

Week 4

- Nirvana
 - Karma and reincarnation / buddhanature
 - The bodhisattva ideal
-

Nirvana

Often paired with **samsara**, the world on fire with desire and suffering, which has six realms (*rokudō* 六道):

- *Heaven / Tendō* 天道: realm of heavenly beings
- *Fighting spirits / Ashuradō* 阿修羅道: anger, jealousy, and constant war
- *Human / Nindō* 人道: beings who are both good and evil
- *Animals / Chikushōdō* 畜生道: stupidity and servitude
- *Hungry ghosts / Gakidō* 餓鬼道: craving and eternal starvation
- *Hell / Jigokudō* 地獄道: lowest and worst realm of torture and aggression

Nirvana is a place where those fires have been blown out: we've seen the true nature of the self, we've stopped being driven by delusion and we're no longer creating the conditions for rebirth

Karma and reincarnation

We set causes and conditions in motion in this life with body, speech and mind, and those forces continue after we leave the physical world.

There's no "soul" that's being issued a new human body; there's just the continuing functioning of the universe along the trajectory of causes and conditions.

Buddhanature

What it's not:

- a *thing*—a state, potentiality, essence, power or substance
- a timeless principle
- the self, consciousness, psychological element
- enlightenment, awakening, a permanent essence or soul
- substantial
- limited to mind or body, or an object of practice

Buddhanature is *being*, but not as a static condition and not as being vs nonbeing

- it's *functioning*: the universe doing what it does

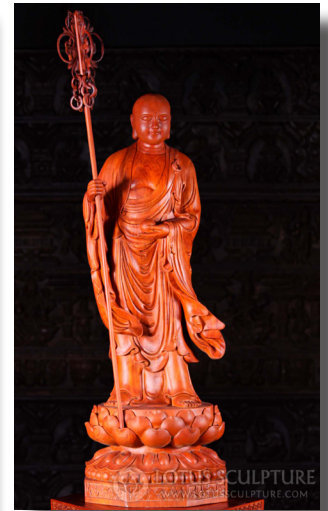
The bodhisattva ideal

- Kannon / Guānyīn / Avalokitesvara 觀音
 - Fugen / Pǔxián / Samantabhadra 普賢
 - Monju / Wénshū / Manjusri 文殊
 - Jizo / Dìzàng / Ksitigarbha 地藏
-

Next week: What is Soto Zen, Sotoshu as a denomination, two founders and two head temples

For more advanced study and reflection

- Research and consider the relationship between the four great bodhisattvas and the six realms of samsara, particularly the hell and human realms.
- Consider the relationship between the *sila* section of the eightfold path and the functioning of karma.
- Read and study the *Busscho* fascicle of Dogen's *Shobogenzo*. (Note that it's one of the longest fascicles, which says something about the centrality of the understanding of buddhanature in our practice.)



Kannon, Fugen, Monju and Jizo