

Reflections from Indonesia

By Dr. Margret Rueffler - December 2004

Foremost in everyone's focus was the seaquake of incredible magnitude, which moved the tectonic plates just off Aceh – on the northern tip of Sumatra, and the resulting tsunami, the ever increasing count of dead victims and the suffering of the survivors.

Being in Indonesia during these dramatic times, I was quickly drawn into the TV pictures of masses of fleeing people, the screams, cries and lamenting of survivors, vast areas of inundated land, dead bodies floating and debris of destroyed homes. The reaction of the local population, all wanting to help, was overwhelming. A very powerful emotional response. Everyone I met wanted to give, go there and be supportive. The TV titles stated "All Indonesia is crying". The various international responses were extremely interesting. The USA sent an airport carrier to be of help – and promised large amounts of money, and thus the focus on the Iraq war was diverted. Germany also donated large amounts diverting the attention from its internal challenges, such as over four million unemployed.

Everyone here in Indonesia hopes that some of this money might actually trickle down to those affected by the tsunami. In addition, Exxon, known to be one of the largest abuser of human rights in the Aceh area, donated a large sum, which however, when compared to its estimated profits per year seems minimal. Not to mention the Aceh rebels accused by the military to be hijacking trucks on the way to the areas hit hardest. The run of the various NGOs to be on the receiving end of this stream of money blessings was on. As I am watching these different actions moving into the high gear of helping, I am wondering – what is really happening here? The larger the emotional and physical trauma, the more helpers will appear, catapulted into action through the suffering of others. Do we really need this suffering first to be motivated to help? Why are we trying to only deal with the symptoms of this tsunami and no one looks for the cause.

The earth is a living being, she is shaking and in great pain – caused by our abuse of her. Depleting her life blood, the oil, exploding atomic bombs in her womb, the wars taking place, only to mention a few. She receives nothing from us. Yet without her there would be no life, human or other. She surely does not want to kill her children. She gives everything and gets nothing lifegiving in return. Why does no one weep for the pain the earth is in?

The people who died in the Tsunami died a fast death. The pain is of those who continue to live. Of course the people need help. The dead need to be honoured as well. The greatest suffering I experienced during this period was the pain the earth is in. Why do we not look to the cause for this? This mass event teaches us something about her. She needs to be honoured again. Replenished by our love and care taking of her as a lifegiving and living being. Why not turn to the earth each day and thank her for providing? Changing our attitude towards the abuse we heape upon ourselves and her? Can we honor and respect ourselves and the earth again?

Why is such an event, the tsunami, featuring as a catastrophe? Can it not be seen as a part of her own process of change? As we go through our individual processes, so does the earth. However, her rhythm is different. There is plenty of scientific evidence that the Himalayas were once at the bottom of the sea. May be it is possible to perceive this seaquake as a part of the earth changing. May be much more will change, observing the global weather patterns and warming.

Humans undergo their processes of releasing old beliefs and attitudes, changing and transforming. Often, this is accompanied by great physical and emotional upheavals. We do have a choice and my perspective on this choice – one, to look at this event as an incredible catastrophe, moving our energy into high gears, saving people. The earth is once more seen as the enemy, and the issue is missed.

Two, to turn inward and become, once more aware of the earth as this living being, nourishing us, in spite of our disregard and abuse for her. To learn to honour ourselves and the earth again, to let the love she needs flow freely, and thus tune into her needs and align with her transformational process.

This in turn, will allow to become aware of her next shift and movements. Like the elephants on the tiny islands off the coast of Sumatra, aware that the earth was moving and Tsunami on its way – ran to high grounds and the locals knowing their animals followed them, thus leaving the place where the Tsunami moved to – and no loss of lives occurred.

In all areas the Tsunami reached nearly no dead animal were found. The animals had already left for higher destinations, sensing the impact of the move of the earth. The real catastrophe is the unawareness of the earth's process. The result of this is then the suffering which takes place.

Our bodies are made up of her minerals etc...We are part of her. I do believe that time has come to consciously support the difficult process of change the earth is in. It is the earth's and our own process of change and transformation . She needs our alignment with her to do this. To sense her moves and thus avoid unnecessary suffering, and allow us this incredible opportunity to grow and transform in alignment with her.