

Dekyi's Story

Collected by Dr. Sonam Dradup

Dekyi 48 yrs old

“Dekyi” means “happiness” in Tibetan and is a girl’s name. This woman in the picture who also has the name of Dekyi somehow doesn’t feel she is happy and never understands why she is granted this name.

Dekyi in a ragged Tibetan dress sat on a bench at the hospital hall with a stick in her wrinkled hands, leaned her head with disheveled hair against the wall, contemplating.

She pulled her walk stick closer to her feet as I walked towards her. I looked around and questioned “Where is your family? Who accompanied you to the camp?” She howled somebody’s name and a boy with a cowboy hat ran to us. “This is my son and he took me here for the operation.” The boy was patting his pants to dust off all the dirt and greeted me “Tashi Delek, I am Dorjee, her son. Sorry for all the dust. I was just playing with some other kids in the hospital yard.” He seemed to be a little boy but managed to take a big responsibility for the family. I asked “How old are you? Do you go to school? Dorjee?” He answered without any hesitation “Seven! School? I am now a fulltime helper of my mother. She is handicapped and needs me.” He ran back to the kids to play again. “Where are your husband and other family?” I asked. She became troubled but explained “I never have a husband, but have two illegitimate children. He is the younger one. The older one is daughter herding the animals at home. I became an orphan since 5. The only family, my older brother, died 3 years ago.” She groaned but continued with a trembling voice “I lost my sight two years ago and since then I have been depending on Dorjee and my 12 year-old daughter for living. I hope that my sight will be restored from this operation. There is a huge amount of debt mounted from my brother’s illness and death that I need to paid off and I need to free Dorjee for schooling and to continuously raise 4 children of my brother.” I asked, “So you have 6 kids to raise? Where is your brother’s wife? Can she take care of the other four?” She answered “Their mother died five years ago and left all the kids for my brother to raise. His death left no choice for the kids than depending on me.” She continues “I am Dekyi. You know the happiness, but it never happened once in my life. My life has been around death, loneliness and debts and now blindness. Often, I think I must have been a bad person in my previous life and bad karma is causing all the pain.” Dekyi



never went to school but firmly believed in reincarnation and karma.

She was called to the examination room for the cataract diagnosis. She quickly pulled herself together and stood up with the support of her stick and called Dorjee. All of the sudden, she looked pale and restless. I asked if she was OK. She fumbled with her hair and pressed it down at the back and said “This is it. The only chance I have got. What if my blindness is diagnosed as untreatable?”

Dorjee showed up and led her to the room. With Dorjee’s help, she placed herself on a chair in front of the slit lamp. A few minutes later, she was diagnosed with bilateral cataracts and scheduled for a surgery in the afternoon on the same day. Dorjee rushed to her and held her from her behind and buried his head into her coat and cried for a long time. He shed tears for the joy of a new hope and for all the pain borne all the years by her mother and himself. Dekyi thanked and prayed for the Buddha with drawing her palms together at her chest, and then spoke with a tearful face “I am now feeling happy and happy for the first time in my life.” She wiped her tears with her right-hand sleeve and then followed Dorjee for lunch. Dekyi was operated in that afternoon.

On the second day of the operation, we learned that her vision was 6/9. Dorjee and She came to me to say thank you and goodbye. She looked much more tidy on that day; her black hair was neat, her face carried a smile and she walked without the stick and wore a cool pair of sunglasses.

Carefully taking off the glasses, she looked at me and expressed her millions of appreciation to Seva. There was a particular message that Dekyi would like me to pass to everybody in Seva Canada and Berkeley. “Please tell all the people in your organization. They are the ones who have helped me end my bad karma and bring a glimpse of light to my life!” Tears were smudging her eyes when she said it.

