

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BUDDHISM



Nirvana

A state characterised by freedom from pain, worry, and the external world; the state to which all Buddhists aspire is the cessation of desire and hence the end of suffering. Nirvana in Sanskrit means "the blowing out." It is understood as the extinguishment of the flame of personal desire, the quenching of the fire of life.

Karma

An afterlife driven by the law of cause and effect, meaning that what a person does in this lifetime, either good or bad, determines what will happen to them in another lifetime, until they have gone through enough suffering and purification to reach Nirvana.

Salvation

Freedom from the cycle of Karma through self-effort by practising the Four Noble Truths.

Four Noble Truths

Life is full of suffering (Dukkha), suffering comes from one's desires (Samudāya), suffering can be avoided through detachment (Nirodha), suffering can be avoided through detachment, and that suffering can end through the Eightfold Path (Magga).

Eightfold Path

- ① **Right understanding**
Accepting Buddhist teachings by practising and judging them for oneself.
- ② **Right intention**
Commitment to cultivate the right attitudes.
- ③ **Right speech**
Speaking with honesty, avoiding slander, gossip, and abusive speech.
- ④ **Right action**
Peaceful and harmonious behaviour; avoiding stealing, killing, and overindulgence.
- ⑤ **Right livelihood**
Avoiding exploitation of people or animals, or selling alcohol, drugs, or weapons to earn a living.
- ⑥ **Right effort**
Maintaining a positive state of mind and avoiding unwholesome or evil mental states.
- ⑦ **Right mindfulness**
Being aware of mental, physical, emotional, and psychological states of being.
- ⑧ **Right concentration**
Developing mental focus regarding the path.

Samsara /Rebirth

In the ongoing cycle of rebirth (samsara), a person experiences life, death, and rebirth. What a person is reborn as is contingent upon karmic actions during one's life. A person can be reborn within one of the six realms: gods, angry gods, animals, tormented beings, hungry ghosts, or humans.

Impermanence The belief that mental and physical experiences are temporary.

Dharma In Buddhism, Dharma refers to the teachings of the Buddha, the path to enlightenment, and the ethical principles that guide oneself and the greater community.

Buddha A man named Siddhartha Gautama who once lived and became enlightened. Buddhists revere him and are devoted to his teachings. Buddha never considered himself a god or any kind of divine being. He saw himself as someone who showed others the way to enlightenment.

Vesak A sacred time for Buddhists to celebrate the life and death of Buddha in May.

Pirivenas Monastic training centres utilised to teach Buddhist monks.

Dhamma The teachings of the Buddha, which teach how to overcome suffering (Dukkha).

Tripitaka The Buddhist canon of scriptures containing monastic rules and philosophical texts.

Enlightenment For Buddhists, enlightenment (Bodhi) is achieved once one escapes the cycle of rebirth and reaches Nirvana.

Dukkha The understanding for Buddhists that life is filled with suffering.

Anatta The Buddhist doctrine that human life is temporary and void of souls.

Sangha A term used to categorise the Buddhist monastic order, including monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

Three Jewels The Triratna of Buddhism comprising the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha.

Bodhisattva One who seeks awakening to follow the path of becoming a buddha.

Meditation A Buddhist practice of training one's mind for great awareness, liberation, mindfulness, self-discovery, and spiritual awakening.

Four Sublime States

A Buddhist practice of training one's mind for great awareness, liberation, mindfulness, self-discovery, and spiritual awakening.

Triśikṣā

The three types of learning that are required to reach enlightenment: śīla ("moral conduct"), samadhi ("meditation"), and prajna ("intuitive wisdom").

Mahayana Buddhism

This form of Buddhism, which originated in India, has a strong influence in Central and East Asia. Mahayana Buddhists focus on cosmology, rituals, metaphysics, and ethics.

Theravada Buddhism

Popularised in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, Theravada Buddhists claim an orthodoxy linked to the original doctrines of the Buddha. Unlike Mahayana Buddhists, this group does not revere other buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Vajrayana Buddhism

This form of Buddhism originated in India and focuses on concepts that are tangible, real, and indestructible. This focus is believed to come from mantras and awareness.

