

Morality Is the Support and Foundation for All Good Qualities

It is said in the teachings that morality is like the earth for the running and the non-running.¹ The Buddha taught that morality is the support and foundation for all good qualities.

Keeping extremely pure morality is very important. This is the root of the Buddha's teachings. There's great benefit if we maintain and protect our morality well but there are many shortcomings if we do not.

Whether the teachings of the Buddha exist in this world or not depends on the root of morality, the *pratimoksha*.² The Vinaya text *Lung-shi* contains a definition of how the holy Dharma exists: "The teachings of the holy Dharma exist only when the Vinaya activities are done precisely."

If the activities of the Vinaya such as the *so-jong*, *gar-nä* and *yar-nä*³ are not practiced, the teachings are not Buddhadharma and the holy Dharma has degenerated. Even the existence of bodhisattvas with high tantric realizations doesn't meet the definition for the existence of the teachings of Buddha. Therefore, the Buddha said in the *Pratimoksha Sutra*, "When I pass into the sorrowless state, morality will be your Buddha." He meant that after his passing, the morality in our mental continuum would be his regent. Thinking in this way, we must preserve the Vinaya, our morality.

In the sutra *Langru Do*, which was given on Langru mountain, Shakyamuni Buddha said, "At that time the Destroyer Qualified Gone Beyond One (the Buddha) proclaimed to the devas, the four guardians and so forth, 'Son of the race, you can't accomplish what you have promised without perseverance. Son of the race, I have borne hardships for three countless great eons to give these teachings. Offering to the stupa Gomang Sela Genda,⁴ including the country, I hand over to you devas. Protect this! Devas, remember this, keep this, and protect the teachings of Buddha.'"

Anyone who renounces the householder's life (*rabtu chungna*) living in the ordination to achieve liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering, protect those who have taken this vow (*rab-jung*).

Why? Because even one lay person who every day for hundreds of years collects extensive merit cannot compare with the merit created by somebody who has renounced the householder's life and lives in the vow of the teachings for just one day. The person living in the vows collects unbelievably far greater merit than the other person. There's no comparison.

This is the reason that buddhas equaling the numbers of sand grains of the Ganga all abandoned the householder's life, lived in the ordination of renunciation, and through that conduct completed the six qualities gone beyond and the ten grounds and achieved great enlightenment.

Colophon: Advice given by Rinpoche as part of advice for Lawudo Retreat Centre, Nepal; October 2011. Edited by Nick Ribush, LYWA.

¹ Running means sentient beings; non-running means the earth.

² Skt: individual liberation.

³ The sangha confession ceremony, the rains retreat and the conclusion of the rains retreat.

⁴ This is the Swayambhunath stupa, not the one we see on top but the crystal stupa inside the mountain that was not made by people.