

Ending a plague

{Based on the story of the Jewel Sutra}

Once, when disease had spread
claiming lives from house to house
and village to village,

when foul, rotting corpses were everywhere,
and mournful cries could be heard from far,

when ghosts and evil minded ones
terrorized those who were left,

just then with his arrival
the torrential rains of the Buddha's compassion
came pouring down,
sweeping away the filth, and clearing the air

Just as he and his disciples walked through the streets
and exorcised that town then
bringing light, speaking swift flowing rivers of deep truth,
washing away disease and despair,
rescuing living beings,
just so, may it be this way for us now

to cleanse all those who suffer today, tonight,
to wash away their delusions,
their afflictions,
their spiritual and physical illness

We invoke the presence of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
the Saints and Sages,
the Devas, guardians and protectors,

and a rain of the holy Dharma
in America and the world, in this, the 21st century,

to cleanse the streets of the putrefying corpses
destroyed by the epidemics
of materialism and greed,
of indifference,
of cruelty, and neglect

of rampant addictions,
of violent thoughts and actions,
of wars,
and destruction,
and of the blindness sweeping through nations

technology enabling the rapid spread of deep delusion
until right thought, speech and action are all but forgotten

evil spreading fast and far,
creating debased humans,
walking corpses,
and hungry ghosts, vengeful spirits

Oh, who can we call to now?
Who but you,
o saviors of humankind, all species,
and the earth!

You who are endlessly dedicated
to the healing of our sorrows and afflictions,
pour down the holy rain of your teachings!

as words,
as light,

*as peace,
as insight
arising in the hearts of men and women,
animals and spirits*

*as empowered prayer
and mantra
and medicines,
enabling compassionate works for our family
and planet to be completely fulfilled!*

Transform the terrible hungry ghost-like minds
inspire us with your grace and wisdom and compassion,
and with your great love and power

Bring light, harmony, joy and rest again to this land
and to these people,
moved by your presence, I pray

And just as the Buddha in his time
utterly tamed those unruly spirits,
completely cleared the airs,
and thoroughly cleansed the streets and homes
and those people's hearts and minds and bodies,
so too, exactly in that same way,
may this place and the minds and hearts of these people here
be thoroughly purified and renewed