

Foundation of All Good Qualities: Teaching #2 by Arjia Rinpoche: March 16,, 2008

1. The last time we studied “how to listen.” This requires good motivation and not relying on the 8 worldly principles.
2. The “Foundation of All Good Qualities” is a summary of the whole dharma: both sutras and tantra. The last part is the tantra part.
3. There are 3 levels of practice: Hearer’s (Arhat)—person of small scope, Solitary Realizer- person of medium scope, and the Greater Vehicle- person of great scope.
4. The path is different for each scope:
Small scope: take refuge – study the 4 noble truths and practice the 10 virtues
Medium scope: renunciation: study the 8-fold path and practice the 12 links of dependent origination
Great scope: generate compassion – take care of others – practice the 6 perfections and generate compassion.
5. The small scope: the enlightened being is an arhat; the middle scope: the enlightened being is a realize. He sees that life is impermanent and practices renunciation. The great scope: the enlightened being is a bodhisattva. He is still not fully enlightened.
6. The Guru is a Bridge to the Buddha. He is our highest master. We do not just show respect for him; we also practice with him. He is not an enlightened being, so he can make mistakes. However, we can learn as we connect with him, and when our anger, attachment, and ignorance arise because of our interactions with him, it is a means of practice.
7. The Dharma is like a building. When you enter the gateway, you go into an entirely different environment. As you walk in further, you see a door to the building. As you enter, you become a part of the environment and now have a certain responsibility to it. This is the sutra level. The gateway is taking refuge as you search for happiness. You are an Arhat.

You take refuge for two reasons:

- a) Fear of suffering
- b) To become confident and safe

When you go into the second entrance—the doorway—you enter into the Mahayana tradition. Before you merely “loved,” but now you are generating “compassion.” You become a Bodhisattva. Generating Compassion requires that you practice “renunciation.

As you go further, you walk up some stairs and see another entrance. To go in, you must have permission. This involves more responsibility. This entrance is the tantra level. The permission is given in the form of an initiation. Tantra is a “shortcut” to enlightenment

8. Difference between sutra and tantra: When you practice the sutras, you see the Buddha as a human being who became enlightened. He is your teacher. There is some distance between you and him. When you practice tantra, you become a Buddha and you enter into the Pure Land.

9. How the student relies upon the teacher: 9 attitudes

- a. Like a dutiful child – doesn't argue
- b. Like a diamond – strong relationship
- c. Like the earth – solid and never complains
- d. Like the surrounding mountain – calm and unchanging
- e. Like a servant – humble
- f. Like a street cleaner – responsible
- g. Like a staircase – anyone can use – is a convenience
- h. Like a dog – loyal
- i. Like a ferry – takes you where you need to go and never complains

10. The three types of faith:

- a. Convinced faith: "I believe"
- b. Pure Faith: in awe
- c. Longing faith: I want to be like a Buddha

11. The ten qualities of a spiritual master

The guru is like a bridge. The Buddha is no longer in India so we need a teacher. Listen to your guru if he teaches the dharma. If he doesn't teach the dharma, then don't listen

- a. Humble due to his higher attaining of morality
- b. Calm due to his higher training of concentration
- c. Pacified due to his training of wisdom
- d. Rich in oral transmission
- e. Having realized emptiness
- f. More learned than his students
- g. Being compassionate
- h. Being hard working
- i. Having no regrets or lamentation