



THE PRACTICE BOOK

# Core Knowledge for Buddhists

*What every practitioner holds in view*



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# Core Essential Knowledge for Buddhist Practitioners



**R**efuge/Homage to the three jewels of Buddhism: Buddha,  
Dharma, and Sangha

## Life of Gautama Buddha

- ◆ Birth as Siddhartha Gautama and his prophecy
- ◆ Entering Jhana at a young age at the harvest festival
- ◆ Witnessing aging, sickness, death, and a spiritual seeker
- ◆ Leaving home to seek liberation
- ◆ 2 teachers and practices of Samadhi & 6 years of ascetic practice
- ◆ Enlightenment
- ◆ Turning of the Dharma Wheel (with 5 disciples) at Deer Park
- ◆ Entering Maha Pari-Nirvana at Kushinagar

## 3 Marks of Existence (4 Dharma Seals)

### MARK

### WHAT IT MEANS

Impermanence

not only the ever-changing phenomenon, but how ephemeral all phenomena are. Realizing this truth benefits from letting go of clinging and attachment.

| MARK      | WHAT IT MEANS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Non-Self  | no inherent independent self or unchanging soul or spirit or “being” because all is conditional and interdependent: Interconnectedness & Interdependence of all as one.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Suffering | unsatisfactoriness, unbalanced from ephemeral but continuous rising and falling activities (karma).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Nirvana*  | cessation of suffering, liberation, awakening to Absolute Reality (enlightenment) “the blissful, the secure, the pure, the island, the shelter, the harbor, the refuge, the ultimate.”, “the unconditioned, the unborn, the deathless, the featureless.” The 4th seal was added in the Mahayana version since this is the ultimate goal of Buddhism. |

## 4 Noble Truths

| NO. | THE NOBLE TRUTH                                                                    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Life (cycle of life/death) is Dukkha (“Suffering”, “Imbalanced”, “Unsatisfactory”) |
| 2   | Cause of Suffering                                                                 |
| 3   | Cessation of Suffering (Liberation)                                                |
| 4   | Path to Cessation/ Liberation (8 Noble Paths)                                      |

## 8 Noble Paths

| NO. | THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH    |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1   | Right Insight/Understanding |
| 2   | Right Intention             |

| NO. | THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 3   | Right Speech             |
| 4   | Right Action             |
| 5   | Right Livelihood         |
| 6   | Right Efforts            |
| 7   | Right Mindfulness        |
| 8   | Right Concentration      |

## 12 Dependent Origination/Karma

| NO. | LINK IN THE CHAIN                                            |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Ignorance (Avidya) - Departure from the Absolute Truth       |
| 2   | Karmic Formations (Sankhara) - volitional & karmic formation |
| 3   | Consciousness (Vijnana)                                      |
| 4   | Name and Form (Nama-Rupa) - mind and body                    |
| 5   | Six Sense Bases (Salayatana)                                 |
| 6   | Contact (Phassa)                                             |
| 7   | Feeling (Vedana)                                             |
| 8   | Craving (Trishna or Tanha)                                   |
| 9   | Clinging (Upadana)                                           |
| 10  | Becoming (Bhava)                                             |
| 11  | Birth (Jati)                                                 |
| 12  | Aging and Death (Jara-marana)                                |

## 5 Skandhas

| NO. | AGGREGATE                      |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 1   | Form                           |
| 2   | Senses / Feelings              |
| 3   | Perception / Conceptualization |
| 4   | Mental / Volitional Formation  |
| 5   | Consciousness                  |

All the above is knowledge necessary for the Middle Way.

## Additional Knowledge:

### 6 Paramitas

| PĀRAMITĀ        | MEANING                                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Dāna pāramitā   | generosity, compassion, letting go of oneself           |
| Śīla pāramitā   | virtue, morality, discipline, proper conduct            |
| Kṣānti pāramitā | patience, tolerance, forbearance, acceptance, endurance |
| Vīrya pāramitā  | energy, diligence, vigor, effort                        |
| Dhyāna pāramitā | one-pointed concentration, contemplation                |
| Prajñā pāramitā | wisdom, insight                                         |

### 5 Hindrances

| NO. | HINDRANCE      |
|-----|----------------|
| 1   | Sensual desire |

| NO. | HINDRANCE                                                     |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2   | Ill will                                                      |
| 3   | Sloth and Torpor                                              |
| 4   | Restlessness and Worry                                        |
| 5   | Skeptical doubts (about the Dharma without logical reasoning) |

## 18 Realms (dhatus):

- ◆ 6 Senses
- ◆ 6 Sense Objects
- ◆ 6 Sense-based Consciousness

The eighteen dhātus (realms) are understood as acting along six channels of perception, where each channel is composed of a sense faculty, a sense object, and sense consciousness.

| CHANNEL | FACULTY<br>DHATUS<br>(INDRIYA-<br>DHATU) | OBJECT DHATUS<br>(VIŚAYA-<br>DHATU) | CONSCIOUSNESS<br>DHATUS<br>(VIJÑĀNA-<br>DHATU)   |
|---------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1.      | eye dhatu (cakṣur-<br>dhatu)             | visual forms (rūpa-<br>dhatu)       | eye consciousness<br>(cakṣur-vijñāna-<br>dhatu)  |
| 2.      | ear dhatu (śrota-<br>dhatu)              | sounds (śabda-<br>dhatu)            | ear consciousness<br>(śrota-vijñāna-<br>dhatu)   |
| 3.      | nose dhatu<br>(ghrāṇa-dhatu)             | smells (gandha-<br>dhatu)           | nose consciousness<br>(ghrāṇa-vijñāna-<br>dhatu) |

| CHAN-<br>NEL | FACULTY<br>DHATUS<br>(INDRIYA-<br>DHATU)       | OBJECT DHATUS<br>(VIŚAYA-<br>DHATU)       | CONSCIOUSNESS<br>DHATUS<br>(VIJÑĀNA-<br>DHATU)       |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.           | tongue dhatu<br>(jihvā-dhatu)                  | tastes (rasa-dhatu)                       | tongue<br>consciousness<br>(jihvā-vijñāna-<br>dhatu) |
| 5.           | body dhatu (kāya-<br>dhatu)                    | tangible objects<br>(spraṣṭavya-dhatu)    | body consciousness<br>(kāya-vijñāna-<br>dhatu)       |
| 6.           | mind faculty dhatu<br>(mano-indriya-<br>dhatu) | mental objects<br>(mano-viśaya-<br>dhatu) | mind consciousness<br>(mano-vijñāna-<br>dhatu)       |

## Recommended Reading

### Buddha's Life:

- ♦ The Buddha: His Life Retold by Robert Allen Mitchell\*
- ♦ The Life of the Buddha: According to the Pali Canon by Bhikkhu Nanamoli

### Theravada:

- ♦ What the Buddha Taught by Wapola Rahula \*
- ♦ In the Buddha's Words by Bhikkhu Bodhi\*
- ♦ Maha Kammavibangha Sutta - Karma (Majjhima Nikaya)
- ♦ Sammaditthi Sutta -Right View (Majjhima Nikaya)
- ♦ Satipathana sutta - Establishment of Mindfulness (Majjhima Nikaya)

- ◆ Paṭiccasamuppādasutta (Dependent Origination) (Samyutta Nikaya)
- ◆ Kaccāyanagotta Sutta
- ◆ Majjhima Nikaya
- ◆ Samyutta Nikaya

### **Mahayana:**

- ◆ Bodhipathapradīpa (A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment) by Master Atisha\*
- ◆ The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching by Thich Nhat Hahn
- ◆ Diamond Sutra\*
- ◆ Lankavatara Sutra
- ◆ Lotus Sutra
- ◆ Mulamadhyamakakarika (Middle Way) by Master Nagarjuna

### **Zen:**

- ◆ The Zen Teachings of Huang Po \*
- ◆ The Platform Sutra – Six Patriarch Huineng
- ◆ The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma
- ◆ Faith in Mind – Third Patriarch SengTsan

### **Other than Buddhist texts that are helpful:**

- ◆ No Boundary by Ken Wilber
- ◆ Eye of the I by Dr. David R. Hawkins
- ◆ Letting Go by Dr. David R. Hawkins

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*This Practice Book gathers the practice materials of the Bodhicitta Sangha for those newly arrived. Every prayer, sutra, and teaching within is reproduced in the Venerable's own words. May it be of benefit to all who begin here.*



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