

# Buddhist

DICTIONARY

by Nyanatiloka



Manual of  
Buddhist Terms and Doctrines

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edited by Nyanaponika

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FROM THE  
P R E F A C E  
TO THE FIRST EDITION

As a first attempt of an authentical dictionary of Buddhist doctrinal terms, used in the Pali Canon and its Commentaries, this present manual will fill a real gap felt by many students of Buddhism. It provides the reader not with a mere superficial enumeration of important Pali terms and their English equivalents, but offers him precise and authentic definitions and explanations of canonical and post-canonical terms and doctrines, based on Sutta, Abhidhamma and Commentaries, and illustrated by numerous quotations taken from these sources, so that, if any one wishes, he could, by intelligently joining together the different articles, produce without difficulty a complete exposition of the entire teachings of Buddhism.

As already pointed out by the author in the preface to his Guide through the Abhidhamma-Pitaka (Colombo 1938), there are found in the Abhidhamma-Canon numerous technical terms not met with in the Sutta-Canon: and again other terms are found only in the Commentaries and not in Sutta and Abhidhamma. The author therefore has made a first attempt—without however laying any claim to absolute reliability or completeness in this by no means easy undertaking—to indicate in the Appendix all the terms that in the oldest Sutta-Texts are either not found at all, or at least not in the same form or meaning, and to set forth how far these are deviations from the older texts, or further developments.

In this connection, the author wishes to state that the often quoted Patisambhidā-Magga, as well as Niddesa, Buddhavamsa and Cariya-piṭaka, though included in the Khuddaka-Nikāya of the Sutta-Pitaka, nevertheless bear throughout the character of Commentaries and, though apparently older than the Sutta-Commentaries handed down to us in Buddhaghosa's diction, must doubtless belong to a later period of origin than the Abhidhamma-Canon.

In rendering the terms into English, I often had to differ considerably from the interpretation of Western scholars and to introduce quite new words. A great number of such earlier translations must be considered partly as totally incorrect, partly as misleading, or at the very least ambiguous. Incorrect are, for instance, the English renderings of *nāma-rūpa* by 'name and form'; *javana* (impulsion, i.e. the karmical impulsive moments) by 'apperception', etc.

The expositions concerning the true nature of the 8-fold path, the 4 noble truths, the *paṭiccasamuppāda* and the 5 groups of existence, doctrines which, with regard to their true nature, have been often misunderstood by Western authors, are sure to come to many as a revelation.



On the doctrine of *anattā*, or 'Egolessness', i.e. the impersonality and emptiness of all phenomena of existence, the author repeatedly felt the necessity of throwing light from every possible point of view, for it is exactly this doctrine which, together with the doctrine of the conditionality of all phenomena of existence, constitutes the very essence of the whole Teaching of the Buddha, without which it will be by no means possible to understand it in its true light. Thus the doctrine of Impersonality runs like a red thread right through the whole book.

May this little manual provide an ever-helpful companion and *vade mecum* to all earnest students in their study of the original Buddhist scriptures, and also give to Buddhist authors and lecturers the opportunity of supplementing and deepening their knowledge of the profound teachings of the Buddha!

Should it, for a better understanding, prove necessary to give to certain subjects a more detailed treatment, the carrying out of this task may be reserved for a later edition of this work.

## NYANATILOKA.

**"Central Internment Camp"**

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