

Thanksgiving ceremony after recovery from coma

Among the most memorable and meaningful of moments was when Bhanté emerged from a coma well enough to hold a thanksgiving ceremony at breakfast time after he had emerged from a several week coma in a moment, according to Phobol Cheng, his granddaughter. A flash of light, many fragrances suffused the room and Bhanté sat up, apparently well.

About an hour later, 4:30 AM, I arrived. Bhanté asked where were the students since it was time to meditate. With apologies, my response included that the Peace Weavers had devoted themselves to taking care of him for some weeks. He shook his head and something like, “Lazy”.

Bhanté announced that he would do a traditional thanksgiving ceremony in light of his recovery. Rebecca, Anna and Sky along with the Round House residents gather in the bedroom where Bhanté was then holding court.

He asked for an unglazed ceramic bowl, a bamboo whisk and some spring water.

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa

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Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā.

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This refrain is commonly chanted as a form of reverence to the Buddha.

Usually recited at the beginning of a talk on Buddhism or read prior to the start of a sutta, it functions as a reminder of the Buddha’s fundamental qualities.

- *bhagavato* = worthy one
- *arahato* = one who has removed all defilements
- *sammāsambuddhassā* = perfectly self-enlightened one

namo | tassa | bhagavato | arahato | sammāsambuddhassā

homage | to him | the worthy one | without defilements | perfectly self-enlightened

Its meaning is variously translated as:

- “Homage to the Worthy One, the Blessed One, the Rightly Self-awakened One.”
- “Homage to him, the worthy one, the one without any defilements, the fully self-enlightened one.”
- “Homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the Fully Enlightened One.”

Thus, the chant serves as a means of honoring the Buddha. Veneration in Buddhism is of an aspirational as opposed to worshipful quality. When Buddhists recite this phrase, they do so out of respect for the Buddha.

It occurs in dialogue in at least six separate instances throughout the Nikāyas: once in the Dīgha Nikāya, three times in the Majjhima Nikāya, once in the Samyutta Nikāya, and once in the Anguttara Nikāya.

The use of “*namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā*” can be traced to the following six suttas:

1. sakkapañhasuttaṃ (DN 21.8)
2. piyajātikasuttaṃ (MN 87.1)
3. brahmāyusuttaṃ (MN 91.1)
4. saṅgāravasuttaṃ (MN 100.1)
5. dhanañjānīsuttaṃ (SN 7.1)
6. kāraṇapālīsuttaṃ (AN 5.194)

For an example of its usage, see the following two excerpts from the Pāli Canon.

First, the Sakka-pañha Sutta (DN 21), in Pāli:

atha kho sakko devānamindo paṇinā pathaviṃ parāmasitvā tikkhattuṃ udānaṃ udānesi —
“namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā”

sakkapañhasuttaṃ (DN 21.8)

The same sutta, translated into English:

Then Sakka, the deva-king, touched the earth with his hand and said three times, “Homage to the Worthy One, the Blessed One, the Rightly Self-awakened One!”

[Sakka-pañha Sutta \(DN 21\)](#)

Coupled with the act of touching the earth, the phrase “*namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā*” serves the purpose of expressing respect. In this sutta, the deva-king Sakka (*Sakko devānaṃ indo*) pays homage to the Buddha after receiving a teaching from the Blessed One. Rejoicing in that teaching, Sakka expresses his respect with the phrase “*namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā*.”

Second, the Piyajatika Sutta (MN 87), in Pāḷi:

atha kho rājā pasenadi kosalo utṭhāyāsanaṃ ekamaṃsaṃ uttarāsaṅgaṃ karitvā yena bhagavā tenañjaliṃ paṇāmetvā tikkhattuṃ udānaṃ udānesi — “*namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa, namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa, namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā*”

piyajātikasuttaṃ (MN 87.1)

The same sutta, translated into English:

Then King Pasenadi Kosala, rising from his seat and arranging his upper robe over one shoulder, paid homage in the direction of the Blessed One with his hands palm-to-palm in front of his heart, and exclaimed three times:

Homage to the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened!

Homage to the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened!

Homage to the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened!

[Piyajatika Sutta \(MN 87\)](#)

As in the instance above, in this case too, King Pasenadi Kosala pays his respect to the Buddha. Such is done either before or after the Buddha delivers a discourse (*sutta*) and serves as a means of showing one’s deepest respect to the enlightened one.

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā.

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassā.

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsbuddhassā.