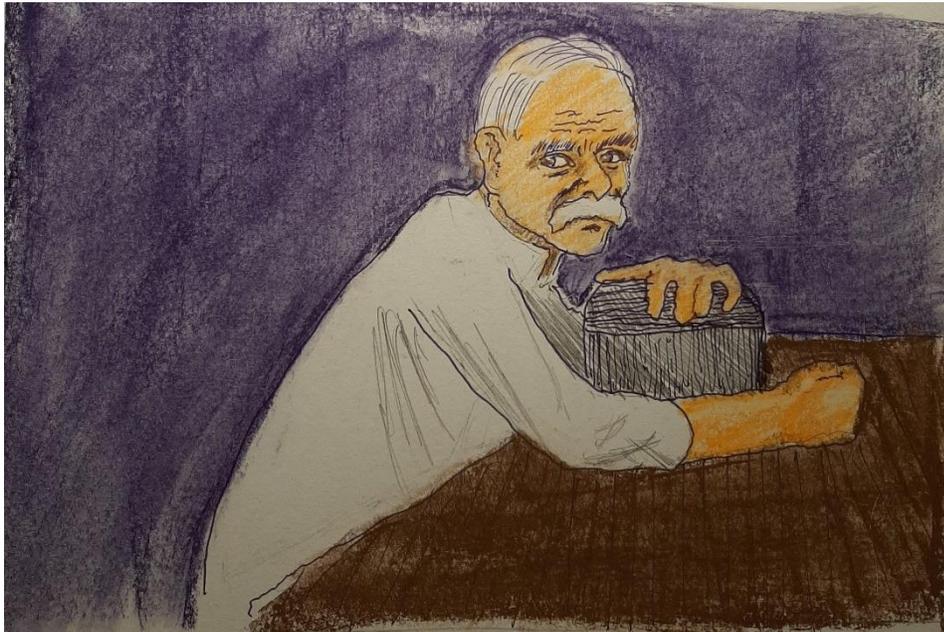


THE BURIED TREASURE (Nanda Jataka)

There was once an elderly man who had worked hard all his life and saved a lot of money, which he kept in a box. He had a young son whom he loved very much. And, he had a beautiful young wife. He thought to himself, as he looked at her,



“When I die, my wife, as young as she is, surely will marry another man and spend all my money that I worked so hard for instead of giving it to my son. Then he will inherit nothing. I am getting old now. I must hide the

money from my wife and somehow make sure my son gets it when he’s old enough. But how should I do this?”

He thought carefully, “Hmmm, I could bury the money, and tell someone who I can really trust where it is, and then he could tell my son where to find it.”

But who could he really trust? He said aloud, “Ah! My dear loyal servant Nanda!” He called out to Nanda, who said,

“Yes sir, what can I do for you?”

The elderly man said, “My dear Nanda, let’s go for a walk in the forest today. I have something very important to do. Bring a shovel. We must get back quickly before my wife gets home.”

He took Nanda with him and they walked deep into the forest. The elderly man stopped under a big tall tree, and Nanda dug a hole under the tree.

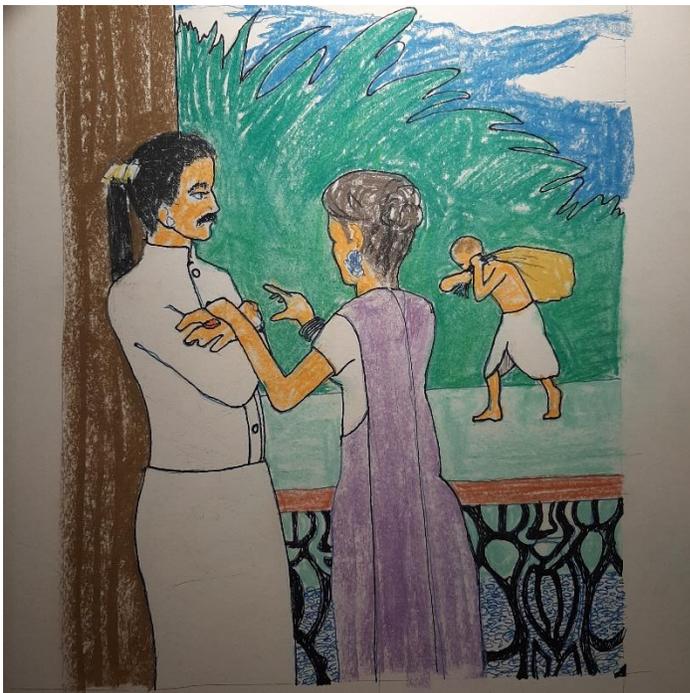


They placed the box of money in the hole and buried it and scattered leaves over the fresh dirt. Then the elderly man said,

“My dear Nanda, when I die, you must give all this money in the box to my son. But you must keep this a secret until I pass away. And don’t let this forest be sold.”

After some time, the elderly man passed away. Years later, his son finished school, and returned home. He was now the man in charge of the family.

One day, his mother said to him,



“Son, your father buried all his money. And the closest person to him was Nanda. So, I’m sure Nanda knows where the money is. You should ask Nanda to get the money and give it to you so you can take care of the family.”

The son later talked to Nanda and asked, “Nanda, do you have any idea where Father buried our money?”

“Yes sir. I know where he buried it,” Nanda replied.

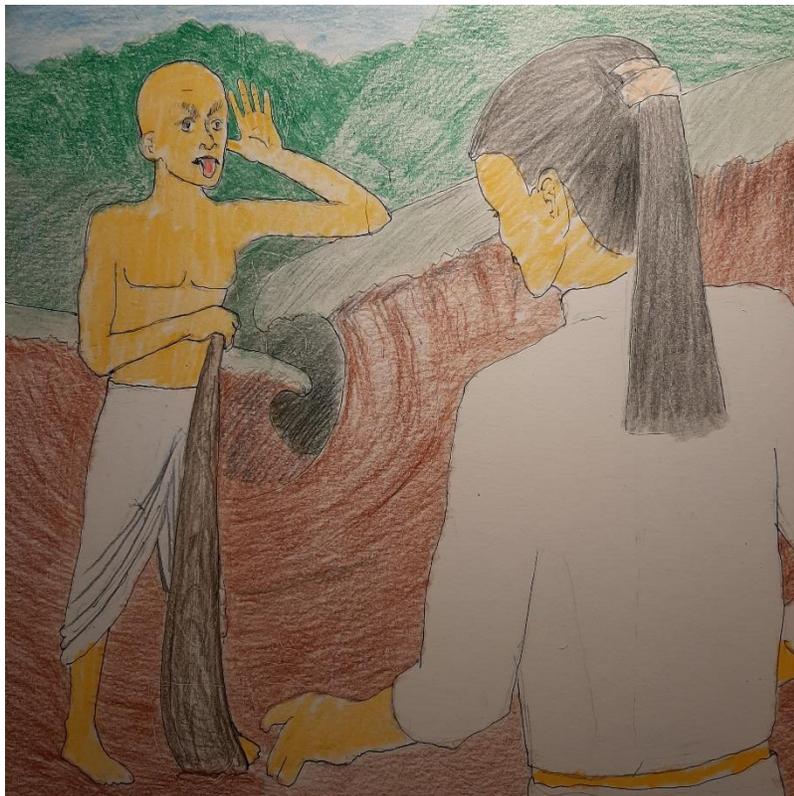
The son asked, “Where is it buried?”

Nanda answered, “In the forest, sir.”

The son said, “Well, let’s go there then.”

Nanda brought a shovel and basket, and they walked together deep into the forest. They walked silently for a long time. Nanda, leading the way, cleared thorn bushes and overgrown branches away so the son could walk easily without getting scratched.

Then, suddenly, Nanda changed. He walked under some tree branches which snapped back into the son’s face. Nanda stood still, and his face looked very arrogant. With a loud voice, he said to the young man,



“It’s too hot out here. And so many insects! You know, you’re just a servant, the son of a servant girl. Why would YOU have any money here?”

The son was shocked. He thought, “What? I’ve never seen Nanda behave this way. What should I do? I’m going to pretend I didn’t hear that.”

Nanda was thinking, “I know the secret of where all the treasure is. I am the only one who knows. Only I have the power *over all that money!*”

The son said, “Well, let’s go back then.” They turned around and returned home.

Nanda acted normally when they got back, as if nothing happened. Several days later, as he was serving the son some tea, Nanda was talking pleasantly to the son about his father.

“Ah, how I miss your father. Such a kind and generous man. I used to bring him his tea right here on the veranda every morning.”

The son responded, “I miss Father very much too. Nanda, you know where Father hid the money in the forest, right? Let’s go find it today.”

“Oh yes, of course,” Nanda replied.

Nanda willingly led him into the forest, carrying the shovel. But as soon as they arrived at the same area in the forest, Nanda’s face changed again, as he thought of how important he was, with the power over all the money. He looked around irritably and scowled,

“So, you had to drag me out here again today. You don’t even know how to handle money. Who do you think you are? I don’t care what you want. I’m sweating, and I am sick of walking out here. I should be taking a nap right now. I am going home.”

The young man, shocked again, said nothing. Nanda then turned around and started walking home. The son shook his head in disbelief, and thought, “I can’t believe this. What has happened to him?”

Again, when they returned home, Nanda acted perfectly normal, polite and helpful.

The son thought, “This is so strange. When we leave the house, he always intends to reveal where the money is. But as soon as we are out in the forest, he is abusive to me. I don’t see why he does this. I should ask the old friend of my father. Maybe he knows what is going on with Nanda”

The next day, the son went to talk to a wise old friend of his father. The son described what happened, and asked.

“What is the real reason for Nanda’s behavior?”

His father's friend said, "The spot where Nanda stands when he speaks abusively to you, my friend, is the place where your father's money is buried. Go again with Nanda into the forest. When he starts talking abusively to you again, say to him, "Whom are you talking to?" and pull him away. Then take the shovel and dig down into that spot. You will find your buried family treasure right there. Dig it up and make him carry it home for you." He said emphatically, "The gold and jewels are buried where Nanda, the servant, so loudly hollers." He further advised the son, "With the money, take care of the family and be generous to those who need help."

The young man respectfully thanked the old friend, and went back home.

The son took Nanda the next day out to the forest. When Nanda again started speaking arrogantly, the son did exactly as the wise old man said. He dug down in that spot and found the treasure that his father had buried.

He used the money very wisely to take care of the family's needs. He also was very generous, using some of it to help other people in need.

QUESTIONS (answers in parentheses):

1. Why did the father bury his money? (To hide it from his wife)
2. Why did the father tell Nanda about it? (So Nanda could tell the son when he gets older)
3. At the time the son asked Nanda about the father's money, was Nanda willing to show him where the money was buried? (Yes)
4. When they arrived a certain spot in the forest, what kind of attitude did Nanda have? (An arrogant attitude)
5. What did the wise old friend of the father advise the son to do when Nanda starts speaking abusively? (Pull Nanda away, dig into that spot, find the treasure there, and make him carry it home for you)

What the Buddha said:

“If someone thinks ‘I want people to know that this good work was done by me,’ or ‘People should always follow my advice,’ this is the ambition of a fool, which makes his desires and arrogance increase.”

Dhammapada 74

DHARMA DISCUSSION - Arrogance:

Can you think of some words that have a meaning similar to the word “arrogant”?

Egoistic, conceited, self-centered, show-off, snobby.



Arrogant people act like they are better or more important than others.

They like to show off what they have and what they can do.

They like to control others, and make them do what they tell them to do.

Many arrogant people don't like to be told what to do.

They expect to be admired, to be popular, to be the center of attention, to get special privileges, to be first, and to get the best.

They don't think much about the feelings of others, what others need, what others would like.

What is the opposite of arrogance? Humility, being humble.

What does that mean?

Thinking of what others might need or want, appreciating the success and talent of others, being respectful, and listening to others.

It also means being aware of your own imperfections and weaknesses.

In the story, Nanda became arrogant when he came close to power - close to the money that would give him power to buy what he likes, and to be respected as someone with a higher status.

It happened to him because he never had much money or power before, being a servant all his life, and being treated like he's not important.

With money, he would have freedom and could tell other people what to do. So when he thought he had power over the buried treasure, he already started acting like he had power, like he was the big boss.

Have you ever seen someone become arrogant when they suddenly become important, popular or famous, or when they suddenly get a lot of money, a big award or something very special?

If so, what kind of behaviors did you notice?

Did they start bossing others around, hanging out only with their popular friends, ignoring others, or blaming others for their mistakes?

Even when someone feels a little bit more important, such as when they have a friend visiting their house, they can become more demanding, less tolerant, and more selfish, for example toward their sisters and brothers.

Our humility is tested when we have a talent, when we win, when we become a leader, or when we are popular.

We should watch out for any signs of arrogance in ourselves – any bossiness, showing off, impatience, expecting admiration or special treatment.

What can you do to be humble?

We should be sure to appreciate the talents and success of others, let others join in or go first, give others a chance, notice what others may need or what they might like, be helpful, listen to others' ideas.