

Pali/English glossary

The following words are mostly in Pali, the language of the Theravadan Buddhist scriptures. They are brief translations for quick reference, rather than exhaustive or refined definitions. Not all of the foreign words found in the talks are listed here, as many are defined as they are used. Note also that Pali diacriticals have been omitted within this book as few people are familiar with the specialized pronunciation conventions.

ajahn (Thai): ‘teacher’, a title given to a monastic who has been ordained for ten or more years.

anagarika: ‘homeless one’; a novice, still technically a lay person, who lives in a monastery and follows the Eight Precepts.

anatta: ‘not self’, i.e. impersonal, without individual essence.

anicca: impermanent, transient, having the nature to arise and pass away.

bhikkhu: In Buddhism, a monk who lives on alms and abides by the training precepts which define a life of renunciation and simplicity.

dana: generosity. Hence, often used to refer to an offering to a monastic community

dhamma: This word is used in several ways. It can refer to the Buddha’s Teaching, as contained in the scriptures; to the Ultimate Truth towards which the teaching points; to a discrete ‘moment’ of life, seen as it really is.

dukkha: *literally, 'hard to bear'; dis-ease, restlessness of mind, discontent or suffering, anguish, conflict, unsatisfactoriness.*

kamma: *action or cause (and by extension, the result or effect) which is created or recreated by habitual impulse, volition, natural energies. (Sanskrit: karma.)*

khanda: *'heap'; the term the Buddha used to refer to each of the five components of human psycho-physical existence.*

metta: *'loving-kindness.'*

Nibbana: *freedom from attachments. The basis for the enlightened vision of things as they are. (Sanskrit: Nirvana.)*

samana: *one who has entered the Holy Life.*

samanera (Thai: samanen): *The novice stage for a monastic.*

samsara: *the unenlightened, unsatisfactory experience of life.*

sangha: *the community of those who practise the Buddha's Way. Often, more specifically, those who have formally committed themselves to the lifestyle of a mendicant monk or nun.*

sutta: *a Buddhist scripture.*

tudong (Thai): *a mendicant's wandering practice, dating back to the Buddha's time. Hence the phrase 'to wander (or 'go') tudong.'*

vinaya: *the monastic discipline, or the scriptural collection of its rules and commentaries.*

vipassana: *the penetrative insight of meditation, as distinguished from simple mental tranquility.*