

RATANA SUTTA

The Buddha's Discourse on
The Three Superb Jewels
And Their Intrinsic Power



With an Introduction, Translation,
and
Explanations Based on Pāli Sources

by

Bhikkhu Ñāṇadassana



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*With an Introduction, Translation,
and
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Foreword

by

Most Ven. N. Ariyadhamma Mahāthera



THIS IS A GIFT OF DHAMMA

‘Sabbadānaṃ Dhammadānaṃ jināti’
(The gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts)
THE BUDDHA

DEDICATION

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this very life.*

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Foreword

(Translation from the Sinhalese)

The recitation of the *Ratana Sutta* is a powerful blessing for protection and an aid for every meditation leading to Nibbāna. The Buddha, the Lord of Peace, recited this Sutta in the city of Vesāli, India, and as a result, calamities caused by famine, evil spirits and disease vanished completely. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of critically ill people recovered instantly and 588,000 people, who attained supramundane Paths, Fruitions, and thus Nibbāna, bore witness to this extraordinary event.

The unique power in the recitation of the *Ratana Sutta*, based on the boundless power of the Buddha's command, surpasses all arts of magical devices (*yantras*), spells (*mantras*) and occultism. The miraculous effects of this recitation diffused even to many solar systems. Hence, today, when calamities of disease and misfortune abound, every Buddhist should arouse friendliness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) and recite the *Ratana Sutta* for the protection and safety of oneself, of others, of one's country and of the whole world.

May those who read and use this booklet be blessed with good health and long life.

“May all beings be happy”

Ven. Nāuyane Ariyadhamma Mahāthera

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

In order to bring the most benefit to humans and gods, the Buddha caused many miracles to happen during His lifetime. However, the miracles attributed to the recitation of the *Ratana Sutta* are outstanding, for He caused three massive calamities disappear in Vesālī, India, that is, famine, harm from evil spirits and disease. Even Sakka, Lord of the gods, present in Vesālī at the time, was delighted after hearing this discourse (*Sutta*) and witnessing its effectiveness. Hence he paid homage to the Buddha, the Dhamma (His Teaching), and the Saṅgha (His Order of monks) by uttering the last three verses of the discourse.

Thenceforth this powerful and effective discourse became the most famous of Buddhist ‘Protective Discourses’ (*parittas*). A fine historical example of its popularity is recorded in the *Mahāvāṅsa* (The Great Chronicle), in its account of King Upatissa II (365-406 AD) of Sri Lanka. During his reign, the island of Sri Lanka was troubled by the ills of a famine and a plague. The benevolent king asked the Saṅgha to recite the *Ratana Sutta*, which they did throughout the night. When morning dawned, a great cloud poured rain on the earth, the famine subsided and all who had suffered from the pla-

gue, recovered. The king then decreed: “When there shall be on the island an evil such as famine, plague or the like, thus shall it be done.”¹ Later, King Sena II (853 - 887 AD) had the whole discourse inscribed on a golden plate and held a great festival in its honour.²

Ratana Sutta is, to this day, one of the best known and most recited discourses in Theravāda Buddhist countries to avert evil, illness, distress or unpleasant situations, both at an individual and national level. It is also recited for promoting a peaceful co-existence with one’s fellow men and for radiating goodwill towards all living beings. Besides, it is often recited along with *Maṅgala Sutta* and *Karaṇīya Metta Sutta* during religious, public or private ceremonies in order to bless new endeavours, projects and undertakings and to ward off inauspicious forces.

The discourse is in the form of a poem, consisting of seventeen verses, and is found in the Pāḷi Canon books *Khuddakapāṭha* and *Sutta Nipāta*.

The first two verses contain an instruction to the gods to pay heed to this discourse and protect humans who bring offerings or bestow merits to them. Then follow twelve verses that describe the exclu-

¹ *Mahāvayaṣa* 19, Ch. 37. v. 189-198.

² *Cūlavayaṣa* (The Little Chronicle), li.79.

sive virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the noble Saṅgha which are called the ‘superb jewels’ (*ratanāṃ paṇītaṃ*) due to their superior qualities. After invoking these virtues, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) is applied for the disappearance of the calamities or distress, by firmly determining:

“By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.”

The discourse ends with three verses uttered by Sakka where he expresses his adoration of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, urging also the gods to revere them, and wishing: *“May there be well-being.”*

The Power of Truth

Ever since the Buddha had the aspiration to attain Buddhahood, He had strongly upheld one particular ethical principle during all His lives, namely, “to adhere to truth and abstain from telling lies”. Without abusing or misusing His words, the power of truth (*sacca-bala*) thus became a source of strength in Him and in the words He uttered. Hence, He could achieve whatever blessings, safety and good fortune He wished for others by invoking true and exclusive virtues and making a firm determination or an asseveration based on this truth (*saccādhittāna*) which is sometimes called the Act of Truth (*saccakiriya*). He utilised it even as a Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be) in His previous lives in order to ward off disasters.

Now, the true and exclusive virtues invoked in the *Ratana Sutta* are:

- ❖ The Buddha as the unequalled Tathāgata (Perfect One) (verse 3), who expounded the Dhamma of Nibbāna, etc. for the highest good of beings (verse 12), and who is the Knower, the Giver and the Bringer of the Sublime Dhamma (verse 13).
- ❖ The Dhamma of the Extinction (of defilements), Dispersion, and Deathlessness (verse 4), and the unsurpassed supramundane concentration with immediate effect (verse 5).
- ❖ The noble Saṅgha (Order of disciples)
 - ♦ who are worthy of offerings, that yield abundant fruit (verse 6),
 - ♦ who have attained the highest gain of Arahantship (verse 7),
 - ♦ who see the Noble Truths unwaveringly (verse 8),
 - ♦ who, even if very negligent, do not take up an eighth rebirth (verse 9),
 - ♦ who have abandoned three mental fetters and are fully freed from rebirth in the four woeful worlds (verse 10),
 - ♦ who are incapable of concealing any evil action (verse 11), and
 - ♦ who are unattached to future birth, as in the case of Arahants (verse 14).

As soon as the Buddha concluded the recitation of the verses with the exclusive virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, there was well-being to the royal family in Vesālī, all calamities disappeared and eighty-four thousand living beings comprehended the supramundane Dhamma. In order to prevent future calamities, He recited it likewise for six more days. And every day there was a similar number of beings comprehending the supramundane Dhamma.

The Background Story

The complete background story, which is translated here from Pāḷi into English, is found in the *Khuddakapāṭha* and *Suttanipāta* Commentaries under the heading *Ratanasutta-vaṇṇanā*.³ It is repeated almost word for word by the *Dhammapada Commentary*, *Pakiṇṇaka-vagga*, with some additional details.

The Calamities in Vesālī

At the time the Buddha was born, Vesālī, the capital of the Licchavis⁴, was prosperous and flourishing, full of folk, thronged with people, and with abundance of food. It had 7.707 princely ru-

³ Both Commentaries state that the story is taken from older Commentaries, “*Evaṃ ... porāṇehi vaṇṇīyati.*”

⁴ The Licchavis were a powerful tribe in India. Vesālī was their capital, and they formed a part of the Vajjian confederacy, being often referred to as the Vajjīs.

lers, 7.707 palaces, 7.707 forts, 7.707 pleasure parks, and 7.707 lotus-ponds.⁵

However, after a time,⁶ Vesāli was hit by a famine due to drought and bad crops. The poor died first and their bodies were cast away outdoors. Due to the stench of their corpses, evil spirits entered the city and thus many more people died. A plague soon broke out owing to the filth of rotting corpses.

Afflicted thus by the three calamities of famine, evil spirits and disease, the citizens of Vesāli approached the king, complaining, “Great king, a threefold calamity has arisen in this city. No such calamity has arisen in the past up to the seventh succession of the royal family. It seems that it has arisen now because of your unrighteousness.” So the king convened in the town-hall a general assembly of all citizens and ordered, “Please investigate any unrighteousness in me.” They investigated the entire royal lineage and found nothing unusual. Therefore, finding no fault with the king, they next contemplated, “By what means can these calamities be abated?”

Some of them advocated offerings and sacrifices to the gods, prayers and auspicious ceremonies, but in spite of all these rites, they were unable to ward off the calamities. Others then suggested that

⁵ See also *Vinaya-piṭaka*, *Mahāvagga*, *Cīvara-kkhandhaka*.

⁶ In the fifth year after the Buddha’s Enlightenment, that is, after about forty years of Buddha’s birth.

the calamities will subside as soon as the six ascetic teachers⁷ arrived. Others said, “The Buddha has arisen in the world. He, the Bhagavā (the Exalted One), teaches the Dhamma for the welfare of all living beings and has great psychic powers and great majesty. As soon as He arrives, the calamities will subside.” Even though pleased with that, many expressed their doubts, saying, “Where does this Bhagavā now dwell? He might not come if we were to invite Him.” Others then said, “All Buddhas are merciful. Why should He not come? He dwells now in Rājagaha and King Bimbisāra attends to him. However, it is the king who might not allow Him to come.”

Then they decided, “If that is so, we will obtain the favour of the king and fetch Him here.” Hence, they gave many gifts to two Licchavi princes⁸ and sent them with a large army to the king, ordering them to obtain the favour of King Bimbisāra and fetch the Bhagavā. Accordingly, the two went and presented the gifts to the king, reported the news and requested, “Great king, send the Bhagavā to

⁷ The six ascetic teachers were the six sectarian teachers: Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambala, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañcaya Belaṭṭhaputta, and Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta.

⁸ According to the *Dhammapada* Commentary, the two Licchavis were prince Mahāli and the son of the king’s head-priest. Mahāli was a participant in King Bimbisāra’s company and had become a Stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) with King Bimbisāra when the Buddha delivered a Dhamma talk in Rājagaha few months after His Enlightenment.

our city.” The king did not accede to their request but replied, “You should see to this matter.”⁹

Invitation to the Buddha

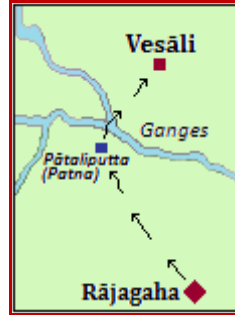
So they next approached the Buddha, paid their homage and requested him, “Venerable Sir, three calamities have arisen in our city. If you, the Bhagavā, will come, we will be safe.” The Buddha then pondering within himself understood the following, “If the *Ratana Sutta* will be recited in Vesāli, the protection it affords will pervade hundred of thousands of millions of solar systems. At the conclusion of the Sutta, eighty-four thousand living beings will comprehend the supramundane Dhamma, and the calamities will subside.” So He consented to their request.

The Buddha's Journey to Vesāli

When King Bimbisāra heard that the Buddha had consented to visit Vesāli, he caused the news to be proclaimed throughout the city (of Rājagaha), and approaching the Buddha, asked Him, “Venerable Sir, did you consent to visit Vesāli?” “Yes, great king”, replied the Buddha. “In that case, Venerable Sir, please wait until I prepare the road for you.”

⁹ King Bimbisāra did not reply in the affirmative because it was the rainy season and the Buddha has given him the promise to spend the rains retreat at Veḷuvana, Rājagaha.

So King Bimbisāra made the ground of a distance of five leagues (*yojanas*) between Rājagaha and Ganges smooth, erected a rest-house at the end of each league, and sent word to the Buddha that the time is fit for the visit. The Buddha then set out accompanied by five hundred monks.



The Buddha's journey from Rājagaha to Vesāli.

The king next caused the road of five leagues to be spread knee-deep with flowers of five different colours, and banners, flags, pitchers, and decorative plantain leaves etc. to be set up. He caused two white parasols to be held up for the Buddha and one for each monk, and together with his retinue, he honoured them with flowers, perfumes and so on. He then lodged the Buddha in each rest-house, offered generous meals, and in five days conducted Him to the bank of the Ganges. There, while adorning a boat with all kinds of ornaments, he sent a message to the citizens of Vesāli, saying, “The Bhagavā has arrived. Please prepare the road and come forth all of you to welcome Him.”

Thereupon thinking, “We will render Him a double honour”, the citizens of Vesāli made the ground of a distance of three leagues between Vesāli and Ganges smooth, prepared to honour the Buddha with four white parasols and each of His monks with

two, and arrived and stood waiting on the bank of the Ganges.

King Bimbisāra fastened two boats together, erected a pavilion thereon, decorated it with flowers, garlands and so on and prepared a seat of all kinds of jewels for the Buddha. The Buddha seated Himself therein, and when the five hundred monks embarked, they sat down appropriately around Him. The king followed the Buddha, descending into the water up to his neck. He then stopped and said, “Venerable Sir, until the Bhagavā returns, I shall remain right here on the bank of the Ganges.”

The deities above up to the Akaniṭṭha realm¹⁰ rendered their honour to Him. So did the Kambalas, Assataras, etc. Nāga kings¹¹ who dwelt beneath the Ganges. Thus, the Buddha voyaged with great honour a distance of a league up the Ganges and entered the boundary of the Vesāliyas.

Thereupon, the Licchavi princes rendered Him double honour that bestowed upon Him by King Bimbisāra and welcomed Him after descending themselves into the water up to their necks.

¹⁰ The *Akaniṭṭha* (Peerless) realm is the highest divine realm in the fine-material Brahma world and the topmost of the five Pure Abodes (*Suddhavāsa*), where beings who become non-returners (*anāgamis*) in other planes of existence are reborn here and attain Arahantship.

¹¹ The *Kambalas*, *Assataras*, etc. are tribes of Nāgas (serpents having miraculous powers and great strength.)

At that very moment a severe thunderstorm arose in the four quarters spreading around, covering them in darkness together with thunder and flashes of lightning. Then as soon as the Buddha set his first step on the bank of the Ganges, a torrential rain poured down. Only those who liked to get wet did so, those who did not, didn't. Streams of water flowed everywhere knee-deep or thigh-deep or waist-deep or neck-deep and all the corpses were washed into the Ganges, so that the region was cleansed.

The Licchavi princes then lodged the Buddha at intervals of a league along the road, offered generous meals, rendered Him double honour that bestowed upon Him by the king, and in three days conducted Him to Vesāli.

Arrival at Vesāli

When the Buddha reached Vesāli, Sakka, Lord of the gods, arrived, followed by a multitude of gods. With the assemblage of powerful and influential gods, most of the evil spirits fled. The Buddha then stood at the gate of the city¹² and addressed the Elder Ānanda, saying, “Ānanda, learn this *Ratana Sutta*, take materials for oblations, and recite it as Protection within the three walls of Vesāli, making rounds with the Licchavi princes.” He then taught him the *Ratana Sutta*.

¹² According to the *Dhammapada* Commentary, the Buddha stood there in the evening.

The Recitation by Ven. Ānanda

Thus, on the same day the Buddha arrived in Vesāli, Venerable Ānanda learnt, at the gate of the city, the *Ratana Sutta* for averting those calamities. He recited it as Protection by taking water in the Buddha's bowl, going about and sprinkling it over the entire city. The moment he uttered the word "Whatever ..." (*'Yaṇ kiñci ...'*, verse 3), the evil spirits who did not flee earlier and were living by means of such places as rubbish heaps, walls and the like, fled through the four gates. But those who did not get enough room through the gates, fled by breaking the walls. As soon as the evil spirits left, diseases in the bodies of humans disappeared. They came out and honoured the Elder with flowers, perfumes and so on.

The populace then smeared the town-hall which stood in the midst of the city with all the perfumes, erected a canopy, adorned it with all kinds of ornaments, prepared therein a seat for the Buddha, and fetched the Buddha there. The Buddha entered the town-hall and seated Himself in the seat prepared for Him. The Order of monks, as well as the princes and the people, sat down in their appropriate seats. Sakka, Lord of the gods, sat nearby together with a company of gods from two heavenly worlds. So did other gods (from other heavenly worlds).

The Recitation by the Buddha

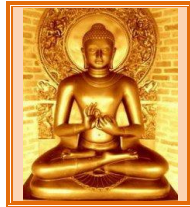
The Elder Ānanda went about the entire city of Vesāli, safeguarded it, came with the citizens of Vesāli and sat down on one side. Thereupon the Buddha recited the *Ratana Sutta* once more. At the conclusion of the recitation there was well-being to the royal family, all calamities disappeared and eighty-four thousand living beings comprehended the supramundane Dhamma.





RATANA SUTTA

***The Discourse on
The Three Superb Jewels***





**1. Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni,
Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe,
Sabbe’va bhūtā sumanā bhavantu,
Atho’ pi sakkacca suṇantu bhāsitaṇ.**

1. Whatever beings are here assembled,
Whether terrestrial or celestial,
May all beings be glad.
Moreover, may they attentively
Listen to what is said:

**2. Tasmā hi bhūtā nisāmetha sabbe,
Mettaṇ karotha mānusiya pajāya,
Divā ca ratto ca haranti ye baliṇ,
Tasmā hi ne rakkhatha appamattā.**

2. Therefore, pay heed all you beings,
Show your friendliness to humankind,
Who day and night bring you offerings.
Hence, protect them diligently.

**3. Yaṇ kiñci vittaṇ idha vā huray vā
Saggesu vā yaṇ ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ
Na no samaṇ atthi Tathāgatena.
Idam’pi Buddhē ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.
Etena saccena suvatthi¹³ hotu!**

¹³ **Suvatthi** (*su-* “good, well” + *atthi* “to be, being”) = **well-being**: good health or fortune. Or as the Commentary explains: *arogatā* (healthiness), *nirupaddavatā* (no danger, safety).

3. Whatever treasure there is here or beyond,
Or whatever superb jewel is in the heavens,
None is equal to the Tathāgata (the Buddha).
Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

***4. Khayaṇ virāgaṇ amataṇ paṇītaṇ
Yadajjhagā Sakyamunī samāhito
Na tena Dhammena samatthi kiñci.
Idam’pi Dhamme ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!***

4. There is nothing equal to that Dhamma
Of the superb Extinction (of defilements),
Dispassion, and Deathlessness (Nibbāna),
Which the concentrated Sakyan Sage
(the Buddha) has realized.
Verily, in the Dhamma is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

***5. Yaṇ Buddhaseṭṭho parivaṇṇayī suciṇ
Samādhim’ānantarikañ’ñam’āhu.
Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati.
Idam’pi Dhamme ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!***

5. That Purity which the Supreme Buddha extolled
Is called “concentration with immediate effect”.
Nothing equal to that concentration is found.
Verily, in the Dhamma is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

**6. *Ye puggalā aṭṭha satañ pasatthā
Cattāri etāni yugāni honti.
Te dakkhiṇeyyā Sugatassa sāvakā,
Etesu dinnāni mahapphalāni
Idam’pi Saṅghe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!***

6. Those eight individuals
That are praised by the Virtuous Ones
Constitute the four pairs (of persons).
They, the worthy of offerings,
Are the disciples of the Well-farer (the Buddha),
And gifts given to them yield abundant fruit.
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

**7. *Ye suppayuttā manasā dalhena,
Nikkāmino Gotamasāsanamhi,
Te pattipattā amataṅ vigayha,
Laddhā mudhā nibbutiṅ bhunṅjamānā.
Idam’pi Saṅghe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!***

7. Those who with a steadfast mind,
Apply themselves well
In the Buddha Gotama’s Teaching,
Being desireless, attain the highest gain.
They plunge into the Deathlessness (Nibbāna)
And enjoy the peace of emancipation,
Obtained for free.
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

**8. *Yathindakhīlo paṭhaviṅ sito siyā
Catubbhi vātehi asampakampiyo,
Tathūpamaṅ sappurisaṅ vadāmi,
Yo ariyasaccāni avecca passati.
Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!***

8. Just as a city-post fixed firmly in the ground
Is unshakeable by the four winds,
So too, I declare, is the virtuous person
Who sees the Noble Truths unwaveringly.
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

**9. *Ye Ariyasaccāni vibhāvayanti,
Gambhīrapaññena sudesitāni,
Kiñcāpi te honti bhusappamattā
Na te bhavaṅ aṭṭhamaṅ ādiyanti.
Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.***

9. Those who clearly comprehend
the Noble Truths,
Well taught by him of profound wisdom¹⁴
Even if they are very negligent,
They do not take up an eighth rebirth.
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

¹⁴ The Buddha.

**10. Sahāvassa dassanasampadāya
Tayassu dhammā jahitū bhavanti:
Sakkāyadiṭṭhi, vicikicchitañca
Sīlabbatāṇ vā'pi yadatthi kiñci.
Catūhapāyehi ca vippamutto,
Cha cābhīṭhānāni abhabbo kātuṇ.
Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!**

10. Just with his gaining of insight
He abandons three states of mind:
Self-identity view, sceptical doubt,
And whatsoever [grasping to]
Mere rules and observances.
He is also fully freed from (rebirth in)
The four woeful worlds (*apāyas*),
And is incapable of committing
The six major misdeeds.
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

**11. Kiñcāpi so kammaṇ karoti pāpakaṇ
Kāyena vācā uda cetasā vā,
Abhabbo so tassa paṭicchādāya,
Abhabbatā diṭṭhapadassa vuttā.
Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!**

11. Any evil action he may still commit
By body, speech, or mind,
He is incapable of concealing it;
For it is said that such incapability
Is of one who has seen the Path (of Nibbāna).
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

*12. Vanappagumbe yathā phussitagge
Gimhānamāse paṭhamasmiṅ gimhe,
Tathūpamaṅ Dhammavaraṅ adesayī,
Nibbānagāmiṅ paramaṅ hitāya.
Idam'pi Buddhhe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*

12. As a woodland grove is crowned
With blossoming flowers
During the heat of the first month of the summer,
Even so (crowned) is the sublime Dhamma
Leading to Nibbāna which He (the Buddha)
Expounded for the highest good.
Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

*13. Varo, varaññū, varado, varāharo,
Anuttaro Dhammavaraṅ adesayī.
Idam'pi Buddhhe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*

13. He, the Sublime one (the Buddha),
The Knower of the Sublime (Nibbāna),
The Giver of the Sublime (Dhamma),
The Bringer of the Sublime (Noble Path),
The Peerless one (the Buddha)
Taught the Sublime Dhamma.
Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

***14. Khīṇaṇ purāṇaṇ, navaṇ natthi sambhavaṇ
Virattacittā āyatike bhavasmiṇ,
Te khīṇabījā avirūḷhicchandā,
Nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṇ padīpo.
Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!***

14. Their old (*kamma*) is destroyed,
No new (*kamma*) is produced,
And their mind is unattached to future rebirth.
Those wise ones, with the seed
(of rebirth-consciousness) destroyed,
And with no more desire for further growth,
Go out as the flame of a lamp.
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

(Spoken by Sakka, Lord of the gods)

***15. Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni,
Bhummāni vā yāni vā antalikkhe,
Tathāgataṃ devamanussapūjitaṃ,
Buddhaṃ namassāma. Suvatthi hotu!***

15. Whatever beings are here assembled,
Whether terrestrial or celestial,
Let us revere the perfect Buddha
Honoured by gods and men.
May there be well-being!

***16. Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni,
Bhummāni vā yāni vā antalikkhe,
Tathāgataṃ devamanussapūjitaṃ,
Dhammaṃ namassāma. Suvatthi hotu!***

16. Whatever beings are here assembled,
Whether terrestrial or celestial,
Let us revere the perfect Dhamma
Honoured by gods and men.
May there be well-being!

***17. Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni,
Bhummāni vā yāni vā antalikkhe,
Tathāgataṃ devamanussapūjitaṃ,
Saṅghaṃ namassāma. Suvatthi hotu!***

17. Whatever beings are here assembled,
Whether terrestrial or celestial,
Let us revere the perfect Saṅgha
Honoured by gods and men.
May there be well-being!

అనుబంధ నిబంధన

EXPLANATIONS

అనుబంధ నిబంధన

అనుబంధ నిబంధన



Most people acquainted with the *Ratana Sutta* like to recite it, sometimes without having access to the meaning of crucial words in it. Hence, the explanations given here are for those desirous of knowing the meaning, but also for those desirous of refreshing their knowledge.

These explanations are based on the *Khuddakapāṭha* and *Sutta-nipāta Commentaries* with further elaboration by the author including quotations and examples from other *Suttas*.

In this section a line-by-line translation of each verse is firstly shown followed by a word-by-word translation. Then come the explanations of each verse.



RATANA SUTTA

Verse One

- a. *Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni*,
Whatever beings are here assembled,
- b. *Bhummāni vā yāni vā antalikkhe*,
Whether terrestrial or celestial,
- c. *Sabbe’va bhūtā sumanā bhavantu*,
May all beings be glad.
- d. *Atho’ pi sakkacca suṇantu bhāsitaṃ*.
**Moreover, may they attentively
listen to what is said:**

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Yānīdha* (*yāni* + *idha*) = Whatever + here, *bhūtāni* = beings, *samāgatāni* = assembled,
- b. *Bhummāni* = terrestrial, *vā* = whether, *yāni* = whatever, *vā* = or, *antalikkhe* = celestial,
- c. *Sabbe’va* (*sabbe* + *eva*) = all truly, *bhūtā* = beings, *sumanā* = glad, *bhavantu* = be.
- d. *Atho’ pi* = moreover, *sakkacca* = attentively, *suṇantu* = may they listen, *bhāsitaṃ* = to what is said:

EXPLANATIONS

This verse and the following are introductory. Here the Buddha addresses right away the audience present before commencing His discourse and determinations based on the power of true statements (*sacca-vacana*).

Whatever (*yāni*) means: anyone, of little or great influence.

Here (*idha*) means: in this place, at this moment.

Beings (*bhūtāni*) means: mainly gods and deities who arrived in multitudes with Sakka, Lord of the gods, at their head when the Buddha reached Vesālī. Consequently, most of the evil spirits fled.

Terrestrial (*bhummāni*) means: gods and deities inhabiting the earth on the ground, trees, creepers, mountains, and so on.

Celestial (*antalikkhe*) means: gods and deities inhabiting the sky in celestial mansions. These include the Yāma gods in the sense-sphere world up to the Akaniṭṭha gods in the last fine-material world.

Be glad (*sumanā bhavantu*) means: be pleased, do not be sad, but have hope since the calamities will soon disappear.

Attentively listen to what is said (*sakkacca suṇantu bhāsitaṃ*) means: pay attention and listen to this Dhamma discourse that brings about good fortune in the heavenly worlds and also supra-mundane bliss.



Verse Two

- a. *Tasmā hi bhūtā nisāmetha sabbe,*
Therefore, pay heed all you beings,
- b. *Mettaṇ karotha mānusiya pajāya,*
Show your friendliness to humankind,
- c. *Divā ca ratto ca haranti ye baliṇ,*
Who day and night bring you offerings.
- d. *Tasmā hi ne rakkhatha appamattā.*
Hence, protect them diligently.

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Tasmā hi* = therefore, *bhūtā* = beings, *nisāmetha* = pay heed, *sabbe* = all (you),
- b. *Mettaṇ* = friendliness, *karotha* = show (lit. do), *mānusiya* = human, *pajāya* = kind, race,
- c. *Divā* = day, *ca* = and, *ratto* = night, *ca* = and, *haranti* = bring you, *ye* = who, *baliṇ* = offering(s).
- d. *Tasmā hi* = hence, therefore, *ne* = them, *rakkhatha* = protect, *appamattā* = diligently.

EXPLANATIONS

This is the exhortation the Buddha gives now to all those gods and deities present by urging them:

Show your friendliness to humankind (*mettaṇ karotha mānusiya pajāya*) means: arouse friendliness, benevolence and kindness to this humankind which is afflicted with the three calamities of famine, evil spirits and disease.

Whatever (*yāni*) means: anyone, of little or great influence.

Here (*idha*) means: in this place, at this moment.

Beings (*bhūtāni*) means: mainly gods and deities who arrived in multitudes with Sakka, Lord of the gods, at their head when the Buddha reached Vesāli. Consequently, most of the evil spirits fled.

Terrestrial (*bhummāni*) means: gods and deities inhabiting the earth on the ground, trees, creepers, mountains, and so on.

Celestial (*antalikkhe*) means: gods and deities inhabiting the sky in celestial mansions. These include the Yāma gods in the sense-sphere world up to the Akaniṭṭha gods in the last fine-material world.

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- a. *Tasmā hi bhūtā nisāmetha sabbe,*
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Who day and night bring you offerings.
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Hence, protect them diligently.

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Tasmā hi* = therefore, *bhūtā* = beings, *nisāmetha* = pay heed, *sabbe* = all (you),
- b. *Mettaṃ* = friendliness, *karotha* = show (lit. do), *mānusiya* = human, *pajāya* = kind, race,
- c. *Divā* = day, *ca* = and, *ratto* = night, *ca* = and, *haranti* = bring you, *ye* = who, *baliṃ* = offering(s).
- d. *Tasmā hi* = hence, therefore, *ne* = them, *rakkhatha* = protect, *appamattā* = diligently.

EXPLANATIONS

This is the exhortation the Buddha gives now to all those gods and deities present by urging them:

Show your friendliness to humankind (*mettaṃ karotha mānusiya pajāya*) means: arouse friendliness, benevolence and kindness to this humankind which is afflicted with the three calamities of famine, evil spirits and disease.

Who day and night bring you offerings (*divā ca ratto ca haranti ye baliṃ*) means: those humans who even make painted, wooden, stone or metal images of gods, approach shrines, temples, trees, and so on, to make offerings or oblations (*bali*)¹⁵ by day intended for this or that god, or make offerings by night during the new moon, full moon, etc. or alternatively, make offerings by day after giving alms to dedicate merits to the guardian deities up to the Brahma gods, or make offerings by night after hearing the preaching or chanting of the Dhamma the whole night long to dedicate merits to them. They are those who bring you offerings and bestow you merits.

Hence, protect them diligently (*tasmā hi ne rakkhatha appamattā*) means: since they bring you offerings and bestow you merits, how should you not protect them? Therefore, even on account of these offerings and bestowing of merit, protect them diligently. Ward off what is harmful for them and bring about what is beneficial. Have gratitude in your hearts and always remember them.



¹⁵ There are five kinds of *bali*: offering to kinsfolk (*nāti*), guests (*atithi*), the departed (*pubbapeta*), the king (*rāja*), and the gods or deities (*devatā*). (see Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Pattakamma-sutta*). The fifth kind of *bali* is meant here.

Verse Three

- a. *Yaṇ kiñci vittaṇ idha vā huraya vā*
Whatever treasure there is here or beyond,
- b. *Saggesu vā yaṇ ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ*
Or whatever superb jewel is in the heavens,
- c. *Na no samaṇ atthi Tathāgatena.*
None is equal to the Tathāgata (the Buddha).
- d. *Idam'pi Buddhē ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.*
Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel.
- e. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Yaṇ kiñci* = whatever, *vittaṇ* = treasure, *idha* = here, *vā* = or, *huraya* = beyond (this world), *vā* = or
- b. *Saggesu* = in the heavens, *vā* = or, *yaṇ* = whatever, *ratanaṇ* = jewel, *paṇītaṇ* = superb,
- c. *Na no* = none, *samaṇ* = equal, *atthi* = is, *Tathāgatena* = to the Tathāgata.
- d. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Buddhē* = in the Buddha, *ratanaṇ* = jewel, *paṇītaṇ* = superb.
- e. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

Thus, after pointing out to the gods and deities how humans are helpful by making offerings and dedicating merits to them, the Buddha commences now to gradually invoke the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha for the disappearance of the calamities and for the gods and humans to hear the Dhamma. Therefore, He applies

the power of true statements (*sacca-vacana*) by reciting the verses beginning with “*Yaṇ kiñci vittaṇ ...* .” (Whatever treasure there is).

Whatever (*yaṇ kiñci*) means: any treasure with or without an owner.

Treasure (*vittaṇ*) means here: valuables that are for utility purpose or for adornment and beautification, such as gold, silver, pearls, gems, cat’s-eye, red coral, ruby, emerald, diamonds; or mineral deposits with ores and precious stones, or even mansions decorated with such valuables.

Here (*idha*) means: in this human world.

Beyond (*huraṇ*) means: in any other world except the human and heavenly world, since these two have been already mentioned. This means the world of *Nāgas* (giant serpents with miraculous powers and great strength), *Supaṇṇas* (giant birds), *Asuras* (Titans), and so on.

In the heavens (*saggesu*) means: in the heavenly worlds of the sensual realm (*kāmāvacara*) and fine-material realm (*rūpāvacara*).

Jewel (*ratanaṇ*) means here: anything that is (1) highly esteemed, (2) of great value or worth, (3) unique, (4) a rare sight, (5) being used by or associated with superior people, and (6) instilling delight. This includes, literally and figuratively:

Material objects – relatively rare and valuable minerals (e.g. gems), or metals (e.g. gold or silver) used either as ornaments or for other purposes.

Persons – anyone esteemed as rare, precious, brilliant, highly valued, of outstanding qualities, cherished, venerated, or worshiped, and

Spiritual qualities – a highly valued teaching or practice.

Superb (*paṇītaṃ*) means: outstanding, excellent, magnificent.

The Tathāgata, ‘The Perfect One’, is an epithet or designation of the Buddha which He uses mostly when referring to himself or to other Buddhas. It literally means the one who has “thus (*tathā*) come (*āgata*)” or “thus (*tathā*) gone (*gata*)”.

He has ‘thus come’ because he has come in the same way that all the other Buddhas of the past have come by striving with the same resolution (*abhinīhāra*) for the welfare of the whole world, that is, by fulfilling the thirty perfections (*pāramis*), the thirty seven factors to Enlightenment, and so forth.

He has ‘thus gone’ because he has gone to full Enlightenment or Nibbāna in the same way that all the other Buddhas of the past have gone by overcoming the five mental hindrances, attaining the

fine-material and immaterial absorptions (*jhānas*), then developing all the insight knowledges, attaining the supramundane stages of Stream-winning, etc. and uprooting all mental defilements with the supramundane Path of Arahantship.¹⁶

In the Suttas the Buddha gives more specific reasons why He is called a Tathāgata:

- ❖ Because He has fully awakened to the nature of the world, and is disentangled from it; has fully awakened to the origin of the world and has abandoned it; has fully awakened to the cessation of the world and has attained it; has fully awakened to the practice leading to the cessation of the world and has developed it.
- ❖ Because He has fully awakened to whatever in this world is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, and reflected upon by the mind.
- ❖ Because from the time of His Enlightenment to the time of His passing away, everything that He says, states, and explains, is just so, and not otherwise.
- ❖ Because he speaks at the right time, speaks what is fact, speaks on what is beneficial, speaks on what is Dhamma and Discipline.
- ❖ Because His actions accord with His words, and His words accord with His actions.

¹⁶ See Aṅguttara-nikāya Commentary, *Ekakanipāta, Eka-puggala-vagga*.

- ❖ Because in this world He is the Supreme One (in morality, concentration, wisdom, liberation, etc.), the Unsurpassed One, the All-Seer, and the Master of His mind.¹⁷

The word *tathāgata* is also sometimes used as an attribute of the Dhamma and Saṅgha, as in the last two verses below: *tathāgataṃ Dhammaṃ, tathāgataṃ Saṅghaṃ*.

None is equal to the Tathāgata (*na no samaṃ atthi Tathāgatena*) means: whatever treasure or jewel was mentioned above, even a single one is not equal to the brilliant Buddha-jewel (*Buddha-ratana*). As the Buddha Himself said:

“The Tathāgata, Arahaṇ and fully Self-enlightened (the Buddha) is the most excellent among all beings, be they footless, two, four or many footed, fine-material, immaterial, perceptive, non-perceptive, or neither perceptive nor non-perceptive. Hence, those pleased in the Tathāgata are pleased in the most excellent, and for those who are pleased in the most excellent, the reward is indeed most excellent.”¹⁸

More precisely, there are six reasons why the Tathāgata is regarded as the unequalled jewel:

¹⁷ E.g. Dīgha-nikāya, *Pāsādika Sutta*; Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Loka Sutta*.

¹⁸ Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Aggappasāda- or Pasāda Sutta*.

1) *Because of high esteem –*

When the Tathāgata arises in the world, powerful gods and humans that exist do not honour or hold anybody else in greater esteem. Thus, Brahmā Sahampati honoured the Tathāgata with a giant jewelled garland. Other gods and humans honoured Him according to their means, notably King Bimbisāra, King Pasenādi Kosala, the wealthy merchant Anāthapiṇḍika and many others. After the Tathāgata's passing away into Nibbāna (*parinibbāna*), Asoka the Great, one of India's greatest emperors, showed his honours in numerous ways. He even established 84,000 monasteries all over India, spending 960 millions of his wealth. Moreover, for whom else, more than 2,500 years after his passing away, does such high esteem, regard and respect exist for the holy places associated with his birth, enlightenment, preaching, and passing away and for his countless cetiyas (memorials, stūpas, pagodas, shrines, statues) in his honour, that abound even far beyond India, as it does for the Tathāgata? Thus, there is no equal jewel to the Tathāgata in the sense of high esteem.¹⁹

¹⁹ Historically seen, the holy places of other religious leaders have often become, till modern times, a latent source of conflict and violence that resulted in bloodshed between rival elements even within the same religious tradition itself. However, due to the high esteem the Buddhists have for the Buddha as the embodiment of compassion, non-violence and peace, no such record of violence exists in history. Thus, the Buddha's superb virtues or the 'jewel' (*cont. next page*)

(2) *Because of great value or worth* –

Even if the Tathāgata receives from people a rag robe (*paṇṣukūla*) as an offering, it will be of abundant fruit and benefit for them in many lives to come. Thus, with no flaw in its effects, there is no equal jewel to the Tathāgata in the sense of great value or worth.

(3) *Because of uniqueness* –

It is not possible to compare and liken the Tathāgata with anyone in regard to morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*), and liberation (*vimutti*), etc. He is not equal or identical with anyone else since He greatly surpasses all in any aspect or quality that might be considered. Thus, there is no equal jewel to the Tathāgata in the sense of uniqueness.

(4) *Because of rare sight (dassana or darshan)* –

Since a Tathāgata seldom arises in the world, He is indeed a rare sight. This can be even attested from the multitudes of gods and deities who came to see him from ten world-spheres from the time He was born till the last moment of his passing away into Nibbāna (*parinibbāna*). Remarkably, at that final moment, there was no space in a distance of twelve leagues around Him where one could touch with the point of a hair that was not filled with mighty gods and deities who were say-

in him inspire people to hold the holy places and even the cetiyas associated with Him in high regard and esteem.

ing, “We have indeed come from far away to behold the Tathāgata. It is seldom for Tathāgatas, Worthy Ones, fully Self-Enlightened Ones to arise in the world.”²⁰ Thus, there is no equal jewel to the Tathāgata in the sense of a rare sight.

(5) Because of superior people associating with Him –

Inferior people having distorted views and thus lacking in sufficient conditions for supramundane attainments cannot be blessed with even seeing the Tathāgata in a dream. Those superior ones, however, who have sufficient conditions are able, after hearing the Tathāgata, to attain Arahantship even at the end of a four-line verse; have penetrative knowledge and vision like Ven. Bāhiya Dāruciriya who instantly comprehended the Dhamma (*khippābhiñña*); are born in noble khattiya and brahmin families like the eighty Great Arahant disciples; and are blessed with the pre-eminences (*anuttariyas*) of seeing (*dassana*), hearing (*savana*), and attending (*pāricariya*) to the Tathāgata. Thus, there is no equal jewel to the Tathāgata in the sense that superior people are blessed by associating with Him by seeing, hearing and attending.

(6) Because of instilling delight –

The Tathāgata instills to multitudes of gods and humans who follow his advice the delight of the

²⁰ Dīgha-nikāya, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*.

first, second, third, and fourth fine-material meditative absorption (*rūpa-jhāna*), the delight of the first, second, third, and fourth immaterial meditative absorption (*arūpa-jhāna*), the delight of the Path of Stream-winner (*sotāpatti-magga*), the delight of the Fruition of Stream-winner (*sotāpatti-phala*), the delight of the Path and Fruition of once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*), non-returner (*anāgāmi*), and Arahantship. Thus, there is no equal jewel to the Tathāgata in the sense of bringing about delight.

Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel (*idam'pi Buddhē ratanaṃ paṇītaṃ*) means: the superb jewel is thus found in the Buddha and constitutes the most outstanding example because it is peerless. By this statement the Buddha asserts that this is true.

By virtue of this truth may there be well-being! (*Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*) means: If it is true that the jewel in the Buddha is superb and most outstanding among all treasures or jewels that are here, beyond, or in the heavens, let there, by virtue of this truth, be well-being for these distressed beings, let there be health and safety. By this statement the Buddha makes a determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*) based on this truth.

As soon as the Buddha recited this verse, there was a great relief to the royal family and their fear disappeared. Moreover, the verbal order in this verse was received by non-humans in many solar systems.

Verse Four

- a. *Khayaṇ, virāgaṇ, amataṇ paṇītaṇ*
**That superb Extinction (of defilements),
Dispersion, and Deathlessness,**
- b. *Yadajjhagā Sakyamunī samāhito*
**Which the concentrated Sakyan Sage
(the Buddha) has realized,**
- c. *Na tena Dhammena samatthi kiñci.*
There is nothing equal to that Dhamma.
- d. *Idam'pi Dhamme ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.*
Verily, in the Dhamma is this superb jewel.
- e. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Khayaṇ* = Extinction, *virāgaṇ* = Dispersion, *amataṇ* = Deathlessness, *paṇītaṇ* = supreme,
- b. *Yadajjhagā* (*yaṇ* + *ajjhagā*) = which has realized, *Sakyamunī* = Sakyan Sage, *samāhito* = the concentrated,
- c. *Na* (*kiñci*) = no-thing, *tena* = to that, *Dhammena* = Teaching (of Cessation, Detachment, Deathlessness), *samatthi* (*sama* + *atthi*) = equal + there is.
- d. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Dhamme* = in the Dhamma, *ratanaṇ* = jewel, *paṇītaṇ* = superb.
- e. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

Thus, after invoking the truth with the Buddha's virtues (*Buddha-guṇa*), the Buddha commences now to invoke it with the virtues of the Teaching of Nibbāna (*nibbāna-dhamma-guṇa*).

Here, Extinction, Dispassion, and Deathlessness are all terms of Nibbāna. More precisely,

Extinction (*khaya*) means: the Extinction of passion (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) through the realization of Nibbāna, or the mere Extinction by their complete non-arising and cessation.

Dispassion (*vi-rāga*) means: the dissociation of passion (*rāga*), etc. from its object when Nibbāna is realized, or their complete detachment, disappearance, and obliteration.

Deathlessness (*amata*) means: that state where one is not born, does not grow old, and die, since rise (birth), fall (death) and change in the continuance do not appear.

Concentrated (*samāhito*) means: mentally concentrated with the concentration (*samādhi*) of the supramundane Noble Path.

Sakyan Sage (*Sakyamunī*) means: the Buddha who was born in the Sakyan clan.

There is nothing equal to that Dhamma (*na tena Dhammena sam'atthi kiñci*) means: there is no other teaching (*dhamma*) equal to that teaching called “the Extinction (of defilements), Dispassion and Deathlessness (Nibbāna)” which the Buddha has realized. As the Buddha said:

“Among all teachings relating to things conditioned (*saṅkhata*) or unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*), dispassion (*virāga*) is the most excellent, namely, ... the extinction of craving, cessation, Nibbāna. Hence, those pleased in the teaching of dispassion are pleased in the most excellent, and for those who are pleased in the most excellent, the reward is indeed most excellent.”²¹

Thus, after pointing out the inequality of the Teaching (*Dhamma*) of Nibbāna with other teachings, the Buddha applies now for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on the exclusive virtue in this Dhamma-jewel of Nibbāna, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Dhamma is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



²¹ Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Aggappasāda- or Pasāda Sutta*.

Verse Five

- a. *Yaṇ Buddhaseṭṭho parivaṇṇayī suciṇ*
That Purity which the Supreme Buddha extolled
- b. *Samādhim'ānantarikañ'ñam'āhu.*
Is called "concentration with immediate effect".
- c. *Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati.*
Nothing equal to that concentration is found.
- d. *Idam'pi Dhamme ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.*
Verily, in the Dhamma is this superb jewel.
- e. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Yaṇ* = that which, *Buddha-seṭṭho* = the Supreme Buddha, *parivaṇṇayī* = extolled, *suciṇ* = Purity,
- b. *Samādhij* = concentration, *ānantarikaṇ* = with immediate effect, *naṇ* = that, *āhu* = is called.
- c. *Samādhinā* = concentration, *tena* = to that, *samo* = equal, *na* = nothing, *vijjati* = is found.
- d. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Dhamme* = in the Dhamma, *ratanaṇ* = jewel, *paṇītaṇ* = superb.
- e. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with the virtues of the Teaching of the supramundane Path (*maggā-dhamma-guṇa*).

Here, **the Buddha** means: he who understood the four Noble Truths.

Supreme (*setṭho*) means: highest, praiseworthy.

Purity (*suci*) means: complete cleansing through the uprooting of the mental defilements and stains.

“Concentration with immediate effect” (*samā-dhim’ānantarikaṇ*) means: the concentration of any of the four supramundane Paths (*maggas*). For immediately after it occurs it yields its respective four supramundane Fruitions (*phalas*). As such, once the concentration of the supramundane Path arises, there is no obstacle that can prevent the arising of the supramundane Fruition – not even a sudden conflagration of a cosmic aeon (*kappa*), as it is said:

“Should a person [who possesses the Path of stream-winning] enter upon the attainment of the Fruition of stream-winning, and should it then be the time for the conflagration of a cosmic aeon, the cosmic aeon would not start burning up until this person had attained the Fruition of stream-winning. This person is called ‘one who can stop a cosmic aeon’ (*thitakappī*). Similarly, all persons who possess a supramundane Path are called ‘those who can stop a cosmic aeon’ (*thitakappino*).”²²

The spectacular simile here with the conflagration of a cosmic aeon is simply to show the absence of any obstacle for the immediate attainment of the supramundane Fruition. For there is actually no

²² Puggala-paññāti, *Ekaka-puggala*. – “**Thitakappī**: kappañ ṭhapetuṃ samattho.” (*Pañcappakarana-atthakathā*).

conflagration of a cosmic aeon when the *sāsana* (Buddha’s dispensation) prevails. Nor does the *sāsana* prevail when a cosmic aeon is destroyed. Nonetheless, in order to illustrate the absence of any obstacle, the reasoning was made: “Even if that would happen, it is impossible to create an obstacle for a person who possess a supramundane Path to not immediately attain the supramundane Fruition, let alone any other obstacle.”

The same concentration is called “*ānantariko ceto-samādhī*” in Dīgha-nikāya, *Dasuttara Sutta*, and “*ānantariyo*” in Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Vitthāra Sutta*.

Nothing equal to that concentration is found (*samādhinā tena samo na vijjati*) means: no concentration of the fine-material realm (*rūpāvacara*) or immaterial realm (*arūpāvacara*) is found equal to that pure supramundane “concentration with immediate effect”. For, even if one cultivates the former concentrations and one is reborn in this or that Brahma world, one is still liable, after their expiration, of being reborn in woeful worlds. By cultivating, however, the supramundane concentration of stream-winning, rebirth in woeful worlds is eradicated. Or better yet, by attaining the supramundane Path concentration of Arahantship, all rebirth is eradicated. That is why the Buddha said:

“Among all teachings relating to things conditioned (*saṅkhata-dhamma*), the [supramundane] Noble Eightfold Path is the most excellent. Hence,

those pleased in the [supramundane] Noble Eightfold Path are pleased in the most excellent, and for those who are pleased in the most excellent, the reward is indeed most excellent.”²³

Thus, after pointing out the inequality of the concentration “with immediate effect” with other kinds of concentration, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on the exclusive virtue in this Dhamma-jewel of the supramundane Path concentration, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Dhamma is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



²³ Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Aggappasāda- or Pasāda Sutta*.

Verse Six

- a. *Ye puggalā aṭṭha satan̄ pasatthā*
**Those eight individuals
Who are praised by the Virtuous Ones**
- b. *Cattāri etāni yugāni honti*
Constitute the four pairs (of persons).
- c. *Te dakkhiṇeyyā Sugatassa sāvakā,*
**They, the worthy of offerings,
Are the disciples of the Well-farer,**
- d. *Etesu dinnāni mahapphalāni*
And gifts given to them yield abundant fruit.
- e. *Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.*
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
- f. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Ye* = those, *puggalā* = individuals, *aṭṭha* = eight, *satan̄* = by the virtuous Ones, *pasatthā* = that are praised
- b. *Cattāri* = four, *etāni* = the, *yugāni* = pairs (of persons), *honti* = constitute (are).
- c. *Te* = they, *dakkhiṇeyyā* = the worthy of offerings, *Sugatassa* = of the Well-farer (the Buddha), *sāvakā* = disciples,
- d. *Etesu* = to them, *dinnāni* = gifts given, *mahapphalāni* = (yield) abundant fruit.
- e. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Saṅghe* = in the Saṅgha, *ratanaṅ* = jewel, *paṇītaṅ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with the virtues of the Order of noble disciples (*Saṅgha-guṇa*).

The eight individuals (*puggalas*) mentioned here are the eight noble (*ariya*) individuals who have realized one of the eight supramundane stages of holiness, that is, any of the four supramundane Paths (*maggas*) and the four supramundane Fruitions (*phalas*) of these Paths. Precisely, they are the noble individuals who realize the:

1. Path of stream-winning (*sotāpatti-magga*),
2. Fruition of stream-winning (*sotāpatti-phala*),
3. Path of once-return (*sakadāgāmi-magga*),
4. Fruition of once-return (*sakadāgāmi-phala*),
5. Path of non-return (*anāgāmi-magga*),
6. Fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi-phala*),
7. Path of Arahantship (*arahatta-magga*),
8. Fruition of Arahantship (*arahatta-phala*).

They are praised by the Virtuous Ones (*sataṅ pasatthā*) means: they are praised by the virtuous Buddhas, Pacceka (individual) Buddhas, disciples of Buddhas and other virtuous gods and humans.

Constitute the four pairs (of persons) means: taking them pair-wise, the noble individual who stands on the first Path of stream-winning and the

one who stands in the first Fruition of stream-winning constitute one pair (see above: 1 & 2); likewise with the pair of the second Path and Fruition of once-return (3 & 4), the third Path and Fruition of non-return (5 & 6), and the fourth Path and Fruition of Arahantship (7 & 8). In this way they constitute four pairs.

Thus, the Order of Buddha's disciples taken individually are the eight noble individuals, and taken by pairs, constitute the four pairs of persons. Here, taken individually should be understood in the context of the ultimate truth (*paramattha-sacca*). A person, for example, who has attained the 'Path' of stream-winning, is not, in the ultimate truth, the same when he attains the 'Fruition' of stream-winning, since the mind-moment of the Path is not the same as the mind-moment of the Fruition. Thus he is a different individual at two different mind-moments. In the conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*), however, he is the same person who attained both, the Path and the Fruition, and is thus called 'a Stream-winner' (*sotāpanna*). Likewise with the Path and the Fruition of once-return, non-return, and Arahantship – the person who attained them is thus called 'a once-returner' (*sakadāgāmī*), 'a non-returner' (*anāgāmī*), and 'a Worthy One' (*Arahaṇ*) respectively. Hence, in the ultimate truth they are eight, and in the conventional, four.

They, the worthy of offerings (*te dakkhiṇeyyā*) means: they all, being endowed with the purity of

supramundane morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*pañña*), are fit for offerings.

Now, an offering is a gift given by a donor out of faith in wholesome actions (*kusala-kamma*) and in the good results of wholesome actions (*kusala-kamma-vipāka*). And those noble individuals are worthy of that offering, or are helpful to it because, through their purity, they purify it by making it of abundant fruit and of great reward for the donor.²⁴

They are the disciples of the Well-farer (*Sugata-tassa sāvaka*) means: they are the disciples of the Buddha who did not only listened to him but also practised and attained the supramundane Paths and Fruitions.

Well-farer (*Sugata*) is an epithet of the Buddha which denotes that:

- ❖ He has fared (*gata*) in the Noble Eightfold Path in a manner that is good, purified and blameless (*sobhana*), and has thus gone without attachment in the direction of safety, namely, Nibbāna. He has reached (*gata*) the excellent (*sundara*) place, namely, the deathless Nibbāna.
- ❖ He has fared (*gata*) rightly (*sammā*) without going back to the defilements abandoned by each supramundane Path, and

²⁴ See Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification), *Saṅghānussati* (Recollection of the Saṅgha), *dakkhiṇeyya*.

- ❖ He enunciates (*gadati*) rightly (*sammā*); he speaks only appropriately in the appropriate time and place.²⁵

Thus, the eight noble individuals are disciples of a Teacher with such lofty virtues.

And gifts given to them yield abundant fruit (*etesu dinnāni mahapphalāni*) means: even small gifts given to the Well-farer's disciples yield abundant fruit since these are purified from the part of the receivers. As the Buddha said:

“Among all orders or congregations, the order of the Tathāgata's (Buddha's) disciples is the most excellent, namely, the four pairs of noble persons, the eight noble individuals ... which are an incomparable field of merit for the world. Hence, those pleased in this noble Order are pleased in the most excellent, and for those who are pleased in the most excellent, the reward is indeed most excellent.

He who thus donates to the most excellent,
Accrues the most excellent merit
And the most excellent long life, beauty,
Fame, renown, happiness, and strength.

The wise donor, god or human,
Who gives to the most excellent,
And is firm in what is most excellent,
Reaches the most excellent [rebirth or
supramundane attainment] and
Rejoices therein.” (AN *Aggapasāda* or *Pasāda Sutta*)

²⁵ See Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification), *Buddhānussati* (Recollection of the Enlightened One), *Sugata*.

Thus, after pointing out the excellence of the Saṅgha-jewel in regard to the worthiness of gifts to all individuals who stand on the supramundane Path and Fruition, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on this exclusive virtue in the Saṅgha, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



Verse Seven

- a. *Ye suppayuttā manasā dalhena*
**Those who with a steadfast mind,
Apply themselves well**
- b. *Nikkāmino Gotamasāsanamhi,*
In the Gotama's Teaching, being desireless,
- c. *Te pattipattā amataṇ vigayha,*
**Attain the highest gain (Arahantship).
They plunge into the Deathlessness (Nibbāna)**
- d. *Laddhā mudhā nibbutiṇ bhuñjamānā.*
**And enjoy the peace of emancipation,
Obtained for free.**
- e. *Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṇ paṇītaṇ.*
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
- f. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Ye* = those who, *suppayuttā* = apply themselves well, *manasā* = with a mind, *dalhena* = steadfast,
- b. *Nikkāmino* = being desireless, *Gotama-sāsanamhi* = in the Buddha Gotama's Teaching,
- c. *Te* = they, *pattipattā* (*pattiṇ* + *pattā*) = the highest gain attain, *amataṇ* = into the deathlessness, *vigayha* = plunge.
- d. *Laddhā* = obtained, *mudhā* = for free, *nibbutiṇ* = the peace of emancipation, *bhuñjamānā* = enjoy (-ing).
- e. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Saṅghe* = in the Saṅgha, *ratanaṇ* = jewel, *paṇītaṇ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with the virtues of Arahants who experience the bliss of the attainment of Fruition (*phala-samāpatti-sukha*).

Those who apply themselves well (*ye suppayuttā*) means: those who have abandoned all kinds of improper search for material requisites and, on account of pure livelihood and pure bodily and verbal actions, purify their morality (*sīla*) well, begin to apply themselves in meditation. By this statement their morality (*sīla*) is shown.

With a steadfast mind (*manasā dalhena*) means: with a mind engaged in firm concentration. By this statement their concentration (*samādhi*) is shown.

Being desireless (*nikkāmino*) means: paying no emotional attention to their body and life, they have got rid of all mental defilements or passions through their energy based on wisdom. By this statement their wisdom (*paññā*), which is endowed with energy (*virīya*), is shown.

They attain the highest gain (*te patti-pattā*) means: they attain (*pattā*), the supramundane Fruition of Arahantship (*Arahatta-phala*), which is the highest gain (*patti*), and by which they find their 'utmost security or release from *saṃsāric* bondage' (*accanta-yogakkhema*).

Enjoy the peace of emancipation (*nibbutiṅ bhuñjamānā*) means: they experience the attainment of Fruition (*phalasangāpatti*) of Arahantship which brings the mental defilements to a standstill.

Obtained for free (*laddhā mudhā*) means: without expense, not spending even a penny, free of charge.

Here is the meaning in brief. Those who apply themselves well in the Buddha Gotama's Teaching because they purified their verbal and bodily actions and are thus endowed with morality (*sīla*), are with a steadfast mind because they are endowed with concentration (*samādhi*), are desireless because they are endowed with wisdom (*paññā*), they plunge, through this right practice of morality, concentration and wisdom, into the deathlessness (Nibbāna). They thus attain (*pattā*) the peace of emancipation which is called Fruition of Arahantship (*Arahatta-phala*). This is the highest spiritual gain (*patti*) and they enjoy it after having obtained it for free.

Thus, after pointing out the excellence of the Saṅgha-jewel in regard to Arahants who experience the bliss of the attainment of Fruition (*phalasangāpatti-sukha*), the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on this exclusive virtue in the Saṅgha, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel*”, and then de-

termining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



Verse Eight

- a. *Yathindakhīlo paṭhaviṅ sito siyā*
Just as a city-post fixed firmly in the ground
- b. *Catubbhi vātehi asampakampiyo,*
Is unshakable by the four winds,
- c. *Tathūpamaṅ sappurisaṅ vadāmi,*
So too, I declare, is the virtuous person
- d. *Yo ariyasaccāni avecca passati.*
Who sees the Noble Truths unwaveringly.
- e. *Idam’pi Saṅghe ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.*
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
- f. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Yathindakhīlo* (*yathā* + *indakhīlo*) = just as a city-post, *paṭhaviṅ* = in the ground, *sito* = fixed firmly, *siyā* = is (would be),
- b. *Catubbhi* = by the four, *vātehi* = winds, *asampakampiyo* = is unshakeable,
- c. *Tathūpamaṅ* (*tathā* + *upamaṅ*) = so too (similarly), *sappurisaṅ* = the virtuous person, *vadāmi* = I declare,
- d. *Yo* = who, *ariya-saccāni* = the Noble Truths, *avecca* = unwaveringly, *passati* = sees.
- e. *Idam’pi* = this verily, *Saṅghe* = in the Saṅgha, *ratanaṅ* = jewel, *paṇītaṅ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with the virtues of the Stream-winner

(*sotāpanna*) who is compared to a firm and unshakable city-post.

A city-post (*inda-khīla*) in ancient India was a 16-20 cubit (8-10 m) long post of hard wood which was buried halfway and firmly fixed in the ground at or before the city gate for its defences. It is used here as a simile to show the unshakable confidence of a Stream-winner who has deeply entered into the stream (*sota*) of the Noble Eightfold Path and who sees in-depth and with unshakable wisdom the four Noble Truths, namely, the Noble Truth of:

1. suffering,
2. the origin of suffering (i.e. craving),
3. the cessation of suffering
(i.e. end of craving, Nibbāna), and
4. the Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Thus, as a city-post cannot be shaken by the four winds blowing from the east, west, north, or south, a Stream-winner cannot be shaken by all the winds of other religious and philosophic doctrines. Or, nobody is able to make him waver or vacillate about his insight knowledge and view. As the Buddha said about the Stream-winner:

“If a recluse or brahmin comes from the east ... west ... north ... or south, seeking an argument, ... thinking: ‘I will refute his view’, it is impossible that he could make him shake, waver, or tremble.

For what reason? Because he has clearly seen the four Noble Truths.”

Moreover, Stream-winners,

“... do not look up at the face of another recluse or brahmin ... thinking: ‘This venerable is surely one who really knows, who really sees’. For what reason? Because they have clearly seen the four Noble Truths.”

On the other hand, those who do not clearly see the four Noble Truths are compared to a light tuft of cotton wool driven by the wind to all possible directions.²⁶

Thus, after pointing out the excellence of the Saṅgha-jewel in regard to the unshakable confidence and wisdom of a Stream-winner, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on this exclusive virtue in the Saṅgha, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



²⁶ See Saṅgyutta-nikāya, *Indakhīla-* & *Vādatthika Sutta*.

Verse Nine

- a. *Ye ariyasaccāni vibhāvayanti,*
Those who clearly comprehend the Noble Truths,
- b. *Gambhīrapaññena sudesitāni,*
Well taught by him of profound wisdom,
- c. *Kiñcāpi te honti bhusappamattā*
Even if they are very negligent,
- d. *Na te bhavaṇaṃ aṭṭhamaṇaṃ ādiyanti.*
They do not take up an eighth rebirth.
- e. *Idam’pi Saṅghe ratanaṇaṃ paṇītaṇaṃ.*
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
- f. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Ye* = those who, *ariyasaccāni* = the Noble Truths, *vibhāvayanti* = clearly comprehend,
- b. *Gambhīra-paññena* = by him of profound wisdom (the Buddha), *su-desitāni* = well taught,
- c. *Kiñcāpi* = even if, *te* = they, *honti* = are, *bhusa-ppamattā* = very negligent,
- d. *Na* = do not, *te* = they, *bhavaṇaṃ* = rebirth, *aṭṭhamaṇaṃ* = an eighth, *ādiyanti* = take up.
- e. *Idam’pi* = this verily, *Saṅghe* = in the Saṅgha, *ratanaṇaṃ* = jewel, *paṇītaṇaṃ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with particular virtues of Stream-win-

ners who do not take up an eighth rebirth and who, more specifically, are called ‘they with seven rebirths at the utmost’ (*sattakkhattu-parama*).

It should be mentioned here that there are three kinds of Stream-winners:

1. ‘One with seven rebirths at the utmost’ (*sattakkhattu-parama*),
2. ‘One passing [2-3 times] from family to family’ (*kolaṅkola*), and
3. ‘A single [rebirth] seeded’ (*eka-bījī*).

As it is said:

[1] “A Stream-winner ... may keep going and transmigrating seven times amongst gods and humans and then he puts an end to suffering. He is called ‘one with seven rebirths at the utmost’.

[2] Or, he may keep going and transmigrating through two or three families and then he puts an end to suffering. He is called ‘one passing from family to family’.

[3] Or, he may be reborn only once more in the human world and then he puts an end to suffering. He is called ‘a single [rebirth] seeded’.”²⁷

In this verse, however, reference is made to those ‘with seven rebirths at the utmost’ (*sattakkhattu-*

²⁷ e.g. Pugalapaññatti § 37-39, and Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Tika-nipāta*, *Dutiyasikkhā Sutta*.

parama), for it is stated that they do not take up an eighth rebirth.

Clearly comprehend the Noble Truths (*ariya-saccāni vibhāvayanti*) means: they dispel with the luminosity of wisdom the darkness of the mental defilements that conceal the four Noble Truths. Thus they make the Noble Truths evident, clear and obvious to themselves.

Well taught by him of profound wisdom (*gam-bhīrapaññena sudesitāni*) means: well taught by the Buddha in many skillful ways with His omniscient knowledge which is of unfathomable wisdom and of great help and which is hard to obtain in the human and heavenly worlds.

Even if they are very negligent (*kiñcāpi te honti bhusappamattā*) means: even if they are very negligent due to reigning amongst gods, reigning as a universal monarch, reigning as a king, etc. which are causes for negligence.

They do not take up an eighth rebirth (*na te bhavaṇaṃ aṭṭhamaṇaṃ ādiyanti*) means: apart from seven rebirths, they do not take up an eighth rebirth due to the disappearance of any mentality and materiality that may have arisen in the beginningless round of rebirths (*saṅsāra*). This disappearance occurs on account of the cessation of the karmic consciousness through the Path knowledge of stream-winning. Hence, it is at the seventh

rebirth that they commence again to practise insight meditation and attain Arahantship.

Thus, after pointing out the excellence of the Saṅgha-jewel in regard to Stream-winners who are called ‘they with seven rebirths at the utmost’, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on this exclusive virtue in the Saṅgha, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



Verse Ten

- a. *Sahāvassa dassanasampadāya*
Just with his gaining of insight
- b. *Tayassu dhammā jahitā bhavanti:*
He abandons three states of mind:
- c. *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi, vicikicchitañca*
Self-identity view, sceptical doubt,
- d. *Sīlabbatāṇ vā'pi yadatthi kiñci.*
And whatsoever [grasping to] mere rules and observances.
- e. *Catūhapāyehi ca vipbamutto,*
**He is also fully freed from (rebirth in)
The four woeful worlds,**
- f. *Cha cābhiṭṭhānāni abhabbo kātuṇ.*
**And is incapable of committing
The six major misdeeds.**
- g. *Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṇ paṇūtaṇ.*
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
- h. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Sahāvassa* (*saha* + *eva* + *assa*) = with just his, *dassana-sampadāya* = gaining of insight,
- b. *Tayassu* (*tayo* + *assa*) = three + he, *dhammā* = states of mind, *jahitā bhavanti* = abandons (lit. are abandoned [by him]):
- c. *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi* = self-identity view, *vicikicchitaṇ* = sceptical doubt, *ca* = and,
- d. *Sīla-bbatāṇ* = mere rules and observances, *vā'pi* = or, *yadatthi* (*yaṇ* + *atthi*) *kiñci* = whatever exists (whatsoever).

- e. *Catūhapāyehi* (*catūhi* + *apāyehi*) = from the four woeful worlds, *ca* = also (and), *vippamutto* = is fully freed,
- f. *Cha* = the six, *cābhiṭhānāni* (*ca* + *abhiṭhānāni*) = and major misdeeds, *abhabbo* = incapable, *kātuṇ* = to commit (of committing).
- g. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Saṅghe* = in the Saṅgha, *ratanay* = jewel, *pañīṭay* = superb.
- h. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with very particular advantages of Stream-winners ‘with the seven rebirths at the utmost’, mentioned above, in contrast to worldlings (*puthujjanas*) who have not eliminated the taking up of rebirth at all.

Just with his gaining of insight (*sahāvassa dassanasampadāya*) means: just with a Stream-winner’s gaining of the supramundane Path of stream-winning. For insight (*dassana*) in this context is called the supramundane Path of stream-winning which gains the sight of Nibbāna for the first time by accomplishing the necessary tasks.

He abandons three states of mind (*tayassu dhammā jahitā bhavanti*) means: he abandons three ‘mental fetters’ (*saṅyojanas*).²⁸

²⁸ ‘Mental fetters’ are a kind of mental defilements (*kilesas*) that bind beings into the round of rebirth (*saṅsāra*). These are ten in number: **1.** self-identity view, **2.** sceptical doubt,

1. Self-identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) – this is the first ‘mental fetter’ which a Stream-winner breaks and entirely abandons. This ensures his full liberation at the utmost of seven more rebirths.

The Pāli word *sa-kāya* is used here as a name for ‘the five aggregates of clinging’ (*pañcūpādāna-kkhandhā*), i.e. material body, feeling, perception, mental activities, and consciousness.²⁹ These five constitute all the physical and mental phenomena of existence and thus the totality of a person’s physical appearance, emotional responses, ideas, attitudes, character, interests, behavioural patterns, social roles, and other distinctive traits. When not wisely reflected upon, they become the condition for clinging and attachment, giving thus the wrong impression or view that mistakenly identifies any of the aggregates as self, ego, personality, or soul. This clinging is the most basic manifestation of suffering (*dukkha*), as declared in the first Noble Truth: “The five aggregates of clinging are suffering.”³⁰

3. clinging to mere rules and observances, **4.** attachment to sensual pleasures, **5.** anger, **6.** attachment to fine-material existence, **7.** attachment to immaterial existence, **8.** conceit, **9.** restlessness, and **10.** ignorance. (e.g. Dīgha-nikāya, *Saṅgīti Sutta*).

A Stream-winner abandons the first three; a Once-returner these three and 4-5 in their grosser form; a Non-returner 1-5 totally; and an Arahant all ten.

²⁹ This definition of *sakkāya* is found in the Suttas, e.g. Majjhima-nikāya, *Cūlavedalla Sutta*.

³⁰ E.g. Dīgha-nikāya, *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta*.

There are in fact 20 kinds of self-identity view. These are obtained by applying four modes of that view to each of the five aggregates:

<i>Four Modes</i>	
1. to be identical with	any of the five aggregates
2. to be independent of	any of the five aggregates
3. to be the owner of	any of the five aggregates
4. to be contained in	any of the five aggregates ³¹

Everyone is actually subject to constant change, as the aggregates of material body, feeling, etc. are never the same. He may be compared to a river, which retains a seeming and illusive identity, though the water-drops that form it are different from moment to moment. Similarly, a self, ego or soul is an illusion and cannot be identified with any one of the five aggregates, nor is it the total of them.

A Stream-winner abandons all twenty kinds of self-identity view, having fully understood them through insight knowledge. He consequently abandons all other wrong views as well, since self-identity view is their root, which everywhere and at all times has most deluded and misled mankind.³²

³¹ E.g. Majjhima-nikāya, *Cūlavedalla Sutta*. See also *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* in *Buddhist Dictionary*, by Nyanatiloka.

³² See *Diṭṭhi* in *Buddhist Dictionary* by Nyanatiloka.

2. Sceptical doubt (*vicikicchita* or *vicikicchā*) – this is the second ‘mental fetter’ which a Stream-winner breaks and entirely abandons. It refers to the scepticism on eight grounds:

1. the Buddha
2. the Teaching,
3. the Saṅgha
4. the training (in *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*)
5. past lives
6. future lives,
7. past & future lives, and
8. Dependent Origination or conditionality.³³

This kind of scepticism prevents wisdom from growing. A Stream-winner, however, fully understands it through insight knowledge and abandons it. He consequently abandons all other kinds of scepticism about things wholesome, unwholesome, etc., since the former kind is the root of the latter.

Grasping to mere rules and observances (*sīlabataṇ* or *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*) – this is the third ‘mental fetter’ which a Stream-winner breaks and entirely abandons. This fetter refers to those, usually outside the Buddha’s Teaching, who adhere to the view that through mere rules, precepts, morality, observances, vows, rites, rituals, etc. they

³³ See e.g. *Dhammasaṅgani* § 1008; *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, *Cetokhila Sutta*.

may reach purification (*suddhi*) from defilements or the ultimate purification which is Nibbāna.³⁴

This is a kind of wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) that deludes the believer into thinking that these and other outward practices suffice for one's liberation. Moreover, the Buddha said that religious practices such as nakedness, matted hair, smearing with ashes, wearing rough deerskins [or other costumes], worshipping the sacrificial fire, penances, mantras, oblations, animal sacrifices, seasonal mortification, fasting and so on cannot purify a person who has not overcome sceptical doubt.³⁵ Similar religious practices and lifestyles that are widespread in many parts of the world are included in this category.

Conversely, moral rules (*sīla*) and observances (*vata*) in Buddhism, which comply to the middle path by avoiding extremes, are a sort of preliminary condition to any higher development of concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) and not an end in itself. Apart from the Noble Eightfold Path, all other practices are wrong practices and taking them as right practices amount to wrong view in the practice. A Stream-winner has, through insight knowledge, fully understood this fact and abandoned any grasping to the view that moral rules and observances alone are the means to En-

³⁴ See Dhammasaṅgani § 1009, and its Commentary.

³⁵ See Sutta-nipāta, *Āmagandha Sutta*, and Dhammapada v. 141.

lightenment. He has consequently abandoned all other kinds of wrong practice, since the former grasping is the root of the latter.

Thus, after pointing out the Stream-winner's abandonment of the 'round of mental defilements' (*kilesa-vaṭṭa*) of 'self-identity view', etc. the Buddha points out now his abandonment of the 'round of the karma-result' (*kamma-vipāka-vaṭṭa*), by declaring that as a result "he is also fully freed from rebirth in the four woeful worlds."

The four woeful worlds (*apāyas*) are: hell (*niraya*), animal world (*tiracchāna-yoni*), hungry ghost world (*petti-visaya*), and the world of Titans or demons (*asurakāyā*). Though a Stream-winner may take up a seventh rebirth, he is, in contrast to a worldling, fully freed from the woeful worlds. He is reborn either in the human or divine world. Moreover, he is firmly established and destined to full Enlightenment.

Thus, after pointing out the Stream-winner's abandonment of the 'round of the karma-result' (*kamma-vipāka-vaṭṭa*), the Buddha points out now his abandonment of the 'round of karma' (*kamma-vaṭṭa*), which is its cause, by declaring that "he is incapable of committing six major misdeeds."

The six major misdeeds (*cha abhiṭṭhānāni*) that he is incapable of committing are: 1. matricide, 2. patricide, 3. killing an Arahant, 4. causing schism in the Saṅgha, 5. wounding a Buddha, and 6. ac-

knowledging another person (other than the Buddha) as one's teacher.³⁶

This incapability distinguishes a Stream-winner from a worldling in terms of major misdeeds or crimes. In fact, a Stream-winner, or any other noble disciple, is incapable of intentionally killing even a tiny ant. A worldling, however, who is not endowed with insight (*dassana*), commits major misdeeds and heinous crimes of great blame. Thus, the contrast is made here to highlight the dangerous side of the worldling's condition and the great strength of a Stream-winner who does not commit them even in his subsequent seven lives.

Thus, after pointing out the excellence of the Saṅgha-jewel regarding the superior virtues of the noble disciple who takes up only seven more rebirths at most in contrast to those who did not abandon rebirth at all, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on this exclusive virtue in the Saṅgha, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.

³⁶ See e.g. Majjhima-nikāya, *Bahudhātuka Sutta*. The first five major misdeeds are also called ‘five heinous crimes with immediate bad destiny’ (*pañca-ānantarika-kammas*).

Verse Eleven

- a. *Kiñcāpi so kammaṃ karoti pāpakaṃ*
Any evil action he may still commit
- b. *Kāyena vācā uda cetasā vā,*
By body, speech, or mind,
- c. *Abhabbo so tassa pañicchādāya,*
He is incapable of concealing it;
- d. *Abhabbatā diṭṭhapadassa vuttā.*
**For it is said that such incapability
Is of one who has seen the Path (of Nibbāna).**
- e. *Idam'pi Saṅghe ratanaṃ paṇītaṃ.*
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
- f. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Kiñcāpi* (*kiñci* + *api*) = any still, *so* = he, *kammaṃ* = action, *karoti* = may commit, *pāpakaṃ* = evil,
- b. *Kāyena* = by body, *vācā* = by speech, *uda* = or, *cetasā* = by mind, *vā* = or,
- c. *Abhabbo* = (is) incapable, *so* = he, *tassa* = of it, *pañicchādāya* = concealing;
- d. *Abhabba-tā* = for such incapability, *diṭṭha-padassa* = of one who has seen the path, *vuttā* = is said.
- e. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Saṅghe* = in the Saṅgha, *ratanaṃ* = jewel, *pañītaṃ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with the Stream-winner's special virtue

of not being able to conceal any evil action committed even by negligence. Thus, He now shows that not only is a Stream-winner incapable of committing the six major misdeeds, but is also incapable of even concealing a slight evil action.

The meaning is this. The **evil actions** (*pāpaka-kammas*) advocated by the Buddha not to be committed can be divided into two categories:

1. *Loka-vajja* (common or universal moral faults) – these are evil actions that are normally reproached and shunned by good people in the world (*loka*), either lay or monastic. Such actions are: killing, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse, lying, slandering, harsh speech, vain talk, covetousness, hatred, and wrong view. These are called the ‘ten unwholesome courses of action’ (*dasa akusala-kamma-patha*). They are wrong and damaging even if committed by common people, and create bad kamma, bad reputation, as well as inferior rebirth. The Buddha laid down many training rules or precepts (*sikkhāpadas*) for the monastics with instructions to fully abstain from them in order to purify their kamma and advised lay followers to observe them too. These training rules are called *loka-vajja-sikkhāpadas*.

2. *Paṇṇatti-vajja* (moral faults against the Buddha’s regulations) – these are evil actions in the sense that they are not suitable for monastics and

should be shunned by them, but not so by lay people. These pertain to rules and regulations which the Buddha, apart from the *lokavajja* training rules, laid down for the observance of manners, duties, customs and etiquette, etc. befitting monastics, but also for the reduction of the mental defilements of greed, hate, delusion, conceit, and jealousy, etc. Transgressions against these regulations do not necessarily create bad kamma or inferior rebirth, except if a monastic, who is supposed to observe them, deliberately transgresses them with an intentional disregard and contempt (*anādariya*) for the Buddha, the training rules, or the Saṅgha. Such a transgression can pollute the purity, dignity and harmony of the monastic community as well.

Now, a Stream-winner cannot actually commit any intentional transgression of *lokavajja* training rules, not even on account of negligence due to lack of mindfulness. It is in this context that the Buddha said:

“My disciples do not transgress even for life’s sake any training rule that I laid down for them.”³⁷

However, he may, due to lack of mindfulness or lack of thorough Vinaya knowledge, transgress *paññatti-vajja* training rules. Examples would be:

³⁷ Vinaya-piṭaka, *Cullavagga*, *Pātimokkha-tthapana-kkhandhakaṃ*.

By body – constructing a dwelling (*kuṭi*) beyond the prescribed Vinaya measurements.

By speech – teaching Dhamma to a person with an umbrella in his hand who is not ill.

By mind – mentally accepting (*sādiyati*) the ownership of money deposit.

He is incapable of concealing it (*abhabbo so tassa paṭicchādāya*) means: he cannot conceal it even for a moment after coming to know that it is not allowable. He confesses it all at once, makes amends according to the rule and restrains himself for the future, by determining, “I will not commit it again.” How? “Just as a tender infant who at once draws back when he puts his hand on a live coal”³⁸ Why?

For it is said that such incapability is of one who has seen the Path (of Nibbāna) (*abhabbatā diṭṭhapadassa vuttā*).

This means that this incapability is something natural (*dhammatā*) and effortless for a Stream-winner who has attained Nibbāna, because he has seen the correct and truthful path.³⁹

Thus, after pointing out the excellence of the Saṅgha-jewel in regard to the Stream-winner’s special virtue of not being able to conceal any evil action,

³⁸ See Majjhima-nikāya, *Kosambiya Sutta*, for this special virtue of a Stream-winner and his *dhammatā*.

³⁹ Ibid.

the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on this exclusive virtue in the Saṅgha, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



Verse Twelve

- a. *Vanappagumbe yathā phussitagge*
As a woodland grove is crowned
With blossoming flowers
- b. *Gimhānamāse paṭhamasmiṅ gimhe,*
During the heat of the first month of the summer,
- c. *Tathūpamaṅ Dhammavaraṅ adesayī,*
Even so (crowned) is the sublime Dhamma
- d. *Nibbānagāmiṅ paramaṅ hitāya.*
Leading to Nibbāna which He (the Buddha)
Expounded for the highest good.
- e. *Idam’pi Buddhē ratanaṅ paṇītaṅ.*
Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel.
- f. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Vana-ppagumbe* = a woodland grove, *yathā* = as,
phussit’agge = (is) crowned with blossoming flowers,
- b. *Gimhānamāse* = in the month of the summer, *paṭhamasmiṅ* = in the first, *gimhe* = during the heat,
- c. *Tathūpamaṅ* (*tathā* + *upamaṅ*) = even so (similarly),
Dhammavaraṅ = (is) the sublime Dhamma, *adesayī* = He (the Buddha) expounded,
- d. *Nibbāna-gāmiṅ* = leading to Nibbāna, *paramaṅ* = for the highest, *hitāya* = good.
- e. *Idam’pi* = this verily, *Buddhē* = in the Buddha, *ratanaṅ* = jewel, *paṇītaṅ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

Thus, after invoking the truth based on the determination upon the Saṅgha-jewel in regard to various excellent qualities and virtues of noble persons included in the Saṅgha, the Buddha commences now to invoke the truth again on the determination upon the Buddha with reference to his excellence of expounding the explanatory part of the Dhamma (*pariyatti-dhamma*) by elucidating here in brief and elsewhere in other discourses in more detail the superior virtues of the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha), and the Dhamma that leads to Nibbāna.

Here is the meaning in brief. As a woodland grove is gloriously crowned with blossoming flowers, even so gloriously crowned is the sublime Dhamma leading to Nibbāna. The various blossoming flowers are thus compared to the beautiful explanations given by the Buddha about morality, concentration, wisdom, and liberation; about the five aggregates, the twelve sense spheres, the eighteen elements, the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right exertions, and the four Noble Truths, etc. Moreover, the Buddha expounded the sublime Dhamma not for material gain, nor for honour, fame and praise, but for the highest good (*paramaṇ hitāya*) of beings, namely, for the attainment of Nibbāna, with a heart entirely moved by compassion.

Thus, after metaphorically comparing the beautiful blossoming flowers of a woodland grove with the beautiful explanatory part of the Dhamma, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on His exclusive virtue, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.



Verse Thirteen

- a. *Varo, varaññū, varado, varāharo,*
**He, the Sublime one (the Buddha),
The Knower of the Sublime (Nibbāna),
The Giver of the Sublime (Dhamma),
The Bringer of the Sublime (Noble Path),**
- b. *Anuttaro Dhammavarayaṃ adesayī.*
**The Peerless one (the Buddha),
Taught the Sublime Dhamma.**
- c. *Idam'pi Buddhhe ratanaṃ paṇītaṃ.*
Verily, in the Buddha is this superb jewel.
- d. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Varo* = the Sublime one (the Buddha), *varaññū* = the Knower of the Sublime (Nibbāna), *varado* = the Giver of the Sublime (Dhamma), *varāharo* = the Bringer of the Sublime (Noble Path),
- b. *Anuttaro* = the Peerless one, *Dhammavarayaṃ* = the Sublime Dhamma, *adesayī* = taught.
- e. *Idam'pi* = this verily, *Buddhe* = in the Buddha, *ratanaṃ* = jewel, *paṇītaṃ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth with His exclusive virtue in regard to the the supramundane (*lokuttara*) Dhamma.

The Sublime one (*varo*) refers here to the Buddha who is endowed with sublime qualities and omniscience.

The Knower of the Sublime (*vara-ññū*) means: the knower of Nibbāna (*nibbaññū*). For among all the Dhammas, Nibbāna is Sublime and the Buddha came to know and penetrate it under the Bodhi tree.

The Giver of the Sublime (*vara-do*) means: He is the giver of the Sublime Dhamma (*dhamma-varaṇ*) or Nibbāna, the bliss of liberation. Among those who benefited were the group of the five ascetics (*pañcavaggiyas*), the group of the thirty young men called *Bhaddavaggiyas*, the 1,250 matted hair ascetics (*jaṭilas*), and countless other humans and gods.

The Bringer of the Sublime (*var'āharo*) means: He is the bringer of the sublime Noble Eightfold Path that leads to Nibbāna. For He fulfilled the thirty perfections (*pāramis*) from the time of Buddha Dīpaṅkara and brought in this age the ancient Noble Path trodden by former Buddhas for others to tread and practise it.

Thus, after pointing out His excellence as a Knower, Giver and Bringer of the supramundane (*lo-kuttara*) Dhamma, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on His exclusive virtue, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Bud-*

dha is this superb jewel”, and then determining,
“By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.”
The verbal order in this verse too was received by
non-humans in many solar systems.



Verse Fourteen

- a. *Khīṇaṇṇ purāṇaṇṇ, navaṇṇ natthi sambhavaṇṇ*
**Their old (*kamma*) is destroyed,
No new (*kamma*) is produced,**
- b. *Virattacittā āyatike bhavasmiṇṇ,*
And their mind is unattached to future birth.
- c. *Te khīṇabījā avirūḷhicchandā,*
**Those wise ones, with the seed
(of rebirth-consciousness) destroyed,
And with no more desire for further growth,**
- d. *Nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṇṇ padīpo.*
Go out as the flame of a lamp.
- e. *Idam’pi Saṅghe ratanaṇṇ paṇītaṇṇ.*
Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel.
- f. *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!*
By virtue of this truth may there be well-being!

Word by Word Translation

- a. *Khīṇaṇṇ* = destroyed (is), *purāṇaṇṇ* = their old (*kamma*), *navaṇṇ natthi* = no new (*kamma*), *sambhavaṇṇ* = is produced,
- b. *Viratta-cittā* = their mind is unattached, *āyatike* = to future, *bhavasmiṇṇ* = birth, becoming.
- c. *Te* = those, *khīṇa-bījā* = with the seed (of rebirth-consciousness) destroyed, *avirūḷhi-cchandā* = with no more desire for further growth,
- d. *Nibbanti* = go out, *dhīrā* = the wise ones, *yathāyaṇṇ* = (*yathā* + *ayaṇṇ*) = as the (this), *padīpo* = flame of a lamp.
- e. *Idam’pi* = this verily, *Saṅghe* = in the Saṅgha, *ratanaṇṇ* = jewel, *paṇītaṇṇ* = superb.
- f. *Etena* = by (virtue of) this, *saccena* = truth, *suvatthi* = well-being, *hotu* = may there be.

EXPLANATIONS

The Buddha commences now to invoke the truth once more with the determination upon the Saṅgha in regard to the excellence of attaining ‘Nibbāna with no residue remaining’ (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*) for those disciples who have listened to the expounding of the Dhamma (*pariyatti-dhamma*), practised accordingly and attained the supramundane (*lokuttara*) Dhamma of Arahantship.

It should be mentioned here that there are two aspects of Nibbāna:

1. ‘Nibbāna with residue (the five aggregates of existence) still remaining’ (*sa-upādi-sesa-nibbāna*), also called ‘the full extinction of defilements’ (*kilesa-parinibbāna*). This comes about at the attainment of Arahantship.
2. ‘Nibbāna with no residue (no five aggregates of existence) remaining’ (*an-upādi-sesa-nibbāna*), also called ‘the full extinction of the five aggregates of existence’ (*khandha-parinibbāna*). This comes about at the death of Arahants.⁴⁰

Both aspects are usually described as:

“This is truly peaceful, this is sublime, namely, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all

⁴⁰ See Itivuttaka, *Nibbānadhātu Sutta*.

bonds or substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving, detachment, cessation, Nibbāna.”⁴¹

Now, the death of Arahants, which is described figuratively in this verse by way of “going out as the flame of a lamp”, and which is ‘Nibbāna with no residue remaining’, is achieved when their old kamma is destroyed, and so on.

Their old kamma is destroyed (*khīṇaṇṇ purāṇaṇṇ*) means: that old, past life kamma of those who have dried up the moisture of craving (*tañhā-sineha*) through the supramundane Path of Arahantship is destroyed, like a seed burnt by fire, unable to give results (*vipāka*) in the future.

No new kamma is produced (*navañ natthi sambhavaṇṇ*) means: since their craving (*tañhā*) has been abandoned, that new, present life kamma of those who perform meritorious actions, etc. is unable, as an uprooted flowering plant, to produce fruits in the future.

And their mind is unattached to future birth (*virattacittā āyatike bhavaismiṇṇ*) means: the mind of Arahants which, through the abandonment of craving, is unattached to future birth.

With the seed destroyed (*khīṇabījā*) means: with the seed of rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāna*) destroyed because their own kamma is destroyed. As the Buddha said:

⁴¹ E.g. Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Catukka-nipāta*, *Nāga Sutta*.

“Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed (*bīja*), and craving the moisture. And for beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving consciousness takes root. It is thus that rebirth (*punabhava*) is generated in the future.”⁴²

With no more desire for further growth (*avirūlhi-cchandā*) means: any desire or liking that earlier existed for re-birth (*puna-bhava*), which is here called ‘further growth’ or ‘re-growth’ (*virūlhi*), has been abandoned through the abandonment of craving. Thus at the time of death it is no more produced.

Those wise ones go out as the flame of a lamp (*nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṇ padīpo*) means: those wise ones possessing the knowledge of the supramundane Dhamma go out of the saṅsāric cycle of rebirth as the flame of a lamp through the cessation of the last consciousness (*carima-viññāṇa*). Thus, they have gone beyond the concepts of ‘being with form or being formless’, etc.

But what is this flame or fire? It is the mental fire of passion (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). These burning fires have gone out with the abandonment of craving, in the same way as an oil lamp goes out when not being fed with any more oil. The ensuing sublime bliss and peace through the going out of these tormenting fires is

⁴² Aṅguttara-nikāya, *Tika-nipāta*, *Paṭhamabhava Sutta*.

an exclusive attainment of Arahants at the moment of death, namely, the ending of all suffering. As it said:

“They overcame suffering without remainder after putting out the fires [of passion, etc.] and attaining Nibbāna without remainder.”⁴³

Thus, after pointing out the excellence of those Arahants who have attained ‘Nibbāna with no residue remaining’, the Buddha applies now, for the disappearance of the calamities, the power of true statement (*sacca-vacana*) based on this exclusive virtue in the Saṅgha, by firstly asserting, “*Verily, in the Saṅgha is this superb jewel*”, and then determining, “*By virtue of this truth may there be well-being.*” The verbal order in this verse too was received by non-humans in many solar systems.

At the conclusion of the recitation of these twelve verses there was well-being to the royal family, all calamities disappeared and eighty-four thousand living beings comprehended the supramundane Dhamma.



⁴³ Itivuttaka, *Aggi Sutta*.

Verses 15, 16 & 17

Spoken by Sakka, Lord of the gods

Afterwards Sakka, Lord of the gods, thought: “The Buddha applied the power of true statements based on the exclusive virtues in the three Superb Jewels and brought well-being to the city. I too shall recite something based on the three Superb Jewels for the well-being of the city.” Thus, he recited the last three verses beginning with “*Yānīdha bhūtāni ...* .” (Whatever beings)

After reciting them, he worshipped the Buddha with circumambulation and returned to his heavenly city along with his retinue of gods. The Buddha, however, remained in Vesālī and recited the *Ratana Sutta* on the following day as well. Once again, eighty-four thousand living beings comprehended the supramundane Dhamma. He recited it likewise up to the seventh day. And every day there was a similar number of beings comprehending the supramundane Dhamma. He spent half a month in Vesālī and then announced his departure to the Licchavi princes. Thereupon, they conducted Him again in three days to the bank of the Ganges with double honours.

The Nāgas, gods and deities honoured Him accordingly. Then King Bimbisāra received Him from the other bank, rendered Him double honour that bestowed upon Him by the Licchavi princes

and conducted Him in the same way as before in five days to Rājagaha.



May all the noble wishes of those who recite the Ratana Sutta be fulfilled, producing the sweet fruit of prosperity, happiness and health.

