BACKGROUND STORY

The city of Vesali was afflicted by a famine, causing death, especially to the poor folks. Due to the presence of decaying corpses the evil spirits began to haunt the city; this was followed by a pestilence. Plagued by these three fears of famine, non-human beings and pestilence, the citizens sought the help of the Buddha who was then living at Rajagaha.

Followed by a large number of monks including the Venerable Ananda, his attendant disciple, the Buddha came to the city of Vesali. With the arrival of the Buddha, there were torrential rains which swept away the putrefying corpses. The atmosphere became purified, the city was clean.

Thereupon the Buddha delivered this Discourse on the Jewels (Ratana Sutta) to the Venerable Ananda, and gave him instructions as to how he should tour the city with the Licchavi citizens reciting the discourse as a mark of protection to the people of Vesali. The Venerable Ananda followed the instructions, and sprinkled the sanctified water from the Buddha's own alms bowl. As a consequence, the evil spirits were exorcised, the pestilence subsided. Thereafter the Venerable Ananda returned with the citizens of Vesali to the Public Hall where the Buddha and his disciples had assembled awaiting his arrival. There the Buddha recited the same Discourse on the Jewels to the gathering.

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Sabbeva bhūtā sumanā bhavantu Atho pi sakkacca sunantu bhāsitam

Tasmā hi bhūtā nisāmetha sabbe Mettam karotha mānusiyā pajāya Divā ca ratto ca haranti ye balim Tasmā hi ne rakkhatha appamattā

Yam kiñci vittam idha vā huram vā Saggesu vā yam ratanam panītam Na no samam atthi tathāgatena Idam pi Buddhe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Khayam virāgam amatam panītam Yadajjhagā sakyamuni samāhito Na tena dhammena sam'atthi kiñci Idam pi dhamme ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Yam buddhasettho parivannayi sucim Samādhi-mānantari-kañña-māhu Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati Idam pi dhamme ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Ye puggalā attha satam pasatthā Cattāri etāni yugāni honti Te dakkhineyyā sugatassa sāvakā Etesu dinnāni mahapphalāni Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Ye suppayuttā manasā dalhena Nikkāmino gotama sāsanamhi Te pattipattā amatam vigayha Laddhā mudhā nibbutim bhuñjamānā Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Yathindakhīlo pathavim sito siyā Catubbhi vātehi asampakampiyo Tathūpamam sappurisam vadāmi Yo ariyasaccāni avecca passati Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Ye ariyasaccāni vibhāvayanti Gambhīrapaññena sudesitāni Kiñcāpi te honti bhusappamattā Na te bhavam atthamam ādiyanti Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu Sahāvassa dassana sampadāya Tayassu dhammā jahitā bhavanti Sakkāyaditthi vicikicchitañ ca Sīlabbatam vāpi yadatthi kiñci Catūhapāyehi ca vippamutto Cha cābhithānāni abhabbo kātum Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatti hotu

Kiñcāpi so kammam karoti pāpakam Kāyena vācā uda cetasā vā Abhabbo so tassa paticchādāya Abhabbatā ditthapadassa vuttā Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Vanappagumbe yathā phussitagge Gimhānamāse pathamasmim gimhe Tathūpamam dhammavaram adesayi Nibbānagāmim paramam hitāya Idam pi Buddhe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Varo varaññū varado varāharo Anuttaro dhammavaram adesayi Idam pi Buddhe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Khīnam purānam navam natthi sambhavam Viratta cittā āyatike bhavasmim Te khīnabījā avirūlhicchandā Nibbanti dhīrā yathā'yam padīpo Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Tathāgatam devamanussa-pūjitam Buddham namassāma suvatthi hotu

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Tathāgatam devamanussa-pūjitam Dhammam namassāma suvatthi hotu

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Tathāgatam devamanussa-pūjitam Sangham namassāma suvatthi hotu

DISCOURSE ON THE JEWELS

Whatever beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, may every being be happy and joyful! And also, listen attentively to my words.

Listen here, all beings! Shower your loving-kindness to those humans who, day and night, bring offerings to you. Therefore, guard them diligently.

Whatever treasures there may be, either here or in the world beyond, or whatever precious jewels there are in the heavens; yet none is comparable to the Enlightened One. In the Buddha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

The tranquil Sage of the Sakyas realized cessation, freedom from passion, deathlessness and excellence. There is nothing comparable to this Dhamma. In the Dhamma is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

That pure concentration the Supreme Buddha praised is described as 'concentration without interruption'. There is nothing like that concentration. In the Dhamma is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Those eight individuals constituting four pairs, they are praised by those at peace. They, worthy of offerings, are the disciples of the Enlightened One, Gifts given to them yield abundant fruit. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

With steadfast mind, applying themselves thoroughly in the Dispensation of Gotama, free of passion, they have attained to that which should be attained. And plunging into deathlessness, they enjoyed the Peace (Nibbāna) in absolute freedom. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Just as a firm post sunk in the earth cannot be shaken by the four winds; I say that a righteous person who thoroughly perceives the Noble Truths is similar to that. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

DISCOURSE ON THE JEWELS

Those who clearly understand the Noble Truths, well taught by Him who has profound wisdom, do not undergo an eighth birth, no matter how exceedingly heedless they may be. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Together with his attainment of insight, three qualities have been abandoned (by him), namely: wrong belief in selfhood, doubt and dependence on rites and ceremonies. He is absolutely freed from the four states of misery, and is incapable of committing the six major wrong doings. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

He is incapable of hiding whatever evil he does, whether by deed, word or thought; for it has been said that such an act is impossible for one who has seen the Path. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Just like a forest crown in full blossom, in the first month of the summer season, so has the sublime doctrine that leads to Nibbāna been taught for the highest good (of beings). In the Buddha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

The peerless Excellent One, the Knower, the Giver, the Bringer of the Excellent, has expounded the sublime doctrine. In the Buddha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Their past is extinct, a new becoming there is not, their minds are not attached to a future birth, their desires do not grow; those wise ones with their seeds of becoming destroyed, go out even as this lamp does. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

[Sakka's exultation:]

We beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, salute the Accomplished Buddha, who is honoured by gods and men. May there be well-being!

We beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, salute the Enlightening Dhamma, which is honoured by gods and men. May there be well-being!

We beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, salute the Noble Sangha, who are honoured by gods and men. May there be well-being!

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Sabbeva bhūtā sumanā bhavantu Atho pi sakkacca sunantu bhāsitam Whatever beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, may every being be happy and joyful! And also, listen attentively to my words.

	Meaning
Yāni	whatever
idha	here
bhūtāni	beings
samāgatāni	assembled, gathered
bhummāni	native to earth, earth-bound, terrestrial
vā	or
yāni va	or whatever (beings)
antalikkhe	sky-bound, heavenly, celestial
sabbe	all, everyone, no exclusion
ета	each one [used here for emphasis]
bhūtā	beings
sumanā bhavantu	have peace of mind, become happy and joyful
atho pi	and also, moreover
sakkacca	attentively, heedfully
sunantu	listen
bhāsitam	to (my) words

Verse 2

Tasmā hi bhūtā nisāmetha sabbe Mettam karotha mānusiyā pajāya Divā ca ratto ca haranti ye balim Tasmā hi ne rakkhatha appamattā

Listen here, all beings! Shower your loving-kindness to those humans who, day and night, bring offerings to you. Therefore, guard them diligently.

	Meaning
Tasmā	Therefore
bhūtā	beings
nisāmetha	give attention
sabbe	all-round
mettam	(having) loving-kindness
karotha	work (towards)
mānusiyā pajāya	(for) human race, human beings
divā (ca)	by day (and)
ratto	by night
(ye) haranti	(they) bring
balim	offerings (to the deities)
ne	them (i.e. those human beings)
rakkhatha	protect
appamattā	with diligence

Yam kiñci vittam idha vā huram vā Saggesu vā yam ratanam panītam Na no samam atthi tathāgatena Idam pi Buddhe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu Whatever treasures there may be, either here or in the world beyond, or whatever precious jewels there are in the heavens; yet none is comparable to the Enlightened One. In the Buddha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

	Meaning
Yam kiñci	Whatever is found
vittam	prized, treasure, highly valued
idha (vā)	here (or)
huram	beyond
saggesu (vā)	(or) in the heavens
ratanam	jewels
panītam	superior, supreme, best, rare
na no samam	none (is) equal/comparable (to)
atthi	is
tathāgatena	the Perfect One, the Enlightened One
idam pi	this
Buddhe	Enlightened One
ratanam panītam	supreme jewel (i.e. the Buddha)
etena saccena	by this truth
suvatthi hotu	may there be safety/happiness/well-being

Khayam virāgam amatam panītam Yadajjhagā sakyamuni samāhito Na tena dhammena sam'atthi kiñci Idam pi dhamme ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu The tranquil Sage of the Sakyas realized cessation, freedom from passion, deathlessness and excellence. There is nothing comparable to this Dhamma. In the Dhamma is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Khayam	cessation, extinction, exhaustion (of defilements)
virāgam	dispassion, free from passions
amatam	deathless
panītam	excellent
Yad…ajjhagā	such found
ajjhagā	realized, attained
sakyamuni	the Sakyan Sage (i.e. the Buddha)
samāhito	in concentration, thus achieving tranquility
Na	no
tena dhammena	with this Dhamma
sam'atthi	is equal (to)
kiñci	at all
dhamme	the teachings of the Enlightened One

Yam buddhasettho parivannayi sucim Samādhi-mānantari-kañña-māhu Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati Idam pi dhamme ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu That pure concentration the Supreme Buddha praised is described as 'concentration without interruption'. There is nothing like that concentration. In the Dhamma is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

buddha	The Enlightened One
settho	highest, supreme
Buddhasettho	the Supreme Buddha
yamparivannayi	such praised
sucim	pureness, purity, stainless
samādhim	concentration
ānantarikaññam	without interval/interruption
āhu	they describe/said
tena samādhinā	with that concentration
samo	similar
na vijjati	there is none

Ye puggalā attha satam pasatthā Cattāri etāni yugāni honti Te dakkhineyyā sugatassa sāvakā Etesu dinnāni mahapphalāni Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu Those eight individuals constituting four pairs, they are praised by those at peace. They, worthy of offerings, are the disciples of the Enlightened One, Gifts given to them yield abundant fruit. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

	Meaning
Ye	Whom [an indefinite indication]
puggalā	persons
attha	eight
satam	those (who are) at peace (of mind)
pasatthā	praised
Cattāri	four
etāni honti	which are
yugāni	pairs
Te	They (i.e. these four pairs or eight persons)
dakkhineyyā	merit offerings
sugatassa	the Blessed One's
sāvakā	disciples
Etesu	whatever (gifts)
dinnāni	given to (them)
mahapphalāni	(reaps) great fruits
sanghe	community (of Blessed One's disciples)

Ye suppayuttā manasā dalhena Nikkāmino gotama sāsanamhi Te pattipattā amatam vigayha Laddhā mudhā nibbutim bhuñjamānā Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu With steadfast mind, applying themselves thoroughly in the Dispensation of Gotama, free of passion, they have attained to that which should be attained. And plunging into deathlessness, they enjoyed the Peace (Nibbāna) in absolute freedom. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Ye	They (here referring to Arahants)
suppayuttā	applied themselves thoroughly (to the practice)
manasā	mind
dalhena	(with) strong/firm, steadfast
nikkāmino	without craving
gotama sāsanamhi	(in) Gotama's dispensation
pattipattā	have attained their goals
amatam	the deathless state (i.e. Nibbāna)
vigayha	having encountered, entered
laddhā	gained
mudhā	without expense
nibbutim	peace
bhuñjamānā	experiencing, savouring

Yathindakhīlo pathavim sito siyā Catubbhi vātehi asampakampiyo Tathūpamam sappurisam vadāmi Yo ariyasaccāni avecca passati Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu Just as a firm post sunk in the earth cannot be shaken by the four winds; I say that a righteous person who thoroughly perceives the Noble Truths is similar to that. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

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Yatha	just like; as
indakhīlo	a locking-post, strong pillar
pathavim	the earth, ground
sito	deeply planted (in)
siyā	[Alternative form of 'bhaveyya'] would be
catubbhi	four (directions)
vātehi	by wind
asampakampiyo	unshaken, incapable of being shaken
tathūpamam	so too indeed, similar to that
sappurisam	the True man, righteous person
vadāmi	I say, I declare
yo avecca	who thoroughly
ariyasaccāni	noble truths
passati	perceive

Ye ariyasaccāni vibhāvayanti Gambhīrapaññena sudesitāni Kiñcāpi te honti bhusappamattā Na te bhavam atthamam ādiyanti Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu Those who clearly understand the Noble Truths, well taught by Him who has profound wisdom, do not undergo an eighth birth, no matter how exceedingly heedless they may be. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

	Meaning
Ye	such
ariyasaccāni	Noble truths
vibhāvayanti	clearly comprehended; clearly evidenced
Gambhīrapaññena	By him who has profound wisdom
sudesitāni	well taught
Kiñcāpi	however
te	they
bhusa	much
pamattā	heedless
bhavam	rebirth, existence
atthamam	an eighth
na…ādiyanti	do not take

Verse 10

Sahāvassa dassana sampadāya Tayassu dhammā jahitā bhavanti Sakkāyaditthi vicikicchitañ ca Sīlabbatam vāpi yadatthi kiñci Catūhapāyehi ca vippamutto Cha cābhithānāni abhabbo kātum Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatti hotu Together with his attainment of insight, three qualities have been abandoned (by him), namely: wrong belief in selfhood, doubt and dependence on rites and ceremonies. He is absolutely freed from the four states of misery, and is incapable of committing the six major wrong doings. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

	Meaning
Sahāva	Together with
assa	his (referring to a Sotāpanna)
dassana	insight
sampadāya	attainment (of)
tayassu	there
dhammā	[plural] states
jahitā	abandoned
bhavanti	are
sakkāyaditthi	wrong view of 'selfhood'
vicikicchitañ	skeptical doubt
sīlabbatam	(belief in) vows, religious rites, rituals
vāpi	and also
yadatthi kiñci	all, of whatever kind there are
catūhapāyehi	from the four woeful states
vippamutto	(he is) free from
cha	six
ābhithānāni	major wrong doings
abhabbo (ca)	(and) is incapable of
kātum	do, commit

Kiñcāpi so kammam karoti pāpakam Kāyena vācā uda cetasā vā Abhabbo so tassa paticchādāya Abhabbatā ditthapadassa vuttā Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu He is incapable of hiding whatever evil he does, whether by deed, word or thought; for it has been said that such an act is impossible for one who has seen the Path. In the Sangha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Meaning Kiñcāpi whatever SOhe deed kammam karoti do, commit pāpakam evil, unwholesome kāyena by body vācā by speech by mind (i.e. through thoughts) cetasā abhabbo incapable tassa that (evil deed) hiding, concealing paticchādāya abhabbatā this incapability (to conceal evil) ditthapadassa one who has seen the Path is said to be vuttā

Vanappagumbe yathā phussitagge Gimhānamāse pathamasmim gimhe Tathūpamam dhammavaram adesayi Nibbānagāmim paramam hitāya Idam pi Buddhe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu Just like a forest crown in full blossom, in the first month of the summer season, so has the sublime doctrine that leads to Nibbāna been taught for the highest good (of beings). In the Buddha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

	Meaning
Vanappagumbe	forest grove
yathā	just like
phussitagge	fully blossomed
gimhānamāse	during the summer month
pathamasmim	first - early summer i.e. April
gimhe	heat (of summer)
tathūpamam	such as
dhammavaram	the sublime Dhamma
adesayi	taught
Nibbānagamim	that leads to Nibbāna
paramam	highest
hitāya	benefit (for beings)

Varo varaññū varado varāharo Anuttaro dhammavaram adesayi Idam pi Buddhe ratanam panītam Etena saccena suvatthi hotu The peerless Excellent One, the Knower, the Giver, the Bringer of the Excellent, has expounded the sublime doctrine. In the Buddha is this precious jewel found. On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

Varo	Glorious one, excellent one
varaññū	the knower of what is excellent (i.e. Nibbāna)
varado	the giver of that excellent state
varāharo	the bringer of that excellent state
anuttaro	incomparable, peerless
dhammavaram	the sublime dhamma
adesayi	taught, expounded

Khīnam purānam	Their past is extinct, a new becoming there is not,
navam natthi sambhavam	their minds are not attached to a future birth,
Viratta cittā āyatike bhavasmim	their desires do not grow;
Te khīnabījā avirūlhicchandā	those wise ones with their seeds of becoming destroyed,
Nibbanti dhīrā yathā'yam padīpo	go out even as this lamp does.
Idam pi sanghe ratanam panītam	In the Sangha is this precious jewel found.
Etena saccena suvatthi hotu	On account of this truth, may there be well-being!

	Meaning
Khīnam	extinct, exhausted
purānam	past (wholesome and unwholesome kamma)
navam	new
natthi	there is not
sambhavam	becoming, arising
viratta	not attached
cittā	mind
āyatike	to future
bhavasmim	rebirth, existence
khīnabījā	seed (of becoming) is destroyed
avirūlhicchandā	(their) desires do not grow
nibbanti	are extinguished
dhīrā	wise ones
yathā'yam	just like this
padīpo	lamp

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Tathāgatam devamanussa-pūjitam Buddham namassāma suvatthi hotu

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Tathāgatam devamanussa-pūjitam Dhammam namassāma suvatthi hotu

Yānīdha bhūtāni samāgatāni Bhummāni vā yāni va antalikkhe Tathāgatam devamanussa-pūjitam Sangham namassāma suvatthi hotu [Sakka's exultation:] We beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, salute the Accomplished Buddha, who is honoured by gods and men. May there be well-being!

We beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, salute the Enlightening Dhamma, who is honoured by gods and men. May there be well-being!

We beings that are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, salute the Noble Sangha, who is honoured by gods and men. May there be well-being!

	Meaning
Tathāgatam	The Enlightened One, Accomplished One
deva	gods, deities
manussa	humans
pūjitam	honoured, revered
namassāma	salute, honour, reverence