

The Value of the Triple Gem (*Ratana*)



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Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacāriṃ

[Pronunciation: dham-mo, ha-ve, rak-kha-ti, dham-ma-jā-ring]

“The Dhamma protects those who live according to it.”

(Khuddaka Nikāya: Jātaka 27/290, Theragāthā 26/314)

Understanding the Value of the Triple Gem

Dhamma is the protective force that safeguards those who live in accordance with it. It prevents practitioners from falling into evil—starting with guarding the mind from depression, delusion, or lust, and from acting immorally or unjustly. This is how Dhamma protects in this very life.

Moreover, when one who has lived by the Dhamma passes away, the Dhamma continues to protect, guiding them away from evil realms and towards heavenly rebirth.

Thus, one who sincerely practices Dhamma—with a heart inclined toward merit and steadfast conduct—receives true protection from the very Dhamma they uphold.

To preserve the Dhamma means to embrace the teachings of the Buddha and live by them truthfully. This is not only a way of honoring the truth but also a way of preserving one's own mental well-being.

In Buddhism, the **Triple Gem**—the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha—is regarded as the most precious refuge. Their value can be described as follows:

1. The Value of the Buddha

The Buddha cultivated perfections (pāramī) over countless eons. He completed ten perfections to the highest degree. Upon attaining supreme enlightenment (Anuttara Sammāsambodhiñāṇa), he radiated great compassion for all beings, teaching the Dhamma so that others might be liberated from suffering and the endless cycle of birth and death. This is the boundless grace of the Buddha.

2. The Value of the Dhamma

The Dhamma is the essence of the Noble Truths. Those who follow it become noble in conduct and mind. It enables one to grow in wisdom, live skillfully, and avoid falling into harmful paths.

3. The Value of the Sangha

The Bhikkhu Sangha (monastic community) consists of those who seek liberation from the dangers of samsāra. They renounce worldly pleasures and ordain under the shade of Buddhism to study, practice, and realize the Dhamma.

In turn, they pass on these teachings to laypeople, guiding others who may not be ordained so they too may hear, understand, and appreciate the value of the Triple Gem.

Summary: The Threefold Value of the Triple Gem

1. **The Buddha:** Enlightened on his own, he then taught others the path.
2. **The Dhamma:** Protects those who follow it from falling into evil.
3. **The Sangha:** Monastics who follow the Buddha's teachings and guide others accordingly.