

# Columbus KTC Intro Class 1: The Three Jewels

## I. Buddha

- A. "Buddha" means "Awakened One"
- B. The historical buddha, known as Shakyamuni Buddha, was born 2,500 years ago in Northern India.
- C. He is called the Buddha because he awakened from a state of ignorance to realize his true nature.
- D. We have this same enlightened nature, called "Buddha Nature".
- E. Our Buddha Nature is obscured from us by the Four Veils
  - 1. Ignorance of our true nature
    - a) Our true nature has the aspects of limitlessness and clarity.
  - 2. Dualistic grasping
    - a) We mistake the limitless aspect as a "self", and the clear aspect as "other".
    - b) The friction between self and other gives rise to the three poisons: attachment, aversion, and indifference.
  - 3. Kleshas (afflictive emotions)
    - a) Anger, pride, desire, jealousy, and ignorance
  - 4. Karma (habitual patterns)
    - a) Actions we take in response to our kleshas, which both create and reinforce similar actions in the future.
- F. We have a habitual pattern of identifying with our Four Veils, rather than our true nature
  - 1. We mistakenly identify with our discursive, conditioned mind, our afflictive emotions, and our habitual patterns.
  - 2. But these are temporary, insubstantial appearances which can be abandoned, transformed, and transcended through methods of meditation.
- G. Buddha Nature is innate in each of us, and is the basis, or ground, of the Buddhist path
  - 1. It is not something we create, obtain from outside ourselves, or realize by reading, thinking, or talking about it.
  - 2. We already possess Buddha Nature, and it is revealed through meditation practice.

## II. Dharma

- A. Refers to the teachings of the Buddha
- B. Can be divided into the Dharma of Scriptures, and the Dharma of Realization
  - 1. Dharma of Scriptures are the teachings we can listen to, contemplate, then meditate on.
  - 2. Dharma of Realization is the experience that results from meditation practice.
  - 3. Buddhadharma includes both the teachings and their realization.
- C. As Buddha Nature is the ground, Dharma is the path
- D. The path consists of three elements: hearing, contemplation, and meditation.
  - 1. Hearing is listening to or reading teachings by qualified teachers
    - a. This is like receiving a map showing the path
  - 2. Contemplation is relating what we've heard to our own personal experience.
    - a. Does it seem true to us?
    - b. The Buddha said not to take anything on blind faith. Examine, question, and digest.
    - c. This is like studying the map
  - 3. Meditation is applying the approaches to meditation and conduct that our teacher presents us.
    - a. This is like actually traveling the path toward our destination.

## III. Sangha

- A. In the context of this class, Sangha is the community of student-practitioners who practice and support the Dharma.
- B. The Sangha not only practices the teachings, but also provides them through sustaining centers, inviting teachers, etc.