



University Learning in Schools

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Buddhists in the World

Glossary

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Keyword	Definition
Anatta	The belief that we don't have a permanent personal self or soul
Anicca	The idea that everything changes and that nothing is permanent
Archaeology	Ancient history generally; systematic description or study of antiquities
Ascetic (noun)	Someone who exercises extremely rigorous self-discipline
Ascetic (adjective)	Severely abstinent, austere
Begging (alms-round)	In a Buddhist context, the action or habit of Theravada monks asking earnestly for resources, especially food/daily necessities
Dhamma (The)	The teachings of the Buddha
Dukkha	All life involves suffering. Suffering is painful experience and the frustration that arises from the impermanence of pleasant experiences.
Eightfold Path	The practical measures needed to become enlightened
Enlightenment	The full realization of the truth of the Buddha's teachings; awakening to a great reality most of us never perceive
Four Noble Truths	Four truths about existence which the Buddha realized upon his Enlightenment
Four Sights	Four conditions which Siddhartha Gautama met with for the first time as an adult: old age, sickness, death and a holy man
Karma	Karma explains that our past actions affect us, either positively or negatively, and that our present actions will

	affect us in the future. Buddhism uses an agricultural metaphor to explain how sowing good or bad deeds will result in good or bad fruit.
Laity	The body of the people not in orders, as opposed to the clergy
Mantra	Sayings that are chanted out loud or internally as objects of meditation
Meditation	The action or practice of profound spiritual or religious reflection or contemplation
Mindfulness	The practice of relating directly to what is happening 'in the moment'
Monastery	A place of residence for a community living under religious vows (<i>especially</i> the residence of a community of monks). Also: the members of such a community
Ordained Buddhist	A Buddhist who has trained and been consecrated to minister in the rites and practices (similar to a Christian vicar or minister)
Rebirth	The idea that we are reborn, with a different body, when we die. There is no individual self which continues, but it is our unsatisfied desire for existence and sensual pleasure that is the cause of rebirth.
Samatha meditation	Calm, concentration/focusing upon objects for concentration
Samsara	The cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The Buddha taught that there is no beginning to this cycle, but that it can be ended through perceiving reality.
Sangha	The community of Buddhists, both lay and ordained/monastic
Siddhartha Gautama	Siddhārtha Gautama, or Śākyamuni, a spiritual teacher from South Asia on whose teachings Buddhism is based
Theravada Buddhism	The school of Buddhism that draws its scriptural inspiration from the Pali canon, which scholars generally agree contains the earliest surviving record of the Buddha's teachings

Three Refuges	The three key factors a Buddhist should go to, to keep his practice safe: the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha
Tibetan Buddhism	The teaching of the Buddha, as practiced and taught in Tibet, and a number of surrounding countries
Vipassana Meditation	‘Insight’ meditation, concerned with reality – opening the mind rather than focusing on a single point as in samatha. Vipassana is necessary to achieve Enlightenment, but is only practised with samatha as its base.
Zen Buddhism	A school of Buddhism which attempts to understand the meaning of life directly, without being misled by logical thought or language