

## GLOSSARY

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**Abhidharma** (Skt.), Higher Dharma: Tib. *chos mngon pa*.

A group of Buddhist scriptures and teachings presenting the various topics taught by the Buddha in a scholastic and systematic way. One of the three collections of the Buddha's teachings. See also *Tripitaka*.

**afflictions** (*kleśa*; *nyon mongs pa*).

The states of mind that cause unrest and obstruct the realisation of ultimate reality. The six root afflictions are ignorance, desire, anger, pride, doubt, and wrong views. The Abhidharma teachings list a further twenty secondary afflictions.

**aggregates.** See *skandha*.

**ālaya** (Skt.), all-base: Tib. *kun gzhi*.

The subtle cognitive or luminous aspect of the mind which is the basis for all appearances of samsara and nirvana. The *ālaya* is sometimes equated with *alayavijñāna*, or all-base consciousness, the subtle continuum of the mind which stores the latencies formed by actions of body, speech, and mind, and thus functions as the basis for the experience of their results.

**ālayavijñāna** (Skt.), all-base consciousness: Tib. *kun gzhi rnam shes*. See *ālaya*.

**arhat** (Skt.), Tib. *dgra bcom pa*.

A person who has achieved the spiritual goal of liberation from the cycle of existence. The Sanskrit term literally means "worthy one," whereas the Tibetan term means "foe destroyer."

**ārya** (Skt.), noble one: Tib. *'phags pa*.

An individual on the Buddhist path who has attained advanced levels of realization through the direct realization of ultimate reality.

**Atiśa, Jowo Jé Palden**, aka Dipaṃkara Śrījñāna (982-1054).

Indian Buddhist master from Bengal, instrumental in the revival of Buddhism in Tibet in the eleventh century after its repression by King Langdarma. Atiśa gained renown in Tibet for his teachings on the graded path to enlightenment and on mind training.

**awakened awareness.** See *jñāna*.

**āyatanas** (Skt.), bases of perception: Tib. *skye mched*.

There are twelve bases of perception, i.e., the six outer and the six inner āyatanas. The outer bases are the six sense objects: form, sound, smell, taste, texture, and mental object. The six inner bases are the six sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

**Bhagavān** (Skt.), Blessed One: Tib. *bcom ldan 'das*.

Epithet of the Buddha.

**bhūmi** (Skt.), earth/ground: Tib. *sa*.

The levels of realization traversed gradually by a bodhisattva on the path to enlightenment. The first bhūmi, called *Utter Joy*, is attained with the initial insight into ultimate reality. This insight is then cultivated along the successive stages of enlightenment up to the tenth and final bodhisattva bhūmi, *Cloud of Dharma*. The attainment of perfect buddhahood, which is the final goal, is called the eleventh bhūmi.

**bodhicitta** (Skt.), mind of awakening/enlightenment: Tib. *byang chub kyi sems*.

Bodhicitta is of two types: relative and ultimate. Relative bodhicitta (Tib. *kun rdzob byang sems*) refers to the resolve to attain buddhahood for the sake of all beings and the practices motivated by this intention, whereas ultimate bodhicitta (Tib. *don dam pa'i byang sems*) refers to the realization of emptiness or ultimate reality.

**bodhisattva** (Skt.), Tib. *byang chub sems dpa'*: lit. “heroic being with an awakened mind.”

Name given to an individual who has generated the resolve to attain the state of complete buddhahood for the sake of other beings and traverses the stages of the bodhisattva path.

**bodhisattva vows.**

The formal commitment made by an individual who is intent on attaining buddhahood for the sake of all beings. It entails the observance of a number of precepts to ensure a steady progress on the path.

**buddha** (Skt.), Awakened One: Tib. *sangs rgyas*.

A person who has attained buddhahood (i.e., true and complete awakening), perfectly free of all obscurations and endowed with perfect wisdom, compassion and the ability to help others. One of the Three Jewels or objects of refuge for Buddhists.

**buddhahood.**

The aim to be achieved in the Mahayana; the state of true and complete enlightenment obtained by the purification of the two veils, i.e., the veil of mental afflictions and the cognitive veil.

**calm abiding** (*śamatha*; *zhi gnas*).

Calm abiding meditation, aimed at developing stability and clarity of mind. Paired with special insight it becomes a powerful tool to uproot ignorance, the root cause of all suffering.

**Chekawa Yeshé Dorjé** (1101-1175).

Tibetan Kadampa master and compiler of the *Mind Training in Seven Points*. He was instrumental in the propagation of teachings on mind training in Tibet, which he himself had received from Geshe Sharawa.

**Cittamātra** (Skt.), Mind-Only School: Tib. *sems tsam pa*.

A Mahayana school of thought known as Vijñānavāda (School of Consciousness) or Vijñaptimātra (Cognition-Only School). The Cittamātra school is related to the Yogācāra tradition founded by the Indian masters Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, and based on the sūtras of the third turning of the Dharma wheel and the teachings of the Bodhisattva Maitreya. The unique approach of this school consists in aiming to demonstrate that everything in the world is nothing but mind, in other words that the objects one relates to are nothing but mental representations devoid of external independent existence. The mind freed of this falsely imagined duality of subject and object is thus liberated from the ignorance at the root of all suffering.

**conventional reality.** See *two realities*.

**Dharma** (Skt.), Tib. *chos*.

When capitalized, this term refers to the Buddha's teachings and the path of practice and experience based on them. One of the Three Jewels or objects of refuge for Buddhists. In general, however, the term *dharma* has more than ten different meanings, including *phenomenon* and *religious tradition*.

**dharmakāya**. See *kāya*.

**Dharmakīrti** (fl. seventh century).

Indian Buddhist master celebrated for his seven works on logic and epistemology in the tradition of the great master Dignāga. His most important treatise is the *Commentary on the Means of Valid Cognition* (*Pramāṇavārttika*).

**Dharma protectors** (*dharmapāla*; *chos skyong*).

Generic name given to a class of beings entrusted with the task of protecting the Buddha's teaching from degeneration and harmful influences. Dharma protectors are basically of two types: enlightened protectors and worldly spirits.

**dhātus** (Skt.), elements of perception: Tib. *kham*s.

There are eighteen elements of perception, comprising the twelve bases of perception (*āyatana*s), consisting of the six senses and the six sense objects; and the related six types of consciousness, i.e., the consciousness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. For an instance of perception to take place, the related bases of perception and consciousness have to function together. For example, the sensory basis of the eye, the sense object form, and the consciousness of the eye cooperate to produce a visual perception of an object.

**dependent arising** (*pratītyasamutpāda*; *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba*).

The process of conditioned existence bringing about rebirth and suffering. The twelve links of dependent origination are ignorance, karmic formations, consciousness, name and form, sense bases, contact, sensation, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, and aging and death.

**dharmatā** (Skt.), Tib. *chos nyid*.

The real nature of things, synonym for ultimate reality.

**Drogmi Lotsawa** (992-1050).

Tibetan translator of the second dissemination of the Dharma in Tibet and a master of vital importance for the Sakya tradition in the transmission of the Lamdré teachings.

**empowerment** (*abhiṣeka*; *dbang bskur*).

A ritual that enables the participant to enter the path of Secret Mantra Vehicle or Vajrayana.

**emptiness** (*śūnyatā*; *stong pa nyid*).

A name for ultimate reality. It refers to the fact that since phenomena arise depending on causes and conditions, they lack an inherent substantial nature of their own. The insight into this reality functions as the gateway to the freedom from conceptual proliferations, which are at the root of karma and the afflictions.

**five aggregates.** See *skandhas*.**five degenerations.**

Five signs symptomatic of the degenerate age we live in, in which the Buddha's teaching is in decline. They are the degenerations of (1) time—the degeneration of outer conditions and the increase in wars, famines, and natural catastrophes; (2) beings—the increase in beings' physical and mental abnormalities; (3) lifespan—the decline of beings' life force; (4) afflictions—the intensification of mental afflictions in beings; and (5) views—the proliferation of wrong views.

**four immeasurables.**

The four altruistic attitudes of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. They are immeasurable in the sense that they are generated towards the infinite number of sentient beings, thus making the mind cultivating them immeasurable. They are also called the *brahmavihāras* ("abodes of Brahma") because their cultivation may lead to a rebirth in the divine realm of Brahma.

**four kayas.** See *kāya*.**Gelug School:** 'the Way of Virtue'.

The youngest of the four main traditions of Buddhism established in Tibet, also known as the Ganden School. This tradition follows the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa Lobsang Dragpa (1357-1419). It is particularly renowned for its emphasis on monastic training and its rigorous scholastic education.

**Geshe** (Tib.), from the Sanskrit *kalyāṇamitra*: ‘virtuous spiritual friend’.

Name given to the masters of the Kadam tradition. It later became a title bestowed on monks upon completion of the monastic academic curriculum in the Gelug and Sakya schools. It is nowadays used only in the Gelug tradition.

**Gorampa, Sönam Senge** (1429-1490).

Sakya master from East Tibet whose writings, especially his philosophical works, have become the classic reference works for scholars of later generations.

**higher realms**, Tib. *mtsho ris*.

The three types of existence in saṃsāra characterised by less obvious forms of suffering than in the lower realms, and by the possibility of attaining liberation. They are the human realm, the realm of demi-gods, and the realm of divine beings.

**higher trainings, three.**

The essence of the Buddhist path, consisting of the training in discipline (*śīla*; *tshul khrims*), meditative concentration (*samādhi*; *ting nge 'dzin*) and wisdom (*prajñā*; *shes rab*).

**Hinayana** (Skt.), Lesser Vehicle: Tib. *theg dman*.

The foundational Buddhist system of theory and practice based on the first turning of the Dharma wheel (i.e., the teaching of the Four Noble Truths). It is also defined as the path of individual liberation, emphasizing renunciation and taken by individuals of lesser abilities who are concerned mainly with their own liberation from suffering. This path can thus be defined on the basis of the philosophical system adhered to (i.e., either Vaibhāṣika, based on the tenets exposed in the *Mahāvibhāṣa* Abhidharma treatise; or Sautrāntika, based on tenets exposed in the sutras), or the motivation of the practitioner (in which case it should not be conflated with the Theravada path, which may be practiced with the motivation to attain buddhahood for the sake of all beings).

**ignorance** (*avidyā*; *ma rig pa*).

Two types of ignorance are distinguished: the ignorance that is one of the three mental poisons (desire, hatred and ignorance) and the ignorance that is the first of the twelve links of dependent arising. Ignorance in terms of the three poisons is an incorrect understanding

of the principle of karma, cause and effect, and thus leads to the accumulation of the causes of suffering. The ignorance of the twelve links is the misapprehension of reality at the root of all suffering, apprehending a self or inherent identity in the individual and in phenomena. This is the most fundamental form of ignorance which gives rise to all other aspects of confusion.

**Jetsün Doringpa** (1449-1524).

Master of the Sakya tradition, of central importance in the transmission of the *Lamdré* teachings. Teacher of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso (1502-1566), founder of the Tsarpa sub-school of the Sakya tradition.

**jñāna** (Skt.), awakened awareness: Tib. *ye shes*.

The direct cognition of ultimate reality of an *ārya* being.

**Kadampa School:** ‘School of Those Who Follow the Words and Instructions’.

One of the earliest schools of Tibetan Buddhism established during the second dissemination of the Dharma. The tradition was founded by disciples of Dromtönpa (1005-1064), who was himself a student of Atiśa. The emphasis in the Kadam tradition is on the practice of mind training (Tib. *blo sbyong*) and on the secrecy of tantric practice. Although it vanished as an independent school a long time ago, its teachings are preserved and cherished by all Tibetan traditions.

**Kagyü School:** ‘School of the Oral Lineage.’

One of the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism, also known as the Practice Lineage (Tib. *grub brgyud*), established during the period of the second dissemination of the Dharma in Tibet. The teachings of this tradition go back to the translator Marpa (1012-1097), his foremost disciple, the celebrated yogin Milarepa (1040-1123), and the latter’s student Gampopa (1079-1173). The school is famous for its Mahāmudrā (‘Great Seal’) teachings on the nature of mind, and its yogic practices including the Six Yogas of Nāropa.

**Kamalaśīla** (fl. eighth century).

Indian master famous for promoting the model of the graded path to enlightenment in Tibet. He successfully defended this approach during the famous Samye debate (in 792 or 780) against the Chinese master Hōshang Mahayana, and later composed the celebrated three books on the *Stages of Meditation* (*Bhāvanākrama*; *sgom rim*).

**karma** (Skt.), action: Tib. *las*.

The natural law of actions and their results. According to the Buddha's teaching, it is mainly the intention behind an action which determines whether it is wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral.

**kāya(s)** (Skt.), 'bodies' of perfect enlightenment: Tib. *sku*.

A buddha's awakening has three levels of manifestation, called the *three kāyas*. These are (1) the *dharmakāya* or 'dharma-body' (Tib. *chos sku*), which is a buddha's perfect realisation of ultimate reality, and is not perceptible to others; (2) the *sambhogakāya* or 'body of enjoyment' (Tib. *longs sku*) – the pure manifestation of this realisation in forms perceptible to bodhisattvas on the highest level of realisation; and (3) the *nirmāṇakāya* or 'emanation body' (Tib. *sprul sku*) – the manifestation of enlightenment accessible to ordinary beings. Sometimes a fourth kāya is added: the *svabhāvikakāya* or 'essence body' (Tib. *ngo bo nyid kyi sku*), which refers to the inseparability of the three kāyas.

**Khenchen** (Tib.), 'Outstanding scholar.'

Honorary title conferred to monks of great scholarly accomplishments.

**lama** (Tib.), Skt. *guru*.

Spiritual guide or teacher.

**Lamdré** (Tib.): 'The Path together with Its Result.'

A cycle of teachings unique to the Sakya tradition. The Lamdré teachings are based on the Hevajratāntra and originated with the Indian adept Mahasiddha Virūpa. They comprise the entire range of Buddhist teachings, from sutra to tantra.

**liberation** (*mokṣa*; *thar pa*).

The state of freedom from suffering and its causes, that is karma and afflictions.

**Lojong** (Tib.), Mind Training.

In general, this term refers to the Mahayana methods of mind training transmitted in the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism. It is often used to refer to a particular set of practices based on the teachings of the Indian master Atiśa (fl. eleventh century). Based on the enlightened attitude of bodhicitta, these teachings emphasize the bodhisattva's altruistic practice of "exchanging oneself for others."



**lower realms**, Tib. *ngan song*.

The three types of existence in samsara characterized by great suffering, namely the animal realm, the realm of hungry ghosts, and the hell realm.

**Madhyamaka** (Skt.), Middle Way school: Tib. *dbu ma*.

A Mahayana school of thought and practice founded by the Indian master Nāgārjuna, based on the sutras of the second turning of the Dharma wheel. This approach emphasizes the lack of any substantial nature in phenomena, based on the doctrine of dependent origination. It is called the Middle Way because its practice frees the mind of the conceptual extremes of both existence and non-existence. In the Tibetan tradition, this school is generally held to represent the supreme philosophical view.

**Mahayana** (Skt.), Great Vehicle: Tib. *theg pa chen po*.

The system of Buddhist theory and practice based on the second and third turnings of the Dharma wheel (i.e. the profound teachings on emptiness and the teachings on the discrimination between the definitive and the provisional teachings). This vehicle is also termed the bodhisattva path, taken by those motivated by great compassion and the wish to attain perfect awakening or buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

**Mantra vehicle**. See *Secret Mantra Vehicle*.

**māras** (Skt.), demons, obstructing forces: Tib. *bdud*.

In the Buddhist context this term refers to inner obstructions on the path to awakening. The tradition speaks of four māras: the māra of the aggregates, the māra of mental afflictions, the māra of the lord of death, and the māra of the child of gods.

**Mind Training**. See *Lojong*.

**Nāgārjuna** (fl. first century CE).

Buddhist master from southern India, founder of the Madhyamaka tradition, famous for his collection of philosophical treatises, among which figures his *Verses on the Root Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*), and his collection of devotional works.

**nirmāṇakāya**. See *kāya*.

**nirvana** (Skt.), ‘the state beyond sorrow’: Tib. *mya ngan las ’das pa*.

The final result obtained by practicing the Buddhist path, i.e. complete liberation from samsara, suffering, and dissatisfaction. Generally speaking two types of nirvana are distinguished. The nirvana of the Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle, refers to cessation, which is the individual liberation from samsara, karma, and rebirth resulting from the cessation of the afflictions and their causes. The nirvana of the Mahayana, or Great Vehicle, refers to a state that is beyond both ordinary samsaric existence and the cessation of the Lesser Vehicle. It is therefore called “nonabiding nirvana.”

**Nyingma School:** ‘School of the Early Transmission’.

The first school of Buddhism in Tibet, established through the efforts of the Indian tantric master Padmasambhāva, aka Guru Rinpoche (fl. eighth century), the Indian abbot and scholar Śāntarakṣita (fl. eighth century), and King Trisong Detsen (742-797). Special features of this school include the transmission of its teachings and traditions by means of spiritual treasures (Tib. *gter ma*) hidden by Padmasambhāva and rediscovered at an opportune time by masters of later generations, and the Dzogchen (‘Great Completion’) teachings on the nature of mind and the various methods to unveil it.

**pāramitā** (Skt.), the perfections: Tib. *pha rol tu phyin pa*.

The practices a bodhisattva engages in, in order to attain complete buddhahood. They are the pāramitās of giving, discipline, forbearance, diligence, concentration, and wisdom. To this list are sometimes added the pāramitās of skillful means, aspiration, power, and gnosis.

**Pāramitā Vehicle** (*pāramitāyāna*; *phar phyin theg pa*), Vehicle of the Perfections.

Following the Mahayana, two pathways lead to complete enlightenment, or buddhahood: the Pāramitā Vehicle and the Secret Mantra Vehicle (or Vajrayāna). On the Pāramitā Vehicle one will mainly practice the pāramitās, whereas a practitioner of the Secret Mantra Vehicle will make use of the skillful means taught in the tantras.

**parinirvāṇa** (Skt.), perfect nirvana: Tib. *yongs su myang ’das*.

The final nirvana of an enlightened being attained upon the perishing of the physical body.

**Patrul Rinpoche, Dza** (1808-1887).

Master of the Nyingma tradition from eastern Tibet who, although highly learned and accomplished, preferred to live the life of a vagabond, unattached to any institution. Regarded as the reincarnation of the Indian master Śāntideva, Patrul Rinpoche is famous for expounding that master's *Way of the Bodhisattva*. Author of *The Words of my Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*).

**pith instructions.** See *sutra*.

**prajñā** (Skt.), wisdom: Tib. *shes rab*.

The mental factor that correctly differentiates and ascertains the object of perception. Wisdom is developed in the threefold process of study, contemplation and meditation. Being one of the three higher trainings, as well as the supreme pāramitā which turns all the other virtues into perfections, it is an essential aspect of the Buddhist path.

**pratyekabuddha** (Skt.), solitary realizer: Tib. *rang sangs rgyas*.

An individual on the Hinayana path of individual liberation who has attained realization without relying on a spiritual teacher.

**relative bodhicitta.** See *bodhicitta*.

**Sakya:** 'School of the Grey Earth'.

One of the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism, established during the period of the second dissemination of the Dharma in Tibet, and named after the place in southern Tibet where its principal monastery was founded in 1073. The five founding masters of this tradition were Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158), Sönam Tsemo (1142-1182), Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216), Sakya Paṇḍita (1182-1251), and Chögyal Phagpa (1235-1280). This school is famous for its extensive philosophical training and as the upholder of the *Lamdré* ('The Path together with its Result') cycle of teachings originating with the Indian master Virūpa.

**Sakya Paṇḍita, Kunga Gyaltsen** (1182-1251).

One of the founding masters of the Sakya school. Sakya Paṇḍita was famous for his strict adherence to the Indian traditions of Buddhism, for his very extensive knowledge of all the classical Indian fields of knowledge, and particularly for his writings on epistemology. He travelled to China to serve as the main spiritual teacher at the Mongol court.

**saṃbhogakāya:** see *kāya*.

**samadhi** (Skt.), meditative absorption: Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*.

A general term used to denote deep levels of meditative concentration. The practice of samadhi constitutes one of the three pillars of Buddhist practice, the other two being ethical discipline and wisdom.

**śamatha.** See *calm abiding*.

**samsara** (Skt.), cyclic existence: Tib. *'khor ba*.

The beginningless and ceaselessly repetitive cycle of uncontrolled birth and death which beings are subject to as long as they are not enlightened. This perpetual cycle of worldly existence is characterized by unsatisfactoriness and a lack of true freedom.

**Sangha** (Skt), Tib. *dge 'dun*.

The community of those practicing the Buddha's path. In the Mahayana this term refers in particular to realized bodhisattvas. It is the third object of refuge, one of the Three Jewels.

**Śāntideva** (fl. eighth century).

Indian Buddhist master and proponent of the Madhyamaka tradition who taught at Nālanda University. Author of the celebrated *Way of the Bodhisattva* (*Bodhicāryāvatāra*).

**Sautrāntika**, 'Those Who Follow the Sūtras': Tib. *mdo sde pa*.

One of the two subschools of the Hinayana, so called due to its adherence to the words of the Buddha as recorded in the sūtras and, as opposed the Vaibhāṣika school, its rejection of the authority of the Abhidharma.

**Secret Mantra Vehicle:** Tib. *gsang sngags kyi theg pa*.

The tantric path of Mahayana Buddhism, also called Vajrayāna, based on a specific class of scriptures called tantras, and characterized by the great number of skillful means used to attain enlightenment. This name emphasizes the use of mantras and the secret nature of this path, being revealed only to those who have received the appropriate empowerments and subsequent permissions.

**Serlingpa** (fl. tenth century).

Serlingpa (Skt. *Suvarṇadvīpa*: 'the One from the Golden Island'), whose actual name was Dharmakīrti, was a Buddhist master from Sumatra, under whom Atiśa studied for twelve years, principally the

teachings on mind training. Not be confused with the Indian Dharmakīrti, renowned for his works on logic and epistemology.

**Shentong Madhyamaka**, Tib. *gzhan stong*.

A Madhyamaka school of thought which has its roots in the Sakya tradition. Due to its unorthodox and controversial interpretation of the two realities, however, the shentong view was never accepted in the mainstream Sakya tradition and was developed in other distinct schools. According to this system, conventional reality is seen as “empty of self-nature” (*rang stong*), while the ultimate is “empty of other” (*gzhan stong*), that is, empty of conventional realities, but not of itself. Implying that certain qualities truly exist on the ultimate level, this doctrine is closely related to the doctrine of buddha-nature. Later, certain masters of the Nyingma and Kagyü schools also adopted this view.

**skandha** (Skt.), aggregates: Tib. *phung po*.

The psycho-physical constituents of a sentient being. There are five aggregates or groups of phenomena that characterize human experience: one group of physical phenomena (i.e. the aggregate of form) and four groups of mental phenomena (feelings, discriminations, formative factors, and consciousness). It is on the basis of these five aggregates that the concept of self is generated.

**skillful means** (*upāya*; *thabs*).

The diverse methods applied on the path in order to achieve awakening. The Mahayana path consists in essence of the union of method and wisdom, method denoting the skillful means such as the first five of the six pāramitās and wisdom being the insight into the nature of reality, the sixth pāramitā. Skillful means also refers to the methods used by enlightened masters, beginning with Śākyamuni Buddha, to guide their disciples on the path.

**special insight** (*vipaśyanā*; *lhag mthong*).

The cultivation of insight into the true nature of reality in order to eliminate mental afflictions and the suffering they produce. One of the two main branches of Buddhist meditation, the practice of special insight must be based on a mind trained in calm abiding—the other branch—in order to function as a liberating method.

**śrāvaka** (Skt.), hearer: Tib. *nyan thos*.

The disciples of Buddha Śākyamuni who practice the teachings of the Lesser Vehicle. The Sanskrit term śrāvaka comes from the two words *śruta* (hearing) and *vāk* (speech), meaning that they listened and then spoke to others what they had heard.

**suchness** (*tathatā*; *de bzhin nyid*).

The ultimate nature of phenomena. Synonym of *emptiness* and *ultimate reality*.

**sutra** (Skt.), Tib. *mdo*.

Scriptures believed to contain the actual words of the Buddha, revealing his exoteric teachings for the general public. The sutras have been commented on in the *śāstras* or commentarial treatises, and their essential points for practice have been extracted in the *upadeśas* or pith instructions. Also, one of the three collections of the Buddha's teachings: see *Tripitaka*.

**Sutrayana** (Skt.), Sutra Vehicle.

The tradition of the Mahayana or Great Vehicle that follows the teachings expounded in the sutras, rather than in the tantras. See *sutra*, *tantra*.

**tantra** (Skt.): Tib. *rgyud*.

Scriptures containing the Buddha's words revealing the esoteric teachings for a qualified audience. The term is also used to denote the entire system of practice based on those scriptures.

**Thogmé Sangpo** (1297-1371).

Kadampa master famous for his practice of bodhicitta and his writings on the subject, in particular his *Thirty-Seven Practices of the Bodhisattvas* and his commentary on *The Way of the Bodhisattva*.

**Three Jewels** (*triratna*; *dkon mchog gsum*).

The three objects of refuge for Buddhists: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

**thugdam**, Tib. *thugs dam*.

Term used to refer the meditative state entered upon death by experienced practitioners. In a more general context terms, it is an honorific term denoting the sacred connection and commitment a tantric practitioner has with the teacher and the practice.

**Tsongkhapa** (1357-1419).

Tibetan master regarded as the founder of the Gelug tradition, famous for his extensive writings covering all aspects of Buddhist thought and practice.

**svabhāvikakāya:** see *kāya*.

**torma**, Tib. *gtor ma*.

An edible offering of more or less elaborate form, sometimes called ritual cake. Tormas are usually made of roasted barley flour dough and can be prepared for various purposes, from an offering to enlightened beings to nourishment for worldly spirits.

**Tripiṭaka (Skt.)**, Three Baskets: Tib. *sde snod gsum*.

The three collections of the Buddha's teachings: Vinaya (monastic rules), Sūtra (general discourses), and Abhidharma (Higher Dharma).

**twelve links of dependent arising.** See *dependent arising*.

**two realities** (*satyadvaya*; *bden pa gnyis*).

According to the Buddha's teachings there are two realities: conventional (*saṃvṛti*; *kun rdzob*) and ultimate (*paramārtha*; *don dam*). Conventional reality is how things appear. It is perceived as real by ordinary beings, but seen as illusory by āryas. For the latter, only ultimate reality, that is the true nature of things, is real. The definition of the two realities varies according to the different schools of thought. For the Vaibhāṣikas, for instance, whatever can be broken down into smaller constituent parts—whether physically or by means of mental analysis—is conventional reality, while that which cannot be broken down any further is ultimately real. In this sense, the *individual person* and *outer phenomena* (such as “mountain,” “table,” “curry,” etc.) are conventional realities, whereas the individual particles constituting physical phenomena and the individual moments of mind are ultimately real. According to the Madhyamaka view expounded in the Sakya tradition, conventional reality refers to the appearances that appear to the mind when the analysis which investigates their ultimate reality is not applied. Ultimate reality is the direct, nonconceptual realization of the true nature of reality free of all conceptual extremes (of existence, nonexistence, both, and neither).

**ultimate bodhicitta.** See *bodhicitta*.

**ultimate reality.** See *two realities*.

**Vaibhāṣika**, ‘Those Who Follow the Commentary’: Tib. *bye brag smra ba*.

A subschool of the Hinayana based on the *Mahāvibhāṣa*, a collection of seven Abhidharma treatises, the views of which were summarized by Vasubandhu in his *Treasury of Abhidharma*. Based on their peculiar definition of conventional and ultimate reality, the proponents of this school assert a kind of realism, holding that partless particles and indivisible moments of consciousness exist on the ultimate level.

**Vajrayāna** (Skt.), Vajra Vehicle: Tib. *rdo rje theg pa*.

The second of the two Mahayana vehicles, the first being the Pāramitāyāna. The Vajrayāna (also called the “secret Mantra vehicle”) is based on the scriptural authority of the tantras and employs a wide variety of methods as skillful means for a faster accomplishment of buddhahood.

**vehicles, three** (*yāna, theg pa*).

The three paths to liberation taught in accordance with followers’ varying capacities: Śrāvakayāna or Vehicle of the Hearers, which was taught to the Buddha’s disciples who aspired to gain liberation for themselves; Pratyekabuddhayāna or Vehicle of Solitary Realizers, which is the path to individual liberation taken in times when no buddha taught the Dharma; and Mahayana or Great Vehicle, taught to the bodhisattvas who aspire to achieve perfect buddhahood for the sake of others. The Mahayana includes the common Pāramitāyāna and the extraordinary Vajrayāna. When the tantric path of Vajrayāna is listed as a separate vehicle, the three vehicles are Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayāna.

**Vinaya** (Skt.): Tib. *’dul ba*.

The collection of scriptures mainly concerned with the rules of conduct for the monastic order and the history behind them. One of the three collections of the Buddha’s teachings. See also *Tripitaka*.

**vipaśyanā**. See *special insight*.

**wisdom**. See *jñāna* and *prajñā*.