

In the dusty streets of a large city lived a beggar procuring alms and rice daily from passersby. Most of the days he was unable to gain enough food for a meal, and enough coppers to buy some firewood to cook and keep him warm. At night, he slept under the sky with only a rag to cover him. His life was difficult, but he had grown used to it over the many years.

One day, the beggar heard the news that the emperor was coming to town for a rare visit. "I am sure the generous emperor will see the state I am in and grant a generous gift. The richest of all men will bestow some sympathy and relief on me in a manner that would undoubtedly surpass the paltry donations of the regular citizens.", he thought.

He made plans to seat himself along the route the Emperor will be traversing, so that the emperor would not miss to notice the beggar's misery. He gathered all his belongings and set his spot on the street before the night before the procession. The royal caravan finally approached and stopped right in front of him around the midday. While the beggar had expected no more than a little gift to support his life on the streets from the Emperor's servants, he was speechless when the cavalcade halted beside him, and the great ruler himself emerged in front of him.

The Emperor approached the beggar shook the poor man's hand, touched him gently on the shoulder and looked into his eyes, he said "Tell me, kind sir, May I have a little gift of rice?"

For a moment, the beggar didn't understand what the Emperor had just said. The Emperor motioned to his bowl with some rice, urging him on. "Can you please spare some grains of rice?" the powerful man insisted.

The beggar could barely believe what was happening to him. He was expecting the great Emperor to ask him anything. He had only a handful of grains, but he was being beseeched by someone who had everything. The beggar slowly took the bowl into his hands and stared at the little rice he had.

He knew he could not deny the Emperor's request by any means. He was barely able to hide his indignation, but he reluctantly counted out five grains of rice and dropped them into the hands of the Emperor.

The Emperor thanked him and shook his hand once more and went on his way. Confused, hurt and angry, the beggar watched the caravan disappeared into the dust and left him alone with nothing more than he had before.

That night, while he was cleaning his rice for his dinner, he noticed something glinting in his bowl. He looked closer and a thrill shot through him when he dug out the tiny gold nugget.

The gold nugget was enough for him to buy himself a few months off the street. "There must be more of it" he thought and started to sift through the rice in search of more gold. He found four more pieces of gold nuggets inside his rice bowl. As he stared down at the small fortune in his bowl, it dawned on him: there were five gold nuggets. One for each grain of rice he had offered the Emperor.