

# Tomorrow's weather will definitely be better than today's

by Tashi Palden

translation from Chinese/Tibetan to English by Yangdon Dhondup

## I

He was driving in front of him an ox and a donkey laden with manure. With a bag full of droppings on his shoulder he was hurrying along the winding, rugged and rough mountain path towards the little village on the hill. The ox had a bronze bell tied to its neck and on the donkey's neck was hanging an iron bell. Accompanied by the lumbering tread of the two pack the tinkling of bronze and iron bells resounded distinctively on the quiet mountain path, making a symphony of sound, only even more precious. The bag which held the droppings hung from his neck, its string leaving a deep mark into his dark skin. To keep off the cold he was wearing a hat; it had two long ribbons and on top of it a beautiful knot which flopped from side to side like the bells hanging from the animal's necks. His chin moved from left to right as he took each heavy step; sweat oozed from his forehead and his temples, constantly dropping on his cheeks and his lower jaw. Some of the sweat would trickle into his eyes, causing him pain and creases. When he couldn't bear it any longer, he would use his cracked and dirty hand to rub them.

He had already spent fifty years of his life carrying the heavy load up the bumpy path. Although he was not crippled, his knees were swollen from overwork so that when he would walk he would sway from one side to the other. Day by day, his body got weaker, but since he was already used to this it never seemed to distress him. When he raised his head to look ahead he saw that the black shadow of the east mountain had still not yet sunk out of sight. From the village, the smoke of breakfast cooking and the boiling of gruel rose continuously upwards. Nobody was out to put the sheep and oxen out to grass.: "The sky becomes dim so early", he thought to himself, "I have already come back with the dung from the pasture land far away. What a pleasure! How proud I am!"

Early this morning when the cock heralded the first break of the day, he got up and fed first the ox and the donkey, prepared the saddles and then heated the tea pot in the kitchen. He drank a few bowls of tea, scooped up some mouthfuls of tsampa and went out into the pitch-dark night. Apart from the sound of the steps of the ox and the donkey, there was no noise to be heard on the familiar road. In the quiet night he only needed a few hours to reach at the place where the nomads were herding. He only saw some tits and some vole-mice playing around freely. He first loaded a big bag of manure and a thick bag of droppings. When he prepared the tsampa that he had brought with him, he discovered that it had already frozen into lumps of ice. The weather was so cold. But his stomach was aching from hunger. He could only force himself to gnaw on the frozen lump of tsampa, hearing the gritty sound of his sharp teeth grinding and chewing with all his strength on the ice. He couldn't taste the tsampa at all and he had no choice but to put the rest of it back into the leather bag. He quickly packed the ox and the donkey and with a bag of goat droppings on his back hurriedly set out to return.

Last year there had been a long drought and of course, as a result, it had been a bad harvest. The days had passed with difficulty, and consequently his son had been unable to marry and have a wife come into the home. Because of this he felt remorse; he regretted it deeply. A proverb came to his mind: if one year's harvest is bad, the next year's will definitely make up for it. He regretted his last year's method of farming and was resolute to take more care this year and started therefore, to work after the seventh day of the new year. He started collecting and carrying dung with enthusiasm. He had an aim. No matter how, this year he wanted to have a good harvest and take a wife for his son.

After the new year, two weeks had passed and the people in the village all started to work on the fields. But no-one would have thought that he would wake up that early, go to bed so late and hurry around so busily. Because of his particular method of work, some people put their thumbs up as a sign of praise; deep in their hearts, they admired him, although there were some who could not bear the sight of him and would show their disapproval.

He had two sons and two daughters. The elder son, like others had gone to the city to work as a builder and had saved a lot of money.

Ama thought of sending her elder daughter with the father to work on the fields but he refused, feeling pity with her who would have to work outside, he said: "Doesn't matter, today, the weather is too cold. When the time comes, they will have to work."

Today, he returned early from the pasture. He put the manure on the field and used a layer of earth to cover the pile. As usual, when he returned home carrying the sheep droppings, the elder daughter took the bag of droppings to give her father's back a rest. As soon as he stepped inside the door, he took the rice wine which his wife had prepared for him and drank two or three bowls in a row. "Aba, you even didn't wash your face", his daughter would remind him. "There is so much sweat

on it!” He just laughed and didn’t reply. First, he used his hands, and then his hat to wipe off the sweat, in his normal of routine, with no thought of using water to wash the dirt from his face.

His wife held a bowl of kneaded tsampa in one hand a bowl of tsampa porridge in the other, ready to give them to him, but he was already twisting sheep wool thread. When you looked at his body and his hands, he was a person who never sat around idly; it seemed his hands would itch if he had nothing to do. He always ate in a hurry, to save time. He gobbled up the tsampa, ate the porridge and taking his farm tools, he went out again with his elder daughter and younger son to the field. Apart from the younger daughter and the mother, everybody went to work on the field.

The sky was overcast, neither light nor dark, in the way that makes people feel melancholy. The wind blew in cold gusts, and bones were aching as if they were frozen by the cold. The soft soil in the field ploughed that autumn, flew around and turned to dust in the gusts of wind. People had to close their eyes in such a wind. The children and their father would use cloths to wrap around their faces, but the hole for the eyes was unprotected and could not ward off the dust and they would use their hands to rub their moistened eyes. As a result, when it was time to go home for lunch, each of their faces were covered with dust, as if they were actors who had powdered their faces. It didn’t look so strange on their faces, but their clothes and their hair would turn white. Anyone seeing them would think that they looked like actors but without being comic and happy - they gave an impression of hardship long endured.

Everyday, he and his children were ran around the fields busily spreading manure, watering, ploughing, sowing and weeding and so on to ensure a good harvest. However, nobody became tired of this never-ending varied tasks, and even more, no-one showed any sign of becoming disheartened.

Sometimes he would go by himself, taking a pack-animal to the top of the mountain to collect manure and firewood. Sometimes, at his wife’s insistence, he would take his daughter with him. Because there were so many tasks to complete, he would often get up when the cock first crowed and start to work.

At dusk, just when he had just arrived home, the shepherd boys would also return. He would put down his farming tools, immediately lock up the sheep in their fold, put the ox and the donkey into their shed, and give them some grain. His wife, seeing that when he entered the house he still wouldn’t stop working, would say lovingly to him: “Brother Kelsang Tashi, come and first drink a bowl of tea!” He would look at Pema Dolkar and reply without being upset: “Don’t worry, I’ll soon be finished”. In fact, if he finished one task, there would be something else to do. His work was never completely finished. If he completed a task one day, he would go on to plan the next day’s work. If he had not worked until the sun had set behind the mountain, he would not drink the tea his wife had prepared for him. When he entered the room, usually had to light on the kerosene lamp. First of all he would rub the dust from his eyes with his sleeves, then take the wet cotton cloth which his daughter would pass him and wipe his face with it. If no-one had prepared a wet cloth, he

would use the quilt to wipe the dust from his face. He would lie on it later, tossing restlessly from side to side. The next day, he would feel much better.

Every evening, he said “Achu, it’s so cold!” Using all his energy he would rub his hands until they were warm and then go to the kitchen and put the fire on. This was his long-standing habit. (But when he was working, whether the weather was cold or not, he showed no signs of suffering from the cold; on the contrary, there was always sweat on his forehead.)

His little daughter liked to snuggle up to her mother’s breast remaining there contentedly. The elder daughter followed her mother, constantly twisting wool into threads. He and his children worked until late in the night without resting. Once, when the younger child had his arms idly wrapped around his knees, he said: “Isn’t it wonderful just to wrap your arms round your knees and gaze around?” The little child, half joking answered: “But if a person doesn’t eat, his intestines will stick together!” Looking at his father, he laughed loudly. The household was renowned for eating supper late, so late that they never had their supper without having the lamp lit. If a doctor had seen it, he would definitely say that eating late was unhealthy. The whole household relied on the little kerosene lamp and the fire in the kitchen during the evenings. Each of them had something to work on, until there was only the sound of barking dogs. When there was no sound at all, the children would doze off. Feeling tired herself, Ama asked to him: “Not going to bed early means using a lot of firewood and feeling cold. Isn’t it better to go to bed now?” Their father said in a length: “Now it is spring time, when the days are long and the nights are short. If we don’t finish off the work we ought to do in winter, and wait for the spring, then the amount of work will increase. When would we have time to finish them?! Isn’t there a saying: If a man just eats and sleeps, isn’t he like a corpse? If a man sleeps all his life, how can he have a good life?”

Although the winter nights were long, the days were still long too, and the next day they still had to get up early. No matter whether the days were long and the nights short in the spring, or the days short and the nights long in winter, they would all still get up early and go to bed late. Even though everyone calls out for a late winter, Kelsang Tashi would finish working on one thing and still have another job to do. If the work for that season was finished, there was still so much work to be done for the next season!

## II

He had already made up his mind that this year he really had to have a good harvest, so that he could arrange his son's marriage. So, during the long days and short nights of the spring just as if it was winter, he made his children get up early and went to the field to fetch manure five to six times before daybreak. When the neighbours saw the pile of manure on his field, looking as if it had been brought by a bunch of cranes, they were all surprised. Some commented in private: "Quite probably Kelsang Tashi and his family didn't sleep all night! (This pile of manure couldn't put itself on the field on its own!)"

Everyone knew that if spring did not come with gusts of wind and sand, then the shiny black grain could not be harvested in autumn. Kelsang Tashi abided strictly by this maxim. If he sees somebody working in a casual way in spring, he would certainly repeat it loudly. In spring time, he often thought that being born in this world and given two hands and two feet by his mother, a person has to work harder if he had more than two hands and two feet., or else the hands and feet would have been given in vain. Wouldn't they simply have become useless?

The spring sowing season came. Although the surrounding hills were still overcast, as if they had not yet awoken from their dreams, the grassland and the trees near the village looked rather like his hair, with grey and green, scattered across it. But his hair was becoming whiter and whiter, while the grey colour of the soil would soon turn into a vital, energetic green.

He carried an old style wooden plough and urged on his ox with the bell on its neck, as he walked swiftly towards the field. The nine eyed flower belt and red coloured ribbon, which he used according to tradition to decorate the horn and the tail of the ox, looked very beautiful. He held the plough handle tight, sang a mountain song and started to plough. His daughter walked behind, carrying a leather bag full of seed on her left shoulder and used her right hand to cast the seed into the furrows.

Not knowing how many hours had passed and how much soil they had ploughed, all she saw was the tired ox panting, white foam dripping from its mouth and the sound of the tinkling of the bell around its neck becoming fainter and fainter. Aba himself was exhausted, and dripping with sweat in the burning sunshine. Drops of sweat fell onto his chin. He had long before cast aside the working cloth over his shirt; now he took off his sweat-soaked, dusty shirt and was naked to the waist. He didn't notice that his back was burning from the sun. He readjusted his woollen trousers, which were falling down, and moved his feet forwards, sinking into the wet soil. Holding the whip, urging the old ox onwards, he sang in a hoarse voice:

"If the plough animal doesn't follow the trench of the furrow  
I, the one who is holding the share, feel disheartened"

(After he sang the ploughman's song in a melodious tone through to the end, his weariness and feelings of melancholy had vanished.) The song expressed his hard work. But the ox found it difficult to endure the labour; it could not move on. Finally, it just lay down on the soil, like an old

man who had had no food and who had been carrying a heavy burden and walking for days over the grasslands. The ox did not have the strength to support its body and lay unconscious, in the open fields. This time, the ploughshare, sunk into the earth, did not move. The yoke hung uselessly on the ox's neck. Kelsang Tashi lifted his whip and with all his strength lashed the plough animal's buttocks. His daughter, who was in front, tugged on the harness to pull the ox up from the soil. But the chin of the ox was stuck to the soil, and it had no comprehension of what was on his impatient master's mind. It had no intention of getting up. For this Kelsang Tashi became disheartened, and even a bit angry. He raised his head to look round, and saw that nearby a young lad with whom he had quarrelled the previous day was ploughing on energetically with a strong ox, singing loudly while he ploughed swiftly through the soil. Kelsang Tashi thought to himself that when he got back, after the quarrel, he had felt very bad and regretted it. In the first place, the water was really not enough to satisfy everyone's needs in watering the fields. Secondly, to complain was useless, and would not get him an equal share of the water. But today, he thought that the young lad looked pleased with himself - that he was mocking and greening at him. He became even angrier, and gave a fierce lash of the whip to his ox, which was not doing his job. The old ox did not move. Kelsang Tashi could not help but vent his anger on the ox, kicking him, but to no effect. The elder daughter felt pity for the ox, and pleaded with her father, and only then was the ox forgiven. Both father and daughter removed the ropes and the yoke from the ox. The ox, out of habit, rolled over on the soil. In his eyes were tears as big as broad beans, as if he wanted to say: Master, I am an old ox, I can't be much help!

Kelsang Tashi sat apathetically on the ground, wiping the sweat from his neck and face with his dusty shirt. Then he took out the plastic bottle of Chang and gulped down a few bowlfuls, sniffed some tobacco powder, and looked at the soil, that did not have enough water. The sun was so hot. He was getting anxious and worried. He had no other strong ox to exchange for his old one. He thought to himself: It would be so good if I could be an ox. He was utterly discouraged.

The young lad had rapidly finished ploughing his field and saw that Kelsang Tashi was helpless and angry. He went towards the daughter and said in a straightforward manner, "Kunsang la, prepare the seed quickly, and I'll help you and your family to plough the remaining field!" As he spoke, the young drove the ox to plough and Kunsang walked behind him spreading the seed. Talking and laughing, they were soon finished.

Kelsang Tashi became worried, thinking: This young lad has saved me from my disaster. It is very kind of him, and I should be grateful! But to have to rely on other people to finish the spring ploughing..., isn't it demeaning, isn't it lowering my standards? Isn't it like being a lower class of person? Ho shameful! Of course, he understood was crucial to a farmer and that spring ploughing was one of the most important tasks of the season. If the land was not ploughed at the right time, disaster would certainly follow. Suddenly, a saying came into to his mind: It does not matter if a person's clothes are worn out if he can accomplish things for oneself. If a person has good food to

eat, it doesn't matter whether his stomach is bloated. This time, it seemed that the saying soothed his conscience.

The field which had been sowed early was just drawing in water, and the field sowed late had also succeeded in growing green seedlings. The surrounding field had changed its colour. It was already the season when all the fields had changed colour. The women in the village were busy weeding in the fields, and the men were able to relax for a few days.

The sound of the cuckoo reminds people of times of peace and relaxation. When people see that the cuckoo, they say: "The poison in the water which has been put by the squirrel and the woodpecker has been cleared away by the cuckoo. The animals can drink the water to regain their strength." The poets, eulogising the cuckoo, have given him the name "the herald of spring". The cuckoo brought summer, the season of hope. The sky, as if it were jealous of the multiplicity of colours on earth, became a deeper azure, and even more beautiful. One could see far into the distance. The white floating clouds, as in autumn, would rarely gather together; they were pure white, high and carefree. The spring drought would soon begin. The heat was unbearable and people had to wear straw hats or cloth around their head to go outside. The reflection and heat of the sunlight were scorching hot. When the cuckoo arrived, Kelsang Tashi seemed to be heavy hearted, heaving a sigh, he complained: "Cry! Because of your arrival, the sky has become blue and the clouds high." The reason for his complaint was that the cuckoo brought the drought and clouds seemed to be frightened away by it. But Kelsang Tashi never harmed the cuckoo. He thought to himself that although the cuckoo and the drought arrived at the same time, the cuckoo couldn't know Heaven's will, and that the cuckoo was unrivalled in its nobility.

### III

No matter how hot and dry it was, during these hot days, they still had to rely on distribution by the village head to put a little water on each family's field. People were happy if there was moon-light. If there was not, they would try to find their way to the field and water the thirsty seedlings without wasting a drop of water. Day and night, they rescued the almost dying seedlings, forgetting to sleep and to eat. Although there was sometimes no water, Kelsang Tashi couldn't wait at home, and still went to inspect the field once a day. When he saw that the seeds would soon die he thought of himself as someone rescuing the life of a critically ill person, and felt very anxious. He could not endure it and sang a song he learned from forefathers:

"The sky is wearing a blue suit  
The seedling is wearing a yellow monk's robe  
The turquoise dragon deity of the southern place  
What is in your mind?"

This is not a monotonous and dull song, but a melancholy song, sung from the bottom of one's heart, a song which pleads for hope.

Sometimes, a rain cloud appeared. A gush of rain drops fell on top of the mountain. Hope rose in the heart of Kelsang Tashi, and he was busier than a weather forecaster. First, he prayed to the Three Refuges, saying: "If the Three Jewels know of this, please let it rain, so that the lives of the farmers will be saved." He saw that rain on top of the mountain was like a clever animal, always reluctant to leave the hill and come down to the plain. The black clouds that gather are dispersed by the wind, and go in all four directions without leaving no trace. He was filled with rage, and his morale was low. He looked at the empty sky and swore: "Phui, the weather is really bad. There has never been such bad weather as this! If it continues like this, it's finished!" Before the sun rose and before he went to sleep, as usual, he would take a look at the sky. It seemed he had no other objects of concern than the sky and the earth.

The sky was azure blue and there were no clouds to be seen. A chilly wind was still blowing. During the daytime, the sun was scorching hot. In the evenings, there were sudden bouts of colds air, causing difficulties in sleeping. He knew that these conditions were an indication of a drought. If the weather continued to be like this, there would be no hope for an autumn harvest. But he was not at all willing to give up. He still took his elder daughter and his younger son, early in the mornings, to water the seedlings. The hot weather was like hot sand in a pan. What was regrettable was that he could not find even a little bit of water, he thought "water is more precious than gold and silver." However, he couldn't think of a good plan.

The mid-April festival (Sakadawa) arrived and villagers took the opportunity to pray to the earth deity for rain to come. That afternoon, although rain fell on top of the mountain, it did not reach the fields in the plains. One day, the villagers caught a frog and a scorpion and made them fight each other. There is an old saying: If the frog wins, then it will rain. If the scorpion wins, the drought will continue. After the fight, the boys and girls sprinkled each other with water until they were soaking wet, like birds taking a bath. Nobody became angry or deceived. Some women wanted to throw Kelsang Tashi in the water. Thinking that the more he gets wet the better for the weather, he didn't defend himself. He hoped that doing this would bring the rain. Many of the girls were soaked in water from the river, and he was chasing and trying to catch them.

The sun was terribly hot, and they spent a long time sprinkling each other with water. In the afternoon, when they returned home, the sky feeling jealous of their games was overcast with dark clouds, and it began to rain. It never rained as heavy like this. Kelsang Tashi's joy was so immense he couldn't suppress it. He thought the method of sprinkling water was a useful one and believed in it. However, he didn't sleep properly, but looking outside, wide-eyed, wondering whether the rain would fall through out the night.

The next day, early in the morning, his wife was busy with the housework as usual. She saw that he was awake and said to him in a kindly way: "Husband, today you shouldn't go anywhere, stay at



home and have a good sleep!” But Kelsang Tashi’s mind was on yesterday’s rain and on how, afterwards the crops would be growing. How could he sleep when he felt like a child who was happy and excited during New Year? He didn’t hear what his wife was saying, and got up, quickly put on his trousers and shirt and ran to see the changes in the field. He could see that the surroundings were not white any more, but gleaming with moisture. The pasture and the grass on the hillside were full of vitality. He was amazed that in a single night the flora and crops had changed colour so miraculously.

As usual, Kelsang Tashi’s face was covered in traces of sweat like the waterways of the grassland. Both his hands were covered with thick dirt. More than once, his wife urged him: “Today, you should take some time off, and wash your face and hands properly.” As usual, he lifted his hand and wiped off the dirt without noticing, and said, laughing: “Yesterday, we were sprinkling water, so today there is no need for washing! I’ll do it to make you feel better, mother!” Saying this, he laughed heartily and got up. He took some cold water and washed himself quickly, put on some cream and sat down, putting some tobacco powder on his nail to inhale. This was the only time, when he could relax a little bit. But today, he couldn’t even take time to sniff his tobacco. Somebody from outside shouted that a person of each household had to come to a meeting. “Those people know even the little time I have for myself!” saying this he sniffed in a hurry so that half of the tobacco powder was still on his nostrils. Then, he ran there straightaway.

#### IV

Because of the rain, Kelsang Tashi’s heart was filled with joy, and he felt happy and relaxed. He could see that the possibility of getting a wife for his son would come true, and that good times were coming nearer and nearer. He imagined the wedding: They would hold a grand marriage ceremony in this room and it would be filled with guests and he would have the seat of honour, holding high his wine glass and drinking his fill. There would be singing and dancing. How wonderful it would be!

The drought had finished but crops have a lot of enemies who attack them suddenly. The local hail preventer explained a secret method of preventing hail to the villagers. The village elders said: “A wooden stake should be put up in each of the four corners of the field. If there is hail on top of the mountain in summer, then the wooden stakes will provide a boundary. When the hail comes down to the fields, it will bump its nose on the wooden stakes.” Everybody thought that the hail preventer’s method would work and believed in his power. So Kelsang Tashi, and all the other villagers, went out to put up wooden stakes at each corner of their fields.

After the rain when there was no hail, the men were without work. His wife and elder daughter went to pull out the weeds. Since Kelsang Tashi did not have much to do, he looked for work. It was the

season for plucking medicinal herbs. He saw that many people were going to the mountain to pluck medicinal herbs, and thought to himself: "I will need to spend a lot of money this year on my son's wedding. We have no other income, and plucking medicinal herbs is a good way to earn money." He immediately wanted to go but his wife and daughter prevented him from going. His younger child said: "You don't have to go by yourself, I am young and my legs are strong. I can do this kind of work, can't I?" Although he had already made his mind, how could he accept the advice of his wife and his children, and change their ideas?

Hence, he took with him his younger son, and climbed up the four to five thousand metre high snowy mountain. They were risking their lives, from the early morning to late in the evening, when, feeling hungry, they scooped up some mouthfuls of tsampa. Their hands reached between the stones, turning and plucking, and their fingertips were scratched and bleeding. Every time they discovered herbs, they were wild with joy, as if they have found an enormous precious stone. Medicinal herbs usually grow on the snow line of high mountains, where it can be windy and stormy, or where heavy rains pour down, or where it half rains and half snows. During bad weather there was no shelter in the vast place and Kelsang Tashi and his son are frozen from head to toe so that they shake with the cold. During snow storms, they shelter between the cliffs, and work with their bodies hunched over. They sheltered at a nomad's tent, but many herb pluckers were already crammed into it and there were not enough blankets. Everyone had come from far away and hadn't brought bedding, so for about a week, they huddled up in coarse woollen blankets and slept on the floor. Nobody took off their clothes, and later their bodies were covered in lice; the itching and biting meant they couldn't rest but Kelsang Tashi had brought with him a painkiller, to be diluted every day with water, which relieved the pain. The painkiller was precious like a Jewel to them and they carried it with them where-ever they went.

After expending great effort and risking their lives to collect precious herbs, they went to sell them. The traders sorted out the herbs, classifying his herbs as middle grade and paying him accordingly. Altogether, he had seven *jin* of dried herbs and sold it for more than a hundred *yuan*. This was Kelsang Tashi's largest time of income during that year. He was, of course, very happy, and bought five bricks of tea which would last for a few months. He brought four metres of material to make shirt for his two daughters, a pair of football boots for his younger son and the rest he kept for the wedding expenses of his elder son.

After the drought in the early summer the crops were not very healthy and plentiful, but after examining them, Kelsang Tashi was satisfied and grateful for the support of the Three Jewels. This year's harvest was a little bit better than last year's. After returning from herb collecting, he put some bricks on the field to prevent flooding and since there was not much to do, Kelsang Tashi went to herd.

From the spring ploughing until autumn's harvest threshing, the weather was always the enemy of the farmers. If there was no drought, then it would suddenly rain or hail or freeze, or there would be

sun and rain... There could be one disaster after the other, and the farmers were always at the mercy of the sky. There was nobody who didn't wanted to control the weather. From the earliest times until now, human beings wanted to control the weather but the sky was much more stronger.

After the horse-racing during the *Wango* festival, the crops in his field turned yellow-gold. In Kelsang Tashi's heart there was again faith and hope.

One day, when the sun was about to set, there was a beam of sunshine from the crack of a cloud. Then, the sky was covered with thick, dark clouds, thunder was heard and lightning flashed in the sky. Kelsang Tashi felt restless and uncomfortable, as if a stone was in his shoe. He couldn't restrain himself, and looked at the sky, pouring down rain and the wind howled. He shouted out curses: "Tui! Tui!" He thought himself that if he commanded the heavens, then it wouldn't be like this. But his cursing had not the slightest effect and he turned once more to the Three Jewels, and prayed for care and protection, saying that the last thing he wanted just now was hail. Just at this time, there was a sudden sound, and something hard fell from the sky. The peak of the mountain had turned white. All the villagers came outside to look, their hearts filled with bewilderment. One renowned hail preventer cursed from the top of his house: "Phei! Phei!" One old man said worriedly: "If women go around shouting wild, then hail will fall for sure". They blamed the noisy women. Despite the wooden stakes at the corner of the fields, and the experienced hail-preventer, and the noisy women, none of them could prevent these big pieces of hail, falling with force like an assault to a brave warrior. They had never seen this kind of hail before, and were terrified and miserable. They had an acute sense of smell, and sensed from a strange aroma that the crops, trees and the grass were being destroyed by the hail. The sobbing of some villagers could be heard.

After the hail, there was water everywhere. All the men from the village went to the field to check the fields. Although the hail had stopped, rain was still pouring down. Some of the villagers had their torch with them, but it was of not much help. They didn't know from where the flood came and therefore, they were unable to prevent the flood. When Kelsang Tashi and some others of his age returned home, their clothes were soaking wet. Some torn clothing hung on their legs. His wife, in the meantime, had heated the left-over noodle-soup and waited with the elder daughter for him. Seeing that he returned, she felt happy and asked him: "How is the crop? Is everything flooded?" He sadly replied: "It's finished. There is nothing to see other than the flood." His wife comforted him saying: "If there's a flood and the hail has come, what can we do? As long as people come back safely, that's more important than anything!"

That night, Kelsang Tashi could only hear the water bubbling. All his hope and plans had vanished. That night, he didn't sleep at all.

The next day, Kelsang Tashi's head was heavy, and he lacked all his strength. He said: "Strange, what has happened?" Saying this, he struggled to get up, and put on his soaked clothes from the previous day. The rain had not stopped, the sky was grey and again he ran to his field. He saw that the ripe crop had been battered so that everything was crooked. All the ears of grain were like birds

fallen onto the field, as if a wild animal had stepped on them. He couldn't utter a single word. He stood there stupefied, thinking deeply.

He looked at this sad situation, and heard women crying loudly, as if they had lost their families. For one moment, he fainted, and recovered only when his daughter Kunsang called him. He didn't want his daughter to feel sad, but at the same time he couldn't help himself, tears were falling from his eyes. He looked at the winding rugged road in front of him, and said: "If a life-partner wants to part forever, then let her go. If a year's harvest is gone, then we will have to make up for it. Even if this year's harvest is gone, there is till next year's! There is no use being sad. Let's wait until next year's harvest, then we will fight against nature, and it will be better!" He looked forward to the coming year. He thought to himself, "next year will be better than this year, tomorrow's weather will be better than today's." If one worked hard on the field, and was immersed in work, then next year's harvest would definitely be good. Everybody waited for next year's good fortune.