

॥ भगवद्बुद्धनमस्क्रिया ॥

॥ bhagavadbuddhanamaskriyā ॥

Homage to the Buddha,
the Bhagavat



सौगतम्

Saugatam
Sanskrit Buddhism

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Introduction

|| namo buddhāya ||

This short homage to the Buddha is very commonly chanted, in its Pāli version, throughout the Theravāda Buddhist world: it may be the best known Buddhist prayer in South-East Asia, where most people are likely to know the formula by heart. Even the two initial words – *namo tassa* - can suffice to evoke a Buddhist setting, an atmosphere of Dharma.

The Theravāda is to this day the only non-Mahāyāna school surviving as an independent tradition. I here employ this particular phrasing for the praise, although it may not be identical to what is more frequently found in the Sanskrit tradition: this is a kind of homage to the Pāli heritage, to which the entire Buddhist world is, I think, much indebted.

The Buddha is here praised for his extraordinary and unique qualities, eliciting confidence in the Buddha as a *jewel* – the best of his kind, the best among teachers. With some awareness that even such a short chant may be understood according to many other levels of meaning, I here only touch upon, as per my limited knowledge, what I think are the most commonly accepted and, one could even say, foundational meanings.

Buddhist texts describe all acts of homage to the Three Jewels as means to accumulate merit, remove obstacles, and practice mindfulness. Furthermore, the workings of dependent arising include the power of truth and truthful speech, a power that can be elicited even by a handful of words.

This short praise is often chanted at the very beginning of one's practice, or before any type of important undertaking. It may be chanted three times, seven times, fourteen, twenty-one, etc.

I thank Harunaga Isaacson for helpful corrections and suggestions.

॥ नमस्तस्मै भगवतेऽर्हते सम्यक्सम्बुद्धाय ॥ x ३ ॥

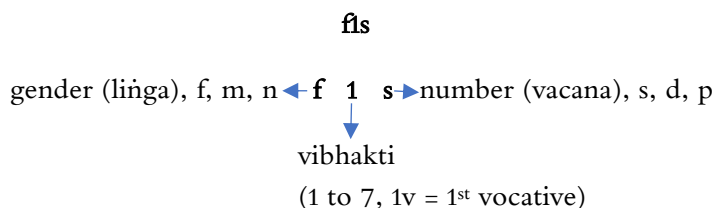
|| namas tasmai bhagavate 'rhate samyaksambuddhāya || x 3 ||

Homage to Him, the Bhagavat, the Arhat,
the Perfect, Complete Buddha || x 3 ||

Grammatical notes and glossary

Nouns have three grammatical genders (feminine, masculine, neuter), three numbers (singular, dual, plural), and seven vibhaktis (the vocative is regarded as a subtype of the 1st vibhakti).

Example of abbreviations for nouns:



Thus, fls means:

feminine gender, 1st vibhakti, singular number.

Other examples:

m3p = masculine, 3rd vibhakti, plural

n5d = neuter, 5th vibhakti, dual

|| namas tasmai bhagavate 'rhate samyaksambuddhāya ||

namaḥ, tasmai, bhagavate, arhate, samyaksambuddhāya

namaḥ | avyaya, homage to (governs the 4th vibhakti, or the vocative) || *tasmai* | *tad* m4s, that, he || *bhagavate* | *bhagavat* m4s, the Bhagavat, the one who has fortune (bhaga-vat), or, the one who has destroyed (bhagna-vat) the Māras || *arhate* | *arhat* m4s, Arhat, Worthy One, the one who destroys (hataṅ) the enemies (ari) i.e. the mental afflictions (kleśa-ari-hataṅ) || *samyaksambuddhāya* | *samyak-sambuddha* m4s, the perfect (samyak) complete Buddha (sambuddha) ||

References

The homage is meant to reproduce faithfully the most common Pāli wording (namo tassa bhagavato arahato samāsambuddhassa). In Sanskrit, the expression can be found within larger expressions, for example:

namas tasmai bhagavate tathāgatāyārhate samyaksambuddhāyācintyacintāmaṇaye
'nuttarāya puṇyakṣetrāyety uktvā [...] Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna (Rajapatirana 1974 : 106)

(I thank Harunaga Isaacson for bringing this edition to my attention, pointing out that it contains a better reading when compared to the edition I was previously using.)

Rajapatirana, Tissa (ed. and tr.). *Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna translated and. edited together with its Tibetan translation and the Lakṣacaityasamutpatti*. PhD Thesis, The Australian National University, 1974.

https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/11297/1/Rajapatirana_T_Part1.pdf