

# Class 5: Buddha Nature

## Discursive, Conditioned Mind

The word “**discursive**” means rambling.

And the word “**conditioned**” means affected by past and present conditions.

## Definition of Buddha Nature

1. **Emptiness** doesn't mean nothingness. Instead, it means empty of any limiting characteristics. In other words: **limitless**. This quality of limitlessness can also be called "**openness**."
2. **Clarity** refers to the mind's potential to know. This quality of clarity can also be called "**awareness**."
3. **Unimpededness**, means the mind is **dynamic and unobstructed**. This means it can move from one thing to another without impediment or obstruction. This quality of unimpededness can also be called "**sensitivity**."

Now, the true nature of mind – which has these qualities of openness and awareness – has come to be called “**Buddha Nature**.”

### Conditioned Mind and Buddha Nature

The relationship between conditioned thinking and Buddha Nature is like that of clouds in the sky that temporarily block the sun.

The historical Buddha is called “the awakened one” because in his meditation, he saw through the clouds and unveiled the pure nature of mind.

*Each of us has exactly the same potential to realize this true nature.* In other words, each of us is potentially a Buddha.

## The Four Veils

- (1) **Fundamental Ignorance**, means the mind fails to recognize what it truly is, the extent of its openness.
- (2) **Conceptual Knowledge**, or the veil of the basic propensity for grasping at duality, means we recognize emptiness as a relative self. Because we have both self and other, the result is conflict between the two.
- (3) This conflict leads to the third veil, the veil of **afflictive emotions**.

**Three Kleshas**, or poisonous mental states: - **Attachment**, - **Aversion**, and - **Indifference**.

- (3) The fourth veil, the veil of **habitual patterns, or karma**. These are *imprints made on consciousness by our actions of body, speech, and mind*.

Now, we mistakenly **identify** with the conditioned mind.

### Mind and Dharma Practice

How does dharma practice work? **“The Threefold Training.”**

- **Listening** to the teachings,
- **Contemplating** them, and
- **Practicing** meditation.

## **The Three Yanas**

**(1) HINAYANA:** In the first path or collection of teachings, we focus on our own spiritual development. The practice of **shamata**, or calm-abiding meditation.

**(2) MAHAYANA:** In the second path or collection of teachings, the focus is on benefitting all beings. The practice of **compassion meditation (TONG-LEN)**

*We see that everywhere there are sentient beings who want to be happy and avoid suffering. But they have the same suffering we have.*

**(3) VAJRAYANA:** In the third path or collection of teachings, the focus is on benefitting others, by using **special practices**. The practice of **mantra meditation** OR **deity meditation**.

*To gradually counteract our fixation on the relative self, the primary technique of mantra meditation is to replace the thought of the relative self with the thought of oneself as a buddha or bodhisattva.*