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extends its grateful thanks to
members of the Group
and to
members of
Keswick Buddhist Group, Keswick, England
Ketumati Buddhist Vihāra, Oldham, England
for bearing the cost of re-printing this booklet

BUDDHIST GROUP OF KENDAL (THERAVĀDA)
c/o FELLSIDE CENTRE
LOW FELLSIDE
KENDAL, CUMBRIA LA9 4NH
ENGLAND
BUDDHIST GROUP OF KENDAL
(THERAVĀDA)

INTRODUCING BUDDHISM

Venerable Dr Balangoda Ānanda Maitreya Mahānāyaka Thera Abhidhaja Maharatthaguru Aggamahā Paṇḍita DLitt D Litt (1896-1998) and
Jayasīlī (Jacquetta Gomes BA DipLib MLS FRAS ALA)
# INTRODUCING BUDDHISM

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The Discourse on Loving Kindness

(Mettā Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka)

1. One who is skilled in the good and who wishes to attain that state of calm, Nibbāna, should act thus: one should be sincere to oneself, upright and conscientious, of soft speech, gentle and not proud.

2. Contented, living simply, peaceful and unburdened, with senses calmed, prudent, modest, and without showing anxiety for support.

3. One should not commit any slight wrong on account of which wise men might censure one.

May all beings be happy and secure, may their hearts be wholesome!

4-5. Whatever living beings there be – those mentally feeble or strong, physically long, stout or medium, short, small or large, those seen or unseen; dwelling far or near; those who are born and those who are to be born – may all beings, without exception, be happy-minded!

6. Let none deceive another nor despise any person whatsoever in any place; in anger or ill-will let one not wish any harm to another.

7. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, in the same way, let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

8. Let thoughts of infinite love pervade the whole world – above, below and around – without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.

9. Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, as long as one is awake, this mindfulness should be developed: this, the wise say, is the highest conduct here.

10. Not embracing false views, virtuous and endowed with insight, giving up attachment to sense desires – indeed, such a person does not come again for repeated becoming (for rebirth).
What is Buddhism?

*Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa!
Homage to Him, the Exalted, the Worthy, the Fully Enlightened One!

*Buddhaṃ saraṇāṃ gacchāmi* I go to the Buddha as my refuge
*Dhammaṃ saraṇāṃ gacchāmi* I go to the Doctrine [Teaching] as my refuge
*Sanghaṃ saraṇāṃ gacchāmi* I go to the Order [of monks and nuns] as my refuge

“The non-aggressive, moral and philosophical system expounded by the Buddha, which demands no blind faith from its adherents, expounds no dogmatic creeds, encourages no superstitious rites and ceremonies, but advocates a golden mean that guides a disciple through pure living and pure thinking to the gain of supreme vision and deliverance from all evil, is called the *Dhamma* and is popularly known as Buddhism.” [Nārada, *Buddhism in a Nutshell*

**THE TRIPLE GEM (TIRATANA)**

**THE BUDDHA**

The Buddha achieved enlightenment. He avoided the two extremes of self-indulgence (which retards spiritual progress) and self-mortification (which weakens the intellect), and instead discovered and followed the Middle Path (*Majjhima Patipadā*) which led to his enlightenment. Thereafter he taught this path until his death.

The Buddha is not a God, nor a saviour who can save others. He explained that deliverance from suffering can only be gained by self-exertion and advised his disciples to be self-reliant.

“Striving should be done by yourselves. The *Tathāgatas* [Buddhas] are only teachers.” (*Dhammapada*, verse 276)

“Come O Kālāmas, do not accept anything on mere hearsay. Do not accept anything by mere tradition. Do not accept anything on account of rumours. Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures. Do not accept anything by mere supposition. Do not accept anything by mere inference. Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your preconceived notions. Do not accept anything merely because it seems acceptable. Do not accept anything thinking that the ascetic is respected by us. But when you know for yourselves – these things are immoral, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to ruin and sorrow – then indeed do you reject them. When you know for yourselves – these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise, these things when performed and undertaken, conduce to well-being and happiness – then do you live and act accordingly.” (*Kālāma Sutta*, *Sutta Piṭaka*)

The Buddha said “He who sees the *Dhamma* sees me”. (*Sutta Piṭaka*)
THE DHAMMA

“The Dhamma is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end.” (Sutta Piṭaka)

“The original Pāli term for Buddhism is Dhamma, which literally, means that which upholds or sustains [him who acts in conformity with its principles and thus prevents him from falling into woeful states] … The Dhamma is that which really is. It is the Doctrine of Reality. It is a means of deliverance from suffering, and deliverance itself. Whether the Buddhas arise or not the Dhamma exists from all eternity. It is a Buddha that realizes this Dhamma, which lies hidden from the ignorant eyes of men, till He, an Enlightened One, comes and compassionately reveals it to the world … This sublime Dhamma is not something apart from oneself. It is purely dependent upon oneself and is to be realized by oneself.” (Nārada, The Buddha and His Teachings)

“Abide with oneself as an island … with the Dhamma as a refuge.” (Parinibbāna Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka)

“The Dhamma He [The Buddha] taught is not merely to be preserved in books, nor is it a subject to be studied from an historical or literary standpoint. On the contrary, it is to be learned and put into practice in the course of one’s daily life, for without practice one cannot appreciate the truth. The Dhamma is to be studied, and more to be practised, and above all to be realized [by one’s own intuitive wisdom]; immediate realization is its ultimate goal. As such the Dhamma is compared to a raft which is meant for the sole purpose of escaping from the ocean of birth and death (samsāra).” (Nārada, Buddhism in a Nutshell)

“This sublime Dhamma … deals with truth and facts that can be testified and verified by personal experience and is not concerned with theories and speculations, which may be accepted as profound truths today and thrown overboard tomorrow. The Buddha did not expound revolutionary philosophical theories, nor did He attempt to create a new material science. In plain terms He explained both what is within and without, so far as it concerns emancipation from the ills of life, and revealed the unique Path of Deliverance … the Buddha did not teach all that He knew … He taught what He deemed was absolutely essential for one’s purification, and was characteristically silent on questions irrelevant to His noble mission.” (Nārada, The Buddha and His Teachings)

Although the Buddha did not leave any written teachings, his disciples [the Sangha] recited and subsequently committed to writing the teachings.

THE SANGHA

The Buddha established a Sangha (Order) of Bhikkhus (monks) and Bhikkhunīs (nuns).
The Four Noble Truths

“One thing only does the Tathāgata [Buddha] teach, namely suffering and the cessation of suffering.” [Sutta Piṭaka]

“In this very one-fathom long body, along with its perceptions and thoughts, do I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, the path leading to the cessation of the world.” [Rohitassa Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka]

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1) The Noble Truth of Suffering
2) The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering
3) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
4) The Noble Truth of the Way to the Cessation of Suffering
   This is the Noble Eightfold Path

ARIYA SACCA

Dukkha Ariya Sacca
Dukkha Samudaya Ariya Sacca
Dukkha Nirodha Ariya Sacca
Dukkha Nirodha Gāminī
Paṭipadā Ariya Sacca
Ariya Aṭṭhangika Magga

“The truth of suffering is to be compared with a disease, the truth of the origin of suffering with the cause of the disease, the truth of the extinction of suffering with the cure of the disease, the truth of the path with the medicine.” (Visuddhi Magga)

“The Four Noble Truths are the briefest synthesis of the entire teachings of Buddhism, since all those manifold doctrines of the threefold Canon [Tipitaka] are without exception, included therein.” [Nyānatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary]

1) THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING
   DUKKHA ARIYA SACCA

“Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering. Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, to be separated from the pleasant is suffering, not to get what one desires is suffering … This Noble Truth of Suffering should be perceived.” [Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka – The First Discourse of the Buddha].

Dukkha can be translated as sorrowfulness, suffering or unsatisfactoriness. There are three types of dukkha:

a) dukkha-dukkha intrinsic or ordinary suffering (physical and mental)
b) viparīṇāma-dukkha suffering due to change
c) saṅkhāra-dukkha suffering due to formations and as conditioned states (the general unsatisfactoriness of existence)

The First Truth “shows that, in consequence of the universal law of impermanency, all the phenomena of existence whatsoever ... are subject to change and dissolution, and hence are miserable and unsatisfactory; and that thus, without exception, they all contain in themselves the germ of suffering.” [Nyānatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary]
2) THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE ORIGIN OF SUFFERING
DUKKHA SAMUDAYA ARIYA SACCA

“Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. It is this craving [tanhā] which produces rebirth, accompanied by passionate clinging, welcoming this and that [life]. It is the craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence and craving for non-existence ... This Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering should be eradicated.” (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka)

3) THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING
DUKKHA NIRODHA ARIYA SACCA

“Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. It is the complete separation from, and destruction of, this very craving [tanhā], its forsaking, renunciation, the liberation therefrom, and non-attachment thereto ... This Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering should be realized.” (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka)

The Third Noble Truth refers to Nibbāna (Enlightenment) which must be realized for oneself. It is necessary to eliminate the root of dukkha which is craving [tanhā] for dukkha to be eliminated and Nibbāna to be attained.

4) THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING
DUKKHA NIRODHA GAMINI PAṬIPADĀ ARIYA SACCA

“Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering. It is the Noble Eightfold Path ... This Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering should be developed.” (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka)

The Noble Eightfold Path must be followed to realize Nibbāna.

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH ARIYA ĀṬṬHANGIKA MAGGA

WISDOM
1) Right View or Understanding
   Samma Diṭṭhi
2) Right Thoughts or Intentions
   Sammā Saṅkappa

MORALITY
3) Right Speech
   Sammā Vācā
4) Right Action
   Sammā Kammanta
5) Right Livelihood
   Sammā Ājīva

CONCENTRATION
6) Right Effort
   Sammā Vāyāma
7) Right Mindfulness
   Sammā Sati
8) Right Concentration
   Sammā Samādhi
The Eightfold Path

“What, O Bhikkhus [monks] is that Middle Path the Tathāgata [Buddha] has comprehended which promotes sight and knowledge, and which tends to peace, higher wisdom, enlightenment and Nibbāna? The very Noble Eightfold Path.” (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka)

The “Noble Eightfold Path ... avoids the extreme of self-mortification that weakens one’s intellect and the extreme of self-indulgence that retards one’s moral progress”. [Narada, The Buddha and His Teachings] Consequently the Buddha calls this path the middle way (majjhimā paṭipadā).

**THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS**

1) The Noble Truth of Suffering  
2) The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering  
3) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering  
4) The Noble Truth of the Way to the Cessation of Suffering

This is the Noble Eightfold Path

**ARĪYA SACCA**

Dukkha Ariya Sacca  
Dukkha Samudaya Ariya Sacca  
Dukkha Nirodha Ariya Sacca

**Dukkha Nirodha Gāmini**  
Paṭipadā Ariya Sacca  
Ariya Aṭṭhangika Magga

**THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH**

**ARĪYA AṬṬHANGIKA MAGGA**

**WISDOM**

1) Right View or Understanding  
2) Right Thoughts or Intentions

**PAÑÑĀ**  
Sammā Diṭṭhi  
Sammā Saṅkappa

**MORALITY**

3) Right Speech  
4) Right Action  
5) Right Livelihood

**SĪLA**  
Sammā Vācā  
Sammā Kammanta  
Sammā Ājīva

**CONCENTRATION**

6) Right Effort  
7) Right Mindfulness  
8) Right Concentration

**SAMĀDHĪ**  
Sammā Vāyāma  
Sammā Sati  
Sammā Samādhi

**MORALITY (SĪLA), CONCENTRATION (SAMĀDHĪ) AND WISDOM (PAÑÑĀ)**

When considered from the standpoint of practical training the Noble Eightfold Path consists of the following three groups:

1) Moral Discipline Group  
2) Concentration Group  
3) Wisdom Group

Silakkhandha  
Samādhikkhandha  
Paññakkhandha
WISDOM (PAÑÑĀ)

1) RIGHT VIEW OR UNDERSTANDING (SAMMĀ DIṬṬHI)
   a) Right View of kamma
   b) Right View of the ten kinds of subjects
   c) Right View of the Four Noble Truths

2) RIGHT THOUGHTS OR INTENTIONS (SAMMĀ SAṀKAPPA)
   a) Thoughts of renunciation (opposed to greed and sensual desire)
   b) Thoughts of benevolence for the welfare of all beings (opposed to ill-will)
   c) Thoughts of harmlessness for all beings (opposed to cruelty)

MORALITY (SĪLA)

3) RIGHT SPEECH (SAMMĀ VĀCAŚ)
   a) Refraining from false speech
   b) Refraining from slanderous speech
   c) Refraining from harsh words and abusive language
   d) Refraining from idle chatter and frivolous talk

4) RIGHT ACTION (SAMMĀ KAMMANTA)
   a) Refraining from killing and injuring any living being
   b) Refraining from taking anything not freely given
   c) Refraining from sexual misconduct and abuse of the senses

5) RIGHT LIVELIHOOD (SAMMĀ ĀJĪVA)
   The following types of livelihood should be avoided:
   a) Dealing in weapons and arms
   b) Dealing in human beings (e.g. prostitution and slavery)
   c) Dealing in living beings and flesh (e.g. butchery)
   d) Dealing in intoxicating drinks
   e) Dealing in poison
   Wrong livelihood by means of immoral physical and verbal actions (e.g. deceit, soothsaying, treachery, trickery, usury) should be avoided.

CONCENTRATION (SAMĀDHI)

6) RIGHT EFFORT (SAMMĀ VĀYĀMA)
   a) The effort to prevent the arising of unarisen unwholesome states
   b) The effort to discard unwholesome states already arisen
   c) The effort to develop unarisen wholesome states
   d) The effort to promote wholesome states already arisen

7) RIGHT MINDFULNESS (SAMMĀ SATI)
   The Four Foundations of Mindfulness:
   a) Mindfulness of the body
   b) Mindfulness of feelings
   c) Mindfulness of consciousness or states of mind
   d) Mindfulness of mental objects or phenomena (dhammas)

8) RIGHT CONCENTRATION (SAMMĀ SAMĀDHI)
   This is one-pointedness of the mind developed through meditation. (The jhānas)
“A unique being, an extraordinary man arises in this world for the benefit of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world ... Who is this unique being? It is the Tathāgata [the Buddha], the Exalted, Fully Enlightened One.” (Sutta Piṭaka)

**THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA**

A Prince was born on the full moon day of May 623 BC (according to some schools of Buddhism) in Lumbini Park at Kapilavatthu, on the present day borders of India and Nepal. His father was King Suddhodana of the Sākya clan. The Prince was named Siddhattha (which means wish fulfilled). His family name was Gotama. Eight distinguished Brahmins examined the prince. It was declared that he would either become a universal monarch or would retire from the world and become a Buddha.

During his childhood the Prince was left unattended under a rose apple tree at a ploughing festival. He meditated on the breath and achieved one-pointedness of mind. At the age of sixteen he married his cousin Princess Yasodhara. He lived a happy married life for thirteen years in luxurious conditions created by his father, to shelter him from the realities of life. While being driven in his carriage outside the palace he saw four signs which changed his view of the world: an old man, a sick person, a corpse, and an ascetic. At the age of twenty-nine he decided to renounce the world to search for the Truth.

Siddhattha left the palace and became a homeless ascetic. He studied under two teachers, Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, mastered their teachings and left them to search for the Truth. Five ascetics joined him. For about six years he practised extreme austerities. Remembering the one-pointedness of mind achieved under the rose apple tree and seeing the futility of excessive austerity he decided to renounce these extreme ascetic practices. His five companions deserted him, fearing that he had returned to a life of luxury.

On the Full Moon day of May in his 35th year he sat under the Bodhi tree at Buddhagaya and attained Buddhahood (achieved enlightenment). Thereafter he is known as the Buddha (the Enlightened or the Awakened One). The Buddha referred to himself as the Tathāgata (He who has thus gone).

The Buddha walked to the Deer Park at Isipatana near Baranasi (formerly Benares) to join his five erstwhile companions. On the Full Moon Day of July 528 BC (according to some schools of Buddhism) the Buddha delivered his First Discourse. The Buddha subsequently established a Sangha (order) of both Bhikkhus (monks) and Bhikkhunīs (nuns).

The Buddha’s ministry lasted for forty-five years. He died at the age of eighty on the Full Moon day of May 543 BC (according to some schools of Buddhism) in the Sāla Grove at Kusinārā. This is known as the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.
THE COUNCILS

Councils of Enlightened Bhikkhus (Arahats) were held three months, 100 years and 236 years after the passing away of the Buddha. At the First Council the Tipiṭaka (Teachings) were recited. A further Council of Arahats was held in the first century BC in Sri Lanka, and the Tipiṭaka was committed to writing. One of the authors of this booklet, Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreyā, actively participated in the sixth and most recent Buddhist Council held in Burma (now Myanmar) from 1954-56 to mark the 2500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha.

SCHOOLS OF EARLY BUDDHISM

After the passing away of the Buddha eighteen schools of early Buddhism developed. Of these only Theravāda (The Teaching of the Elders) survives today.

THE GREATER VEHICLE (MAHĀYĀNA)

In the first century AD, Mahāyāna Buddhism developed as a separate tradition. It was known to its adherents as the Greater Vehicle, in contrast to the contemporary monastic based Buddhism, which the Mahāyānists named the Hīnayāna (Lesser Vehicle).

Mahāyāna Buddhism adopted Sanskrit as its language. The Bodhisattva (Pāli: Bodhisatta) ideal emerged of a person who refuses to enter Nirvāṇa (Pāli: Nibbāna), but instead returns to saṁsāra to help others. Compassion and wisdom became the most important virtues. The role of lay people was developed.

THE DIAMOND VEHICLE OR TANTRA (VAJRAYĀNA)

Tantra emerged between the 3rd and 7th centuries AD. Tantra involves a rapid attainment of Buddhahood through specialised forms of meditation which make wide use of visualisation and images.

THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM FROM INDIA

1) The Southern Transmission
Buddhism spread into Burma (now Myanmar), Indonesia, Kampuchea, Laos, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Consequently Theravāda Buddhism is often known as the Southern School.

2) The Northern Transmission
Mahāyāna Buddhism spread initially along the North-Western frontier and the Silk Road. It reached Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Tibet, former USSR and Vietnam.

3) Buddhism in the West
In the 19th century European scholars started to study Buddhism. Buddhism has spread greatly since 1945, partly because of the work of expatriate communities and partly because of indigenous interest.
The Three Basic Facts of Existence

“Whether the Tathāgatas [Buddhas] appear or not, O Bhikkhus [monks], it remains a fact, an established principle, a natural law that all conditioned things are transient (anicca), sorrowful (dukkha) and that everything is without a self (anattā).” (Sutta Piṭaka)

The Three Basic Facts of Existence are also known as the Three Characteristics, the Three Signata or the Three Signs. The formula for the Three Basic Facts given in verses 277-9 of the Dhammapada is:

Sabbe saṅkhārā anicca all conditioned things are impermanent, transient
Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkha all conditioned things are sorrowful, unsatisfactory
Sabbe dhammā anattā all phenomena are without ego, self, substance

THE THREE BASIC FACTS OR CHARACTERISTICS (TI-LAKKHĀṆA)

1) anicca impermanence, transience, transitoriness
2) dukkha sorrowfulness, suffering, unsatisfactoriness
3) anattā egolessness, impersonality, non-ego, non-self, unsubstantiality

1) ANICCA (IMPERMANENCE, TRANSIENCE, TRANSITORINESS)

“Impermanency is the rising, passing away and changing of things, or the disappearance of things that have become or arisen. The meaning is that these things never persist in the same way, but that they are dissolving and vanishing from moment to moment.” (Visuddhi Magga)

2) DUKKHA (SORROWFULNESS, SUFFERING, UNSATISFACTORINESS)

Dukkha is the unsatisfactory nature of all conditioned phenomena. These are all liable to suffering because of their impermanence.

“Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, to be separated from the pleasant is suffering, not to get what one desires is suffering. In brief, the five aggregates of attachment are suffering.” (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Sutta Piṭaka) (The First Discourse of the Buddha.)

3) ANATTĀ (EGOLESSNESS, IMPERSONALITY, NON-EGO, NON-SELF UNSUBSTANTIALITY)

There is no self-existing, real ego-identity, nor a soul, nor any other abiding substance.

The Buddha is known as Anattā-vādi (the teacher of impersonality) since this is a teaching unique to Buddhism.
FIVE AGGREGATES, GROUPS OF CLINGING OR EXISTENCE (PAÑC’UPADĀNA-KKHANDHA)

According to Buddhist teaching the so-called being consists of five khandas or aggregates:

1) rūpa-kkhandha aggregate of matter (compared to a lump of froth)
2) vedanā-kkhandha aggregate of feelings (compared to a bubble)
3) sañña-kkhandha aggregate of perceptions, memories (compared to a mirage)
4) saṅkhāra-kkhandha aggregate of mental formations, states (banana tree trunk)
5) viññāna-kkhandha aggregate of consciousness (a conjuring trick)

All physical and mental phenomena are included in these five aggregates.

ANATTALAKKHANA SUTTA (SUTTA PIṬAKA)

This is the Second Discourse of the Buddha. The Buddha asks his first five disciples:

“What do you think, O monks: Is this body permanent or impermanent? Impermanent Lord. Are feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness, permanent or impermanent? Impermanent Lord. But that which is impermanent, is it something pleasant or painful? It is painful, Lord. But, of what is impermanent, painful and transitory, could it rightly be said ‘This belongs to me, this I am, this is Ego’? No Lord. Therefore whatever there is of corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness, whether past, present or future, one’s own or external, gross or subtle, low or high, far or near, of all these things one should understand, according to reality and true wisdom ‘This does not belong to me, this I am not, this is not my ego’.”

UNDERSTANDING AND MEDITATING ON THE THREE BASIC FACTS

“Existence can be understood only if these Three Basic Facts are comprehended, and this is not only logically, but in confrontation with one’s own experience. Insight-wisdom (vipassanā-paññā) which is the ultimate liberating factor in Buddhism, consists just of this experience of the Three Characteristics applied to one’s own bodily and mental processes and deepened and matured in meditation … To ‘see things as they really are’ means seeing them consistently in the light of the Three Characteristics.” (Nyānaponika, The Basic Facts of Existence: I, Impermanence Collected Essays, Wheel No 186-7)

Vipassanā (insight) “is the intuitive light flashing forth and exposing the truth of the impermanency, the suffering and the impersonal and unsubstantial nature of all corporeal and mental phenomena of existence.” (Nyānatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary)
Buddhist Meditation

The Pāli word bhāvanā means mental culture or mental development. “Buddhist bhāvanā ... is mental culture in the full sense of the term. It aims at cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances, such as lustful desires, hatred, ill-will, indolence, worries and restlessness, sceptical doubts, and cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, the analytical faculty, confidence, joy, tranquillity, leading finally to the attainment of highest wisdom which sees the nature of things as they are, and realizes the Ultimate Truth, Nibbāna.” (Walpola Rāhula, What the Buddha Taught)

In Buddhism there are two kinds of meditation:

1) Samatha-bhāvanā
Samatha is the development of one-pointedness of mind and concentration. Samādhi is the concentrated, peaceful, still and unshaken state of mind.

2) Vipassanā-bhāvanā
Vipassanā is the intuitive insight into the nature of things and leads to the realization of Nibbāna (enlightenment).

MEDITATION SHOULD ALWAYS BE STUDIED UNDER A QUALIFIED TEACHER!

DIVINE ABODES/SUBLIME STATES (BRAHMAVIHĀRAS)
BOUNDLESS STATES/ILLIMITABLES (APPAMAÑÑĀ)

1) Mettā loving kindness (direct enemy hatred, indirect enemy affection)
2) Karuṇā compassion (direct enemy cruelty, indirect enemy passionate grief)
3) Muditā sympathetic joy (direct enemy jealousy, indirect enemy exhilaration)
4) Upekkhā equanimity (direct enemy attachment and aversion, indirect enemy callousness)

Mettā bhāvanā is frequently practised as a form of samatha meditation.

“Mettā should be practised first towards oneself. In doing so a person should charge his mind and body with positive thoughts of peace and happiness. He should think how he could be peaceful, happy, free from suffering, worry and anger. He then becomes the embodiment of loving kindness. Shielded by loving kindness, he cuts off all hostile vibrations and negative thoughts. He returns good for evil, love for anger. He becomes ever tolerant and tries his best not to give occasion for anger to any. Himself beaming with happiness, he injects happiness into others not only inwardly but also outwardly by putting his mettā into practice in the course of his daily life.

When he is full of peace and is free from thoughts of hatred, it is easy for him to radiate loving kindness towards others. What he does not possess he cannot give to others. Before he tries to make others happy he should first be happy himself. He should know the ways and means to make himself happy.” (Nārada, The Buddha and His Teachings)
MEDITATION ON BREATHING (ĀNĀPĀNA SATI)

Meditation on the breath can be used to develop samādhi and vipassanā.

DEVELOPMENT OF CONCENTRATION (SAMATHA)

“He may watch his inhalation and exhalation at the start. By no means should he force breath in or out. He should just be aware of his breath as it passes in and out while letting the breath go in and out automatically in its own way. He has only to be watchful, mindful, and attentive to it. If he is a long-nosed person, the breath will touch the tip of his nose first, and if his nose is a short one, the breath will touch his upper lip first. He should fix his mind and attention on the spot the breath first touches, the tip of the nose or the upper lip, as the case may be … To be conscious and mindful of, or attentive to, one’s breath is the preliminary step of this practice ...” (Balangoda Ānanda Maitreya, Meditation on Breathing)

INSIGHT-DEVELOPMENT (VIPASSANĀ)

“Some meditators practise vipassanā (insight-development) from the beginning. They do not try to attain ecstatic trances. They start with being mindful of inhalation and exhalation. Then by counting breaths ... they develop concentration and mindfulness. Next, they stop counting and develop mindfulness over extension of breaths both long and short, and then contemplate over the start, middle and end of inhalations and exhalations. They examine the feelings that arise at the breath’s first touch on the tip of the nose or upper lip and see impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness of feelings. Then they examine the consciousness (mind-unit), perception (saññā) and other mental factors (saṅkhāra) that arise together with the feeling and see that all of them are impermanent, and therefore not satisfactory, and insubstantial (egoless).” (Balangoda Ānanda Maitreya, Meditation on Breathing)

MEDITATION IN DAILY LIFE (BHĀVANĀ)

“Another very important, practical, and useful form of ‘meditation’ (mental development) is to be aware and mindful of whatever you do, physically or verbally, during the daily routine of work in your life, private, public or professional. Whether you walk, stand, sit, lie down, or sleep, whether you stretch or bend your limbs, whether you look around, whether you put on your clothes, whether you talk or keep silence, whether you eat or drink, even whether you answer the calls of nature – in these and other activities, you should be fully aware and mindful of the act you perform at the moment. That is to say, that you should live in the present moment, in the present action. That does not mean that you should not think of the past or the future at all. On the contrary, you should think of them in relation to the present moment, the present action, when and where it is relevant.” (Walpola Rāhula, What the Buddha Taught)
The Buddhist Teaching of *Kamma* and Rebirth

“Owners of their *kamma* are the beings, heirs of their *kamma*, the *kamma* is the womb from which they have sprung, *kamma* is their refuge.” (Sutta Pitaka)

**KAMMA**

The Buddha said “Volition (*cetanā*) is *kamma*. Having willed one acts by body, speech and thought.” (Sutta Pitaka) *Kamma* is all moral and immoral volition and intentional action, mental (thought), verbal (word) and physical (deed). Involuntary and unintentional actions are not *kamma*, because volition is not present. *Kamma* is action, and *vipāka* (fruit or result) is its reaction or result. Wholesome *kamma* gives rise to wholesome *vipāka*, and unwholesome *kamma* gives rise to unwholesome *vipāka*. “Not knowing things as they truly are does one accumulate *kamma*. No *kamma* is accumulated by one who has completely eradicated craving and has understood things as they truly are. Ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) are the chief causes of *kamma*.” (Naṭrada, *A Manual of Buddhism*) Action has three unwholesome (*akusala*) roots (*mūla*/hetu): greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), and three wholesome (*kusala*) roots: greedlessness (*ālobha*), hatelessness (*ādosa*) and undeludedness (*āmoha*).

The Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* (non-self) shows that there is no person who produces *kamma* or receives *vipāka*. “Volition or will (*cetanā*) is itself the doer of *kamma*.” (Naṭrada, *The Buddha and his Teachings*) There is “no doer over and above the doing, no experiencer of the result over and above the occurrence of the result.” (Visuddhi Magga)

**WHOLESOME COURSES OF ACTION, MERITORIOUS ACTIONS**

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<tr>
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<td>Dhammadēsanā</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Straightening of one’s own views</td>
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**UNWHOLESOME COURSES OF ACTION**

<table>
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<tbody>
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<td>3) Sexual misconduct and abuse of the senses</td>
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<td>4) Lying</td>
<td>Musāvāda</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Slandering</td>
<td>Pisunavācā</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6) Harsh speech  Pharusavācā
7) Frivolous talk  Samphappalāpa
8) Covetousness  Abhijjha
9) Ill-will  Vyāpāda
10) False view  Micchādiṭṭhi

REBIRTH

“Kamma necessarily leads to rebirth. Past kamma conditions the present birth, and present kamma, in combination with past kamma, the future ... kamma, which is rooted in ignorance, is the cause of birth and death. As long as this kammic force survives there is rebirth.” (Nārada, A Manual of Buddhism)

“Birth ... is the arising of the khandhas (aggregates) ... Death ... is the cessation of the psycho-physical life of any one individual existence ... the kammic force remains undisturbed by the disintegration of the physical body, and the passing away of the present consciousness leads to the arising of a fresh one in another birth ... The continuity of the flux, at death, is unbroken in point of time, and there is no breach in the stream of consciousness ... The body dies and its kammic force is reborn in another without anything transmigrating from this life to the other. The last thought-moment of this life perishes conditioning another thought-moment in a subsequent life, this new being is neither absolutely the same – since it has changed – nor totally different – being the same stream of kamma energy. There is merely a continuity of a particular life-flux.” (Nārada, The Buddha and His Teachings)

DEPENDENT ARISING/ORIGINATION (PATĪCCASAMUPPĀDA)

Dependent on ignorance (avijjā) arise kamma formations/activities (saṅkhāra)
Dependent on kamma formations arises rebirth-consciousness (patisandhi viññāna)
Dependent on rebirth-consciousness arise mind and matter (nāma-rūpa)
Dependent on mind and matter arise the six sense spheres/bases (salāyatana)
Dependent on the six spheres of sense arises contact/impression (phassa)
Dependent on contact arises feeling (vedanā)
Dependent on feeling arises craving (tanhā)
Dependent on craving arises grasping/clinging/attachment (upādāna)
Dependent on grasping/clinging arises action/becoming (kamma bhava)
Dependent on action/becoming arises birth (i.e. rebirth) (jāti)
Dependent on rebirth arise decay and death (jarā maraṇa)

THE FIVE ORDERS, PROCESSES OR UNIVERSAL LAWS (NIYĀMAS)

1) Utu Niyāma  physical inorganic order (e.g. seasons)
2) Bīja Niyāma  physical organic order, order of germs and seeds
3) Kamma Niyāma  order of action and result (actions produce results)
4) Citta Niyāma  order of mind or psychic law (e.g. process of consciousness)
5) Dhamma Niyāma  order of the norm (e.g. gravitation)
“By oneself alone is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself alone is evil avoided; by oneself alone is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one can purify another.” (Dhammapada, verse 165)

All Buddhas taught the same teaching. Their teaching is summarised in a four-line stanza:

“Not to do any evil,
To cultivate good,
To purify one’s mind –
This is the Teaching of the Buddhas.”

(Dhammapada, verse 183)

**BUDDHISM AS A RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY**

“The question has often been asked: Is Buddhism a religion or a philosophy? It does not matter what you call it. Buddhism remains what it is whatever the label you may put on it. The label is immaterial. Even the label ‘Buddhism’ which we give to the teachings of Buddha is of little importance. The name one gives it is inessential.” (Walpola Rāhula, *What the Buddha Taught*)

**BUDDHISM AND RELIGION**

“Buddhism is not strictly a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, for it is not ‘a system of faith and worship’, owing any allegiance to a supernatural God. Buddhism does not demand blind faith from its adherents. Hence mere belief is dethroned and for it is substituted ‘confidence based on knowledge’.” (Nārada, *The Buddha and His Teachings*)

“Buddhism cannot ... be strictly called a religion, because it is neither a system of faith and worship, nor ‘the outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a God or Gods having power over their own destiny to whom obedience, service and honour are due’ ... However, if, by religion, is meant ‘a teaching which takes a view of life which is more than superficial, a teaching which looks into life and not merely at it, a teaching which furnishes men with a guide to conduct that is in accord with this in-look, a teaching which enables those who give it heed to face life with fortitude and death with serenity,’ or a system of deliverance from the ills of life, then certainly Buddhism is a religion of religions.” (Nārada, *The Buddha and His Teachings*)

**BUDDHISM AND PHILOSOPHY**

“Buddhism ... cannot be strictly called a philosophy because it is not merely the ‘love of, inducing the search after, wisdom.’ Nor is Buddhism ‘a hypothetical interpretation of the unknown [as in metaphysics], or of the inexactely known [as
in ethics or political philosophy). If by philosophy is meant ‘an enquiry not so much after certain particular facts as after the fundamental character of this world in which we find ourselves, and of the kind of life which such a world behoves us to live’, Buddhism may approximate a philosophy, but it is very much more comprehensive. Philosophy deals mainly with knowledge and is not concerned with practice; whereas Buddhism lays special emphasis on practice and realization … In one sense Buddhism is not a philosophy, in another sense it is the philosophy of philosophies.” (Nārada, The Buddha and His Teachings)

WHAT BUDDHISM IS

“Buddhism is neither a metaphysical path nor a ritualistic path. It is neither sceptical nor dogmatic. It is neither eternalism nor nihilism. It is neither self-mortification nor self-indulgence. It is neither pessimism nor optimism but realism. It is neither absolutely this-worldly nor other-worldly. It is not extrovert but introvert. It is not theo-centric but homo-centric. It is a unique Path of Enlightenment.” (Nārada, The Buddha and His Teachings)

BUDDHIST ORGANISATIONS

Buddhist organisations in the United Kingdom offer classes and Buddhist activities and functions. Many of these are listed in The Buddhist Directory published by The Buddhist Society, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PH (020-7834-5858).

MEDITATION CLASSES AND INSTRUCTION

Those who wish to learn how to meditate are strongly advised to study under an authorised and qualified teacher. Meditation classes are held at Buddhist organisations. Students of meditation should always ask the teacher about any difficulties or queries which may arise.

BUDDHIST PUBLICATIONS

This Introducing Buddhism booklet gives a brief overview of some of the most important Buddhist doctrines common to most schools of Buddhism. Much Buddhist doctrine is common to all schools but there are differences. For example, in the Theravāda school, the Buddha is known as Buddha Gotama, whereas in the Mahāyāna tradition he is known as Sākyamuni Buddha. Different schools give different dates for the life of the Buddha. This Introducing Buddhism booklet mainly uses the Pāli language whereas some other books mainly use the Sanskrit language. Some words are the same in both languages (for example, rūpa, saṁsāra), but other words are different (for example, dukkha and duhkha, Nibbāna and Nirvāṇa).
Buddhist Literature

Students of Buddhism are advised to discuss further reading with the teachers at Buddhist organisations.

LIBRARIES

There are several Buddhist Libraries in the United Kingdom including:
Buddhist Society Library, 58 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PH
[020-7834-5858]
Christmas Humphreys Memorial Library, Amaravati Buddhist Centre, Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 3BZ [01442-842455]

BOOKSELLERS AND PUBLISHERS

Publications on Buddhism are available from many sources including:
Buddhist Book Service, 2600 Elmont Street, Wheaton, Maryland MD 20902, USA [301-946-9437]
Buddhist Cultural Centre, 125 Anderson Road, Nedimala, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka [Mainly Theravāda]
BPS, Buddhist Publication Society, PO Box 61, Kandy, Sri Lanka [Mainly Theravāda]
BPG, Buddhist Publishing Group, Sharpham Coachyard, Ashprington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7UT [01803-732082]
Buddhist Society, 58 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PH [020-7834-5858]
PTS, Pāli Text Society, 73 Lime Walk, Headington, Oxford OX3 7AD [01865-742125]
Shambala Publications, Horticultural Hall, 300 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts MA 02115, USA [617-424-0030]
Wisdom Books, 25 Stanley Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1RW [020-8553-5020]
Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville, Massachusetts MA 02144, USA [617-776-7416]

BOOKS

The following books are recommended as suitable introductions to Buddhism:

INTRODUCTORY


THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM


TIBETAN BUDDHISM


ZEN BUDDHISM


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<td>ill-will</td>
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**OTHER TERMS**

- Brahmin: High/priestly caste Hindu
- Dhammapada: Path/Way of Dhamma (book)
- Hinayāna: Lesser vehicle
- Mahāyāna: Greater vehicle
- Pāli: Language of Theravāda scriptures
- Sākya: Buddha’s clan
- Sanskrit: Language of Mahāyāna scriptures
- Tantra: Form of Buddhism which makes extensive use of the creative imagination and texts which teach this
- Theravāda: A School of Buddhism (Teaching of the Elders)
- Vajrayāna: Diamond vehicle
- Visuddhi Magga: Path of Purification (book)
- Yāna: Vehicle
HOMAGE (VANDANĀ)

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa!
(Homage to Him, the Exalted, the worthy, the fully Enlightened One!)

THE THREE REFUGES (TISARĀNA)

Buddham saraṇam gacchāmi:
(I go to the Buddha as my Refuge.)

Dhammaṁ saraṇam gacchāmi:
(I go to the Doctrine as my Refuge.)

Sanghaṁ saraṇam gacchāmi:
(I go to the Order as my Refuge.)

Dutiyam pi Buddham saraṇam gacchāmi:
(For the second time, I go to the Buddha as my Refuge.)

Dutiyam pi Dhammaṁ saraṇam gacchāmi:
(For the second time, I go to the Doctrine as my Refuge.)

Dutiyam pi Sanghaṁ saraṇam gacchāmi:
(For the second time, I go to the Order as my Refuge.)

Tatiyam pi Buddham saraṇam gacchāmi:
(For the third time, I go to the Buddha as my Refuge.)

Tatiyam pi Dhammaṁ saraṇam gacchāmi:
(For the third time, I go to the Doctrine as my Refuge.)

Tatiyam pi Sanghaṁ saraṇam gacchāmi:
(For the third time, I go to the Order as my Refuge.)

THE FIVE PRECEPTS (PAÑCA SĪLA)

Pānātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.
(I undertake the rule of training to refrain from killing or injury to living things.)

Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.
(I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking that which is not given.)

Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.
(I undertake the rule of training to refrain from excessive sensuality.)

Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.
(I undertake the rule of training to refrain from false and harmful speech.)

Surā - meraya - majja - pamādaṭṭhāna veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.
(I undertake the rule of training to refrain from drinks and drugs which fuddle the mind and reduce mindfulness.)