

Buddha

Bhante Bodhidhamma · DhammaBytes · 13:25

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa

Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble and fully self-enlightened one.

So I thought I'd look at the word Buddha. Since this weekend we celebrate his birth, enlightenment and *parinibbāna*, total *Nibbāna*. We don't say his death, although he died. It's celebrated properly at the full moon of May which is towards the end of the dry season so you're looking to the rains. It's like spring really so that's the traditional time. Other forms of Buddhism celebrate it at other times of the year.

So the first thing is that there are three types of Buddhas. There's the self-enlightened Buddha. There's what we call the private Buddha. And there's the Buddha who was a follower of a Buddha.

So if we look at the first one, the *Sammāsambuddho*, we have nine qualities and we chant them in the morning: "*Itipi so Bhagavā araham̐ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā.*"

The first one is *Araham̐*, and that refers to the fact that all his defilements have been destroyed. So that's not only the moral stuff, killing and all that, it's also depression, anxiety, all the secondary stuff about guilt and shame. So the heart's completely purified. So the word *Araham̐* refers to the end of all defilements.

Sammāsambuddho refers to the fact that he's self-enlightened. And what that means is that there was nobody around at that time who knew where the path was. So he worked with various teachers, he did various mortifications, all that was offered at the time, but they didn't seem to get him anywhere. And it was a memory from childhood, which, as it were, set him on the path. So it's because of that, because of that memory, because he goes back to his own life, that we say he's self-enlightened. And that's what that *Sammāsambuddho* refers to.

Vijjācaraṇasampanno means, the *vijjā* means knowledge, wisdom, and the *caraṇa* means his conduct. So it wasn't a case of, you know, do as I say, not as I do. Both his behavior, the way he conducted himself, and the knowledge, the wisdom he had were concurrent, were accomplished. There was no distinction between the two. So his wisdom was expressed through his compassionate action, through his general demeanour. Whenever he went to a room, even when he was very famous, he would never just enter it. He'd always cough and knock. There was a sort of gentility about it. So that's the *vijjācaraṇasampanno*.

The *sugato* means that he fares well, both in his own self and in the world, as a teacher. It's basically a life

of ease, a life of accomplishment, you might say. It's a similar sort of understanding.

The *lokavidū*, so he's a knower of the worlds, meaning that he discerned that there were different spheres of existence and moved within them at ease, it would seem. He's a knower of the worlds.

Anuttaro purisadammasārathi, he was the supreme trainer of those who need to be trained. Sometimes "tamed" is used so he had some rough people who came to take his teachings and he had to be firm. So as you know from your own experience there are teachers who carry with them a certain authority so that when they say something you just do it. My teacher was like that, Sayadaw Janaka. If he said you get up at half three, you get up at half three. He didn't discuss it. He wasn't that type of person. And there are other teachers who are more cajoling, more easy to bend and get them to do what you want.

So the Buddha was very clear about the teaching. He was very clear about the training. It was once when one of the monks came to him and said, "Look, what is this business about the self? And I want these questions answered. Is the world infinite or not infinite? Does the Buddha exist or not exist? Does the *Tathāgata* exist or not exist? I want these questions answered or I shall leave the order." And he said, "Since when did I make it a condition for you to be a member of the order that you had to have these questions answered?" Basically, fine, you want to leave, go. But there was no... so he pulled him up short on that one. In the end, of course, he stayed.

But he was also a *sathā devamanussānaṃ*. He was also a teacher of gods and men. And this refers to the skill, to his seemingly very clever skill at getting people to understand, to directly experience what he was talking about. I suppose the most outstanding one was of the dull monk, whose brother had actually suggested he might leave the order. Because in those days, of course, you had to remember the Buddha's teachings. And it was said that when he learnt one line of the teaching, it knocked out the line he'd just learnt. So he couldn't learn anything apart from that.

When the Buddha heard this, he said, "No, no." So he gave him a very simple exercise, took a cloth, and he said, "Wipe your face, you know, the sweat on your face, and keep rubbing it, and just keep observing it, and keep saying, impermanent, impermanent, *anicca, anicca*." And he became fully liberated. It didn't work for me, but there we are.

So he was very skillful in his teaching. He knew where people were at and was able to give them all sorts of little exercises. And that's why there's no specific technique left by him. So every good teacher that comes along, like the Mahāsi, works on the way he spoke, what things were left, the tradition, and they come up with these techniques. That's why there's such a plethora of techniques. He didn't say one technique is good for everybody. That was his way of teaching, skillful means. So in that sense he was an incomparable teacher.

So *buddho* means, the last two are more to do with acclamations or honorifics really. *Buddho*, the awakened one. It comes from the word to awake, to come out of a dream. So life's a dream, a bubble in a

stream and all that. And then he's awakened, he's come out of that. And we often use the word enlightened for it. There are more adjectives in the scriptures to suggest an enlightenment, a light coming on in the dark, rather than awakening, but both are used. That's the *buddho*.

And finally, *Bhagavā*. This also refers to teacher. But I think here there's a certain idea of respectfulness about it. Because you would go to the *Bhagavā*. "Where's the *Bhagavā*?" So it's more to do with where is the enlightened person? Where's the holy one? Where is the noble enlightened person? So that's more of a sense of someone to be venerated.

And those are your nine basic qualities of the Buddha. And although the exercises there in Theravāda... but it's never really taught. But it's on meditating on these qualities, meditating here in the sense of contemplating these qualities, that one gains a certain relationship to a personage of the Buddha, even though obviously it doesn't exist. It becomes like an image in your heart, it becomes like an image in your mind, you see. And the more you contemplate on what these qualities mean, it corrects your own image, your own ideal towards which you're working. It becomes quite a lovely contemplation to do in the same way you can contemplate the Dhamma and the Sangha. But the Buddha for in terms of developing the juice of the spiritual path, the actual devotional path which brings a real joy to the heart, so that's one of the exercises.

So we do *mettā*, which is another one of those similar exercises that brings a bit of juice to the practice. *Vipassanā* can be, well, heavy. So you've got to juice it up a bit, you see. So a day like on Sunday is a time when you just recollect on the teacher and the qualities of that, you know. And for most of us that's where we're heading. We're definitely heading towards the end of defilement. What does that mean? So it's a lovely exercise to do.

Then the other two are this *Pacceka Buddha*. So here there's a private Buddha, that's how it's translated, solitary Buddha. And the idea is that somebody can become fully self-enlightened, so *Pacceka Buddha* is self-enlightened, but can't teach. They just can't do it, can't get it across. Because the two things that the Buddha did was not only to teach the Dhamma, but to set up an order, an institution, which could carry the message, the Sangha, the order of monks and nuns. So it would seem that there are people who become fully enlightened, they just don't have those sort of qualities. They're not complete *Sammāsambuddhas*.

And then finally there's the *Sāvaka Buddhas*. So they're the ones who become Buddha by following a Buddha. So once you've devoted yourself to the Buddha's path and you become an *arahat*, that's the usual word they use for such a person, an *arahat*, then you're a *Sāvaka Buddha*. And you've made it. Then you can relax. Then you can really have a cup of tea. That's the only time you can really have a cup of tea and a cake. Before that, it's just indulgence. You're just kidding yourself.

So I can only hope my words have been of some assistance, inspiring, shall we say. May you be fully liberated sooner rather than later.

Buddha

Transcriptions produced locally using Swiss low-carbon electricity. Corrections and rewriting by cloud-hosted AI.