

# The Nine Qualities of the Buddha

Bhante Bodhidhamma · YouTube Talks · 22:49

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*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa. Namō tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa. Namō tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.* Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble, and fully self-awakened one.

First of all, many thanks to Donatella who is translating for me, honeying my words with her angelic voice. This evening I will talk about the nine qualities of the Buddha, which we refer to when we listen to the puja. So we chant that in the morning.

The first quality is *arahant*. It means accomplished, somebody who is worthy of respect. Now, what the commentators do is they begin to separate the word to give it more meaning. And the one that makes sense to me is the division between ari and hatta. It means he destroyed his enemies. Now the enemies, of course, are the defilements. The defilements are listed as ten, but actually in the scriptures it just means anything that is unwholesome within our personality. And such a person has no secret evil. He can say with the Buddha, with all the enlightened people, that birth is destroyed and the holy life has been lived. What had to be done has been done. There is no more rebirth for me. So whenever we say arahant, that's what we mean.

Now the second one is *sammāsambuddho*, which means self-enlightened. So this is the crucial role that the first person plays for us. Somebody must have planted the first wheat. Somebody must have created the wheel. And we know that Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing climbed Everest. So once they did it, everybody else can do it, even the dogs. So in other words, the one who initiates, who begins something, has a special place within our praise. And so this means that the first person, the one who started all this, has a special place in what we attribute to him, in the blessings we wish him. So he is the founder of our tradition. Without him there simply wouldn't be any Buddhism.

Now the next quality is endowed with clear vision, or we can say direct understanding, and virtuous conduct. So this means that he has understood the cause of our problems, and of his own problems. And because of that, his actions are always virtuous. So remember that everything begins from this misunderstanding. It's a misunderstanding as to who we are. Presuming ourselves to be human beings, that's all, we seek happiness in the sensual world. And this creates what we call an attachment, which means we are dependent on the sensual world to make us happy. And this leads us to certain unfortunate qualities: greed, aversion and fear, and all the rest. All the rest of human misery. So, in other words, he is somebody who has understood the path and understands it to be a path of purification.

The next quality is translated as someone who has completed a journey. So this includes all the training

that he went to with his two teachers, and his own discovery of the path. And don't forget that he also did some very severe mortification exercises. So in other words, by practicing in the wrong paths, he eventually found the right path. So this often happens to us. First you make mistakes and then you find the right way to do something.

Now, the next one is a seer of the worlds. Now, this does not refer specifically to seeing other realms of being. This is to do with the worlds that we create. These are the ones that we manufacture, our little universes. So sometimes we're in the hell realm, when we're depressed and upset. Sometimes we're in the animal realm, when we used to get drunk, but we don't do that anymore. And then there's the hungry ghost realm when we are very greedy. And sometimes we're in the human realm where we have some sort of intelligence, some sort of wisdom. Occasionally we get lost in anger and we become angry gods. And of course occasionally we are bathing in absolute wonderful joy and pleasure. So these are the worlds that we create within ourselves. So somehow we have to go beyond these worlds. And that's what we do whenever we practice *vipassanā*. Because when we practice *vipassanā* we can see these worlds appearing in front of us. So that was the knower of the worlds.

The next translates literally as a coachman driving an ox or a horse. It translates better as an incomparable trainer of trainees. And of course he has left us certain rules and regulations that we can follow. So on the negative side there are the five precepts, the eight precepts. And then, of course, for the monastic life, all the rules of the Vinaya. And on the positive side, he's given us the ten perfections. And the four brahmaviharas, the four great illimitables: love, compassion, joy and equanimity.

The next one is, he is a teacher of gods and men. Gods and human beings. So this of course refers to the dhamma, all the teachings of the dhamma. And of course the practice of *vipassanā*, of all the absorption techniques, and of course how to live the spiritual life in ordinary daily life.

And number eight is *buddho*, which is the one who knows. So this is simply saying that he knows how we create the world of *samsāra*, the world of ongoing, and the escape. So remember he said he only taught two things: *dukkha* and the end of *dukkha*. And *dukkha* is all the miseries that you can think of.

And then the final quality is *bhagavā*, which means exalted, sublime. Yes, it's an honorific, like we say of the Dalai Lama, his holiness.

So those nine qualities: he has accomplished and has destroyed all his defilements. He was self-awakened. He has a clear understanding of our situation and because of that virtuous conduct. He has completed the journey and he did it skillfully. He knows all the worlds that we can create and how to get out of them. He's a wonderful trainer, a coach. Life coach. And he's also a great teacher. He has penetrated the human condition, he is the Buddha. And therefore we consider him to be exalted, sublime and blessed.

I hope my words have been of some assistance. That's this silly Google Assistant. A very great annoyance. So, I hope my words have been of some assistance. That I have not caused confusion. And that by your

devotion to the path, you will be liberated. Sooner rather than later.

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