AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

In this new edition of the bestselling *Introduction to Buddhism*, Peter Harvey provides a comprehensive introduction to the development of the Buddhist tradition in both Asia and the West. Extensively revised and fully updated, this new edition draws on recent scholarship in the field, and explores the tensions and continuities between the different forms of Buddhism. Harvey critiques and corrects some common misconceptions and mistranslations, and discusses key concepts that have often been over-simplified and over-generalized.

The volume includes detailed references to scriptures and secondary literature, an updated bibliography and a section on web resources. Key terms are given in Pali and Sanskrit, and Tibetan words are transliterated in the most easily pronounceable form. This truly accessible account is an ideal coursebook for students of religion, Asian philosophy and Asian studies, and is also a useful reference for readers wanting an overview of Buddhism and its beliefs.

**Peter Harvey** is Emeritus Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Sunderland. He is the author of *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues* (Cambridge, 2000) and *The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvana in Early Buddhism* (Curzon, 1995). He is editor of the *Buddhist Studies Review* and one of the two founders of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies.
Frontispiece: The ‘Peace Pagoda’ in Battersea Park, London
AN INTRODUCTION TO
BUDDHISM

Teachings, History and Practices

SECOND EDITION
PETER HARVEY
May any karmic fruitfulness (*puñña*) generated by writing this work be for the benefit of my parents, wife and daughter, all who read this book, and indeed all beings.

*Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa*

Honour to the Blessed One, Arahat, perfectly and completely Awakened One!

The author (second from the right) accompanied by two Samatha Trust teachers at a festival at Ratanagiri Vihāra, Northumberland, UK, giving alms to Ajahn Sumedho, then head of the Forest Sangha.
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Preface to the Second Edition, and Acknowledgements

The first edition of this book has sold over 55,000 copies since its publication in 1990, and has translations in French, Italian and Spanish. It has been used as a textbook from MA level down to secondary school level.

The book was aimed to give a balanced overview of the panorama of Buddhism in the world, for students, Buddhists and the general public. As a writer, I was an ‘insider’ to Buddhism looking outwards to help others look inside its many ‘rooms’. My own starting point was as: a scholar of Theravāda Buddhism who was mainly used to working with textual material, someone whose first degree was in philosophy, who had taught a university course on Buddhism for a number of years, a practising Theravāda Buddhist, and a meditation teacher in the Samatha Trust tradition. In order to write an introduction to Buddhism as a whole, I had to broaden beyond my base in exploring the textual sources of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and historical and anthropological accounts of all traditions. My background meant that I wrote as an ‘insider’ to various strands of Theravāda Buddhism, but as a sympathetic ‘outsider’ to Mahāyāna traditions and even some strands of Theravāda.

My aims in the new edition are as in the first edition, though now also including a greater willingness to explore tensions as well as continuities between the different forms of Buddhism:
1. to present as comprehensive an overview of Buddhism as possible;
2. to introduce key ideas/practices/developments, linking them to textual citations, where relevant;
3. to show their relationship to other ideas and practices of the same tradition;
4. to show their parallels in other Buddhist traditions;
5. to present the diversities within Buddhism, but in a way which allows the reader to see how one thing led to another: the continuities, and thus the
uniting common threads that run through the tapestry of Buddhism, sometimes with a similar end attained by different means;
6. to nevertheless explore some tensions between the different forms of Buddhism;
7. to show how Buddhism works as a set of practices, not just a set of beliefs;
8. to show the overall dynamics of how Buddhism ‘works’;
9. to include a good range of illustrations, from all the traditions;
10. to convey something of the emotional tone or ‘flavour(s)’ of Buddhism;
11. to emphasize aspects of Buddhism that particularly help to illuminate Buddhism as it is now, showing the relevance of historical developments to the present.

The focus is on the main developments, ideas and practices, and their relationships, seeking a breadth of coverage with interlinked shafts of depth, and to convey Buddhism’s nature as a living tradition.

This second edition has been thoroughly revised throughout. It gives detailed references to both scriptures and secondary literature, the bibliography is updated and a section on web resources is added, which is also available online at www.cambridge.org/harvey. It provides both Pali and Sanskrit versions of key terms, uses Pinyin forms for Chinese terms (with Wade-Giles forms given on first use), with pronounceable forms used for Tibetan names and terms (with the Wylie transcription forms given on first use). When an italicized foreign term is used in the plural, an unitalicized s is added, for clarity.

Throughout, more explanations and clarifications have been added. In Chapter 2 and elsewhere, ‘karmic fruitfulness’ is used as a translation for puñña, rather than the common but rather limp ‘merit’. In Chapter 3, the ariya-saccas are translated and explained as ‘True Realities for the Spiritually Ennobled’, rather than ‘Noble Truths’ or ‘Holy Truths’, with dukkha as ‘the painful’/‘painful’ and anattā as ‘non-Self’ rather than ‘not-self’. Also, a section on ‘Nirvāṇa as an object of insight’ has been added. In Chapter 4, there is a new section on ‘The three aspirations, Jātakas and Avādānas’, and more attention is given to the heritage of the school that has become known as the ‘Theravāda’, in part to more clearly differentiate it from early Buddhism.

In Chapter 5, attention is given to the varying senses of the key term ‘emptiness’ in Mahāyāna thought, as for example in the self-emptiness and other-emptiness debate in Tibetan Buddhism, and in developments of Tathāgata-garbha thought in East Asian Buddhism. In Chapter 6, more attention is given to differentiating the different kinds of Bodhisattva, and the section on Tantra is considerably expanded.
Chapter 7 now includes a section on esoteric or ‘tantric’ Southern Buddhism. Chapter 8 traces several uniting concerns through the devotional activities it explores. Chapter 9 draws on research from my *Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*. Chapter 10 includes updated material on the revival of the bhikkhunī ordination line in the Theravāda. Chapter 11, on meditation, has been restructured and developed in more depth. It now includes sections on ‘Qualities to be developed by meditation’, ‘The contributions of samatha and vipassanā meditation in Southern Buddhism’, ‘Some recent methods of vipassanā practice’, ‘The cakras and the “six yogas of Nāropa”’, ‘Sexual yoga’, ‘Mahāmudrā’, ‘Dzogch’en’ and ‘Zen in action: straightforward mind at all times’.

Chapter 12, on Buddhism in modern Asia, has been considerably updated, for example to include material on the Dhammakāya and Sānti Asoke movements in Thailand, the interaction of Buddhism and spirit religion in Sri Lanka, and in Japan, the ‘Critical Buddhism’ debate and the Nichiren Shōshū/Sōka Gakkai split. Chapter 13, on Buddhism beyond Asia, has been extensively updated, and with new sections on ‘The internet, films and music’, ‘Immigration’ and ‘Categories of Buddhists, and their characteristics and numbers’. Both Chapters 12 and 13 contain many new tables, and both include material on ‘Engaged Buddhism’.

I would like to express my gratitude to Lance S. Cousins, now of Wolfson College, Oxford, for his very valuable comments on a draft of the first edition of this work, and Paul Harrison, of Stanford University, for his various comments on this edition.

I would also like to thank: Russell Webb for information on Buddhism in Europe; Cathy Cantwell, of Oxford University, for her comments on tantric material; my students Mary Jaksch, of the New Zealand Diamond Sangha, for help in understanding kōans, and Aigo Pedro Castro Sánchez, author of *Las Eseñanzas de Dōgen*, for help in understanding the use of the term Mahāsattva; Jane Caple, of Leeds University, for information on numbers of Northern Buddhists in China; Ajahn Tiradhammo for his comments on the chapter on the Sangha; and Stewart McFarlaine, formerly of Lancaster University, for his help with some points on Eastern Buddhism.
A Note on Language and Pronunciation

Most of the foreign words in this work are from Pali and Sanskrit, which are closely related languages of ancient India. Pali is the scriptural, liturgical and scholarly language of Southern (Theravāda) Buddhism, one of the three main cultural traditions of Buddhism. Sanskrit, or rather ‘Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit’, is the language in which many of the scriptures and scholarly treatises of Mahāyāna Buddhism came to be written in India. Northern and Eastern Buddhism, where the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism predominates, generally use the Tibetan or Chinese translations of these texts. Many works on Buddhism give only Sanskrit versions of words, but this is artificial as Sanskrit is no longer used by Buddhists (except in Nepal), but Pali is still much in use. This work therefore uses the Pali version of terms (followed in brackets on first use by the Sanskrit) for most of early Buddhism, for Southern Buddhism, and when discussing Buddhism in general. Sanskrit versions are used when particularly discussing Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism, for some early schools which also came to use Sanskrit, and when discussing Hinduism. The Sanskrit term ‘Stūpa’, referring to a relic mound, is also used in preference to the less well-known Pali term ‘Thūpa’; the same applies to ‘Nirvāṇa’ rather than ‘Nibbāna’. An unitalicized Sanskrit ‘karma’ is also used instead of Pali ‘kamma’, as it is now also an English word. In many cases, Pali and Sanskrit terms are spelt the same. Where the spellings are different, the Pali spelling is the simpler one.

Both Pali and Sanskrit have more than twenty-six letters, so to write them in the Roman alphabet means that this needs to be expanded by the use of diacritical marks. Once the specific sounds of the letters are known, Pali and Sanskrit words are then pronounced as they are written, unlike English ones. It is therefore worth taking account of the diacritical marks, as they give a clear guide to pronunciation. The letters are pronounced as follows:

1. a is short and flat, like the u in ‘hut’ or ‘utter’
2. i is short, like i in ‘bit’
3. u is like u in ‘put’, or oo in ‘foot’
A Note on Language and Pronunciation

1. e is like e in ‘bed’, only pronounced long
2. o is long, like o in ‘note’ (or, before more than one consonant, more like o in ‘not’ or ‘odd’).
3. A bar over a vowel makes it long:
   - ā is like a in ‘barn’
   - ī is like ee in ‘beet’
   - ū is like u in ‘brute’.
4. Sanskrit also has the vowels ai and au, respectively pronounced like the ‘ai’ in aisle and ‘ow’ in vow. Thus Jain rhymes with line, not with Jane.
5. When there is a dot under a letter (t, d, n, ṭ, ḍ, ṇ), this means that it is a ‘cerebral’ letter. Imagine a dot on the roof of one’s mouth that one must touch with one’s tongue when saying these letters. This produces a characteristically ‘Indian’ sound. It also makes s into a sh sound, and r into ri.
6. The Sanskrit letter ḷ represents an aspiration of the preceding vowel: an ‘h’ sound followed by a slight echo of the vowel, e.g. ḷuḥkha as ḷuḥ’kha.
7. Aspirated consonants (kh, gh, ch, jh, ṭh, ḍh, ṇh, ph, bh) are accompanied by a strong breath-pulse from the chest, as when uttering English consonants very emphatically. For example:
   - ḷh is like ch-h in ‘church-hall’
   - ṭh is like t-h in ‘hot-house’
   - ph is like p-h in ‘cup-handle’
   When aspirated consonants occur as part of a consonant cluster, the aspiration comes at the end of the cluster.
8. ṡ is like ch in ‘choose’.
9. ṛ is like ny in ‘canyon’, ṛṛ is like nnyy.
10. ṇ is a pure nasal sound, made when the mouth is closed but air escapes through the nose, with the vocal chords vibrating; it approximates to ng.
11. ṇ is an ng, nasal sound said from the mouth, rather than the nose.
12. ṽ may be somewhat similar to English v when at the start of a word, or between vowels, but like w when combined with another consonant.
13. Double consonants are always pronounced long, for example nn is as in ‘unnecessary’.
   All other letters are pronounced as in English.
   - ṅ is used to denote a long o in Japanese (as in ‘note’, rather than ‘not’).
   For Tibetan words, the full transcription, according to the Wylie system, is given in brackets on first use, but otherwise, including in the index, a form that gives a better indication of pronunciation is given, as in Samuel (1993: 617–34).
For Chinese, the modern Pinyin system of romanization is used, followed, on first use, by the form in the older Wade-Giles system. A few things to note in Pinyin:

- \( j \) has no equivalent in English, but is like an unaspirated \( q \).
- \( q \) has no equivalent in English, but is like cheek, with lips spread wide with \( ee \), and the tongue curled downwards to touch back of the teeth, and strong aspiration.
- \( x \) has no equivalent in English, but is like she, with the lips spread and the tip of the tongue curled downwards and stuck to the back of the teeth when saying \( ee \).
- \( zh \) is like \( ch \) as a sound between choke, joke and true.
- \( z \) is between sushi and cats.
- \( c \) is like \( ts \) in cats.
Abbreviations

Note that below:
Th. = a text of Pali Canon or later Theravādin literature
My. = a Mahāyāna text in Sanskrit, Chinese or Tibetan


A-a. Āṅguttara Nikāya Atṭhakathā (Manorathapūriṇī) (Th.): commentary on A.


BCE Before the Christian Era.

List of abbreviations


BPS Buddhist Publication Society.


BSR *Buddhist Studies Review*.


c. Circa.

c.e Christian Era.

Ch. Chinese.


D-a. *Dīgha Nikāya Atthakathā* (*Sumangalavilāsini*) (Th.): commentary on D.


List of abbreviations


f. Founded.

FWBO Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.


JBE Journal of Buddhist Ethics.

JIABS Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.


Khp-a. Commentary on Khp.; see last item for translation.

Kor. Korean.


List of abbreviations


M-a. Majjhima Nikāya Atṭhakathā (Papançasūdani) (Th.); commentary on M.

MB Motilal Banarsidass (publisher).
MBS Mahā Bodhi Society.


n.d. No date.
List of abbreviations


pron. Pronounced.

PTS Pali Text Society.


repr. Reprint.


S-a. Saṃyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Sāratthapakkāsīnī) (Th.); commentary on S.


Skt Sanskrit.

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Sn-a.</td>
<td>Sutta-nipāta Atṭhakathā (Paramatthajotikā 11) (Th.); commentary on Sn.</td>
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<td>Tib.</td>
<td>Tibetan.</td>
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<td>Trims.</td>
<td>Trīṃsiṭṭikā-kārikā (or Trīṃsiṭṭika) [of Vasubandhu] (My.); see under Mv. for translations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tin.</td>
<td>Trisabhāva-nirdeśa [of Vasubandhu] (My.); see under Mv. for translations.</td>
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Vims. Vimśatikā-kārikā [of Vasubandhu] (My.); see under Mv. for translations.


Vrtni. Vimśatikā-vr̩tti [of Vasubandhu] (My.); see under Mv. for translations.


Vv-at. Vimāna-vatthu Aṭṭhakathā (Paramatthadipani 111) (Th.); commentary on Vv.

Most of these works are still in print; reprints have only been mentioned where the publisher differs from the original one. Translations published by the PTS are from the editions of the text published by them. Other translations are from various editions. Translations given in this book are not necessarily the same as those in the cited translations, particularly in the case of translations from Pali. For a detailed listing of Buddhist texts and their translations, see Williams and Tribe (2000: 230–48).

Reference is generally to volume and page number of the text in Pali; but for Dhp., Sn., Thag. and Thig., it is to verse number, and Mahāyāna works other than Sūtras are referred to by chapter and verse number. For Kvu., reference is either to the page number or the number of the ‘book’ and the discussion point within it. Dhs., Plat. and Vc. are referred to by section (sec.) number in text.

The page numbers of the relevant edition of an original text are generally given in brackets in its translation, or at the top of the page. In translations of the Pali Canon, the volume number of the translation generally corresponds to the volume of the PTS edition of the texts, except that Middle Length Sayings i translates only the first 338 pages of M. i, the rest being part of Middle Length Sayings ii. Also, Vin. i11 and iv are translated respectively as Book of the Discipline, Vols. i plus 11 (pp. 1–163), and 11 (pp. 164–416) plus 11i, with Vin. i and 11 as Book of the Discipline, Vols. iv and v, and Vin. v is Book of the Discipline vi. Moreover, in Book of the Discipline 1–v, the
List of abbreviations

number indicating the Pali page number shows where the relevant page ends, rather than begins, as is usual in other translations.

Note that a very useful source for translations of many Pali texts is Access to Insight: www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka. It references texts by Sutta number, or section and Sutta number, but also gives, in brackets, the volume and page number of the start of the relevant text in Pali (PTS edition).