



DHARMA TEACHER ORDER

2022-2023, Year 4 of the Certificate in Buddhist Studies Program

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Course Description.....	3
3. Levels of Student Commitment.....	3
4. Expectations for Students Seeking a Certificate of Buddhist Studies.....	4
5. Expectations for Students Seeking Dharma Teacher Ordination.....	6
6. DTO Buddhist Studies Booklist/Resources for Year 4.....	6
7. Class Schedule & Etiquette.....	8
8. Practice Sessions, Days of Mindfulness, & Retreats.....	9
9. Buddhist Studies Calendar (Year 4, 2022-2023).....	10
10. Dharma Presentation Guidelines.....	11
11. Prisoner Mentoring: Buddhist Correspondence Course.....	12
12. The Principles of the Dharma Teacher Order.....	13
Appendix 1: Key Buddhist Concepts.....	15

1. Introduction

Welcome to the 2022-2023 Dharma Teacher Order (Year 4) Class. The Dharma Teacher Order, founded by the Venerable Thich Tri Hoang, is a group of monastics and lay people who follow the Vietnamese Zen (Thien) Buddhist tradition and are interested in:

1. Learning more about the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha).
2. Developing our spiritual practices.
3. Making the Dharma available to the Western Hemisphere.

We are respectful of all Buddhist traditions as well as other religious denominations and welcome interaction with all of them.

We currently have Sanghas in New York, Connecticut, Florida, Missouri, North Carolina, and Texas. We are very fortunate to have the Venerable Thich Tri Hoang (Thay) to guide our study and practice. In an excerpt from a letter to students, our teacher explains:

“People come to the Dharma Study and Training Course for many reasons. Some want to learn the history and philosophy of Buddhism. Some come out of a desire to learn to live a more satisfying life. Some see the turmoil and pain in world and want to explore a spiritual way in which to help diminish that. Some hope to share the benefits of their study and practice with others.

Becoming a student in the **Dharma Study (Training) Course** means making a commitment to the program of study and learning how to live a more enlightened life. The path that you have undertaken is not always straight. Many of our students discover that commitment will change their views and behavior over time. Sometimes this can lead to questioning and even changing their old assumptions and conduct. Sometimes there is an internal resistance to these changes; sometimes there is resistance to them from the surrounding environment. Life sometimes presents its own challenges, and that may affect your ability to complete the full course of study. That, however, in no way diminishes either your own positive impulse, or the courage it takes to continue the Path, in or out of the classroom.

I encourage you to take your study and practice seriously. We found that those students who do so benefit most. A few of our students embarked on a monastic life because of their participation in class. Others went on to develop and operate Buddhism courses for the incarcerated. Some students organized their own Sanghas. Several of our students retained their original non-Buddhist religious affiliation but found that the course deepened their understanding and appreciation of that faith. The coursework, while challenging, can be completed by anyone who works at it. Besides the formal aspect of study, the course is designed to allow you to find your own voice to express your understanding of the Dharma.”

2. Course Description

The curriculum consists of four years of study leading to a certificate. Though the content of the course consists of a sequential year-by-year set of materials, students may enter the course in any year, and will receive a certificate after successfully completing the four years of successful study. Because the DTO believes that the best way to learn is to teach to others, students make presentations with the support of mentors, teachers, and facilitators.

- Buddhist literature is vast and varied. It includes the suttas of the Theravada Pali canon, the Mahayana and Vajrayana Sutras, and subsequent works by ancient, modern, and current Buddhist teachers of various traditions.
- The **first year of study** covers the life of the historical Buddha, his central teachings, and an introduction to the 3 main schools of Buddhism – Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.
- The **second year** covers the Buddha's teachings on meditation practices, based on the Anapanasati and Satipatthana Sutras, and other works.
- The **third year** covers Buddhist Doctrine found in sutras in all 3 canons.
- The **fourth year** covers understanding the mechanics and liberation of the mind from a Buddhist perspective.

3. Levels of Student Commitment

To address the needs of our students, we offer a Buddhist Studies Program with three distinct levels of commitment:

I. Audit

This is an informal path and does not include either certificate or ordination. Students interested in auditing should contact their local DTO leader. For students who live in a location without a local sangha, please email Elena (bravodharma4u@gmail.com).

Expectations for Audit Students:

- Audit students are welcome to attend any classes or other activities as they see fit.
- Virtual participants who can do so are encouraged to always keep their cameras on to promote participation and inspire engagement.
- There are no other requirements. Join us!
- Auditing students interested in formally joining the program can email Elena (bravodharma4u@gmail.com) for more information.

II: Path leading to a Certificate of Buddhist Studies

This path leads to a Certificate of Buddhist Studies conferred by the Dharma Teacher Order after four years of study, contingent on the approval of the Venerable Thich Tri Hoang.

4. Expectations for Students Seeking a Certificate of Buddhist Studies

With awareness of the generosity, effort, and care on the part of both students and teachers to make this program possible, and with gratitude for receiving the gift of the Dharma, we ask every student of the Dharma Teacher Order to commit to the following:

1. Among the essential elements for obtaining DTO's four-year Certificate in Buddhist Studies and to continue the path to become a Dharma Teacher are:
 - attending all classes,
 - completing assignments,
 - building a regular personal meditation practice, and
 - demonstrating involvement with a local sangha and/or attendance to the National virtual Sangha.
2. **Preparation:** All students will come to class having read the assigned material to encourage participation in the discussion, ask questions, and/or add insight into the topic presented.
3. **Attendance:** Students of the DTO will make every effort to attend all classes as scheduled.
 - Students may attend the in-person or the virtual session.
 - Please be on time. If you are going to be late, contact Phap Lan (512-576-2351).
 - Virtual participants will always keep their cameras on to promote participation and encourage engagement.
 - Exceptions are occasionally made. For example, blind and visually impaired students who do not use cameras are exempt. Please work with your DTO leader if you require an exception.
 - Students without an approved exception who turn off their cameras will be considered absent and required to complete the make-up assignment described below.
4. **Make-Up Assignment:** When an absence is inevitable, the student will 1) complete the reading assignment; 2) view the video recording of the class; 3) reflect on and respond to the questions offered by the presenter; and 4) write a 3-page paper with the following questions as the foundation:
 - a. What stood out to you from the reading? Why?
 - b. What stood out to you from the presentation and discussion? Why?
 - c. How might these teachings impact your practice?

5. **Presentation:** Students will deliver at least one presentation from the current year's book list.
- Each student will sign up for at least one presentation at the beginning of the program year.
 - The presenter will formulate five questions highlighting fundamental elements from the reading to further explore doctrine, new concepts, teachings, and other aspects of the material that best resonated with the student.
 - Mentors for presentations will be available for each assigned reading and will be available to work closely with students that request their support. Presentation mentors will contact presenters early on to establish communication.
6. **Community:** Students will practice sangha building and deepen their practices in community with others through a combination of participation at their local sangha, the National virtual DTO Sangha, Days of Mindfulness, and DTO retreats.
- We recognize that the combination of these community practices will be unique to each student.
 - At a minimum students will attend at least one DTO retreat.
 - Attendance at all four quarterly sessions meets the requirement for attending a DTO retreat during this school year.
7. **Tuition:** Tuition for each year is \$150.00.
- Scholarships for up to 50% of the tuition costs may be available. Please speak to your local DTO leader.
 - Tuition can be paid all at once, or in installments.
 - For students practicing at a temple associated with DTO, please pay your tuition directly to your temple and inform your local DTO leader when you make your payment.
 - For online students, please pay your tuition with a check payable to the *Dharma Teacher Order* and mail to:
Dharma Teacher Order
34 Westminster Dr.
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.
 - Books are the students' responsibility. Many but not all the books are available at no cost online.

III: Path Leading to Ordination

This path leads to a Certificate of Buddhist Studies after four years of study. Successfully completing further studies (minimum of one additional year) may lead to ordination as a Lay Dharma Teacher in the Dharma Teacher Order. Ordination is contingent upon leaders' and mentors' recommendation to and approval by the Venerable Thich Tri Hoang.

5. Expectations for Students Seeking Dharma Teacher Ordination

- Fulfill all the commitments outlined in the path leading to a Certificate of Buddhist Studies.
- Volunteer as a mentor in the Buddhist Correspondence Course. *See the description on THE PRISON PROJECT PRISONER MENTORING, included below.*
- Complete further studies and projects related to an area of service that demonstrate your ongoing learning and skills as a Dharma teacher. These studies will be for a minimum of one additional year (Year 5+), depending on the needs and skills of each individual student.
- Note: Additional ordination can be possible after being ordained as a Dharma teacher, including initial Zen priesthood (2 additional years) and full Zen priesthood (5 additional years after initial ordination). Please speak with DTO local leadership or contact Elena at bravodharma4u@gmail.com to learn more.

6. DTO Buddhist Studies Booklist/Resources for Year 4

4 th Year Main Texts	
<u>Understanding Our Minds: 50 Verses on Buddhist Psychology</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously published under the title <i>Transformation at the Base</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By Thich Nhat Hanh • ISBN 1888375302 • Available at Parallax Press
<u>Stepping into Freedom</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By Thich Nhat Hanh • ISBN 9781952692000 • Available at Parallax Press
<u>Avatamsaka Sutra</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 39 only • Available at City of 10,000 Buddhas • A pdf of the chapter is available from your DTO leader
<u>Anger</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thich Nhat Hanh • ISBN 1573229377 • Available at Parallax Press
<u>The Way of the Bodhisattva</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shantideva, Padmakara Translation Group • ISBN 1590303881 • Available at Shambhala Publications
<u>The Bodhisattva Ideal</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By Sangharakshita • ISBN 9781911407300 • Available at Windhorse Publications
<u>A Heart Full of Peace</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By Joseph Goldstein • ISBN 10086171542x • Available at Wisdom Publications

4 th Year Supplementary Texts	
<u><i>Buddha Mind, Buddha Body: Walking toward Enlightenment</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>Understanding Our Mind: 50 Verses on Buddhist Psychology</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thich Nhat Hanh ISBN 9781888375756 Available at Parallax Press
Talks 1 – 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports Thich Nhat Hanh's <i>Transformation at the Base: Fifty Verses on the Nature of Consciousness</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Zoketsu comments on Thich Nhat Hanh's Transformation at the Base: Fifty Verses on the Nature of Consciousness” Found at everydayzen.org
<i>The Ultimate Dimension</i> , an advanced retreat on the Avatamsaka and Lotus sutras <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>Avatamsaka Sutra</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Thich Nhat Hanh Available at Sounds True
<i>Hua-yen Buddhism, the Jewel Net of Indra</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>Avatamsaka Sutra</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Francis H. Cook, 1977 ISBN 027102190x Available at Penn State Press
<i>Perfecting Patience: Buddhist Techniques to Overcome Anger Perspective</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>Anger</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the Dalai Lama ISBN 9781559394796 Previously published as <i>Healing Anger: The Power of Patience from the Buddhist Perspective</i> (ISBN 1559390735) Available at Shambhala Publications
<i>The Cow in the Parking Lot, A Zen Approach to Overcoming Anger</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>Anger</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Susan Edmiston and Leonard Scheff ISBN 9700761158158 Available at Workman Books
<i>No Time to Lose</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>The Way of the Bodhisattva</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Pema Chodron ISBN 1590301358 Available at Shambhala Publications
<i>A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>The Way of the Bodhisattva</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the Dalai Lama ISBN 0877739714
<i>Practicing Wisdom: The Perfection of Shantideva's Bodhisattva Way</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>The Way of the Bodhisattva</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the Dalai Lama ISBN 9780861711826 Available at Wisdom Publications
<i>Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>A Heart Full of Peace</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Joseph Goldstein ISBN 9781622030637 Available at Sounds True
<i>A Path with Heart: A Guide Through the</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Jack Kornfield

<i>Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>A Heart Full of Peace</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISBN 998055337213 Available at Amazon or JackKornfield.com
<i>Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports main text: <i>A Heart Full of Peace</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Sharon Salzberg ISBN 9781570629037 Available at Shambhala Publications

7. Class Schedule & Etiquette

Preparing for Class

For students participating in-person, we encourage you to practice with your local sangha before class. Online students are encouraged to also spend time preparing for class through the practices described in the Morning Practice guide (or those of your own tradition).

Online students are also welcomed to join with the morning practices at Phap Nguyen Temple via Zoom at 10:30 a.m. Central (contact Phap Lan for more information) or Dinh Quang Temple via Facebook livestream at 9:00 a.m. Central (contact David at dinhquangbuddhistsservice@gmail.com for more information).

Class Schedule (All Times are in Central Time)

12:00 pm Dharma Presentation (Guidelines provided)

1:15 pm Break/Walking Meditation

1:45 pm Dharma Discussion

2:45 pm Announcements & Sharing the Merit

- The presenter may use part of the discussion time to finish up the presentation.
- The presenter will facilitate a discussion based on the five questions prepared in advance and distributed to the class members before the class.
- Some presenters prefer to incorporate the study questions into the presentation and encourage questions and discussion throughout the presentation. This requires more advanced presentation and time management skills to maintain the recommended balance between presentation (75 minutes) and discussion (45 minutes).

Class Etiquette:

- Be respectful of each other and the Sangha.
- Allow everyone the opportunity to share during the discussion.
- A mindfulness bell may be offered to bring us back to the present.
- To let others know you would like to share, join palms together and say, “(name)-bowing in.” When you are finished speaking, join palms together and say, “(name)-bowing out.”
- Use the class time to practice mindful speech: instead of criticism and debate, we cultivate deep listening and loving speech.

8. Practice Sessions, Days of Mindfulness, & Retreats

National DTO Quarterly Practice Sessions

The National DTO virtual Sangha will host quarterly meetings via Zoom.

- These are important opportunities to get to know one another, practice together, and explore the Dharma.
- This year, we will be studying sutras together.
- Quarterly Sessions meet on Fridays at 6-8 PM-CT (7-9 PM-ET):
 - October 14, 2022,
 - January 20, 2023,
 - April 14, 2023, and
 - June 16, 2023.

Contact Elena at bravodharma4u@gmail.com for additional information.

LOCAL MINDFULNESS DAYS

Local DTO Sanghas may host Days of Mindfulness. We encourage students to participate in these opportunities to deepen their understanding and practices.

NATIONAL DTO RETREATS

Our practice is to have two DTO retreats and two DTO silent retreats each year.

December/Winter Retreat:

- Representatives from all the DTO Sanghas attend.
- The location rotates each year. Potential sites include New York, Texas, and Missouri.
- This year we will not be having a winter retreat.
- However, everyone is invited to attend the ordination ceremony for Phap Lan and David Ketchum which will be held at Dinh Quang Temple in Springfield, MO on September 3-4, 2022.

April/Spring Retreat:

- The spring retreat includes lay Dharma teacher and lay Priest ordinations.
- It is typically held in New York at [Mariandale Retreat Center](#).
- The Spring Retreat will be held at Mariandale from April 28-30, 2023.

Silent Retreats:

- There may be up to 2 silent retreats scheduled at Mariandale, for those who can attend.
- A silent retreat will be held at Mariandale from January 5-8, 2023.

9. Buddhist Studies Calendar (Year 4, 2022-2023)

Date (Noon to 3 pm Central Time)

8/13	Orientation to DTO (12:00-1:00 pm)
9/10	Understanding Our Mind Part I
9/24	Understanding Our Mind Parts II,III
10/8	Understanding Our Mind Part IV, V
10/14	<i>First Quarterly National Virtual Sangha</i> (Friday 7 PM ET/ 6PM Central)
10/22	Understanding Our Minds Part VI
11/5	Stepping into Freedom Parts I-III
11/12	Stepping into Freedom Part IV-End
12/10	Avatamsaka Sutra CH 39 pp 1135-1186 (up to but not including <i>Supratishthita</i>)
12/17	Avatamsaka Sutra CH 39 pp 1186-1235 (from <i>Supratishthita</i> to <i>Vidvan</i>)
1/5-1/8	<i>Silent Retreat at Mariandale</i>
1/14	Anger
1/20	<i>Second Quarterly National Virtual Sangha</i> (Friday 7 PM ET/ 6PM Central)
1/28	The Way of the Bodhisattva Intro; Text and Translation; CH 1,2; Appendix 1
2/11	The Way of the Bodhisattva CH 3,4,5,6,7
2/25	The Way of the Bodhisattva CH 8,9,10; Appendices 2,3
3/11	The Bodhisattva Ideal CH 1-4
3/25	The Bodhisattva Ideal CH 5-8
4/8	A Heart Full of Peace
4/14	<i>Third Quarterly National Virtual Sangha</i> (Friday 7 PM ET/ 6PM Central)
4/28-4/30	<i>Spring Retreat at Mariandale</i>
6/16	<i>Fourth Quarterly National Virtual Sangha</i> (Friday 7 PM ET/ 6PM Central)

10. Dharma Presentation Guidelines

Class participants are expected to make at least one presentation. If the class size is small, each will be required to make more than one presentation. Audit students are not required to make a presentation but are welcome to do so if they wish. If presenting with other students, it is recommended to either work out a common approach or divide the reading so that each person can be responsible for a specific section.

Whether working alone or with other presenters, provide at least five discussion questions for the class. If you are unsure about how to organize the presentation, ask for help from the mentor assigned to the selected reading. Mentors can be DTO lay Dharma Teachers, DTO lay Dharma Priests, or senior students. Advisors are also available for first year students. Contact the local Sangha leader or Phap Lan if you would like to have an advisor assigned to you.

The following structure should be kept in mind when developing the presentation:

Context

1. When was the book written and/or translated?
2. What facts about the author's life could help understand this book?
3. Does the book reflect a particular school of Buddhist thought? If so, which one?
4. How does the book fit into the overall curriculum theme of this class year? (Refer to the Course Description Section on page three.)
5. What is the significance of the book for the class and for Buddhism?

Content

1. Provide a summary of the assigned reading as a whole and avoid chapter by chapter presentation.
2. List and explain at least three key teachings offered.
3. List and define three key terms. (Refer to Appendix 1: Key Buddhist Concepts)

Application

1. Describe how this book will influence or has influenced your personal practice.
2. How does this book compare to other books discussed in the class?

* Each presenter will prepare five reflection questions about the major concepts in the presentation. **Submit your questions and answers by email to the local Sangha leader, the assigned mentor, or to Elena at bravodharma4u@gmail.com no later than the Wednesday before class.**

11. Prisoner Mentoring: Buddhist Correspondence Course

In addition to learning about the history, philosophy, and practice of Buddhism, DTO students seeking ordination are expected to mentor inmates enrolled in the Buddhist Correspondence Course. Our teacher, Thich Tri Hoang, is founder of and spiritual advisor to the Course. For 15 years, two dedicated members of the Dharma Teacher Order in Costa Rica (Revs. Adrienne and Richard Baksa) developed and administered all components of the Course, including communications between mentors and students. In 2018, we began to transfer operations to Phap Nguyen Temple. Jon takes care of placing book orders, programming, and serving as all around IT person. Phap Lan manages mentors and students, facilitates all communications, and answers mail from inmates from all over the country. Rev. Richard continues to serve as Director of the BAUS Prison Program, and he and Rev. Adrienne continue to serve as mentors for Jon and Phap Lan.

Mentors and students come from all over our country as well as from several foreign countries. We currently have approximately 600 students and 90 mentors in the Course. The mentor is provided with a mentor's manual which includes all prisoner assignments as well as the correct responses to all assignment questions and exercises. The prisoner reads the material and completes the assignment, mails it to the administrator who emails it to the mentor. The mentor grades the assignment and returns the graded assignment to the administrator, who then formats and mails it to the prisoner along with a copy of the next assignment and the quarterly newsletter. This ministry is a valuable service that truly makes a difference in the lives of inmates. The students are extremely grateful for the Course materials as well as for the opportunity to interact regularly with a spiritual mentor. You will learn quickly, through this service, how rewarding it is to help reduce the suffering of those who are incarcerated.

Please contact Phap Lan, Director of the Buddhist Correspondence course, to find out how to get started.

12. The Principles of the Dharma Teacher Order

1. Respect the teachings of all Buddhist traditions as your own.
2. As a manifestation of compassion, make efforts to become vegetarian.
3. Live the Precepts and the Bodhisattva Vows.
4. Knowledge should support practice, just as the left foot supports the right. Without practice, knowledge is hollow
5. Make efforts to bring Dharma to those who are in need. Contribute time, energy, and material means to the Sangha.
6. Have gratitude and loyalty to the many generations of the teachers who have passed the Dharma to us.
7. Treat all people equally. A person's sex, sexual orientation, race, social status, political view, and faith do not affect their Buddha Nature.
8. Live a simple life; be a monk (male or female) at heart.
9. Do not waste time arguing about either politics or religion.
10. Meet anger with patience and a calm mind. Do not return anger for anger. Always remember to set an example as a Dharma Teacher.
11. To realize wisdom and compassion look deeply into suffering and happiness; one should consider the happiness of others as our own happiness and vice versa, and the suffering of others as our own suffering and vice versa
12. Contemplate impermanence in order to value and enjoy the present.

For further information about the DTO, please visit:
<http://dharmateacherorder.org/>



Appendix 1: Key Buddhist Concepts

Below are some key Buddhist concepts that students are expected to learn in this class. Students should use this list to guide their reading, study, and class presentations.

Attachment

upādāna (Skt.; Pāli). Clinging or grasping, an intensified form of craving (tṛṣṇā). It is said to have four forms: (1) clinging to pleasurable sensual experiences (kāma); (2) clinging to views and theories (dṛṣṭi); (3) clinging to rules and rituals (śīlavrata-parāmārśa); clinging to belief in a soul or self (ātma-vāda). In the series of twelve links in the doctrine of Dependent Origination (pratītya-samutpāda), upādāna is preceded by craving (tṛṣṇā) and succeeded by becoming (bhava), illustrating the connection between desire and rebirth. The same point is made in references to the five aggregates as objects of grasping when they are referred to as the 'aggregates of attachment' (upādāna-skandha). from *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, by Damien Keown

Bodhicitta

(Skt., thought of awakening). A key term in Mahayana Buddhism denoting the state of mind of a Bodhisattva. Two aspects are recognized: the relative aspect, or the mind (citta) of a Bodhisattva directed towards enlightenment (bodhi); and the absolute aspect or the mind whose intrinsic nature is enlightenment. The former relative aspect is also said to be twofold: the bodhicitta of aspiration (praṇidhāna), when one announces one's intention to pursue the Bodhisattva Path, and the bodhicitta of application, by which one engages in the path. from *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, by Damien Keown

Bodhisattva

bodhisattva [Sanskrit,=enlightenment-being], in early Buddhism the term used to refer to the Buddha before he attained supreme enlightenment; more generally, any being destined for enlightenment or intent on enlightenment. The spiritual path of the bodhisattva is the central teaching of Mahayana Buddhism. One becomes a bodhisattva by arousing the "mind of enlightenment," taking a vow to attain supreme enlightenment for the sake of all beings. The bodhisattva does not aspire to leave the round of birth-and-death (samsara) before all beings are saved; he is thus distinguished from the arahant of earlier Buddhism, who allegedly seeks nirvana only for himself and who, according to Mahayana teaching, has an inferior spiritual attainment. The practice of a bodhisattva consists of the six "perfections" or paramitas: charity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), forbearance (*ksanti*), diligence (*virya*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). Both laymen and monks may be regarded as bodhisattvas. from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th edition

Buddha

An epithet of those who successfully break the hold of ignorance, liberate themselves from cyclic existence, and teach others the path to liberation. Derived from the Sanskrit root budh, "to awaken," it refers to someone who attains nirvana through meditative practice and the cultivation of such qualities as wisdom, patience, and generosity. Such a person will never again be reborn within cyclic existence, as all the cognitive ties that bind ordinary beings to continued rebirth have been severed. Through their meditative practice, buddhas have eliminated all craving and defilements. the buddha of the present era is referred to as "Sakyamuni" ("Sage of the Sakyas"). He was born Siddhartha Gautama, a member of the Sakya clan. from *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by John Powers

Buddhanature

Buddha-nature (Skt., buddhatā); according to the Mahāyāna view, the true, immutable, and eternal nature of all beings. Since all beings possess buddha-nature, it is possible for them to attain enlightenment and become a buddha, regardless of what level of existence they occupy. The interpretation of the essence of buddha-nature varies from school to school; there is controversy over whether all beings and also inanimate entities actually possess buddha-nature.

from *The Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen*

Consciousness

vijñāna (Skt.; Pāli, viññāna). Consciousness or awareness, in both its active, discriminative form of knowing, and its subliminal or unconscious bodily and psychic functions. It is important to realize that vijñāna means more than the stream of mental awareness, which the English word 'consciousness' primarily denotes. For example, from the earliest times Buddhist sources have distinguished six forms of vijñāna corresponding to the six senses, thus eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, taste-consciousness, touch-consciousness, bodily consciousness, and mental consciousness. Vijñāna thus encompasses both the Western terms 'conscious' and 'unconscious' and for that reason is difficult to translate by any single term. It is an important element in the Buddhist analysis of human nature as the last of the five aggregates (skandhas). In the scheme of Dependent Origination (pratītya-samutpāda) it forms the third link in the twelvefold series. from *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, by Damien Keown

Dharma

As doctrine, *Dharma* means the teachings of Buddha, and Buddhism in general. Dharma is a moral imperative for a Buddhist, for it is through observing the Buddha's teachings that one can reach enlightenment and nirvana. By following the Dharma one will see immediate results; one will experience it at once, without lag. Dharma in this sense is a means toward salvation. This then is the religious imperative behind Buddhism as a whole. Dharma is what makes Buddhism relevant, today as well as in the past. The dharmas of existence: Early Buddhism used the idea of dharmas to mean elements of existence. The idea embraced all aspects of reality, including mind. Some schools also included unconditioned aspects of reality, such as those found in the state of NIRVANA, while other schools meant the term *dharmas* to apply to only the objects of consciousness. from *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by Edward A. Irons

Emptiness

Emptiness was a concept fully developed by the Mahayana thinkers. However, its source no doubt lies in the earlier teachings on non-self, or *ANATMAN*. Both these terms are in turn related to the ZEN BUDDHISM concept of *WU* (in Japanese, *mu*), or nonbeing. *Sunyata* does not simply involve a denial of existence or nihilism. *Sunyata* means that the phenomena of existence, all dharmas, have no intrinsic identities. Every aspect of reality is, according to the principles of *PRATITYA-SAMUTPADA*, conditioned in some way. And sunyata is ultimately equal to another Buddhist concept, *TATHATA*, "suchness." from *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by Edward A. Irons

Five Hindrances

Many are the obstacles which block the road to spiritual progress, but there are five in particular which, under the name of hindrances (*nivarana*), are often mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures:

1. Sensual desire (*kamacchanda*),
2. Ill-will (*byapada*),
3. Sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*),
4. Restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca-kukkucca*),
5. Skeptical doubt (*vicikiccha*).

They are called "hindrances" because they hinder and envelop the mind in many ways, obstructing its development (*bhavana*). According to the Buddhist teachings, spiritual development is twofold: through tranquillity (*samatha-bhavana*) and through insight (*vipassana-bhavana*). Tranquillity is gained by complete concentration of the mind during the meditative absorptions (*jhana*). For achieving these absorptions, the overcoming of the five hindrances, at least temporarily, is a preliminary condition. It is especially in the context of achieving the absorptions that the Buddha often mentions the five hindrances in his discourses. Nyanaponika Thera, *The Wheel*, Publication No. 26, Buddhist Publication Society

Five skandhas

The five components of the psycho-physical personality, and the factors on the basis of which ordinary beings impute the false notion of a "self" (atman): 1/ form (rupa); 2/ feelings (vedana); 3/ discrimination (samjna); 4/ compositional factors (samskara); and 5/ consciousness (vijnana). Because these components are constantly changing, beings who attempt to cling to the "self" are subject to suffering. These factors are often referred to as "aggregates of attachment" (upadana-skandha) because, although they are impermanent and changing, ordinary beings (that is, those who have not attained the awareness of arhats and buddhas) develop desire for them. from *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by John Powers

Four immeasurables/Four brahmaviharas

Four sublime states of mind have been taught by the Buddha:

- Love or Loving-kindness (*metta*)
- Compassion (*karuna*)
- Sympathetic Joy (*mudita*)
- Equanimity (*upekkha*)

In Pali, the language of the Buddhist scriptures, these four are known under the name of *Brahma-vihara*. This term may be rendered by: excellent, lofty or sublime states of mind; or alternatively, by: Brahma-like, god-like or divine abodes. These four attitudes are said to be *excellent* or *sublime* because they are the right or ideal way of conduct towards living beings (*sattesu samma patipatti*). They provide, in fact, the answer to all situations arising from social contact. They are the great removers of tension, the great peace-makers in social conflict, and the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence. They level social barriers, build harmonious communities, awaken slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revive joy and hope long abandoned, and promote human brotherhood against the forces of egotism. Nyanaponika Thera, *The Wheel*, Publication No. 6, Buddhist Publication Society

Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths are a teaching tool. The Buddha's first sermon was presented to his five wandering ascetic friends at the Deer Park in Varanasi, near modern Sarnath. Here he first presented the idea of the Four Noble Truths (*catvari ariyasatyan*). The Four Noble Truths present the Buddha's fundamental understanding of reality. Suffering (*DUKKHA*) is part of life. Suffering is caused by desire (*TANHA*). There is a way (*MARGA*) [the Eightfold Path] to the cessation of suffering (*NIRODHA*). These ideas are found throughout Buddhist literature. It is said the Buddha first decided to teach the Four Noble Truths because he felt the Twelve-fold Chain of Dependent Origination, his detailed explanation of *PRATITYA-SAMUTPADA* (codependent arising), would be too difficult for people to grasp. The Four Noble Truths are a way of helping people understand this concept. The Eightfold Path is often summarized by a threefold formula of *SILA* (morality), *SAMADHI* (concentration), and *PRAJNA* (wisdom), what some writers call the "threefold practice," or the three "trainings." Right view and right thought are associated with wisdom; right speech, right action, and right livelihood with morality; right mindfulness and right concentration with samadhi; and right effort with all three areas of practice. from *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by Edward A. Irons

Interdependent origination

The term *pratitya-samutpada* (Pali, *paticca-samuppada*), "dependent origination" or "dependent arising," was first used by the Buddha to characterize the understanding of the nature of human existence that he had attained at his enlightenment. Essentially a doctrine of causality, this notion is so central to Buddhist thought that a proper understanding of *pratitya-samutpada* is often declared tantamount to enlightenment itself. In it, an entire complex of notions about moral responsibility, human freedom, the process of rebirth, and the path to liberation coalesce. from *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Lindsay Jones, ed. (entry by David Kalupahana)

Interpenetration

There is one particular feature of the world as seen by a Buddha which is repeatedly stressed and for which the Avatamsaka sutra is justly famous. This is interpenetration. In a world with no hard edges, the world of luminous flow without shadows, all things infinitely interpenetrate:

They...perceive that the fields full of assemblies, the being and aeons which are as many as all the dust particles, are all present in every particle of dust. They perceive that the many fields and assemblies and the beings and atoms are all reflected in each particle of dust. (Gomez 1967:xxxviii)

The world as seen by the Buddhas, the dharmadhātu, the way things really are, is one of infinite interpenetration. Inside everything is everything else. And yet not things are confused. As a description of the way things are in our unenlightened world this seems incredible. But the dharmadhātu is the world as seen by the Buddha wherein there is no question of the world (an objectively real world 'out there') as distinct from meditative vision. *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, by Paul Williams

Karma

Buddhist ethical theory is primarily concerned with volitional actions, that is, those actions that result from deliberate choice. Such actions set in motion a series of events that inevitably produce concordant results. These results may be either pleasant or unpleasant, depending on the original volition. In some cases the results of actions are experienced immediately, and in others they are only manifested at a later time. Some karmic results do not accrue until a future life. from *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by John Powers

Meditation

English word often used to translate a range of more specific indigenous terms denoting techniques and practices designed to concentrate and focus the mind. See *bhāvanā; samādhi; sādhana; vipaśyanā; śamatha*. from *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, by Damien Keown

Merit

Puṇya (Pāli *puñña*): The karmic result of the voluntary performance of virtuous actions. Such actions may include performance of pujas, prayer, or giving gifts to the monastic community (saṃgha). In Theravada countries, making merit is a central focus of the religious lives of laypeople, who are generally thought to be incapable of attaining the higher levels of meditative practice or nirvāṇa. In early Buddhism, it appears that it was assumed that merit is non-transferable, but in Mahayana the doctrine of "transference of merit" became widespread, and is said to be one of the key virtues of a bodhisattva, who willingly gives away the karmic benefits of his/her good works for the benefit of others. from *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by John Powers

Mindfulness

smṛti (Skt.; Pāli, sati). Mindfulness or awareness. An alert state of mind that should be cultivated constantly as the foundation for understanding and insight (prajñā). Many meditational practices exist to help develop mindfulness, notably the four Foundations of Mindfulness (smṛti-upasthāna). Smṛti features in many formulations of virtues: it is the third of the Five Powers (bala), the first of the Factors of Awakening (bodhyaṅga), and the seventh of the eight factors of the Eightfold Path.

from [*A Dictionary of Buddhism*](#), by Damien Keown

Nirvana

In Indian religious thought, the supreme goal of certain meditation disciplines. Although it occurs in the literatures of a number of ancient Indian traditions, the Sanskrit term *nirvāṇa* is most commonly associated with Buddhism, in which it is the oldest and most common designation for the goal of the Buddhist path. It is used to refer to the extinction of desire, hatred, and ignorance and, ultimately, of suffering and rebirth. Literally, it

means “blowing out” or “becoming extinguished,” as when a flame is blown out or a fire burns out. ... Nirvana was not regarded as a place...but as a state of absence, notably the absence of suffering. Exactly what persisted in the state of nirvana has been the subject of considerable discussion over the history of the tradition, though it has been described as bliss—unchanging, secure, and unconditioned.

Buddhist thinkers have distinguished between “the nirvana with remainder,” a state achieved prior to death, where “the remainder” refers to the mind and body of this final existence, and “the nirvana without remainder,” which is achieved at death when the causes of all future existence have been extinguished and the chain of causation of both physical form and of consciousness have been finally terminated. These states were available to all who followed the Buddhist path to its conclusion. The Buddha himself is said to have realized nirvana when he achieved enlightenment at the age of 35. Although he destroyed the cause of future rebirth, he continued to live for another 45 years. When he died, he entered nirvana, never to be born again. from *Encyclopedia Britannica*, entry by Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

Paramitas/Paramis

The six (and sometimes ten) qualities that bodhisattvas cultivate on the path to buddhahood: 1/ generosity (dana); 2/ ethics (sila); 3/ patience (ksanti); 4/ effort (virya); 5/ concentration (dhyana); and 6/ wisdom (prajna). An additional four are often presented in texts that correlate their cultivation with attainment of the ten bodhisattva “levels” (bhumi): 7/ skill in means (upaya-kausalya); 8/ aspiration (pranidhana); 9/ power (bala); and wisdom (jnana). from *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by John Powers

Rebirth

The belief (also transmigration, metempsychosis, reincarnation, etc.) common in Eastern religions, that there is a continuity from one life to a next, either of a self or soul (ātman), or, in the case of Buddhism, of the process itself. Buddhism teaches a karmically controlled continuity of consciousnesses between lives but denies that there is an ātman or inherently existing self which is the bearer of these consciousnesses. There are six realms of rebirth: three are pleasant (peaceful deities [deva], wrathful deities [asura], and humans), and three are unpleasant (animals, hungry ghosts [preta], and hell-beings).

from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*

Samsara

The beginningless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in which ordinary beings are trapped. According to Buddhism, the universe is beginningless and endless, and the beings who dwell within it transmigrate from life to life in dependence upon their volitional actions. Due to ignorance of the true nature of reality, they are generally predisposed toward actions and attitudes that lead to negative consequences. This process inevitably results in repeated suffering, disappointment, and death, and so the main goal of Buddhism is to extricate oneself from the cycle, which can only be done through religious practice that enables one to transform one's negative attitudes and proclivities and develop direct intuitive understanding of the nature of reality. This serves to break the cycle and can lead to full liberation. from *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by John Powers

Seven factors of awakening

bodhyaṅga (Pāli, bojjhaṅga). A list of seven factors that lead to or constitute bodhi, or awakening. Often referred to as the seven ‘limbs of enlightenment’, the seven items are listed in Pāli sources as: (1) mind-fulness (sati); (2) investigation of the Dharma (dharma-vicaya); (3) energy (viriya); (4) joy (pīti); (5) tranquillity (passaddhi); (6) meditation (samādhi); (7) equanimity (upekkhā). The seven occur as the sixth of the 37 ‘factors of enlightenment’ (bodhi-pāṅṣika-dharma).

from *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, by Damien Keown

Three (or Four) Dharma Seals

Buddhism is distinguished by four characteristics, or “seals.” Actually, if all these four seals are found in a path or a philosophy, it doesn’t matter whether you call it Buddhist or not. You can call it what you like; the words “Buddhist” or “Buddhism” are not important. The point is that if this path contains these four seals, it can be considered the path of the Buddha. Therefore, these four characteristics are called “the Four Seals of Dharma.” They are:

- *All compounded things are impermanent.*
- *All emotions are painful.* This is something that only Buddhists would talk about. Many religions worship things like love with celebration and songs. Buddhists think, “This is all suffering.”
- *All phenomena are empty; they are without inherent existence.* This is actually the ultimate view of Buddhism; the other three are grounded on this third seal.
- The fourth seal is that *nirvana is beyond extremes.* From *Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche*

Three Refuges and Precepts

triśaraṇa (Skt.; Pāli, tisaraṇa). The ‘three refuges’, namely the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, particularly when used as a profession of faith. The formal procedure by which a layman becomes a Buddhist is by ‘taking refuge’, which involves repeating three times the formula ‘I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Saṃgha’ (in Pali, Buddhāṃ saraṇam gacchāmi, Dhammāṃ saraṇam gacchāmi, Saṃghaṃ saraṇam gacchāmi). The utterance of this formula is followed by recital of the Five Precepts (panca-sila). In addition to the three refuges Tibetan forms of Buddhism, influenced by tantric Buddhism, have added the guru as an additional refuge to the formula, since access to the other three refuges is considered to be dependent upon the kindness of a teacher. The three refuges are also referred to as the ‘three jewels’ (triratna). from *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, by Damien Keown

Three root defilements/Three poisons

The unwholesome mental states are called *kilesas*. The word can be translated afflictions because they bring suffering. It can also be translated defilements because they defile and corrupt the mind. The Buddha has analyzed the nature of the defilements and has beautifully explained how they can all be traced to the three "root defilements" of greed, hatred, and delusion. Our task in following the Buddha's teaching, in practicing the Dhamma, is to overcome, to eliminate, to abandon the defilements of greed and hatred that give rise to many other branch defilements. But greed and hatred spring ultimately from delusion or ignorance. And thus to eliminate all the defilements, we have to eliminate ignorance. Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, *BPS Newsletter*, No. 55, 2006

Two truths

Two Truths (Skt., satya-dvaya). The two levels of truth or reality in Madhyamaka philosophy, known as relative truth (saṃvṛti-satya) and absolute truth (paramārtha-satya). In many forms of Buddhism, the concept of two levels of truth concerned the validity of epistemological experience but in some forms of Mahāyāna it was also applied to matters of ontology. This is especially so in later Madhyamaka where saṃvṛti-satya applies to the mundane reality of saṃsāra and paramārtha-satya to the transcendental reality of enlightenment and nirvāṇa. The apparent hiatus between these two levels of reality or truth led to serious soteriological difficulties which generated much debate in later Mahāyāna concerning the relationship between these two forms of truth or reality. from *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, by Damien Keown

Upaya

Upaya-kausalya (Pali upaya-kosalla): The ability to adapt Buddhist teachings and practices to the level of understanding of one's audience. This is particularly important in Mahayana, where it is said to be one of the most important abilities developed by bodhisattvas. It is the seventh in the tenfold list of perfections (paramita) and is cultivated on the seventh bodhisattva "level" (bhumi). from *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, by John Powers

Wisdom

Prajñā (Pali panna): In general, this refers to the development of intuitive understanding of key Buddhist concepts. In Mahayana, the "perfection of wisdom" is the sixth of the "perfections" (paramita) that a bodhisattva cultivates on the path to buddhahood. In Mahayana it is associated with direct perception of emptiness (sunyata) and is attained on the sixth bodhisattva "level" (bhumi). Along with karuna (compassion), it is one of the two main qualities that bodhisattvas cultivate in pursuit of buddhahood.