

Advice of the Mountain Flower

Another day, I went for some fresh air to a meadow covered with flowers.
... While singing and remaining in a state of awareness of the absolute
view, I noticed among the profusion of flowers spread out before me one
particular flower waving gently on it's long stem and giving out a sweet fragrance,

as it swayed from side to side, I heard this song in the rustling
Of its petals...

Listen to me, mountain dweller: ...
I don't want to hurt your feelings,
but, in fact, you even lack awareness
of impermanence and death.
Let alone any realization of emptiness.

For those with such awareness,
outer phenomena all teach impermanence and death.
I, the flower, will now give you, the yogi,
a bit of helpful advice
on death and impermanence.

A flower born in a meadow,
I enjoy perfect happiness
with my brightly colored petals in full bloom.
Surrounded by an eager cloud of bees,
I dance gaily, swaying gently with the wind.
When a fine rain falls, my petals warp around me;
when the sun shines I open like a smile.

Right now I look well enough.
But I won't last long.
Not at all.

Unwelcome frost will dull the vivid colors,
till turning brown I wither.
Thinking of this, I am disturbed.
Later still, winds –
Violent and merciless –
Will tear me apart until I turn to dust....

You, hermit, ...
Are of the same nature.

Surrounded by a host of disciples,
you enjoy a fine complexion,
your body of flesh and blood is full of life.
When others praise you,
You dance with joy;...

Right now, you look well enough.
But you won't last long.
Not at all.

Unhealthy ageing will steal away
your healthy vigor;
your hair will whiten
and your back will grow bent....
When touched by the merciless hands

of illness and death
you will leave this world
for the next life....

Since you, mountain-roaming hermit,
And I, a mountain flower,
Are mountain friends,
I have offered you
These words of good advice.

Then the flower fell silent and remained still.

In reply, I sang:
O brilliant, exquisite flower,
your discourse on impermanence
is wonderful indeed.
But what shall the two of us do?
Is there nothing that can be done?...

The flower replied:
...Among all the activities of samsara,
there is not one that is lasting.

Whatever is born will die;
Whatever is joined will come apart;
Whatever is gathered will disperse;
Whatever is high will fall.

Having considered this,
I resolve not to be attached
to these lush meadows,
even now, in the full glory of my display,
even as my petals unfold in splendor...

You too, while strong and fit,
should abandon your clinging....
seek the pure field of freedom,
the great serenity.

by Shabkar Tsodruk Rangdrol (1781 - 1851)

from *The Life of Shabkar - Autobiography of a Tibetan Yogi*