

Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje Rinpoche's Appeal to the Tibetan people

This week, two young Tibetan children, one in Tibet and one in India, have burned themselves to death. These events pain me deeply. I could not bear to think of it when I heard the news, and for that reason, I want to make a request of my fellow Tibetans at home and abroad. From 2009 to the present, nearly 150 Tibetans within Tibet and abroad have immolated their own precious bodies, making the strongest of statements. But neither among the international community nor in any other country has anyone shown the concern that such an act should warrant, any respect for the value of their lives, or any interest in the situation and aspirations that led them to immolate themselves. Within Tibetan society, people will applaud them for a few days, saying, "He's a hero," "She's a heroine," or "That is incredible." But that does not help. It is important to deeply consider the physical pain of those who set themselves on fire and the mental suffering of the relatives they leave behind, as well as whether this will help or harm Tibet, immediately, within a short while, or in the long term. As a fellow Tibetan, I ask all of you to continue living good and healthy lives. The Tibetan land is vast, but the Tibetan people are few in number. Therefore, it is critical that every individual Tibetan remain alive in order to preserve the land and people of Tibet. In particular, most of those who have immolated themselves have been young. They are our hope and lifeblood for the future. This non-stop expenditure of life is a severe drain on Tibet as a whole. For the sake of our homeland's future, to relieve the hardships of our people, we should treasure each single breath we take. Use even a single hour or minute well. We should build harmony among our people, increase our sense of community, and give up narrow-minded attachment to old ways. We need to achieve significant results in our education, both traditional and modern. I think that once the Tibetan people are able to stand on their own two feet, we will be able to fulfill our primary aspirations.

Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje

March 4, 2016