

On Buddha Shakyamuni

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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Buddha Shakyamuni? Who is that? That is our buddha. This time's buddha. All the naughty ones of this whole eon or whatever you call it, this time, for every sentient being, Shakyamuni is the buddha.

Actually, Shakyamuni is always there. Shakyamuni is there in every time and every place.

If you ask, "Whose fault is it that we have the dharma, all the dharma, each kind?" It's Shakyamuni's fault. He is the one!

Actually, Shakyamuni isn't just the buddha of this time; he is the buddha of *all* times. Shakyamuni is of the past, of the future, and now. Then that's it! You need something else?

All beings one way are Shakyamuni, meaning they will become enlightened. Then they are finished! Then they lost their sentient-being-ness. That's it! That is our Shakyamuni, too, our buddhanature Shakyamuni.

Sometimes people forget about Shakyamuni—they think they are some Vajrayana big deal and Shakyamuni is only for Hinayana or Mahayana. They think, "Guru Rinpoche! Vajrasattva! Vajrakilaya! Troma Nagmo! Mahakala! Those are my buddhas—Shakyamuni is too simple." That is completely wrong thinking. But one way that's fine, too, because if they have faith in those deities, actually Shakyamuni is already there. Ha, ha, ha! Still you didn't escape your Shakyamuni! Also it's fine because you can't harm Shakyamuni anyway. If you don't have faith in Shakyamuni, that doesn't harm him. If you do have faith, that doesn't benefit him. Who is harmed or benefitted? Yourself. If you think Shakyamuni is too simple, or shallow, or has no guts, Shakyamuni isn't even embarrassed! Is that a fault of his, that he's not embarrassed? No. It's your fault to not be embarrassed by your own wrong thinking. Thinking that way, you are just showing that you yourself are too simple, too shallow, and have no guts.

Anyway, if people have that kind of idea, the important thing is they have faith in a real refuge object—if they like Vajrasattva better than Shakyamuni, fine! Vajrasattva's not going to be happy; Shakyamuni's not going to be sad and jealous. Because they are not like you! So be flexible. The important thing is to have faith in the refuge objects. Have faith and trust—that's it! That's the really important focus.

Actually, do you think Buddha Shakyamuni is sitting peacefully because he has no guts? No. It isn't a sign that he's afraid to fight. He is not sitting down because he's afraid to stand up, afraid of using his own two feet, like you. He is peaceful because he has already conquered all his enemies, and not external enemies that he hated, either, like soldiers. He conquered the enemies of his own poisons, his own passions, his own grasping. He was able to overcome his self-grasping completely. He was able to overcome his grasping to duality. That is what *tup-pa* in Tibetan, or *muni* in Sanskrit, or "sage" in English means. That is why he is called Shakyamuni, "the sage of the Shakya clan." He is supremely capable. If we could just understand that one word, "sage," we would have such deep faith! If we could just get a tiny glimpse of his qualities, we really wouldn't doubt. You wouldn't be able to make the mistake of thinking he was something simple, or too peaceful, or something low, or just for Hinayana. Actually, real Hinayana is already there in Vajrayana anyway, and anyone who thinks Hinayana is low is really showing their own ignorance, worse than showing their dirty butt.

In another way, "sage" means that he knows the fundamental nature of all phenomena of samsara and enlightenment. Actually it has many, many meanings—you can go very deeply into that one word, that one idea, and Shakyamuni's qualities start to open up there. Then you know, "Ah! He is like that!" and you have real faith. Not faith with your mouth. Anyway, do I know about that, those qualities, those amazing deep things? No.

I am just hanging out here, drinking beer and lying in bed. But Shakyamuni conquered everything. For me, in my bed, when I'm sleeping, my enemy is that I have to wake up; when I'm awake, my enemy is having to go to sleep. Those are my kind of enemies, dumb-dumb enemies, and because I am dumb-dumb I haven't conquered either one! Therefore, I'm always half-awake and half-asleep and getting nowhere! Shakyamuni, though, he recognized the real enemy, which

is grasping to the self, and he conquered it completely. Therefore, he is called “sage;” and he’s also called “conqueror,” as in “transcendent accomplished conqueror,” *chom-den-de* in Tibetan, *bhagawan* in Sanskrit.

No, Shakyamuni is nothing small, nothing low, nothing shallow. He is the real, deep, biggest, highest, most trustworthy of everything. That’s not just what I say, that is what all the lamas say, and all the buddhas and bodhisattvas say, and what Shakyamuni himself said, except he wasn’t boasting and lying like most people because he actually does have those qualities.

So on the upcoming festival day, everybody can come and practice, and remember Shakyamuni’s qualities, whatever you can, whatever you know. That way have faith, and that way practice together. That is a real festival day, a real holiday. That is the essence, the reason—don’t just come for the delicious food. Come for the dharma. Come for the practice. Don’t cheat yourself of your Shakyamuni, okay? Our Shakyamuni chance, our Shakyamuni offering, our Shakyamuni purification. Think that way, not only on that one day, but *at least* on that one day. At least don’t cheat your Shakyamuni for that one day, okay? That is the real party.

Tashi delek!

-Gyatrul