

Glossary of Terms and Names

100-syllable mantra: The purifying mantra of Vajrasattva. OM BAZRA SATTWA SAMAYA MANU PALAYA BAZRA SATTWA TENOPA TISHTHA DRIDO ME BHAWA SUTO KHYOME BHAWA SUPO KHYOME BHAWA ANU RAKTO ME BHAWA SARWA SIDDHIM-ME PRA-YATSHA SARWA KARMA SUTSA-ME TSIT-TAN SHRIYA KURU HUNG HA HA HA HA HO BHAGAWAN SARWA TATHAGATA BAZRA-MAME MUN TSA BAZRI BHAWA MAHA SAMAYA SATTWA AH

Abhidharma: literally, higher teachings. A category of Buddhist scriptures that presents a systematic, abstract description of all worldly phenomena.

Afflicting emotions: In general, any defilement or poison which obscures the clarity of mind. These are often summarized as three: ignorance, attachment, and aversion. All other negative predispositions are produced on the basis of these three poisons.

Aggregates: The collection of characteristics that constitutes a sentient being. Like a heap of grain, a being appears to be a single entity until, upon closer examination, it is understood to be comprised of many pieces.

Arhat: Literally, a "foe destroyer". The culmination of the Hinayana path, it refers to one who has overcome the outward manifestation of the afflicting emotions, but who has not completely uprooted their psychic imprint. Although free of samsara, an arhat is not fully enlightened.

Arising stage (of tantric meditation): A meditation characterized by identifying all physical, mental, and verbal phenomena with a yidam deity through highly developed visualization techniques. It is performed in order to directly reveal the practitioner's buddha-nature.

Asanga: (4th Century C.E.) An Indian master who is most remembered for having received five celebrated texts from Arya Maitreya (*Abhisamayalankara*, *Uttaratantra*, *Mahayanasutralankara*, *Madhyantavibhaga*, and *Dharma-Dharmatavibhaga*) and for founding the Vast Action lineage. One of the Six Ornaments of this world.

Ashvaghosa: (3rd Century C.E.) A great Indian master renowned for his scholarship and poetry. His writings include the *Activities of Buddha* (Skt. *Buddhacarita*). He is also known by the name Aryasura.

Bhumi: Literally, "ground" or "foundation". Refers to the progressive levels of a bodhisattva's training, each one of which successively provides the foundation for the next.

Bodhicitta: Literally, "mind of enlightenment." The intention to accomplish perfect, complete enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. buddhahood is the perfection of the practice of bodhicitta.

Bodhisattva: Literally, "enlightenment being." One who has generated bodhicitta and who works tirelessly for the benefit of all beings.

Buddha: One who has attained unsurpassable, complete, perfect enlightenment, i.e., one who has fully awakened all wisdom and fully purified all obscurations.

Buddhfield: Existences created by buddhas wherein conditions are perfect for the attainment of enlightenment by its inhabitants. Many practitioners aspire to rebirth in this state because reversion to lower states is impossible. Also called pure lands.

Buddha-nature: The pure essence potential to attain enlightenment that is inherent in every sentient being. It is obscured to varying degrees by afflicting emotions and subtle obscurations, but it can be actualized through the practices of moral ethics, meditation, and wisdom.

Completion stage (of tantric meditation): A meditation performed once one has identified oneself as a yidam deity. There are two types of completion stage practice: with signs and without. Practice with signs consists of reciting mantras, as well as channel and chakra practices. Practice without signs is the practice of Mahamudra.

Compassion: A mind moved to benefit others.

Deity Yoga: The characteristic type of Vajrayana meditation practice, in which mundane phenomena are identified with those of a yidam. The term encompasses both the generation or arising stage and the generation stage of meditation.

Dharma: The holy teachings of Lord Buddha, categorized in two parts: the Dharma that is studied and the Dharma that has been realized.

Dharmakaya: One of the three bodies of a Buddha. It denotes the ultimate nature of Buddha's wisdom form, which is nonconceptual and indefinable.

Drigung Kagyu: The branch of the Kagyu tradition founded by Lord Jigten Sumgön.

Emptiness: The lack of inherent reality of a phenomenon or person.

Empowerment: The tantric ritual by which one is empowered to perform a specific meditation practice.

Enlightenment: The ultimate achievement of buddhahood.

Gampopa: (1074 - 1153 C.E.) Renowned as one of Tibet's greatest teachers, he is one of the foremost figures in the Kagyu lineage. His writings include *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* and the Precious Garland of the Excellent Path.

Heinous acts: Actions that prevent one from attaining enlightenment in the lifetime in which they were committed. As a result of their commission, one is thrown into the hell realms at death without passing through the intermediate state.

Hinayana: Of the two major branches of Buddhist philosophy and practice, the Buddhist school which emphasizes individual liberation and practice of the Four Noble Truths.

Jigten Sumgön: (1143-1217) Founder of the Drigung Kagyu tradition. He was the heart-son of Phagmo Drupa, and widely recognized as an incarnation of Nagarjuna. His most famous writings include *One Thought* (Tib.: *Gong Chig*) and *Heart Essence of Mahayana Teachings* (Tib.: *Ten Nying*).

Kagyu: Literally, "oral transmission" lineage. One of the four principal traditions within Tibetan Buddhism, it originated with Buddha Vajradhara and was primarily transmitted by Tilopa and Naropa in India, and Marpa, Milarepa, and Gampopa in Tibet. It holds Mahamudra and the Six Dharmas of Naropa as its central teachings.

Kalpa: Generically, an eon or other nearly limitless length of time. In Buddhist cosmology, it has the specific meaning of a complete cycle of a universe consisting of four stages: emptiness, formation, maintenance, and destruction.

Karma: Literally, "action". Physical, verbal or mental acts which imprint habitual tendencies in the mind. Upon meeting with suitable conditions, these habits ripen and become manifest in future events.

Kaya: Literally, body, form, heap or collection. The various forms in which a Buddha manifests. Generally classified as three - Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya - but occasionally a fourth classification is added, namely the Svabhavikakaya or nature body, to express the inseparable nature of

these three. The term Rupakaya (form body) is also used to refer to the second and third classifications together.

Lama: An authentic teacher authorized to transmit Buddhist teachings to suitable students. Depending on tradition, a lama may or may not be a monk.

Mahamudra: Literally, the "Great Seal". The highest, most conclusive view that unites bliss and emptiness into one, the primordial effulgent nature of mind, and is the ultimate realization of all phenomena of samsara and nirvana as they actually are. Its practice reveals the practitioner's basic, pure nature and leads to the experience of highest enlightenment.

Mahayana: Literally, the "Great Vehicle." The Buddhist school that holds the bodhisattva ideal as the highest practice and teaches the aspiration to attainment of enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Mantra: Literally "mind-protection". Sacred speech which, in the context of Vajrayana practices, serves to purify one's ordinary speech and identify it with a yidam deity's wisdom speech in order to attain enlightenment.

Mara: Any negative influences on ordinary people that obstruct spiritual development, frequently personified as demon-like beings named Mara.

Marpa: (1012 - 1097 C.E.) A Tibetan layman who is especially renowned for bringing many teachings to Tibet from India and translating them. These include Mahamudra texts and the Six Dharmas of Naropa. As Naropa's disciple and Milarepa's primary teacher, he is a major figure in the Kagyu lineage.

Merit: Any virtuous thought or activity which has the result of imprinting positive habitual tendencies in one's mindstream.

Milarepa: (1052 - 1135 C.E.) One of the great masters of the Kagyu lineage, he is often referred to as an example of someone who attained enlightenment in a single lifetime. His vajra songs contain great healing qualities. He was Dharma Lord Gampopa's primary teacher.

Nagarjuna: (2nd Century C.E.) An Indian master of such critical importance to the propagation of the Mahayana and Vajrayana that he is often called the "second Buddha." He founded the Madhyamaka philosophical school which systematized the *Prajña Paramita (Perfection of Wisdom)* teachings, and authored many texts which remain authoritative to the present day. One of the Six Ornaments of this world.

Nirmanakaya: Literally "emanation body". The physical form of a buddha or other great being, purposefully manifested for the benefit of common sentient beings. This is not necessarily a human form; they can appear as whatever is necessary.

Nirvana: The unconfused state without suffering; the transcendence of samsara.

Perfections: The training to be completed by bodhisattvas, consisting of the perfection of generosity, moral ethics, patience, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom awareness.

Pratyekabuddha: Self-liberated Buddhas, whose attainment is less than the ultimate buddhahood. While they may receive Dharma teachings during the time of a Buddha or now, they do not attain realization until after the Buddha's teachings have disappeared. Being without bodhicitta, they do not teach how to reach enlightenment, but they do display miracle powers to inspire devotion.

Sambhogakaya: Literally "enjoyment body". A non-substantial, yet visible, body of a buddha or other great being, manifested to directly benefit bodhisattvas at high stages of realization and to serve as objects of devotion for practitioners.

Samadhi: Meditative absorption.

Samsara: The beginningless and endless cycle of rebirths throughout the six realms; the confused state of suffering from which Buddhists seek liberation.

Sangha: Generally, the entire community of practitioners. In different contexts, it can refer specifically to the monastic community or to the assembly of highly realized beings (arhats and bodhisattvas at the first bhumi and above).

Sentient beings: All conscious creatures who are reborn within the six realms.

Skandha: See Aggregates.

Shravaka: A Hinayana disciple who hears the words of the Buddha's teachings, shares them with others, and aspires to become an arhat for his/her own benefit.

Stupa: Sacred structures generally categorized as reliquaries, which are universally used by Buddhists as objects of veneration and devotion.

Svabhavikakaya: The underlying indivisible essence of all enlightened forms.

Sutra: literally, a rope or thread that holds things together. Figuratively, it refers to the canonical scriptures that are records of the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni.

Vajra: When used alone, the term implies the attribute of indestructibility or an adamant quality. When used in conjunction with a bell that symbolizes wisdom, a vajra is a ritual object symbolizing compassion or skillful means.

Vajrayana: The diamond path or "vehicle" of Buddhist tantra.

Vinaya: The code of discipline for Buddhist practitioners, especially for monks and nuns.

Yidam: A deity whose form and attributes embody a particular aspect of enlightenment and with whom a practitioner identifies in meditation.

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