Conclusion
Our main concern in the thesis was the sociological study of Young Lamas in the Ladakh society and culture. The topic as such demanded a comprehensive field study of the area concerned. Normally we were required to conduct a survey encompassing whole region of Ladakh comprising two districts of Leh and Kargil spreading over an area of 45110 sq. K.M, 14036 sq. K.M. respectively with population distribution as 3, 8 persons respectively per / sq. K.M. (2001 census). As per the recent census the ratio of Lamas to the general population is in the ratio of 30: 1. The monasteries, to accommodate such a large number of Lamas, are numerous and situated at every important place connected with some important event or personality. The monasteries are not necessarily in or near the urban areas but are generally situated in far-flung areas away from the maddening crowds in the mountainous barren rock grooves or on the rock cliffs which made our survey difficult to conduct within a short period of time. There are fourteen important monasteries situated in and around Leh and every monastery has more than hundred inmates. We initially wanted to make a survey of all these monasteries but given the type and kind of the terrain, the hostile geographical conditions, the facilities of accommodation and transportation to conduct such an exhaustive field work coupled with the constraints of time available to a research scholar we had to delimit our area of study. Hence our thesis limited itself to the exhaustive, comprehensive and detailed survey of only three main monasteries at a distance of no less the 150 K.m from each other. However, we of course made a
general survey of few other monasteries around each one of the main monasteries. The Hemis, Lamayuru and Likir which provided us a profitable material for a comparative study.

In order to build up a necessary historical and intellectual background of our problem we conceived a chaptrization where we provided three early chapters on:

a) Introduction laying main emphasis on the evolution of Buddhism, its development in history and its propagation within India.

b) Evolution of Lamaism in Tibet and Ladakh.

c) Role of Lamas.

Save the role of Lamas two chapters are mainly based on our theoretical study where the third chapter role of Lamas is of mixed nature combining field study with our theoretical study. First two chapters draw upon the available historical and scriptural material.

6th century B.C. saw the rise of two important socio-ethical philosophies of their time which later emerged as two distinct religions of the east establishing great monarchies, one the Zoroastrianism which emerged in Balkh (Afghanistan) and another Buddhism which struck roots in Balkh and emerged supposedly in Nepal. The former was the God centered religion and the latter the man centered one. Man in Buddhism is considered not only simple agent of change in the universe, but also the master of his own destiny. Evil and good are both possibilities inherent in him. Buddhism with its emphasis on individual perfection is a social philosophy which by implication tries to create society based on Dhamma (the universal law). It does not make man to submit to the
extraneous standards which envisions man as a mere means to an end but made him personally responsible for his actions and a connoisseur of his doings. Vedas and other scriptures as interpreted by Brahmans had no relevance for a man as it was projected as an instrument to create a society which was caste ridden and favorable to a section of the society only. Vedas had made man subservient to his own kind. Buddhism considered all kinds of closed systems as enslavement of man. Evil is neither in the goods nor in any thing exterior to man. It is in fact given in the very nature of the man's desire. Any desire is a lack, a lack which creates craving, craving for the time past, time fleeting and time yet to arrive. The origin of suffering lies their in. The emergence of craving is basically based on ignorance. A man who is ignorant about his facticity and status is ignorant and devoid of true knowledge. He is not able to understand the true nature of things and is led into the trap of Birth and death. Thus the desire is ignorance and ignorance is the cause of suffering. Man is limited and enslaved by his own doings. In order to over come ones limitations one needs to conquer his desires. This could well be achieved by knowledge which is the enlightenment of the soul. Once men achieve this enlightenment he is free of bondage and wheel of birth and rebirth. Buddhism does not need any agent or a measure external to man to provide him instructions or principles.

After the death of the Buddha there arose great controversies among his followers with regard to the interpretation of the teachings of Buddha and also about the rules of discipline.

Conclusion
Buddhist doctrine continued to change and the final schism occurred at the fourth Great council held in Kashmir, under the Patronage of the Kushan emperor, Kanishka (A.D 78 – 103), some time during the first or second century A.D. the accounts of Kanishka’s council exhibit not only the prominence of the Trevada, (whose canon is in pali) Sarvastivada (whose canon was in Sanskrit) and the Buddha Bhakti, but also allude to the appearance of the Mahayana as contrasted with the Hinayana.

The first important sect of Hinayana was Sthavira (elder). Within Sthavira developed such important sects as the sarastivada (whose canon was in sanskrit) and the Theravadins (whose canon is in pali) and who today are the only surviving representatives of the whole of the Hinayana Buddhism.

Mahayana Buddhism is almost the complete antithesis of Hinayana, for unlike Hinayana it is devotional Buddhism. It has forsaken the lone quest for Nirvana and replaced it with concern for the salvation of all living creatures.

Hinayanists teach that Buddha was just a man, an extraordinary man, but a man nevertheless.

Mahayana Buddhism invests him with divine nature. Buddha, they say, was a physical expression of a supreme physical being which exists in three states. The Body of Essence, the Body of Bliss and the created Body. All living creatures are part of the Body of Essence, which is external and universal, therefore, all are one and for the matter all are Buddha. The historical Buddha was the physical manifestation of the created Body. The Body of Bliss exists in the heavens.
where it remains and continues until all beings are united in the Body of Essence.

The other important form of Buddhism is vajrayana “the third vehicle.” Vajrayana was a progression and a natural development of Mahayanaist philosophy. The vajrayana sect developed and extended the Bodhisatta principle and combined it with elements of esoteric Brahmanism current at the time. The mysticism of the saivita cult was adopted by Buddhists and grafted on to the Bodhisattva idea. This was the recognition of the active energy of the deity personified in the female form, his Shakti. This introduced female deities into the Mahayana Buddhist Pantheon. The female aspect is prevalent at all levels from the Shaktis of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

In modern times, there are two major schools of Buddhism:
1. Hinayana or Theravada, which is found chiefly in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos.
2. Mahayana, which found in China, Tibet and Japan. Vajrayana is not a separate school but is an added characteristic of the Mahayana Buddhism of Tibet.

By the time Buddhism reached Ladakh it was already introduced to some such philosophies and creeds which believed in the concept of Shaktis (powers) regress meditation, mental and physical exercises (Yoga) and the division of the world into two hostile forces of good and evil where man was the important factor of change and basically opponent of evil. Though he under the Vail of ignorance had temporarily overwhelmed by the ignorance. Hinayana
Buddhism hardly reached Ladakh it was the *Mahayan* sect which as early as 2nd century A.D. makes its first presence in Ladakh as is evidenced by the *Khaltse* inscription of *Kajola Kadiphisis* decoded by Cunningham and modified later by B.K. Kaul. Dambi. This period is supposed to be the first arrival of Buddhism, in Ladakh. At this period Buddhism could only penetrate in the Purig region of western Ladakh and lasted for a short period. As it was soon run over by the *Dardic* groups who believed in *Bon-Chos* religion of Tibet. For nearly Eight hundred years Buddhism remained active in the neighborhood of Ladakh i.e. Kashmir where it found congenial atmosphere patronizing rulers and scholars well versed in *Shaivism*, (Tantric version) and *Shakti* cults. Once Buddhism found itself at the receiving end of the rulers of Kashmir who destroyed not only Buddhist monuments but also tried to extinguish the flame of Buddhist philosophy, Buddhists began to look for new places to protect preserve and propagate their faith. While Kashmir now became the paradise lost for the Buddhists, Ladakh emerged as a paradise regained. As Ladakh was on the cross-roads to central Asia, Tibet and Kashmir Buddhism reached it from all the three sources, but the dominant traits are those from Kashmir and Tibet only. Ladakh Buddhism is generally known as Lamaism, which is a misnomer. Lamaism was coined originally by German scholar, *Kappon*, in 1859 to describe the unique features of Buddhism under the auspicious of monks who believed in *Tantric* cults and various gods whose presence in the system is generally considered as anomalous to pure Buddhism preached by Buddha.

Conclusion
The way world is shaping to day, the possession of information is emerging as a more significant weapon in mans encounters with his world both within and extraneous to him. It is the quantum of information available in its different sections which determines, in turn, the measure of the change undergoing in the society. In a “situation” change is newer partial, sectarian or isolated. Change could be witnesses as having intensity of different measures or acceleration but it will never leave its other parts or components in its original state of inertia.

Ladakh which had lost its status as an entrepot of trade and commerce between Central Asia and India for a brief period during Dogra occupation is now emerging as a major destination of world tourists bringing in avenues of more information and exposure and creating a need for more and more facilities. For last twenty years the intensity in the implementation of welfare schemes has significantly increased. Establishment of military cantonments has given a further fillip to ever-increasing service sector in the region besides generating other corresponding avenues of economic activity. The quality, make and origin of the goods in the trade markets of Leh (and other urban centers to a degree) indicate, in the first place the volume of the trade going on besides also being indicative of the purchasing capacity of the people concerned. Ladakhis, in general, are now, on move. They have become more responsive to new fashions. Through old ways patterns are not uncommon, new dress codes, food habits and living styles are nevertheless becoming more and more pronounced. The earlier indifferent or/and meek
responses to political manicuring has metamorphosed into better, purpose oriented, significant responses. The monasteries, which always were in the centre of major socio-politic-economic activities (through not in the centre of the storm) are still the guiding principles the society concerned.

The physical isolation of the monasteries not with standing Lamas are connected with their society through various knots which are functional and mutually beneficial. No activity in the society, whether sacred or secular is complete without the "necessary service" from the monk or monks.

Monasteries as discussed in the chapter three are not convents in usual European sense. They are hub of socio-religious activities attending, even to the people strained social relations. During the recent Buddhist agitation for special status for Ladakh, Lamas happened to be in the vanguard of agitation. The laity-Lama relation is close. Lama are not, as is generally supposed, confined to the four walls of this monastery but are, of this own and per necessity roaming in the length and breadth of Ladakh. Through monasteries are the repositories of tradition, old practices and apparently "recalcitrant to change" values Lamas have already tasted the benefits of change around and are, under the new requirements effecting changes within the monastic system and tolerating, nay even giving their sanctions to the "expression of changes" in the society. The acquired affluences are reflected within the monasteries as well.

Electronic mass media, universal education and more easy means of communication have helped create an awareness among people which questions the existence of
many unsustainable beliefs and practices and introduces the society to new ideas which are more fascinating and apparently more practical. Entry of new goals also bring along new values and patterns of life. Agents of change are many and they are at work openly and in disguise both.

The young age group, who found its present destination in monasteries belong to a society where vertical hierarchy is least admitted. Ladakh society composed of lower middle class (I must say lower middle class if the term is still permissible or popular among exports).

Under the new, socially relevant centre and state government schemes, concessions under various categories and tourist influx have created many openings upward for the class. Domestic conditions are now less taxing and more promising. If the class in general, still offers its members to the monastery it is more for the religions merits to be gained, an old vow to be honoured or for the prestige which such offer bestows upon the child, It is no-more for the poverty in the family which forces the parents to part with their child as could be gleaned from the relevant tables in the chapter four on findings. Children such offered come from all income groups with varying family strength. It was, earlier presumed that, the children thus offered come from poorest classes with more children which otherwise become liability on the family. As the children join their respective monasteries at very tender age, rural urban divide does not make any "worth pondering" distinction. Children responded to our questions as if they, more or less belong to same class, group of place of birth.
However with regard to the general knowledge and preferences of languages to be learned and choice of dress (if ever given) urbanized children were more forthcoming and stood for what could be termed as, under the circumstances, for radical ideas. Children from joint family system felt more nostalgic about their home and remembered with a tinge of melancholy the good time they spend there. Through, nearly all the Young Lamas considered the monastic life as one of discipline and regress schedules they, nevertheless appreciated it as merit giving experience leading to moksa. As compared to other boys of their age who stayed at home, the Young Lamas considered themselves more respected among common people.

The monasteries are neither the detention houses nor the corrective or reformation homes, they treat their young entrants with care and provide for their physical and mental needs. They Young Lamas are allowed to visit local settlements or markets and permitted to enjoy the hostilities of the merit seeking population. However, if huge sums or costlier goods are offered they are supposed to carry them to the respective monasteries.

Our sample of Young Lamas gave mixed reactions to our enquiries when asked about their early home life, most of them said that was wonderful, stress free and play all the way. Most of the Young Lamas are, however, nostalgic about the varieties of foods; they used to take at their original places. The foods served in the monastery may be nutritious but taste wise they are no match for the foods Young Lamas take at restaurants or outside their respective monasteries.
Institution Of Lamahood: A Sociological Study Of Young Lamas Of Leh.

As for as children are concerned it is really a big affair for them. It is not a mere change of place. It is both physical and mental strain. It is the question of realignments; realignment with the idea of leaving ones home - a parental care of whatever degree it may be; realignment with the anxiety of having to move to a new strange world. They have generally no choice to make- the decision as such having been made much before his birth or even before the conception of the child concerned.

Buddhism, in the broader sense of the term past, does not really negate it, but in the narrower sense monasteries employ all kinds of methodologies to help the inmates of the monastery to cut this umbilical knot. But it is very difficulty to forget ones relations with the past hence our sample expressed their deep emotional bonds with their parents, friends and events they had lived in the near past.

The dreams about their parents express the suppressed desires and wishes, lacks, the psychic requirements and deficiencies of a Young Lama. The dreams metaphorically express their latent desires, suppressed feelings and unconscious intensity of the relations which form their sub conscious history. Desires, even, get metamorphosed into various shapes and colours. Young Lamas remain connected with their families. Family is the strongest rapport. He receives moral, ideological and logistic support through out his stay in the monastery. He is not an abandoned child.

Children are not totally abundant by their families; they arrange the supply of necessary clothes for their words in the

Conclusion
monastery. Though the money which a ward receives from his parents is not uniform or regular but it is of course provided.

Once inside a monastery the Young Lamas are treated collectively and without any bias to their age or social background. However the age group 5-10 is given some conditional concessions, which in no case amount breaking set norms of the monastery, by way of allowances to play indoor physical and mental games.

The Young Lamas seem to enjoy their stay in the monastery/Lamasery. However as the life in the monastery is regress and disciplined and every thing goes by routine the small number of Young Lamas who may not be psychologically well disposed towards the life of discipline have shown their reservation to continue with it.

Monasteries consider the Young Lamas as an asset and keep their physical and mental health always on priority. Early to bed and early to rise is the rule. Young Lamas preference for the early morning prayers is a clear indication that early rising is less painful for them and they have understood its significance.

To our enquiry about the continuity with Lamaism majority of the Young Lamas forcefully / empathetically impressed their willingness to continue with their predicament. They were apparently happy to be Lamas. The drudgery of life outside a monastery and the poverty which puts lot of pressure on the Young Lamas may have contributed to this view.

Most of the Young Lamas of course showed an unhesitating inclination to the modern items. The Lamas from

Conclusion
the lower age group were more forth coming and more enthusiastic about these items. Three Lamas who hailed from choglamsar, Leh proper and Thicksay respectively confessed of having watched Dil Wale Dulhanya Lay Jayengay, Munna Bhai MBBS, Herra Pheri and Border. They even wanted to travel by air.

To train the inmates in the ways of Lamahood is the social / religious obligation of the monastery. Young Lamas are brought up under the close circuited authoritarian paternalism of monastery. They are slowly and systematically stripped clear of their identities. The new identities they acquire help them create a supportive environment necessary for the communal living in the monastery. The Young Lamas are, however allowed to retain their contacts with their home people though the contacts are now more ritualistic and formal.

Now under the new scheme of education and in order to make the Gompa schools progressive and responsive to the modern education, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies has made arrangements to bring all Gompa schools under its programme of improving the system and impart education in the socially relevant subjects.

The fall in the ratio could be assigned to various factors governing Ladakh society.

a. Spread of Modern education
b. Increasing job opportunities
c. Exposure to modernization

There are many categories under which the scholarship is distributed among the Young Lamas.
Young Lamas are always a welcome sight. They play their little roles for the monastery and the society concerned. *Young Lamas* are invited by the general Laity for sacred purpose or as a token of respect to their houses where they are offered food, clothing and money in cash which Young Lamas carry to their respective monastery. Monasteries have no objection if Young Lamas stay back in private house in case of any untoward or sudden change of weather. 

There are two categories of *Young Lamas* in a *dgon-pa*; *Young Lamas* who have at some stage now, given up their studies and have opted for monastic work according to level of achievement, capacity and training.

During our visit to these *dgon-pa's* we often found *Young Lamas* heartily and cheerfully engaged with each other making gestures and eying each other to convey some most intimate sentiments or observations.

There is no law or regulation which could bind an inmate of a lamasery permanently or against his wish to *lamahood* or to a *monastery* in any other capacity. Anybody is free to choose his vocation or destination of life. Donation of a family member to any monastery is generally considered voluntary and a pleasing affair for the family concern. In every ceremony he has a special place. He is expected to recite appropriate orisons and chant suitable mantras.

*Young Lamas* were forth coming and open to our questions and reacted most of the time spontaneously and without any regard for strict indoctrination.

**Conclusion**
The Young Lamas looked very cute but subdued in their Lamaistic dress. All had their heads shaven clean and wore leather chapels. Not many were, any more enthusiastic about the dress they wore. They mostly considered it as a religious obligation and a mark of identity.

Our respondents mostly favored jeans if given a choice and considered the Lamaistic dress more a religious obligation than being attractive. However, 37% of our sample considered tricevara a necessary identity mark which makes them acceptable and welcome guests at public places and functions.

70% of our respondents described the life outside a monastery pleasing but merit less. They called it a life whose ultimate end is suffering and bondage. Life in monastery was for them, a means and a preparation for paramananda - a life free of bondage (absolute bliss), while 10% Lamas called it a life - pleasing and routine. 20% Lamas termed life outside monastery pleasing and fascinating.

Young Lamas have a good exposure to the happening around them. The quality of the information under the given circumstances was highly appreciative. Young Lamas were better informed about the happenings, around. They preferred English language over every other language as they wanted to communicate with the foreigners who come to visit their monastery. To our question - whether they know anything about the Buddha and monastery - the reply was in affirmative and to our question if they knew that they are going to be lamas they said yes. They were very excited and curious to join the life in the monastery. They had visited
Institution Of Lamahood: A Sociological Study Of Young Lamas Of Leh.

Lamaseries and seen the lamas who always commanded respect and went about with an elan. 25% of our respondents said that they, of course, were feeling a little nervous, off the wits and out of gear when they actually had to move out of their home.

The urban populace and the neo rich of the region are now contributing financially for the up-keep of the monastery. Their children are mostly in the school or other profitable activities like boy guides to the tourists. This class of people has found ways to circumvent their religious obligations.

The overall change in the socio-economic structure of Ladakh society is bringing about corresponding changes in the Lamaistic institution well. The Young Lasmas though apparently well adjusted within their system are expressing their desire to change and enjoy the benefits of the modern life within their scheme of things. They do not shun to express their willingness to effect changes in the order for the better results.

More particularly the educational system in the monasteries is thought to be outmoded and out dated. The requirements for the change in the curriculum are best expressed in the responses of our questions regarding their preferences and choice for new things. However Monastic institutions are still very relevant to the Ladakh society and provide necessary guidance to the people of the region.
Glossary
Institution Of Lamahood: A Sociological Study Of Young Lamas Of Leh.

A

Amitabha(Amida Amita Amitayus)

Amitabha is the most commonly used name for the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life. A transhistorical Buddha venerated by all Mahayana schools (T'ien T'ai, Esoteric, Zen ...) and, particularly, Pure Land. Presides over the Western Pure Land (Land of Ultimate Bliss), where anyone can be reborn through utterly sincere recitation of His name, particularly at the time of death.

Amitabha Buddha at the highest or noumenon level represents the True Mind, the Self-Nature common to the Buddhas and sentient beings -- all-encompassing and all-inclusive. This deeper understanding provides the rationale for the harmonization of Zen and Pure Land, two of the most popular schools of Mahayana Buddhism. See also "Buddha Reatation," "Mind," "Pure Land."

Amitabha Buddha

The name of the bodhisattva who established the Pure Land form of Buddhism. The power he gained from his merit as a bodhisattva allows him to help get to the Pure Land. They do not have to get there on their own power.

Anatta

The Buddhist notion that there is no eternal soul, unlike in Hinduism. Instead, each living person is an association of five skandas, which fly apart at death. (Linguistically, "atta" is Pali for "atman" while "an" is the negative. The term literally means "no soul.")

Arhat

A term used primarily in Theravada Buddhism to signify a person who has fulfilled its ultimate goal, the attainment of nirvana. Upon death, the arhat will become extinguished. The arhat, as an individual, has attained full enlightenment, peace and freedom. This should be contrasted to Mahayana Buddhism, in which the ultimate goal is to become a bodhisattva--someone who uses the power they gain from enlightenment to help others.

Arhatship is the highest rank attained by Sravakas. An Arhat is a Buddhist saint who has attained liberation from the cycle of Birth and Death, generally through living a monastic life in accordance with the Buddhas' teachings. This is the goal of Theravadin practice, as contrasted with Bodhisattvahood in Mahayana practice. (A Dictionary of Buddhism.) The stage is preceded by three others: 1. Stream Winner, 2. Once-Returner, 3. Non-Returner.

Glossary.
Atman

Self, oneself; in Sanskrit, also a technical term for the transcendent Self of the Upanishads.

Avalokiteshvara

Popularly known as the Bodhisattva of Compassion. He has reincarnated in this world numerous times (in both male and female forms) and therefore plays many roles depending on which strand of Buddhism one follows. First, in Mahayana Buddhism, he is considered to be the manifestation of Amitabha Buddha, the founder of the Pure Land school of Buddhism. As such he is available to help all in dire need. Second, in China, she appears as Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Compassion. In folk belief, she keeps people safe from natural catastrophe. Third, in Tibet, he appears in several forms. The most important of these are as Chenrezig, the male partner of the couple who gave birth to the Tibetan people, and as the Dalai Lama.

Arthakrtya

One of the Four All-Embracing Virtues: performance of conduct profitable to others in order to lead them toward the truth.

B

Bhiksu

Religious mendicant; Buddhist fully ordained monk. Bhiksuni is the equivalent term designating a woman. A religious mendicant; a fully ordained Buddhist monk.

Bodhi

Sanskrit for Enlightenment. Also Perfect knowledge or wisdom by which a person becomes a Buddha.

Bodhisattvas

Those who aspire to Supreme Enlightenment and Buddhahood for themselves and all beings. The word Bodhisattva can therefore stand for a realized being such as Avalokitesvara or Samantabhadra but also for anyone who has developed the Bodhi Mind, the aspiration to save oneself and others.

In Mahayana Buddhism, a person who has achieved enlightenment, but has who has chosen to remain in this world to help those who are suffering, instead of going on to nirvana. This is the highest ideal. Kuan Yin is an important Chinese bodhisattva; her full name means "Hearing World's Cries Bodhisattva." Amitabha Buddha is an important Bodhisattva in the Mahayana form of Buddhism called Pure Land. The idea of the bodhisattva should be contrasted to the arhat of Theravada Buddhism.
Buddha

The Awakened One; one who through aeons of spiritual development has attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. This epithet usually refers to Sakyamuni Buddha, who lived and taught in India some 2,600 years ago.

(1) A buddha is someone who has attained enlightenment. (2) The Buddha is Siddartha who was the founder of Buddhism. He was the first to attain enlightenment, and then taught others how to attain it.

Buddhadharma

Lit., Teaching of Enlightenment. Originally applied to designate the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha; supplanted by the term "Buddhism" in its later historical development.

Bhikkhu, bikkhuni

A Buddhist monk, a buddhist nun.

Chan Buddhism

The Chinese name for Zen Buddhism.

Deva

"A shining one". An inhabitant of the heavenly realms, which is characterized by long life, joyous surroundings and blissful states of mind. In the Buddhist tradition, these states are understood to be impermanent, not eternal.

Dharma

a) The teachings of the Buddhas (generally capitalized in English); b) duty, law, doctrine; c) things, events, phenomena, everything. Law, duty, justice, righteousness, virtue; the social or moral order; the unity of life; the teachings or Way of the Buddha; also, in a separate sense, a mental state or moment or unit of thought.

Dhyana

The practice of concentration--i.e., meditation. Also, more specifically, the four form concentrations and the four formless concentrations.
**Dviyana**

Lit., two vehicles. The two vehicles or practice paths of Sravakayana and Pratyekabuddhayana.

**Dalai Lama**

The bodhisattva who is the reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of Compassion. He is a single person who has been reincarnated 14 times as the Dalai Lama. See also lama. The Dalai Lama has always been a combination the chief spiritual leader and the chief political leader of Tibet. The present Dalai Lama lives in exile in Nepal; he remains spiritual leader of his people, even under their oppression by the Chinese government.

**Dorje**

The English word often used to translate the Sanskrit word "vajra" (Tibetan, "dorje"), which is key symbol for Vajrayana Buddhism. It means literally "Diamond Thunderbolt." It symbolizes the indestructible character of emptiness, the true nature of all things. Tibetan Buddhists use a crafted metal image of a thunderbolt in their rituals.

**Dukkha**

The Buddhist understanding of the nature of life, especially human life. It is suffering, pain, misery, and death.

**E**

**Eight Sufferings**

(1) Suffering of Birth; (2) Suffering of Old Age; (3) Suffering of Sickness; (4) Suffering of Death; (5) Suffering of being apart from the loved ones; (6) Suffering being together with the despised ones; (7) Suffering of not getting what one wants; (8) Suffering of the flourishing of the Five Skandhas.

**Eight Winds**

Winds of Eight Directions. Most people are usually moved by the winds of the eight directions: (1) Praise; (2) Ridicule; (3) Suffering; (4) Happiness; (5) Benefit; (6) Destruction; (7) Gain; (8) Loss.

**Eightfold Path**

The Noble Eightfold path consists of the eight steps by which a person can achieve Nirvana. This is the path by which one ceases to desire and thereby ceases to suffer (see dukkha). This path leads to a form of meditation which, similar to Raja Yoga in Hinduism, enables a person to reach enlightenment. The eight stages are:

1) Right Views.
2) Right Intent.
3) Right Speech.
4) Right Conduct.
5) Right livelihood.
6) Right effort.
7) Right mindfulness.
8) Right concentration.

**Emptiness**

Emptiness is usually the description of Enlightenment. To the western mind, this description is often difficult to comprehend, leading to the idea that it is "nothing," and therefore quite unattractive. Two points will help correct this view. First, "emptiness" can be understood as the Buddhist way of saying that Ultimate Reality is incapable of being described, much the way that many Christian theologians view the Christian God as beyond our human attempts to describe. Second, the "emptiness" should not be thought of as another place. Instead, it is identical to the world or universe humans experience in this life. In this way, it is much like the Hindu notion that this world is simply maya (illusion), which prevents humans from seeing the true unity of the cosmos (which in Hinduism means the identity of Atman and Brahman). Thus emptiness and the phenomena of this world are the same, or as the Heart Sutra says, "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form."

**Enlightenment**

This is the usual English translation of the Sanskrit word "bodhi," which literally means "awakening." It is achieved by following the Eight-fold path, and therefore constitutes freedom from all desires. Enlightenment gives the person who achieves it the wisdom of perceiving the ultimate reality, which entails the power and the ability to work to change that reality in certain ways—especially to help people in need. For example, Amitabha created the western land—the Pure Land—as a heaven for his followers. Enlightenment is often described as emptiness. This is the final step before nirvana.

**F**

**Five Bhikshus**

The first five of Buddha's converts: Ajnata-Kaundinya, Asvajit, Bhadrika, Dasabala-Kasyapa, and Mahanama-Kulika. They were the first five disciples that Shakyamuni preached when he became Buddha.

**Five Desires (Five Sensual Pleasures)**

Desires connected with the five senses, i.e., form, sound, aroma, taste and touch.
Five Eyes

1. human eye; 2. divine eye; 3. dharma eye; 4. wisdom eye; 5. Buddha eye.

Five Fundamental Conditions of Passions and Delusions

1. Wrong views which are common to triloka; 2. Clinging or attachment in the desire realm; 3. Clinging or attachment in the form realm; 4. Clinging or attachment in the formless realm which is still mortal; 5. The state of unenlightenment which is the root-cause of all distressful delusion.

Five Natures

The natures of (1) Bodhisattvas, (2) Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas, (3) ordinary good people, (4) agnostics, (5) heretics.

Five Offenses

The five rebellious acts or deadly sins: (1) parricide; (2) matricide; (3) killing an arhat; (4) shedding the blood of a Buddha; (5) destroying the harmony of the sangha, or fraternity.

Five Precepts

The precepts taken by lay Buddhists, prohibiting i) killing, ii) stealing iii) lying, iv) sexual misconduct, v) ingesting intoxicants. See also "Ten Precepts."

The minimum set of moral rules for Buddhism, practiced by both the lay people and the monks of the sangha. They forbid (1) theft, (2) improper sexual practices (adultery for lay people, sexual activity of any kind for monks), (3) killing, (4) lying and deceiving, and (5) drinking alcoholic drinks.

Five Skandhas

The five groups of elements (Dharmas) into which all existences are classified in early Buddhism. The five are: Rupa (matter), Vedana (feeling), Sanjna (ideation); Samskara (forces or drives) Vijnana (consciousness or sensation). Group, heap, aggregate; the five constituents of the personality; form, feeling, perception, impulses, consciousness; the five factors constituting the individual person.

Four Elements

All matters are formed and are composed by four conditioned causes: (1) earth, which is characterized by solidity and durability; (2) water, which is characterized by liquid/fluid and moisture; (3) fire, which is
characterized by energy and warmth; (4) wind, which is characterized by gas/air movement.

**Four Great Bodhisattva**

They represent the four major characters of Bodhisattva:
1. Manjusri - Universal Great Wisdom Bodhisattva;
2. Samantabhadra - Universal Worthy Great Conduct Bodhisattva;
3. Ksitigarbha - Earth Store King Great Vow Bodhisattva;
4. Avalokitesvara - Guan Shr Yin Great Compassion Bodhisattva.

**Four Great Vows (Four Universal Vows)**

The four vows held by all Bodhisattvas. These vows are called great because of the wondrous and inconceivable compassion involved in fulfilling them. They are as follows: *Sentient beings without number we vow to enlighten; Vexations without end we vow to eradicate; Limitless approaches to Dharma we vow to master; The Supreme Awakening we vow to achieve.*

**Four Noble Truths**

The most basic statement of Buddhist belief:
(1) All is suffering (dukkha).
(2) Suffering is caused by desire.
(3) If one can eliminate desire, they can eliminate suffering.
(4) The Noble Eight-fold Path can eliminate desire.

**Four Pure Lands**

A classification by the Pure Land and T’ien T’ai schools of the pure realms subsumed under the Land of Amitabha Buddha, as described in the sutras. They are:

i) the Land of Common Residence of Beings and Saints (Land Where Saints and Ordinary Beings Dwell Together), where all beings, from the six lower worlds (hells, hungry ghosts ... ) to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, live together (further divided into two, the Common Residence Pure Land and Common Impure Land);
ii) the Land of Expediency (Land of Expedient Liberation), inhabited by Arhats and lesser Bodhisattvas;
iii) the Land of Real Reward, inhabited by the highest Bodhisattvas;
iv) the Land of Eternally Quiescent Light, in which the Buddhas dwell.

These distinctions are at the phenomenal level. At the noumenon level, there is, of course, no difference among them.

**Four Reliance (to learning Buddhist Dharma)**

The four standards of Right Dharma which buddhist should rely on or abide by:
(1) to abide by the Dharma, not the person;
(2) to abide by the sutras of ultimate truth, not the sutras of incomplete truth;
(3) to abide by the meaning, not the word;
(4) to abide by the wisdom, not the consciousness.

**Four Unlimited Mind**


**Four Virtues**

The four Nirvanic virtues: (1) Eternity or permanence; (2) Joy; (3) Personality; (4) Purity. These four important virtues are affirmed by the sutra in the transcendental or nirvana-realm.

**Four Ways (of learning Buddhist Dharma)**

(1) Belief/faith; (2) Interpretation/discernment; (3) Practice/performance; (4) Verification/assurance. These are the cyclic process in learning a truth.

**Four Wisdom**

The forms of wisdom of a Buddha. (1) the Great-Mirror wisdom of Aksobhya; (2) the Universal Wisdom of Ratnaketu; (3) the Profound Observing Wisdom of Amitabha; (4) the Perfecting Wisdom of Amoghsiddhi.

**Fourfold Assembly**

Or the Four Varga (groups) are bhiksu, bhiksuni, upasaka and upasika, i.e. monks, nuns, male and female devotees.

**Gautama**

The Buddha's family name, or last name. His first name was Siddhartha.

**H**

**Heart Sutra**

One of the central sutras in Mahayana Buddhism. It is particularly important in Zen because of its teaching about emptiness. The key idea of this teaching is: Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness is no other than form." For an on-line translation of the Heart Sutra, click here.

**Hinayana**

The Lesser Vehicle; a term applied by the Mahayana to those schools of Buddhism that practice to attain the fruits of Sravakayana and
Pratyekabuddhayana and do not attempt to attain the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi of Buddha.

The term literally means "the Little Way." It is a derogatory term put onto Theravada Buddhism by those who follow Mahayana, which means "the Great Way (or vehicle, or raft)."

Jataka
Tales of the Buddha's former lives.

K

Karma

Volition, volitional or intentional activity. Karma is always followed by its fruit, Vipaka. Karma and Vipaka are oftentimes referred to as the law of causality, a cardinal concern in the Teaching of the Buddha.

Common karma: the difference between personal and common karma can be seen in the following example: Suppose a country goes to war to gain certain economic advantages and in the process, numerous soldiers and civilians are killed or maimed. If a particular citizen volunteers for military service and actually participates in the carnage, he commits a personal karma of killing. Other citizens, however, even if opposed to the war, may benefit directly or indirectly (e.g., through economic gain). They are thus said to share in the common karma of killing of their country.

Fixed karma: in principle, all karma is subject to change. Fixed karma, however, is karma which can only be changed in extraordinary circumstances, because it derives from an evil act committed simultaneously with mind, speech and body. An example of fixed karma would be a premeditated crime (versus a crime of passion).

For Buddhism, as in Hinduism, this is the moral law of cause and effect. People build up karma (both good and bad) as a result of their actions. This then determines the level to which one is reborn after birth. In Buddhism, the different levels can include hells, humans or animals in this world, or one of several heavens.

koan

A riddle-like puzzle used for teaching in Zen Buddhism. It cannot be solved by reason, but instead forces the student to solve it through a flash of insight. A well-known example is the question, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

L

Laksana

A distinctive mark, sign, indication, characteristic or designation. A Buddha is recognized by his thirty-two characteristic physiological marks.
Lankavatara Sutra

The only sutra recommended by Bodhidharma, the First Zen Patriarch in China. It is a key Zen text, along with the Diamond Sutra (recommended by the Sixth Patriarch), the Surangama Sutra, the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Avatamsaka Sutra ... The last four sutras are referred to frequently in Pure Land commentaries.

Laity

An English word used to refer to the general members of a religion (in Buddhism, Christianity, etc.) as opposed to religious specialists such as monks or priests.

Lama

In Vajrayana, the term for teacher or guru. He is usually the head of a monastery or perhaps several monasteries. Some important lamas are considered to be bodhisattvas, such as the Dalai Lama.

Lesser Vehicle

The early Buddhism. A term coined by Mahayanists to distinguish this school of Buddhism [whose modern descendent is Theravada] from Mahayana. It is so called because the teaching of this school puts emphasis on one's own liberation, whereas the teaching of Mahayana stresses the attainment of Buddhahood for all sentient beings. Theravada is now prevalent in southeast Asia, while Mahayana has spread over the northern area (China, Vietnam, Korea, Japan ...) (G.C.C. Chang).

Lotus Sect

A Buddhist sect founded by the great Master Hui Yuan about 390 A.D. at his monastery on Mount Lu in Kiangsi Province in China. The Lotus Sect believes in and honors Amitabha Buddha and declares that, through the chanting of his name and by purifying and finally ridding oneself of desire, one can be reborn in the Pure Land. There one is born of a lotus, and, depending on one's degree of purification and practice, one is born into one of the nine grades of the lotus: upper superior, middle superior, lower superior, etc.

Lotus Sutra

The Lotus Sutra is probably the most important text of Mahayana Buddhism. It describes a lecture the Buddha gave and the ideas and thoughts. He discusses all the things that differentiate Mahayana Buddhism from Theravada, such as the idea of a bodhisattva, in particular the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the merit of the people who venerate the Lotus Sutra, and the key to nirvana and Buddhahood.
M

Mahayama

The mother of Shakaymuni. She was a Koliyan Princess and married to Suddhodana.

Mahayana

Great vehicle; the dominant Buddhist tradition of East Asia. Special characteristics of Mahayana are 1. Emphasis on bodhisattva ideal, 2. The accession of the Buddha to a superhuman status, 3. The development of extensive philosophical inquiry to counter Brahmanical and other scholarly argument, 4. The development of elaborate devotional practice.

Mahayana Buddhism

Mahayana means "The Great Raft" or "The Great Vehicle." It is the largest and most influential of the three main forms of Buddhism (the other two being Theravada and Vajrayana ). It is practiced in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Vajrayana derived from it and shares many similarities with it. Mahayana emphasizes the idea of the bodhisattva over that of the arhat. The goal of an individual is therefore not to pass out of this world into nirvana, but to attain enlightenment—with the wisdom, understanding and power that goes with it—and then to show compassion by returning to this world to help those in need. Amitabha Buddha did this to establish Pure Land Buddhism. In comparison to Theravada, Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes the help that gods and bodhisattvas can give to people to help them escape samsara. It has elaborate descriptions of how this works and emphasizes prayers and rituals that enable people to seek this help. Zen is another branch of Mahayana Buddhism.

Mantra

A syllable, word or verse which has been revealed to a seer in meditation, embodiment in sound of a deity; spell or incantation.

Maitreya

The Buddha who is expected to come in the future, known to all schools of Buddhism. He is worshipped as a being who guides those who confess their wrongs, and teachers who become discouraged. He is sometimes depicted as the "Laughing Buddha" with his hands stretched over his head, a smile on his face, and a large, bare stomach.

Mandala

In general, an art form based on the closed circle, which is the symbol on eternal continuity. In Trantric Buddhism (Vajrayana), it is a painting or tapestry based on concentric circles. Within the circles, the Buddha usually appears with other deities, bodhisattvas, and other symbolic imagery. For the monk, a mandala serves as a focus of meditation, and a symbolic
representation of the reality of the identity of samsara and nirvana. In popular religion, the mandala is often the focus of worship—or, to put it another way, the buddhas and deities depicted in a mandala become the object(s) of worship. For further information about mandalas, click here.

**mantra, mantram**

A sound that is used as a focus for meditation or worship; a short prayer. Similar to Hinduism.

**Mara**

Death, "the Striker" or "Tempter" or "The Evil One" or "The Killer"; embodiment of the selfish attachments and temptations that bind one to the cycle of birth and death. The opposite of the Buddha nature in each person.

**metta**

Metta means "Loving-kindness".

**Middle Vehicle**

Also called Middle Doctrine School or Madhyarnika; one of the two main schools of Mahayana thought; it upholds the Void as the only really real or independent, unconditioned Reality.

**mudra**

Symbolic hand gestures used in ritual or dance. The Buddha is often depicted with his hands in the meditation mudra or in the mudra symbolizing teaching. In Vajrayana, the gestures enlarge to involve the entire body, and they enable the gesturer to interact with Tantric deities.

**N**

**Nagarjuna**

"One of the most important philosophers of Buddhism and the founder of the Madhyamika school. Nagarjuna's major accomplishment was his systematization of the teaching presented in the Prajnaparamita Sutras. Nagarjuna's methodological approach of rejecting all opposites is the basis of the Middle Way (Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen.)

**Narayana**

Name of a deva, a strong, manly hero having divine power.

**Nirvana**

The deathless; the cessation of all suffering. The very opposite of the Wheel of Birth-and-Death; it is what those in the Buddhist tradition aspire
to experience. The Absolute, which transcends designation and mundane characterization.

It is the cessation of suffering, the liberation from karma, and therefore the passing over into another world. The best way to think about nirvana is that it is the final goal of Buddhism, and that Enlightenment is the step immediately before it. Thus one becomes aware of the nature of Ultimate Reality in Enlightenment, and then one becomes unified with that reality in nirvana. Thus the Buddha, when he died, passed into Nirvana, having perviously attained Enlightenment during his life and sharing it with humanity. A bodhisattva is one who has attained Enlightenment, but rather than passing over into nirvana, chose to come back to this world to use their power to help other people.

P

**Parinirvana**

The Buddha's final Nirvana, entered by him at the time of death.

**Prajna**

True or transcendental wisdom. Last of the paramitas. One of the highest attainments of Buddhist practice.

**Pratyeka Buddha**

A solitary Buddha; one who has achieved Awakening through insight into the dependent origination of mind and body. Pratyekabuddhas lead only solitary lives, and they do not teach the Dharma to others nor do they have any desire to do so.

**Pretas**

Hungry ghosts, who are tormented by continual and unsatisfied cravings. The preta-realm is one of the three states of woe (apaya-bhumi) and one of the six realms of existence.

**puja**

A act of worship or devotion to a Buddha or a Bodhisattva.

**Pure Land Buddhism**

The form of Buddhism established by the Bodhisattva Amitabha. In China and Japan, this form of Buddhism has the largest following of all the different types of Buddhism. This form of Buddhism is aimed at the average person in its recognition that most people cannot achieve enlightenment and so are doomed forever to stay in samsara. So Amitabha set up a "Pure Land" in the "west"--kind of like a heaven--to which people can go when they die. To gain entrance, people simply have
to call on the power of Amitabha. This is done by uttering a phrase such as "Namu Amidha Butsu," which is Japanese for "Praise to Amitabha Buddha."

S

Saha World

World of Endurance. Refers to this world of ours, filled with suffering and afflictions, yet gladly endured by its inhabitants.

Sage

A wise and virtuous person, an accomplished one who is second in rank to a saint.

Samadhi

Deep concentration: the state of one-pointedness of mind characterized by peace and imperturbability. Samadhi is also one of the Paramitas and is indispensable on the path to Bodhi.

Samsara

Cycle of rebirths; realms of Birth and Death. The continual cycle of death and rebirth. This death and rebirth is of course into this world of suffering and this is viewed in a negative manner.

Sangha

Harmonious community. In the Buddhadharma, Sangha means the order of Bhiksus, Bhiksunis, Sramaneras and Sramanerikas. Another meaning is the Arya Sangha, made up of those individuals, lay or monastic, who have attained one of the four stages of sanctity. Also, the Bodhisattva Sangha. A general term that refers to the monks (Bhikkhus) as a whole.

SangharamaBody

A monaster with its garden or grove, a universal body.

Sutra

An aphorism; a thread of suggestive words or phrases summarizing religious and philosophical instruction. In buddhism, it refers to a discourse by the Buddha or one of his major disciples. The Sutra collection is one of the three divisions of the Buddhist scriptures.

Sakya, Sakymuni

The Sakya is the clan into which the Buddha was born. "Sakyamuni" means "wise one of the Sakya," which was a title given to the Buddha.
Sanzen

This is the twice-daily meeting between the student and the master in Zen Buddhism to discuss the student's progress in meditation. The main purpose is to determine whether the student has solved their koan. If not, the incorrect answer is rejected, and the master must then spur the student on to find a correct solution.

Siddhartha

The Buddha's given name, or first name. His surname was Gautama.

Sila

The precepts taken by lay Buddhists, prohibiting i) killing, ii) stealing iii) lying, iv) sexual misconduct, v) ingesting intoxicants. See also "Ten Precepts."

The minimum set of moral rules for Buddhism, practiced by both the lay people and the monks of the sangha. They forbid (1) theft, (2) improper sexual practices (adultery for lay people, sexual activity of any kind for monks), (3) killing, (4) lying and deceiving, and (5) drinking alcoholic drinks.

Skandhas

The five elements of a human which come together at birth and separate at death: body, feelings/senses, perceptions, habits and inclinations, and consciousness.

Stupa

A shrine in which relics of the Buddha are kept. It often has a dome shape.

Sutra

As in Hinduism, a sacred text.

Ten Great Vows

The famous vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra in the Avatamsaka Sutra. These vows represent the quintessence of this Sutra and are the basis of all Mahayana practice. Studying the vows and putting them into practice is tantamount to studying the Avatamsaka Sutra and practicing its teachings. See also "Samantabhadra."
Ten Precepts

Include an expanded version of the Five Precepts of body and mouth (not to kill, steal, engage in illicit sex, lie, or take intoxicants) with the addition of the virtues of the mind (elimination of greed, anger and delusion). See also "Five Precepts," "Ten Evil Acts."

This is the code of monastic discipline for the monks. It consists of the Five Precepts (no stealing, sexual activity, killing, lying, or alcohol) which apply to all Buddhists, and five further restrictions designed specifically for members of the sangha. These are:
(6) Not to take food from noon to the next morning.
(7) Not to adorn the body with anything other than the monk's robe.
(8) Not to participate in or watch public entertainments.
(9) Not to use high or comfortable beds.
(10) Not to use money.

Ten Stages of a Bodhisattva's Progress

They are the following: (1) Joy at having overcome former difficulties and at now entering the path to Buddhahood; (2) Freedom from all possible defilement, the stage of purity; (3) The stage of further enlightenment; (4) Glowing wisdom; (5) Mastery of the utmost or final difficulties; (6) The open way of wisdom that is beyond purity and impurity; (7) Proceeding afar, above the concept of "self" in order to save others; (8) Attainment of calm unperturbability; (9) Achievement of the finest discriminatory wisdom; knowing, expeditiously, where and how to save; possessing the ten powers; (10) Attainment of the fertilizing powers of the Law Cloud.

Theravada

Lit., the School of the Elders; one of the two main forms of Buddhism known in the world today; practiced chiefly in south-east Asia; has the Pali Canon for textual foundation; this tradition advocates the Arahantship.

Three bodies of the Buddha (trikaya)

1. Dharma-body: The Dharma-body, or the "body of reality", which is formless, unchanging, transcendental, and inconceivable. Synonymous with suchness, or emptiness. 2. Sambhogakaya: the "body of enjoyment", the celestial body of the Buddha. Personification of eternal perfection in its ultimate sense. It "resides" in the Pure Land and never manifests itself in the mundane world, but only in the celestial spheres, accompanied by enlightened Bodhisattvas. 3. Nirmanakaya: the "incarnated body" of the Buddha. In order to benefit certain sentient beings, a Buddha incarnates himself into an appropriate visible body, such as that of Sakyamuni Buddha.

The incarnated body of the Buddha should not be confused with a magically produced Buddha. The former is a real, tangible human body.
which has a definite life span, The latter is an illusory Buddha-form which is produced with miraculous powers and can be withdrawn with miraculous powers (G.C.C. Chang).

**Three Jewels (Three Precious Ones, Three Treasures)**

In Sanskrit, Rathatraya. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; sometimes referred to as the Teacher, the Teaching and the Taught.

**Three Karmas**

The three conditions, inheritances or karmas, of which there are several groups, including the karmas of deeds, words and thoughts.

**Three Poisons**

Craving, aversion and delusion; also, these are termed the three root-stains or the three roots of unskillfulness.

**Three Pure Land Sutras**

Pure Land Buddhism is based on three basic sutras:

a) Amitabha Sutra (or Shorter Amitabha Sutra, or Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha, or the Sutra of Amida);
b) Longer Amitabha Sutra (or Longer Sukhavati-Vyuha, or the Teaching of Infinite Life);
c) Meditation Sutra (or the Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life, or the Amitayus Dhyana Sutra).

Sometimes the last chapter of the Avatamsaka Sutra ("The Practices and Vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra") is considered the fourth basic sutra of the Pure Land tradition. Note: in Pure Land, the Longer Amitabha Sutra is considered a shorter form of the Lotus Sutra.

**Three Realms (Triple Realm, Three Worlds)**

The realms of desire (our world), form (realms of the lesser deities) and formlessness (realms of the higher deities). The Western Pure Land is outside the Triple Realm, beyond samsara and retrogression. See also "Pure Land."

**Three Refuges**

Taking refuge and possessing confidence in the Buddha's Awakening, in his Teaching and in the Sangha of enlightened disciples.

**Two Truths**

1) Relative or conventional, everyday truth of the mundane world subject to delusion and dichotomies and 2) the Ultimate Truth, transcending dichotomies, as taught by the Buddhas.
According to Buddhism, there are two kinds of Truth, the Absolute and the Relative. The Absolute Truth (of the Void) manifests "illumination but is always still," and this is absolutely inexplicable. On the other hand, the Relative Truth (of the Unreal) manifests "stillness but is always illuminating," which means that it is immanent in everything. (Hsu Heng Chi/P.H. Wei).

Pure Land thinkers such as the Patriarch Tao Ch'o accepted "the legitimacy of Conventional Truth as an expression of Ultimate Truth and as a vehicle to reach Ultimate Truth. Even though all form is nonform, it is acceptable and necessary to use form within the limits of causality, because its use is an expedient means of saving others out of one's compassion for them and because, even for the unenlightened, the use of form can lead to the revelation of form as nonform" (David Chappell). Thus to reach Buddhahood, which is formless, the cultivator can practice the Pure Land method based on form.

**Tantrayana**

Since a "vajra" is a diamond, this term means "The Diamond Way." It refers to the third form of Buddhism (after Theravada and Mahayana), which is practiced largely in Tibet. It is also known as Trantric Buddhism. The main claim of Vajrayana is that it enables a person to reach nirvana in a single lifetime. It is able to do this by using all of a person's powers (including those of the body) to achieve that goal.

**Tantrism**

Tantrism and tantric ideas begin with notions in line with all forms of Buddhism, namely, the idea that Ultimate Reality is a singular Unity. It is not the apparent multiplicity of the present world around us (maya). Tantrism, which is a key component of Vajrayana, then goes beyond these notions to their representation in the symbol of the sexual union between male and female (see yab-yum). This union is a symbol of the identity of the multiple nature of this world (maya), which is represented by the male, with the unity and wisdom of cosmos, represented by the female. In some schools, the symbol of intercourse is reenacted as part of meditation.

**Tathagata**

Tathagata is a title of the Buddha meaning "he or she who has come from the world of suchness (ultimate reality)."

**Theravada**

Literally, "the path of the Elders." Of the three major branches of Buddhism, this was the earliest to crystalize into form. In contrast to Mahayana and Vajrayana, Theravada emphasizes the individual over the group, holding that it is the individual who must reach nirvana on their own. Its central virtue is thus wisdom, which is to be achieved by the arhat who attains enlightenment in this life and nirvana upon death. It discourages speculation about the nature of the cosmos, enlightenment, and nirvana, instead focusing on meditation to achieve enlightenment.
The main social group is therefore the sangha, the gathered monks and nuns who support and teach each other as each one strives to achieve enlightenment.

**The Three Vows, also known as The Three Refuges or The Three Jewels**

1) I take refuge in the Buddha.
2) I take refuge in the Dharma.
3) I take refuge in the Sangha.

**Thunderbolt**

The English word often used to translate the Sanskrit word "vajra" (Tibetan, "dorje"), which is key symbol for Vajrayana Buddhism. It means literally "Diamond Thunderbolt." It symbolizes the indestructible character of emptiness, the true nature of all things. Tibetan Buddhists use a crafted metal image of a thunderbolt in their rituals.

**Tripitaka**, also tipitaka.

The three main sacred scriptures of Buddhism. A "pitaka" is a basket and so the term refers to the "three baskets." The first basket is the teachings of the Buddha. The second is the discipline for the sangha. The third is that of special teachings. For further information about the tripitaka, click here.

**U**

**Upasaka/Upasika**

Buddhist lay disciple (man/woman), who formally received five precepts or rules of conduct.

**V**

**Vaisravana**

One of the four maharaja-deva guardians of the first or lowest devaloka on its four sides. Vaisravana guards the north.

**Vimalakirti sutra**

Also called Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra. A key Mahayana sutra particularly popular with Zen and to a lesser extent Pure Land followers. The main protagonist is a layman named Vimalakirti who is the equal of many Bodhisattvas in wisdom, eloquence, etc. He explained the teaching of Emptiness in terms of non-duality ... "The true nature of things is beyond the limiting concepts imposed by words." Thus, when asked by Manjusri to define the non-dual Truth, Vimalakirti simply remained silent.
Vinaya

Disciplined conduct, referring specifically to the monastic rules for the disciples who have left home; also, one of the three divisions of the Buddhist scriptures.

Vipasyana

Discernment; also, insight, correct perception or view.

Virya: Energy

The energy necessary to maintain and progress in spiritual development. Also, one of the Paramitas.

Vajrayana

Since a "vajra" is a diamond, this term means "The Diamond Way." It refers to the third form of Buddhism (after Theravada and Mahayana), which is practiced largely in Tibet. It is also known as Trantric Buddhism. The main claim of Vajrayana is that it enables a person to reach nirvana in a single lifetime. It is able to do this by using all of a person's powers (including those of the body) to achieve that goal.

Y

Yana

Sanskrit term, commonly translated as vehicle; means spiritual vehicle, path or career.

yab-yum

In Tibetan Buddhism, or Vajrayana Buddhism, this is the symbol of the male and female sexual union—usually a union of a god or a bodhisattva and his consort—which represents the completeness of the cosmos. The male represents action, usually that of compassion, in this finite world, and the female represents wisdom, the unity of the Infinite.

Z

Zazen

In Zen Buddhism, the practice of extended periods of meditation, usually in a group in a meeting hall. The monks sit quietly for long periods of time in the cross-legged Lotus position. While different individuals will be meditating with different goals, often meditation focuses on solving a koan. For more information than you ever wanted to know about zazen, click here.
Zen Buddhism

A branch of Mahayana Buddhism which was brought to China (where it was called Chan) in 520 CE by Bodhidarma and arrived in Japan in the twelfth century. It is probably the most common form of Buddhism in the West. Practitioners of Zen must usually devote themselves to a life as a monk, for it requires extensive periods of meditation. It concentrates on making clear that reality is beyond words and language and beyond logic. To accomplish this, it makes use of the koan, zazen, and sanzen.