

Pali terms

Abhidhamma/Abhidharma (Pali/Sanskrit)

The third section of the Buddhist canon devoted to human psychology and philosophy

Anapanasati (Pali)

Mindfulness of breathing

Anatta (Pali)

Not self, insubstantiality, one of the three characteristics of existence

Anicca (Pali)

Impermanent, one of the three characteristics of existence. Buddhist teachings emphasize that all conditioned mental and physical phenomena are impermanent - nothing lasts, nothing stays the same.

Beginner's mind

A mind that is open to the experience of the moment, free of conceptual overlays; first made popular by the Zen teacher Suzuki Roshi

Bhikkhu (Pali)

A Buddhist monk

Bhikkhuni (Pali)

A Buddhist nun

Bodhi (Pali/Sanskrit)

awakening

Brahma-Vihara (Pali, Sanskrit)

Divine or sublime abode, the four mind states said to lead to a rebirth in a heavenly realm: lovingkindness (metta), compassion (karuna), appreciative joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekkha)

Buddha (Pali, Sanskrit)

Fully awakened one; specifically the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, who lived and taught in India 2,500 years ago; one of the three jewels of refuge

Buddha-Dharma/Dhamma (Sanskrit/Pali)

The teachings of the Buddha

Dana (Pali/Sanskrit)

The practice of giving; generosity. Dana is the first of the ten paramis, or qualities to be perfected in order to become a Buddha

Dhammapada (Pali)

The best known of all the Buddhist scriptures; a collection of 423 verses, spoken by the Buddha, that focuses on the value of ethical conduct and mental training

Dependent origination

The doctrine that all mental and physical phenomena arise and pass away depending on causes and conditions

Dharma/Dhamma (Sanskrit/Pali)

The Buddha's teachings, truth, the basic building blocks of reality; one of the three jewels of refuge

Dukkha (Pali)

Suffering; of pain, both mental and physical, of change, and endemic to cyclic existence; the first Noble Truth that acknowledges the reality of suffering

Feeling tone

Vedana (Pali); the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral tone that arises with every experience; one of the five aggregates

Investigation

Vicaya (Pali); Interest and inquiry into experience. One of the seven factors of enlightenment

Jhana (Pali)

Mental absorption, a state of strong concentration that temporarily suspends the five hindrances

Joy

Piti (Pali); A gladdening of the mind and body. One of the seven factors of enlightenment

Kalyana mitra (Pali)

Spiritual friend. In the Theravada Buddhist meditation tradition, teachers are often referred to as spiritual friends.

Karma/Kamma (Sanskrit/Pali)

Action, deed; the law of cause and effect; intentional action, either wholesome or unwholesome that brings either pleasant or unpleasant results respectively

Kilesa (Pali)

Defilement; unwholesome qualities; a factor of mind that obscures clear seeing; a hindrance to meditation; also known as afflictive emotion

Karuna (Pali)

Compassion; one of the four Brahma-Viharas (sublime abodes)

Mental noting

A technique used in meditation to help direct the mind to the object of meditation

Merit

The auspicious power of wholesome action that brings positive karmic results

Metta (Pali)

Loving kindness, gentle friendship; a practice for generating lovingkindness said to be first taught by the Buddha as an antidote to fear. It helps cultivate our natural capacity for an open and loving heart and is traditionally offered along with other Brahma-vihara meditations that enrich compassion, joy in the happiness of others and equanimity. These practices lead to the development of concentration, fearlessness, happiness and a greater ability to love.

Middle way

A spiritual path that avoids extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence, as discovered and taught by the Buddha. Often taught as a middle way between the dead ends of religion and sensory clinging.

Mindfulness

Sati (Pali). Careful attention to mental and physical processes; a key ingredient of meditation; one of the five spiritual faculties; one of the seven factors of enlightenment; an aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path

Mudita (Pali)

Appreciative or empathetic joy; the cultivation of happiness when seeing someone else's good fortune or happy circumstances; one of the four Brahma-Viharas (sublime abodes)

Nirvana/ Nibbana (Sanskrit/Pali)

Extinction of the fires of attachment, hatred and delusion that cause suffering; liberation from cyclic existence

Pali

The ancient language of the scriptures of Theravada Buddhism

Panna (Pali)

Wisdom; one of the five spiritual faculties

Precept

A principle that defines a certain standard of ethical conduct; the foundation of all Buddhist meditation practice; see the five (or eight) precepts

Restlessness and remorse

Uddhacca-kukkucca (Pali). Agitation of the mind; one of the five hindrances to meditation.

Saddha (Pali)

Faith, confidence; one of the five spiritual faculties

Samadhi (Pali)

Concentration; a deep state of meditation; one of the five spiritual faculties; one of the seven factors of enlightenment; an aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path

Samatha (Pali)

A term referring to the group of meditation practices that aim at samadhi

Samsara (Pali, Sanskrit)

Wandering on; round of rebirths; the ocean of worldly suffering; the state of being governed by the five hindrances

Sangha (Pali)

The community of practitioners of the Buddhist path, or those beings who have attained direct realization of the nature of reality, one of the three jewels of refuge.

Sankhara (Pali)

Mental or physical formation

Sati (Pali)

Mindfulness; one of the five spiritual faculties; of the seven factors of enlightenment; an aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path

Satipatthana (Pali)

The four foundations of mindfulness: contemplation of body, feeling, mind and mind-objects; the Buddha's quintessential teachings on mindfulness

Sense doors

The six perceptual gates through which we experience the world.

Sila (Pali)

Moral or ethical conduct, virtue, the foundation of Buddhist practice

Skeptical doubt

Vicikiccha (Pali). The kind of doubt that undermines faith; one of the five hindrances to meditation

Skillful means

Action based on kindness, respect, truthfulness, timeliness and wisdom

Sloth and torpor

Thina-middha (Pali) Sleepiness or lethargy; one of the five hindrances to meditation

Sutta/Sutra (Pali/Sanskrit)

Thread, heard; a discourse by the Buddha or one of his disciples

Theravada (Pali)

Path of the Elders; the form of Buddhism found throughout many parts of Southeast Asia. Vipassana meditation is a central part of this tradition.

Three jewels of refuge

The three jewels of refuge are the Buddha, the Dharma (doctrine) and the Sangha. Practitioners take refuge in the fact that the Buddha found a way to freedom, taught the Dharma as the path to that freedom, and founded the Sangha as the supportive community that follows the way.

Tranquility

Passaddhi (Pali); Physical and mental calm. One of the seven factors of enlightenment

Upekkha (Pali)

Equanimity; the ability to maintain a spacious impartiality of mind in the midst of life's changing conditions; one of the four Brahma-Viharas (sublime abodes); one of the seven factors of enlightenment

Vedana (Pali)

Feeling; the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feeling tone that arises with all experience; one of the five aggregates

Vinaya (Pali)

Discipline; the rules and regulations governing the conduct of Buddhist monks and nuns

Vipassana (Pali)

To see clearly; insight meditation; the simple and direct practice of moment-to-moment mindfulness. Through careful and sustained observation, we experience for ourselves the ever-changing flow of the mind/body process. This awareness leads us to accept more fully the pleasure and pain, fear and joy, sadness and happiness that life inevitably brings. As insight deepens, we develop greater equanimity and peace in the face of change, and wisdom and compassion increasingly become the guiding principles of our lives.

The Buddha first taught vipassana over 2,500 years ago. The various methods of this practice have been well preserved in the Theravada tradition of Buddhism. IMS retreats are all rooted in this ancient and well-mapped path to awakening and draw on the full spectrum of this tradition's lineages.

Viriya (Pali)

The physical and mental energy needed for diligent mindfulness practice; the strong, courageous heart of energy. One of the five spiritual faculties; one of the seven factors of enlightenment

Wrong view

The tendency of the mind to cling to concepts at the expense of reality; taking what is impermanent to be permanent, what is dissatisfying to be satisfying, what is selfless to be self

Yogi (Pali)

One who is undertaking the spiritual path of awakening; a meditator

The three characteristics

The three characteristics of all conditioned physical and mental phenomena:

1. Impermanent; anicca (Pali)
2. Unsatisfactory, suffering; dukkha (Pali)
3. Non-self; anatta (Pali)

The three feeling tones

Each moment of experience is felt as one of three feeling tones:

1. Pleasant
2. Unpleasant
3. Neutral; neither pleasant nor unpleasant

The three kinds of suffering

The Buddha taught that we can understand different kinds of suffering through these three categories:

1. The suffering of mental and physical pain
2. The suffering of change
3. The suffering of conditionality

The four Brahma-Viharas / heart practices

Lovingkindness; metta (Pali)

Compassion; karuna (Pali)

Appreciative joy; mudita (Pali)

Equanimity; upekkha (Pali)

The four foundations of mindfulness

Contemplation of body

Contemplation of feeling

Contemplation of mind

Contemplation of mind-objects

The four noble truths

This was the Buddha's first and fundamental teaching about the nature of our experience and our spiritual potential:

The existence of suffering

The origin of suffering

The cessation of suffering

The path to the cessation of suffering - the Noble Eightfold Path

The five aggregates of clinging

The five aspects of personality in which all physical and mental phenomena exist:

Materiality; rupa (Pali)

Feeling; vedana (Pali)

Perception; sanna (Pali)

Mental formations; sankhara (Pali)

Consciousness; vinnana (Pali)

The five hindrances

These are the classical hindrances to meditation practice:

Desire, clinging, craving; kamacchanda (Pali)

Aversion, anger, hatred; vyapada (Pali)

Sleepiness, sloth, torpor; thina-midha (Pali)

Restlessness and remorse; uddhacca-kukkucca (Pali)

Skeptical doubt; vicikiccha (Pali)

The five (or eight) precepts

An ethical life is founded on these standards of conduct:

Five

To practice compassionate action – to refrain from harming any living, sentient beings.

To practice contentment – to refrain from taking what is not freely given. To not steal or 'borrow' without the consent of the giver; to accept what is offered and not try to change it or get more.

To practice responsibility in all our relationships – including refraining from misusing sexual energy. (While on retreat, yogis take the precept to abstain from sexual activity.)

To refrain from harmful speech – not to lie, gossip or use harsh or hurtful language.

To care for ourselves – to refrain from clouding the mind and harming the body through the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicants.

Eight

To refrain from eating after noon.

To refrain from dancing, singing, music, shows; from the use of garlands, perfumes, cosmetics and adornments.

To refrain from using high and luxurious seats and beds.

The five spiritual faculties: These are inherent faculties of mind and heart that, when fully developed, lead to the end of suffering:

Faith; saddha (Pali)

Energy; viriya (Pali)

Mindfulness; sati (Pali)

Concentration; samadhi (Pali)

Wisdom; panna (Pali)

The six sense doors: Everything we experience comes through these portals:

Eye (Seeing)

Ear (Hearing)

Nose (Smelling)

Tongue (Tasting)

Body (Touching)

Mind

The six wholesome and unwholesome roots of mind: The mind is always under the influence of one of these states:

Wholesome

Generosity; dana (Pali)

Lovingkindness; metta (Pali)

Wisdom; panna (Pali)

Unwholesome

Greed; lobha (Pali)

Hatred; dosa (Pali)

Delusion; moha (Pali)

The seven factors of enlightenment: The mental qualities that provide the conditions conducive to awakening:

Mindfulness; sati (Pali)
Investigation; vicaya (Pali)
Energy; viriya (Pali)
Joy; piti (Pali)
Tranquility; passaddhi (Pali)
Concentration; samadhi (Pali)
Equanimity; upekkha (Pali)

The noble eightfold path: This is the path the Buddha taught to those seeking liberation:

Right view
Right thought
Right speech
Right action
Right livelihood
Right effort
Right mindfulness
Right concentration

The eight worldly vicissitudes: According to the Buddha, we will experience these vicissitudes throughout lives, no matter what our intentions or actions:

Gain and loss
Praise and blame
Pleasure and pain
status and disgrace

A LIST OF THE LISTS

Ones

(1) Which one thing greatly helps?

Diligence in wholesome states (appamādo kusalesu dhammesu).

(2) Which one thing is to be thoroughly known? Contact as a condition of the corruptions and of grasping (phasso sāsavo upādāniyo).

(3) Which one thing is to be abandoned? Self-conceit (asmi-māna). Twos

Twos

(1) Which two things greatly help?

Mindfulness and clear awareness.

(2) Which two things are to be developed?

Calm and insight.

(3) Which two things are to be thoroughly known?

Mind and body.

(4) Which two things are to be abandoned? Ignorance and craving for existence.

Threes

(1) Three unwholesome roots: greed, aversion and delusion. (lobho akusala-mūlaṃ, doso akusala-mūlaṃ, moho akusala-mūlaṃ).

(2) Three wholesome roots: non-greed, non-aversion and non-delusion (alobho). Generosity, kindness, wisdom.

(3) Three kinds of wrong conduct: in body, speech and mind (kāya-duccaritaṃ, vacī-duccaritaṃ, mano-duccaritaṃ).

(4) Three kinds of unwholesome thought (akusala vitakkā): of sensuality, of enmity, of cruelty (kāma-vitakko, vyāpāda-vitakko, vihiṃsa-vitakko).

(5) Three kinds of wholesome thought: of renunciation (nekkhamma-vitakko), of non-enmity, of non-cruelty.

(6) Three kinds of craving: sensual craving, craving for becoming, craving for extinction (kāma-taṇhā, bhava-taṇhā, vibhava-taṇhā).

(7) Three more kinds of craving: craving for [the realm] of sense-desires, craving for [the realm] of form, craving for the formless [realm] (kāma-taṇhā, rūpa-taṇhā, arūpa-taṇhā).

(8) Three fetters (saṃyojanāni): of personality belief, of doubt, of attachment to rites and rituals (sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata-parāmāso).

(9) Three corruptions (āsavā): of sense-desire, of becoming, of ignorance (kāmasavo, bhavāsavo, avijjāsavo). In some Abhidhamma lists a fourth is added: views (diṭṭhāsavo).

(10) Three forms of conceit: ‘I am better than...’, ‘I am the same as...’, ‘I am worse than...’ (‘seyyo ‘ham asmīti’ vidhā, ‘sadiso ‘ham asmīti’ vidhā, hīno ‘ham asmīti vidha).

(11) Three feelings: pleasant, painful, neither (sukhā vedanā, dukkhā vedanā, adukkham-asukhā vedanā).

(12) Three kinds of distress (dukkha): as pain, as inherent in formations as due to change (dukkha-dukkhatā, sankhāra-dukkhatā, vipariṇāma-dukkhatā).

(13) Three fires: lust, hatred, delusion (rāgaggi, dosaggi, mohaggi).

(14) Three kinds of cultivation: of the body of the emotions, of mind, of understanding (kāya-bhāvanā, citta-bhāvanā, paññā-bhāvanā).

Fours

1. (1) Four ways of founding mindfulness: body, feelings, mind states, mind-objects.

(2) Four great efforts (sammappadhānā): To prevent the arising of unwholesome mental states, to overcome unwholesome mental states that have already arisen, to produce wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen, to maintain wholesome mental states that have already arisen.

(3) Four roads to power (iddhipādā): concentration of intention, concentration of energy, concentration of consciousness, concentration of investigation.

(4) Four formless jhānas: the Sphere of Infinite Space, the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, the Sphere of No-Thing-ness, the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception.

(5) Four efforts (see also 2 as these are linked): restraint (saṁvara-padhanam), abandoning (pahāna-padhanam), cultivation (bhāvanā-padhanam), preservation (anurakkhaṇa-padhanam).

(6) Four elements: earth, water, fire air (paṭhavī-, āpo-, tejo-, vāyo-dhātu).

(7) Four nutriments (āhārā): material (kabalinkāra), contact (phassa), mental volition (manosañcetanā), consciousness (viññāṇa).

(8) Four clingings (upādānāni): to sensuality (kāma), to views (diṭṭhi), to rules and rituals (sīlabbata-pārāmāsa), to self-view (attavāda).

(9) Four Noble forms of speech: refraining from lying, slander, abuse, gossip.

(10) Four sublime abidings (brahma vihāras): boundless friendliness (mettā), compassion (karuṇā), gentle joy (mudita), equanimity (upekkhā).

Fives

(1) Five aggregates: body (rūpa), feelings (vedanā), perceptions (saññā), mental formation (sankhāras), consciousness (viññāṇa).

(2) Five aggregates of grasping (same as 1).

(3) Five hindrances (nīvaraṇa): sensual craving (kāmacchanda), ill-will (vyāpāda), sloth and torpor (thīna-middha), restlessness and remorse (uddhacca-kukkucca), skeptical doubt (vicikicchā).

(4) Five lower fetters: personality-belief (sakkāya-diṭṭhi), doubt, attachment to rites and rituals, sensual craving, ill-will.

(5) Five higher fetters: craving for the world of form (rūpa-rāga), craving for the formless world (arūpa-rāga), conceit (māna), restlessness (uddhacca), ignorance (avijjā).

(6) Five rules of training (sikkhāpadāni): refraining from harming living things, refraining from taking what is not offered, refraining from sensual and sexual misconduct, refraining from false speech, refraining from strong liquor and mind clouding drugs (surā-meraya-majja-pamādatṭhānā).

(7) Five faculties: confidence (saddhā), energy, mindfulness, concentration, understanding.

Sixes

(1) Six internal sense spheres (ajjhattikāni āyatanāni): eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, -body- (kāyātanam), mind sense sphere (manāyatanam).

(2) Six external sense spheres (bahirāni āyatanāni): sight object (rūpāyatanam), sound-, smell-, taste-, tangible object (phoṭṭabbāyatanam), mind-objects (dhammāyatanam).

(3) Six groups of consciousness (viññāṇa-kāyā): eye consciousness, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind consciousness.

(4) Six groups of contact (phassa-kāyā): eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind contact (manosamphasso).

(5) Six groups of feeling (vedanā-kāyā): feelings based on eye-contact (cakkhu-samphassajā vedanā), on ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind-contact.

(6) Six groups of perception (saññā-kāyā): perception of sights (rūpa-saññā), of sounds, of smells, of tastes, of touches, of mind-objects (dhamma-saññā).

(7) Six groups of volition (sañcetanā-kāyā): volition based on sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, mind-objects.

(8) Six groups of craving (taṇhā-kāyā): craving for sight, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, mind-objects.

Sevens

(1) Seven Noble treasures (ariya-dhanāni): confidence (saddhā), morality (sīla), self-respect (hiri), fear of wrongdoing (ottappa), learning (suta), generosity (cāga), understanding (paññā).

(2) Seven factors of awakening (sambojjhangā): mindfulness (sati), investigation of phenomena (dhamma-vicaya), energy (viriyā), joy (pīti), tranquility (passaddhi), concentration (samādhi), equanimity (upekkhā).

(3) Seven requisites of concentration: right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness.

(4) Seven powers (balāni): confidence, energy, self-respect, fear of wrongdoing, mindfulness, concentration, understanding.

(5) Seven underlying tendencies (anusayā): sensuous greed (kāma-rāga), resentment (paṭigha), views, doubt, conceit, craving for becoming (bhava-rāga), ignorance.

(6) Seven fetters: complaisance (literally ‘going along with’ anunaya), resentment -then as 5.

Eights

(1) Eight-fold path factors (sammattā): right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

(2) Eight worldly conditions (loka-dhammā): gain and loss, fame and shame, blame and praise, happiness and misery (lābho ca alābho ca yaso ca ayaso ca nindā ca pasamsā ca sukhañ ca dukkhañ ca).

Nines

(1) Nine causes of malice (āghāta-vatthūni) malice is stirred by the thought (i) ‘He has done me an injury’, (ii) ‘He is doing me an injury’, (iii) ‘He will do me an injury’, (iv) ‘He has injured someone who is dear to me’, (v) ‘He is injuring someone who is dear to me’, (vi) ‘He will injure someone who is dear to me’, (vii) ‘He has helped someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me’, (viii) ‘He is helping someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me’, (ix) ‘He will help someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me.’

Tens

(1) Ten unwholesome courses of action (akusala-kamapathā): taking life, taking what is not given, sexual and sensual and sexual misconduct, false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, gossip, greed, ill-will, wrong view.

(2) Ten wholesome course of action: avoidance of taking life, taking what is not given etc., the avoidance of the other course mentioned in 1.

Twelve

Twelve links of dependent origination (paṭicca-samuppāda): (i) ignorance (avijjā), (ii) mental formations (saṅkhāra), (iii) consciousness (viññāṇa), (iv) mind-body entity (nāma-rūpa), (v) six sense spheres (saḷ-āyatana), (vi) contact (phassa), (vii) feeling (vedanā), (viii) craving (taṇhā), (ix) grasping (upādāna), (x) becoming (bhava), (xi) birth (jāti), (xii) old age and death (jarā-maraṇa).

Thirty-Seven

Thirty-seven qualities that contribute to awakening (bodhi pakkhiyā dhammā):

Each quality is to be aroused, cultivated and fulfilled.

First Set: Four ways of establishing mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna)

- . 1) observing the body in and as the body.
- . 2) observing feelings in and as feelings.
- . 3) observing mind in and as mind.
- . 4) observing mental qualities and phenomena in and as mental qualities and phenomena.

Second set: Right effort (sammappadhāna)

- . 5) prevent harmful mental states from arising.
- . 6) overcome those harmful, unwholesome mental states that have arisen.
- . 7) generate beneficial mental states that have not arisen.
- . 8) maintain and fully develop beneficial, wholesome mental states that have arisen.

Third set: Bases of success (iddhipāda) 9) concentration due to resolution accompanied by determined effort. 10) concentration due to energy accompanied by determined effort. 11) concentration due to mind accompanied by determined effort. 12) concentration due to examination accompanied by determined effort.

Fourth set: Natural strengths (indriya) 13) confidence. 14) energy. 15) mindfulness.

16) concentration. 17) penetrating insight.

Fifth set: Developed powers (bala) 18) confidence. 19) energy. 20) mindfulness.

21) concentration. 22) penetrating insight.

Sixth set: Factors of awakening (bojjhaṅga) 23) mindfulness. 24) investigation of qualities. 25) energy. 26) joy. 27) tranquility. 28) concentration. 29) equanimity.

Seventh set: The ennobling path

30) right view. 31) right intention. 32) right speech. 33) right action. 34) right livelihood. 35) right effort. 36) right mindfulness. 37) right concentration.