

**Pali Buddhist Dictionary**  
**A Work-In-Progress**

**akusula:** unwholesome; opposite of *kusula*; All acts of body, speech, or mind which are rooted in greed, aversion or delusion

**anagami:** “Non-Returner”; see Stages of Enlightenment

**anitarom:** disliking, displeasure

**anatta:** non-self ; the absence of an inherent or independent self; the lack of self-essence

**anicca:** impermanence; The unstable, impermanent, transient nature of all phenomena ... . In other words, all things arise and cease, are subject to change, and will become otherwise, making them all inherently unsatisfactory and bound to cause suffering. From Venerable Acariya Mun Bhuridatta Thera by Ajahn Maha Boowa

**arahat:** fully enlightened being; see Stages of Enlightenment

**asava:** discharges, outflows, leaks, eruptions: the mental defilements which flow out from the mind’s depths in response to conditions.

**atta:** self, ego

**avijja:** fundamental ignorance; first link in Dependent Origination

**ayatana:** 6 sense bases and their objects; fifth link in Dependent Origination

**bhava:** the process of becoming; tenth link in Dependent Origination

LP Jamnean says *bhava* is the process of becoming

**body, speech and mind:** the three spheres of action that can be observed and trained in Buddhist practice. From A Still Forest Pool by Ajahn Chah

**bojjhanga:** mental factors of awakening, of enlightenment

**brahma viharas:** here *Brhama* means sublime or noble; *vihara* means mode or state of conduct, or state of living. They are also termed *appamanna* (limitless, boundless) because these thoughts are radiated towards all beings without limit or obstruction.

---**metta:** loving kindness, benevolence, goodwill, is defined as that which softens the heart. It is not carnal love or personal affection.

---**karuna:** (compassion) is defined as that which makes the hearts of the good quiver when others are subject to suffering, or that which dissipates the suffering of others. Its chief characteristic is the wish to remove the suffering of others.

---**mudita** is not merely sympathy but sympathetic or appreciative joy.

---**upekkha**—lit., to view impartially, that is, with neither attachment nor aversion. It is not indifference but perfect equanimity or well-balanced mind. It is the balanced state of mind amidst all vicissitudes of life, such as praise and blame, pain and happiness, gain and loss, repute and disrepute.

From The Buddha and His Teachings by Narada Maha Thera

**cetana:** volition or intention

**cetasika:** mental factor arising with consciousness

**citta:** mind, heart, heart-mind, consciousness: that which thinks, knows, and experiences, the four mental *khandhas*. In a more limited sense, *citta* is what “thinks”, can be defiled by *kilesa*, can be developed, and can realize *nibbana*. Although we cannot know *citta* directly, it is where all *Dhamma* practice occurs. From Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree by Buddhadasa

LP Jamean says the *citta* is the receptacle or container of the *khandhas*

**dana:** giving, generosity, charity: a fundamental virtue and practice

**Dependent Origination:** *paticca samuppada*; the chain of Conditioned Arising; causal genesis; The process, beginning in ignorance, which explains how the cycle of birth, death and rebirth (*samsara*) takes place

**dhamma:** (skt. *dharma*) a very broad term that means **1.** any event or action; **2.** any phenomena in and of its self; **3.** any mental quality, factor or object of the mind; any discernible element, or quality present in consciousness

(dlf: when referring to the teachings of the Buddha, *Dhamma* is capitalized)

**Dhamma:** The four primary meanings of Dhamma are nature, the law and truth of nature, the duty to be performed in accordance with natural law, and the results of benefits that arise from the performance of that duty. From Anapanasati; Mindfulness with Breathing; Unveiling the Secrets of Life by Buddhadasa.

Also, the Teachings of the Buddha.

**ditthi:** view, belief, speculative opinion, insight. If not qualified by *samma*, ‘right’, (i.e., *samma ditthi*) it mostly refers to wrong and evil view or opinion, and only in a few instances to right view, understanding or insight.

**domanassa:** mentally painful feeling

**dosa:** hatred, ill-will: the second category of defilement (*kilesa*), which includes anger, aversion, dislike, and all other negative thoughts and emotions. It is characterized by the mind pushing away the object. From Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree by Buddhadasa

**dukkha:** stress, suffering, misery, unsatisfactoriness, pain. Literally, “hard to endure, difficult to bear.”

emptiness: see *sunyata*

**Four Foundations of Mindfulness:** see *Satipatthana*

**hinderance:** (*nivarana*), obstacles: semi-defilements that get in the way of success in any endeavor, especially mental development. The five hinderances are: desire, aversion, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt

**itarom:** liking

**jati:** birth, often translated as rebirth; eleventh link in Dependent Origination

**jhanas:** one-pointed focus of the mind **1.** an object, for the purpose of developing tranquility or **2.** on impermanence, for the purpose of developing insight. *Jhana* is understood as both an activity of the mind (focusing, peering, looking intently and deeply) and the results of that activity. From Mindfulness with Breathing; A Manual for Serious Beginners by Buddhadasa

**jara marana:** aging (or old age) and death; twelfth link in Dependent Origination

**kama:** sensuality, sexuality: strong desire and its objects. Seeking and indulging in sensual pleasure; not to be confused with *kamma* (spelled with two “m”s) From Mindfulness with Breathing; A Manual for Serious Beginners by Buddhadasa

**kama tanha:** craving for sensual pleasure

**kamma:** (skt. *Karma*) action: actions of the body, speech and mind arising from wholesome or unwholesome volitions. Good intentions and actions bring good results; bad intentions and actions bring bad results. Unintentional actions are not *kamma*, are not *Dhammically* significant. *Kamma* has nothing to do with fate, luck or fortune, nor does it mean the result of *kamma*. From Mindfulness with Breathing; A Manual for Serious Beginners by Buddhadasa

**karuna:** see Brahma Viharas

**khandhas:** (skt. *Skandhas*) The five aggregates, groups, or heaps, that make up a “person”: *rupa* (body); *vedana* (feeling); *sanna* (memory); *sankhara* (thought); *vinnana* (consciousness, sense awareness).

**kilesa:** mental defilement; Mental quality that defiles or stains the heart or mind, such as greed, hatred, delusion, restless agitation, and so on. From The Collected Teachings of Ajahn Chah; Food for the Heart

**kodha:** anger, jealousy, vengefulness

**kusala:** wholesome. Every mental state rooted in non-greed, non-aversion, non-delusion, the Three Roots of Wholesomeness, and the acts of the body and speech dependent on them. From Calm and Insight; A Buddhist Manual of Meditators by Bhikkhu Khantipalo

**kuti:** monastic dwelling, usually a small hut raised on pillars

**lobha:** greed. The mind's grasping onto a pleasant experience. With dosa and moha, one of the three forces which keep the minds of beings in darkness. From In This Very Life; The Liberation Teachings of the Buddha by Sayadaw U Pandita

**lokiya:** mundane, are all those states of consciousness and mental factors arising in the worldly (ordinary person), as well as in the Noble One, which are not associated with the supermundane paths and fruits of a *sotipanna* (see Stages of Enlightenment). From Buddhist Dictionary; Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines by Ven. Nyanatiloka

**lokuttara:** transcendent, above and beyond the world, supermundane; to be free of worldly conditions although living in the world.

**maha:** great; superior

**mahasati and mahapanna:** supreme-mindfulness and supreme-wisdom.

**Mara:** In Pali, derived from a word meaning "death." Personification of the force of ignorance, delusion and craving that kills virtue as well as life. The lord of all conditioned realms.

**metta:** loving-kindness; impartially wishing happiness for all, including oneself. see also Brahma Viharas

**moha:** delusion: the third category of kilesa; includes stupidity, fear, worry, confusion, doubt, envy, infatuation, hope and expectation; characterized by the mind spinning around and object. From Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree; The Buddha's Teaching on Voidness by Buddhadasa

**mudita:** see Brahma Viharas

**nama:** refers to the mental components of personality, which include feelings, memory, thoughts and consciousness. From Venerable Acariya Mun Bhuridatta Thera by Ajahn Maha Boowa

**nama-rupa:** mental and physical formation; fourth link in Dependent Origination

**nibbana:** (skt. Nirvana) the extinction of the fires of greed, of hatred and of ignorance (*lobha, dosa, moha*); the extinction of all defilements and suffering

**nimitta:** sign, image, mark, characteristic

**nirodha:** quenching, cessation, extinction: occurring when something is thoroughly calmed, cooled and quenched such that it won't concoct, heat up, or become the basis for *dukkha* again.

**panna:** (skt. *prajna*). Wisdom, discernment, understanding of the nature of existence.

**paramis:** (skt: paramita) the ten spiritual perfections: generosity, moral restraint, renunciation, wisdom, effort, patience, truthfulness, determination, kindness and equanimity.

Virtues accumulated for lifetimes manifesting as wholesome dispositions. From The Collected Teachings of Ajahn Chah; Food for the Heart by Ajahn Chah

**pathiga:** irritation

**phassa:** sense contact; (see *ayatana*, 6 sense base and their objects); sixth link in Dependent Origination

**piti:** rapture, spiritual joy and bliss associated with one of the *jhana* states rapture.

**raga:** lust

**rupa:** the body and physical phenomena in general

**salayatana:** 6 sense bases

**sakadagami:** “Once Returner”; see Stages of Enlightenment

**samadhi:** concentration, one-pointedness of mind; state of concentrated calm resulting from meditation practice.

**samatha:** calm, tranquility. Usually, the first result of practicing meditation.

**samma:** right, correct

**sampajanna:** ‘clarity of consciousness’, clear comprehension. This term is frequently used in combination with mindfulness (*sati*).

**samsara:** literally, “perpetual wandering”; the continuous process of being born, getting sick, growing old, and dying –an uninterrupted succession of births, deaths, and rebirths.

**sankhara:** anything formed or fashion by conditions; or as one of the five *khandhas*; thought (mental) formations within the mind. The second link in Dependent Origination. From *Straight from the Heart* by Ajahn Maha Boowa

LP Jamnean says briefly *sankhara* (*khandha*) refers to karmic formation

**sanna:** memory and perception; it is the awareness of an object’s distinctive marks (“one perceives blue, yellow, etc. *Samyutta Nikaya*, XXII,

79). If, in repeated perception of an object, these marks are recognized, *sanna* functions as 'memory' (Abhidhamma Studies, p. 68f)

**sati:** mindfulness, attentiveness, awareness

**satipatthana:** The four foundations or applications of mindfulness: the four bases on which *sati* must be established in mental development: **1.** contemplation of body; **2.** contemplation of feeling; **3.** contemplation of mind; and **4.** contemplation of Dhamma (Supreme Truth) in dhammas (phenomena).

**sila:** morality, abstaining from physical and vocal actions that cause harm to others and oneself.

**sotapanna:** "Stream Enterer"; see Stages of Enlightenment

**Stages of Enlightenment:** **1. sotapanna:** "Stream Enterer"; one who has attained The First Stage of Enlightenment by experiencing *nibbana* for the first time. Such a person uproots the illusion of self as well as doubt in the efficacy of meditation practice; will not be reborn as an animal or in hell due to the weakening of his or her defilements; and ceases to believe that a any rite or ritual can bring about liberation. **2. sakadagami:** "Once Returner"; one who has attained The Second Stage of Enlightenment. Because of weakened craving and anger, this being will be reborn in only one more plane of existence. **3. anagami:** "Non-Returner"; one who has attained The Third Stage of Enlightenment by experiencing *nibbana* at its third level of depth. This person will experience no more rebirths in sensual and material realms, but will attain final enlightenment from the Brahma realm, where there is mind, but no matter. An *anagami* has uprooted the defilements of greed and anger, but may still experience subtle defilements such as restlessness. **4. arahat:** fully enlightened being; one who has uprooted all the defilements and experiences no more mental suffering. Having attained The Fourth and Final Stage of Enlightenment, he or she will not be reborn again in any form, passing entirely into the unconditioned state upon death. From In This Very Life; The Liberation Teachings of the Buddha by Sayadaw U Pandita

**sunnata:** (skt. Sunyata) emptiness, voidness. All things, without any exception, are void of 'self' and 'belonging to self,' are void of any meaning

or value of ‘self,’ are void and free of ‘I’ and ‘mind.’” From Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree by Buddadasa Bhikkhu.

**sutta:** discourse attributed to the Buddha and certain of his disciples

**tanha:** desire, craving, thirst, blind want; eight link in Dependent Origination

**Tipitaka:** the “three baskets” of scriptures: the *Vinaya* (discipline for monks and nuns), the *Sutta* (discourse of the Buddha and leading disciples) and the *Abhidhamma* (psycho-philosophical texts). Called “baskets” after the containers which held the original palm leaf manuscripts.

**upadana:** attachment, clinging, grasping; ninth link in Dependent Origination

**upekkha:** see *Brahma Viharas*

**vedana:** feeling: the mental reaction to or coloring of sense experience (*phassa*). Feeling comes in three forms: pleasant or agreeable, unpleasant or painful, and indeterminate, neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant. (Not to be confused with “feeling” in a conventional sense, i.e., emotions); seventh link in Dependent Origination

Vedana’s responsibility is to sense present experience.

**vibhava tanha:** craving for non-becoming, (craving for something other than what is

**vinnana:** consciousness; simple cognizance. It simply registers sense data, feelings, and mental impressions as they occur. For instance, when visual images make contact with the eye, or when thoughts occur in the mind, consciousness of them arises simultaneously. When that object subsequently ceases, so too does the consciousness that took note of it. third link in Dependent Origination. From Venerable Acariya Mun Bhuridatta Thera by Ajahn Maha Boowa

vinnana has the responsibility of embellishing, i.e., like it a little, very hot

**vipassana:** insight, seeing clearly: to see directly into the true nature of things: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, non-self

**wisdom:** see *panna*

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