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BUDDHA'S VIRTUES

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INTRODUCTION:

Everybody in the world tries to get rid of the fear which hidden as a latent tendency (*Anusaya*) in their heart from the beginning of cycle of birth and death (*Samsāra*). Mostly comes into existence due to fear. When Ancient men undergo natural harms and dangers such as disasters and earthquakes, they thought in common sense that these outbreaks must be because of anger of unknown forces (gods) which created all these pleasant or unpleasant things eventually. That's why; they sacrifice all pleasant things to gods with the imaginary of no getting anger of them. Thus, the beginning of the religion perpetuates as a refuge in the world.



Buddhism does not encourage such taking refuge in hills, woods, groves, trees and shrines when people are fear-stricken. Such refuge can be put into category of religion, but not into Buddhism. Buddhism cannot be label as religion because there is no room for belief in Buddhism. Buddhism is a far cry from religion.

Buddhist people do not take refuge in the Buddha as a savior or creator but as a just teacher (*Satthā*) or master who has shown the real path which leads to the liberation of the suffering (*Vimutti*). The Buddha never declares himself as a savior or creator who will save us from the sins or vices and who will reward us or curse us. In this regard, the Buddha openly utters that

'*Attāhi attano nātho, kōhi natho paro siyā*', which means that 'one is one's own master and there is no other master for the men'.

The twenty-five century old teaching of Universal Teacher is strong enough to face any challenge without reversing or having to give new interpretation to its original teaching this Dhamma can be accepted without fear of being contradicted by modern scientific discoveries and achievement. the Sangha.

Analysis of the Qualities and Virtues of the Buddha (*Buddhaguṇā*): The Buddha was symbolic of all sublime virtues – great loving-kindness (*Mettā*), unique compassion (*Karuṇā*) and deepest wisdom (*Paññā*) which were unsurpassed and unparalleled in human world.

But I will depict, under this chapter, only nine qualities of the Buddha through the analytical and philosophical dimension. Buddhist people recite the following verse which is composed of the nine intrinsic virtues of the Buddha: -

"*Itipi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjāsaraṇasam-panno sugato lokavidū anuttaropurisadhammasārathi satthādeva-manussānaṃ buddho bhagavā*"ti.

Its brief translation is as follow: - “ Such indeed is the great *Arahant* - perfect and worthy of homage, *Sammāsambuddho* – Omniscient, *Vijjāsaraṇasampanno* – endowed with clear vision and good conduct, *Sugato* – well-gone, or well-spoken, *Lokavidū* – wise in the knowledge of the world, *Anuttaropurisadhammasārathi* – teacher of gods and men, *Buddho* – enlightened and maker the realization of the four noble truths to others, *Bhagavā* – blessed”.

Why is he worthy of honour? (Arahant): He has no greed, ill-will, ignorance or other defilements which are the source of bad deeds. One who has these mental impurities is attached to sensual pleasures, has anger and aversion to offensive objects, and does not know the true nature of mind and matter; that is, he thinks that everything is permanent and pleasurable. Moreover, the Buddha has uprooted in himself all other defilements such as; conceit, envy, meanness, enmity, hypocrisy, boastfulness, deception, etc. Although we may wish to eradicate these things we have not been able to do so, therefore he is worthy of honour.

In what sense is he the Fully Enlightened One? (Sammāsambuddho): The Buddha knows everything by his own Insight without depending on the teaching of others. He is always ready to explain anything that should be explained. Once, a prince named Abhaya asked the Buddha, “If learned persons approach you and ask you a question they had constructed would the answer occur to you spontaneously, or have you already reflected on every possible question thinking, 'If anyone approaches me and asks me this, I will answer thus'”

The Buddha answered with a counter-question, “Can you name all the various parts of a chariot?”

Yes, I can, answered the prince.

“What do you think, O Prince, if anyone who has approached you should ask thus, 'What is the name of this particular part of the chariot?' would the answer occur to you spontaneously, or would you have already reflected on it in your mind?”

“The answer would occur to me spontaneously because I am a renowned charioteer and all the particular parts of a chariot are fully known to me” replied the prince.

“In the same way, O prince, the answer occurs to me spontaneously because the Dhamma is fully penetrated by me.”

Nobody can answer as many questions as the Buddha. Other teachers, when they are baffled by a question, resort to speculation and imagination. Recognizing that the Buddha does not need to resort to such speculation we pay respect to the Buddha.

1. What is the Buddha's knowledge and conduct? (*Vijjācaraṇasampanno*)

The Buddha perfected fifteen kinds of conduct, namely: morality, sense restraint, moderation in eating, vigilance, moral shame, moral dread, great learning, wisdom, confidence, industry, concentration and the four-fold *Jhāna* of the non-material sphere. Because of these attributes it is proper to pay respect to the Buddha.

Without right conduct no one can get knowledge. Some may have knowledge without having to study because of acquiring it in previous lives. For four aeons and one hundred thousand world-cycles, throughout innumerable lives the Bodhisatta (the future Buddha) sought for the well-being of mankind. Therefore he practised the ten perfections (*Pāramī*), namely: charity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, industry, tolerance, truthfulness, resolution, loving-kindness, and equanimity.

In his last life, knowing that sensual pleasures could never give inner peace, the Bodhisatta renounced lay life and for six years practised austerities such as suppression of breathing, starvation and so on. When he realised that self-mortification was also not the way to enlightenment he gave it up and followed the middle way to become a Buddha.

2. Why is he called the Blessed One? (*Sugato*)

The Buddha's fourth attribute is 'Sugato' which is translated as the Blessed One or the Happy One. It is a combination of the prefix 'su' and the word 'gato'. Su means good, and gato means speech. The Buddha never speaks anything which is false or meaningless. There are six kinds of speech:

- i) speech which is not true, not factual, not connected with benefit and which is disagreeable to others,
- ii) speech which is true, factual, not connected with benefit and which is pleasing to others,
- iii) speech which is true, factual, connected with benefit but which is disagreeable to others,
- iv) speech which is not true or factual, nor connected with benefit but which is pleasing to others,
- v) speech which is true, factual, not connected with benefit and which is disagreeable to others,
- vi) and speech which is true, factual, connected with benefit and which is pleasing to others.

The Buddha's speech is usually the last type and on some occasions he speaks the third, but for that he knows the right time. As a mother would remove a stick from a baby's throat even though it might draw blood, so too the Buddha sometimes admonishes his disciples severely out of compassion.

3. How does he know the worlds? (*Lokavidū*)

The Buddha has knowledge of all existences, that is, he can perceive the nature of all beings, planes and phenomena. He knows all the past, present and future lives of beings as well as their temperament.

Beings differ from one another in their inclinations and preferences. Without the practice of meditation suitable for their particular temperament no one can get the best results. Only the Buddha was able to give the method of meditating for each person in conformity with his temperament.

The Buddha also fully knows the true nature of mind and matter. Perhaps other people may think that mind and matter are permanent and pleasant. But the Buddha perceives that they are always changing, that they are ceaselessly arising and vanishing.

4. Why is he the guide of unruly men? (*Anuttaro purisa dammasārathi*)

The Buddha is also known as the peerless tamer and guide of the hearts of men. This is related to the previous attribute. He has the ability to instruct and tame other people because he knows people's temperament. As a physician can cure someone effectively only when he knows what is wrong with him. Other wise, not only may the patient not recover but he may die due to the wrong treatment.

5. Why is he the teacher of gods and men (*Satthā devamanussānam*)

The Buddha was able to solve many problems which could not be solved by anyone else. Then he enlightened others. He taught them how to live, how to practise meditation in order to be released from the cycle of suffering. Some may think that the Buddha was pessimistic and cynical because he often stressed the loathsome aspects of life. But the Buddha not only taught detachment from the world but also gave many instructions on how to live happily and purely, how to relate to others, how to judge a person, how to make an honest livelihood etc. For one's daily life the '*Maṅgala sutta* and '*Sīṅgālovāda sutta* are very useful and practical. So the Buddha was the teacher of gods and men.

6. What is the meaning of Buddha? (*Buddho*)

The eighth attribute of the Buddha is 'Enlightened One' or 'Awakened One' - Buddha. Anyone who attains omniscience deserves to be called by that name. One who possesses great wealth is known as a millionaire, it is not necessary for him to announce it. If a poor man claims to be a millionaire he will be ridiculed.

There are three kinds of understanding: understanding based on thinking, understanding based on learning from others and understanding based on mental development which has reached the stage of full concentration. It is by the last of these that the Buddha knows the four noble truths. There is nothing to know beyond the four noble truths because all phenomena fall within their scope. Without realising the four noble truths, no one can be free from suffering.

7. Why is he called the Exalted One? (*Bhagavā*)

The Buddha possesses **six special qualities**:

- i) control over his mind,
- ii) nine supramundane attributes,

- iii) good disciples,
- iv) glory,
- v) the wish to further the welfare of all beings.
- vi) untiring energy.

CONCLUSION:

If our world is just like darkness, we live in that darkness-world. Therefore, the Buddha is like the sun. The Dhamma is like the net of the sun's rays spreading out over the earth, dispelling the darkness and cold of the night, giving warmth and light to all beings. The Sangha is like the beings for whom the darkness of night has been dispelled, who go about their affairs enjoy the one and radiance of the sun. That's why, everybody in the world should take refuge in the Triple Gem if they really wish to achieve worldly peace, happiness and the final liberation of suffering (Nibbāna) as well.

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Dhp	Dhammapada Pāḷi
M	Majjhimanikāya Pāḷi
GS	The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Vol. I.)
LD	The Long Discourses of the Buddha
ML	The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha
CD	The Connected Discourses of the Buddha.