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Part 2 Sanskrit Terms

These terms are mostly from G. de Purucker's *Occult Glossary* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1972; 1st ed. 1933). I have also used Judith Tyberg's *Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom-Religion* (Covina: Theosophical University Press, 1943; 1st ed. 1940), and a typescript entitled *Glossary: Sanskrit Philosophical Terms* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1975). Sanskrit *entries* (and variants) in standard romanization are printed in bold type. Common spellings of entries which differ from standard romanization are given in ordinary type. Words contained in brackets in the printed booklet are not recorded.

Ādi-buddhi — original intelligence.

Agniṣvāta — literally “tasted by fire,” name of a class of **pitṛ**, father or progenitor.

Ahaṅkāra [ahaṅkāra, ahankāra] — egoism, literally “I-maker.”

Ākāśa — the fifth cosmic element, aether; also space.

Ānanda — bliss.

Antaskaraṇa or **antaḥkaraṇa** — intermediate instrument, the link between higher and lower self.

Anupapādaka — having no progenitor, parentless, name of a class of celestial beings.

Arhat — literally “worthy one,” Buddhist term for one who has reached personal enlightenment.

Arjuna — the third of the five sons of Paṇḍu in the **Mahābhārata**, and the hero with whom **Kṛṣṇa** converses in the **Bhagavad-gītā**.

Āśrama — a hermitage, or one of the four stages of Hindu religious life.

Aśvattha [aśwattha] — the sacred fig tree. Symbolically, the Tree of Life.

Ātman — soul or self.

jīvātman — the living or individual self

paramātman — the supreme or universal self

sūtrātman — the thread self of individuality in successive incarnations.

Āvalokiteśvara — in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the **Bodhisattva** who especially embodies compassion: Tibetan *Chenrezi*, Chinese *Kuan-yin*, and Japanese *Kannon*.

Avasthā — a state of consciousness, of which there are four:

jāgrat — ordinary waking consciousness

svapna [swapna] — dreaming sleep

susupti [sushupti] — dreamless sleep

turīya — literally “the fourth,” spiritual consciousness.

Āvatāra — a descent or incarnation of divine energy, an avatar.

Avīci [avīchi] — the lowest hell, literally “the waveless.”

Avidyā — ignorance.

Bhagavad-gītā — the famous Hindu text, literally “the Lord’s Song.”

Bhūta — ghost, shade or astral shell of the dead, literally “has been”; also cosmic element.

Bīja — seed, or life-germ.

Bodhi — awakening or enlightenment.

Bodhisattva — a being on the path to enlightenment or buddhahood.

Brahmā — the individual or personified aspect of brahman.

Brahman — the impersonal absolute, or ultimate reality.

Brāhmaṇa — a Brahmin, a member of the priestly class, the first of the four classes; or a *Brāhmaṇa*, a text of the second layer of the **Veda**.

Buddha — enlightened or awakened one.

Buddhi — higher intelligence.

Cakra [chakra] — wheel, cycle of time, or energy center in the body.

Cela [chela] (student or disciple) is actually a Hindi word, celā, derived from a Sanskrit word for servant, with variant forms **ceṭa**, **ceṭaka**, **ceḍa**, and **ceḍaka**. The usual Sanskrit word for student is **śiṣya**.

Chāyā [chhāyā] — a shade or shadow.

Cit [chit] — pure consciousness.

Deva — celestial being, a deity.

Note: *Devachan* (the state of rest between incarnations) has been mistakenly explained as a compound of Sanskrit **deva** with a supposed Tibetan word *chan* meaning land or region. *Devachan* is actually a borrowing of the Tibetan word *bde-ba-can* (pronounced de-wa-chen), which is the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit *sukhāvātī*, “the happy place.”

Dharma — sacred law, religion, or duty.

Dvija [dwija] — literally “twice-born,” a Hindu of one of the higher classes, especially a **Brāhmaṇa**, who has undergone the second birth of ritual initiation and investment with the sacred thread.

Gautama — the family name of Śākyamuni Buddha, Pali *Gotama*.

Gāyatrī or **Sāvitrī** — a verse (*R̥gveda* III.62.10) recited daily by orthodox Brāhmaṇas at morning and evening:

**tat savitur vareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt**

— approximately translated: “Let us meditate on that most excellent light of the divine Sun, that it may illumine our minds.”

Guṇa — quality, one of three qualities of **prakṛti**:

sattva [sattwa] — clarity or purity

rajas — passion or activity

tamas — darkness or inertia.

Guru — teacher.

Guru-paramparā — a succession or lineage of teachers.

Īśvara [Īśwara] — lord, head of a hierarchy.

Jīva — life or a living being.

Jīvanmukta — literally “released while living,” one who attains *mukti* (liberation) in the present life.

Kalpa — a vast cycle of time.

Kāma — desire. **Kāma-loka** is the world or realm of desire.

Kāma-rūpa is the desire body.

Karman — action, especially morally significant action which has *karmic* consequences, karma.

Karuṇā — compassion.

Kṛṣṇa [Krishna] — literally “dark one,” an *avatāra* of **Viṣṇu**, and the advisor of the sons of Paṇḍu in the **Mahābhārata**, who converses with **Arjuna** in the **Bhagavad-gītā**.

Kṣatriya [kshatriya] — a member of the warrior class, the second of the four classes.

Kumāra — child, youth.

Laya — dissolution, disappearance.

Lipika — scribe, celestial recorder.

Loka — a world, realm, or plane. A *tala* is a lower realm corresponding to a particular *loka*.

Mahābhārata — the great epic of ancient India, the great story of the descendants of Bharata. The other famous ancient Indian epic is the **Rāmāyaṇa**, the story of Rāma.

Mahat — universal intelligence, the macrocosmic equivalent to **buddhi**.

Mahātman — literally “great-souled one,” master, Mahatma.

Manas — mind as a faculty of perception and judgment.

Mānasaputra — mental (or mind-born) son.

Mantra — an utterance considered to have not only meaning but power as sound — in ritual or as a focus for meditation.

Manu — one of the beings who open or close a **manvantara**; also the author of the *Mānava-dharma-śāstra* (the “Law Book of Manu”).

Manvantara — literally “interval between **manus**,” a cycle of cosmic manifestation.

Māyā — illusion.

Māyāvi-rūpa — illusory form.

Mokṣa [moksha] — spiritual release or liberation. **Mukti** is synonymous.

Mudrā — symbolic gesture.

Mūlaprakṛti [mulaprakriti] — root nature.

Nirmāṇakāya — transformation body, the form of **Buddha** which appears in the human realm. This is the Sanskrit word translated by the Tibetan term *tulku*.

Nirvāṇa — spiritual emancipation, the extinction of the passions, the cessation of bondage to the cycle of rebirth.

Om — a sacred syllable used in invocations; sometimes written *aum* and analyzed into the elements **a** + **u** + **m** + *silence*, which symbolize many things, such as the four **avasthās**.

Parabrahman — the supreme **brahman**, or beyond **brahman**.

Pāramitā — the transcendent qualities or perfections of the **Bodhisattvas**, which carry them across to the other shore of enlightenment. There are numerous lists of **pāramitās**, most often lists of six or ten. The following list of seven is given in *The Voice of the Silence* (omitting **virāga** gives the most common list of six):

dāna — generosity

śīla — morality

kṣānti — patience

virāga — dispassion

vīrya — courage

dhyāna — meditation

prajñā — understanding.

Patañjali — the author to whom the *Yogasūtra* is ascribed; also the author of the basic commentary on Pāṇini's grammar, who may or may not be the same person.

Pitr [pitri] — father or progenitor; also ancestor.

Pradhāna — undifferentiated matter.

Prajāpati — literally “lord of progeny,” **brahmā**.

Prakṛti [prakṛiti] — nature or material manifestation.

Pralaya — a cycle of dissolution between **manvantaras**.

Prāṇa — breath or the various life-breaths or vital forces.

Pratyeka-buddha — one who attains buddhahood for himself alone.

Pravṛtti [pravritti] — evolution, the reverse of nivṛtti [nivritti], involution.

Punarjanman — rebirth, reincarnation.

Purāṇa — literally “ancient,” a class of Hindu mythological texts.

Puruṣa [purusha] — person, spirit, or spiritual monad.

Rūpa — form. **Arūpa** — formless.

Śakti — cosmic activity, mythically personified as the wives of the gods.

Śambhala — the secret place where Hindus expect Kalkin (the next **avatāra** of **Viṣṇu**), where Buddhists expect Maitreya (the next **Buddha**), and where theosophists locate the chief lodge of the Mahatmas.

Samṣāra — this universe to which we are bound by the cycle of rebirth.

Śaṅkarācārya — the master (**ācārya**) Śaṅkara [Śaṅkara], great thinker and commentator of the **Advaita** school of **Vedānta** philosophy. Śaṅkara also founded a set of monasteries and his most important successors among the abbots use **Śaṅkarācārya** as a title.

Sannyāsin [saṃnyāsin] — renouncer, one who renounces.

Śarīra — body [see **upādhi**].

sthūla-śarīra — the gross body

liṅga-śarīra — the subtle body

kāraṇa-śarīra — the causal body.

Śāstra — a Sanskrit scholastic text or treatise, meant to instruct students in a specialized area of knowledge.

Sat — reality, being. The opposite of **asat**, unreality, non-being.

Satya — truth.

Siddhārtha — the personal name of Śakyamuni or Gautama Buddha.

Śiṣṭa [śiṣṭa] — residue, remains of one manvantara as seeds for the next.

Skandha — literally “bundle,” the psycho-physical constituents of persons.

Śloka — the usual Sanskrit epic meter, or a 32-syllable stanza in that meter.

Smṛti [smṛiti] — literally “remembering”; tradition, a class of Hindu scriptures (including the *Dharma Śāstras* and the Epics) for which the remembered meaning, but not the exact wording, is authoritative.

Śruti — literally “hearing”; the portion of Hindu scriptures, notably the **Veda**, considered authoritative in its exact wording and sound.

Śūdra — a member of the servile class, the fourth of the four classes.

Śūnyatā — voidness or emptiness; in Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy, the principle that existence is devoid of any independent and unchanging essence.

Svabhāva [svabhāva] — self-becoming, essential or inherent nature; to be distinguished from svabhavat [svabhavat] — the self-existent.

Tantra — literally “a text,” specifically a class of esoteric Hindu or Buddhist texts dealing with ritual, yogic, and magical practices.

Tāntrika — the adjective for **tantra**, or a follower of tantric practices.

Tat — literally “that,” the indescribable reality, in contrast to idam, literally “this,” the manifested universe.

Tathāgata — a title for a **Buddha**, meaning literally either “he who comes thus” or “he who goes thus”; what the **Buddha** calls himself in the Buddhist texts.

Tattva [tattwa] — a fundamental principle or substance.

Tejas — brightness, the element of fire. **Taijasa** is the corresponding adjective, fiery.

Trimūrti — the triple form or trinity of Hinduism:

Brahmā— the creator

Viṣṇu — the preserver

Śiva — the destroyer.

Tṛṣṇā [trishṇā] — thirst or craving. Pali *taṇhā*.

Upādhi — a vehicle or body [see **śarīra**].

kāraṇopādhi — the causal body

sūkṣmopādhi — the subtle body

sthūlopādhi — the gross body.

Upaniṣad [upaniṣad] — a philosophical text belonging to the fourth layer of the **Veda**.

Upāsaka — a Buddhist layman; **upāsikā** a Buddhist laywoman.

Vāc [vāch] — speech or word.

Vāhana — vehicle.

Vaiśya — a member of the mercantile or artisan class, the third of the four classes.

Veda — literally “knowledge,” the oldest, most sacred collections of Hindu scriptures. There are four collections — the *Ṛg-veda*, *Sāma-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, and *Atharva-veda* — each containing four layers of text, called: *Samhitā*, *Brahmaṇa*, *Āraṇyak*, and *Upaniṣad*.

Vedānta — literally “end or completion of the **Veda**,” the *Upaniṣads* or the philosophy based on them. **Advaita-**

vedānta [adwaita-] is the Nondualist school of **Vedānta** philosophy.

Vidyā — knowledge.

Yoga — union with supreme reality or a discipline by which such union is attained. There are many types of yoga in the second sense, including:

jñāna-yoga — discipline through knowledge

karma-yoga — discipline through action

bhakti-yoga — discipline through devotion

haṭha-yoga — physical discipline through ascetic exercises

rāja-yoga — the “royal” discipline

brahma-yoga — the “divine” discipline.

In the yoga system of Patañjali there are eight stages of discipline:

1. **yama** — restraint
2. **niyama** — religious observance
3. **āsana** — posture
4. **prāṇāyāma** — breath control
5. **pratyāhāra** — withdrawal from the senses
6. **dhāraṇā** — attention
7. **dhyāna** — contemplation
8. **samādhi** — concentration or oneness.

Yogin — a practitioner of yoga.

Yuga — an age. A mahā-yuga or “great age” consists of four ages, named for the four possible throws in the ancient Indian dice game:

kṛta-yuga [kṛita-] or satya-yuga — the golden age

tretā-yuga — the silver age

dvāpara-yuga [dvāpara-] — the bronze age

kali-yuga — iron or dark age, our present period.