

Glossary

action prohibited by the Buddha

An action which is not naturally negative but is to be avoided because the Buddha established a precept prohibiting it, for example, singing and dancing done with attachment by those with monastic precepts.

anagarika

A person holding the eight precepts and preparing to be a monastic.

arhat

One who is free from samsara and has attained liberation.

brahmacarya (Tibetan: *tshangs par spyod pa*)

Celibacy.

bhikshu (Pali: bhikkhu, Tibetan: *gelong*)

A fully ordained Buddhist monk.

bhikshuni (Pali: bhikkhuni, Tibetan: *gelongma*)

A fully ordained Buddhist nun.

bodhicitta

The altruistic aspiration to become a Buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings.

bodhisattva

One who has generated the spontaneous altruistic intention to become a Buddha in order to benefit sentient beings.

Buddha

A fully enlightened being. "The Buddha" refers to the historical Buddha of this age, Shakyamuni Buddha.

Dharma (Pali: Dhamma)

The Buddha's teachings; the true paths and true cessations in a realized being's mindstream.

Dharmagupta

The Vinaya school prevalent in China, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

Four Noble Truths

The Buddha's first teaching which describes our present situation and our potential: the truths of suffering, its causes, their cessation, and the path to that cessation.

geshe

A learned master (comparable to a Ph.D.) in Tibetan Buddhism.

guru (Tibetan: lama)

A spiritual master or teacher.

gurudhamma (Sanskrit: *gurudharma*)

Eight important rules regarding the relationship between bhikshus and bhikshunis.

karma

Action, either one bringing a result or a decision made by an assembly of monastics.

koan

A seeming puzzle given by a Zen master to his or her student. By contemplating this and holding it in mind, the student comes to understand the nature of reality.

lama (Sanskrit: guru)

A spiritual master or teacher.

maechee

An eight-precept nun in Thailand.

Mahaprajapati (Pali: Mahapajapati)

The Buddha's aunt and stepmother, who became the first bhikshuni.

Mahayana

The Buddhist tradition emphasizing the development of bodhicitta and leading to full enlightenment.

Mulasarvastivada

The Vinaya school prevalent in Tibet.

naturally negative actions

Actions which bring suffering results whether one has a precept to abandon them or not, for example, killing, stealing, lying, and so on.

nirvana (Pali: nibbana)

Liberation from cyclic existence.

ngondro

Preliminary practices, such as prostrations and recitation of the Vajrasattva mantra, done before undertaking major tantric practices.

ordination

The ceremony through which one becomes a monastic.

parajika

Defeat or root downfall. If one commits this, one is no longer a monastic.

parinirvana (Pali: *parinibbana*)

The time when a Buddha passes away and leaves his or her earthly body.

parmarabjung

Pre-novice ordination taken for the duration of one's life.

posadha (Pali: *uposatha*, Tibetan: *sojong*)

The confession ceremony held on new and full moon days during which Buddhist monastics purify and restore their precepts.

pravarana (Pali: *pavarana*; Tibetan: *gagye*)

The ceremony marking the end of the summer retreat (rains retreat).

Pratimoksa (Pali: Patimokkha)

Individual liberation; the code of monastic precepts leading to this liberation. The texts containing this code.

puja

An offering ceremony often chanted together in a group.

samsara

Cyclic existence, uncontrollably being reborn with a body and mind under the influence of disturbing attitudes and karma.

Sangha

An individual who has attained the path of seeing and above.

sangha

A community of four or more bhikshus or bhikshunis.

sanzen

A private meeting between a teacher and student in the Zen tradition.

sesshin

A meditation retreat.

siksamana (Pali: *sikkhamana*, Tibetan: *gelopma*)

A probationary nun.

sramanera (Pali: *samanera*)

A male novice monastic.

sramanerika (Pali: *samaneri*)

A female novice monastic.

sutra (Pali: sutta)

A discourse given by the Buddha, the text containing such a discourse.

Tantra

Vajrayana; a scripture taught by the Buddha describing the Vajrayana practice.

teisho

A Dharma talk.

Theravada

The Vinaya school prevalent in Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka.

Three Baskets of the Buddha's teachings (Skt: Tripitaka)

The categorization of the Buddha's teachings into three broad topics—Vinaya (ethical discipline), Sutra (discourses), and Abhidharma (knowledge of phenomena).

Three Higher Trainings (Sanskrit: *trisra-siksa*; Pali: *tisso sikkha*)

The higher trainings in ethical discipline, concentration, and wisdom.

Three Jewels (Triple Gem)

The Buddhas, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Taking refuge or entrusting one's spiritual guidance to these is the beginning of the Buddhist path.

upadhaya

A senior bhikshu or bhikshuni who trains those newly ordained.

upasaka

A male Buddhist who has taken refuge and some or all of the five lay precepts.

upasika

A female Buddhist who has taken refuge and some or all of the five lay precepts.

Vajrayana

The Diamond Vehicle, a branch of the Mahayana in which the practitioner engages in tantric practices involving visualization, mantra recitation, and so forth.

varsā (Pali: *vassa*, Tib: *yarney*)

The rains retreat or summer retreat during which the sangha is restricted to living in a certain area to avoid harming crops and insects prevalent during the monsoon rains.

vihāra

A monastic dwelling, an early monastery.

Vinaya

The ethical discipline, precepts, and rules of training for the monastic community. The texts explaining this.

zazen

The type of meditation done in the Zen tradition.

zendo

A meditation hall.