



One's Best Friend

An Excerpt from *The True Source of Healing* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



The ever-present, unbounded sacred space of your nature is beyond distinctions of beauty or ugliness, pain or pleasure. Just as fear can drive you away from connection with your essential nature, beauty, too, can pull you away from it. And just as fear can lead you back to your essential nature, so can beauty. When you see a beautiful flower, you may believe that the beauty lies in the flower and not in you. Regarding the flower as the source of that beauty reinforces your sense of yourself as one who is lacking – in this instance, lacking beauty. But the wisdom eye recognizes that the beauty of the flower is also the beauty of who you are: both arise from the same source, the inner refuge. Everything is of the same nature.

So what happens when we perceive pain with the wisdom eye? Normally when we have pain, we experience that we *are* the pain: *I am hurting*. But when you identify with the space, light, and warmth of the inner refuge, then even when blockages and pain are present, you recognize that you are fundamentally pure. In the dzogchen teachings the lotus is used to illustrate our fundamentally pure nature. The lotus grows in water, and although the roots lie in the mud at the bottom of a murky pond, the blossom rests on the water's surface, its petals unblemished and pure. When you are fully present in pain, can you feel your lotus nature?

Pain is appearance. Blockages, numbness and discomfort are appearances. The thoughts and stressful speech you have about your pain are appearances. All the challenging situations you experience are also appearances. No matter what appears in it, unbounded sacred space is unchanging. Can you recognize your unbounded nature? As we've been practicing, stillness of the body, silence of speech, and spaciousness of mind are the three doors that lead to the

recognition of our unbounded nature. This recognition cuts the root of suffering. When the root is cut, no appearance can delude or disturb you. By going for inner refuge and becoming familiar with the truth of your unbounded nature, you come to feel strong enough and brave enough to journey to the very heart of appearances, rather than continually running away from them. Discovering the space, light, and warmth in the presence of appearance is healing.

When pain is your challenge, if you can access the inner refuge and rest there, you will gain confidence that you are not your pain. Furthermore, your suffering will transform. Pain will no longer define your whole existence, and positive qualities like love, humor, and joy will become available to you.

In the midst of pain, remember that you always have the choice to connect to stillness, silence, and spaciousness, and rest in the inner refuge. As you rest there, open awareness can clear disturbing thoughts and emotions as well as soothe physical pain. How much is your life guided by light and awareness, and how much is it driven by reactivity and denial? The inner refuge is your unfailing support in any moment. Let it be your best friend.

(Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book, *The True Source of Healing: How the Ancient Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval Can Transform and Enrich Your Life*
, is available from Ligmincha's

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