

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

## Sweet, Soft, and Flexible: Discipline's Surprising Inner Qualities

*During the holiday season in 2013, Rinpoche was asked if he had any Christmas message to send to the sangha. He gave this teaching in reply.*

### Part 1

#### MY WAY Makes Us Stingy, Guilty, Proud, and Uptight

In America, everyone wants to keep everything for themselves.

If someone else does something good or helpful, we could just think, "Good! Wonderful! They did that, which is beneficial for them and beneficial for others." But nobody thinks that way. Instead, everyone wants to go MY WAY.

We would rather go MY WAY than get something done. Nothing good can happen unless we do it, no idea is good unless it is ours. That is our stupidity and our jealousy. That is how we close every door on our chance to create virtue. We are the most stingy because we think we are the only ones who should be allowed to be generous. This is how we are uptight when we need to be flexible.

When our clothes are dirty or we have something on our faces, we are really embarrassed and act so guilty, uncomfortable, and anxious. But we are shameless about our real faults. Everyone acts so guilty one minute and then instantly proud the next. I don't think you know the real thing to be guilty about or the real thing to be proud about. You are not qualified for either guilt or pride! You are ashamed of the dirt on your face while at the same time proudly showing your whole dirty butt. You are proud of your beautiful jewelry and not a bit ashamed of your five poisons. That is how mixed up we are!

As Buddhists, our five poisons should be decreasing. But Buddhists can be really jealous and sometimes really uptight.

Real monks and nuns are not guilty or uptight. Sometimes they need to be a little self-conscious because then they will really try hard and keep their vows purely.

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

Look at go-go ladies, even, how hard they try! Go-go ladies also protect themselves very carefully, painting their faces and then keeping their pretty clothes so clean and neat, because they believe these bring success. They have a specific idea of success and how to achieve it. They are mindful and careful for that purpose.

Real monks and nuns need to protect themselves, too, in a similar way. Then they fit with the Foundational Vehicle, at least on the outside. Of course, to practice effectively it has to happen on the inside not the outside. But the outside also has an impact. You need to keep yourself clean before you point the finger at anyone else being dirty.

Some monks and nuns really have a trip: "I am ordained!" "I am a novice!" thinking they are something special. They can be like rattlesnakes!

The ordained shouldn't be like that. That is MY WAY. You need to have compassion and wisdom, otherwise you are not following the Buddha. If you are wearing the Buddha's clothes, they are to remind you of compassion and wisdom. They are not to make you uptight.

*~ teaching continues in Part 2...*