
Advanced Certificate in Buddhism and Psychology

Buddhist Meditation

Buddhist Meditation: Key Terms and Vocabulary

Buddhist meditation, also known as Vipassana or Insight meditation, is a practice that aims to develop mindfulness, concentration, and insight. This glossary will explain some of the key terms and vocabulary associated with Buddhist meditation as part of the Advanced Certificate in Buddhism and Psychology.

1. Mindfulness (Sati): Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment with a non-judgmental attitude. It involves bringing awareness to one's thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations without getting caught up in them.

Example: While meditating, if you notice your mind wandering, mindfulness involves gently bringing your attention back to your breath without judging or criticizing yourself.

2. Concentration (Samadhi): Concentration is the ability to focus one's attention on a single object or sensation for an extended period. In Buddhist meditation, this often involves focusing on the breath, but it can also involve focusing on a visual image, a sound, or a mantra.

Example: During meditation, if you find yourself getting distracted by thoughts or sounds, concentration involves gently bringing your attention back to your breath and maintaining your focus.

3. Insight (Vipassana): Insight is the deep understanding or wisdom that arises from meditation practice. It involves seeing things as they really are, without the filters of our assumptions, beliefs, and biases.

Example: Through meditation, you may gain insight into the impermanent nature of all things, including your own thoughts and emotions.

4. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness are a framework for developing mindfulness in daily life. They include:

- * Mindfulness of the body
- * Mindfulness of feelings
- * Mindfulness of the mind
- * Mindfulness of mental objects

Example: Mindfulness of the body might involve paying attention to sensations in the body during meditation or during daily activities like walking or eating.

5. The Five Hindrances: The Five Hindrances are obstacles that can arise during meditation practice. They include:

- * Sensory desire
- * Ill will
- * Sloth and torpor
- * Restlessness and remorse
- * Doubt

Example: Sensory desire might involve getting caught up in thoughts about food or sex during meditation, while ill will might involve feelings of anger or frustration.

6. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment: The Seven Factors of Enlightenment are qualities that can arise during meditation practice and lead to awakening. They include:

- * Mindfulness
- * Investigation
- * Energy
- * Joy
- * Tranquility
- * Concentration
- * Equanimity

Example: Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment, while investigation involves exploring one's experience with curiosity and interest.

7. Jhanas: Jhanas are deep states of concentration and absorption that can arise during meditation practice. There are eight jhanas in total, each with its own unique qualities and characteristics.

Example: The first jhana involves a sense of rapture and joy, while the second jhana involves a sense of calm and tranquility.

8. Metta: Metta is a Pali word that means "loving-kindness." It is a practice of cultivating feelings of love and kindness towards oneself and others.

Example: During a metta meditation, you might repeat phrases like "may I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be safe, may I live with ease" to cultivate feelings of loving-kindness towards yourself.

9. Vipassana: Vipassana is a Pali word that means "insight" or "clear seeing." It is a form of meditation that involves developing mindfulness and insight into the nature of reality.

Example: During a Vipassana meditation, you might focus on the sensations in your body, observing them with a sense of curiosity and non-attachment.

10. Samatha: Samatha is a Pali word that means "calm abiding." It is a form of meditation that involves developing concentration and tranquility.

Example: During a samatha meditation, you might focus on a single object, such as your breath, and maintain your attention on it for an extended period.

In conclusion, Buddhist meditation involves a rich vocabulary and set of practices that can help individuals develop mindfulness, concentration, and insight. By understanding terms like mindfulness, concentration, insight, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Five Hindrances, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, Jhanas, Metta, Vipassana, and Samatha, students of the Advanced Certificate in Buddhism and Psychology can deepen their understanding and practice of Buddhist meditation. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced meditator, these terms and practices can help you cultivate a more present, compassionate, and wise approach to life.