

Voice of Clear Light

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From a Lamenting Heart

A Spontaneous Poem by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, May 10, 2015



While teaching the Bon in Spain
I hear the news of an earthquake in Nepal.
Instantly the hairs on my body stand up
Sadness whirls in my heart
Anguish penetrates my body.

Is this the punishment of angry local deities?
Or natural, samsaric destruction?
Or simply a fate that has befallen us?

Beneath the earth, stones collide.
There can be no certainty of any reason.
A profusion of causes and conditions
In spaces outer, inner, and secret
Result in this elemental dream-like disaster.
Among the thousands of dead and injured
Men and women, children and elderly.
Mother and child, once inseparable even for a moment,
Now apart, forever.
How appalling.
Couples bonded in love and affection,
With dreams for a lifetime together,
Are torn apart and permanently separated.
My heart fills with agony.

In any family, many are dead.
Some are left alive and injured.
All that had been earned is lost.
All that had been built up has collapsed.
Lonely, friendless, hopeless, exhausted,
A survivor looks to the sky and sees only a void,
Looks down at a collapsed wall and sees corpses.
Minds wander untethered like souls between lives.
Fathers, spent of strength, do not know what to do.
Grandparents nearing the completion of contented lives
Once full of children and grandchildren leading joyful lives
Are now alone.
A home with generations of memories—gone.
Spiritual monuments, priceless objects of heritage
Turned to rubble in a moment.
I am pierced with sadness.

There is a thundering sorrow beneath the earth.
Who listens? No one.
The sound vanishes like an echo.
An innocent newborn child,
Who has not even seen the light of this world,
Experiences life and death at once.
Challenging even to imagine.
Like a bad omen in a dream
This too will dissolve.
People will gradually forget.

One day, it will be difficult to trace what happened here.
Therefore, in this crucial time, let us remember!

The deceased of Nepal and Tibet have a long history of friendship.
Let us perform a dedication prayer and join our merit.
All who survive—laity, monks, and nuns
United in heartfelt sadness
Can lift some load of suffering, whether small or large.
Each of us can dispel another's darkness with the light of compassion.
Each of us can bear witness to the grieving of another.
When we have lost the way forward and do not know what to do,
When we cannot see the light because of the darkness of suffering,
At that moment, our advice to one another is precious.

To intelligent men and women,
There is no greater demonstration of impermanence than this.
Now have the diligence to understand!
Old and young are liable to become sick.
The circumstances of your own death are uncertain.
Possibly, your death is very close.
Do not concern yourself with elaborate strategies for this lifetime.
Do not abandon your peace to busyness.
Do not abandon your happiness in pursuit of wealth.
Do not abandon your compassion in anger.

As if there were just today to live,
Do good for yourself and others.
Enjoy close friends and family.
Learn a new art form to be wiser.
Laugh like a child thousands upon thousands of times.
Take joy in activities outside your profession.
Even if one finds true happiness in that which is considered crazy, do it!
Spread your love and compassion like the million rays of the sun.
An altruistic heart effortlessly works for good.
Turn your happiness like a wheel—in all directions.
Endeavor to work without bias for all beings and for truth.

This earthquake is a master of appearance.

If you still have difficulty understanding the essence of the teachings
After a lifetime of listening,
Perhaps now your heart has been moved.
If your mind is still unripe
After completing nine hundred thousand preliminary practices,
Perhaps now your mind has been tamed.
I praise the masters of natural existence!

For these deceased and faultless people,
With compassion and respect from the core of my heart
I will offer these strings of words like necklaces of flowers.
Every time I pray, I will not forget.
I dedicate my virtuous actions to all who suffer.
May you be liberated in a pure land.

This is a spontaneous poem. Written by Ababa (Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche) in Berlin, Germany, 2015. Translated from Tibetan to English by Dr. Sangmo Yangri and Matthew Conover. Edited by Marcy Vaughn.