



THE HUNDRED
THOUSAND SONGS
OF
MILAREPA

A NEW TRANSLATION

TSANGNYÖN HERUKA

TRANSLATED BY CHRISTOPHER STAGG

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Translated under the Guidance of Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche

By Christopher Stagg
of the Nitartha Translation Network



SHAMBHALA
BOULDER
2016

*To all my mother sentient beings,
In particular, my mother in this life, Rita Stagg.*

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KTGR	Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche
DPR	Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche
KSP	Khenpo Sherap Phuntsok
AKW	Acharya Kelsang Wangdi
ATW	Acharya Tashi Wangchuk
TN	Tenzin Namdak

Textual sources:

<i>BCC</i>	<i>Twelve Great Sons (Bu chen bcu gnyis)</i>
<i>DK</i>	<i>Great White Conch Dictionary (Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo),</i> Tibetan dictionary of Buddhist terms (Blo bzang 'phrin las 2002)
<i>DN</i>	<i>The Black Treasury (mDzod nag ma)</i> of the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Complete Works edition (Rang byung rdo rje 2006)
<i>DN-S</i>	<i>The Black Treasury</i> , Sichuan edition (Rang byung rdo rje 2008)
<i>DSD</i>	<i>New Revised [Tibetan] Dictionary (Dag yig gsar bsgrigs)</i>
<i>DSM</i>	<i>The Golden Mirror of Decoding (brDa dkrol gser gyi me long),</i> Tibetan dictionary of archaic terms (Tshul khrims 1997)
<i>JV</i>	Jim Valby in THL Tibetan to English Translation Tool
<i>RY</i>	Rangjung Yeshe in THL Tibetan to English Translation Tool

TDC The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*; Zhang *et al.* 1993)

TNH Tsangnyön Heruka's version of Milarepa's *Life and Songs* (bTsang smyon he ruka 1999)

Other abbreviations:

S: Sanskrit

T: Tibetan

Foreword by the Seventeenth Karmapa

The great Tibetan yogi Jetsun Milarepa is revered by all Tibetans, but he is of immense importance for the Kagyu school in particular. He serves as the bridge between the Indian traditions he received through his teacher, the great Marpa Lotsawa, and the Jetsun's own student, Lord Gampopa, the wellspring of the Dakpo Kagyu lineage.

Lord Milarepa's *Hundred Thousand Songs* is considered to be the finest example of *gur*—songs of spiritual realization—and was composed in the original Tibetan poetic style. When we read this book, it would be wrong to regard it merely as literature or as an interesting text of historical value. We should, instead, consider how we can learn from his example and emulate his qualities in our own lives and practice. Jetsun Milarepa was an ordinary human being with many faults who, having committed grave misdeeds that included the murder of more than thirty people, turned to the dharma. Then, through unwavering devotion to his teacher, single-pointed focus, enthusiastic effort, and limitless patience, he was able to attain the supreme goal of buddhahood in one lifetime.

We, in contrast, are generally half-hearted in our pursuit of enlightenment. We are easily distracted and preoccupied with the eight worldly dharmas. Though we go through the motions of refuge, rituals, prostrations, and so forth, we often lack commitment and the steadfast devotion which Milarepa embodied.

Until now, English readers wishing to read this fundamental text have relied on Garma C. C. Chang's translation, an excellent work by a devout Buddhist who was also a traveler, scholar, and linguist. However, that work was produced more than sixty-five years ago. I welcome this new translation. It incorporates some amendments and corrections and, in lively modern English, tries to capture the vivid vernacular of the original Tibetan.

I pray that all who read this book may benefit and be truly inspired by Jetsun Milarepa's extraordinary life and profound realizations.

Seventeenth Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje
Dharamsala, India

January 4, 2017

Foreword by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche

With tales of betrayal, magic, revenge, and redemption, the life story of Milarepa and his *Hundred Thousand Songs* illustrates one man's tireless quest for awakening in the face of tremendous difficulties. This text is more than the story of Tibet's greatest yogi, it is a vibrant source of inspiration, blessings, and a guiding example for all who seek enlightenment in this lifetime.

In his twilight years, Milarepa's twelve spiritual sons led by Bodhi Raja and Repa Shiwa Ö, made efforts gathering and putting together his scattered *dohas*—songs of spiritual realization—from his students' personal accounts. It is said that they presented these to Milarepa who then gave his final blessings and made an aspiration that these would benefit all who encounter them. This compilation by his own students seems to be the first written collection of Milarepa's songs and life story. Since then, there have been numerous life stories and collections of songs written and compiled by many great masters, among which one of the most extensive and comprehensive is the *Dzönakma*, the *Treasure House*, compiled by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje. This is the basis for the most popular collection known as the *Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, compiled by Tsangnyön Heruka 366 years after the parinirvana of Milarepa. Nevertheless, the *Treasure House* and the *Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* remain true to the earliest known collections.

The first complete English translation of Tsangnyön Heruka's *Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* was done by Garma C. C. Chang and published in 1962. Since then, the practice of translating Buddhist texts into English has become more systematic and precise; many Buddhist terms have found their way into our modern vernacular, even influencing our popular psyche and culture. In this new translation, Milarepa's voice resonates to us from across nearly a millennium, but the chord it strikes in our hearts is timeless

and relevant. This text offers us a glimpse of an ordinary person's journey to enlightenment with all of its joys, sorrows, and challenges, and shares the profound instructions for anyone with the compassion and courage to apply them.

I am deeply grateful to my friend and student, Christopher Stagg, for taking on the task of translating this amazing work. His diligence in study and practice, as well as his musical training and talents, inform his translation for the benefit of all.

Milarepa was renowned for his beautiful voice and for teaching the dharma through his spontaneous songs of realization. Like Milarepa, my own guru, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, lived the life of a wandering yogi and is also known for spontaneously giving instruction in song and verse. Rinpoche revived the *doha* singing tradition, not only in Tibetan, but also in English, Chinese, and other languages around the world. Thus, the awakening power of this lineage continues today with my guru. With his blessings, and the blessings of the Buddha and all enlightened hearts, I pray that this translation be a cause for perpetuating the genuine lineage of awakening in our modern world.

Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche
Nalandawest
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Translator's Introduction

Milarepa (ca. 1051–ca. 1135), Tibet's great singing yogi, is arguably the most renowned figure in Tibetan culture, the quintessential Tibetan folk-hero. Milarepa committed grave crimes at an early age then later had a radical change of heart. He sought out and followed a spiritual master, finally attaining the ultimate state of awakening within a single lifetime.*¹ Though Milarepa's own practice tradition was the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, followers and practitioners of all of the Buddhist lineages in Tibet reflect and meditate upon Milarepa's life story and songs. Copies of Milarepa's *Life* and *Songs* can be found in nearly every Tibetan-language or dharma library.

This story of a man who lived nearly a thousand years ago continues to be recounted in both contemporary and traditional portrayals. In 2010, His Holiness the Seventeenth Gyalwang Karmapa, an important Tibetan spiritual leader and a holder of Milarepa's Buddhist lineage, composed, directed, and produced a theatrical portrayal of Milarepa's life that was the centerpiece of the Kagyu Monlam. This production, at the annual prayer festival that draws thousands from around the world to Bodhgaya, India, every winter, was the largest theatrical event in Tibetan history to date.*² In 2006, a feature-length Tibetan-language film depicting the first part of Milarepa's life was directed by Neten Chokling. Even a comic book of his life, published in several languages (including Tibetan), was released in 1991.*³ Traditional thangka paintings and statues portraying images of Milarepa's emaciated body and trademark gesture—right hand lifted to his ear “to hear his guru from afar”—are commonly seen in monasteries and dharma centers throughout the world.

Why is Milarepa so popular? Most biographies of past Buddhist masters portray their subjects as virtually perfect from the outset. Nearly all of these narratives follow the same hagiographical trope of an already-enlightened being born into human form to benefit others, excelling prodigiously in study and meditation practice, and performing vast and wondrous benefit for sentient beings. Milarepa's story is different. Milarepa starts out as an ordinary human who, experiencing remorse for his heinous acts, turns his life around, and,

persevering through great hardship, attains the highest potential of a human being. Far from being perfect in his endeavors, he is someone who experiences great struggles along his journey. Milarepa is relatable; his humanity is portrayed in a way that does not require audiences to have any connection to his tradition of Buddhism—or even Tibetan culture—to be captivated by his story. For those with an interest in the spiritual journey, his example seems to give readers permission to ask, “If he could, why not me?” Milarepa’s story, and his demonstration of attaining enlightenment in one lifetime through great efforts and endurance, is simply inspiring.

Following his own spiritual attainment, Milarepa sets out to teach and relates to others in their particular situations, giving practical advice that seekers can put to immediate use in their own spiritual journeys. The advice Milarepa gives is especially useful for earnest practitioners of meditation. Milarepa’s biography is often taken by meditators into retreats, not only as a source of inspiration but also as a handbook of pithy instructions that can support their practice. One of the great works of Tibetan—and arguably even world—literature, this book can be appreciated on many different levels. Whether one reads it as a general narrative, as inspiration for the spiritual path, or as an instruction manual for advanced esoteric practices, there is something of value and interest for anyone who may embark upon its pages.

The version of Milarepa’s life story and songs most widely read today was compiled by Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507) approximately 350 years following the protagonist’s death. Tsangnyön composed the work in two parts intended to be read consecutively. The first is a shorter volume recounting the overall narrative of Milarepa’s life first published with the full title *The Life of the Great Lord of Yogis, the Jetsun Milarepa, Demonstrating the Path of Liberation and Omniscience*.^{*4} It now has at least three widely circulated translations in English, the most recent two with the short title, *The Life of Milarepa*.^{*5} The second part of Tsangnyön’s work is much more extensive and primarily concerns Milarepa’s teachings and songs following his own attainment of realization. Originally titled *The Collected Songs Expanding on the Life of the Jetsun Milarepa*,^{*6} this larger volume was published in English for the first time more than fifty years ago as *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* by the great scholar and practitioner Garma C.C. Chang (1920–1988).^{*7} Although other translations of excerpts from the *Songs* are available, Chang’s work has been the only complete English translation to be published. In the late 1930s, Chang spent eight years in Tibet studying under his guru Gangkar Rinpoche. A devout practitioner in the lineage

of Milarepa, he had a solid understanding of the tradition and its practices. While it is now well known that there are mistakes in Chang's work, given his personal experience in Milarepa's practice tradition and his command of both Tibetan and English, the translation he produced was a great contribution. The importance of Chang's groundbreaking work cannot be overstated; it was foundational in the development of this new translation.

The work known by English speakers as *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* is called in Tibetan by the abbreviated title *Mila Gurbum*.^{*8} While Milarepa sang perhaps many thousands of songs during his lifetime, this work (along with the few songs in the shorter *Life of Milarepa*) contains 382 songs, 62 of which were sung by other figures, leaving only 322 actually by Milarepa himself.^{*9}

The last syllable of the Tibetan title, *bum*, alone, can mean one hundred thousand, but when preceded by another word, it figuratively means "collection." Collected works of Tibetan authors are called "soong boom" (*gsung 'bum*), or "collected teachings." Thus, "*The Collected Songs of Milarepa*" is a more accurate translation of the title. However, as in the case of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (which is actually titled *Liberation upon Hearing in the Bardo*), it was felt that Chang's more familiar title would give the volume wider recognition, so *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa: A New Translation* was chosen as the title for this book.

HISTORY OF MILAREPA BIOGRAPHIES

Many early biographical works of Milarepa's life preceded Tsangnyön's version. Likely the first was a short sketch dictated by Milarepa's main disciple, Gampopa. Although only several pages long, it outlines the major points of Milarepa's life later used in the more extensive versions. Gampopa's work does not record Milarepa's songs verbatim; however, reference is made to several of the songs that appear in later versions of his biography.^{*10} Andrew Quintman has done extensive research on the history and development of Milarepa's biography. He has surveyed works attributed to Ngendzong Repa and Rechungpa, both direct students of Milarepa, along with a number of shorter biographies appearing alongside those of other lineage masters in the collections of biographies that are each called the *Golden Rosary*. In these, Quintman observes a gradual evolution of the narrative details of Milarepa's life, which become more and more fleshed

out, with actual songs appearing often in truncated form, but sometimes in full.*11

Perhaps the first biography to include multiple cycles of Milarepa's songs of realization as well as a full account of his life was *The Twelve Great Sons*.*12 It appeared sometime between the mid-twelfth century and the mid-thirteenth century, and is attributed to Milarepa's twelve closest disciples, with a prominent role credited to Ngendzong Repa, renowned for his perfect memory of Milarepa's spontaneous utterances. A later compilation, *The Black Treasury*,*13 is attributed to the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339). It likely drew from *The Twelve Great Sons* as a major source, including virtually all of the songs while adding additional material, thus making it the largest biographical work on Milarepa we have today. It was only in the late fifteenth century, more than three hundred years after Milarepa's death, that Tsangnyön Heruka, relying in great part on these previous works, masterfully edited and compiled what is today the most popular and widely known version of Milarepa's life and songs.

TSANGNYÖN HERUKA

Much of what we know about Tsangnyön Heruka comes from hagiographical accounts written by three of his direct disciples: Götsang Repa, Lhatsün Rinchen Namgyal, and Ngödrup Pembar.*14 According to his students, Tsangnyön was born in the village of Kharkha in the western region of Central Tibet called Tsang.*15 At age eight, he received novice ordination with the monastic name Sangyé Gyaltzen, and throughout his time as a monk he is said to have kept the monastic discipline rigorously, engaging diligently in the traditional ten activities of dharma.*16 Even from this very early time in his life, he is portrayed as having felt a strong connection with the figure of Milarepa. In one account, Tsangnyön was urged by the *dakinis**17 to practice meditation in Lachi, one of the sacred places associated with Milarepa. Knowing that his parents would never allow such a journey, he left secretly; but early on in his journey his distraught mother found him and brought him back home.

At age fourteen Tsangnyön met his primary guru, Shara Rabjam Sangyé Sengé (Sharawa) (1427–1470), a holder of all the important whispered lineage instructions of the Kagyu. Sharawa gradually transmitted those instructions to Tsangnyön, and against Tsangnyön's own predilections, Sharawa urged him to take Hevajra (also called Heruka) as his primary *yidam**18 practice. Tsangnyön

studied the Hevajra Tantra extensively at the monastic institute of Palkhor Chödé of Gyantsé, subsequently receiving the *abhisheka* of Hevajra from his guru. At around age twenty-one, Tsangnyön left the monastery and began to engage in yogic practices extensively. Spending years in solitary mountain retreats, Tsangnyön is said to have attained the highest level of accomplishment around the age of twenty-three.*¹⁹ Coinciding with this stabilization of his practice, Tsangnyön began outwardly displaying behaviors indicative of the “conduct of yogic discipline.” Such conduct, only appropriate for true yogic adepts, serves the dual function of benefiting others and enhancing the yogi’s own practice by transcending conventional concepts of culture and decorum. The practice of the “conduct of yogic discipline” can take the form of unconventional or even outrageous behavior that at times may come across as offensive or obscene to those who witness it.*²⁰ Götsang Repa portrays an early episode of Tsangnyön’s yogic conduct:

Having thought extensively about how to benefit the Buddhist doctrine and living beings, he went to a very great gathering in Tsari. His body was naked, soiled with ashes from corpses, spotted with blood, and smeared with fat. He made a necklace and ornaments for his feet and hands [using] the intestines of a dead man’s body. He cut off the fingers and toes, tied them together with a thread of muscle fibers and bound his hair with it. A person offered him an incomplete set of thin bone ornaments which he wore on his body. Sometimes he laughed and sometimes he cried. In particular, he carried out various kinds of outrageous behavior in the market place. Even though the conduct of the people of Tsari was very rough, [Tsangnyön’s] compassion brought them under his control, and they were subdued by his power. They revered him very much and agreed to call him Madman of Tsang. Then he became as famous as the sun and the moon in all directions.*²¹

A number of similar accounts are mentioned describing this phase of Tsangnyön’s life, as he traveled widely throughout southern Tibet and into Nepal. Because of such displays, he was given additional names of a crazy-wisdom flavor, such as Traktung Gyalpo*²² (“Blood-Drinking King”) and Tsariwa Rupé Gyenchen*²³ (“Man of Tsari Dressed in Bone Ornaments”).*²⁴ Though reactions to Tsangnyön’s behavior often evoked great anger (his life was threatened on numerous occasions), it was through these actions that he also made auspicious

connections with a number of kings and dignitaries who are said to have offered assistance that enabled him to act effectively for the sake of beings and the Buddhist teachings.*25

Later, Tsangnyön began to teach and write, at which point such radical behavior is mentioned much less frequently in his biographies.*26 At thirty-eight, Tsangnyön went to Lachi where he began compiling and printing the life story and collected songs of his great role model, Milarepa. According to his biographers, Tsangnyön's inspiration for compiling Milarepa's life story and songs came from a visionary encounter with Naropa, one of the great forefathers of the Kagyu lineage. In the vision, Tsangnyön was instructed to compose the work and was assured that he would receive the proper resources to do so.*27 According to Götsang Repa, Tsangnyön developed great resolve to carry out the task with the specific aim of making Milarepa's story and teachings an inspiration for people of all walks of life:

Rather than stirring up bubbles of technical jargon, [such a biography] would be a wish-fulfilling gem, an exceptional means for leading them to buddhahood in one lifetime. It would thus awaken the inner potential for virtue in arrogant *geshes**28 who are on the verge of becoming non-Buddhists...For those who doubt the possibility of attaining buddhahood in one lifetime or say they have no time for meditation on the profound, it would serve as a perfect example of those very things...Once this printing is finished it will benefit limitless beings.*29

This intention to disseminate Milarepa's life story widely and promote it for a popular readership was a new notion. Previous versions of the biography and collected songs were merely that, collections, consisting of isolated episodes without great attention paid to an overall narrative. Furthermore, the two largest precedent collections, *The Twelve Great Sons* and *The Black Treasury*, "concluded with strict commands of secrecy."*30 A warning illustrating this appears at the end of the third story of the Tashi Tseringma cycle, which seems to be the oldest fully intact section of the work:

"Until one gives practice instruction and examines
Meditators in the future, yet to come,
You should withhold the instruction and not show the writings."
Thus my lord guru commanded me.

If you should transgress this command,
You will incur the punishment of the dakinis.
Thus, please do not propagate it, but keep it hidden.

Since in his vision Tsangnyön was presumably informed directly by Naropa that he should disseminate Milarepa's story and teachings, it seems Tsangnyön felt such restrictions were lifted.

In some accounts, Tsangnyön is described as having undergone great difficulty in acquiring all the texts and scattered sayings of Milarepa as well as retaining the wood-block cutters, scribes, and printers needed to produce the work. He assembled them all at Crystal Cave, one of Milarepa's famed meditation sites, where the wood-blocks were carved.*³¹ The *Life* and *Songs* were finally completed in 1488 and Tsangnyön distributed them widely throughout Central Tibet, sending many copies to Ngari, Lho, Chang, and to all the officials in the region around Mount Tsari.*³² Following the biography's initial dissemination, Tsangnyön also took a multimedia approach to promoting the story by commissioning a set of three large thangka paintings portraying the episodes of Milarepa's life as Tsangnyön himself had described them in his writings.*³³

Though it is Milarepa's biography that Tsangnyön became most well known for, his activity supporting the teachings and practitioners was far-reaching. Later in life he worked assiduously to renovate the famed Swayambhu stupa*³⁴ located in the western part of present-day Kathmandu. All of this work earned the praise of the Seventh Gyalwang Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso, whose letter to Tsangnyön was recorded in one of Tsangnyön's works:

I, the one widely known as Karmapa, have the following to say: I have gradually heard about the actions for spreading the Kagyü teachings carried out by the mighty and holy yogin Tsangnyön. I have heard how he has printed the life story and song collection of the glorious laughing vajra (Milarepa), how he has established hermitages at the three holy mountains,*³⁵ and so forth. I too feel happy and rejoice when I hear about it. In addition to that, the restorations of the Venerable All Trees (Swayambhu) and of the hermitages of Drin and Chuwar and so forth make the burden you are carrying for the Buddhist teachings huge. I will also assist you in whatever way I can; don't give up! May the world be adorned with the blazing glory of auspiciousness!*³⁶

STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THE WORK

Before the production of Tsangnyön's *Life* and *Songs*, Milarepa's life stories and collected songs were generally published as mixed collections. As mentioned above, Tsangnyön divided the life and songs into separate texts, streamlining the narrative of major points of Milarepa's life story into a smaller "coherent and integrated story" and separating the extensive collection of songs and accounts dealing primarily with his life as a teacher (though the two works are often now joined in a single volume in modern printings of the Tibetan).^{*37} Arranging them in this way, Tsangnyön elevated the *Life* to a place of prominence and placed the *Songs* in a supporting role. Although these texts were published separately, it is by reading both the *Life* and the *Songs* that Milarepa's life and work can be best appreciated.^{*38} As Döndrup Gyal states in a contemporary survey of the history of dharma songs in Tibet, "If one studies Milarepa's *Life* without the *Songs*, one is unable to gain a deep understanding; and likewise, if one doesn't know about the *Life* while reading Milarepa's *Songs*, one is unable to understand the background for the stories of the songs."^{*39}

The *Collected Songs of Milarepa* is organized into three major cycles. The first deals primarily with Milarepa's various encounters with nonhuman spirits, the second describes his first meetings with his most important and well-known disciples, and the third cycle is a series of miscellaneous stories and episodes from Milarepa's teaching career. While in previous versions of the *Life* and *Songs*, stories were presented discretely as isolated events, in Tsangnyön's version, most of the episodes are presented in chronological fashion. In the eighth chapter of the comparatively short *Life of Milarepa*, a rough summary tells of each place to which Milarepa traveled following his own personal spiritual attainment and of the beings he benefited, presumably in the order they occurred in his life. That summary is fleshed out fully in the *Collected Songs* with care given to tying the narrative together, often by explaining where Milarepa traveled subsequent to a particular episode at the end or beginning of each chapter. Although the *Collected Songs* lacks a clear overall arc in terms of plot, this linear narrative gives the story an overriding momentum, making it a more compelling read.

Students and practitioners of Milarepa's tradition revere the *Collected Songs* not only for its primary narrative but also for the light it sheds on his teaching. Milarepa's main mode of instruction is the singing of "songs of realization," or *dohas*, a tradition brought to Tibet by the lineage of *mahasiddhas*, great unconventional realized masters of India. In this tradition, masters sing

spontaneously from their own immediate experience about what they have realized directly, often giving instruction on how others may come to have the same understanding. In Milarepa's particular style, colloquial, idiomatic language and commonplace examples are employed, making the teaching accessible and relatable for individuals who may not have engaged in any formal study of Buddhist philosophy. This direct, experiential approach to teaching inevitably helps the students portrayed in the stories establish a connection with the teaching in a personal way.

Milarepa pointedly avoids elaborations on philosophical topics, yet throughout the *Collected Songs*, he touches on all of the major topics related to dharma practice. For beginners and those who have little experience with dharma, he emphasizes renunciation, faith, karma, cause and effect, and the six *paramitas*. For his meditator-disciples, he sings about the many profound topics of the Vajrayana tradition: the practices of the creation and completion stages,*⁴⁰ illusory body, transference (*phowa*), *bardo*,*⁴¹ recognizing the nature of mind, and sustaining that experience throughout formal meditation and daily activity. Milarepa rarely fleshes out the mechanical details of the practices, leaving most of those instructions to be given behind the scenes; but those with some familiarity with what he teaches will be able to pick up on the key points as a support for their own practice.

Like traditional treatises and practice manuals providing information organized by topic, the *Collected Songs* can also be considered as a sort of practice manual, one that presents topics organically, in real-life situations. Each song can, in effect, stand alone as an instruction presenting key points of the teachings in a brief and easy-to-remember format, albeit one that requires the reader to unpack their meaning fully. To this day, Buddhist teachers from this tradition regularly give oral teachings expounding on the meaning of selected songs of Milarepa.

One notable contemporary commentator of Milarepa's songs is the great scholar and yogic master Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. Throughout his life's teaching, Khenpo Rinpoche has used Milarepa's songs as a basis for presenting the dharma to students worldwide. While training a new generation of translators, Khenpo Rinpoche has guided Western students in the study of many of Milarepa's songs in their native languages and Western melodies. Khenpo Rinpoche relates:

These chapters [of Milarepa's *Collected Songs*] are all wonderful aids for our practice. These days, people like to study and to meditate, but they

also need teachings that are concise. The great thing about these chapters is that they each tell the complete story of Milarepa and one particular disciple or group of disciples. They give the whole path from beginning to end, from when the students first meet Milarepa, describing what their encounter is like, to what happens as they practice and as Milarepa gives them more and more instructions. So in each chapter there is a complete path. And the songs are so profound.*42

All of the English translations of Milarepa's songs found in this work that are known to have been developed under Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's guidance have been listed in [appendix 4](#).*43

In addition to the songs, the narrative itself, describing Milarepa's actions and relationships with students, serves as an important teaching. There are a number of traditional treatises and practice texts written in the Vajrayana context that describe how an appropriate relationship between guru and disciple should play out. But Milarepa's *Life* and *Songs* gives a firsthand view of how such a relationship can unfold. Further, throughout the *Collected Songs*, Milarepa interacts with a wide variety of individuals with differing backgrounds and levels of experience, demonstrating how he guided monks, laypeople, yogis like himself, and even spirits. Teachers of Vajrayana Buddhism often state that if one wishes to understand how to relate to a Vajrayana guru and how the Vajrayana path works on a practical level, one should read the *Life* and *Songs* of Milarepa. There seems to be a certain *way* of how things are carried on in his tradition, and this translator has personally observed while working with the text how uncannily familiar certain descriptions seem when in the presence of masters of Milarepa's lineage. It can be attested that Milarepa's lineage is truly still alive even in today's modern world.

FAITH IN THE BUDDHIST TRADITION

Faith plays a central role in the historical roots of every spiritual tradition. In our modern world, as compared to times before the widespread adoption of the scientific worldview, spiritual faith seems to have a much less prominent role in the common person's daily life and is often downplayed in favor of a purely objective, materialist view of reality. This is not to disparage the importance and benefit of science, but from the perspective of the spiritual path of awakening to the mind's full potential, modern science seems not yet able to convey the same

depth found within the world's wisdom traditions. In the Western world, where democratic ideals are placed in the highest standing, authority of any kind is questioned, often to the point of deep cynicism and disdain. The notion of accepting the assertions of any authority, spiritual or otherwise, let alone "faith" in them, is often treated with deep suspicion.

In recent decades, Buddhism has started being described as a "science of mind," where investigation and analysis of what can be directly experienced is greatly emphasized. This leads some to go so far as to say that Buddhism is not a religion at all. Many in the West turn to Buddhism because they perceive it as a sane, antiestablishment alternative that speaks to their spiritual needs in a way the dogmatic traditions of their upbringing were unable to. Yet, while objectivity and intelligent inquiry play a crucial role in the Buddhist approach, faith is still taught to be an integral component of the path. In the *Collected Songs* alone, the word "faith" or "faithful" shows up more than 250 times. Faith is portrayed in a positive light, as essential for anyone who wishes to train in the path that Milarepa teaches. Milarepa frequently remarks on the importance of faith to those with whom he interacts, even describing those lacking it as "unsuitable vessels" for his profound instructions. Frequently after hearing Milarepa's songs of instruction, the audience is described as having given rise to "exceeding faith."

So what does "faith" actually mean here? In common Western usage, faith often refers to a blind belief in something based solely on what one has been taught by someone else (one's parents or some institution, perhaps). Individuals are, at times, told that they must simply have faith toward certain things that are unseen or cannot be directly known. They are further told that it is important not to lose faith. Should they accept these notions, these individuals may work to contrive something that may feel like faith in a particular object, often unsuccessfully. This is not to say that the term is used in such a way all the time. Earnest practitioners of non-Buddhist traditions may disagree that this dogmatic depiction of faith is a valid one. Likewise, this blind, dogmatic kind of faith is not what is meant when used in the Buddhist context, and specifically throughout the *Collected Songs*. To turn to a traditional explanation in the Buddhist context, Gampopa, Milarepa's main disciple, explains in his own work, the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, that faith is an essential quality and the working basis or support for the journey toward liberation and enlightenment. Gampopa summarizes his points:

The freedoms, resources,

Confidence, desire, and admiration;
Two for the body, and three for mind,
The precious birth comprises these five points.

Here, the “precious birth” refers to what is traditionally called a *precious* human birth, or in plainer words, a situation conducive for attaining awakening. The tradition says that one must have “eight freedoms and ten resources” completely present to qualify as having a “precious human birth” (these two, freedoms and resources, are what “two for the body” refers to in Gampopa’s verse). These eighteen conditions, many of which are not under one’s direct control, must be present in the basic situation of one’s life in order to engage the Buddhist path. In addition to those, Gampopa then describes three qualities of mind that must be present. These are the three qualities of what Buddhists refer to as faith: confident faith, desiring faith, and admiring or inspired faith.

The first of these, confident faith, means that one has a sense of confidence, a basic trust in the teachings of the Buddha and those who can teach them in an authentic way. How such confidence is arrived at depends on the individual. Some may naturally have an immediate connection; the teachings just “click” right away for them. For others, deep inquiry and analysis must take place before arriving at some level of confidence. However it may come to manifest, this confident or trusting faith must be genuine and personal. In the *Collected Songs*, Milarepa often states that one should be “free of hypocrisy”; it does not help to outwardly act as if one has confidence but internally to have nothing but doubts. That is not to say that doubts cannot be present at this stage. Inquisitiveness and intelligence are necessary to develop genuine confidence, but at the same time, this confident faith includes a sense of openness with any doubts present, leaning toward seeing the “object of faith” as a worthy one despite the doubts.

Based on that genuine confidence or trust, Gampopa explains, one sees the good qualities of enlightenment or awakening. With a sense of admiration toward the attainment of awakening, one develops a desire to engage in the path to achieve it. There is a desire for and a general orientation toward wanting to manifest such good qualities oneself.

With that confidence, one develops inspiration, devoted interest, and respect toward the Buddha, his teachings, and the community of supporters in practice. With each of these qualities joined together—confidence, desire, and admiration—in the Buddhist context, faith is described as genuine confidence or trust imbued with a quality of inspiration and interest.

The Sanskrit word for this is *śraddhā*, which in Tibetan came to be translated as “dépa” (*dad pa*). In translation, words from the source language must inevitably be rendered by some preexisting word in the new language, despite the semantic difficulties this may present. In English, “faith” seems to be the most common word choice. However, some translators use the word “confidence,” which circumvents the usual pitfalls of misunderstanding “faith” as simply accepting dogma. “Confidence” is a good word if it is understood as confidence with a little bit of “juice,” some inspiration, interest, and a general orientation toward the object of faith. Without that added element of interest and inspiration, confidence alone remains static and does not function to compel one to investigate further and deepen one’s spiritual practice. In his text, Gampopa reinforces the importance of faith by quoting the *Ten Attributes of the Noble Ones Sutra*:

For humans without any faith,
The virtuous dharmas cannot arise;
Just as a seed that is scorched by fire
Cannot become a sprout that is green.*44

Faith must be present to engage the spiritual journey in the first place. But while important for engaging the teachings, faith in and of itself cannot bring one to liberation. There must also be some intelligent wisdom present. Nagarjuna says in his *Ratnavali*:

Because of having faith, one relies on dharma;
Because of having *prajña*, one understands it correctly.
Of these two, the primary one is *prajña*,
But faith is what comes before.

Faith functions as the impetus for meeting and engaging in the dharma, and must come first. Then intelligent wisdom, or *prajña*, is necessary in order to understand and practice the dharma correctly. Fully fledged faith necessarily entails this quality of intelligence. In a short study on the term *śraddhā* (or *saddhā* in Pali) within the Pali canon, Giustarini describes faith in the context of the sutras as a quality of wisdom: “[it is] a capacity of seeing the truth...it is the first blossoming of the faculty of knowing and seeing.”*45 Faith as a capacity to see is echoed in the great Mahayana treatise on buddha nature, the *Uttaratantrashastra*:

The ultimate of all the Self-Arisen Ones
Is realized through faith.
The orb of the sun blazes with light,
But it is not seen by those without eyes.

The “ultimate” here refers to buddha nature, every sentient being’s capacity to become awakened, and “the Self-Arisen Ones” refers to the buddhas for whom that buddha nature is fully manifest. Jamgön Kongtrul comments on this verse:

This true nature of all self-[arisen] buddhas, who have not come about through conditions but have been spontaneously present from the very beginning, is within all sentient beings. Nevertheless ordinary beings, *shravakas*,^{*46} *pratyekabuddhas*,^{*47} and those bodhisattvas^{*48} who have newly entered [the path] do not realize it directly, as it is. Relying on the trustworthy words of the Buddha, they first have to realize it in a general way by means of faith, devotion, and finally firm conviction. This is similar to the example of the orb of the sun, which, blazing with light, is still not seen by the blind.^{*49}

Milarepa also sings:

If you know how to look with the eye of faith,
All the blessings you desire will fall like rain.

When Milarepa speaks of faith in the *Collected Songs*, he brings the topic to a more specific context. The common Buddhist presentation says that one must have faith toward the Buddha’s teachings to engage the path. The Vajrayana path, which Milarepa primarily emphasizes in his teaching, is a subset of the Mahayana, having the same profound view of emptiness and the same vast scope of seeking liberation for all sentient beings. However, one of the primary distinctions between the general Mahayana and the Vajrayana is the presence of many different methods that act as a support for traversing the path very quickly. The Vajrayana is said to be a path for those with the sharpest faculties, and on this path the student must have a strong aptitude for giving rise to faith.

What does the student need to have faith toward? Here, one must first have faith in one’s own innate potential to gain awakening, and to facilitate that

awakening, faith in the Vajrayana spiritual friend, or guru, is considered paramount. In the Vajrayana context, the living guru is seen as even more important than the Buddha himself because, unlike the historical Buddha, such a guru is actually present and able to guide the student in a direct and personal way. Relating to a Vajrayana guru, there must be some kind of chemistry or karmic connection for the relationship to work.

On the point of connecting with a guru, Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche explains:

As for assessing our connection with a spiritual friend, we should rely on both our personal feeling of connection and the *prajña* of analyzing the qualities of the guru. If we combine these two elements, we will find the right balance. If we just rely on our feelings, we can be deceived, because they change all the time...we need to sit for a while with our intuitive feeling of connection for a teacher.*50

Again, faith is not seen as dogma or passive acceptance, but rather as a quality of intelligence. It is taught that potential gurus should be examined for as long as twelve years before practitioners fully devote themselves to becoming followers. If basic trust and a sense of connection based on a mutual examination of guru and student is not present, then on the Vajrayana path, one's personal practice has no foundation on which to develop.

Certainly there are those who are naturally predisposed to having spontaneous and deep faith in a teacher, as demonstrated by many of the students Milarepa meets in this volume; but what about those for whom such faith does not arise so spontaneously? If there is a sense of initial connection, interest, or “spark” present toward a particular teacher, however faint it may be, for those who have the inclination, the connection can be developed and deepened.

Traditionally, before engaging in any Vajrayana practice, an extensive series of preliminary practices must be undertaken. The forms these preliminary practices take are as varied as the individuals who undertake them. However, a traditional template for such preliminaries has emerged in Milarepa's Kagyu lineage codifying the practices of going for refuge, generating *bodhichitta*,*51 purification, accumulating merit, and most importantly, cultivating devotion and personal connection toward the guru and lineage. For the practices to be effective, the Vajrayana requires that faith and devotion be present. Devotion and the “receiving of blessings” are relied upon in the Vajrayana context as a key method for bringing about direct awakening in the student's mind-stream. In

Vajrayana, faith and devotion are generally synonymous, though the term “devotion” is used more widely in the Kagyu tradition of Milarepa. According to an often-quoted saying of the Kagyu masters:

If you don't shine the sun of devotion
On the glacier mountain of the guru's four *kayas*,
The river of blessing will not flow;
Therefore, be assiduous in the mind of devotion.

Another well-known supplication to the Kagyu lineage masters states:

Devotion is the head of meditation as is taught;
The guru opens the gate to the treasury of oral instructions.
To this meditator who continually supplicates him,
Grant your blessings that genuine devotion be born in me.

Cultivating faith and devotion, especially in the Vajrayana tradition, is a practice and not a static state; not something one simply has or does not have. Faith and devotion are ever evolving and changing. Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche has likened devotion to a cardiogram: it is always going up and down. If one's devotion has flat-lined, then that's a sign it is not a genuine living experience.

This is wonderfully illustrated in the *Collected Songs* by the example of Rechungpa, who some would call Milarepa's closest disciple. Rechungpa returned from India with a bit of pride in having received many teachings that Milarepa had not. His story describes how he loses his faith, at least temporarily, then struggles to regain it. The narrative gives us a firsthand look at how a student can struggle with faith and also how the guru can work with those difficulties. Rechungpa's story, in the *Collected Songs*, gives us a clear, human example of how even the greatest of practitioners can struggle and work with the practice of faith and devotion.*52

ULTIMATE VIEW, MEDITATION, CONDUCT, AND FRUITION

Throughout the *Collected Songs*, Milarepa addresses his teachings to all levels of students, but the majority of his songs of realization and experience reflect, at least in brief, his own ultimate view and practice. In many of his songs, he

emphasizes only what is necessary as a foundation for that practice, primarily renunciation and the necessity of following a qualified spiritual master. But in others he speaks of the main practice itself, which in Milarepa's tradition is called Mahamudra, or the Great Seal. The term "Mahamudra" can be used to refer to both the practice through which one comes to ultimate realization as well as the unfabricated, genuine reality one realizes.

The meditation of Mahamudra and the methods used to support that meditation are generally not for beginners. One's mind must be fully prepared through training in the various preliminary practices before embarking upon Mahamudra meditation as a main practice. In addition to the preliminaries mentioned above, most individuals need to have a clear and stable conceptual or inferential understanding of the view of Mahamudra before attempting to engage in its actual practice. Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche describes those who try to force an understanding of Mahamudra through meditation without having first developed an understanding of the profound view as "naïve meditators." Khenpo Rinpoche teaches that most individuals must go about gaining certainty in that ultimate view in gradual stages. This approach employs deep study and contemplation of Buddhist philosophical tenets as a tool to gradually bring about a personal and direct experience of the true empty nature of phenomena.*⁵³ Milarepa does not teach these gradual stages of familiarizing with the ultimate view directly in the *Songs*, generally assuming his audience already has some understanding.

A presentation common to all practitioners of the Mahamudra lineage and one Milarepa himself uses to explain the practice is the "view, meditation, conduct, and fruition." Milarepa teaches the "view" of Mahamudra as the basis for practice, "meditation" as the path of familiarizing with that view, "conduct" as the activity one engages in outside of formal meditation that also functions as enhancement of the practice, and the "fruition" as the result of Mahamudra meditation. Milarepa uses this template in various songs throughout the *Collected Songs*, but a particularly clear and explicit presentation is found in the final song of the thirty-ninth chapter.

In the first verse of this song, Milarepa summarizes the ultimate view, meditation, conduct, and fruition:

The view is wisdom, which is empty.

The meditation is luminosity free of fixation.

The conduct is the continual stream of nonattachment.

The fruition is nakedness free of stains.

It is typical for Milarepa to list the main points of a topic at the beginning of his songs and then expound upon them. To clarify the first point, the ultimate view, he sings:

With this view, the wisdom that is empty,
There's the danger of straying into mere talk.
If you don't develop certainty in reality,
Words will not liberate the clinging to a self.
Therefore, certainty is extremely important.

The general teachings of Buddhism contain many philosophical descriptions and reasonings to help one come to an understanding of the view of emptiness in a conceptual and inferential way. As stated above, for most individuals this is an important prerequisite for the actual meditation of Mahamudra. However, Milarepa says that if we leave such understanding as merely conceptual or theoretical (or as he calls it, "mere talk"), then we will not be able to attain liberation. The study, contemplation, and meditation upon such teachings are an important preliminary, but in the end we must have a direct experience, which is pointed out or introduced by someone who has direct understanding themselves: a guru who holds the lineage. For this practice, the ultimate view is not one that can be expressed through words or logic; rather it is a direct experience. This personal and genuine experience of emptiness, the view, serves as the basis for practice in the context of Mahamudra. One must have some direct experience of emptiness before one can meditate upon it.

An experience of this wisdom will initially appear in brief glimpses, but to bring this experience to stability, one must repeatedly familiarize with it, or recollect it. Milarepa sings:

With this meditation, luminosity free of fixation,
There's the danger of straying into mere abiding.
If wisdom does not dawn from within,
Though you may abide stably, there is no liberation.
Wisdom won't develop from dullness and agitation;
Thus, undistracted mindfulness is very important.

What is the meditation in the context of Mahamudra? It is luminosity, free of fixation. “Luminosity” can be a misleading term. Hearing it, we might think that lights will start to shine, or some kind of holy experience will take place when we meditate. But here luminosity is a way of describing the experience of emptiness as something other than a vacuous nothingness. Notions of “emptiness” as something like the void of outer space or like an empty container are common misunderstandings of the word. Rather, the Buddhist term “emptiness” is often described as “openness,” a potential for anything to appear. Yet all of these appearances, all of the experiences we have, are only *merely* appearing. They are not autonomous and unchanging. These appearances have no solid core to them. They appear, yet they are empty. This is what is described in the *Heart Sutra* when it says:

Form is emptiness; emptiness also is form. Form is no other than emptiness; emptiness is no other than form.

To this point, Milarepa also sings:

E MA! The phenomena of samsara’s three realms
Not existing, they appear. How wondrous it is!

Appearances cannot be separated from their empty essence, and likewise emptiness is not something separate from what appears to us. The true nature of mind has an aspect of appearing; it is alive and vivid; here this quality is called “luminous.” But we have the strong habit of seeing things in a way that they do not actually exist: as solid and permanent. It is on the basis of fixating on these luminous appearances as being truly existent that we run into trouble, giving rise to all kinds of disturbing mind states, or *afflictions*. We become attached to appearances, or we develop aversion toward them, and so on. Because of these disturbing mind states, in the end, we experience suffering. So the meditation here is to relax and let appearances be as they are without the interference of our conceptual labeling. This is what is meant by luminosity free of fixation.

When practicing meditation, we generally try to allow our minds to settle peacefully and one-pointedly. When the mind settles in this way, meditation is called *shamatha*, or peaceful abiding. But Milarepa in this verse says that there is a “danger of straying into mere abiding.” What is the danger here? If we bring our minds to rest, that alone is not enough to bring about liberation. We could get

caught up in just resting peacefully, which is not a bad thing in itself, but that resting alone does not get to the root of our problem. For our meditation to work to remove the root of our problem, wisdom, or clear seeing of the true nature of reality, must dawn from within. The experience of emptiness must be present, otherwise even if our meditation is very stable, we are only having a temporary experience of calmness. We are not cutting through the root of what binds us to suffering.

This is not to say, however, that calm abiding is not important. Milarepa also says, “wisdom will not develop from dullness and agitation.” If our minds are agitated by thoughts and emotions, or if we fall into a dull, sleepy state, then there is no chance for our own wisdom, which is naturally present, to shine forth. We need to have stability in our minds in order for wisdom to develop. So in the ultimate meditation, we remain merely undistracted and relaxed with mindfulness of the present moment of awareness, letting whatever may appear be just as it is without fixating on it. The well-known supplication to the Dakpo Kagyu lineage states:

Nondistraction is the body of meditation, as is taught;
Whatever arises is fresh—the essence of realization.
To this meditator who rests simply without altering it
Grant your blessings so that my meditation is free of conception.

When meditating on Mahamudra, one does not fixate awareness on any particular thing nor try to fix anything. One simply sustains “nondistraction” and allows whatever arises to be as it is.

To rest free of any conceptual fixation while recognizing the true nature of mind in the midst of all kinds of appearances arising is not something that will happen automatically for most individuals. Only with the proper preliminaries of renunciation, devotion toward the guru, and understanding of the profound view as a foundation, followed by persistence and relaxation in the actual practice of familiarizing with the view, can this meditation become stable.

When one does develop stability in this view and meditation, it cannot be left to formal meditation sessions alone if one wishes to achieve complete liberation. One must take the experience off the meditation cushion and into the conduct of everyday activity. Milarepa sings:

With this conduct, the continual stream of nonattachment,

There's the danger of straying into improper behavior.
If the view and meditation don't dawn as its companion,
Then yogic discipline becomes a friend of the eight concerns.
Therefore being free of attachment and obscurations is very important.

When yogis and yoginis have become proficient in sustaining the experience of the view and meditation, the nature of mind, they can practice continuously in all that they do. Yogic discipline here consists of acting in spontaneous ways for the benefit of beings. In special cases it can take the form of seemingly outrageous conduct, as was reported of Tsangnyön Heruka. But if that conduct is not properly accompanied by the ultimate view and meditation, it just becomes improper, nonvirtuous behavior. Not only is there no benefit, it even causes harm. Milarepa says such “yogic discipline” just becomes a friend of the eight worldly concerns: falling into fixation over gain and loss, praise and blame, happiness and pain, fame and obscurity. If any of these concerns are present in the mind, you can be sure that you are not practicing true yogic discipline. To practice such conduct, one must be completely free of attachment at all times and be free of the obscurations of the afflictions and of conceptual fixation.

In the general view of Buddhism, “fruition” is a term used to describe the final result of traversing the path, namely buddhahood, or enlightenment. But here, fruition is presented in a slightly different way. Milarepa sings:

The fruition that is nakedness free of stains
Has the danger of being clothed in the garments of characteristics.
If confusion doesn't collapse from within,
You'll just meditate with a mental aspiration; it'll be of little meaning.
Therefore the collapse of confusion is important.

In the beginning of this song, the ultimate view was described as “primordial wisdom, which is empty.” This is another way of describing the basic nature of mind, also called buddha nature. This nature of mind, the wisdom inherently present in our minds, is also the fruition. The Vajrayana is sometimes referred to as the fruitional vehicle; this approach takes the fruition, the recognition of one's own buddha nature, as the path. “Nakedness” here means that there is nothing that ultimately blocks or obscures the nature of mind. There are no stains such as afflictions, concepts, or labels inherently present keeping one from being able to

see and experience that inherent basic nature.

However, there is a danger that we may think highly of ourselves or our seemingly lofty attainment and give it a label such as “the nature of mind,” “enlightenment,” “buddha nature,” or even “special.” Conventionally we speak about it in this way, but these labels are not the actual true nature: they are just conceptual overlays, or, as Milarepa calls them, the “garments of characteristics.” The ultimate reality of mind is naturally naked and free of any stains. But in order to see it that way, our confusion must “collapse from within.” Generally we think of confusion as something we need to get rid of, something to abandon, and wisdom as something to adopt or acquire in some way from the outside. But from the ultimate viewpoint, there is nothing that we need to do; confusion simply needs to collapse from within us. How does that happen? The traditional example illustrating this is mistakenly believing a coiled rope to be a snake. When we think the rope is a snake, we develop fear, and all kinds of disturbing emotions arise from that confusion. However, as soon as we know that the snake is actually a rope, our confusion just naturally subsides, without any outside intervention. We don’t need to turn a “confused snake” into an “unconfused rope.” Simply seeing the situation—our mind—as it truly is and without altering anything, is all we need to be free of confusion. Once we have certainty that the “snake” is actually a rope, there is no way that confusion will return: it collapses for good.

In this sense, seeing the true nature of reality is analogous to seeing the nature of mind. When we see it as it is, without altering it in anyway and without the overlays of our concepts, then confusion simply collapses. From the ultimate standpoint, the mind of buddhahood is taught to be something that is naturally present and not something that can be created or found somewhere else. All of the confusion we experience is not something that needs to be gotten rid of. Once we see things the way they are, we also see that confusion is completely made up. We don’t need to do anything more to it; it collapses naturally. Milarepa points out that if confusion doesn’t collapse from within and we think to ourselves, “I will now do the ultimate practice of Mahamudra to become enlightened,” or, “By working hard at this meditation I will achieve something special,” such thinking will just be a mental aspiration and a meaningless attempt at the real practice. This is why, Milarepa says, it is so important for confusion to collapse from within.

In all of his teachings and songs of realization, Milarepa speaks from a single point of view: his own experience. All of his songs can serve as commentaries for

each other. In the song quoted above, Milarepa presents clear points about the ultimate view, meditation, conduct, and fruition, but he has much more to say on these topics elsewhere. The *Collected Songs* is a great tapestry of teachings interweaving the whole range of dharma topics from different approaches and angles. When studied and contemplated as a collection, Milarepa's *Songs* can give practitioners much practical insight on how to work for the benefit of themselves and others on the spiritual path.

A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

The language used in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life* and *Songs* is unlike that of most Tibetan Buddhist literature. While the dharma terminology is generally familiar to Tibetan-language students of Buddhism, the text also includes a significant amount of colloquial language. This gives it a "down-to-earth" feel for native speakers, but, because Tibetan does not have a standardized, interregional colloquial language, nonnative translators and even native speakers often struggle with pinning down the exact meaning of certain passages. The unique language found in the *Collected Songs* is generally identified as that of the Tsang region of Central Tibet dating back to the fifteenth century C.E. or before. Understanding it is a challenge due to a combination of obscure regionalisms and age, at times akin to trying to read Chaucer's Middle English writings without the aid of glossaries and footnotes benefiting from centuries of scholarship.

Much of the *Life* and *Songs* can be understood immediately, but attempting to translate each word as it was meant in the original language has required a great deal of consultation and research. Editions of both *The Twelve Great Sons* and *The Black Treasury* were compared for clarity, as many of the passages are drawn from these texts nearly verbatim with only slight word discrepancies. Whenever possible, native Tibetan speakers and scholars were consulted to bring clarity to more difficult passages. Despite these efforts, a number of passages remain obscure. These have been translated as carefully as possible and marked, with the original Tibetan terms appearing in endnotes. Where a Tibetan scholar was available for consultation, that individual's input has been indicated by their initials following the passage in question. These notes are all technical, likely only of interest to readers of Tibetan, and have been placed as endnotes to ease readability. To the same end, additional information that is more generally helpful, including explanations of obscure references and background relating to

certain Buddhist topics, appears in footnotes at the bottom of the page.

A few words in the text have been left as phoneticizations of the original Tibetan. These words are used frequently, and have become common parlance among English speakers who are familiar with Milarepa's life story and the tradition from which he comes. The first of these is the honorific title most commonly used when referring to Milarepa, "the Jetsun."^{*54} This is a compound word consisting of "je" (pronounced "jay"), which can mean "lord," "king," or "majesty"; and "tsun," which refers to someone who is without flaw in their conduct, and thus is to be revered. In the Tibetan, this second syllable is pronounced "tsün," but the umlaut has been omitted for simplicity. "Jetsun" could be literally translated as "noble or respectable lord," but the Tibetan honorific has become so closely associated with Milarepa that it was left untranslated in this work.

The word *repa*^{*55} means "cotton-clad one," with *re* meaning "cotton cloth" and *pa* signaling one who does or is associated with the preceding syllables. *Repa* generally refers to yogic practitioners of *chandali* (or "tummo" in Tibetan).^{*56} Through this practice, intense heat is produced internally, making it unnecessary to wear heavy clothing even in the coldest of climates. Thus, *repas* wear a single cotton cloth to signify their accomplishment in *chandali* and as encouragement to maintain diligence in their practice.

Another word left untranslated is "*tendrel*."^{*57} This is a contraction of "ten ching drelwar jungwa,"^{*58} used by Tibetans to translate the key Buddhist concept of "interdependent origination" (S: *pratītyasamutpāda*). In the Vajrayana tradition—the context of this work—the meaning of interdependence takes on a special significance. A central practice of the Secret Mantra tradition is "pure vision," or sacred outlook: seeing the entire world and all beings within it as fundamentally pure and sacred. When this view is applied, all phenomena of the relative world take on a symbolic meaning and interactions with them become significant in one's path to awakening. Interactions between the guru and disciple are particularly important on the Vajrayana path. *Tendrel*, in the Vajrayana context, can take on the meaning of "omen." One appreciates the interdependent play of the world by paying attention to one's mind and environment.

The back matter of the book provides a few additional resources for readers. A summary of Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life of Milarepa* is available in [appendix 1](#) to provide background for those unfamiliar with Milarepa's story. For students of the Tibetan language, [appendix 2](#) lists Tibetan equivalents for the proper names

of places and people appearing throughout the work, and [appendix 3](#) gives the chosen English words for key Tibetan terms. [Appendix 4](#), as mentioned above, provides a list of the many songs that have been translated elsewhere under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche along with where they can be found in the text. Finally, a glossary containing many Sanskrit and Buddhist terms and proper names provides more background.

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Christopher Stagg
Seattle, WA
October 2015

*1 See [appendix 1](#) for a brief overview of Milarepa's life story.

*2 http://kagyumonlam.org/English/News/Report/Report_20100101_1.html. Accessed Oct. 5, 2015.

*3 Van Dam 1991.

*4 T: *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po rje btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar thar pa dang thams cad mkhyen pa'i lam ston.*

*5 By W.Y. Evans-Wentz (1928), Lobsang Lhalungpa (1977), and most recently Andrew Quintman (Tsangnyon Heruka 2010).

*6 T: *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar rgyas par phye ba mgur 'bum*.

*7 Zhang Cheng-ji (張澄基). *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* was first published in 1962. Chang also later translated the work into his native Chinese, which was published in Taiwan in 1980.

*8 T: *Mila mgur 'bum*.

*9 Quintman 2014a: 240.

*10 Quintman 2014a: 45.

*11 Quintman 2014a: 60.

*12 T: *Bu chen bcu gnyis*.

*13 T: *mDzod nag ma*.

*14 Larsson 2012: 40.

*15 Larsson 2012: 61.

*16 Larsson 2012: 74–76. The ten activities of dharma are writing, making offerings, practicing generosity, listening, memorizing, reading, explaining, reciting, contemplating the meaning of dharma, and meditating on its meaning.

*17 Dakinis are generally understood as feminine messengers or protectors of the dharma.

*18 Tutelary or chosen deities, taught to be the root of spiritual accomplishment.

*19 Larsson 2012: 134.

*20 An example of such conduct is given in the life story of Drukpa Kunlé (1455–1529) (T: *'brug pa kun legs*), another crazy-wisdom master who was a contemporary of Tsangnyön Heruka. One day Drukpa Kunlé met a man on the road who knew of and recognized him. The man asked Drukpa Kunlé to bless the sacred thangka painting he was carrying, which Drukpa Kunlé agreed to do. Drukpa Kunlé took the painting and laid it out on the road (already considered outrageous and disrespectful) and then proceeded to urinate on it. This of course deeply upset the man, who shouted in outrage at Drukpa Kunlé. Drukpa Kunlé then just walked away. When the man went to pick up the painting, he found all the contours of the deity gilded as if with fine brush strokes (Brunnhölzl 2010: 77).

*21 Larsson 2012: 135.

*22 T: *khrag thung rgyal po*.

*23 T: *tsa ri ba rus pa'i rgyan can*. This name is used on the title page of the Tso-ngön Mirig edition that was used as a primary source for this translation.

*24 Quintman 2014a: 124.

*25 Larsson 2012: 141.

*26 Larsson 2012: 171.

*27 Quintman 2014a: 127.

*28 *Geshe* is the Tibetan word for “spiritual friend” and here generally denotes monks who are learned and hold some rank in the monastic system. In this context it does not refer to any specific lineage.

*29 Quintman 2014a: 128–129.

*30 Quintman 2014a: 129.

*31 Quintman 2014a: 129.

*32 Quintman 2014a: 132.

*33 Quintman 2014a: 132–133.

*34 A stupa is a Buddhist monument that usually houses holy objects or relics of deceased masters.

- *35 The three holy mountains are Kailash (Tisé), Tsari, and Lachi.
- *36 Larsson 2012: 179.
- *37 Quintman 2014a: 137.
- *38 Quintman 2014a: 140–141.
- *39 Quoted in Quintman 2014a: 141.
- *40 In the creation stage one generally meditates, visualizing a deity to purify mundane karmic appearances; the completion stage practices are connected to working with the subtle body to gain direct experience of the nature of mind.
- *41 Bardo (T: *bar do*) means “in-between state” and generally refers to the period between death in one lifetime and rebirth in the next.
- *42 Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche 2004: 24.
- *43 Readers can find full translations, some with recordings of the modern melodies, on the website for Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso’s teachings and activity at ktgrinpoche.org.
- *44 This actually seems to be a quotation from the *Ārya-tārā-mūlakalpa-nāma Tantra*: Lhasa Kangyur H 711: vol. 95, folio/line 128b.3–128b.4.
- *45 Giustarini 2006: 166.
- *46 Shravakas, or hearers, are realized beings who strive to attain the level of arhat and do not engage in the practices of the Mahayana.
- *47 Pratyekabuddhas, or solitary realizers, practice without relying on a spiritual master to attain realization.
- *48 Bodhisattvas here refers to those who have had a direct experience of the true nature of reality and have committed to helping all beings attain awakening.
- *49 Translation by Rosemary Fuchs in *Buddha Nature* (Fuchs 2000: 173–174).
- *50 Dzogchen Ponlop 2011: 12.
- *51 Here bodhichitta (or “awakened heart”) entails the motivation to attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings.
- *52 Rechungpa’s story develops across several episodes of the *Collected Songs*, but [chapters 38](#) and [39](#), “The Story of the Yak Horn” and “The Song of the Wild Asses,” deal most directly with this topic of faith.
- *53 For a general outline and explanation of how this progressive study and contemplation is undertaken, see Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche’s book *The Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*.
- *54 T: *rje btsun*.
- *55 T: *ras pa*.
- *56 T: *gtum mo*.
- *57 T: *rten ’brel*.
- *58 T: *rten cing ’brel bar ’byung ba*.

The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa

originally titled

ཇི་བཅུ་ལྔ་མི་ལ་རས་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་རྒྱས་པར་བྱེ་བ་མགྲུང་འབྲུམ།།

The Collected Songs That Expand upon the *Life of Milarepa*

Cycle One

THE BINDING UNDER OATH OF HARM-INFLICTING
SPIRITS

1

Mila Gathers Wood

NAMO GURU

Once, while at Chonglung Garuda Fortress, dwelling in a state of luminous Mahamudra, the powerful lord of yogis, Jetsun Milarepa, rose to prepare his provisions and saw that not only was there no tsampa,*¹ salt, water, or seasonings, there was not even a bit of wood in the wood bin. There being no water or fire for the stove, Milarepa thought, “It seems my abandonment of provisions has become too intense. I’ll go out to gather some wood.” He then set out.

When he had found enough wood to fill the lower part of his robe a strong gust of wind suddenly came up. When he held his robe, the wood blew away, and when he held the wood, his robe blew away. At this, he thought, “Even though I have been in retreat so long, I have not abandoned my self-clinging. What’s the use in dharma and practice without giving up self-clinging?”

He said out loud, “If you want my clothes, take them! If you want my wood, take it!” Relinquishing them both, he sat down. Then, because of his lack of nourishment, he was overtaken by a wind-condition*² and fainted. When he came to, his garment was hanging at the top of a tree, waving in the breeze. A feeling of disillusionment overcame him, and he sat and meditated on the flat surface of a rock that was the size of a sheep.

From the direction of Drowo Valley in the east, a white cloud began to appear. Milarepa thought, “Under that cloud is the hermitage of Drowo Valley. It is there that my guru, the translator Marpa Lotsawa, lives.” Remembering how in the midst of his guru, his guru’s consort, and their retinue of vajra brothers, sisters, and friends, he had received the explanations of the tantras, abhishekas, and key instructions, he thought, “How nice it would be, if he’s there now, to go and meet him.” Where before he had felt disillusionment, powerful memories of his guru brought an immeasurable feeling of sadness. Shedding many tears, he sang this melody of sadness and longing, “The Song of the Six Remembrances of the Guru”:

Remembering you, father Marpa, dispels my anguish;
This beggar's song of longing just suddenly came:

In the east at Chonglung Red Rock
A white rain cloud hovers above.
Underneath that floating white cloud
Lies the great site, the hermitage of Drowo Valley.
In back is a mountain like a great majestically poised elephant, And the
mountain in front is like a great majestically poised lion.
Upon the throne of the great Amolika Rock,*³
Upon a cushion of *krishnasara* deer*⁴ skin, Who is it that sits in that place?
It is Marpa the Translator who sits there.
If, right now, I could meet you, how happy I'd be!

Though my devotion is weak, I wish to meet him,
Though my longing is weak, I wish to meet him.
Whenever I think, I remember the noble guru.
Whenever I meditate, I remember Marpa Lotsawa.

Lady Dagmema, who is dearer than my own mother,
If right now I could meet you, how happy I'd be!
Though the journey is long, I wish to meet her.
Though the path is hard, I wish to meet her.
Whenever I think, I remember the noble guru.
Whenever I meditate, I remember Marpa Lotsawa.

The profound tantra of Hevajra,
If right now it could be taught, how happy I'd be!
Though my prajña is slight, I wish to hold it.
Though my intellect is slight, I wish to recite it.
Whenever I think, I remember the noble guru.
Whenever I meditate, I remember Marpa Lotsawa.

The four symbolic abhishekas of the whispered lineage,
If I could receive them now, how happy I'd be!

Though my offerings are small, I wish to receive them.
Though I cannot offer an initiation gift, I wish to request them.
Whenever I think, I remember the noble guru.
Whenever I meditate, I remember Marpa Lotsawa.

The profound instruction of the Six Dharmas of Naropa,*5
If right now they could be taught, how happy I'd be!
Though my fortitude is weak, I wish to receive them.
Though my endurance in meditation is feeble, I wish to receive them.
Whenever I think, I remember the noble guru.
Whenever I meditate, I remember Marpa Lotsawa.

Dharma friends gathered with faith from Ü*6 and Tsang, If I could see you
now, how happy I'd be!
Though my experience and realization are slight, I long to discuss.
Though my understanding is inferior, I long to discuss.
Whenever I think, I remember the noble guru.
Whenever I meditate, I remember Marpa Lotsawa.

Though this beggar knows that within devotion we are inseparable, I am
unable to bear this torturous longing
Of remembering my guru within my heart.
My breath is seized in my chest, I cannot speak!
Kind one, please take away your son's sorrow!

Then, on the point of a cloud stretched out like a banner of five-colored cloth sat Lord Marpa before him, riding on a white lion adorned with many ornaments, and appearing even more splendid than when Milarepa had been with him in the past.

“My son, Great Sorcerer,*7 why have you called out to me with such anguish? Have you lost trust in the supreme jewels of the guru and yidam? Have you been chasing your thoughts—the objects of adverse conditions? Have the obstacles of the eight worldly concerns corrupted your retreat? Are the demons of hope and fear getting to you?

“Above, have you offered service to the guru, the supreme jewel; below, have you shown generosity to the sentient beings of the six realms; in between, have you purified your own obscurations and negativity and given rise to excellent qualities? Have the conducive conditions for these not arisen?”

“Whatever it may be, you and I are inseparable. So, through your practice, benefit the teachings and beings.”

At this vision, with unbearable joy, Milarepa sang this song in reply:

Seeing my father guru and hearing his speech,

This beggar’s depression dawned as a wondrous experience.

Remembering my guru’s life example,

From deep down, devotion and realization arose.

I truly received his compassion and blessings,

And nondharmic appearances, all of them, ceased.

My longing song of remembering the guru

Pained the ears of the Jetsun*⁸ and yet This beggar couldn’t help it; I would do it again.

Please continue to hold me with your compassion!

The practice of persistence and endurance in hardship,

This is the service to please my father guru.

Wandering alone in mountain retreats, This is the service to please the dakinis.

The genuine dharma, free of self-regard,

This is the service to the Buddha’s teaching.

Making life and practice entirely equal,*⁹

This is how I’m generous to protectorless beings.

With endurance, I’m joyful when sick and I’m happy to die: This is the broom that sweeps away karma, obscurations, and nonvirtue.

The austerity of giving up food obtained through harm,

This is the conducive condition for experience and realization.

Father Guru, I repay your kindness through practice.
Protect your son with compassion, Lord Guru.
Grant your blessing that this beggar may keep to mountain retreats.

Thus he sang. With a lucid and happy mind, he took his robe and brought a handful of wood back to his retreat place. When he arrived at his hut, there were five iron-atsaras*¹⁰ sitting with eyes agape, the size of saucers.¹ One was sitting on the Jetsun's bed teaching dharma, two of them were listening to him, one was preparing food, and one was engrossed in reading Milarepa's texts.

At first, a flash of shock came over Milarepa. Then he thought, "These must be apparitions of displeased local spirits. Wherever I've stayed, I have never not offered *torma*,*¹¹ and I have never not offered praises of the place. I should offer a praise to this site." And so he sang this song of realization in praise of that site:

E MA!*¹² In this solitary place in remote mountains, A place where Victorious
Ones found enlightenment,

There are traces of *siddhas**¹³ who stayed here before, Here where this
human stays all alone.

At Chonglung Red Rock Garuda Fortress,
Above, southern clouds*¹⁴ whirl and swirl.
Below, the river curves and twines.
Between, the vultures float and drift.
Myriads of plants are scattered about.
Trees all dance relaxed and loose.
Bees buzz with gentle hum.
Sweet-scented flowers—ah! A delight!
Melodious birds chirp and tweet.

Here at Chonglung Red Rock Fortress
Birds and chicks train the skill of their wings.
Monkeys and langurs train their skill.
Deer and antelope train the skill of their feet.

I, Milarepa, train in the skill of experience.
I train in the skill of the two bodhichittas.

I'm harmonious with the deities in this retreat.
Gather here, all you *bhuta**¹⁵ spirits, Drink this nectar of love and
compassion
And then be off to your own lands!

After he sang this, the *atsaras*, with hostile countenance toward Milarepa, looked at each other with angry glances. Then, two more *atsaras* came to join, bringing their number to seven. Some of them stood in front of him biting their lips with a wrathful expression. Some of them bared their fangs wrathfully. Several laughed and yelled with booming voice. Together, all of them swiped and stabbed in the air, attempting to intimidate Milarepa. Then he thought, "These spirits are making obstacles for me." So, with a wrathful gaze, he recited powerful mantras, but they didn't go anywhere. Then, giving rise to great compassion, he taught them dharma. But when they didn't give it any heed, Milarepa thought, "Marpa of Lhodrak has pointed out to me that all phenomena are one's own mind, and that mind itself is luminosity-emptiness; I have completely resolved that this is so. Therefore, to take these demons and obstacles as external and delight over making them leave is useless." Then, manifesting fearless confidence, he sang this song of realization, "Having Confidence in the View":

Father, victorious over the armies of the four *maras*,*¹⁶
I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.

People call me a human, but
I am the son of the great snow lioness.
In my mother's womb, I perfected three powers.*¹⁷
When I was a baby, I slept in my den.
When I was a youth, I guarded its gates.
As a full-grown lion I wander in snowy heights.
I have no fear of stormy blizzards.
I'm not afraid of steep rocky cliffs.

People call me a human, but
I am the son of the *garuda*, king of birds.
While inside the egg, I developed my wings.
When I was a baby, I slept in the nest.

When I was a youth, I guarded its gates.
A full-grown garuda, I fly in the sky.
I have no fear of the sky's expanse.
I'm not afraid of narrow ravines.

People call me a human, but
I am the son of the colossal whale.
In my mother's womb, my golden spots grew.
When I was a baby, I slept in the nest.

When I was a youth, I led the school.
A full-grown great fish, I roam the vast sea.
I have no fear of the sea's mighty waves.
I'm not afraid of hooks or nets.

People call me a human, but
I am a son of the Kagyu gurus.
In my mother's womb, I gave rise to faith.
When I was a baby, I entered the gateway of dharma.
When I was a youth, I put effort in study.
An adult, I wander in mountain retreats.
Though ghosts may be savage, I am not afraid.
Though demons play many tricks, I am not afraid.

When the lioness stands in the snow, her paws do not freeze.
If the lioness's paws froze in the snow,
Her perfected three powers would be of little use.

The flying garuda cannot fall from the sky.
If the great garuda could fall from the sky,
Its broad wingspan would be of little use.

When the whale swims in water, it cannot drown.
If the great whale succumbed to the water and drowned, Being born in the
water would be of little use.

Iron boulders cannot be destroyed by stones.
If iron boulders could be destroyed by stones,
For smelting and refining, they would be of little use.

I, Milarepa, have no fear of ghosts.
If Milarepa had fear of ghosts,
Realizing the abiding nature would be of little use.

You band of ghosts, demons, and obstructing spirits here, How sublime it is
that you've come at this time.
Don't hurry; relax and stay for a while.
Let's chat about everything under the sun.

You're hurried? Aw! You can stay just one night!
We'll vie in a contest of all our three gates
And we'll see the difference between virtue and nonvirtue.
I won't let you leave until you've made some obstacles.
If you should go back without making obstacles,
How ashamed and embarrassed to have come here you'll be.

After he sang this, Milarepa got up with confidence in his practice and charged in amongst the demons. The atsaras glanced, blinking, back and forth, in fear. The force of their quivering bodies made everything inside the cave shake slightly. Then, all of the atsaras swiftly dissolved into a single remaining one, and with one strong gust of wind, he too vanished.

Then Milarepa thought, "The king of obstructing spirits, Bhinayaka, really gave it a go! The gust of wind that blew away my wood and clothes before was also his magical doing. But because of the guru's compassion, he was not able to get to me." Then his practice was enhanced beyond comprehension.

This single cycle has three different names: "The Attack of Bhinayaka, King of Obstructing Spirits," "The Six Remembrances of the Guru," and "The Red Rock of Chonglung."

VIRTUE!

-
- *1 Roasted barley flour, a Tibetan staple.
- *2 T: *bser ma*. This is the equivalent of cold prana (or *qi* in the Chinese tradition) and literally means “wind,” or “air.” When the prana becomes imbalanced then various health problems ensue.
- *3 Amolika is a type of stone connected with celestial realms that is often referred to in Tibetan literature (Kunsang 2006: 213).
- *4 Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion, is traditionally depicted wearing a *krishnasara* deer skin over his left shoulder and heart to symbolize love and compassion. Deer skins, generally, also serve as meditation seats for Buddhist yogis. “As an *asana* [or seat], the deer-skin is believed to enhance the solitary tranquility and awareness required by an ascetic, with the purity of *sattvic* energy of the deer being absorbed by the practitioner” (Beer 2003: 62).
- *5 Taught to be the condensed practices of the tantras, the Six Dharmas are chandali, illusory body, dream yoga, luminosity yoga, practice of the bardo, and transference.
- *6 Ü is the central region of Tibet.
- *7 “Great Sorcerer” was Marpa’s nickname for Milarepa because of the sorcery he had learned and used to take revenge on his own townsmen.
- *8 Here, “Jetsun” refers to Marpa.
- *9 Making life and practice equal means to practice throughout one’s entire life.
- *10 In this context, “atsara” is a type of demon.
- *11 Tormas are small offering cakes that are traditionally offered to protectors and local deities.
- *12 “E MA!” is an exclamatory word indicating amazement.
- *13 Literally, “accomplishes”; realized ones who have attained great accomplishment in practice.
- *14 On the Tibetan plateau, rain clouds generally come from the south.
- *15 A formless spirit that causes harm to others.
- *16 The four maras, or demons, are the mara of the skandhas, the mara of the Lord of Death, the mara of the afflictions, and the mara of the godly son (or worldly pleasures).
- *17 The three powers are “the powers of body, speech, and mind” (Goldfield, in *Stories and Songs*: 21).

2

Journey to Lachi Chuzang

NAMO GURU

After staying at Chonglung Rock, the lord of yogis, the Jetsun Milarepa, journeyed through Tongla Pass toward the snowy mountain range of Lachi in order to meditate and fulfill the command of his guru. When Milarepa arrived at Tsarma in Nyanang, the gateway of the site of Lachi, there was a grand wedding being held by the local people of Tsarma.

People were chatting, saying, “Right now, there is a man named Milarepa who remains in mountain retreats where there are no humans and makes austerity his livelihood. He is a true practitioner.”

While they were discussing the Jetsun’s fame, Milarepa approached the door of the place where they were talking. A beautiful young woman adorned with exquisite jewelry came outside. This was Leksé Bum.

“Yogi, where do you come from?” she asked.

“I am the meditator Milarepa who stays in the mountains with no fixed location,” the Jetsun replied. “Lady benefactor, I have come to make a connection with you by requesting food and drink, so if you please, you should give me some.”

“Since your livelihood is honest, I can bring you some,” the woman said. “But, are you really the one they call Milarepa?”

The Jetsun answered, “It would be meaningless for me to lie to you.”

Delighted, she rushed inside and said to all the participants, “That beloved dharma practitioner whom earlier you said lived far away is now right here at our door!”

Then everyone went outside. Some of them prostrated and some of them inquired in detail about Milarepa’s story. Convinced that it really was Milarepa, they invited him inside, offering him abundant respect and service. Everyone had great faith and devotion.

At the head of the row was a young man, a wealthy benefactor. This was

Shendormo. After he had a long conversation with the Jetsun, he asked, “Now, Lama, where will you go?”

“I’m going to Lachi to meditate,” he said.

“Then you must stay in our homeland, Kyogmo Demon Valley, and bless the land there,” he said. “We will offer our service so you will have no hardship.”

A teacher of the dharma who was there said, “Aha! The master and benefactor have agreed with each other. Lachi is in fact another name for none other than Kyogmo Demon Valley. Lama, if you stay there, I personally will also serve you as much as I can and request teachings.” This was the teacher Shakya Guna.

Then the benefactor said, “Our remote home—alas—it’s a lovely place! But fearing the excessive affliction brought by ghosts that manifest there, no one wants to stay. Please hurry to our land.” With that, the whole gathering prostrated to him.

The Jetsun said, “I am going quickly, but I’m not going for the sake of your land. It is because I have a command from my guru I must fulfill that I am going.”

“That is fine with us. We will give you excellent provisions and send servants with you,” they said.

The Jetsun said, “I’m not someone who needs companions or excellent provisions in mountain retreats. First, I will go by myself. But that you have offered your help is truly wonderful; we can see if there is something you can do later.”

Then the Jetsun, on his own, went to Lachi Snow Mountain. When he got near the pass, spirits there sent down powerful magic. When he had progressed only a short way up the pass, there suddenly came a storm. Loud thunder roared and lightning flashed. The mountains on each side of the valley shifted, causing water to come down and collect. The water became a great lake agitated with strong waves. The Jetsun used a yogic gaze and lanced down his walking stick, making the water flow back down into the ground and disappear. This place is known as Demon Pond.²

Then Milarepa went down some distance, and the spirits made the mountains break against each other, with waves of churning boulders crashing around. When this happened, the dakinis made a path in the valley for Milarepa that was shaped like a mountain snake racing downward. The path that pacified the avalanche is known as the High Road of the Dakinis.

The weaker of the spirits then naturally receded, but when the stronger ones were not able to defeat Milarepa, they tried again. Reaching the end of the High Road of the Dakinis, the Jetsun used a yogic gaze to subjugate the negative spirits. When their magic was pacified, he put his footprint in the rock where he sat. He went on a bit further, the sky cleared, and he became cheerful. Milarepa then sat up on a high perch. Giving rise to a *samadhi* of loving-kindness toward sentient beings, his practice was enhanced immensely. This place is known as the Heights of Loving-Kindness.

Then he went to Chuzang. While dwelling there within the yoga of continual river flow, on the tenth evening of the seventh month of the male fire tiger year, a great demon in the form of Bharo of Nepal came leading an army of spirits. They filled all the earth and sky of Chuzang Valley. They threw mountains and thunderbolts toward the Jetsun, making a fierce rain of weapons fall upon him. They called his name out, shouting frightful things like “Get him! Kill him!” and displayed many ugly forms. Thinking, “The spirits are trying to get to me,” he sang this song of realization about the dharma of the truth of cause and effect:

I prostrate to all gurus.

I go for refuge in the lord who is so kind!

The magic of you male and female demons

Appeared to my eyes as an array of confused appearances.

Alas! For you *pretas*,*¹ I feel such compassion.

This human you have not been able to harm.

The result of your previously accumulated bad karma

Is now experienced in your body of karmic ripening.

In this form, your minds move throughout the sky.

With evil intent—your afflicted motivation—

You savagely act in body and speech,

Saying, “Kill, cut, beat, and break!”

As for this *repa* yogi who’s free of concepts,

My mind is without fear, I have confidence in view.

With my heroic lion’s walk,

In body, I hold to the fortress of the deity’s form; In speech, I hold to the

fortress of mantra's sound;
In mind, I hold to the fortress of luminous clarity.
My sixfold collection's*² own essence is empty.
For a yogi who is like this,
Your dark preta magic can do no harm.
The results of virtue and negativity are fact.
By repeatedly accumulating causes that match their result,
You'll go to the lower realms—how sad that is!

Alas! All you afflicted pretas,
You don't realize the genuine nature—how sad!
This waiflike Milarepa here
Explains the dharma through singing songs of instruction.

The sentient beings in this world,
All of them have been my parents.
Because they have been so kind, I feel pain when they suffer.
Thus, you should turn from your malevolent mind.
Is it not good to think of karma, cause and effect?
Is it not good to engage in the ten virtuous actions?
Remember these excellent words and examine them.
Understand their meaning and put them into practice.³

Thus he sang. Then the army of ghosts said, "Your clever speech doesn't fool us. We're not going to leave you in peace!" With that, the army increased in number and their magic grew greater.

Then the Jetsun thought to himself and said accordingly, "Army of ghosts, because of my guru's kindness, the magic of obstructing demons is an ornament of the mind of this yogi who realizes the abiding nature. Send it all even more strongly, and I'll join it with supreme bodhichitta." Then he sang this song, "The Seven Great Ornaments":

I bow at the feet of Lord Marpa the Translator.
I, a yogi who's realized the abiding nature,
Will sing you a song of great ornaments.

You male and female demons gathered here With your minds undistracted,
listen intently.

With the stupa of supreme Mount Meru in the center,
In the south, a glow of deep blue lapis
Ornaments the sky of Jambudvipa.*3

Playing above Yugandhara Mountain*4
Are the luminous pair, the sun and moon,
Which ornament the four continents far and wide.

By the miraculous power of the bodhisattva *nagas*,⁴
Rain pours down from the sky's expanse
And ornaments the solid earth.

From the water vapor of the outer ocean,
Southern clouds form in the heavens above.
Thus, clouds of the south ornament the heavens.

By the interdependence of the elements—heat and moisture—
In summer, rainbows gleam upon green mountains.
Rainbows ornament the grassy hills.

In the west, rivers flow from Lake Manasarovar,*5
So the plants in the south, in Jambudvipa, flourish.
They're an ornament for all the beings there.

I'm a yogi who keeps to mountain retreats.
By the power of meditating on the emptiness of mind,
The magic of male and female *yakshas**6 and ghosts has appeared.
Such magic is an ornament of my practice.

Now, listen well, all you spirits.
This human here, do you know who I am?
If you do not know who I am,
I am the yogi Milarepa!

The flower of loving-kindness has blossomed in the depths of my heart.
By means of this pleasing song,
I've taught the dharma with words that are true.
With altruistic mind, I've given this counsel.

Though you've not given rise to supreme bodhichitta
And performed the benefit of other beings,
Once you've abandoned the ten nonvirtuous deeds,
How could you not have your own liberation and peace?
If you listen to this man, there will be great benefit.
Practice dharma now, and your happiness will last!

Thus he sang. Most of the spirits came to have faith and respect toward the Jetsun. With their magic pacified, they said, "Yogi, you are truly wondrous! If you had not communicated to us the way things are, and had we not seen the signs, we would not have understood. Now we will not cause obstacles for you. Although it was very kind of you to teach us this dharma regarding karma and results, our habits of negativity are strong and our intellect is weak, so we didn't fully understand. Please, now, teach us dharma that contains few words and has great meaning, that is easy to understand and to take along with us." Then he sang this song of realization, "The Seven Things It Is":

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.
Grant your blessings that I may be skilled in bodhichitta.

Without any words that are meaningful and true,
Such songs, though nice, are merely a lute.

Without illustrating the dharma through fitting examples,
Such poetry, though learned, is just a guitar.

If dharma has not merged with your mind-stream in a practical way, Saying
"I understand" is just deception.

If you're not practicing the meaning of the whispered lineage instructions,
Staying in retreats is just making things hard for yourself.

Not practicing dharma that will certainly do benefit,
To toil over mundane matters is just difficult work.

Without regarding subtle karma, cause and effect,
Though your words give great counsel, it's just a wish they convey.

Without practicing the meaning of the words,
Giving mere lip service is just a lie.

Abandon nonvirtue, and it's inherently accomplished.
Practice virtue, and it's implicitly accomplished.
Roll that all into one point and practice that.
Saying lots of words is of little help;
You should practice in accord with this vital key point!

Thus he sang. Those who had requested the dharma had faith and respect for the Jetsun and did many prostrations and circumambulations. Every one of them returned back to where they had come from. However, the leader of the spirits, Bharo, along with several of his retinue, again sent magic upon Milarepa just as before. Then Milarepa sang this song of realization on the dharma of cause and effect:

I bow at the feet of Marpa who is so kind.
Now, all you spirits, listen once more!

Your bodies fly in space unimpeded,
And your habit of malicious thoughts is so fixed.
With the fangs of afflictions you terrorize others;
You'll be tormented by the nonvirtue of giving others pain.
There's no place to discard the truth of cause and effect; The force of
ripening can't be thrown away.
You bring this torment and anger upon yourself.

Alas! How confused are you hungry ghosts!
So sad! The power of all your negative karma—
When I think of it, I feel anguish in my heart!
All the karma you've gathered before

All the karma you've gathered before
Just makes you want to do it some more.
For food, you enjoy flesh and blood
That involves the negativity of killing and slaughter.
For activity, you take the lives of beings.
Among the six types of beings, a preta's body you'll have.
Engaging in negativity, to the lower realms you'll fall.
So horribly sad! Change your ways to dharma,
And without hope or fear, you'll quickly reach bliss.

Thus he sang. Then the spirits said, "You are so skilled in teaching us this dharma, now we understand. Please tell us about what kind of confidence arises in you when you bring this understanding into practice." To that, Milarepa sang this song of realization, "Having Authentic Confidence":

I bow at the feet of the qualified guru Marpa.

I, a yogi who has realized the ultimate,
Having confidence in the ground, the state free of arising, I perfected, in
stages, the path's unceasing power.⁵
Explaining with great compassion—the method—
Within the expanse of *dharmata**⁷—true reality—I'll sing a song.

Obscured by negative deeds, you're thickly veiled,
So the definitive meaning—the abiding nature—you don't comprehend.
Thus, I'll explain dharma of the provisional meaning.*⁸

In the past, the omniscient Buddha emphatically taught In the sutras and
tantras, which are without stain,
The dharma of cause and effect.
It's the single friend of all sentient beings.
These words are certainly true and do not deceive.
You should listen, too, to the Lord Maitreya's words.

I, this yogi who has trained in experience,
Looking out at obstructions—these illusions outside—
I know they're the magical display of unborn mind

I know they're the magical display of unborn mind.

Looking in at the mind of awareness inside—

It's primordially empty, mind itself, without root.

With the qualities of meditating all alone

And the blessings of the lineage of gurus,

I realized this through the lineage of the great Lord Naropa.

I meditated upon the unerring meaning—

The enlightened intention of the Victorious Ones.

The lord guru revealed the vital points

Of the intention of the tantras' profound methods.

By the power of meditating stably on the path of creation and completion, I

know the interdependent connection of the inner nadis,

So I don't fear the obstructions of confused appearances outside.

In the lineage of the great Brahman,*⁹

Came many glorious sky-like yogis.*¹⁰

My confused ruminations dissolve into space.

Having trained and trained in innate mind's key point,

I do not observe one who's harmed, or a harmer.

If you open up the scriptures of the dharma's *pitakas*,*¹¹

I'm completely certain there's no other point but this!

Thus he sang. Then Bharo and his retinue, taking off their turbans, prostrated and circumambulated many times and said they would offer an entire month's provisions to Milarepa. Then, like a rainbow, they disappeared.

The following morning, when the sun rose, Bharo's spirits from the night before came, surrounded by many retinues of female Bhari*¹² wearing beautiful ornaments. They filled many precious containers with wine and other liquors, and the retinue filled a fine basin with rice, meats, and all kinds of food and served them to the Jetsun.

"From now on we will be your subjects and accomplish whatever you command," they said. They prostrated and circumambulated many times and then disappeared. The leader of those spirits became known as King Tangdrem, the lord of an assembly of great deities.

Through all of this, the Jetsun's practice was enhanced, and with his body in a

state of bliss, he was without any hunger for a whole month.

By this time, the Jetsun had become very familiar with all the places in Lachi Chuzang, and along the road to Lachi Neythil,^{*13} in the center of a large field of tamarisk trees,^{*14} there was a great boulder with a sheltering hollow in it where Milarepa sat for a while. Many dakinis prostrated to him there and surrounding him, they offered a great variety of desirable objects. The dakinis left two footprints in the stone there and then vanished like a rainbow.

Then Milarepa walked on a short way, and along the entire path spirits had magically manifested many great female organs. The Jetsun, while engaging in a yogic gaze, walked on with his secret vajra^{*15} fully erect. At the point where he had passed nine female organs, there was a stone that embodied all of the vital essence of that site toward which Milarepa employed his secret center's vajra and yogic gaze. This place where all of the magical manifestations were pacified became known as the Nine Peaks and Nine Valleys.

Then as he was about to arrive at Neythil, again Bharo, whom Milarepa had previously encountered, greeted him with many offerings. He prepared a dharma throne for the Jetsun and requested him to teach the dharma. After the Jetsun again taught extensively on the dharma of cause and effect, Bharo dissolved into a great boulder in front.

The Jetsun was very happy to then finally arrive at Neythil and he stayed there for one whole month. There, the people of Tsarma in Nyanang came and he said to the benefactors there, "It was indeed Kyogmo, a Valley of Demons. Since I have tamed all the demons, it is now a site for practice. I was the very first to come here and meditate." They all came to have supreme faith.

This is the cycle of the journey to Lachi Chuzang.

*1 Pretas, or "hungry ghosts" (T: *yi dvags*), are one of the six types of beings in samsara along with gods, asuras or jealous gods, humans, animals, and hell beings. Demons and ghosts generally fall into the preta category.

*2 This refers to the six collections of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

*3 In Buddhist cosmology, Mount Meru is at the center of our universe; its southern slope, which is blue in color, faces the "continent" of Jambudvipa, the world in which we live.

*4 According to Buddhist cosmology, Yugandhara Mountain is one of the seven mountains that surround the four continents, with Mount Meru in the center of those. The sun and moon are said to travel around Yugandhara Mountain.

*5 Located near Mount Kailash, this lake is known as the "Invincible Turquoise Lake" (T: *g.yu ma pham msho*) in Tibetan.

*6 Harmful demonic spirits (T: *gnod sbyin*).

- *⁷ Dharmata (T: *chos nyid*) is a word used to denote the true nature of reality.
- *⁸ Teachings of the provisional meaning were taught by the Buddha for those who are not yet ready to understand the full meaning of the nature of phenomena, which is the definitive meaning.
- *⁹ The lineage of Saraha, who was a Brahman and forebear of the Mahamudra lineage.
- *¹⁰ This indicates that the yogis' view and meditation is vast like the sky.
- *¹¹ The *pitakas*, or baskets, are the three main categories of the Buddhist scriptures. They are the sutras (containing the words of the Buddha), the *vinaya* (containing the vows and guidelines for the ordained sangha), and the *abhidharma* (canonical scriptures that elucidate the meaning of Buddha's teaching as compiled in the sutras).
- *¹² Bhara is a Nepali surname belonging to the caste of warriors/nobility; its derivation for use as the name of this demon is unclear. "Bhari" is the feminine form of Bhara.
- *¹³ "Thil" (T: *mthil*) in Tibetan can mean "center" or "primary"; so in light of the following passage, Lachi Neythil is literally, "Center, or Main Point, of the Site Lachi."
- *¹⁴ The exact Western name of this plant is not completely certain; the *TDC*, s.v. *'om bu*, describes it as "a type of medicinal tree with bitter flavor; cooling medicinal essence; ability to draw out illness and poison, clear away fever, and to dry pus and lymph."
- *¹⁵ Penis (T: *gsang rdo*).

3

The Song of the Snow

NAMO GURU

Because of his renown for taming the malevolent *devas* and ghosts at Lachi Snow Mountain, where he first went, the Jetsun Milarepa became an object of homage and offering for all the people of Nyanang. In particular, Jomo Urmo requested dharma teachings. At that time, she said to Milarepa, “My son, Dampa Gyakpupa, is now very young, but when he grows old I will offer him to serve the Jetsun.”

At that place where the people developed great faith, the people of Tsarma invited him to stay and Shendormo offered him service. The Jetsun stayed for a while in the village, but seeing everyone’s mundane samsaric activity, he showed great revulsion.

“I am going to Lachi Snow Mountain,” he said.

The people of Tsarma replied to the Jetsun, “You do nothing but benefit sentient beings. Please benefit us by staying here this winter and teaching us. After taming the demons, you can go as you please. Late next spring, we too will go and serve you.”

In particular, the teacher Shakya Guna and Shendormo tried to dissuade him, saying things such as, “When winter comes, it will be very difficult and tiresome in the snow.”

But however much they pleaded, Milarepa would not listen. “I, a lineage-son of Naropa, have no fear of the howl of the snows. Too, Marpa’s command to me was to give up distractions and mundane activities by staying in isolated places free of people. Especially, for me, settling in the village would be worse than death.” Thus he spoke with resolve to leave.

Then the people of Tsarma quickly offered provisions to the Jetsun, and several of them promised to come to request dharma from him during the winter. Six people, lay and ordained, including the teacher Shakya Guna and Shendormo, brought Milarepa a drink for his departure. They said they would go with him as far as the pass; once they crossed the pass, they went further on as far as Demon Pond. Then the Jetsun, taking with him two dré*¹ of tsampa, one dré of rice, a

side of meat, and a portion of butter, went to the Great Cave of Taming Demons, where he stayed.

They all headed back, and at the pass, clouds gathered and a blizzard struck. They had a difficult time keeping to the path, as snow came roiling and swirling up to their knees. They finally made it to their village just before the people went to sleep. Then, from that evening on, it snowed day and night for another eighteen days; and for six months, travel between Drin and Nyanang came to a halt. Because of this, Milarepa's students*2 were certain that the Jetsun had died, and so they offered a funeral rite *puja**3 for him.

When the next Saga Dawa*4 had passed, those disciples from before went to retrieve the deceased body of the Jetsun, cutting a path in the snow with axes. When they got near the place where he had stayed, they sat down on some raised ground and rested. There, a great snow leopard*5 climbed up the face of a boulder and stretched. It is said that he looked at them for a long while and then went away.

Upon seeing this, they discussed amongst themselves, "If the snow leopard ate the Jetsun's body, there will probably only be pieces of his clothing or hair, and nothing else to be found." Heavy-hearted, they went along weeping. The long and treacherous path*6 there, where apparitions of tigers and leopards manifested and walked, became known as the Treacherous Path of Leopards and Tigers. There, the party had misgivings, thinking, "Were these devas or ghosts?"

With doubts in their mind, they approached the Great Cave of Taming Demons, and could hear the Jetsun singing a song. Then they thought, "Perhaps a hunter gave him some provisions, or maybe he found some animal's corpse that was killed by a beast. Is it possible he did not die, after all?"

When they reached him, the guru said, "All you fools, you got up to this area some time ago; why have you only just now arrived here? The food*7 is getting cold; come quickly into the cave!"

At this, they were so happy they began to weep. They all came to Milarepa, tearfully clutching at his hands and feet.

The Jetsun said, "Now, don't cry, come on and eat!"

First, they all prostrated and asked about their guru's health. Looking around at the provisions, they saw that only one of the dré of tsampa from before had been finished, and on top of that, there was a cooked dish of meat with rice.

The teacher Shakya Guna said, "You cooked our food before we arrived. Did the Jetsun see us coming through the higher perceptions*8?"

The Jetsun replied, “Looking out from atop a boulder, I saw when you all were sitting and resting.”

The teacher Shakya Guna said, “On that boulder we only saw a snow leopard, we didn’t see the Jetsun. Where was the Jetsun at that point?”

“That snow leopard was me. I’m a yogi who has attained mastery over *prana* and mind. Since I have overcome the constituents of the four elements, I can display miracles of transforming my body into anything I desire. Since you are all worthy disciples, I displayed this miracle of my material body. But you should not speak of this to other people.”

Then Shendormo said, “The Jetsun looks even more radiant and healthy than last year. Since the snow closed off both entrances to the road, there was no way for any human to serve you. Was it a deva or ghost that served you? Or did you find the body of something like a dead animal? What was it that happened?”

“Because my samadhi flourished, I didn’t need to eat actual food. On the special days, the dakinis would each give a portion of a *ganachakra**⁹ offering. Then, sometimes I would just gulp down a spoonful of tsampa. In particular, in the last part of the first lunar month,*¹⁰ I had a meditative vision of all you disciples surrounding me bringing lots of food and drink. Because of that, I did not have the appetite to eat for many days. What was it that you all did during that time?”

They did some calculations and found that it was when they offered a funeral rite puja for him with vast and elaborate offerings.

The Jetsun said, “Worldly people who practice virtue bring benefit for themselves in the bardo after death, but to cut the present bardo of living is even more beneficial.”

Then they fervently offered invitations for the Jetsun to go to Nyanang. The Jetsun replied, “I’m very happy right here, and since my samadhi is flourishing, I will not go. But you all go ahead.”

“If the Jetsun does not go, then the people of Nyanang will all say to us that we caused the death of the Jetsun and will chide us and heap reprimands upon us.” In particular, Jomo Urmo had sent a strong message along with them saying, “Bring my Jetsun home!”

They all repeatedly urged him and said, “If the Jetsun will not come, then we will wait here even until death.” At their insistence, the Jetsun agreed to go.

The winter dakinis said to him, “Milarepa, even though you don’t need

anything, the future lineage of disciples does have needs. Therefore, break through the snow like this.” As the dakinis had instructed, the Jetsun and his students returned that morning, bringing snowshoes*¹¹ with them.

When they reached the pass, Shendormo went on ahead to spread the good news to the students and people of Tsarma that the Jetsun had not died, but, indeed, had returned. Milarepa and his disciples came to a large flat white boulder that was used for threshing wheat. All the students who had heard the good news—male, female, young, and old—came to greet the Jetsun. Looking at his face, everyone embraced him and wept. They cried out to him, asking after his health; and they prostrated and circumambulated. Then, the Jetsun leaned forward and rested his arms and torso upon his bamboo walking stick. Still wearing the shoes used to break through the snow, from upon the flat white boulder, he answered the gathering of disciples’ inquiry about his health with this song of realization:

On this auspicious, glorious day,
You male and female benefactors who welcome me with prostrations, Along
with myself, the yogi Milarepa:
We didn’t perish, and have met. Oh how joyful!
I’m an old man with a treasury of songs,
So I’ll answer your query of my health with this tune;
Listen carefully with focused, attentive minds.

At the very end of the tiger year
And at the beginning of the year of the hare,
On the full moon of the Wagyal month,*¹²
Disillusioned with the things of samsara,
I went seeking a secluded retreat
In the remote pastures of the Lachi snowy range.
The land and sky conferred together
And sent down a messenger, a strong wind.
With the elements of water and wind astir,
Black southern clouds gathered in front.
The sun and moon were put into prison.
The twenty-eight constellations were strung on a wire.
The eight planets were put into shackles by edict

The eight planets were put into shackles by edict.
The great Milky Way was tethered down.
The morning star was completely wrapped in mist.
Wind with sleet blew, and finally,⁶
Snow fell for nine days and nine nights;
With the days and nights together totaling eighteen.
The big flakes were big; they fell like thick layers of wool,
Like birds in flight that plummet down.
The small flakes were small; they fell like tiny wheels,
Like bees flying around, then dropping down.

Other small flakes the size of mustard seeds and beans, Lumped together and
fell like balls of sleet.
Snow fell in more sizes than one could count.

High above, the snowy white peaks touched the sky.
Below, the plants and trees were matted and pressed.
The mountains of black donned a blanket of white,
An ocean with waves that were frozen over.
The blue rivers' waters were put in a shell.
The contour of the land was evened to a plain.
Because this snowfall was so great,
The black-haired people*¹³ became socked in.
The four-legged creatures were stricken with famine:
Especially the old, weak ones' sustenance was cut.
Above, the birds' food source was depleted.
Below, the pikas and mice hid in their stores.
The meat-eating animals were unable to eat.

As for the fate of such sleet and strong wind⁷
And particularly the fate of me, Milarepa:
That blizzard that came down from above,
The strong winter wind of the new year,
And I, the yogi Milarepa's cloth, these three,

All fought on the side of the high snow mountain.
But I was victorious over the snowfall, and it melted to water.
Though the wind roared powerfully, it naturally subsided,
And my cloth, like fire, was blazing strong!
Two wrestlers contended there in a life-or-death match.
I gave it the edge of my kingly sword.
I was victorious in that fight where the valiant ones were overthrown; Thus,
 all dharma practitioners earned some clout
Especially meditators, twice as much;
In particular, my single *chandali* cloth showed its greatness.
The four gatherings of illness*¹⁴ were put on the scale.⁸

Then, inner disturbances were completely vanquished.⁹
Both cold and hot pranas were fully cast out.
Later, the [elements] listened and heeded what was said.¹⁰
The demon of snow and sleet was suppressed.
Then, all was resolved and completely still.
Though samsara's brigade tried, it didn't succeed.
Thus, this yogi won the fight.

I'm my grandfather's descendant, with the coat of a tiger;
I've never fled wearing the coat of a fox.*¹⁵
To my father was born a son of the class of champions;
I've never lost in the face of a foe.¹¹
I'm of the family of lions, the king of beasts;
I've never lived in a snowless land.

Fate has once again played its joke.¹²
If you trust that what this old man says has any power,
The practice lineage teachings will spread in the future,
A few siddhas will also come,
And I, the yogi Milarepa,
Will be renowned throughout the lands.
You disciples will have faith

And fame of you will later spread.

I, a yogi, am very well.
You benefactors, how are you?

When he had sung this, the students all danced and shouted with great joy. Milarepa also shouted for joy. When he danced, the boulder shifted and softened like kneaded mud, and the entire surface become full of Milarepa's footprints and the imprints of his walking stick. The center of the rock also shifted to form stairs. This place, which was formerly called the "Flat White Boulder," later became known as "Footprint Rock."

The students invited Milarepa to come to Tsarma in Nyanang, where they offered him service with a feast of thanksgiving. Among the participants was Leksé Bum, who said, "The Jetsun has come here today without any harm done to him; I'm more joyful than ever. Your complexion looks even better than it did before. Your practice must have gone well. Did the dakinis serve you?"

He replied with this song of realization:

I bow my head at the feet of the lord guru.

The dakinis gave me the *siddhi**¹⁶ of blessing; The *amrita**¹⁷ of *samaya* was so beneficial.

Through an offering of faith, my strength was restored;
The disciples' gathering of merit was excellent.

For my mind that has the view, emptiness dawns.
In the essence of what's seen, nary an atom exists.
Viewer and viewed are completely gone.*¹⁸
This way of realizing the view is excellent.

My meditation is the river flow of luminosity,
And I don't divide my meditation into sessions and breaks.
Meditator and meditated are completely gone.
This perseverance in meditation is excellent.

My conduct's doer and deed are luminosity;

Since dependent arising is resolved to be empty,
Doer and deed are completely gone.
This way of engaging conduct is excellent.

My thoughts of bias dissolved into space;
I'm without hypocrisy, the eight concerns, or hope and fear.
Keeper and kept are completely gone.
This way of keeping samaya is excellent.

I've determined my mind is *dharmakaya*.^{*19}
So to accomplish the benefit of self and other,
Accomplisher and accomplished are completely gone.
This way of accomplishing the fruition is excellent.

The happy song of this old man
Is an answer for these faithful students.
In my retreat of practice I was sealed in by the snow
Where the dakinis made me offerings of provisions.

Water from rocky snow mountains was a most excellent drink.
With no one practicing, practice was glorious.
Without needing toil, the harvest was ripened.
Without hoarding and maintaining, which is ever only temporary, my
storehouse was filled.

By looking at the mind, everything was seen.
By remaining humble, the royal throne was seized.
My resolve to reach the highest peak, that's the guru's kindness.

As for you gathering of disciples and benefactors,
The kindness of your service with faith
I repay with dharma.
May all who have come here be filled with joy!

Thus he sang. The teacher Shakya Guna offered prostrations to Milarepa and

said, “Today, the Jetsun has come here unharmed by the great snow storm, and all we students have also survived. This coming together of master and disciples has made us extremely happy. Today, we thank you for your kind gift of teaching the dharma. We also ask you to teach us dharma about what arose in the meditative experience of the Jetsun this winter.”

In response to the teacher Shakya Guna, the Jetsun sang this song of realization on the six essential points of meditative experience as a departure gift for the students:

I bow at the feet of the lord guru with the threefold kindness.*20

As to my meditative experiences in solitary retreat:

This evening, in these auspicious full rows,
All the disciples gathered who fill these seats,
Headed by you, the teacher Shakya Guna,
Were brought together through pure aspiration;
Then, the benefactor Dormo and his wife,*21
Along with you students who have a connection
Of dharma and samaya, offered a request.
You asked the father to give dharma as a departure gift—
For the sake of that request, here is my reply:

I had revulsion toward the things of samsara.
Disillusioned, I went to Lachi Snow Mountain,
To the solitary site of the Cave of Taming Demons.

For me, the yogi Milarepa,
Meditation experiences dawned during those six months.
Thus, I'll sing this song of six essential points:

From examples of six outer objects,
You'll understand the six inner faults.
For the six fetters that bind without any freedom,
I used the methods, the six paths of liberation.
Once I gained confidence in the six expanses,
The experience of the six types of bliss dawned.

If I don't sing the song, having mentioned these points,
You will not be able to understand their meaning.
So, here's an explanation of what these words mean:

If it is obstructing, it isn't space.
If it can be counted, it isn't the stars.¹³
If it trembles or moves, it isn't a mountain.
If it's increased or diminished, it isn't the ocean.
If a bridge reaches across, it's not a great river.
If it can be seized, it isn't a rainbow.
These six are the outer examples.

If it has reference points, it is not the view.
If there's dullness and agitation, it's not meditation.
If there's adopting and rejecting, it is not conduct.
If there are concepts, it is not yoga.*²²
If there's dawning and waning, it is not wisdom.
If there's birth and death, it's not buddhahood.
These six are the inner faults.

If anger is strong, that's the fetter of the hell realm.
If there is great avarice, that's the fetter of the pretas.
If there is great ignorance, that's the fetter of the animals.
If passion is great, that's the fetter of the humans.
If there's strong jealousy, it's the fetter of the *asuras*.*²³
If there is strong pride, that's the fetter of the devas.
These six are the fetters that bind without freedom.

If faith is strong, that's liberation's path.
If you rely on the learned and righteous, that's liberation's path.
If your samaya is pure, that's liberation's path.
If you wander in mountain retreats, that's liberation's path.
If you stay alone, that's liberation's path.

If you engage in practice, that's liberation's path.
These methods are the six paths of liberation.

Coemergence is the primordial expanse.
To be free of "outer or inner" is the expanse of awareness.
To be free of "clear or obscured" is the expanse of wisdom.
That which pervades all is the expanse of dharma.
To be free of movement and change is the expanse of *bindu*. *24
Unbroken continuity is the expanse of experience.
These are the six expanses with confidence.

Chandali's blazing in the body brings bliss.
Right and left prana entering the *avadhuti* brings bliss. *25
In the upper part, river flow of bodhichitta brings bliss.
In the lower part, the pervading of clear bindu brings bliss.
In the middle, white and red meeting through play brings bliss.
Contentment through the bliss of undefiled body brings bliss.
These are the six blisses of the yogi's experience.

Now, this is my song of six essential points,
The melody of my meditation experience during these six months,
May you disciples enjoy it as a feast.

You happy people gathered here today,
By drinking beer as amrita, all are pleased.
This old song sung by this old man
Had to be sung to please you disciples;
Let this suffice as my dharma gift for now.
Apply yourselves in auspicious dharma with joyful heart.
May this aspiration of pure activity be fulfilled.

Thus he sang. Then Shendormo said, "Although meeting the precious Jetsun is like meeting the buddhas of the three times, these people who don't even serve you, follow you, or practice the dharma, let alone have devotion toward you, are

more stupid than animals.”

The Jetsun replied, “If someone doesn’t have pure devotion toward me, that is fine; but if someone does not practice dharma when they have obtained a precious human life at a time when the Buddha’s teachings have spread, that is extremely foolish.” Then he sang this song:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.

Now listen, you faithful benefactors:

When the genuine dharma has extensively spread,
To carelessly engage in nonvirtue is extremely foolish.

With this body and its freedoms and resources so hard to get,
To squander this human life is extremely foolish.

To constantly dwell in the charnel grounds
Of decrepit-walled cities is extremely foolish.

Spouses are just like guests at a gathering.*26
To bicker and fight with them is extremely foolish.

The self-resounding of illusory words of renown,
To get attached to these is extremely foolish.

Enemies that are fleeting just like a flower,
To risk your life fighting them is extremely foolish.

In the house of deception of one’s relatives,
To despair when one of them dies is extremely foolish.

Toward the borrowed wealth that’s like a dewdrop,
To be knotted up with miserliness is extremely foolish.

As for this body, this bag of filth,
To scrub it, desiring it to be good, is extremely foolish.

This supreme food, this nectar of instruction,
To sell it for food and wealth is extremely foolish.

This assembly with many foolish ones, If you're clever, through the sublime
dharma you'll become self-sufficient.

If you're smart, you'll do as this yogi does.

Thus he sang. The students assembled there said, "Please accept us. Although we are not as clever or as smart as the Jetsun, we will try to avoid falling into such foolish things. Please stay here with us as a resident lama teaching the dharma for those of us who are living, and performing the pure land rituals for those who have passed away. Please continually remain here with us."

Then the Jetsun replied, "I must meditate at Lachi Snow Mountain as my guru prophesied. I will only stay here a little while. Anyway, I don't know anything about the mundane activities of pleasing you benefactors. Also, if I stay, you would only come to view me with contempt." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa from Lhodrak.
You male and female benefactors gathered here,
With deeply heartfelt unwavering faith
Toward me, the yogi Milarepa,
Supplicate free of hypocrisy.

By staying continuously in a single place,
When you're with people a short time, you'll get sick of them.
If you get too familiar, you'll naturally have contempt for them.
If you stay for long, by not meeting expectations there'll be much offense.
With such ill temper and fighting, samaya is disturbed.
Bad friends make excellent virtuous activity fly away.
By falsely boasting of your greatness, you'll gather bad karma.
Talk a lot about rights and wrongs, and enemies will surround you.
Being deceitful with bias is a great negativity.
Expecting thanks for faith offerings, negative thoughts will disturb you.¹⁴
Taking food offerings from the dead is a debt one can't bear.
You people's resident lamas are really shoddy.
If you've contempt for those you spend time with, you'll feel dejected.
Leaders of the masses suffer at the time of death

LEADERS OF THE MASSES SUFFER AT THE TIME OF DEATH.

Therefore, if yogis of mountain retreats

Resort to villages, it's a great loss.

I am going to mountain retreats with no fixed direction.

That you faithful ones gathered merit is wonderful.

You male and female benefactors gathered here,

Saying "Be our lama" makes an excellent imprint:

It's by our connection of aspiration we have met again and again.

Thus he sang. Then they said, "We students would not get sick of listening to you, but the Jetsun would get sick of us. Although we fervently requested you to stay, there's no way you will listen. Please do look upon us and return quickly to Lachi again and again."

They made many offerings to Milarepa, but he did not accept them. The students gathered there all were amazed. With great delight, they rejoiced and gained unwavering faith in the Jetsun.

This is the cycle of the song of the snow.

*1 In Tibet, a square-shaped vessel for measuring grain which contains six *phul*. One "dré" is approximately one quart.

*2 "Students" throughout the entire work directly translates the Tibetan word "nyama" (*nya ma*), distinct from "disciples," which translates the Tibetan "lobma" (*slob ma*). The word often implies a group of female students, but here it refers to both male and female lay students. Thrangu Rinpoche explains that Nyamas are lay dharma students who, on the new and full moon days of the lunar month, come to see a teacher and receive teachings and practice. The full moon day is called *nya gang* and is the source of their name, "nyama" (Thrangu 2001: 27).

*3 A puja is a ritual ceremony entailing many offerings.

*4 Saga Dawa is the name of the fourth month in the Tibetan calendar; it generally falls in late spring.

*5 T: *gsa'gzigs*. "Snow leopard" seems to be correct, though there may be another, possibly extinct species to which this refers. (DPR) *6 T: *'phrang* "Treacherous path," throughout the translation, refers to a narrow passageway along the side of a cliff, a common occurrence in Tibet.

*7 There are two types of food mentioned here that are particular to Tibetan cuisine, pronounced: "zen" and "tsöma" (T: *zan dang tshod ma*). "Zen" is a ball of packed tsampa (roasted barley flour) and hot butter tea, and "tsöma" refers to the cooked food that accompanies "zen."

*8 Higher perceptions can refer to clairvoyance or other supernormal powers gained through accomplishment in meditation.

*9 A feast offering performed by Vajrayana practitioners.

*10 T: *rta'i zla ba*, literally, "the horse month."

*11 T: *dkyar*. The exact meaning of this term seems to vary among Tibetan speakers. According to *DSD*, this word is simply a name for "shoes" in a local dialect. Jäschke says it is a Ladakhi term for snowshoes.

James Valby says that it is an appliance for crossing snow on glaciers (*JV*).

*12 *Wagyal* (T: *wa rgyal*) literally means “fox king.” The Kalachakra calendar has a month named *gyal* (S: *pauṣa*) which falls in mid-winter and corresponds to the tenth Tibetan month, so some variant of that may be entailed here.

*13 In this context, another name for Tibetans.

*14 The four gatherings of illness refers to “the sicknesses that are caused by the unbalancing strength and activity of the four elements—earth, water, fire, and air—in the yogi’s body” (Chang 1999: 36).

*15 Foxes are noted to be cowardly.

*16 *Siddhi*, or accomplishment, is what is accomplished or attained through practice. There are both common *siddhis* (the higher perceptions) and the supreme *siddhi* (full awakening).

*17 *Amrita* (T: *bdud rtsi*) is often used metaphorically in poetic language to mean “nectar”; *amrita* is also a sacred substance used in some Vajrayana rituals.

*18 T: *stor nas thal*. “Completely gone” here means that there is nothing substantially established, that things are empty in their essence.

*19 *Dharmakaya* (literally, “dharma body”) is the mind of the buddha itself.

*20 The three kindnesses are bestowing *abhishekas*, bestowing guiding explanations, and bestowing reading transmissions.

*21 *Shendormo* and his wife, *Leksé Bum*.

*22 The term for “yoga” in Tibetan is “*nal jor*” (*rnal ’byor*), which literally means to join (“*jor*”) with the genuine, true state (“*nal*”).

*23 Also called “jealous gods,” this is one of the six classes of beings of the desire realm. Jealousy is said to be their most dominant affliction.

*24 T: *thig le*. Subtle essences that are a key element of subtle body practice in anuttarayoga tantra.

*25 Literally, “The prana from the *lalana* [the primary *nadi* on the left] and the *rasana* [the primary *nadi* on the right] entering into the *avadhuti* [the central *nadi*] is blissful.” It is taught that when the prana enters into the *avadhuti*, it is purified, thus bringing about a powerful experience of the nature of mind.

*26 This, as with the “fleeting flower” example below, refers to the Buddhist teaching of impermanence; spouses, like guests at a gathering, will soon part ways through death.

4

The Rakshasa Demoness of Lingpa Rock

NAMO GURU

No matter how many times the people of Nyanang, from Tsarma and so forth, supplicated him to stay, the Jetsun Milarepa would not listen. In order to accomplish his guru's command, he went to meditate at Riwo Palbar*¹ in Kyidrong and came to Lingpa Rock Cave.*² One evening when it was almost dark, as he was sustaining his practice in the cave, there repeatedly came a whistling sound from a crack in the rock to the left of where the Jetsun was sitting. "*Vreew, vreew!*" it sounded; at that, Milarepa got up. But when he looked, there was nothing there. He thought, "It was just this meditator's deluded perception," and went back to his sleeping place.

Then, again, a great light shone forth from the crack. At the front end of the light rays was a red-colored man riding on the back of a black musk deer, with a beautiful woman leading them in front. The man jabbed the Jetsun once with his elbow, and with a gust of wind he vanished. The woman transformed into a red female dog that then grabbed Milarepa's left toe and wouldn't let go. Realizing this was the magical appearance of a *rakshasa* rock-demoness, he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet Marpa who has been so kind.

You have tried to inflict harm on me,

And you display an unpleasant emanated form.

You're the rakshasa rock-demoness of Lingpa Rock.

Are you not a ghost with negative karma?

I don't know how to sing songs with beautiful melodies, But listen, here, to
these words of truth.

Up in the center of the blue sky Is the enriching presence of the sun and
moon— A wondrous palace of the deities.

Their light rays shine as the glory of beings

their light rays shine as the glory of beings.

In their activity of circling the four great continents, Rahu,*³ do not rise up to rival them!

On the crystal snow mountain, the exalted eastern peak, Is the enriching presence of the white snow lion,

Who reigns as king of the animals.

As a sign of his greatness, he won't eat carrion.

When he descends down the blue rocky slope,

Blizzards, do not rise up to rival him!

Under the canopy of the southern forest

Is the enriching presence of the tigress,

A champion among all of the beasts.

As sign of her valor, she won't fear for her life.

When she passes through treacherous passages,

Traps in the ground, do not rise up to rival her!

In the brimming Lake Manasarovar in the west

Lies the enriching presence of the white-bellied fish, A dancer within the element of water.

She has wondrous golden spots.

When she goes after enjoyable food to eat,

Hooks, do not rise up to rival her!

In the north, at Samye Red Rock,

Is the enriching presence of the vulture, the king of birds.

They are sages among all those that fly.

How wondrous that they don't take the lives of others.

When they search for food on the three-peaked mountain, Traps and nets, do not rise up to rival them!

At Lingpa Rock, where the vulture nests lie, Is the enriching presence of the yogi, Milarepa,

An accomplisher of benefit for self and other.

I've abandoned this life as a sign I am true

I've abandoned this life, as a sign I am true.

Giving rise to supreme bodhichitta—the cause—
In this very body and very life,
I'll one-pointedly practice toward buddhahood.
Rock-demoness, do not rise up to rival me!

This is a song of five wondrous examples
Along with their meaning, making six;
An interlocking golden chain of poetic words.
Do you understand what I've said, rock-demoness?
This karma you're accumulating is a grave negativity.
Do not persist in acting this way!
Tame your malevolence and viciousness.

If you don't know that everything is mind,
The ghost of concepts will never be exhausted.
If you don't realize that mind itself is empty,
Will those ghosts ever be turned away?
Malevolent ghost, don't harm! Don't harm!
Don't harm this man, and go back whence you came!

When Milarepa had sung this, the demoness just remained there, still clamping onto his foot. Then, in an instant, she vanished but without letting go. Then she replied to his song in this way:

EMA! Fortunate son of noble family!
Brave one who wanders all alone,
Yogi who roams in mountain retreats,
One of wonder in enduring hardship,
The song you sang is like the command of a king.
That king's command is more weighty than gold.
Gold mixed with brass is imbued with a flaw.
If you don't know how to reverse that flaw,
All you've said until now is completely false.¹⁵
I will explain something using the examples Just sung by the lord king in his

song of law.

Please listen a moment, without distraction.

As you just said:

“Up there in the center of the sky

Is the enriching presence of the luminous sun and moon, A wondrous palace
of the devas;

They clear away the darkness of the four continents.”

When, in action, they circle the four great continents, If, with their gleam,
they don't give up their watch, And their orbs of light do not deceive,

How could Rahu rise up to rival them?

As you just said:

“On the eastern snow mountain with the crystal topknot Is the enriching
presence of the white snow lion,

Who reigns as king for every creature.

He subjugates the animals, his subjects, with law.”

When he descends the blue rocky slope

If he's without great anger or pride

And he doesn't oppress with his turquoise mane,

How could a blizzard rise up to rival him?

As you just said:

“Under the canopy of the dense southern forest

Is the enriching presence of the tigress,

A champion among all of the beasts.

She overcomes others with her fangs and claws.”

When she passes through treacherous tight places,

If she doesn't become arrogant with her dexterous skill, Or deceive anyone
with her stripes,

How could a trap ever rise up to rival her?

As you just said:

“In the brimming Lake Manasarovar

Is the enriching presence of the white bellied fish. A danger in the element of

is the enriching presence of the white-bellied fish, A dancer in the element of
water,

A divine sage, magnificent to behold.”

When she goes after desirable food, If she doesn't go after any humans
And doesn't deceive with her illusory body,
How could a hook ever rise up to rival her?

As you just said:

“In the north, at Samye Red Rock,

Is the enriching presence of the vulture, the king of birds.

They are sages among the birds;

They outshine all the other fowl.”

When he searches for food on the peaks of the three mountains, If he doesn't
go for live blood and meat to eat,

And doesn't deceive by flapping his wings,

How could nets and traps rise up to rival him?

As you said:

“At Lingpa Rock, where the vulture nests lie

Is the enriching presence of you, the yogi Milarepa, An accomplisher of
benefit for self and other.

Giving rise to supreme bodhichitta, the cause,

In this very body and very life,

When you are practicing one-pointedly

To accomplish buddhahood in a single life,

You'll lead the six beings down appropriate paths.”

If concepts, with strong latent tendencies as a cause, Do not rise up to rival
you,

Through the perpetuating cause of your own mind's confusion, How will I, a
rock-demoness, rise up to rival you?

This demon of latent tendencies arises from mind.

If you don't understand the nature of mind

And you say, “Away with you!” I will not go.

If you don't realize your own mind is empty

If you don't realize your own mind is empty,
There'll be countless ghosts besides me to haunt you.

If you do recognize your own mind,
All adverse conditions will arise as friends,
And I, this rock-demoness, will become your subject.

But as for your mind, I have some doubts.
You still must have resolve toward your own mind;
You still need resolve regarding confusion.

What the rock demon goddess said made perfect sense to the Jetsun. In response, he sang this song of realization, on the eight examples of remembering:*4

What you say is so true! So true, evil ghost.
There are no other words as true as these.
I've roamed these lands both far and wide,
But never heard such a pleasing song.
Even in a deliberation of a hundred scholars
It's impossible there would be a meaning higher than this.
Ghost, what came from your mouth was eloquently said.
This golden spoon of excellent speech
Has gone straight to my heart and mind.
It's removed my sickness*5 of inner fixation on things And cleared the
darkness of confusion and ignorance.
It has opened the white lotus of my mind.
It lit the luminous lamp of self-awareness.
It suddenly awakened mindfulness-wisdom.
Mindfulness has awakened powerfully!

Looking up in the center of the blue sky,
I suddenly remember dharmata-emptiness.
I have no fear of existent phenomena.

When I look out at the sun and moon,
I suddenly remember the luminosity of mind itself

I suddenly remember the luminosity of mind itself.
I have no fear of agitation and dullness.

When I look out at the mountain's peak,
I suddenly remember unmoving samadhi.
I have no fear of thoughts that move and change.

When I look down to the center of the river, I suddenly remember unbroken
flow.
I have no fear of fleeting conditions.

When I see a rainbow drawn in the sky,
I suddenly remember the union of appearance and emptiness.
I have no fear of eternalism and nihilism.

When I see a reflection of the moon in water,
I suddenly remember self-clarity free of fixation.
I have no fear of the concepts of perceived and perceiver.

Looking inward at the self-aware mind,
I suddenly remember the lamp in a vase.*6
I have no fear of dullness and ignorance.

Ghost, having heard what came from your mouth,
I suddenly remember discriminating self-awareness.
I have no fear of hindrances and obstructions.
I've understood well all of your eloquent speech,
And I've understood the suchness of mind.

You've been born as a demon with an ugly body.
You perform negative actions, inflicting harm and detriment.
This is so because you've paid no heed to cause and effect.
Now, contemplate the faults of samsara.
Completely abandon the ten nonvirtuous deeds.

I am a yogi who is like a lion,

I have no fear or apprehension.
Here, I have poked you and teased you a bit;
Malevolent ghost, please don't take it too seriously.
Ghost, because you inflicted harm this evening,
Just like the story, when long ago

There were five yaksha and rakshasa siblings And the power of the king's
loving-kindness,*7
Like that, by meeting me through the connection of aspiration, May you
come to have bodhichitta.
May I tame you at some future time.

Then the rock-demoness developed great faith and let go of Milarepa's foot.
Again without any physical form, in the space before him, she offered this
pleasing song in return:

Alas! Fortunate yogi!
Because you've gathered merit, you enjoy the dharma.
Wondrous one who remains alone in the mountains,
With your eyes of compassion you look upon beings far and wide.

I hold the lineage of Pema Tötreng Tsal;*8
I've listened to the genuine dharma's garland of words.
Though I've heard the words, my attachment is strong.
I've gone to all the gathering halls of yogis.
Those with karmic connection, I establish in virtue; Those fortunate ones, I
connect with true meaning.
Though I'm altruistic and do virtuous things,
This poor body can't be restored, and I go terribly hungry.
Due to bad karma, I wander this world.
For food, I like to have meat and blood
And sometimes I possess the minds of feeble ones.
Beautiful women are stricken with heart-prana sickness*9

And vain arrogant men I mark with blood!
With my eyes, I watch everyone for entertainment;

With my mind, I suppress the moods in all the land;
With my body, I incite agitation and distraction.
For my abode, I stay at Lingpa Rock.
These are my activities.

These are the things I have to tell you
And I offer this song in answer to yours.
I am so pleased and happy we have met.

Here, I had this wondrous thing to say;
Yogi it was in service to you.
These are the clear words of my own faith.
May you be pleased by the offering of this forthright song.

Then the Jetsun thought, “I need to bind this spirit by oath by continuing to question her.” He responded to her with this song of realization:

Now listen here you pitiful one,
You have a great master but have been a poor student.
You’ve heard and contemplated the sublime dharma
But you grasp at strings of words you don’t understand.
You speak them very well but have not applied them.
With such phony and empty speech
It’s not possible to purify your mind-stream’s stains.
Due to your previous negative habits
And swift accumulation of negative karma,
The samaya vows that you took became impaired.
By the power of that, you were born in this wretched state; You ran to the
city of rakshasas where their bodies suffer.
Your untruths, deceit, and lies are many.
With unvirtuous mind, you’ve harmed the life-force of beings This ugly body,
this form you were born in,
You’ve gained by paying no heed to karma, cause and effect.
Now, if you know how to contemplate the faults of samsara, Then confess all
the negative actions you have done; Commit yourself to practicing virtue.

Just like a lion, I have no fear.
Like an elephant, I haven't any dread.
Like a madman, I have no reference points.
To you I am speaking words of truth,
Keep speaking to me with honesty.
Inflicting harm and creating obstacles for me,
Ghost, this is your harvest to be reaped in the end.
By the power of this connection of a dharma aspiration, At a future time I
will accept you.
Think well on this, poor deluded one.

Thus he sang. Then the rock-demoness, displaying her previous form, offered this song with honesty:

Lord, principal among all the buddhas of the three times, Great
Vajradhara*¹⁰ in the body of a sage, You act as sovereign over the
marvelous teachings

And have the excellent engendering of bodhichitta, so wondrous.
How fortunate are my wretched brothers and sisters.
We've heard and understood the words you spoke.

At first, I studied and contemplated
The genuine dharma, the strong command of my master.
In the middle I engaged in negative karma.
I have the harsh afflictions and am without any patience.
Thus, I took birth in a wretched body.
I've done benefit, but I've also brought harm
To all of the wandering sentient beings.
Previously, in this year gone by,
Great meditator, you came here alone
To Lingpa Rock and did your practice.
I sometimes like you, but sometimes I don't.
Because I like you, this evening we met.
Because I don't like you, I took hold of your foot.

Because I had remorse, I confessed to you, Lord.

From now on, this wretched one will abandon her viciousness.

I will practice dharma earnestly and be its supporter.

In the future, for all of us,

With your body of great bliss, a tree's cooling shade, Please be a refuge for us
ghosts with negative karma Who are afflicted by the five poisons day and
night.

Based upon the command you gave,

Henceforth until the time of awakening,

Having pacified all maliciousness,

I'll be a protectress of yogis.

I'll be a supporter of practitioners.

I'll be an attendant of all great meditators.

I'll be a caretaker of all who practice dharma.

I'll support those who have samaya.

I shall protect and serve the teachings!

Making this excellent aspiration, she developed strong faith, taking an oath to protect all practitioners and never to bring any harm. Then the Jetsun sang this song of accepting the rakshasa rock-demoness:

I am a yogi¹⁶ who has abandoned samsara, I am the son of a noble guru.

I'm a treasury of precious key instructions,

A heartfelt practitioner of the genuine dharma.

I'm a yogi who realizes dharmata,

An old wise mother for all sentient beings.

I am a being with bravery,

A holder of the tradition of Shakyamuni.

I am a sovereign of bodhichitta,

One who's long meditated on loving-kindness.

Through compassion I've tamed malevolence.

I'm the one who stays at Lingpa Rock;

I am a meditator free of distraction.

Are you happy now, or are you still wretched and confused?
If you don't feel joy, then you're in a poor state.
A greater ghost than you is clinging to an "I."
A more plentiful ghost than you is conceptual thinking.
A more evil ghost than you is the malevolent mind.
A wilder ghost than you is discursive thoughts.
A more spoiled and stubborn ghost than you is the latent tendencies.

If you take ghosts to be ghosts, then they are harmful.
If you know ghosts to be empty, they'll go away.
If you know ghosts to be dharmata, one is liberated.
If you know ghosts to be your parents, they'll be apprehended.
If you know ghosts to be mind, they will dawn as ornaments.
By knowing this is the way things are, all is liberated.

Wretched ghost, this is my answer to your words.
I shall bind you under oath as one to be tamed.
Practice now in accord with the words of your vow.
Do not violate this solemn speech—
This *vidyadhara**¹¹ samaya that we have.
Do not belittle [the guru's] strong compassion.
Do not obstruct the body, speech, and mind [of practitioners].
If you should tread over your stated commitments,
You're certain to go to the vajra hell.
Because it's important, three times I say:
Understand this well, and maintain the practice.

By our excellent aspirations, we have met.
At a future time, in the infinite
And fathomless realm of Sukhavati,*¹²
Where you'll be endowed with bodhichitta,
You'll be first among my retinue of ones to be tamed.
You'll be a lady of Vairasattva.

Singing this, he thus bound her under oath. The rock-demoness then prostrated to and circumambulated the Jetsun many times. She agreed to accomplish all that Milarepa said, then vanished like a rainbow.

After that, in the morning, when the sun rose, the rakshasa rock-demoness, along with all her brothers and sisters as a retinue, [appeared] as exquisitely adorned men and women. With such beautiful and pleasing forms, they brought many offerings to Milarepa. When they had offered them to him, the rakshasa rock-demoness said, “Due to negative karma, I took on the body of a ghost, was driven by my negative latent tendencies, and previously inflicted harm with malevolent intention. I ask your forgiveness. From now on, yogi, I will listen to your command and be your subject. Now, Jetsun, please teach us the dharma of definitive meaning that has developed in your mind.” Then she sang this song of request:

EMA! O son of the wise and noble ones, Fortunate one who has accumulated merit,

One with the blessings of an excellent lineage,

One who has perseverance in practice,

One with bravery who stays all alone,

You have striven in the practices of profound meaning.

No ghost can ever make obstructions for you.

Thus, from the *tendrel**¹³ of signs of inner *nadi* and prana, With illusory dance, you teach the true meaning.

We have joined together with your mind.

Through excellent aspiration, we’re connected from before.

Although I’ve met many siddhas up until now,

It’s from you I have obtained blessing with kindness.

Now I, this wretched one, offer this:

With the deception of the lower *yana*’s provisional meaning, Taming karma and afflictions is quite difficult.

Vain, arrogant guests with empty talk

Will definitely run when adverse conditions of suffering come.

Masters who are jaded by the dharma

Are aggressive and don’t benefit themselves.

Lord, who is an emanation*¹⁴ of the buddhas of the three times, You've realized the definitive—the dharmata.

The profound reality that has been born in your mind [You sing] as *upadeshas**¹⁵ that condense the key points— This definitive meaning, the ultimate place to be brought— To this retinue of brothers and sisters.

We pray you grant these secret vajra words, the genuine meaning.

Please grant supreme luminosity,

The great wisdom-luminosity

This secret seal of the profound definitive meaning, By hearing it, one will never fall to the lower realms; By meditating on it, one will never wander in samsara; Please don't conceal it; grant it to us!

Thus she sang. Then the Jetsun said, “You still are not able to meditate on the definitive meaning. If you are able, you must offer your life-essence to me as well as offer a solemn vow.” The demons offered their immutable life-essence and then offered a commitment to the Jetsun to do whatever he commanded from then on and to support all dharmic deeds. In reply to that, the Jetsun sang this song of realization of the definitive meaning on the twenty-seven cases of dissolution:

Lord, hidden Buddha with human form,
Lotsawa whose name is not lightly uttered,
Father, so kind, at your feet I bow.

I am not skilled in singing Vedic songs,
But, ghost, you said, “Sing a song, sing a song!”
Now, I'll respond with a melody about the abiding nature.

Thunder, lightning, and clouds from the south, these three: When they arise,
they arise from the sky;
When they dissolve, they dissolve back into the sky.

Rainbows, fog, and mist, these three:
When they arise, they arise from space;
When they dissolve, into space they dissolve.

Plants, crops, and fruits, these three: When they arise, they arise from the earth;

When they dissolve, into the earth they dissolve.

Forests, leaves, and flowers, these three:

When they arise, they arise from the mountain;

When they dissolve, into the mountain they dissolve.

Rivers, bubbles, and waves on the water, these three: When they arise, they arise from the ocean.

When they dissolve, into the ocean they dissolve.

Latent tendencies, attachment, and fixation, these three: When they arise, they arise from the all-base;

When they dissolve, into the all-base they dissolve.

Self-awareness, self-luminosity, self-liberation, these three: When they arise, they arise from mind's essence;

When they dissolve, into mind's essence they dissolve.

Unarisenness, unceasingness, ineffability, these three: When they arise, they arise from dharmata;

When they dissolve, into dharmata they dissolve.

The appearances of, clinging to, and concepts of ghosts, these three: When they arise, they arise from the yogi;

When they dissolve, into the yogi they dissolve.

So, hindrances are the magical display of mind.

If you don't recognize your own empty projections

But take your own mind as a ghost, then you, yogi, are deluded.*16

The root of delusion arises from the mind.

By realizing the very essence of mind,

One sees luminosity to be free from coming or going.

The appearances of outer objects is mind's confusion.

By examining the characteristics of appearances,
One realizes appearance and emptiness are not two.

“Meditation,” itself, is a thought.
And then “nonmeditation,” as well, is a thought;
Meditation and nonmeditation are not two different things.

The dualistic view is the basis of confusion.
There is no view in ultimate reality:
All of these examples show the characteristics of mind.

Giving the example of space’s characteristics,
One comes to certainty toward mind’s true nature.
Now, for view, look at this reality beyond conceptual mind; For meditation,
rest without distraction;
For conduct, sustain it with spontaneity and without any break; For fruition,
abandon terms, such as hope and fear.
Ghost, this is your lot, your treasury of dharma!

I’ve no time to sing you endless empty songs.
Don’t ask questions or think a lot, just remain silent.
Ghost, you said, “Sing a song,” so I sang this song.
These are the words of a crazy man.

Ghost, if you can put this into practice,
For food, you’ll eat the food of great bliss;
When thirsty, you’ll drink the undefiled amrita;
For work, you’ll be a support for all yogic practitioners.

The rock-demoness and the entire retinue gave rise to great faith, then prostrated
and circumambulated many times. Thanking Milarepa, they all vanished like a
rainbow. From that time forth, they did as the Jetsun commanded, never harming
meditators who stayed there and supporting those who were harmonious with the
dharma.

This is the cycle of the rakshasa demoness of Lingpa Rock.

-
- *1 Glorious Blazing Mountain (T: *riwo dpal 'bar*).
- *2 Lingpa Drakpuk (T: *ling pa'i brag phug*).
- *3 In traditional Buddhist cosmology, Rahu is considered the planet that causes eclipses.
- *4 In Tibetan, the same word is used for “mindfulness” and “remembering” (*dran pa*).
- *5 Literally, “heart prana [sickness].”
- *6 This is a metaphor for the nature of mind, which is luminous and always present within but is not seen by ordinary beings because it is obscured, in the same way that a lamp is obscured when placed in a vase.
- *7 One of the Jataka tales, the collection of stories about the Buddha’s previous lives, tells how the Buddha was once a king who always meditated on loving-kindness in order to protect his subjects. By the power of his meditation, no harm was ever able to come to them. A group of local rakshasas (a type of flesh-eating demon) complained to the king because, as all of the subjects of the kingdom were protected, they could never get anything to feed upon. So the king offered his own blood for them to drink and made the aspiration that he would be able to tame them in the future. It is said that those five rakshasa brothers became the Buddha’s first five disciples in a subsequent lifetime and attained arhathood under the Buddha’s (formerly that king’s) guidance.
- *8 Another name for Padmasambhava, or Guru Rinpoche.
- *9 This means they become overwhelmed with fear or depression.
- *10 Vajradhara is considered the “primordial buddha” in the Kagyu lineage and is said to be the nonhuman founder of the lineage.
- *11 Literally, “awareness holder”; one who continually abides in the state of awakening.
- *12 In Tibetan, Dewachen. This is the abode of great bliss of the Buddha Amitabha.
- *13 On the Vajrayana path, *tendrel*, or auspicious coincidence, is taught to play a very important role.
- *14 Literally, nirmanakaya (emanation body) (T: *rje dus gsum sangs rgyas sprul pa'i sku*).
- *15 In contrast to the classifications and logic of the scriptural tradition, *upadeshas*, or pith instructions, condense the meaning of the Buddha’s teaching into short instructions that can be put into practice directly.
- *16 If one takes the ghost, a mere projection of the mind, as something external, separate, and real, then one is deluded. (DPR)

5

The Prior Visit to Rakma

NAMO GURU

It was the Jetsun Milarepa's intention to go from Lingpa Rock to Riwo Palbar in order to meditate. When he was on his way, he told his benefactors from Rakma that he was going to Riwo Palbar.

They said to him, "Below Riwo Palbar, there is a place even more lovely than Riwo Palbar that is called Protector Fortress.*1 It would be good if you stayed there. Even we are not very familiar with the road to Riwo Palbar, but if you stay at Protector Fortress, we will send a guide with you."

Milarepa thought to himself, "First I will stay at this place they speak of, and then I will go to see Riwo Palbar. But I don't need their guide." He said to them, "I do not need your guide; I will find the way myself."

"But if you don't have a guide, there's no way you'll be able to find it," they told him. "Do you have your own guide?"

"I do," Milarepa said.

"What is the guide's name?" they asked. Then he sang this song of realization in reply:

The fully qualified noble guru
Is the guide who clears away any darkness.

This single cloth beyond warmth or cold
Is the guide for abandoning attachment.

The three cycles of teaching on mixing and transference*2
Are the guides that eliminate the bardo states.

Prana and mind so pliable here Are the guide for journeying around the land.

To cast away this body as food
Is the guide for taming the clinging to self.

To meditate in solitary places
Is the guide for achieving enlightenment.

With these six guides that lead the way,
I'll go and stay at the Enlightenment Fortress.

With that, he went off to the site just above Rakma, and from that time forward that place was known as the Enlightenment Fortress.*3

At that site, while the Jetsun was dwelling in river-like samadhi, one night at midnight there was a great clamor of military trumpets and war cries. Milarepa thought, "Have enemies come to attack the people of this region?" Then as Milarepa remained within a samadhi of strong compassion, the sounds grew closer and closer. Suddenly, a bright red light appeared.

"What could that be?" he thought.

When he looked, he saw that in all the fields, fire raged forth. All the land and space became filled with a frightening and ruthless army lighting things on fire, stirring up water, toppling mountains, shaking the earth, and stabbing with their weapons. A myriad of magical appearances were displayed. In particular, they began tearing apart Milarepa's meditation cave and shouting all sorts of unpleasant things.

Because of all this, the Jetsun thought, "These are spirits who are creating obstacles and wreaking their havoc here. Alas, beings have wandered throughout the six realms accumulating negative karma from beginningless time in samsara. Among those six types of beings, these here have been born as pretas that travel through space. With wanton conduct and malevolent intention toward others, they harm the lives of many beings and do all sorts of damage. Because of that, they once again will be reborn in the inescapable hell realms*4 where they will have to experience unbearable suffering." Giving rise to compassion, he sang this song of realization:

In your heart, a spacious sky of loving-kindness,
Clouds of compassion fully gather
With the rain of activity falling down,
You ripen the harvest of ones to be tamed.
To Marpa the Translator, at your feet I bow.
Grant your blessings that all beings, equal to space,*5
Attain the level of omniscient buddhahood

ATTAIN THE LEVEL OF UNIMPERVED ENLIGHTENMENT.

You yaksha spirits who have gathered here,
You mob of dakinis whose minds move in the sky,
You hungry ghosts who think only of food,
Through the ripening of karma of nonvirtuous conduct, You've now been
born in the bodies of pretas.
Again, by the power of harming others in this life, Next life, you'll be born in
the realms of hell.

In this song, I've taught just a little about cause and effect.
Now, when you've become certain about this necessary point:

I am the son of the Kagyu gurus.
The ground, which is faith, arose and I entered the dharma.
Knowing karma, cause and effect, I've undergone hardship.
Through the power of the path—
Which is rousing diligence, then meditating—
I have seen the fruition, the true nature of mind.
I know all appearances to be like illusions.
I'm liberated from the sickness of clinging to a self.
I've cut the samsaric bonds of perceiver and perceived.
I've seized the royal seat of the changeless dharmakaya.
With malevolent mind, you've tried to make obstacles For a yogi who is free
of any fear;
So all you will do is tire yourself out
And create the cause for more of your anger.

My mind's continuum is the all-base.*6
If you or a being from the realm of Brahma
All the way down to the eighteen hells,
If any one of the six types of beings
Should rise up as a foe against me,
Not a single thought of fear will arise.

You yaksha spirits who have gathered here,

Your martial forces of magical powers
Don't make a single mark on me.
If you should turn from here and leave,
All you've done until now will be totally in vain.
You'll only embarrass yourself again.
Keep going back at it, you mob of ghosts!

After singing this, Milarepa rested in the meditative equipoise of dharmata, and as a result, that gathering of spirits became full of faith. They did many prostrations and circumambulations, and took his feet to their heads.

“You are a yogi who has attained true stability. This we did not know! Please forgive all of our previous havoc. From this day forth, we will do whatever you command. Please give us a command in order to establish a dharma connection.”

The Jetsun said, “Very well then, do not do any misdeed whatsoever, and practice virtue fully.”

They all told Milarepa their story, offered him their hearts and minds, and became his students, pledging themselves to do anything he told them. They each then returned to their respective lands; they are now the goddess Se'i Lhamo of Mangyul and the local deities of Riwo Palbar.

Then the Jetsun thought, “Since the local deity of Riwo Palbar has already come here, I do not need to go there to meditate.” After staying in that place for a few nights, his practice greatly flourished, and he sang this song of realization:

In this solitary place, the Enlightenment Fortress, I, Milarepa, am
accomplishing awakening.

I am a master of bodhichitta

And have sustained the practice of enlightened heart.

Having quickly attained the great enlightenment,

May I unite all these beings who have been my mother Together with
supreme awakening!

So he sang and then he exerted himself in practice.

Then a few days later, a benefactor offered him a bundle of wood and half a bushel of tsampa. “With such thin clothing, you're certain to get cold. Within the

entire southern region, here in Rakma it's the coldest. And among all the places in Rakma, this cave you are staying in here is especially cold! If you'll accept it, Lama, I would like to offer this fur-lined jacket. Lama, what is your name?" he asked.

The Jetsun then asked, "Benefactor, what is *your* name?"

"My name is Lhabar,"*7 he answered.

"That's an excellent name. I have no need to rely on such things as your tsampa or fur jacket. Still, that you have offered tsampa is wonderful! But I won't take the fur jacket. I will stay just as I am." Then he sang this song of realization to Lhabar:

In the city of confusion of the six types of beings, My consciousness roamed
like a confused child

And had a myriad of deluded karmic projections.

Sometimes I had the delusion of hunger

And with equal taste, I begged for my food.

Sometimes I took on the commitment of hardship.

And sometimes it was emptiness that I ate.

Sometimes I ate bad food and just endured it.

Sometimes I had the delusion of thirst

And I drank the clear and blue mountain water.

Sometimes I drank my very own urine.

Sometimes I drank from the river of compassion.

Sometimes I drank the dakinis' samaya substance.

Sometimes I had the delusion of cold And I adorned myself with a single
cloth.

Sometimes the blissful heat of chandali blazed,

Sometimes it was no good, and I just endured it.

Sometimes the delusion of friends arose

And I relied on the companion of awareness and wisdom.

I engaged in the actions of the ten virtuous deeds And undertook the practice
of the genuine view.

I investigated thoroughly the self-aware nature of mind.

I am a yogi, a lion of men.

I've a turquoise mane of excellent view that flows.

With fangs and claws of excellent meditation

I've practiced upon the summits of snow

And hope to attain fruition's good qualities.

I am a yogi, a tiger of men.

I've perfected the three powers*⁸ of enlightened mind.

I have the stripes of inseparable means and prajña.

I dwelled in the medicinal forest of luminosity

And hope the fruition of helping others comes forth.

I am a yogi, a vulture of men.

My wings of the creation stage's clarity spread

With the feathers of the stable completion stage.

With their union, I soar in dharmata's sky

And sleep on the rock of genuine reality.

I've accomplished the result of the two benefits.*⁹

I am a yogi, a genuine man.

I am the yogi Milarepa.

I can face all appearances as they come;

I deal with whatever is here and now.

I'm a yogi without predictability.

I take what arises with no reference point.

I have no food so I beg for alms.

I go naked without any clothes to wear.

I'm a beggar without any kind of wealth.

I'm free of thinking about any plans.

I don't stay here, or anywhere.

My actions are all spontaneous.

I am a madman with delight toward death.

I have no need for anything.

If you're needing to get ahold of essential provisions, Then the afflictions will give you hardship and pain; Benefactor, don't take the trouble, head back to your home.

I'm a yogi who does all kinds of strange things.

With virtue and a benevolent mind,

Through such generosity, you've been so kind.

May this life be long and free of illness;

And having used the freedoms, resources, and happiness, Next life, within a pure realm,

May we meet and also engage in dharma

And accomplish the benefit of others.

Thus he sang. Then the benefactor gave rise to great faith and said, "You are the siddha Milarepa, and just to know this much about you is enough. To perfect the accumulation of merit, I, an ordinary sentient being,*¹⁰ will provide provisions for you as long as you stay here. Please, you must accept them!" So, for the time that he stayed at Enlightenment Fortress, the wealthy Lhabar offered all of Milarepa's provisions.

The Jetsun's practice improved greatly and while he had this experience of great joy, several people of Rakma came to meet him.

"Have you had a good stay in this place? Has your practice gone well?"

The Jetsun replied, "I have enjoyed this place and my virtuous activity has flourished."

"It happens like that," they said. "Please sing a praise of this joyful place and tell about your practice here." In response to that, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

This isolated place, the Enlightenment Fortress: At the summit are powerful gods and high white snow.

Below are many benefactors endowed with faith.

In back, the mountains are like white silk curtains.

Abundant forests are clustered in front.

In large and vast lovely fields and meadows

Are fragrant lotuses pleasing to see
Where six-legged creatures buzz around.
On the edges of pools of water there
Are swans that look while bending their necks.
In the fullness of the fruit trees' branches,
Flocks of beautiful birds sing pleasing tunes.
Within the soft and gentle breeze,
The branches of trees sway and dance.
At the tops of high trees that don't block the view, Monkeys and langurs play
a myriad of games.
In the vast meadows that are fresh and green
Are animals scattered grazing for food.
And the caretaking cowherds there
Make lovely songs with voice and flute.

Slaves to the craving of this world
Pervade the earth working for things.
This yogi sees all of that,
Upon this precious rock where all is clear:
I remember appearances are examples of impermanence.
I see sense pleasures to be like a mirage.
I look at this life like a dream or illusion
And cultivate compassion for those who don't realize this.
I eat the food of empty space
And cultivate the focus of nondistractedness.
In the myriad of experiences, anything arises.
E MA! The phenomena of samsara's three realms Not existing, they appear.
How wondrous it is!

After Milarepa had sung that, the students, with great faith, went back.

This is the cycle of the prior visit to Rakma.

*1 In Tibetan, "Gön Dzong" (T: *dgon rdzong*).

- *2 “These three teachings are to blend chandali with illusory body yoga during the day; to blend dream yoga with luminosity during the night; and to blend the practices of bardo and phowa at the point of death (KTGR)” (*Stories and Songs*: 23).
- *3 The place above Rakma, Protector Fortress (T: *dgon rdzong*), later became known as Enlightenment Fortress (T: *byang chub rdzong*).
- *4 Inescapable “means that liberation from this type of hell is difficult to achieve (KTGR)” (*Stories and Songs*: 24).
- *5 There are as many sentient beings as space is vast.
- *6 Here “all-base” is a synonym for buddha nature (KTGR) (*Stories and Songs*: 25).
- *7 Lhabar literally means “blazing deity.”
- *8 The powers of body, speech, and mind (*Stories and Songs*: 27).
- *9 The benefit of self and other.
- *10 Literally, “I am one who has committed negative actions,” or “who has bad karma.”

6

Kyangpen Sky Fortress

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa went from Rakma to Kyangpen Sky Fortress. While he was staying there, at one point a monkey appeared riding on a rabbit. He wore armor made of barley husks and held a bow and arrow made of straw. The monkey looked to see if he could advance on Milarepa, and the Jetsun chuckled.

The monkey said, “I have come to frighten you, but if you’re not frightened, then I will go.”

The Jetsun said:

I am resolved that appearances are mind;
I’ve seen that mind itself is dharmakaya.
So, spirit, whatever magic you may show,
It just makes this yogi laugh!

Thus he sang. Then the spirit committed to serve Milarepa and vanished like a rainbow. This spirit was the Drotang king.

Later, some benefactors of Drotang came to meet the Jetsun and asked, “What are the good qualities of this place?” Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

Lord Guru, I supplicate you.

Do you know this place’s good qualities, or not?
If you don’t know the qualities of this place:

This is the Kyangpen Sky Fortress, a solitary retreat.
At the palace of this Sky Fortress here,
Above, clouds from the south gather in darkness.
Beneath are fresh and clear waterfalls.

Behind are red rocks and the expanse of the sky.
In front are meadows with radiant flowers.
To the side, fierce beasts let out their great roar.
At its face, vultures, the king of birds, soar.
In the sky, misty fine rain comes down,
And bees are ever humming their tune.
Deer and wild ass, mother and child, dance in their play.
Monkeys and langurs leap and run about.
Larks with their chicks let out many a peep, And mountain grouses make
melodious songs.
The clear highland springs babble pleasantly.

All these sounds, each at their time, are experience's friend.
This place's good qualities are inconceivable, And my mind is so happy I've
burst into song.
Key instructions now come forth from my speech.
All you male and female benefactors gathered here, Follow after me and do
as I have:
Abandon negativity and practice virtue!

Thus he sang. Among the people gathered there was one *mantrika* who said,
“Jetsun, on this joyous occasion of our having met you, please give us the gift of
an instruction that is easy to understand and easy to put into practice. Explain to
us how to practice the view, meditation, and conduct.” The Jetsun sang this song
of realization in reply:

May the guru's blessings enter my mind.
Grant your blessing that I realize emptiness.

In response to these benefactors with great faith, I'll sing a song to please the
yidam deities.

Appearance, emptiness, their inseparability, these three: These three things
summarize the view.

Clarity, nonconception, and nondistractedness, these three: These three things
summarize meditation.

Nonattachment, nonclinging, continuity,*1 these three: These three things summarize conduct.

No hope, no fear, no confusion, these three: These three things summarize fruition.

No deception, no hypocrisy, no pretense, these three: These three things summarize samaya.

When Milarepa had sung this, they all returned back to their homes filled with faith. Then after several days, many students came again to meet Milarepa. Those who had been there earlier asked, “Jetsun, are your body and mind well?” inquiring after Milarepa’s health. In reply he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of the noble guru.

In this place, an isolated forest without any humans:

Milarepa’s meditation feels so good.

My sitting and walking without clinging feels good.

My illusory body free of illness feels good.

My sitting without any sleep feels good.

My concept-free samadhi feels good.

My chandali free of chill feels good.

My austerity free of dejection feels good.

My harvest that is free from toil feels good.

My isolated place free of distraction feels good.

This is the state of my body.

My yana*2 with means and prajña feels good.

My creation and completion*3 in union feels good.

My mindfulness free of prana coming or going feels good.

My silence without friends to talk to feels good.

This is the state of my speech.

My view that is free of identification feels good.

My meditation that's always flowing feels good.
My conduct that never degenerates feels good.
My fruition without hope and fear feels good.
This is the state of my mind.

Unchanging nonconceptual luminosity feels good.
Great bliss in perfect purity's space feels good.
Unceasing manifestations*4 in the expanse feels good.

This short little tune of feeling so good
Is just my experience put into song.
With view and conduct joined together,
Henceforth, you who strive toward awakening, Whenever you practice, do it
like this.

When he had sung this, the disciples said, "These ways that the guru's body, speech, and mind feel so good is marvelous! Where is it that all of this arose from?"

Milarepa replied, "This has all arisen from the realization of mind."

"Even though we don't have the kind of bliss that you have, we hope we can have at least a taste of that. Please teach us dharma that is easy to understand about the meditation that is a method for this realization of mind and can bring about such bliss." In response, the Jetsun sang this song of realization, "The Twelve Points of Mind":

I bow at the feet of the noble guru.
You benefactors who wish to realize mind's nature, When you practice, do it
like this:

Faith, knowledge, discipline, these three: These are the life-rod of the mind.
If you plant it stably you will have bliss.
If you'll have a life-rod, have it like this.

No attachment, no clinging, no ignorance, these three: These are the armor of
the mind.

Light to wear and weapon-proof,
If you wear armor, wear it like this.

Meditation, diligence, and endurance in hardship, these three: These are the stallion of the mind.

When it runs, you'll quickly escape to liberation.

When you get on the stallion, do it like this.

Self-aware, self-luminous, self-blissful, these three: These are the fruition of the mind.

It's planted, then ripens, and is nutritious to eat.

When you attain the fruition, attain it like this.

These twelve points of the mind

Dawned within the mind of this yogi.

You faithful benefactors should practice them!

As he was singing this, they gave rise to faith and later served Milarepa fully. Then the Jetsun decided to go to the Yolmo Snowy Range.

This is the cycle of Kyangpen Sky Fortress.

*¹ Literally “completion or perfection” (*mthar skol*). After giving rise to authentic view and meditation, one needs to practice conduct that is free of attachment and clinging. This conduct, in turn, should be done continuously, without break. (KSP) *² Here, “yana” means vehicle for traversing the spiritual path. It is generally taught that in order to have a complete path, both skillful methods (or means) and prajña (or wisdom) must be present.

*³ T: *bskyed rdzogs*. This refers to the creation (or generation) stage practice and the completion stage practice of the Vajrayana.

*⁴ This word, translated here as “manifestations,” has a slightly negative connotation (T: *'char sgo*); the line could be understood as “any negative or adverse conditions that arise are blissful.”

7

The Yolmo Snowy Range

NAMO GURU

To fulfill the command of his guru, the lord of yogis, the Jetsun Milarepa, went from Kyangpen to the Yolmo Snowy Range, where he stayed at Tiger Cave Lion Fortress*¹ in the forest of Singa Ling. At that time, the local protector goddess of Yolmo appeared, manifesting peacefully from the start, with beautiful form. Accepted as a subject, the spirit gave abundant service and respect to Milarepa.

While the Jetsun's practice was greatly flourishing, five young nuns from Mönyul*² came to request teachings from Milarepa. They said to him, "Because there are many fearsome conditions here, this is a place where experience and realization greatly flourish and practice is enhanced. Guru, have you also found this to be so?"

In reply, he sang this song of praise of that place and of how his experience and realization arose:*³

I bow at the feet of the noble guru.

By gathering merit, I've met such a lord.

Because of the guru's prophecy I have come here,

This blissful castle in the wooded mountains of Mönyul.

It's a land of grassy mountains with radiant flowers
In the midst of many dancing trees;

A land where langurs and monkeys play;

A place where birds sing myriads of songs;

A land where bees fly gently about;

Where rainbows shine both day and night;

Where light rain falls in both summer and winter;

Where the mist billows in fall and spring.

Within such a solitary place.

For me, the yogi Milarepa,
The luminous experience of meditation
On the emptiness of mind feels so good.
However many negative manifestations arise, it feels extremely good.
When the highs and lows are intense, it feels even better still.
My body free of negative karma feels good.
When there's a myriad of disturbances, it feels extremely good.
When fearsome appearances are intense, that feels even better still.
Being free of afflictions, birth, and death feels good.
When the [demons'] savagery gets worse, it feels extremely good.
When there's no sickness, it feels even better still.
Suffering arising as bliss feels good.
*Trulchor**4 coming from meditative experience feels extremely good.
The dancing of running and jumping feels even better still.
This treasury of spontaneous song feels good.
Such words that are like the melodies of bees feel extremely good.
When that sound becomes merit, it feels even better still.
The confidence of strength of mind feels good in the expanse.
Mind's self-arising by its own strength feels extremely good.
Its dawning as a variety feels even better still.
This yogi who has blissful experience and is happy
Makes this parting gift for a child with faith.

Once he sang this, he gave the abhishekas and instructions, then had them meditate. They developed excellent experience and realization, at which the Jetsun was very pleased. Then he sang this song of realization, "The Song of Experience of the Amrita of Advice":

Guru, buddha, dharmakaya,
Unerring teacher of the path of liberation,
Your compassionate activity is the glory of beings;
You sit, never separate from me, as the ornament of my crown.

You practitioners of dharma who are residing here,

Though there are many ways to practice genuine dharma, You are so fortunate to be practicing the profound path.

When accomplishing buddhahood in a single life,
Do not let your desires in this life be great.
If you do, you'll engage much in virtue and negativity.
If that happens, you'll fall to the lower realms.

When offering service to the guru,
Don't complain about all you've done to help.
If you do, there'll be resentment for both master and student.
If that happens, you'll not accomplish your wishes.

When you are keeping the samaya vows,
Don't sleep in the cities of ordinary people.
If you do, you'll be influenced by negative examples.
If this happens, your samaya vows will be broken.

When you are engaging in study,
Do not have great pride in conventional knowledge.
If you do, the five poisons' embers will flare.
If they flare, your intention toward virtuous activity will be disturbed.

When meditating together with friends,
Do not engage in many endeavors.
If you do, you'll be distracted from profound virtuous activity.
If distracted, you'll miss out on the fortune of sacred dharma.

When practicing the whispered lineage's path of means, Don't get involved in blessing or taming ghosts.
If you do, your own mind-stream will rise up as a ghost.
If that happens, you'll strive in the dharma of townsmen.*5

When experience and realization are beginning to dawn, Don't speak of your prowess or higher perceptions.
If you do, you'll corrupt the secret code language.

If that happens, the path's good qualities and signs will be obscured.
When you see these faults, abandon them.

Eating the food of deceit, negative conduct;
Taking offerings intended for the deceased;
Striving in pleasing others: engage in none of these.
Act with humility, and be self-sufficient.

Then they asked, "What is the way in which one should be self-sufficient?"¹⁷
When they had requested the Jetsun to say more, he sang this song of realization
in reply:

I supplicate the lord who is so kind:
Grant your blessing that this beggar's practice may go well.

You young, new students,
In the deceitful city of virtue and negativity,
Don't extinguish your good fortune; listen to the genuine dharma.
You've not gone down the wrong path, for you have met me.

Gathering the accumulations again and again, practice meditation.
The mist of blessings gives rise to experience and realization.
Rousing that alone won't help; you must be self-sufficient!
This upadesha of being self-sufficient
I will explain with love; listen carefully.

When keeping to isolated mountain retreats, Don't reminisce about the
entertainment of the city.
If you do, you'll be distracted by the demons of your own mind.
Keep the mind turned inward, and be self-sufficient!

When penetrating the key point with perseverance in meditation,
Contemplate the uncertainty of the time of death,
And remember the faults of samsara.
Without mulling over the pleasures of this life,
Cultivate endurance in hardship, and be self-sufficient!

When receiving instructions on profound meditation,
Don't have great desire for conceptual knowledge.
If you do, then you'll strive in worldly conduct.
If that happens, this human life will be empty and wasted.
Act with humility, and be self-sufficient!

When bits of experience and realization arise,
Don't regard yourself highly with compulsion to speak of them.
If you speak of them, it will upset the *mamos**⁶ and dakinis.
Meditate without distraction, and be self-sufficient!

When spending time around the guru,
Don't examine his good qualities or faults.
If you do, you'll just see a heap of faults.
Have pure vision, and be self-sufficient!

When in harmony with dharma friends and in the abhisheka rows, Don't wish
for seniority or the head of that row.
If you do, attachment and anger will upset your samaya.
Remain harmonious, and be self-sufficient!

When begging for alms in the midst of the town,
Don't deceive others with false dharma.
If you do, you'll fall to the lower realms yourself.
Act honestly, and be self-sufficient!

Always and in all that you do, Be without high self-regard or strong desires.
If you have them, you'll just become jaded while looking dharmic.
Abandon deception and lies, and be self-sufficient!

Then, someone who is able to be self-sufficient
Should pass on the instructions that are so kind
In order to benefit self and others.
Hold generosity in the core of your heart!

When Milarepa had sung that, they all developed perseverance in their meditation and great enthusiasm for letting go of this life. With unwavering faith in the Jetsun, they offered a gold mandala and requested a practice that condenses to their essence the key points of view, meditation, and conduct.

The Jetsun said, “Take this gold and use it for your retreat provisions. As for the key points of view and meditation, they are like this.” Then he sang this song of realization, “The Nails of View, Meditation, and Conduct”:¹⁸

Grant your blessing that I may naturally abide
In accord with the lord guru’s view, meditation, and conduct.

For this view there are three nails to drive.
For this meditation there are three nails to drive.
For this conduct there are three nails to drive.
For this fruition there are three nails to drive.

To explain the three nails of the view:
All phenomenal existence is subsumed in mind;
Mind itself is of the nature of luminosity;
Yet it cannot be identified.

To explain the three nails of meditation:
Concepts are liberated as dharmakaya;
Clear awareness is of the nature of bliss.
Resting, uncontrived, is equipoise.

To explain the three nails of conduct:
The ten virtues are the natural expression of conduct; The ten nonvirtues are
naturally pure in their own place; The antidote doesn’t fix luminosity-
emptiness.*⁷

To explain the three nails of fruition:
Nirvana is not established as being somewhere else.
Samsara is not to be abandoned for somewhere else.
I’ve determined that my own mind is buddha.

From among three nails, there's a single nail to drive: That nail is the nail of dharmata's emptiness.

The nailing is done by a noble guru.

If you analyze too much, it won't be driven in.

Coemergent realization will drive it in.

This wealth that is shared by dharma practitioners

Arose in the mind of this yogi here:

May all of you students be pleased.

Then the disciples said, "Besides ardently supplicating the root guru who guides one on the unerring path of practice, is there anything more to practice?"

The Jetsun, with delight, said, "The root guide on the path has these aspects." He then sang this song of realization:

The guru, instructions, and student, these three;

Perseverance, endurance, and faith, these three;

Prajña, compassion, and character, these three;

These are ever the guides on the path.

This solitary place that is free of busyness

Is the guide on the path that protects meditative concentration.

The revered siddha guru

Is the guide on the path who clears away darkness.

Faith that is free of any weariness Is the guide on the path to the higher states.

Thoughts about the five sense faculties

Is the guide on the path of liberating whatever's encountered.

The instructions of the Kagyu gurus

Are the guide on the path that shows the three kayas.

The objects of refuge, the three precious jewels,

Are the guide on the path that's without any error.

Once these six guides have shown the way,

The yogi will go to the field of great bliss
And remain in the state free of elaboration and concepts.
How happy is the homeland of self-recognition and self-liberation!
I take the seat of certainty in understanding reality.

In this empty uninhabited land
This happy yogi's song was let out like a dragon's roar.
The rain of renown falls in all ten directions,
The petals of compassion's bloom unfurl,
Bodhichitta's result purely ripens,
And enlightenment's activity pervades everything!

Then the nuns thought, "Since it is fine for the guru to stay anywhere, we should invite him to our own land," and said to Milarepa, "Lama, since the guru's practice is flawless and he doesn't need to meditate, come to our land and allow the benefactors there to accumulate merit, turn the wheel of dharma, and accomplish the benefit of sentient beings."

The Jetsun said, "My meditation right here in these mountain retreats is how I benefit sentient beings. Although my meditation is flawless, to stay in mountain retreats is the meditator's pride." Then he sang this song of realization:

The guru's kindness I repay with my practice;
Grant your blessings that my mind-stream be ripened and liberated.

For you fortunate dharma practitioners who are here I'll sing a song of
upadesha on the profound meaning.
Listen with focus, and be without distraction.

The white snow lioness of the snows on high
Majestically stands upon the mountain's white face.
It's not for fear of any others:
This majestic stance is the snow lion's heroic pride.

The vulture of the red rocks, king of birds,
Spreads his wings in the expanse of the sky.
It's not for fear of falling upon the cliff:
To fly in the sky is the vulture's heroic pride.

To fly in the sky is the vulture's heroic pride.

Within the ocean, the mother of waters,
The queen of fish further trains her skill.
It's not for fear that she will drown:
To move and dart is her heroic pride.

In the branches of trees of the mountains of Mön,
Monkeys and langurs further train their skill.
There is no worry that the monkeys will fall:
It's their nature to play in all kinds of ways.

In the depths of the wooded forest,
The striped tigress further trains her skill.
It's not because the tigress has fear:
It's her nature to be haughty with such skill.

In the forest of Singala,
Milarepa meditates on emptiness.
It's not for fear that my meditation will deviate:
Prolonging meditation is my heroic pride.

With the practice that is free of distraction
Toward the mandala of dharmata that's perfectly pure, It's not for fear of
mistaking the meaning:
To seize the key point in its place is the yogi's heroic pride.

Any hindrances, deviations, or confusion In the practice of the inner nadi,
prana, and bindu
Are not a fault of the dharma:
These are the boasting of quick production of signs.

With the powerful gait of spontaneous conduct,
The many expressions of highs and lows,
These are not the concepts of dualistic mind's appearances: They're the
tendrel of the myriad signs.

In the ripening of the power of karma, cause and effect, The very forms of
virtue and negativity are seen.

But they're not a point of deviation for meditation:
They're the clear words of truth of one's individual type.

A meditator who can maintain his seat in meditation
Has very little craving for worldly things.
It's not that he desires any fame or renown:
It's the inner sign of revulsion toward the world.

I, a yogi who meditates on the profound path,
Keep only to mountains and to rock caves.
I'm not a phony nor do I engage in inappropriate conduct; One-pointed
meditation is what I desire.
The many melodies of this repa
Are not deceitful or a wish to distract.
They are profound heart advice to help
This gathering of faithful disciples here.

When he had sung this they said, "Even though you only stay in mountain
retreats, you need to have conducive conditions, such as a good meditation cabin.
We will provide them for you."

The Jetsun replied, "I already have conducive conditions, like my meditation
castle. This is what they are like." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of my father, the wish-fulfilling jewel.
Grant your blessing that your son meet with conducive conditions.

Please guide me in coming to the certainty That my own body is the deity's
palace.

Because of fear, I was worried and built a castle;
This castle is the castle of dharmata's emptiness.
Now, I've no worry over it collapsing.

Because of the cold, I was worried and searched for some clothes; Those

clothes were the clothes of chandali's ashé.*8

Now, I've no worry over any cold.

Because of poverty, I was worried and searched for riches; Those riches were the inexhaustible seven noble riches.*9

Now I have no worry over poverty.

Because of hunger I was worried and searched for some food; That food was the food of the samadhi of dharmata.

Now I have no worry over hunger.

Because of thirst I was worried and searched for drink; That drink was mindfulness and awareness's beer of amrita.

Now I have no worry over thirst.

Because of sadness I was worried and searched for a companion; That companion was the companion of the continuity of bliss-emptiness.

Now I have no worry over sadness.

Because of being mistaken I was worried and searched for a path; That path was the open and spacious path of union.

Now I have no worry over mistakes.

This yogi, who has everything desired, Wherever I stay, I am happy.

At Yolmo Tiger Lion Fortress,

One's hairs stand on end at the tiger's roar;

With that, one can't help but strictly keep to retreat.

Compassion is roused at the tiger cub's play;

With that, one can't help but cultivate bodhichitta.

The howl of monkeys makes one feel uneasy;

With that, one can't help but become disillusioned.

The clamor of young monkeys makes one laugh;

With that, one can't help but cultivate altruistic intention.

The cuckoo's melody makes one feel sad;
With that, tears cannot help but fall.

The changing, melodious voice of the lark;*¹⁰
With that, the ear cannot help but be pleased.

Large black ravens with their copious caws
Are the companions of yogis and help their minds.

Staying in a place like this, I'm naturally happy.
When I have no companions, I'm happier still.

May this yogi's song of happy experience
Clear away the suffering of wandering beings.

When he had sung this, disillusionment and revulsion toward worldly things arose strongly for the disciples¹⁹ there. They offered the commitment never to come down from the mountains, and through meditation they all gained final attainment in their virtuous activity.

Then the yidam said to the Jetsun, “Go again to Tibet and while meditating in remote mountain retreats, benefit sentient beings. There you will benefit the teachings and beings.” With that prophecy, the Jetsun resolved to go to Tibet.

This is the cycle of the Yolmo Snowy Range.

*¹ In Tibetan, Takpuk Senge Dzong (T: *stag phug seng ge rdzong*).

*² “Most accounts note the toponym Mön or Mönyul, which can refer to regions of Arunachal Pradesh in northeast India, southern Tibet, and Bhutan. In the context of Milarepa's biographical tradition, however, Mön is commonly used to describe the border region south of the Himalayan slope and is applied ‘to all kinds of groups throughout the Himalayas with whom the Tibetans came into contact.’ It is thus a general term, meaning ‘little more than “southern or western mountain-dwelling non-Indian non-Tibetan barbarians”’” (Quintman 2014b: 78, quoting Michael Aris, *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*. [Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1979]).

*³ Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's commentary on this song is also available in *Stars of Wisdom*.

*⁴ T: *khrol khor*, a set of physical yogic exercises. “When meditative experiences occur, then implicitly, trulkhor naturally comes from that. All movement becomes trulkhor” (DPR).

*⁵ This is referring to doing ritual practice for worldly ends, rather than having a spiritual goal. (KSP) *⁶ Mamos (T: *ma dang mkha'gro*) are a type of rakshasa spirit; the word is also used to refer to a class of wrathful or semiwrathful dakinis.

*⁷ Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche explains this line in his song “The Essence of Clear Light Sunshine: A Commentary on the Meaning of the Three Nails”: “The remedy, prajña that realizes selflessness/ Doesn’t fix up luminous empty mind one bit/ And the remedy itself is naturally pure and free/ So it doesn’t create emptiness or clarity.” Translated by Ari Goldfield (*Songs of Realization*: 214).

*⁸ T: *a shad*. This refers to the shape of the Tibetan letter that is visualized during chandali practice in order to generate yogic heat.

*⁹ The seven noble riches, or seven riches of the aryas, are faith, discipline, learning/study, generosity, modesty, decorum/shame, and prajña.

*¹⁰ T: *co ga*. Probably the Oriental skylark (*Alauda gulgula*).

8

The Offering of the Pigeon Goddess Girl

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa left Yolmo and journeyed to Tibet according to prophecy. In a cave in Kutang, while alone like a rhinoceros,*¹ residing in a state of luminosity, there came a pigeon wearing a dangling gold earring. As though prostrating, the pigeon bowed her body and nodded her head as she circumambulated Milarepa many times. Then she flew in the direction of Immaculate Rock.*²

Knowing that this was the invitation of a spirit, the Jetsun went over to her. There sat a pile of white rice, which the pigeon began offering to him with her beak. As before, she prostrated and circumambulated, and then flew away. The Jetsun, with great joy and amazement, sang this song of realization:

E MA HO!

Marpa of Lhodrak, who has been so kind,

By remembering you from my heart, I meditate with you there.

Again and again I supplicate you to never be separate from me.

Mixing one's mind with the guru's is so blissful.

A la la! The nature of appearances

Is pointed out as birthless dharmakaya,

And they merge,*³ uncontrived, with the state of dharmakaya.

I'm not concerned whether some views are high and others low.

This uncontrived mind is so blissful indeed!

This nature of mind is luminosity-emptiness.

That luminosity-emptiness is pointed out as awareness
And they merge in the uncontrived, innate state.

I'm not concerned over good or bad meditation.

This uncontrived mind is so blissful indeed!

The sixfold collection clear right in its own place.
Is pointed out as nondual, free of perceiver and perceived, And both pleasure
and pain are merged into one.
With this body, uncontrived, in its primordial state, I'm not concerned over
right or wrong conduct.
This uncontrived mind is so blissful indeed!

The fruition is the nature of dharmakaya.
The variety is pointed out as *nirmanakaya*.
Everything, when encountered, is merged with the state of liberation, But I
have no hope of any fruition.
This uncontrived mind is so blissful indeed!

When Milarepa had sung this, the pigeon returned, this time with seven
companions. Just as before, they prostrated and circumambulated the Jetsun. He
thought, "These are most certainly spirits. I will have to see if they speak honestly
or not."

"Who are you all, and why have you come here?" he asked them.

The *devis**⁴ performed magic revealing their own bodily forms. The leader of
them, who had come previously, said, "We are all devis who have faith in you and
have come to request the dharma. Please teach us."

In response to this request, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

Lord, emanated guru who is so wondrous
With no small compassion, please grant your blessing.

You whose miraculous conduct is in accord with the dharma, Who appeared
before in a pigeon's form,
You eight wondrously beautiful devis,

If you wish to practice the sublime pure dharma, Please keep the meaning of
this song within your minds.

Generally, the mundane comfort in the world,
Though it seems very pleasant, quickly departs.

In particular, the view of you noble ladies,

Though it seems high, there's nothing stable about that.

The householder's way with its suffering of samsara, Though it seems very good, there is much pain involved.

Excellent children of noble bloodlines,
If they've no resourcefulness themselves, they'll have much distress.

Students who have an excellent guru,
If their conduct is poor, then to samsara they fall.

You emanated pigeon goddesses,
Though you request the dharma, really trusting it is hard.

If you must practice the genuine dharma,
You must see as faulty beyond any doubt
The good qualities of this mundane world.
Understand adverse conditions that arise in this life To be the companion to enlightenment.
For this man, adverse conditions are incredibly kind; You should also understand it this way!

Thus he sang. Then the devis, smiling, all said, "Yes, we will do so!" and they prostrated and circumambulated him.

The Jetsun asked, "Why is it that you appeared before as pigeons?"

They replied, "You have no attachment at all to this life or your own benefit. In order to accomplish enlightenment for the benefit of others, you have abandoned distractions and remain alone, engaged in meditative concentration without interruption. Seeing this with our own divine eye, with faith, we came to request the dharma. We appeared in this way to hide ourselves from people with negativity. Now, please come to our divine realm and teach the dharma."

The Jetsun then said, "For the entirety of this life, I will remain in the realm of humans to benefit beings. Since the divine realms are also without any essence, there is no need for them. Even if I were to go there, I would have nothing different to say than this. You all should practice in this way." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa from Lhodrak.

Father guru, with your blessing, please grant me siddhi.

You eight beautiful female goddesses:

This white rice, the food of meditative concentration and siddhi, Has revived
my body, and my practice will flourish.

I'll repay this kindness with the dharma.

Listen attentively and keep it in your minds.

The white and radiant celestial royal seat,

Though you've managed to get to it, is without any essence.

The youthfulness and beauty of you devis,

Though it's a pleasant appearance, will quickly go.

This illusory deception, a magical display,

Though the enjoyment is great, is a cause for downfall.

The sufferings of the six beings of samsara,

When one ponders them, are deeply disheartening.

Should you wish to practice dharma for their sake, Then supplicate the three
precious jewels;

Meditate on the six beings as your own parents; Make offerings to the guru
lord;

Give generously to the impoverished;

Dedicate your virtue for the six beings' benefit; Always meditate on the
uncertainty of the time of death; With one's body as the yidam deity,

Utter the profound speech of mantra;

Meditate on self-aware emptiness wisdom;

And continuously place your own mind as your witness.

Then they said, "We are ignorant sentient beings with afflictions firmly entrenched within our minds. Please teach us a method on which to rely for remedying this state with mindfulness." Then he sang this song of realization in reply:

I bow at the feet of Marpa who is so kind.

Grant your blessing that remedies arise well in my mind-stream.

You devis who are endowed with faith,
If you want to practice in a continual way:

Inside, meditate with the concentration of shamatha; To abandon activity is
one great ornament.

Outside, stably take hold of the antidote;
To relax body and speech is one great ornament.

Continuously take the seat of mindfulness;
To have few affairs is one great ornament.

When adverse conditions give the mind difficulty, Be on the lookout for the
arising of aggression.

When encountering money and things of desire,
Be on the lookout for the arising of attachment.

When the weapons of harsh speech fall upon you, Be on the lookout for your
ears' delusion.

When accompanying friends that are equal to yourself, Be on the lookout for
the arising of jealousy.

When praise and honor come your way,
Be on the lookout for the arising of pride.

At all times and in every way
Tame the evil demons within your mind-stream.

Should a hundred learned and righteous ones speak, There would be no better
advice than this.

Now practice with joy in meditation!

When Milarepa had sung that, the devis rejoiced with great delight. Then, again
transforming into pigeons, they went off to the celestial realm.

The Jetsun, being quite pleased with the result, and with his practice
flourishing, went to Drakya Vajra Fortress.

This is the cycle of the offering of the pigeon goddess girl. Here also concludes the cycle that tells primarily of Milarepa's binding under oath the harm-inflicting spirits.

*¹ Rhinoceroses are traditionally considered solitary animals that do not stay in herds.

*² In Tibetan, Tsangwa Drak (T: *gtsang ba brag*).

*³ Footnote to Jim Scott's translation "Song to a Pigeon Goddess Girl": "The point here is not that appearance and emptiness are newly joined, but that they have been inseparable from the outset. The same applies to the other factors described [as "merging"] in the following stanzas" (*Songs of Realization*: 363).

*⁴ Goddesses; the female form of *deva*.

Cycle Two

THE RIPENING AND LIBERATION OF THE FORTUNATE
HEART-SONS AND DAUGHTERS

9

The Prior Visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa traveled to Drakya Vajra Fortress, where his practice flourished in the Horse Saddle Rock Cave.*1 At that time, there was a mantrika from Kutang*2 who met the Jetsun in person, and he developed great faith.

“Lama, although I have engaged in some semblance of meditation practice, it seems that there is some essential point that I do not understand. Please give me some instruction as to why my practice has not developed and good qualities have not arisen for me at all.”

In reply Milarepa said, “For this you need to understand all of these essential points.” Then he sang this song of realization on the six questions:

These manifestations of mind are even more than there are dust motes in the sun’s rays.

Is there a noble yogi who knows the appearance of things in their own place?

The abiding nature of things, the base, is not produced by any cause or condition.

Is there a noble yogi who knows how to cut this single root?

This impulsive arising of mind cannot be stopped by a hundred spearmen.

Is there a noble yogi who knows that attachment reverses on its own?

The movement of mind cannot be forced into an iron box.

Is there a noble yogi who knows that discursive thinking is empty in itself?

The wisdom deities do not abandon the enjoyment of sense pleasures.

Is there a noble yogi who knows that the sixfold collection of consciousnesses are relaxed at ease?

These appearances of the objects of the sixfold collection cannot even be stopped by the Victorious One’s hand

stopped by the victorious One's hand.

Is there a noble yogi who knows there is no object within those appearances?

Then again the man asked, "Is such a practice something that develops gradually, or is it something that arises suddenly?"

The Jetsun answered, "For a person with superior capacity, it arises suddenly. For those of middling and lesser capacities, it develops in accord with the four yogic stages.*³ The way to tell if the signs have arisen or not is like this." Then he sang this song of realization on distinguishing what the four yogic stages are and what they are not:

I bow at the feet of the supreme lord guru.

Fixating on mind as real is the cause of samsara.

The self-awareness that's clear and free of fixation,

If you recognize it to be spontaneous presence,

You have perfected one-pointedness.

Saying "union" while meditating with characteristics,

Or saying "cause and effect" with wrong livelihood:

One who cultivates ignorance, the source of all,*⁴

Will not have the yoga of one-pointedness.

One's own mind that is clear and fixation-free Has the heart of bliss that's
free of elaboration.

When its essence, like space, is luminous,

One has perfected being free of elaborations.

Saying "elaboration-free" with many elaborations,

Or saying "ineffable" while using many terms:

One who cultivates ignorance, this clinging to an "I,"

Will have no yoga free of elaborations.

Within dharmakaya, which is appearance-emptiness nondual, One
experiences samsara and nirvana as one.

When sentient beings and buddhas merge,

One has perfected one-taste.²⁰

If one says “one-taste” but propounds many things,
Or if one says “only one” but breaks it into sessions,
With delusion itself getting more deluded,
One will not have the yoga of one-taste.

Conceptual thinking is the essence of wisdom.
In its spontaneous presence there are no causes and results.
When the three kayas are all present within,
One has perfected nonmeditation.

If one says “nonmeditation” with mental engagement,
Or says “luminosity” while cultivating stupidity,
Simply babbling with delusion,
One will not have the yoga of nonmeditation.

When Milarepa had sung this, again the man said, “These practices are truly wondrous! If we worldly people were to practice the six paramitas, how should we practice them?” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

I bow at the feet of the qualified lord guru.

Wealth is like a dewdrop on grass
You should give generously free of attachment.

While making the freedoms and resources meaningful,*5
You should keep discipline as you would protect your eye.

Anger is the root of the lower realms,
You should practice patience at the risk of your life.

Lazy ones don’t accomplish benefit for self and other.
Have diligence in practicing virtuous action.

With confusion one can’t realize the Mahayana’s teachings.
One-pointedly familiarize with their meaning.

Buddhahood is not something found by searching.

Look at the nature of your own mind.

Faith is like the mist of autumn.

When it vanishes, you must persevere.

When Milarepa had sung this, the man developed faith and awe, and then went back to his home.

Several days later, that mantrika brought many students who came to Milarepa with offerings. They offered them with respect and the man from before said, “The students gathered here have faith in the Jetsun’s life story; we have come to meet him in person. Please teach us dharma about how the Jetsun gained confidence in practice as a result of great hardship.” In response, the Jetsun sang this song of realization, the “Six Measures of Confidence.”

Having revulsion toward the things of samsara,
I made a connection through vigorous faith:
To give up attachment to one’s home is hard;
But I abandoned my homeland, and pacified aggression.
To cease having affection toward loved ones is hard;
But I let go of my relatives and became free of attachment.
Since I had no contentment toward material wealth,

I wore a single cloth, and put a stop to my clinging.
To relinquish worldly distractions is hard;
Maintaining humility, I broke through my pride.
To let go of the conceit of self-clinging is hard;
So like an animal, I roam in mountain retreats.
You faithful ones’ accumulation of merit is meaningful;
This is the measure of confidence in perseverance.

The dharmakaya, which is like the sky,
Although it pervades every wandering being,
Through age-old ignorance, beings wander in samsara.
Though one may realize it partially, making it stable is hard.
Without the stability of that understanding,

Sometimes the five poisons arise in the mind.
Through that, one wanders aimlessly among the immature.
If one gains stability in that understanding,
The six collections will continually dawn free of attachment, And one will
continually abide inseparable from the three kayas.
This is the measure of confidence in realization.

Meditation and postmeditation,
These two appear for beginners on the path.
For the stable mind, these don't appear as two.
For a yogi who is free of any distraction,
The six collections dawn continually free of attachment,
And they continually abide inseparable from the three kayas.
The prana that moves free of any attachment
Is the source of all attractive qualities.
Learned ones meditate like the sky.
This is the measure of confidence in meditation.²¹

Without attachment to the four modes of conduct,^{*6}
Beautiful forms and the wealth of attachment—
Whatever appears—I know they're like mist.
So, the way I think of guiding beings
Is that they're ordinary bodies, like illusions
And water-moons^{*7}: I have no fixation.
I am not tainted by the fetters of objects.
Its example is a lotus growing out of the mud.
This is the measure of confidence in conduct.

Mind pervades all, just like the sky.
Appearing conditions are pure; they're the dharmakaya's clarity.
The very teacher who is omniscient toward every aspect
Is like a crystal ball in the palm of one's hand.^{*8}
First, it doesn't come from anything.
In the middle, it doesn't abide in any place

in the middle, it doesn't abide in any place.
In the end, it doesn't go anywhere.
Through abiding in equality of the three times,
Mind is without cause for birth or death.
In primordial purity that is like the sky,
Red and white clouds disappear in their own place;
No trace of the four elements remains.
In the sky-like mind that pervades everything,
By being inseparable from the continuity of birthlessness, The stream of
samsara's three realms is cut.
This is the measure of confidence in fruition.

For the yogi who has realization in this way,
When this illusory body is left behind,
In the bardo where all good qualities are complete
Through pointing out with the profound oral instructions, The mother and
child of mind will meet.
If at that point they do not meet,
The impure perpetuated illusory body,
Through the cooperating condition of the key instructions, Will dawn as the
pure illusory body, the *sambhogakaya*.^{*9}
By knowing the sambhogakaya to be like a reflection,
There will be no worry about mistaking the path.
This is the measure of confidence in having no confusion in the bardo.

When Milarepa had sung this, the students of Kutang developed great devotion.
Later on they made the most excellent offerings of service.

Early one morning, within the state of luminosity, Vajrayogini^{*10} appeared to the
Jetsun and said, "You will have one sun-like disciple, one moon-like disciple, and
twenty-three disciples who are like stars; there will be twenty-five siddhas among
your students. There will be one hundred disciples who attain irreversible
realization, one hundred and eight great beings who attain 'heat' on the path, and
one thousand and one male and female yogis who take hold of the path. Having
made a connection with the dharma, those who will cut the rebirths of the lower

realms will be countless.

“Your moon-like disciple, one with karmic potential, is at the Pura Pass of Gungtang. Therefore, you should go there.” Hearing this prophecy, Milarepa then resolved to go there.

This is the cycle of the prior visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress.

*1 In Tibetan, Drak Tagé Puk (T: *brag rta sge'i phug*).

*2 This high mountain region is in current-day Nepal and is known as “Manaslu” in Nepali.

*3 The four yogic stages in the context of Mahamudra are one-pointedness, free from elaborations, one taste, and nonmeditation. They are described in the song below. See also Wangchuk Dorje: 212.

*4 As in the second of the four noble truths, this (T: *kun 'byung*) means the source of all afflictions, karma, and suffering.

*5 While making this human birth with its freedoms and resources meaningful.

*6 Walking, moving, lying down, and sitting.

*7 Water-moons (T: *chu zla*) refers to the reflection of the moon in water; it is a common simile for all phenomena, which appear yet are empty in essence.

*8 The crystal ball symbolizes the clear, all-seeing aspect of the true nature of mind; being in the palm of the hand means that it is always present and accessible.

*9 “Enjoyment body”; in this context, *sambhogakaya* refers to one’s form that arises in the intermediate state (bardo) between death and the next rebirth.

*10 Vajrayogini is a yidam deity who is particularly important in the Kagyu lineage.

10

Meeting Rechungpa

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa, in accord with prophecy, traveled to upper Gungtang. He arrived at a house in Gungtang where there were many masons working. Milarepa said to them, “I should make a connection with you by requesting food and provisions.”

They replied, “We are all busy doing this stonework, so we don’t have any spare time. Since you are free, why don’t you come and work in our place. If you do, then we will bring you something to eat.”

“Yes, since I have finished doing my own kind of stonework, I am free. Even if you don’t give me any food, you should give up doing that mundane worldly stonework.”

Then they asked, “What kind of stonework have you done? Why is it we should give up doing our stonework here?” In answer to that, he sang this song of realization:

First is the stable foundation of faith.

Second is the high wall of diligence.

Third is the wide wall of meditative concentration.

Fourth is the excellent roof²² of prajña.

These four make up the house²³ I’ve built.

It’s a house that will forever stand.

Your worldly house will only deceive.

You should give up this prison of demons right now!

When he had sung this, they said, “What you have said is very helpful for our minds. Please tell us, with your way of life, what do you have in place of what we have in terms of our outer fields, wealth, relatives, wife, and children that she gave birth to? Our way of life here, you would probably give that up too. Please teach us the reason for taking on your way of life and letting go of ours.” In reply, he sang this song:

First is the excellent field of the all-base mind.
Second is the seed of instructions planted.
Third, the sprout of practice has grown.
Fourth, the fruition of the three kayas has ripened.
The crop with these four things combined
Is the crop that will last forever.
Your worldly crop will only deceive.
You should give up the burden of food and clothing.

First is the excellent treasure of emptiness.
Second is the wealth of the seven noble riches.
Third is being happy with the ten virtues' conduct.²⁴
Fourth is the undefiled great bliss.
The food and wealth with these four things combined
Is the food and wealth
that will last forever.
Your worldly food and wealth will only deceive.
You should give up the trickery of illusions.

First are the excellent forefathers, the buddhas.
Second is my own mouth²⁵ with the genuine dharma.
Third are the uncles and cousins of the sangha.
Fourth are the supporters, the *dharmapalas*.
The relatives who have these four combined
Are the relatives that will last forever.
Your worldly relatives will only deceive.
You should give up these temporary friends.

First are her excellent ancestors gone to bliss.
Second, she's expert in cooking up bliss-clarity.
Third, she has the glowing complexion of union.
Fourth, she has the clothing of experience and realization.
The wife who has these four things combined
Is a wife that will last forever.
Your worldly companions will only deceive

Your worldly companions will only deceive.
You should give up your temporary adversaries.

First is the child of awareness' birth.
Second is the infant of the signs of accomplishment.
Third, the speech of experience and realization flows easily.
Fourth come the progeny that are fully enlightened.
This son who has all of these four things combined
Is the son that will last forever.
Your worldly sons will only deceive.
You should give up the tethers of samsara.

You Gungtang worker women and men
And I, the yogi Milarepa,
Through the imprint that was made by conversing here, May we meet in the
land of glorious Uddiyana.

When Milarepa had sung this, they all gave rise to great faith, made prostrations to him, and served him provisions. Thereafter they were very devoted.

Then the Jetsun went to stay at the Silk Cave at the upper part of Goat Pass*¹ There at Goat Pass was a handsome and very intelligent boy who had lost his father at an early age. After his father's death, his uncle and mother jointly supported him. The boy, from a young age, was able to read very well and received many gifts from people who listened when he recited the scriptures.

One day, as this boy was riding a donkey while tending a herd of cattle in the upper part of his own valley, he came to a cave where the Jetsun was practicing. Hearing the Jetsun singing a song of realization, his outlook changed. He got off his donkey and, leaving behind his cows, went near the Jetsun. As soon as the boy saw Milarepa's face, an indescribable samadhi arose in his mind-stream. He just stood there for a while, straight and still. This boy was Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa, one of the heart-sons of Milarepa.

By the power of his awakened karma, he gained unwavering faith in the Jetsun. He offered to the Jetsun all of the gifts that had been given to him from reciting scriptures and he stayed with Milarepa to study dharma.

His mother and uncle looked into the situation and saw the boy was staying with Milarepa but no longer receiving gifts for his recitations. They thought,

“Have the benefactors stopped giving him money?” They went around to each of the patrons who had been giving money for the scripture recitations, asking, “Have you been giving my son his wages?” They all said that they had.

Then, realizing that the money had been offered to the Jetsun, the boy’s mother and uncle did all they could to stop the boy, but to no avail. They both became angry and very spiteful. The boy, however, received instructions from the Jetsun, began to meditate, and excellent experience and realization arose. Due to the heat from his chandali practice, he was even able to wear a single cotton cloth, and thus received the name Rechungpa.*2

At this time, Rechungpa’s mother and uncle forcibly took him back, and when they had put Rechungpa to work plowing the fields he was stricken by an illness caused by the earth-lord spirits.*3 While he was on retreat in hopes of curing himself of the illness, there were five Indian *acharyas**4 who came to him begging for food. Rechungpa offered them some puffed barley that had been given to him by his mother and uncle. While they were eating, they all cried out “*Chiti-jvala!*” as they realized Rechungpa had contracted leprosy.*6

Rechungpa asked, “Do you have any methods to heal this illness?”

The leader of the group said, “Poor thing! You really are in a pitiful state. I have a guru named Varachandra;*27 I can take you to him.” Putting off his travels in Tibet, he then committed to go to India [with Rechungpa].

Rechungpa went to the Jetsun to get permission to go to India, to which he consented and sang this song of realization, on the dharma of travel:

I supplicate the lord with supreme kindness.

Bless my son, Rechungpa, here.

Son, for this life’s ultimate aim, focus on dharma.

Not merely with words, you should supplicate

The guru, yidam, and the three precious jewels.

Now go and travel in the land of India.

For food eat the food of endurance in samadhi; As a connection with the *a-tung*,*5 wear the cotton cloth; Then ride the illusory horse of prana and mind.

Now go and travel to the land of India.

Scrub the mind that is free of stain.

For that, always observe, free of regret,
The white silver mirror of samaya.
Now go and travel to the land of India.

Should the bandits of desire for fame outwardly overtake you, Keep watch by
equalizing the eight worldly concerns.
Hide your good qualities within the unobservable state.
Rousing excellent bodhichitta, go and travel!
Son, I pray your life be long and free of illness.

With the Jetsun remaining within his retreat cave, Rechungpa sealed him inside with mud. Then following the acharya, he went to India where he met the guru Varachandra.

The guru gave Rechungpa complete instructions on the Winged Garuda of Fierce Vajrapani²⁸ on which he meditated. Through that, he was cured of his illness. Rechungpa then returned to Tibet. From the town of Kyidrong onward, he went along asking of his guru's whereabouts. He heard from someone who said that previously they had heard of a yogi there named Mila but had not heard anything about him recently.

"Has my guru died?" he thought. With heavy heart, he went to Silk Cave to see. The mud seal that he had put on the cave was undisturbed as before. Then he thought, "Has he died while still in the cave?" He tore down the mud seal and went inside. There, the Jetsun was sitting perfectly straight, practicing. Seeing this, Rechungpa was overjoyed and asked after Milarepa's health. In response the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa, so kind.
Having cut ties with my family, I feel good.
Relinquishing clinging to my homeland, I feel good.
With no care over local matters, I feel good.

Not corrupted by sangha donations, I feel good.
Not becoming a householder, I feel good.
Not needing this or that, I feel good.
Wealthy with the noble riches, I feel good.
Without the suffering of keeping provisions, I feel good.

.....

With no worry of them getting lost, I feel good.
With no fear of them running out, I feel good.
With resolve about mind, I feel good.
Not needing to please benefactors, I feel good.
With no weariness or irritation, I feel good.
Without hypocritical conduct, I feel good.
Whatever I do is dharma, and that feels good.
No weariness of wishing to roam around feels good.
Without fear of being killed, I feel good.
Without fear of burglary, I feel good.
Having conducive conditions for virtuous activity feels good.
Abandoning negative actions, I feel good.
With my efforts in merit, I feel good.
With no anger or malevolence, I feel good.
Having abandoned pride and jealousy, I feel good.
Seeing the faults of the eight concerns, I feel good.
Resting in equality, I feel good.
With mind looking at mind, I feel good.
With no hope or fear, I feel good.
In the expanse of luminosity, free of fixation, I feel good.
In the space of nonconceptual wisdom, I feel good.
In the primordial state of spontaneity, I feel good.
With the six consciousnesses in their own place, I feel good.
With the clarity of the five gates' consciousnesses, I feel good.*6
With the cutting of mind's coming and going, I feel good.

I have so many ways of feeling good.
This is a yogi's happy song.
I do not aspire for any other happiness.
In death I feel good, for I've done no negative deeds.
In life I feel good, for virtuous activity flourishes.

Benefactors give me food and clothes.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १ ॥

This is the kindness of the three jewels and the guru.
To practice for the sake of yogic bliss feels good.
Rechungpa, are you well; did you get what you went for?

When Milarepa had sung this, Rechungpa replied, “Yes, I am also well, and I got what I went for. Please accept me and continue to give me instructions.” Then the Jetsun again gave Rechungpa instructions and had him meditate in the Silk Cave. There he perfected his experience and realization.

This is the cycle of meeting his heart-son Rechungpa at the Silk Cave.

*¹ In Tibetan, Ralé Pu Za-Ok Puk (T: *ra la'i phu za 'og phug*).

*² The name Rechungpa could be translated as “Little Repa” or “Junior Repa.”

*³ In Tibetan, Sa-dak (T: *sa bdag*). It is common in the Tibetan tradition to attribute the onset of illness to local deities or spirits that are thought to have a sense of ownership over the region they inhabit. When the land is disturbed in some way, here by means of plowing a field, these spirits are thought to seek retribution causing illness or other mishaps for the perpetrator.

*⁴ In this context, these are Indian yogis.

*⁵ T: *a thung*. Literally, “short A.” This is synonymous with *ashé*.

*⁶ The five sense consciousnesses.

11

Meeting Tsaphu Repa

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa went from the Silk Cave to the Luminosity Cave of Rönphu.*1 While staying there, several young people from his own native land of Tsaphu*2 came to meet him.

“First, you destroyed all of your enemies, and now you have become an outstanding dharma practitioner. How wondrous! When we are near you, we all feel like practicing dharma, but when we go back home, we just do worldly things. What can be done to help this?”

The Jetsun answered, “If you have resolve toward becoming liberated from the sufferings of samsara, such as birth, old age, sickness, and death, then whatever you do will be good. If not, then the sufferings of future lives will be longer and more intense. Therefore it is important to make some provisions for the next life. It’s like this.” Then he sang this song of realization:

All we worldly beings here
Are carried by the river of birth, old age, sickness, and death.
The next river will be even bigger than this one.
Have you made the provision of a vessel?

In the next life, our fear of demons, rakshasas, And the Lord of Death will
become even greater.

Have you made the provision of a guide?*

The attachment of desire, aggression,
And stupidity in the next life will be even stronger.
Have you made the provision of an antidote?

In the next life, our journey in this great land Of the three realms of samsara
will be even longer.

Have you prepared food for the journey?

If you're not prepared, then practice the sublime dharma!

When Milarepa had sung this they said, "This is very helpful for our minds. We will also practice dharma near the guru." Milarepa thought, "They aren't bad; therefore, the guru should let his disciples and benefactors care for him."

"Please keep just a little money from each of us. Also, we did not understand what you just sang, please explain the meaning further." In reply Milarepa sang this song:

Following a learned guru

Is called the guide of samsara and nirvana.

Giving generously with no sense of regret or loss
Is making the provisions of
food for the journey.

Shining the moon of experience upon the darkness
Is making the provision of
a guide.

Giving what you've accumulated to the dharma
Is making the provision of a
vessel.

When one has the view that is without bias,
That is meditation without distraction.

When your conduct is in accord with dharma,
This samaya is what pleases the guru.
Its result is having no regrets when you die.

Friends, benefactors, and disciples, these three: This yogi has little need for
them.

You worldly ones do have a need.

Obeisance, honorifics, and hypocrisy, these three: This yogi has little need
for them;

A person with the eight concerns has a need.

Material things, belongings, and busyness, these three: This yogi has little
need for them.

'That's something one who wishes for fame would need.

Washing, hygiene, and concepts, these three: This yogi has little need for them.

These are something that young ones need.

These are called the "Twelve Things You Don't Need"; They're not everyone's cup of tea.

This boasting of a repa yogi,

You who've gathered here, keep it in mind.

If you want to be happy, then practice the genuine dharma.

If you're disillusioned with busyness, keep to solitary places.

If you have great perseverance, stay all alone.

If you wish for enlightenment, develop endurance in meditation, And you'll certainly be victorious over the four enemy maras.

Thus he sang. Among the disciples there was one young man who had faith, diligence, prajña, compassion, and love. He said, "Lama, we are attached to the needs of this life, and because of that we have not made the necessary provisions for the next life. Now, following after the guru, I will give up this life and start to make provisions for the next life." This he offered with great earnestness.

The Jetsun said, "Obtaining the precious human birth with the freedoms and resources and being able to practice the dharma are very difficult. Even if one does practice the dharma, to amass all the perfect conducive conditions, such as finding a guru, is also very difficult. Now, while these conditions have come together, please practice the sublime dharma." Then he sang this song of realization:

Getting this human birth with the freedoms and resources
Where one is free of the eight freedomless states is difficult.

Having let go of the mundane happiness of this life,
To make the freedoms and resources meaningful is difficult.*4

Having seen the faults of samsara,
To accomplish the state of nirvana is difficult.

Even if someone should practice genuine dharma,
To gather the perfect

conditions is difficult.

To have a guru endowed with compassion
Who knows the scriptures, logic, and upadeshas is difficult.

To have a disciple who is able to practice
With untiring faith is difficult.

To have a retreat with everything one needs
And with nothing that is fearful or harmful is difficult.

To have a friend with the same mindset and action
That's concordant with the tenets' view and conduct is difficult.

To have a body that's workable—
Free of sickness or pain—is difficult.

Even if these should come together,
To practice one-pointedly is difficult.

These nine difficult things that I have sung here,
Even though they are difficult, you should engage in practice.

Thus he sang. The young man uncontrollably gave rise to faith and he was accepted as an attendant. He was given the abhishekas and key instructions through which he was ripened and liberated. Thus, he became the close son named Tsaphu Repa.

This is the cycle of meeting Tsaphu Repa at Luminosity Cave.

*1 In Tibetan, Rönphu'i Ösal Puk (T: *ron phu'i 'od gsal phug*).

*2 Upper Tsa.

*3 An escort who also functions as a bodyguard (T: *skyel ma*).

*4 Literally, “To take on the essence of the freedoms and resources is difficult” (T: *dal 'byor snying po len pa dka'*).

12

The Later Visit to Rakma

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa went from the Luminosity Cave down to Kyidrong in Mangyul to refresh himself. While begging for alms in the practice of equal taste, he came across a large group of people at the town's center.

“Benefactors, I am a yogi and have come here seeking today's provisions.”

“Yogi, are you the one who they say previously stayed at Rakma?” they asked.

“I am.”

“Well then, you are truly one of great wonder,” they said, and everyone developed devotion.

Among them was a couple unable to have children who invited Milarepa to their home. Offering their respect and service, they asked Milarepa, “Lama, where are you and your relatives from?”

“I am a beggar who has left behind my country and relatives, and my country and relatives, too, have left me behind.”

“Then please be our adopted son. We also have an excellent estate you can live on. There you can take a beautiful wife and then have your own family.”

“I don't have any need for those things,” Milarepa said. “I have renounced them all.” Then he sang this song of realization:

At first one's homeland is happy and pleasant
But it becomes like a rasp scraping at one's body, speech, and mind.
In the middle, one plows with so much toil;
Then one plants seeds, but they do not come up.
That city of famine, that terrible land,
Is like a realm of *gandharvas**¹ without a protector.

Finally, leaving it behind, one goes.

In this abode of amassing negativity, one's mind is troubled.

I do not wish for this temporary dungeon

I do not wish for this temporary dungeon.

I will not become your adopted son.

When Milarepa sang this, the couple said, “Please don’t say that. We will invite a girl of good pedigree suitable for you to take as your bride.” In reply he sang this song:

This companion, she’ll first be a smiling goddess,
With a face so lovely you’ll never have enough of looking.
Then in the middle, she’ll be a rakshasa with the eyes of a corpse.
Say one thing to her, and she’ll snap back twice.
If you take hold of her hair, she’ll grab your knee.
If you hit her with a stick, she’ll brandish her ladle.
In the end, she’ll be an old cow, without any teeth.
She’ll be an angry-eyed rakshasa, and your mind will be troubled.
I have abandoned demonic adversaries;
I have no wish for your young female friend.

When he had sung this, the couple replied, “Lama, when you get old and are ready to die, it won’t be like when you are young. If you don’t have a son, you will be depressed beyond measure. Don’t you need to have a son?” In response, he sang this song of realization:

This son would first be a handsome divine prince;
You love him so much the passion is hard to bear.
In the middle, he’ll be fierce creditor;
You give everything but he’ll never be pleased.
Then he’ll bring someone’s girl into the home
And the parents who were kind get kicked out.
Though the father cries, there’ll be no response.
Though the mother cries out, he won’t reply.
In the end, the neighbors, without any affection,
Will say spiteful words and bring you ruin.
With this enemy you’ve borne, your mind will be troubled.
I relinquish such tethers of samsara.

When he had sung this, the couple replied, “Well, maybe it’s true that one’s own son would just become an enemy. But to have a daughter would surely be

something worthwhile. Without one, you won't be happy." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

A daughter, at first, would be a divine smiling princess,
A powerful woman who takes what you treasure away.²⁹
In the middle, she brings debt that never ends;
She takes things away from right in front of her father
And secretly steals from behind her mother's back.
She has no appreciation for what they've given her
And brings depression upon her kind parents.
In the end she'll be a red-faced knife-demoness.*2
At her best, she gives many things away to others.
At her worst, she brings her family shame and misfortune.
With such a knife-demoness, your mind will be troubled.
I've abandoned the misery that's without relief.
I don't want a daughter, such a basis of ruin.

When Milarepa had sung this, the couple said, "Although you may not need a son or a daughter, if you don't have any other family, then you'll have the unbearable suffering of low status." Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

In the beginning, families are happy to meet, and they smile when they see each other.
"Come over!" "Stay here!" Such talk fills the whole valley.
In the middle, they become those who owe meat and beer;
Such gifts are given back and forth to each other.
In the end, with attachment and aggression, they're a basis for regret.
With this source of quarrel and misery, your mind will be troubled.
I've abandoned friends to just hang out with for fun.*3
I don't wish for any worldly relations.

Thus he sang. Again, the couple fervently spoke, "Although you don't want any relative toward whom you are partial, we have plenty of money and wealth. By all means you should take and keep it." Thus they offered their wealth to him.

The Jetsun said, "The sun and the moon never stay in one small place to eliminate the darkness there; likewise, I will not forsake the benefit of many beings to become your adopted son in this life. But by meeting me, you both have

attained benefit for yourselves in this and in future lives. I make the aspiration that we may meet again next life in the land of Uddiyana.” Then he sang this song of realization:

At first, wealth makes one happy and is an object of others’ aspiration.
But however much one has, one won’t be satisfied.
In the middle, one is bound by the knot of miserliness;
One won’t be able to practice generosity for the sake of virtue.
It’s a summoning gesture for enemies and demons.
What you have accumulated, others will spend.
In the end, it becomes the mara of death.
Enemies will seek after your wealth, and your mind will be troubled.
I’ve abandoned the temptations of samsara.
I have no wish for this mara’s deception.

Thus he sang. The couple gave rise to unwavering faith in the Jetsun, and gave all of the wealth that they had amassed toward the cause of dharma. Then, receiving instructions from the Jetsun, they meditated. By doing that, they took hold of the path at the time of death. Thus becoming forever free from the suffering of the lower realms, they gradually progressed along to the attainment of enlightenment.

Then the Jetsun again went to the Enlightenment Fortress in Rakma. While he stayed there, the benefactors from before offered their service to him and his practice flourished. One day, two young cowherds came and met the Jetsun.

The younger one of them said, “Doesn’t the lama have any companions staying with him?”

“I have a companion,” Milarepa answered.

“Oh, then what is his name?”

“My companion’s name is Bodhichitta.”

“Then where is this friend now?” the boy asked.

“Right now my companion is in the house of the all-base consciousness,” Milarepa replied.

“Where is this house of the all-base consciousness?”

“It is right within my body.”

The elder one of them then said, “Guru, you are not someone we should take refuge in. We will go.”*4

But the younger one asked, “Is the all-base consciousness the mind? Is this body the mind’s house?”

“Yes it is.”

The boy spoke further, “In a person’s house, one person can be inside, or many people can be inside. Within the body, is there one mind or are there many minds? How many are there, and what are they like?”

The Jetsun replied, “As to whether there is one mind or many, you should look and see for yourself.”

“Very well,” he said and the two of them went home.

The next morning, the younger one went back to see the Jetsun and said, “Lama, I looked to see how many minds there are and what they are like. I found there is no more than one. If you try and kill it, you can’t kill it. If you try to overpower it, you can’t. If you try to seize it, you can’t grasp it. If you try to push it down, you can’t push it. If you place it, it won’t stay. If you send it away, it won’t go. If you try to gather it, you can’t gather it. If you look at it, you can’t see it. If you examine it, you can’t find it. If you think it exists, it won’t show itself. If you think it doesn’t exist, it spreads all over the place. It flickers and flutters, bounces and bounds, flashes and disappears.*5 I can’t say what it is at all! Please, Lama, teach me what it is!” Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

Caretaking herder, now listen to me:

The wonderful taste of candy so sweet:

By hearing its qualities, you won’t experience it.

You can think all about it, but you won’t have the taste.

To experience the taste, you must use your tongue.

Likewise, as to the essence of mind:

Another person can point it out,

But at that point you won’t be able to see it at all.

Then, because of that previous occasion,

If you look for mind, you’ll see it for sure.

Herder, you should work with your mind like this!

When Milarepa had sung this, the boy replied, “Then please, Lama, give me this pointing-out, and I will search this evening and return tomorrow morning to

tell you what I find.”

Then the Jetsun said, “Tonight, look and see if you can tell me what color mind is. Is it red? Is it white? Search like that. Then look to see what kind of shape it has. Is it oblong? Is it round? Then look from your head down to the soles of your feet to see where the mind actually abides.”

In the morning, when the sun had come up, the boy drove his cows up the hill and went back to see Milarepa.

The Jetsun asked him, “Last night, did you search for your mind?”

“Yes, I did search for it,” he replied.

“What is it like?”

The boy said, “It moves and is clear and luminous. It’s not something I can identify. I couldn’t find any color or shape that it has. Together with the eyes, it can see. With the ears, it can hear. Together with the nose, it smells. With the tongue, it tastes. With the feet, it walks. It’s a total mishmash—a complete disaster!³⁰ This present body is just the servant of the mind. When the body is happy, the mind uses it until it degenerates and becomes old. Then when it has completely deteriorated, the mind just throws it out like a stone used to wipe your behind, and the mind goes on its way just like a spoiled little kid. Then when the body tries to get retribution on the mind, the mind can’t just stay there relaxed at ease. Because of the suffering that ensues, the body tramples on it like a herd of animals in order to stop it. When the body falls asleep at night, the mind goes everywhere just as it pleases. The body gives the mind such a hard time. When the body tries to take ownership of the mind, things just get worse and worse.”

Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

Son, caretaking herder, listen here, Within this body, the meeting point of
awareness and matter,
Is consciousness that has such great negativity.
Its experience of the lower realms’ suffering
Is reversed through the abandonment of samsara.
Do you wish to go, O noble son,
To the higher realms, that city of freedom?
If you do wish to go, I can take you there!

When Milarepa had sung this, the boy said, “Oh yes, you must! Please accept

me!”

Then Milarepa asked him, “What is your name?”

“My name is Genyen*6 Sangye Kyap.”

“How old are you?”

“I’m sixteen years old.”

With that, the Jetsun gave him the transmission for refuge, explained the benefits of going for refuge, and said, “From this evening on, do not break your refuge vows. Now, go tonight and investigate: are you who go for refuge body, or mind? Then come back tomorrow morning with your answer.”

The following morning the boy returned with his answer. “Lama, last night I looked to see whether the one who goes for refuge is body or mind, and I saw that it’s neither of the two. I saw that all the parts of my body from my head down to my feet each have their own name. And then I thought, ‘Can it be that the one who goes for refuge is included in all of these parts of my body? If the body is separate from mind, then the body is just a corpse, so in that case, the body can’t be the one that goes for refuge. Not only that, but if one takes apart all the pieces of that corpse, they each in turn have their own names.’

“So then I turned to look and see if it was the mind that goes for refuge. If the mind is given the name, ‘the one who goes for refuge,’ then it can’t also be called ‘mind.’ Not only that, if a previous mind is called ‘mind,’ can you then call a later mind ‘the one who goes for refuge’? The mind at the time of being ‘the one who goes for refuge’ then can’t be a previous mind or later mind. Furthermore, the present mind and the future mind also have their respective names; if you call both the previous mind and the later mind ‘the one who goes for refuge,’ then it would never go out of existence. So, all of the past and future lives that one takes within the six classes of beings could be called ‘the one who goes for refuge.’

“But I don’t remember my past lives and I don’t know what future lives I will take. Last year’s and yesterday’s mind have already ceased, and the mind of tomorrow has not yet arisen. The present mind also changes in every moment. Lama, *you* know, so please explain this to me.”

In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

The guru who’s realized the nature of selflessness

I respectfully supplicate with my three gates:

To me and all the students to come hereafter,

Grant your blessings that we too realize the nature of selflessness

Grant your blessings that we too realize the nature of selflessness.

By your compassion, may we emerge from the object of self-clinging.*7

Praying like that, caretaking herder, listen to this:

This consciousness that clings to an “I”:

If you look, you definitely won’t be able to see it.

By the power of meditating on Mahamudra,

You’ll see by not seeing anything at all.

In the meditation of Mahamudra,

You’ll need the ground—faith, devotion, and resolve;

On the path, please know the causality of samsara;

Then to actualize the final fruition

You’ll need the guru’s abhisheka, transmission, and upadeshas.

To be a suitable vessel for those,

One needs to have the accumulation of merit

And maintain resolve through both pleasure and pain,

Persevering even in the face of death.*8

Can you practice like this, my dear young son?

If so, you have a karmic propensity.

If not, there’s no need to explain any further.

Again, you should carefully think this over.

If you can’t find this “I” that one clings to,

Then that in itself is the selflessness of persons.

Now if you want to realize the selflessness of phenomena,*9

Then follow me for the next twelve years.

If you’ll do that, you’ll come to understand mind.

My dear young boy, work with mind like that!

Thus he sang. The boy said, “Guru, now I offer you my head and my entire body too. You know how to help me determine the nature of my own mind.”

With that, the Jetsun thought, “Now I need to see if this boy has the ability to meditate or not.” He supplicated the three jewels and said to the boy, “Meditate on the form of the Buddha just in front of your nose.” Thus, giving him this

instruction on shamatha meditation with an object, Milarepa sent him off.

Seven days went by, and on the seventh day, the boy's father came. "Lama," he said to Milarepa, "my boy has not come home for seven days. Fearing that something awful happened to him, I set out to find him. All of his herder companions told me that he found a guru and is with him receiving dharma teachings. I thought he would have come home by now, but he hasn't. Has he been here to see you?"

"He hasn't been here for seven days," Milarepa replied. Hearing that, the father left, weeping. Then, after much searching, in the recesses of a mountain, he found the boy sitting straight up with eyes staring straight ahead.

The father asked him, "What are you doing?"

The boy answered, "I'm meditating on the key instructions of the guru."

"Seven days have gone by and you haven't come home. Why?" the father asked.

"What are you talking about? I've only been sitting here for just a little while."

"Look at the sun."

The boy looked up and could see that it was indeed earlier in the day than when he started meditating. "How can this be?" he exclaimed.

After that, the boy disappeared several more times, sometimes for five or six days, and so the father continued having to go and search for him. "This constantly having to search for you is dangerous and it is making us tired and miserable. Do you want to go and be with your guru, or not?"

The boy said that he wanted to go, so with that, the father prepared some provisions for him and brought him to Milarepa. Then the Jetsun guru initiated him into the trainings of an *upasaka*, taught him about karma, cause and effect, and finally gave him teachings on coemergent union and had him practice. Perfectly pure meditation arose in his mind-stream. The guru was greatly pleased and sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Lord Marpa the Translator
Who was blessed by Maitripa and glorious Naropa.

All the great teachers who speak of the dharma,
Though they're vastly learned in what dharma they teach,
When the material body and awareness separate,
Their mere words of dharma dissolve into the sky.

Ignorance obscures mind's luminous manifestations
And they become fearful of the dharmakaya at death.
Though they spend their whole lives studying the pitakas,
When mind parts from the material body, it's of no benefit.

All meditators who practice shamatha
Have powerful experiences, vivid and clear,
And are happy, thinking that experience is *vipashyana*.^{*10}
But when the vipashyana of dharmakaya at the time of death is needed,
Mother and child luminosity do not meet.
That shamatha from before won't help at death, And again, they'll be trapped
in the animal realm.

Upasaka son, supreme protector,^{*11} now listen!
When resting evenly in meditation with the points of body,
If appearances cease and you are without thoughts,
These are the doings of a lethargic shamatha.
But when you rouse yourself with mindfulness,
It's like a candle, self-luminous and shining bright,
Or like a flower that's naturally vivid and clear.
Like looking with your eyes at the glow of the sky,
Awareness-emptiness is naked, open, and clear.

That nonconceptuality that's luminous and clear
Is the arising of the shamatha experience.
On the basis of that meditative experience,
While supplicating the precious jewels,
Gain certainty by studying and contemplating the dharma.
Take the vipashyana that brings the understanding of no self
And tie the sturdy rope of shamatha to that.^{*12}
Then that strong noble being with love and compassion
Through the mighty strength of rousing bodhichitta to benefit others, Having
been lifted up with a pure aspiration
To the completely pure path of seeing,

There, vipashyana directly realizes the purity that cannot be seen
And then the faults of mind's hopes and fears will be known.
Without going anywhere, you'll arrive at the Buddha's ground.
Without looking at anything, you'll see dharmakaya.
Without achieving anything, your aim will be spontaneously accomplished.
My upasaka son, work with mind like this.

Having sung this, the Jetsun took the boy as his attendant and gave him all of the abhishekas and key instructions. Then meditating, the boy gained perfection in experience and realization and became one of Milarepa's heart-sons, Repa Sangye Kyap.

This is the cycle of Milarepa's meeting Repa Sangye Kyap during his later visit to Rakma.

*1 Literally, "scent eaters" (T: *dri za*); this type of spirit or deity sustains itself on scents; also sometimes referred to as celestial musicians among devas in the desire realm.

*2 "Knife-demoness" (T: *gri mo*) is likely one among the vast plethora of Tibetan spirits and demons.

*3 Literally, "Eating companions for when you're happy" (T: *skyid tshē'i za grogs*).

*4 Meaning, "You are not a genuine and trustworthy teacher."

*5 T: *rig rig/ tur tur/ phras phras/ yal yal ba 'di*. These experiential terms "have the meaning of rapid movement in the sense of flickering, darting, and hopping" (*Stories and Songs*: 40).

*6 S: *upāsaka*. A holder of Buddhist vows for laypeople.

*7 The object of self-clinging is the five *skandhas* or aggregates. In traditional Buddhist teachings, the self is taught to be falsely imputed upon these five skandhas consisting of one's body (form) and four skandhas of mind (sensations, conceptions, mental formations, and consciousness).

*8 Literally, "At death, one must put up the roof of ability" (T: *'chi bar nus pa'i thog 'gel dgos*).

*9 According to the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism, one must realize the two types of selflessness to attain complete buddhahood. If one realizes the selflessness of persons (i.e., the selfless nature of the five skandhas), then one attains freedom from the mental afflictions. To attain complete buddhahood, one must realize the selflessness of all phenomena in their entirety.

*10 Calm abiding of the mind (or shamatha) alone is not sufficient to attain liberation; it is taught that one must also have insight (or vipashyana) into selflessness, the true nature of reality.

*11 Milarepa is making a play on the boy's name, Sangye Kyap, which means "Protector Buddha."

*12 Goldfield: "[That] is the vipashyana referred to in the previous line. [It is also] called 'approximate vipashyana' because at the stage of ordinary sentient beings, it is still a conceptual understanding of the true nature of reality" (*Stories and Songs*: 44).

13

Accepting the Teacher Shakya Guna

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa went from Mangyul Kyidrong to Nyanang, where his old benefactors were overjoyed to see him and supplicated him to stay permanently in Nyanang. He went to a place between Tsen Döshö and Nyanang, where he stayed in a cave underneath a great rock shaped like a belly. There, the teacher Shakya Guna and some other students of Nyanang came to see Milarepa. They asked the Jetsun, “In the mountain retreats of other lands you have been to, how has your practice been enhanced and what kind of confidence have you given rise to?” In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.

Having meditated in other mountain retreats,

I've found confidence in birthlessness

And purified the clinging to past and future lives as two.

I've seen the falsity of the appearances of the six realms
And cut through the imputation of birth and death as two.

I've found confidence in equality

And purified clinging to happiness and pain.

I've seen the falsity of the experience of feelings
And cut through the imputation of things to adopt and reject.

I've found confidence in inseparability

And purified clinging to samsara and nirvana as two.

I've seen the falsity of training in the paths and grounds
And cut through the imputation of hope and fear.

After Milarepa sang this, the disciples asked, “What other kinds of practice arose for you?”

He replied, “I will tell you about how virtuous activity arose for me in a way that is easy for you students to understand.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Outside dawned the conditions of my mother and father, And inside dawned
my own all-base consciousness.

In between, I got this perfect human body
Not born in the three lower realms—that’s all I’ve got!

Outside dawned the appearances of birth and death, And inside dawned
revulsion and faith.

In between, I remember the sublime dharma.
I’ve not fallen sway to the enemy of close friends*¹—that’s all I’ve got!

Outside dawned the condition of my father guru, And inside dawned prajña
that’s purified my stains.

In between, confident understanding arises.
No doubts arise toward the dharma—that’s all I’ve got!

Outside dawned the six realms’ beings,
And inside dawned unbiased compassion.
In between I remember my meditation experience.
Compassion without clinging—that’s all I’ve got!

Outside dawned the self-liberated three realms, And inside dawned self-
arisen wisdom.
In between is realization with confidence.
I have no anxiety over true reality—that’s all I’ve got!

Outside dawned the five sense pleasures,
And inside dawned the prajña of no clinging.
In between I have the conduct of equal taste.
I don’t cling to pain and pleasure as two—that’s all I’ve got!

Outside dawned produced phenomena that disintegrate, And inside dawned
freedom from hope and fear.
In between I’m free of the sickness of effort.
I don’t cling to virtue and nonvirtue as two—that’s all I’ve got!

From clinging to virtue and nonvirtue as two — that's all I've got.

Thus he sang. Then the teacher Shakyā Guna said, “Jetsun, your practice has been excellent from the very beginning. Although I met you in the past, I didn’t have confidence or trust in the instructions you gave. Now, I ask you, please accept me, and give me the abhishekas and instructions.” The Jetsun gave him the abhishekas and instructions and then set him to practice.

When the teacher Shakyā Guna gave rise to some experience, he came back and told the Jetsun. He told him, “If appearance and samsara did not exist, there would be no need to practice. If there were no mind, no one could ever become a *khenpo*.^{*2} Without the guru, there would be no way to know how to practice. Please tell me the definitions of these and point out the nature of mind.” In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

What defines appearances is that they do not arise; If they seem to arise,
that’s just clinging to things as real.

What defines samsara is that it’s baseless and rootless; If a base or root is
found, that’s merely a thought.

What defines mind is union—inseparability;
If you separate its features, then you have wishful thinking.

What defines a true guru is to have a lineage;
Those who make things up themselves are deluded.

The nature of mind, which is like the sky,
Is obscured by concepts like thick southern clouds.
Let this upadesha of a qualified guru
Be like the element of wind that blows them away.

Even concepts themselves are luminosity, And experience dawns like the sun
and the moon.

That clarity, free of the three times and ten directions, Since it cannot be
identified, cannot be expressed, And certainty shines like the stars and
planets above.

When anything arises, there is great bliss.
Its nature is free of elaborations—the dharmakaya.

The conditioned appearances of the six collections are naturally empty.
This effortless spontaneity is undefiled;*3
Within this basic nature, completely relaxed,
Wisdom that's fixation-free abides continually.
The inseparable three kayas—how incredible indeed!

Having sung this, Milarepa said to Shakya Guna, “Teacher, don't be attached to the fame and happiness of this life. Without following after mere conventional terms, you should make practice the sole point of this life. This is how you should practice dharma. Since everyone should practice in this way, put the meaning of these words into practice.” Then he sang this song of realization:

All you noble, fortunate people:
This life is deceiving, don't you understand?
Enjoyments are illusions, don't you understand?
Samsara is peace, don't you understand?
Bliss is a dream, don't you understand?
Praise and blame are echoes, don't you understand?
Appearances are mind's nature, don't you understand?
One's own mind is buddha, don't you understand?
Buddha is dharmakaya, don't you understand?
Dharmakaya is dharmata, don't you understand?
If you realize this, whatever appears is included in mind.
Throughout the day and night, look at the mind; When you look at the mind,
there's nothing to be seen.
Rest right within that not seeing anything.

As for what I think of Mahamudra, It's just the basic nature and nothing more than that.

Rest within there being no knower to be found.
Since meditation and postmeditation are inseparable, I'm without any stages in meditation.
Whatever appears, it's empty of its own nature.
By remembering this, there is no clinging or nonclinging.
Through savoring that unborn quality,

Realization follows in meditation:

Thus, the practice of karmamudra;

The practices of nadi, prana, and bindu;

The meditation and recitations of deities;

And the meditation of the four *brahmaviharas**4

Are just methods of entering the Mahayana.

If you meditate on them with fixation,

You'll not relinquish the roots of attachment and anger.

Know that appearances are just mind's basic nature And that mind itself is empty.

If your experience entails this understanding, The accumulations of virtue, like discipline and offering, Will all be complete within that.

Thus he sang. The teacher Shakya Guna then exclusively engaged in practice. He developed extraordinary experience and realization and became one of Milarepa's close teacher-meditator sons.

This is the cycle of how Milarepa accepted the teacher Shakya Guna at the Nyanang Belly Cave.

*1 In dharma practice, enemies are seen as friends on the path, as they cause one to develop renunciation and patience, and they lessen one's pride. Likewise, due to the distractions they cause, friends and close ones are considered to be obstacles and enemies to one's practice of dharma. (KTGR) *2 "Khenpo" is a title given to learned teachers. Shakya Guna's title ("teacher") implies he too is learned.

*3 "Undeclared" here means undeclared by the afflictions.

*4 The four brahmaviharas (T: *tshangs pa'i gnas bzhi*), literally "four abodes of Brahma," are loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

14

Meeting Paldarbum

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa intended to go to Jang Tago Snow Mountain*¹ to meditate. He left in the autumn, and on his way he came upon the village Gepa Lesum in Chung. When he arrived there, all the villagers were working to reap the harvest. In particular, in a large field there was a girl of about fifteen years of age who had the signs of a wisdom dakini and was leading a large group of people in the harvest.

Milarepa went over to them and said, “Benefactors, I am a yogi and I am seeking some provisions.”

The girl said, “Yogi, go to the door of my house over there. I will come and meet you.”

The Jetsun went to the door of the house and pushed it open with his walking stick. The door swung open and he entered. After a moment, an old woman wearing ragged, dirty clothes came out from within the house, carrying a fistful of ashes in her hand.

“You beggar yogis! In the summer you come begging for butter and cheese, and in the winter it’s beer and grain! You never stay put! I’ll bet you were going to try to steal my daughter and daughter-in-law’s jewelry and came over when you thought there was no one home!” Her body was quivering with rage and just as she was about to hurl the ashes at Milarepa, the Jetsun said, “Grandmother, before you throw those ashes at me, listen a little to this song of Milarepa.” Then he sang this song of realization on nine points for the grandmother:

One, above is the bliss of the higher realms’ freedom;

Two, below is the suffering of the three lower realms;

Three, in between are those without control over their birth.

When these three things convene upon you, Grandma, you’re cruel and detest the dharma.

Take care of yourself and look at your mind!

If you do something, practice the sublime dharma

If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.
If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.
When you first were betrothed to be in this family,
Did you think you'd become this kind of a woman?

One, in the morning you rise so early;
Two, in the evening you retire so late;
Three, your work doesn't ever cease.
When these three things convene upon you,
Grandma, you're a miserable unpaid slave.
Take care of yourself and look at your mind!
If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.
If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.
Then think, if you did that, would it be like this?

One, the imperious head of the family;
Two, paying taxes though you've nothing to give;
Three, the sons you can't do without.
When these three things convene upon you,
Grandma, you're undervalued and can't make ends meet.
Take care of yourself and look at your mind!
If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.
If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.
Then think, if you did that, would it be like this?

One, are the thieves who steal what you have;
Two, are the robbers who steal with force;
Three, you fight back without concern for injury or death.
When these three things convene upon you,
Grandma, you burn with rage when you meet a foe.
Take care of yourself and look at your mind!
If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.
If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.
Then think, if you did that, would it be like this?

One, your nose is into what peoples' daughters are doing;³¹

Two, you meddle in your own sons' affairs;

Three, you gossip with all of your grandkids.

When these three things convene upon you,

Grandma, you've got your fingers in everything.

Take care of yourself and look at your mind!

If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.

If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.

If you did that, would it be like this?

One, when you get up, it's like extracting a stake;

Two, you walk around like a waddling goose;

Three, when you sit, it's like a rock hitting the ground.

When these three things convene upon you,

Grandma, you're depressed with an old, spent body.

Take care of yourself and look at your mind!

If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.

If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.

If you did that, then think—would it be like this?

One, outside, your skin is all wrinkled;

Two, inside, your flesh and blood are used up, you're a bag of bones; Three,
in between you're blind, deaf, dumb, and senile.

When these three things convene upon you,

Grandma, you're a scowling hideous thing.

Take care of yourself and look at your mind!

If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.

If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.

Now, think, if you did that, would it be like this?

One, your food and drink are spoiled and cold;

Two, your clothes are ragged and heavy;

Three, your bed is made of four joined hides;

When these three things convene upon you,
Grandma, you understand you're half human and half dog.
Take care of yourself and look at your mind!
If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.
If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.
Now, think—will it be like this?

Liberation and the higher realms are as rare as a daytime star; Samsara and
the lower realms are more common than your aches and pains.
At this dreadful time when your material body and mind will soon separate,
Grandma, you're full of regret without any confidence in death.
Take care of yourself and look at your mind!
If you do something, practice the sublime dharma.
If you follow something, follow a qualified guru.

Because of the Jetsun's compassion and his melodious song, the old woman helplessly gave rise to faith, and the ashes in her hands fell through her fingers. She felt regret about all her previous actions, and as the old woman wept, the girl who had been out in the field and had shown the Jetsun her doorway entered.

The girl said, "Yogi, did you, a dharma practitioner, strike this old lady? What reason did you have for doing that?"

Then the old woman said, "Daughter, don't attack him, he wasn't rebuking me in any way. It was I who went to attack him. In return, he gave me a dharma teaching. In what he described, there was not a single thing that had not befallen me. I felt shame and despair, then having such deep regret for not being able to practice dharma, I broke out in tears. But you are not like me. You are young, wealthy, and have faith. This guru here is the one called Milarepa. Offer him respect and service, and request dharma and key instructions."

The girl said, "If what you say is true, then both of you are truly wondrous! If you really are the great lord Milarepa, then just by meeting you I will have accumulated merit. It is said that when you tell the story of your lineage of dharma practitioners, your disciples gain conviction and it changes their outlook. Please tell us about your lineage."

Then the Jetsun thought, "This girl is a disciple with a karmic connection." He sang this song of realization on the way of meeting the lineage:

First is Samantabhadra, the pervasive dharmakaya;
Second is great Vajradhara, the sambhogakaya of marks and signs; Third is
Shakyamuni, the nirmanakaya that benefits beings.

I am a yogi who holds these three lineages.

Is there a female student³² with faith in these three?

When Milarepa had sung this, she said, “These lineages are indeed marvelous; they are like the example of a river that flows from the source springs in the snow-mountains. It is said that you dharma practitioners gain certainty in the inner birthless dharmakaya in reliance on the outer symbolic guru of the continuum of consciousness. Please tell us what kind root guru you rely upon.”

The Jetsun replied, “My root gurus are like this.” Then he sang this song of realization about how to rely on qualified gurus:

The outer guru portrays the external as the continuum of consciousness.

The inner guru shows the internal as the continuum of awareness.

The ultimate guru shows mind is the ultimate continuum.

I am a yogi who has these three gurus.

Is there a female student with faith in these three?

When Milarepa had sung this, she said, “These gurus are extraordinary, like turquoise strung upon a golden chain. Before requesting teachings from them, what kind of abhisheka should one receive?” Then in reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Placing the vase on the head is the outer abhisheka.

Showing one’s body to be the deity’s form is the inner abhisheka.

Mind’s recognition of itself is the ultimate abhisheka.

I am a yogi who has these three abhishekas.

Is there a female student here who will request these three?

When Milarepa had sung this, again she spoke: “These abhishekas are extremely profound. They are like the lion, the king of beasts, who overthrows all others with his claws. Once one receives these abhishekas, it is said there is something called the ‘ultimate guiding instructions’ that allow one to bring awareness to the path. Please explain how they guide one along.” In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

The outer guiding instruction is hearing, contemplation, and meditation.

The inner guiding instruction is letting rock meet bone with awareness.*2

The ultimate guiding instruction is experience and realization free of meeting

The ultimate guiding instruction is experience and realization free of meeting or parting.

I'm a yogi who has these three guiding instructions.

Is there a female student here who will request these three?

He sang this and the girl replied, "These guiding instructions are like the appearing reflection in a rust-free mirror. Once one has received these instructions, it's said that one must roam in mountain retreats and practice Chö.*3 What kind of Chö practice do you do?" In reply, he sang this song:

Roaming in rugged mountain retreats is the outer Chö.

Casting the body away as food is the inner Chö.

Cutting to the root of the unique is the ultimate Chö.

I'm a yogi who has these three kinds of Chö.

Is there a female student here who will request these three?

The girl said, "These kinds of Chö are like a garuda, the most glorious of birds, who overpowers all other birds when he flies in the sky. They are extremely wondrous! When the yogi practices Chö there is something called 'PHAT'*4 to enable him to bring adverse conditions onto the path. Tell me, what is the meaning of 'PHAT'?" Then he sang this song:

Collecting scattered thoughts is the outer PHAT.

Rousing dull awareness is the inner PHAT.

Resting in the abiding nature is the ultimate PHAT.

I'm a yogi who has these three cycles of PHAT.

Is there a female student who will utter these three?

Thus he sang. Then she said, "These kinds of PHAT are extremely wondrous! They demand swift and firm action like a great king's battle trumpet or command. Through practicing this way, what kinds of manifestations have dawned for you?" In reply, he sang this song of realization:

The uncontrived ground dawns as great all-pervasiveness; The uncontrived path dawns as the great unimpededness;

The uncontrived fruition dawns as the Great Seal (Mahamudra).

I'm a yogi who has these three experiences.

Is there a female student who will accomplish these three?

Thus he sang. Then she said, "These manifestations are like when the sun is shining in a cloud-free sky; everything is illuminated and clear. They are

extremely wondrous! In practicing with such dawning manifestations, what kind of confidence have you attained?” In reply, he sang this song of realization:

Being free of devas and ghosts is my confidence in view.

Being free of focal object and distraction is my confidence in meditation.

Being free of hope and fear is my confidence in fruition.

I'm a yogi with these three kinds of confidence.

Is there a female student who wants these three?

When Milarepa had sung this, great faith arose in the girl and she prostrated to him. Taking his feet to her head, she invited him inside where she offered him respect and abundant service.

“Lama, before, because I was obscured with ignorance, I never thought of the dharma. Now, Lama, I would like to follow you as an attendant. Please, with your compassion, guide me in the dharma.” Thus seeing her own faults, she requested him to teach the dharma in this way:

O Precious Guru!

Nirmanakaya, supreme among beings,

I've no understanding, no awareness, and am confused:

These three faults have been exposed in my mundane life.

The southern clouds were so thick in these three summer months
That I did not sense the sunrise at all.

The cold wind of the three winter months was so strong
That I did not sense that the flowers had bloomed.

My own negative latent tendencies were so strong
That I didn't recognize that you were a siddha.

I'll tell you the story of this immature lady:

Because of negative karma I took an inferior body.

Because of the thick obscurations of my lower birth,

I did not sense that I was a buddha.*5

Having no perseverance, I never thought of the dharma.

And when I knew I should do dharma, I was carried away by laziness.

If a woman has a nice face, then her freedom is lost.

If she has an ugly one, she can't find a companion.

If she has an ugly one, she can't find a companion.

We leave our kind parents behind

And sacrifice ourselves for our husband's sake.

Being so sensitive, we have little patience.

We quarrel so much and are adept at arguing.

We collect all the gossip of the land.

At home we must act as the watchdog.

Though our food and wealth are to be shared by all,

Ill-temper and greed are our actual lot.

We never think of death and impermanence.

Our obscurations follow us like a shadow.

Now, from my heart, I wish to practice dharma.

I request a teaching that's easy to understand and put into practice.

Pleased by what she had sung, the Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply to her request:

O my disciple Paldarbum!

This story you told of a woman's life

If I praise it, you may think too highly of yourself.

If I admonish it, you may become very angry.

If I say how it is, it will expose your faults.

Now listen to what this old man says:

If you want to practice dharma from your heart,

It's time to put off scrubbing your belongings

And start scrubbing your own mind.

It's time to give up your vanity and pretension

And take a lower, humbler position.

It's time to give up your servitude of husband and son

And follow a fully qualified guru.

It's time to abandon work for the good of this life

And accomplish great benefit for the next.

It's time to abandon avarice and desire for wealth

And give generously to all without any bias.
If you understand these points, then you're a clever girl.

Child, you're like a little lark:
You speak very well, but you're bereft of dharma.
Child, you're like a forest peacock:
You've a beautiful form, but you're bereft of dharma.
Child, you're like a marketplace peddler:
Though you're quite shrewd, you're bereft of dharma.

If you wish to practice dharma well,
You should follow after me and do as I do.
Meditate on the key instructions in mountains without distraction.

Thus he sang. Then the girl offered this song in reply to the Jetsun:

O Precious Jetsun,
Yogi with whom any contact is so meaningful:
In the day, I'm busy with work that never ends,
And at night I fall into a sleep of stupidity.
From dawn to dusk, the work of food and clothing enslave me.
Thus, I'm never free to practice the dharma.

At this, the Jetsun said, "If you want to practice the dharma purely, you must understand worldly activity to be an enemy and leave it all behind." In reply to her song, he sang his song of realization on the four things to leave behind:

O student, Lady Paldarbum!
Listen, you wealthy one with faith.
Your future lives extend far beyond this one,
But have you prepared provisions for them?
If you haven't prepared provisions for them,
That provision is generosity; you should be generous!
This enemy, the guard dog called avarice,
Though you think it's beneficial, will only bring harm.
Have you understood that avarice is an enemy?

Have you understood that avarice is an enemy .

If you understand, then you should leave it behind!

O student, Lady Paldarbum!

Your future lives will be even darker than this one.

Have you prepared a lamp for yourself?

If you haven't prepared a lamp for yourself,

That lamp is luminosity; you should familiarize with it.

This enemy, a corpse-like sleep called ignorance,

Though you think it's beneficial, will only do harm.

Do you understand that ignorance is an enemy?

If you do, then you should leave it behind!

O student, Lady Paldarbum!

Your future lives will be more fearful than this one.

Have you prepared a guide and protector?

If you haven't prepared a guide and protector,

That guide is sublime dharma; you should practice it well.

This enemy who dissuades you, called relatives,

Though you think they're beneficial, will only do harm.

Do you know that relatives are enemies?

If you do, then you should leave them behind!

O student, Lady Paldarbum!

Your future lives' path is more long and treacherous than this one.

Have you prepared your stallion to ride?

If you haven't prepared your stallion to ride,

That stallion is diligence; please practice it well.

This enemy that deceives you, called laziness,

Though you think it's beneficial, will only bring harm.

Do you know that laziness is an enemy?

If you do, then you should leave it behind!

Thus he sang. Again the girl fervently pleaded, "Lama, I haven't prepared any

kind of provisions for the next life. With your compassion, please give me some guiding instructions on how to meditate and make these preparations.”

The Jetsun was extremely pleased and said, “In my tradition, you don’t have to change your name in order to practice dharma sincerely. Since you can attain buddhahood with a full head of hair, you don’t need to cut it or change your clothes in order to practice dharma.”*6 Then he sang this song of realization containing four examples along with their meaning, making five, which describes the meditation instructions for the practice of mind:

O student, Lady Paldarbum!

Well then, you wealthy one with faith:

Take the sky as your example:

Meditate free of center or edge.

Take the sun and moon as your example:

Meditate beyond brightness or darkness.

Take this mountain as your example:

Meditate free from any movement.

Take the great sea as your example:

Meditate free of surface or depth.

These examples illustrate your mind;

Meditate on it, free from worry or doubt.

Once he had sung this, he taught her the essential points of body and mind and had her meditate. The girl gave rise to excellent experience and realization. Then, in order to clear away doubts and hindrances, she offered this song to Milarepa.

O Precious Jetsun, Nirmanakaya, supreme among beings:

I can easily meditate on the sky,

But meditating on southern clouds is not so easy.

Please give the key instruction for meditating on clouds.

I can easily meditate on the sun and moon,

But meditating on stars is not so easy.

Please give the key instruction for meditating on stars.

I can easily meditate on the mountain,

But meditating on plants is not so easy.
Please give the key instruction for meditating on plants.

I can easily meditate on the sea,
But meditating on the waves is not so easy.
Please give the key instruction for meditating on waves.

I can easily meditate on my mind,
But meditating on thoughts is not so easy.
Please give the key instruction for meditating on thoughts.

When she sang this, the Jetsun thought, “She has really started to meditate,” and was extremely pleased. In reply to her request, he sang this song of realization on clearing obstacles and enhancing the practice:

O student, Lady Paldarbum!

Listen, you wealthy one with faith:

If meditating on the sky is easy to do,
Southern clouds are the magical display of the sky.
Just rest in the nature of the sky itself.

If meditating on the sun and moon is easy to do,
The stars are the magical display of the sun and moon.
Just rest in the nature of the sun and moon themselves.

If meditating on the mountain is easy to do, Plants are the magical display of
the mountain.
Just rest in the nature of the mountain itself.

If meditating on the ocean is easy to do,
Waves are the magical display of the ocean.
Just rest in the nature of the ocean itself.

If meditating on one’s mind is easy to do,
Thoughts are the magical display of the mind.
Just rest in the nature of the mind itself.

She meditated according to this instruction and gained certainty that the nature of mind is dharmata. Later, in that very body, she went to the celestial realms accompanied by music.

This is the cycle of meeting the female student Paldarbum, one of the four disciple-daughters of the Jetsun, at the site of Gepa Lesum in Chung.

*¹ North Horse Gate Snow Mountain (T: *byang rta sgo'i gangs*).

*² “Letting rock meet bone” means to have unremitting perseverance.

*³ Chö (T: *gcod*), sometimes written “Chod,” literally means to “cut” or “sever,” and this takes on different levels of meaning as is illustrated in Milarepa’s song here.

*⁴ PHAT is a Sanskrit syllable that is uttered in some Mantrayana practices to dispel various obstacles and negativity.

*⁵ All sentient beings inherently possess buddha nature and therefore fundamentally are buddhas, but due to obscurations they are not able to perceive that this is so.

*⁶ Milarepa is making reference to the monastic tradition of cutting hair, wearing dharma robes, and taking on a monastic name.

15

Meeting Seben Repa

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa, after meditating at Jang Tago, went to meditate at Shri Mountain. Along the road, he stopped at an inn in the northern part of Yeru. At the inn, there was a geshe named Yakru Tangpa who had come with a retinue of monks. The merchant Dawa Norbu was also staying there with many goods and livestock along with a large retinue.

The Jetsun went to the merchant Dawa Norbu and his retinue to beg for provisions.

“If you yogis would make a living yourselves instead of begging from other people, you would be much happier,” the merchant said, scolding him.

The Jetsun replied, “Right now, you all are happy with all you have. But what you don’t consider is that in the future, it will cause you to suffer. Listen to my song.” Then he sang this song of realization about eight things to remember:

Now, all of your family gathers within your home and you’re happy.

But when you die, they’ll throw out your remains and you’ll go. Remember this!

Now, many powerful and pompous troops are convened here and you’re happy.

But when you die, without refuge or protector, you’ll go. Remember this!

Now, you have a great retinue of paternal relatives and you’re happy.

But when you die, you’ll be separated from all your relatives and friends. Remember this!

Now, you have servants, retinues, children, and wealth and you’re happy.

But when you die, you’ll be naked, empty-handed, and penniless. Remember this!

Now, you are strong, noble, and vigorous and you’re happy.

Now, you are strong, agile, and vigorous and you're happy.
But when you die, your body will be taken and folded into three parts.*1
Remember this!

Now, your food is delicious and sweet, and you're happy.
But when you die, you won't even be able to swallow water. Remember this!

I always remember these and have practiced the dharma.
Without any worldly enjoyments, I am happy!
This song of the eight things that you should remember
Was sung at the Garakache Inn in Tsang
By me, the yogi Milarepa.
May it serve to remind you and direct you to virtue.

Thus he sang. Great faith arose in the merchant Dawa Norbu and he said, "Lama, everything you said here makes so much sense to me. Now, even I think of the dharma. Please give me some advice on how to practice dharma in this way." In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

In this rugged*2 mountain retreat, a place with qualities, With faith and
respect I supplicate you,
Precious guru who has the view and conduct.
May all who practice this be unmistaken in the meaning:

When the mind runs wild, apply the view that subjugates it; The
characteristics [perceived by] mind are self-liberated—how marvelous!

When the mind is unhappy, beg for alms with one taste; All objects are self-
liberated—how marvelous!

When meditative experiences are unpleasant, consult one with experience;
Consulting a friend with experience will help your mind.

If you don't have confidence, read the Victorious One's teachings; Through
these words of truth, you will gain certainty.

When your heart is heavy, supplicate the lord;
The blessings of the father guru will benefit your mind.

When you look out at those without any faith,
Their bodies lie down in the bed of samsara,
Their heads are placed on the pillow of the five poisons, And the mucus of
their afflictions is flung in all ten directions.

You should seek out the doctor who will heal such an illness And make an
offering of devotion with your three gates.

That doctor—the guru—uses the six excellent herbs,*³

The excellent medicine of pointing out the three kayas.

It will certainly liberate you from the five poisons' sickness.

Make the offering of your practice to show your gratitude.

Once Milarepa had sung this, supreme faith arose within Dawa Norbu, and he did just as the Jetsun said. Later, he became an excellent householder-yogi.

At that time, while Geshe Yakru Tangpa was teaching the dharma, the Jetsun was staying there acting in the manner of a *kusulu*.^{*4} The geshe's monks would all engage in the dharma activity of reciting and memorizing in the evenings. At night, they would sit straight, meditating in deep samadhi. In the morning, they would again do their dharma activity of reciting and memorizing.

Once at breakfast time, the Jetsun went to beg for something to eat.

The monks said to him with contempt, "You pretend to be a yogi outwardly, but you can't do any recitation or memorize anything. You can't meditate in samadhi. You can't even recite any mantras. Then to come here to a group of the monastic sangha begging for things that were donated to them, what a shame!"

The Jetsun replied, "I practice deity meditation and mantra recitation. I study and engage in dharma activity. I meditate in samadhi. I do them all at once, and this makes me very happy." Then he sang this song:

The support, the three jewels that are ever-present,

Are perfect in the state of uncontrived awareness;

I don't need to make supplications to them.

This yogi who's free of reciting mantras is so happy!

The yidam deities who bestow the two types of siddhi*⁵

Can't be created; they're perfect within luminosity.

So I don't need to practice the creation stage

So I don't need to practice the creation stage.

I'm a yogi whose body arises as the deity, so happy!

The host of dakinis who clear away obstacles and adverse conditions
Are perfect in the natural innate state.

I don't need to offer any tormas to them.

I'm a yogi who rests in the six consciousnesses relaxed, so happy!

The demons that cause obstructions are just my own thoughts.

Appearances of ghosts are perfect in dharmata.

I don't need to do pujas or bang on drums.

I'm a yogi for whom thoughts arise as dharmakaya, so happy!

All the conventional terms of the scriptures

Are perfect within the experience of luminosity.

I don't need to do any study of those.

I'm a yogi for whom experiences arise as texts, so happy!

Thus he sang. Geshe Yakru Tangpa said, "Yogi, your practice is truly amazing!
But to be a good representative of the Buddhist teachings one must first study,
then wear the yellow robes and engage in excellent conduct."

Then the Jetsun replied, "That is your tradition, so you should do accordingly.
But I am Milarepa, and in my tradition, if I am not ashamed of my own conduct,
then that is sufficient. When I look at your tradition, it seems to be like this. See
if what I say is true." Then he sang this song of realization:

I go for refuge to the three precious jewels.

Guru, with your compassion, look upon me.

You're a spiritual friend with the eight worldly concerns.

If, inwardly, your own mind hasn't been tamed,

Outwardly, how can you tame other unruly beings?

The lama's white parasols with their peacock plumes

Are impermanent, like a flash of lightning in the sky.

Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

On the outskirts of town the monastery serving tea

On the outskirts of town, the monastery serving tea
Is like a signal that invites cheating and disaster.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

The bustle of busyness of the laypeople here
Is like the milling about of aggressive enemies.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

Protecting one's livelihood—horses, sheep, and livestock— Is like a dusty
wind that blows the dewdrops on grass.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

This illusory body, with its heaps of afflictions,
Is like a human corpse painted in gold.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

As for the leaders of groups of practicing *yoginis**6
They start out good but then end up bad.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

The ganachakra feast with its desirable food
Is like the Mongols who come to collect a compulsory tax.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

Village rituals—divinations, Bön rites, and astrology— Are like schemes to
force one to hand over lots of money.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

The little songs sung to deceive female students
Are like the howls of a cat in heat.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

The owner of a home and fields in his own land
Is like an infant staring at a rainbow.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

The arrogant students in this assembly here

Are like the servants of many ministers.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

Teaching the dharma when you haven't grasped its meaning Is like the
swindling of a liar.
Geshe, think it over; is it not like that?

In short, with a crop that doesn't benefit oneself,
It's awfully hard to act for the benefit of others!

Thus he sang. Then boundless faith and devotion arose in Geshe Yakru Tangpa. Shedding tears, he rose from his cushion and did prostrations before the Jetsun. "What you have said is true!" Then he requested teachings in order to make a connection with the dharma.

From among his monks present, there was one named Seben Tönchung who became a follower of the Jetsun. Milarepa gave him abhishekas and instructions and after meditating he perfected his experience and realization. He became one of the heart-sons of Milarepa, named Seben Repa of Dotra.

This is the cycle of meeting Seben Repa at the Garakache Inn of northern Yeru in Tsang.

*1 This is a reference to how bodies are handled at the time of death.

*2 T: *gnyan sa*. This term can mean either "rugged place," or "a place with powerful local spirits."

*3 One enumeration of the six traditional medicinal herbs used in Tibetan medicine is nutmeg, clove, cubeb, cardamom, saffron, and bamboo. Other lists include myrobalan, musk, and solidified elephant bile (JV, RY). Here, however, "six excellent herbs" should be understood in the general colloquial sense of "good medicine."

*4 *Kusulu* generally means "beggar" or "do-nothing"; it refers to someone who does nothing but eat, sleep, and defecate. (KTGR) *5 The two types of siddhi are the common siddhis (higher perceptions, magical power, etc.) and the supreme siddhi of full enlightenment.

*6 Yoginis are female yogis.

16

Meeting Drigom Repa

NAMO GURU

Once, the Jetsun Milarepa was doing his practice while residing at Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain*1 in Latö. At that time, the leader of a band of bandits, along with several of his henchmen came upon the Jetsun. When they saw that Milarepa had no material possessions or provisions of any kind and that he was practicing the genuine dharma, faith arose in them.

“Lama, why are you staying in this place with such poor quality water and so few resources? Please come to our home; we will offer you service.”

The Jetsun replied, “Although this place has poor water and few resources, it’s because of this that what I really need, my meditative concentration, is flourishing. Though your home may have nice amenities, I will not go. That said, if any of you are fortunate and have karmic propensity, come to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain to meditate.” Then he sang this song of realization:

The marvelous site, Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain:

The journey there is long, but it’s a site near the path.

If there is a fortunate one here with karmic propensity, go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

If there’s someone who’s let go of this life, then go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

The marvelous site, Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain:

There, water is distant but experience and realization are near.

If there is a fortunate one here with karmic propensity, go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

If there’s someone who’s let go of this life, then go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

The marvelous site, Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain:

There, water and firewood are rare but many dakinis gather.

If there is a fortunate one here with karmic propensity, go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

If there's someone who's let go of this life, then go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

The marvelous site, Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain:

There, the yidam with blessings, Chakrasamvara,^{*2} resides;

He is a yidam who bestows the siddhis.

If there is a fortunate one here with karmic propensity, go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

If there's someone who's let go of this life, then go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

The marvelous site, Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain:

There, the wondrous dharmapalas Mahakala and Mahakali reside;

They're the dharmapalas who clear away obstacles.

If there is a fortunate one here with karmic propensity, go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

If there's someone who's let go of this life, then go to Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

Thus he sang. Then the bandits' leader developed great faith and he prostrated, taking the Jetsun's feet to the crown of his head. "May we meet in the very near future," he said, and left.

Later, when the man went to meet the Jetsun, he brought a large piece of turquoise. He wondered if it were really best to offer it to Milarepa, thus giving rise to some misguided doubts. So, holding it back, he brought another gift to offer in place of the turquoise. First, when he offered the smaller gift, the Jetsun smiled and said, "You don't need to have doubts about offering the turquoise that you intended for me. I have no need for turquoise, but if you offer it, it will perfect your accumulation of merit."

Thinking that Milarepa had the unimpeded higher perceptions, the man offered the turquoise, and Milarepa accepted it.

Milarepa then returned the turquoise saying, "Here, use it for your retreat

provisions.”

“He really has no attachment to wealth,” the man thought, and attained unwavering faith. He then followed the Jetsun as an attendant and was given the abhishekas and instructions. Through meditation, he perfected his experience and realization.

Thus, that man became one of Milarepa’s heart-sons, Drigom Lingkhawa.

This is the cycle of meeting Drigom Repa at Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

*1 T: *rgyal gyi shrI ri*. Quintman states, “An alternate, and ancient name, for the sacred mountain (*gnas ri*) Rtsib ri” (2008: 378). The name also appears in the *Black Treasury* as Tsib-ri (*rtsib ri*) (DN: 375).

*2 A yidam deity of the mother class of the anuttarayoga tantras; Chakrasamvara is one of the main yidams practiced in Milarepa’s tradition.

Repa Shiwa Ö

NAMO GURU

The lord of yogis, the Jetsun Milarepa, had been meditating during the summer in the south of Shri Mountain. When the autumn harvest time came, he went out begging for alms in the practice of equal taste. While he was sleeping at Upper Koptang, it is said, in a dream, a lady with dark skin and bright yellow hair appeared leading a young man who was about twenty years of age. She said to the Jetsun, “Milarepa, of the eight portions of your heart, one belongs to him. Therefore, give it to him,” then she vanished.

The Jetsun awoke and thought, “This lady was a dakini. Of my destined disciples, eight will complete the path and are like my heart. Today, I will meet one of them, an individual who has awakened karma. I definitely must help him.”

He went up the path of Lower Bong and right at the Silver Spring Stupa he sat sleeping for a little while. Then a young man appeared riding a horse that was black as a crow.*1

“Yogi, what are you doing sleeping?” he said.

The Jetsun replied, “Benefactor, where are you going?”

He said, “I’m crossing this river and going to Dingri Khokna.”

“Well then, since this old yogi cannot cross the river, I must ride on the back of the benefactor’s horse.”

The young man said, “I’m in a hurry to get to the east for a festival. If you ride with me, it will injure the horse.” With no desire at all to take the Jetsun along, he went on ahead, it is said.

Then, while immersed in a guru yoga of devotion, the Jetsun held his prana,³³ he glided over to the other side without sinking into the water. When he looked back at where he had been before, in the middle of the river, it is said he saw the young man coming, splashing, and making white frothy waves. Though the young man had seen the Jetsun leap to the other side right before him without sinking into the water, he couldn’t believe it. He thought, “Were my eyes deceived? Did

he really cross the water without sinking into it?” He went on and crossed to the other side.

The young man shouted, “Lama, wait!” then went up to him. He looked at Milarepa’s feet and saw his soles had barely touched the water. At that, heartfelt faith arose in him.

“I didn’t realize that the guru was a siddha. Please forgive me that I didn’t let you ride my horse earlier.” Right then he got down from his horse and prostrated to the Jetsun many times, placed Milarepa’s feet up on his head, and with intense devotion said to the guru, “Lama, where are you from? Where have you studied? What is the name of your guru? Where is your monastery? What kind of meditation experiences have you had? From where have you come today? Where will you go tonight?” Thus, the young man asked Milarepa many detailed questions. Then the Jetsun replied with this song of realization:

Well then, my handsome young man,
If you want to know, then listen here.

Do you know who I am, or not?

If you don’t know who I am,

I am Milarepa.

My cord*2 was cut in Lower Gungtang.

I did my studies in Ü and Tsang.

Beginning with the father Gyetön Ngokme,

All the way up to Rangtön Lhaga,

I’ve had ten gurus who were very kind.

The dharma I received from them was the early-school tantras.*3

They had high understanding of the dharma view.

In particular, in the presence of Lhajé Nupchung

I received the fierce mantra of Red and Black-Faced Rahula.*4

Though he was learned in his tradition of practice, He could not quite cut my mistaken perceptions.

Then the one who was blessed by Maitripa and Lord Naropa,

Who was introduced to the mother-like dharmata of mind

And mastered the key points of the body’s interdependence,

“He resides at the site of Lho Chükhyer,” it was said.
Renowned from afar, this father Lotsawa,
Just hearing his name, my hairs stood on end.
Traveling a difficult path, I came into his presence.
When I saw his face, my outlook instantly changed.
That he was a guru from former lifetimes was sure.
For the one from Lhodrak, the peerless lord,
That venerable one who was so kind
I had no offering of material wealth to give,
So with body and speech, I served by crushing rocks.*5
I heard the profound tantra of Hevajra.
In particular, I received Naropa’s path of means.
For Chakrasamvara, who’s endowed with blessing,
I received all the ripening path’s four abhishekas.
The dharma of Mahamudra was pointed out,
And I saw the essence of mind, the innate reality.
I realized the base, the dharmata free of elaboration.
For the four streams of the whispered lineage*6
I collected all the key instructions of great quality
And drew out the vital essence of the profound key points.
For practice, I meditated on nadi, prana, and bindu
And attained mastery of the points of prana and mind.
I, therefore, am a yogi of space.
The four inner elements are thoroughly mixed;³⁴
I have no fear of the outer element of water.
Before, I was merely testing you out.³⁵
My monastery is Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain.

This morning, I came from Upper Koktang, And tonight it’s not certain
where I shall wander.

This is the way for a yogi like me.

Young man, be happy, and go where you please.

When the Jetsun had sung this, the young man's faith grew even stronger and tears flowed freely. He took the reins of his black horse, offered them to the Jetsun's hand, and then offered this song:

Here's a siddha whom I've never seen before;
A being, beyond all ordinary humans;
A buddha, difficult to meet face to face;
A nirmanakaya whose speech is difficult to encounter.
I have never heard your name.
I did not recognize your face.
I have never prostrated to you.
I have never inquired of your health.
Though I have regret, still I ask,
Lord, kindly please forgive my shame.

My black horse with wings of the wind,
His neck is beautified with a breast-strap*⁷ and bell.
Upon his coat of good pedigree,
Lies a saddlecloth of yak hair, soft and warm,
And a regal saddle, made of white oak.
Ornate iron buckles are added to the cinch.
The crupper and breastplate are tied with fine knots of red rope.
At the nape of the horse's magical bridle
Is a tiger's fur with finely drawn stripes;³⁶
It's embossed with a mirror that shines bright like a star.
With control of the reins you can turn him around.
A white cane whip will deliver its command.
When he performs in the king's father's memorial festival*⁸ ³⁷

And the flag is planted at the finish line, Without a doubt this is the stallion
that wins the prize.*⁹

He's a true prize for this worldly man.
Because I offer this horse to the father Jetsun,
Please, great sorcerer, don't send me to the hells.

Having sung this song, he offered his horse, but the Jetsun wouldn't accept it.

"I have a horse that is far better than the one you have," he said, and sang this song of realization:

Benefactor son, listen here this once,
I have the stallion of consciousness and prana
Greatly extolled with meditative equipoise.
He has a coat of illusory postmeditation
And the saddle of luminous self-awareness.
The three nails to be observed*¹⁰ are added to the cinch.
His crupper and breastplate are the two gates' upadeshas.
On the nape of the bridle, the prana-control practice,
Are the three nose-points*¹¹ that are finely drawn.³⁸
It's embossed with the waves of inner peace.
Physical trulkhor*¹² is what turns him around.
He's whipped by the continual flow of experience
And gallops on the plain of the avadhuti.
That is the horse of this yogi here.
If I gallop away, I'm liberated from samsara's muck;
If I pursue, I arrive at the dry land of enlightenment.
I have no desire for your black horse,
So, young man, you can pursue your own way.

When the Jetsun had sung this, it became clear to the young man that Milarepa would not accept his horse. However, seeing that Milarepa was barefoot, the young man thought, "Perhaps he could use my boots." He took off his embossed boots, and offered this song:

Precious yogi siddha lord,
Since you have no attachment to your homeland,
You wander the lands with no fixed direction
Where there are angry dogs with weapon-like teeth
And brambles and defiles that torment your feet.
Since walking barefoot is so wearisome,
These blue boots will be your faithful servants.

Valuable threads of silk were used
To make embroidery beautiful to the eye.
Embossed brass buckles are placed thereon.
Fine leather of Upper Gungtang,
And leather from a wild yak's underbelly
Were joined together by a craftsman with skill.
On the miraculous handcrafted³⁹ bootstraps Are engraved lion heads and
crocodiles.*¹³

They are the stylish dress of this young lad.
Jetsun, please wear these on your feet
And accept me with compassion.

After he sang and offered the boots in that way, the Jetsun said, "I will not accept them. I have boots here that are far better than yours." Then he sang this song of realization in reply:

Young man with faith, listen here.
In this homeland of the three realms of samsara,
The darkness of ignorance densely gathers.
The mire of passion is full of filthy muck.
The rocky plain of jealousy has rugged barbs.

The wild dog of aggression bites and gnaws.
The rocky mountain of pride has precipitous cliffs.

Having crossed the four great rivers,*¹⁴
I escaped to the field of great bliss.
The illusory leather of impermanence, the cause,*¹⁵
And the leather sole of revulsion toward samsara
I join with confidence in karma, cause and effect.
On the bootstraps of the myriad sensory pleasures⁴⁰
Are the silk threads of freedom from attachment to my own perceptions
And the embossed brass buckles of accomplishment and practice.
Then I add the belt of the three points to bind.*¹⁶

These are the boots this yogi has;
For your embossed ones, I have no desire.
Benefactor, you may go on to your own home.

When Milarepa would not accept the boots, again the young man spoke: “Jetsun, very well, even if you will not accept the boots, with nothing but a single cloth to wear, it must get very cold. Please, you must accept this red and green coat.” And he offered this song:

Precious guru, siddha lord,
You don’t take any place to be your own,
Thus, with no fixed reference, you roam around.
Sometimes you go to the mountain peaks.
Sometimes you sleep on the village streets.
A single cotton cloth is the same as having no clothes.
Dwelling with naked body, you must get cold.

The garment on this young man’s body
Was made from red and green raw silk of Mendri*¹⁷

And sewn together by a skillful craftsman.
Its lining is stuffed with filling white as a cloud.⁴¹
The chest piece is decorated with a silk brocade.⁴²
The top is embellished with the fur of lynx.
The lower hem is made from an otter’s fur.
The sleeves are crafted from excellent silk.
If you wear it, you’ll look majestic and radiant.
You won’t have distress about cold gusts of wind.
It’s the excellent garment a Zhang minister*¹⁸ would don.
Father Jetsun, please take it and wear it.
I ask you, with your kindness, please grant me refuge.

Though he supplicated in this way, the Jetsun would not accept and replied, “I have a better coat than the one you have.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Listen young man, with the smart tongue!

In general, in the city of someone’s six realms

in general, in the city of samsara's six realms

With the wind of negative karma forcefully driving me,
My consciousness powerlessly roamed around.

It roamed the field of the bardos of birth and death,
It went to the mountain peak of the bardo of dreams,
And it slept on the crossroads of the bardo of becoming.
I pursued the primordial eternal land.

Made from the raw silk of perfect purity,
It's enwrapped by the silk of the samaya vows
And is sewn by the craftsman of mindfulness and awareness.
The chest piece with its shape of the three yogas
Is embellished with the Three Vital Points of Mixing.*¹⁹
The sleeves of luminosity at the moment of death

Are joined with the pure illusory body, Then the hem of the bardo's pointing-
out is sewn.

That is the coat of this yogi.

I do not want your red and green one.

Young benefactor, go happily, as you please.

Then the young man said, "Jetsun, if you will not accept the coat, because your clothes are so thin, you must, please, accept the coat's mantle." Then he supplicated him with this song:

Now, you precious, supreme being,
When the great heat of the three summer months emerges
And the melodious call of the cuckoo is heard,
Though you dwell nakedly, you don't chill at all.
But in the three months of winter, the earth falls breathless;
The single cotton cloth you wear is thinner than silk;
The new year's icy wind will sting more harshly than an arrow
And the father Jetsun will suffer the chill.

This mantle of the red and green coat
Is made of white cloth with a spotted pattern

And hemmed with dark-colored raw silk.
The chest piece made of satin there
Is covered with a blend of five-hued cloth.
The upper cloth is handcrafted with embroidery.
That is the garment of this young man.
Through this offering of clothes to the Repa Lord,
Look on me with compassion, I pray.

Though he offered in this way, the Jetsun again did not accept. “I have an even better garment than you have,” he said, and sang this song of realization in reply:

Listen now, to this kind father!⁴³
Forcefully led by the confusion of ignorance,
I went, without seeing, to frightful cliffs.
The gales of the afflictions had both great heat and cold.
The results of bad karma, like rain, poured down.
Now I’ve escaped to the city of liberation.

On the white cloth made of chandali’s ashé,
Is the chest piece of the nadi’s four chakras.*²⁰
The hems of inner prana and mind are joined.
The brocade of the heat of bindu’s blaze and drip
Is enwrapped by seams of the experience of bliss and emptiness in union.
It’s the coemergent garment of chandali.
For the clothes of inner chandali, there is no summer or winter.

Though outwardly garments of wool are lovely,
A single cotton cloth is light and comfortable.
I have no desire for your garments there.
So, benefactor, go on to your home.

When Milarepa had sung this, again, the young man made an offering: “Jetsun, though you won’t accept this clothing, since you have practiced so much since last year, your body has become weak; I offer you my hat so that you can trade it for some meat to restore your body.” Then he sang this song of offering:

O yogi, supreme being,
You gave rise to weariness for the things of samsara
And wished for liberation from birth and death.
Thus, intending to practice with one-pointed focus,
You have undergone many great hardships
And your body has become wearied by the sufferings of cold.

This hat that I wear upon my head
Is a sparkling hat from India.
This wondrous and precious silver plate

Was made by skillful craftsmen there.
On the inside and outside is crocodile hide
And it has been embossed by hand.
A vulture feather is placed upon its crest
And the chinstrap is a regal crystal garland.
If appraised, it'd be worth the price of a large yak.
Nirmanakaya, I offer this to you.
Exchange it for a variety of nutritious meat.
Please, father Jetsun, restore your body.
Please let me follow and attend you in summer and winter.

The Jetsun did not accept the offering and sang this song of realization in reply:

Listen, young man, don't let your eyes be deceived:
This lineage son of the great scholar Naropa
Has gained mastery over the key points of *tendrel*, the path,
And has perfectly familiarized with the profound methods.
Thus, I've no fear toward the inner elements of wind;
This doesn't depend on a variety of nutritious meat.
Cold wind, you may do as you please!

As to the crown upon my head:
It's beautified with clarity, like sun and moon ornaments.
The wish-fulfilling jewel, lord, nirmanakaya

THE WISH-FULFILLING JEWEL, 1010, nirmalakaya
Translator, whose name is renowned far and wide,
He sits there beautified with charnel-ground ornaments.
If you know how to look with the eye of respect,
You will meet the face of glorious Vajradhara.
It's certain he'll protect you with love like a son.
That is the hidden, inner crown.
The outer pandit's hat of India is lovely,
But to throw such a hat away is the very hat I wear.⁴⁴
I have no desire for your hat.
Young man, go happily to where you were going!

Then the young man thought, "The Jetsun's continual refusals must mean all that I have offered to him is too insignificant." With that, he untied a piece of precious turquoise that was around his neck, and offered this song:

Well then, supreme and wondrous being,
Having practiced and practiced without attachment,
Since you see all that arises as illusion,
You have no desire for objects and wealth.
And I, powerlessly, have given rise to faith.
If this child, through generosity, doesn't offer to you
The wealth and food amassed by his father,
The gods of the heavens would be disgusted;
And tomorrow onward, this man's mind would be steered by evil.
Thus, Lord, please don't say you don't want it.

This white turquoise with great luster,
A bright lamp of the Shuyé clan:^{*21}
A soft leather strap is threaded through it
And it is placed upon red silk.
If sold, it would free the world of poverty.
I offer it for the neck of this genuine lord.
With kindness, grant the genuine dharma.

With this song he offered the turquoise, but again the Jetsun didn't accept.

"I have no desire for your turquoise, for I have an even more precious jewel than that." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Benefactor son, listen to this kind father!
Within the expanse of this vast land
This yogi has wandered distant paths.
At crowded crossroads of the towns,
For provisions, once daily, I beg for small morsels.
I have revulsion for delicious, sweet food.

With mundane wealth, there's never any contentment.
When I see the wealth that's been hoarded left behind,^{*22}
I have no wish for your rich man's wealth.
I am the king of contentment and within my treasury
Is the precious jewel of the whispered lineage.
It is inlaid with practice and experience,
Cleaned with mindfulness that doesn't forget,
And its eye is threaded with the four-session yoga.
My mind is adorned with the child of awareness
So I have no desire for your turquoise necklace.
Son, go happily on your way.

When the Jetsun had sung this song of realization, the young man thought, "Is this Jetsun nirmanakaya not accepting me because he sees that I have committed negative deeds?" Then he said to Milarepa, "Holy being, though you don't have any regard for illusory wealth, I now offer you these three weapons.^{*23} From now on I will abandon the use of weapons, and take the vow never to take life. With your kindness, you must grant me refuge." Offering Milarepa his carrying pouch^{*24} and gear, he offered this song:

Now then, supreme being of great compassion,
Until now I have taken my enemies as enemies.
I've never let a stubborn foe get away.
On my right is this quiver of tiger skin
With flaming stripes, which holds my arrows.

On my left is a sheath of leopard hide;*25
With its spots, it hides my bow.
My sword is ornamented and etched by hand;
It is the point where the *dralha* and *tsen* convene.*26

When I tied my gear and sheath onto my hip, I'd look like a Mongol warrior
dressed for banditry.

When enemies saw it, their heart and lungs raced.
They'd flee like grazing yaks running into rocky heights.
I have contemplated this and now have deep regret.
These previous deeds, I regret and purify.
And so now I offer these three weapons to you.
From this time forth, I make this vow:
Lord, wherever you go, I will follow and serve.

Although he offered in that way, again, the Jetsun did not accept. “Son, you will not be able to keep this vow. And I also do not want these weapons you've offered. I have a carrying pouch that is even better than yours,” and in reply he sang this song of realization:

Son, listen here, you unrivaled champion.
At the watchtower of confusion—the misconceptualization of objects—
The foe—the bandit of the five poisons—violently advances.
If, now, you don't blend victory and defeat,*27
Later, there's a danger you'll be thrown in the inescapable prison.
This yogi wages battle upon such foes.

Outer appearances are my striped tiger-skin quiver
The inner self-luminosity, without fixation, is my leopard-skin sheath.
Upon the sword of great *prajña*
And its belt of the expansive path of union
Is the hand-sewn embroidery of the signs of accomplishments' qualities.
These are the hidden inner gear.
In the bow of emptiness, the unborn reality,
Is loaded the arrow's notch of *bodhichitta*—the means.

When the arrow of the four immeasurables is shot,
It will repel the attack of the enemy—the five poisons.
It will block the battalion of afflictions and karma.
That is how this yogi subdues the enemy.
I do not want your carrying pouch.
Benefactor son, happily go to your home.

When the Jetsun had sung that song of realization, again the young man spoke, “Exalted Jetsun, though you don’t accept my three weapons, since there is no way I could go without thanking you for your kindness, please accept this cloth belt and dagger.” Supplicating Milarepa to accept him with compassion, he sang this song:

Lord, yogi nirmanakaya, please listen:
Though many know dharma, there are few who practice,
And only few among hundreds will show signs of accomplishment.
Is not the Father Nirmanakaya Repa such a one?
I don’t receive teachings from many who know dharma:
So your genuine dharma that comes from undergoing hardship
I dare not request empty-handed.

This cast iron from the center of Nepal
Is decorated with etchings of waves and clouds.
This sharp iron dagger with a lion on the grip
Has a white iron sheath with silver lattice.
It has a chain of carved white iron
As well as a chain of gold and bronze.
When it’s tied to my waist, I look majestic and handsome.
It’s a great accessory for all young men.
Please accept this gift I offer with devotion;
With it I request a few words about meditative experience.

Making this petition in song, he took his belt and dagger in his hands and offered them to the Jetsun. Then Milarepa said, “Right now, it is not suitable for me to share my meditation experiences. I also have no desire for your offering. I have a

belt and dagger that are better than yours.” Then he sang this song of realization in reply:

Son, unrivaled youth, listen here!

I, a lion that wanders in snow mountains,

Have a milk that’s like a nourishing elixir.

I’d never pour it into any container Other than a ladle made of gold.

On my waist that is straight and movement-free

Is bound my belt of intense motivation—the base.

Etched on it are waves of the mind free of deceit.

For my prajña, a dagger that’s pointed and sharp,

Is the iron sheath of three measures of confidence and experience.

Both the iron chain of faith

And the golden chain of diligence

Are great adornments for all dharma activity.

Through great fear of the punishment of the dakinis

I’ve never before sold the dharma for wealth,

Nor will I now accept your gift.

Young man, go onward to your home.

When the Jetsun had sung this, the young man said, “Jetsun yogi, if you will not accept any service of material offering, I shall offer you a monastery. Please accept it and stay there.” Then he offered this song:

Lord with yogic conduct and discipline,

Since you’re action-free and have reversed attachment,

You’ve turned your back on the prison of your homeland.

You wander the lands of humans with no fixed direction.

You’ve cut the elaborations of body’s pleasure and pain.

Now, staying in a single place, may your realization and experience flourish!

This monastery is built on the edge of mountain and plain.

On a pure and naturally arisen column

Shines the sun and moon’s illuminating light.

On the azure floor with its Chinese ink,

A mandala is drawn with mineral paint

A mandala is drawn with mineral paint.

There too, are arranged lovely bouquets of flowers.

Outside, a protective trench surrounds it.

The support beam ornaments are made of wood,

And eight stupas ornament it beautifully.

This support for devotion of us worldly ones,

I offer as a seat for the father Jetsun: Please remain here relaxed and at ease.

The Jetsun did not accept his offering and said, "I have no desire for a monastery to own, and I do not know about conforming with the customs of worldly people, so listen to this song of mine." Then, in reply, he sang this song of realization:

Now, strong youth decked with ornaments,

In this life all is impermanent, merely an illusion.

When Yama, the Lord of Death, arrives,

You rich men cannot make a ransom of your wealth;

There'll be no place for a hero to strike with his sword;

And the cowardly fox will have no place to run.

When that time comes, the flesh turns to dust.

For fear of that, I've seized the fortress

Within the monastery of the inner unborn mind:

In the middle, beam ornaments are made from the unmoving prana;

The column of reality's changeless base is raised;

The sun and moon of creation and completion's path shine.

On the floor of the heat of shamatha

Is drawn the mandala with the ink of vipashyana.

Bouquets of bliss, clarity, and nonthought, too, are placed.

The beautiful eight stupas of the ten virtuous deeds

Are surrounded by the protective trench of emptiness.

That is this yogi's monastery.

I have no desire at all for your monastery.

Benefactor son, happily go on home.

Thus Milarepa sang without accepting the monastery the young man offered. Again, the young man spoke: "Lama, though you won't accept this retreat, since

the body is illusory, it is a basis for illness. I offer my capable sister. She is one of faith and can be your consort. Please do not be irritated, and accept her.” Then he offered this song:

Lord, yogi who roams in mountain retreats,
Because you’ve seen the hidden faults of women,
You are free of a lustful mind. And yet, Since this body is illusory, it is a
basis for illness.
It is fine to have a close, dear companion.

The only sister of three brothers and me,
A daughter descended from excellent paternal lineage
And born from a wise mother, a magical lady.
Among crowds of devas and humans, she’s an enchanting beauty,
A suitable queen for a regal king.

She wears a goddess’s clothing of silk
Patterned with waves and flashing rainbows.
On the braid of gold and turquoise upon her head
Is a garland of alternating onyx and agate gems.
This wondrous lady, who is lovely as a painting,
Has had many suitors, but we’ve consented to none.
Today, nirmanakaya, I offer her to you.
Please don’t be irritated; accept this gift.

Though he offered in this way, the Jetsun did not accept. “Son, don’t speak like this. I have abandoned the households of samsara. I don’t have any desire at all for a self-centered wife. My present happiness comes through being spontaneous. If you give your sister to an old beggar like me without any nobility or lineage, later, all the neighbors in your land will mock you. Son, you will surely regret it. I will not be your sister’s groom. However, I have a far superior wife.” In reply, he sang this song of realization:

In the lineage of the noble and wise
In general, women are a cause of desire
And a qualified awareness-consort is extremely rare.
Traversing the messenger path is wondrous.

But since there'll be praise, blame, and mocking of your sister,
To rely on her as a *mudra* would be difficult.

My lady is emptiness, free of attachment;
She's a beauty with the radiance of compassion.
Her loving smile is so enchanting.
Her various clothes of red and white
Are swathed in the silk of the nondual meeting.
She wears the halter of equal taste's conduct.
Upon her braid of the four joys
Lies a garland of the multiplicity as being of one taste.
She's a beauty who realizes innate reality, the base.
That's the female companion of this yogi here.
I have no desire for your samsaric householder life.
Now, benefactor you go back to your home.

Thus the Jetsun sang, refusing to accept the offering. Again the young man said, "Jetsun, even though such a wondrous being with realization as you doesn't have any concepts about embarrassment, since worldly ones like me will generate misgivings, please, you must accept these trousers." So he offered the trousers with this song:

Lord yogi, you with nothing to hide,
Who sleeps naked with the conduct of yogic discipline,
Your male jewel you expose wherever you please.
Since your confusion has been dismantled from within,
You have no dread or apprehension at all.
Worldly ones like me have embarrassment and shame.
Your realization is high, indeed, you're a buddha,
But if your conduct conformed with humans that would be excellent.

These trousers that this young man wears
Are made from a ewe's softest wool.
It was spun by my very own sister and mother,
And my wife skillfully strung the loom.

It was then woven together by my neighbor's daughter,
And my uncle lovingly stitched them up.
It's clothing for worldly ones with shame like us.
I offer these trousers to you.
I beg you not say that you won't accept them.

After he had offered the trousers in this way, the Jetsun replied, "Son, you don't understand the difference between shameful and unshameful. You laugh at how I leave my appearance relaxed at ease, but when we first came from the mother's womb, we were naked with no clothes. In the end, when we die, consciousness leaves the body naked and goes on its way. Now, too, I do not practice fabricated conduct; I leave my conduct naturally like this. I know the shame that contrived ones have. Therefore, son, listen to this song." Thus in reply, he sang this song of realization:

So, young man, with such fine gifts,
You're ashamed about things that are without any shame.
This here is just a natural male organ,
I don't have the shame that is contrived.⁴⁵
But you don't avoid those things that are truly shameful:
Toward those who engage in negativity and hypocrisy
You have no shame or heedfulness;
However, I do have this kind of shame.

The material, the soft wool of bodhichitta,
Is spun by the ripening paths' four abhishekas.
It's strung on the loom of samadhi, the path of liberation,
Then cleaned and scrubbed through pure aspirations.
The maker who remembers the one who is kind
Sews the trousers of heedfulness and shame.
This garment that protects one's shame perfects the benefit of other.
I have no desire for your trousers there,
Benefactor, go back to your own home.

When he had sung this, the young man thought, "Whatever service I offer to this

great being, he doesn't accept it. I need to figure out where he's going and where he will stay; I should invite him to my own home."

Then he said to Milarepa, "Holy Jetsun, you will not accept any of my service or offerings to you. However, there must be some place you intend to stay along this path on which you are traveling. Therefore please don't keep it secret, you must tell me."

The Jetsun replied, "Son, there is no secret here. I'm going to Dingri to beg for alms during the harvest. When the harvest is threshed, I will go over to Nyanang. Then in the winter, I will stay in a remote valley called Lachi."

Then the young man thought again, "I must dissuade him and invite him to come to my home for a few nights. If he accepts and I request the dharma, I wonder if he will teach." Then he sang this song:

Incomparable Nirmanakaya Lord,
Although you intend to go to Dingri
And beg for alms in the practice of equal taste,
That land is without any good qualities.
In Dingri, a land with expansive sky,
The people's virtue is less than a mustard seed's worth.
Their fists are tighter than temple doors.
The tsampa is rarer than precious gold;
And on the rare occasion you find some, it will make you sick.
That land is a city of famine.

And then if you go in the direction of Nyanang
The pass of Tongla Ngonmo is a terrifying place.
Bandits who rob the locals roam there.
It's a place where lepers wander at night.
The hiding places for ambush are countless.
One dare not travel except with a hundred companions.
To go even three steps you'll need a guide.
That land is called Nyanang, the Dark Valley.

It lies at the border of Nepal and Tibet:
The upper region is the snowy land of Tibet.

Whether summer or winter, it always snows.
Day and night a great icy wind blows,
And the people there are dumber than cows.

Then the rivers flow to Mön in the south:
The lower region is a hot land with ravines
With tight treacherous bridges where your life is endangered,
And Nepali fever will threaten your life.
In the south, the people speak differently, in a Nepali tongue,
And the trees there are like stiff human corpses.

Lord, that land is no place for you to go;
I beg you, don't go now, please delay your journey.
Though you refuse to be my permanent object of veneration,
For half a month I can offer you food.
I beg you to come to this young man's home.
Lord, out of compassion please come with me!

Thus the benefactor sang. Then Milarepa said, "In general, I don't appreciate benefactors who are self-centered. Son, I will not go to your home. I know Nyanang and Dingri better than you do. Listen, here, to my song." Then he sang this song of realization in reply:

O young man with determination,
Son, listen to this with unwavering faith:

A land where all ten virtues are present
And the people are faultless with good qualities
Is difficult to find, for times have changed.

This yogi acts with whatever comes to mind.
I've never fallen under the authority of others.
It's true that tsampa is rare in Dingri,
But for me, with food, there's no clean or dirty.
Outwardly, I enjoy the five amritas.
I've never been attached to delicious food.

Thus, I'm a yogi of the untouchable class.
Inwardly, I eat the food of nonconceptual samadhi.
Therefore, I have little concern for food.
Famine, you may do as you please!

Though the pass of Tongla is a fearsome place,
I supplicate the lord endowed with blessing.
The three jewels of refuge are an excellent support
And the three worlds' dakinis come to be my guide.
Bodhichitta, my friend, accompanies me
And the eight classes of devas and rakshasas come to welcome me.
I am free of enemies and without any wealth.
Bandits, you may do as you please!

Although the land of Nyanang is called the Dark Valley,
The people are genuine as in days of old.
The speech they use is genuine and honest.
Their conduct is genuine and completely relaxed.
Their food and drink is genuine and they don't hold it back.
The land has a genuine, natural forest.

I don't care much for material offerings
But their food and drink is abundant.
This yogi's mind is happy there.
There, distractions of busyness are few.
Samadhi of meditative equipoise flourishes there.
So, therefore, it's to Nyanang that I go.
I've obtained control over chandali's heat.
I'm free of fear over hot and cold winds.
Snow, you may do as you please!

I will not delay my journey this time;
Son, I will not go to your home.
I've no desire for arrogant benefactors.

I know nothing about the conduct of pleasing others.
The sun is setting, now ride your horse.
Young man, it's time to happily go.
Son, may you be free of sickness and have long life.

Thus he declined to go with the young man. Then, with disappointment, the young man replied, "Jetsun, whatever service I offer, you will not accept it. No matter how much I request the dharma, you will not give it. I must be heavily obscured. Now, there's nothing for me to do but make aspirations and take my own life before you."

Then he took the razor-sharp dagger that he had and pointed it at his heart. With a cry of lamentation he offered this song:

Great Lord Yogi, now please listen:
I, today, on this morning,
Right at the Silver Spring Stupa,
Saw a man here naked and sleeping.
I thought maybe he was a yogi who was completely crazy
Or else who does all kinds of improper things,
Who'll display any kind of behavior at all.
Thus, I didn't think you were a man in whom to put trust.
I had no faith and disrespectfully slandered you.
I didn't follow the road but went around to avoid you.
This the Jetsun knew very well.
My desolation and remorse are worse than death.

Then when the sun shone softly at its peak
And you crossed the wide blue river,
I saw you floating over the water like a bird.
I saw you surging into space like the wind.
I saw your miraculous body going over.

When you had gone across the great river,
Because I had met such a siddha lord,
"My latent tendencies and obscurations must be small," I thought.

“I have such great merit,” I thought.
“I have karmic connection and pure aspiration,” I thought.
“I’ve the fortune of the sublime dharma,” I thought.
The level of joy that I felt here today
I have never felt since my mother gave birth to me.
As for my service of offering illusory wealth,
To that, you said, “I don’t need it, I don’t want it!”
Except from you, the yogi Repa Lord,
I’d never heard of that in all of Tibet.

A man more wondrous than you
I’ve never seen among all who practice dharma.
Lord, although you are truly wondrous,
Today, the way that I presented my offerings
Was not agreeable to the exalted lord.
Thus it seems my negative karma and obscurations are great.
It seems I have only the tiniest merit.
It seems I am not qualified to practice the sublime dharma at all.

Now, full of despair and ignorance,
My mind is agitated and I’m so disheartened.
I don’t know the path, I’m completely oblivious.⁴⁶
Now that I’ve seen a true nirmanakaya,
If I can’t obtain just a few kind words, It’ll be as though I’ve not met this lord
at all.
What will I say to my countrymen?
If I return to my home, how ashamed I will be.

Because of this I shall take my own life.
Sentient beings, once born, must eventually die,
So for me, now seems the best time to go.
I’ll die in the presence of a siddha lord.
With my mind focused on dharma, I will die.

Is there any speech more pleasant to hear than that?*

Lord, please think of me with your higher perceptions.

Oh! How little merit this young man has!

Thus he supplicated, with total self-rejection. Then the Jetsun thought, “He has such great devoted interest and affection for me, we must have a connection through aspiration. It is certain that this is the one I saw last night in my dream. Now, I must accept him.” In response, he sang this song:

Son, young benefactor, listen to me.

With your strong determination in the mind of virtue,

It’s certain your bad karma and obscurations are few.

With the confident way you spoke just now,

It’s certain you have little pride or self-regard.

Through your persistence and diligence here,

It’s certain you have little laziness.

With the heart of generosity that you’ve displayed,

It’s certain you’ve little avarice or attachment.

With the great prajña and compassion that you’ve shown,

It’s certain you’ve little ignorance or aggression.

With the great devoted interest you’ve shown toward me,

It’s certain you’ve relied on noble ones before.

Therefore, my son, don’t say you’ve fallen into despair.

You, who come from Lower Gyaltrom,

And I, the vagabond from Tsa in Gungtang,

Here, today, on this morning,

Have met at the bank of this wide blue river.

We’ve come together at the base of the Silver Spring Stupa.

This, it seems, is from previous aspirations.

It’s certain we’ve a karmic connection of practice.

It seems the imprint in our all-base has awakened.

This is a song of our excellent *tendrel* from before.

Now, when meeting with genuine reality,

Son, if you earnestly wish to practice sublime dharma,
If faith has welled from the depths of your being,
If you won't look back upon this life,
If you truly want to follow me:

Relatives are the dissuasion of maras:
Not thinking they're real, you should cut their ties.
Food and wealth are the spies of maras:
The more that you get used to it,
The worse things get; abandon your attachment.
Sensory pleasures are the noose of maras:
They'll certainly bind you; let go of attachment.
Youthful companions are female maras:
They'll surely deceive you; be cautious of them.
One's homeland is the prison of maras:
Getting freedom is hard; quickly escape!

Putting all those aside, then you should go:
If you put them aside now, it would be meaningful and excellent.
The dummy of this illusory body must fall away.
If we make a *tendrel* now, it would be excellent.
The vulture of the mind will surely fly.
If you soared in the sky now, it would be excellent.
If you listen and do as this man instructs,
Son, you'll have the fortune of the sublime dharma.
I'll give you the abhishekas and blessings, which are the gateway,
And I'll give you the instructions of the profound whispered lineage.
Son, you have taken hold of the path,
And I, this yogi, am full of delight.
Young man, keep this in your mind!

Thus the Jetsun sang and the young man developed joy and was elated. He took the Jetsun's feet to his head, and made many prostrations and circumambulations.

Making a solemn aspiration he went on his way, it is said.

About four months later, when the Jetsun was staying at Menlung Chuwar in Drin, the young man and his nephew came to see him. The uncle offered a piece of turquoise, the bright lamp of the Shuyé clan, and his nephew offered half a measure of gold. But Milarepa would not accept them. At that very time, Guru Bari Lotsawa was building a stupa of Ushnishavijaya*²⁹ in Drin.

The Jetsun said, “Uncle and nephew, it is fine if I do not have these things you have offered, but you can offer them to Guru Bari Lotsawa and request him to give you abhisheka. As for the instructions, I will give them myself.” In this way Milarepa helped them make the connection.

They received the complete abhisheka of Chakrasamvara from Guru Bari Lotsawa, and after that, the guru gave both the uncle and nephew the three outer practices—the cycle of Ushnishavijaya, the practice of extending life called the recitation of Meru Singha, and the cycle of Arya Amoghapasha.*³⁰ For the three inner practices, he gave the *sadhana* of the Seven Letters of Chakrasamvara, the cycle of the Guru Symbolic Jetsunma, and the *sadhana* of Kurukulle. After that, the two of them accompanied Guru Bari Lotsawa to Sakya and then returned to where Milarepa was.

Staying with the Jetsun for five years, they received the widely renowned Six Dharmas of Naropa and the Mahamudra lineage of the great lord Maitripa. He nurtured them by giving them the naked instructions and the oral instructions without exception.

Before, the young man’s name had been Shuyé Darma Wangchuk, then later the Jetsun changed his name to Repa Shiwa Ö. Before, concerning himself with worldly customs, he had great attachment. Later, he became one who relinquished worldly concerns. Then, while in the presence of the Jetsun, he offered vows that for the rest of his life he would only wear a single cloth, would never wear leather shoes, would never return to his homeland, and would never keep more than two days’ provisions at a time. With perseverance in meditation, excellent experience arose. The Jetsun was very pleased, and sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to all the noble gurus.

This compassionate practice lineage has great blessing.

The instructions of Marpa and Mila have great power.

This young man, Shiwa Ö, has great endurance in meditation.

Because of the mamos and dakinis he developed quick realization.

Son, if you wish to take your practice to the end,
Without engaging in empty speech,
Practice dharma in an unbiased way.
Don't wish for noble glories of the past;
Travel in isolated and empty valleys.
Don't spend time around negative friends or servants;
All alone, engage continually in practice.
Don't think of becoming a guru yourself;
Keep a humble position and practice meditation.
Don't wish for signs to quickly come;
Let your meditation last until your death.
Don't study words or terminology;
Meditate without distraction on the whispered lineage instructions.
If you should think, "Will this benefit me?"
Abandon conventional terms and practice meditation.

Then Shiwa Ö said, "Previously, you said that to train in study without practicing is a deviation from the path. Please say more about this."

The Jetsun replied, "Someone who hasn't let go of this life and doesn't know the key points of practice will deviate. I, a son of Marpa's lineage, have no deviations. Do not train in words or terminology, and devote yourself to practice." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of the noble guru.
The teacher who uses bloated words
When debating is cunning, acting like a madman.

When he speaks, he's like a jaded woman who chatters on and on.
When he sleeps, he slumbers in pompous pride.
When walking, he struts about like a Mongol.
Such men have many deviations and hindrances.

In general, the three realms and six classes have their respective deviations.
Ordinary beings deviate through desirous actions.
Shravakas and pratyekabuddhas deviate by abiding in peace.

Geshes deviate in how they collect their charity.
Teachers deviate with the fortress of words.
Bhikshus deviate by pretending to be good.
Yogis deviate by falling into insanity.
Meditators deviate into the view of vacuous emptiness.
Then, every kind of ignorance is a grave deviation.

For the dakinis' breath of the whispered lineage,
Thinking there are deviations, that itself is a demon.
Shiwa Ö, while at the side of the Great Repa,
If you think you'll fall into deviations, then you are deceived.
Abandon your doubts and practice meditation.
When directly applying the naked instructions,
If you think there are deviations, don't take them as real.
Son, don't worry about studying terms.
Meditate one-pointedly and you'll obtain the result!

Abandoning conventional terms, he meditated one-pointedly in the presence of the guru, enduring great loss with respect to clothing and food. At that time, one of his friends from before came there. Seeing him in his impoverished state, without any material provisions such as food and clothing, his friend, giving rise to false compassion, said, "Shuyé Darma Wangchuk, you used to be wealthy, the treasured child. Now you've become an old beggar with nothing to eat or wear. How awful for you!" In reply, Repa Shiwa Ö sang this song of realization:

The Father Jetsun Guru is the nature of Buddha.
A support of having a place to make offerings are both of my parents.
But my other relatives have been a cause for samsara; Therefore, I've
relinquished all close relations.

To be alone by oneself is the nature of Buddha.
A support for virtuous activity are dharma friends.
But three or more is the cause for idle chatter;
So therefore I remain alone by myself.

A single word of instruction is the nature of Buddha.

A support for virtuous activity are small manuals with instructions.
But the cause of pride is a variety of many texts;
So therefore I've abandoned taking notes.

Mountain retreats in the wilderness are the nature of Buddha.
A support for virtuous activity is seeking provisions.
But the cause of attachment is material things;
So therefore I've relinquished my fatherland.

The country without fixed direction is the nature of Buddha.
A support for virtuous activity is the faithful ones' alms.
But the cause for the afflictions is many retinues and servants;
So therefore I've relinquished retinues and servants.

Giving rise to great faith, the friend from before made many offerings of wealth.

The Jetsun was very pleased with Shiwa Ö, who served as his attendant until he passed into *parinirvana*. He completely received all the key instructions of practice and thus cut through all deviations of experience and realization. The nephew did not become a *repa yogi*, at which the Jetsun was slightly displeased. He became known as the foolish and noble Sangye Kyap, and kept a small monastery at Rana in Nyanang, it is said.

As for Repa Shiwa Ö, after the Jetsun passed into *parinirvana*, when he had meditated at the Golung Menchu Cave in Padruk, he perfected all the qualities of the paths, *bhumis*,^{*31} experience, and realization. He became able to move unimpededly through rock in the practice caves, and in that very life went to a celestial realm.

This is the cycle of Repa Shiwa Ö at the Silver Spring Stupa, and so forth.

*1 The bird referred to here (T: *'ol ba*) is possibly the red-billed chough (*Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax*), which is very common in the Himalayan region. (DPR) *2 T: *lte ba*. Umbilical cord.

*3 The tantras of Tibet's early phase of translating dharma, also referred to as Nyingma.

*4 Sometimes called Red-Faced Za, which is a mixed translation/transliteration of the Tibetan (T: *gza' gdong dmar nag*).

*5 This is a reference to Milarepa's hardships of building the towers under Marpa's supervision. See [chapter 2](#) of the second section of Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life of Milarepa*.

*6 The four streams of the whispered lineage coming from Tilopa consist of the yogas of chandali, dream,

luminosity, and illusory body.

*⁷ An ornamental strap that is tied around the neck of the horse of someone of wealth or high class (T: *mgul dom g.yer khas gzengs bstod de*). (DPR) *⁸ This seems to be the festival that Shiwa Ö is going to when he meets Milarepa, though the exact nature of the festival remains obscure.

*⁹ This probably refers to a Tibetan tradition of planting a spear or staff with a flag on it for the first contestant who crosses the finish line in a race, and the “prize” is more literally something like a ceremonial scarf (T: *kha btags*). (DPR) *¹⁰ The three nails here are probably view, meditation, and conduct. (DPR) *¹¹ The three nose-points refers to the tips of three different nadis that open at the forehead center, at the throat, and at the secret place. These are referred to in certain subtle-body practices, particularly in the father tantras (Kongtrul 2008: 314).

*¹² Yogic exercises for the subtle body.

*¹³ Tibetan boots require straps that wrap around the leg in order to properly hold them up. The lion heads and crocodiles are most likely designs etched into pieces of ornamental metal that the boot straps are strung through. (TN) *¹⁴ The rivers of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

*¹⁵ The contemplation of death and impermanence is taught to be the cause for developing the desire to practice dharma.

*¹⁶ The three points are probably body, speech, and mind. (DPR) *¹⁷ “Mendri” (T: *mendri*) is a Tibetanized transliteration of an obscure word most likely in an Indian language. Rockhill states, “it may possibly have a connection with the munga silk of Assam. Perhaps it may be a local term for satin” (Rockhill 1884: 239); Jäschke says this might be a type of fur. I have read *sprin chu* as a misspelling or alternate spelling of the word *srin bal*, which is raw silk.

*¹⁸ Zhang was an important clan in early Tibet. (TDC, RY) *¹⁹ The Three Vital Points of Mixing (T: *gnas bsre ba gsum*) is a teaching that came from Marpa (DPR); the three mixings are connected with the Six Dharmas of Naropa: chandali is the mixing of desire and great bliss, illusory body is the mixing of aggression and lack of true existence, and luminosity yoga is the mixing of ignorance and nonconceptuality. (DK) *²⁰ Chakras (or “wheels”) are centers in the body where there are concentrations of nadis. The chakras are a key component of the yogic subtle body practices.

*²¹ Shuyé is the clan name of the young man here named Darma Wangchuk. He later became known as Repa Shiwa Ö.

*²² When one dies, one must leave behind all of the wealth that one has hoarded throughout one’s life.

*²³ Three traditional Tibetan weapons: arrows, sword, and spear (T: *’khor gsum*).

*²⁴ A pouch carried by travelers containing various necessities (tinder-case, smoking implements, weapons, etc.) (T: *stag chas*).

*²⁵ In traditional Tibetan gear, the bow and arrow are carried in flat pouches that fall on either side of the legs and are attached to a belt tied around the waist. (DPR) *²⁶ *Dralha* (T: *dgra lha*) means “warrior god” and *tsan* (T: *btsan*) are fierce spirits usually associated with mountains; both are deities derived from the Tibetan Bön tradition.

*²⁷ This means to let go of attachment to victory and aversion for defeat and see them as equal.

*²⁸ To think in terms of dharma as the young man is doing here, what is more pleasant to hear than that? (DPR) *²⁹ A female long-life deity.

*³⁰ This is a kriya yoga tantra; when translated literally from the Tibetan it means “The Cycle of the Noble Meaningful Lasso.” Amoghapasha is a manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion.

*³¹ *Bhumi* (T: *sa*) means “level” or “ground” and refers to the different stages of the path of meditation of realized beings.

18

Meeting Ngendzong Tönpa

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa did not have any wealth or material enjoyments of any kind but carried only a single bamboo walking stick with all of his necessities attached to it. One day, while attended by Seben Repa, he went begging for alms in the practice of equal taste at a small castle by the confluence of rivers in the Chim Valley. There were no people living there except for a single old woman. Milarepa went to the old woman and said, “We are here begging for alms.”

The old lady replied, “I don’t have anything to give you, as I am very poor. Outside, in the fields over there is a rich man of Ngendzong named Jangchup Bar. Today he is working on his farm. Go there and he will provide you with something.”

With that, the father Jetsun and his disciple-son went there. When they arrived, the rich man was hauling a big bag of seeds.

The great Jetsun said, “Benefactor, it is said that you are rich. Thus, please give us two yogis today’s provisions.”

The man replied, “I can give you provisions. If you are truly a genuine yogi, then you know how to take appearances and use them as examples. I ask you, please sing a song of realization in connection with my plow here.” Then the Jetsun and his disciple Seben Repa both sang this song of realization in reply:

Well then, arrogant benefactor,

Rich man of Ngendzong, listen here!

In the first month of summer and the three of spring,

When all the Tibetans are plowing their fields,

I, a yogi, also plow a field.

On the hard earth of the field of the afflictions, the base, I scatter the manure
of faith, the preliminary,

And soak it with the moisture of the five amritas.

A wise and intelligent farmer Plants the seed free of confused conception.
Yoking together the two oxen of nonduality,
He attaches the plow endowed with prajña.
The driver who is endowed with samaya
Sets to work the plow of nondistractedness.
Then using the whip of diligence to speed it along,
Though the afflictions are hard, he digs them up.
The sprout of awakening begins to rise;
And at the time of the result, it will be fully ripened.
You're a farmer of this mundane world;
I'm a farmer of the lasting crop.
Whose harvest is greater, we'll look and see.
Who'll have ultimate happiness, we'll compare and find out!

I have made examples of these appearances
And sung this song of work in the fields.
Be happy now, you arrogant man;
Accomplish self-benefit and accumulate merit.

Thus he sang. Then the man said, "Well then, yogi, what does the walking stick that you hold in your hand symbolize? This thing that seems like a child's toy, or some crazy man's tool, must have some kind of meaning. Please explain this meaning." Then again, the Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply:

Well, benefactor, inquisitive one,
You with great generosity, listen here!
Do you know who I am, or not?
If you don't know who I am, I am Milarepa.
I'm a person who's undergone hardship.
I'm a meditator with great perseverance.
I'm a yogi who's trained with impartiality.

This bamboo walking stick that I hold in my hand
First grew on the side of a great rock.
In the middle it was reaped with a great curved scythe.

In the end it was strung with a soft leather strap.

As for its source, it came from Mön in the south.

What carried it? It was carried by the dzo*¹ of the Mahayana.

Where did it travel? It traveled to the marketplaces.

Who offered it? It was offered by one with faith.

This bamboo walking stick that I have here

Do you know its meaning, or do you not?

If you don't know what its meaning is,

Then listen well, and I'll explain.

Cutting the bamboo at the root to begin

Is the sign of cutting the root of samsara.

Cutting the top end of the bamboo

Is the sign of cutting all doubts and deviations.

The measure of the bamboo is two cubits*² long: This is a sign of the two measures of a practitioner.

The bamboo from which it is made is excellent and supple: This is a sign that mind itself, the base, is primordially excellent.

The bamboo's sap is soft with good color:

This is a sign of having trained in mind's innate reality.

The bamboo is straight and flexible:

This is a sign of the practice of unmistaken meaning.

The grooves that are on the bamboo

Are a sign of being trained in the continual path of awakening.

The four different sections of the bamboo

Are a sign of having the four immeasurables.

The three joints that are on the bamboo

Are the sign of the three kayas, complete within the base.

The color of the bamboo doesn't change:

This is a sign that the base, dharmata, is unchanging.

The bamboo is also round in shape:

This is the sign of dharmata, free of elaboration.

The bamboo is primordially pure and shining:
This is a sign of the stainless dharmakaya.

The hollow center of the bamboo Is a sign that all phenomena are empty.
The small black marks upon the bamboo
Are a sign of subtle concepts arising
For the yogi repas of Tibet.

The bamboo's paternal lineage, its nobility from the start, Is a sign of
correctly practicing dharma.

The bamboo is lovely and pleasing to see:
That's a sign of beings' faith and yearning.
The metal around the bamboo's base
Is a sign of yogis roaming in mountain retreats.

The copper handle that wraps around it
Is a sign of bringing the dakinis under control.

The iron nail driven in the bamboo
Is a sign of the yogi's great perseverance.

The brass ornaments that are attached
Are a sign of the expansion of the inner good qualities.

The leather strap that is attached to it
Is a sign of the suppleness of the yogi's mind.

The two leather whipcord*³ strands braided together Is a sign of bringing
union to the path.

The mother and child whipcord strands braided together Are the sign of the
three kayas meeting the mother.

The bone ornaments that are attached
Are a sign of the yogi roaming the countryside.

The pouch of flint and steel placed here
Is a sign of taking what appears as one's friend.

The white conch ornament that is attached
Is a sign of the turning of the wheel of dharma.

The small piece of a beast's hide attached
Is the sign of no apprehension or dread.

The mirror that is attached
Is the sign of full realization dawning from within.
The sharp razor that is attached
Is a sign of cutting the pain of the afflictions.

The sphere of crystal that is attached Is a sign of being free of latent
tendencies and stains.

The garland of ivory that is attached
Is a sign of great longing for the guru.
The set of bells that is attached
Is a sign of renown in the ten directions.
The white and red woolen cloth attached
Is the sign of the retinue of many disciple-sons.
That it's beautiful when held in the yogi's hand
Is a sign of taming ordinary ones through methods.

This question you had of its meaning
Is a sign of an imprint of devotion you have.
That you have met with me
Is the sign of the aspiration you had before.
This song of the white bamboo walking stick's signs,
Do you understand its symbols, all you devas and humans?
They've a dharma meaning. Now with faith and respect, May you practice
genuine dharma happily for a long time!

After the Jetsun sang this song of realization on how his white bamboo walking stick was concordant with dharma, exceeding faith arose in the benefactor. He did prostrations, bringing Milarepa's feet to his head. "Lama, until I die, please be our object of veneration. Stay here and make this your home."

But the father Jetsun and his son would not agree to stay for more than seven nights. "I will not be your mundane worldly resident lama," he said, and prepared to leave.

As he was leaving, the benefactor said, "If the Jetsun guru must leave now, please, before you go, say just a few words about how your meditative experience arose in your mind." Then the father Jetsun and his disciple-son sang this song of

realization:

Well then, benefactor endowed with faith,
You fickle-minded rich man, listen here!
Dharma is easy to speak of, but its meaning is difficult.
You worldly people, so confused,
Hoping you'll have leisure, you let the seasons pass.

Merely thinking about practicing, you waste your human life.
It would be good if you practiced some dharma.

Spring water from rocky mountains and the three cooling medicines Can
certainly clear up the illness of jaundice.
But only the mountain snow grouse*⁴ can reach it; Creatures in the lowlands
have no ability to drink it.

The sword that is made of meteoric iron
Can certainly repel an attack in battle.
But only the King of Elephants*⁵ can wield it; Others, small elephants, cannot
put it on.

The deathless amrita of the gods
Certainly accomplishes *rasayana**⁶ for the body.
But they are from the master Nagarjuna,
It is not the domain of all dharma practitioners.

The golden locket of *vetalas*
Can certainly clear away poverty;
But apart from Prince Chandraprabha,
It is not the domain of ordinary subjects.*⁷

A jewel that comes from the depths of the ocean
Can certainly satisfy all needs and desires.
But apart from the naga kings Nanda and Takshaka, It is not the domain of
people of Jambudvipa.

The celestial palace of Tushita*⁸
Is certainly a great spectacle;
But apart from the great master Asanga,
Ordinary people cannot see it.

The power of the six excellent medicines
Can certainly cure any illness of heat or cold.
But apart from the fragrant sandalwood,
They won't develop within all ordinary trees.*⁹

Karma, cause and effect, and the ten pure virtues
Can certainly make one see the higher realms.
But they are only for those endowed with faith;
It is not the domain of those with great negativity.

The upadeshas of the Kagyu gurus
Can certainly make one attain enlightenment.
But they are only for those with karmic connection;
They are not the domain of unqualified ones.

The precious upadeshas of the whispered lineage
Can certainly actualize buddhahood.
But they are only for those with great perseverance;
Meditation is not the domain of you distracted ones.

The ganachakra with its food and drink
Is able to clear away poverty.
But it is only for those who give to the poor,⁴⁷
It is not the domain of miserly ones.

The generosity of giving material wealth
Is certainly a provision one can make for oneself.
But apart from you, the rich man of Ngendzong,
All others with wealth do not dare to give.

I, the yogi Milarepa,
My attendant Seben Repa here,
And you, the rich man from Ngendzong Chim Valley, we three: For seven
nights we'll sleep in the same place;
That's because of the connection of our aspiration.
But I will not stay; I must roam around.
For you, benefactor, and your retinue of family,
May your life be long and free of illness.

After Milarepa sang this, he said to the rich man, “Your giving me food, my teaching you dharma, along with this place to sleep: these three things are important.

“Devotion is called ‘the seed of the mind’; if you always have such faith then that is the cooperating cause for the next life. For creating the connection of aspiration, it isn't necessary to teach a lot of dharma, nor do we have to be together for a long time. The condition of a focal object and the mind's seed of devotion must come together and mingle for just a short time. It is by the power of aspiration that we have come together.

“The mind of faith and intent is important. These days, people have not accumulated merit, and so they cannot see many inner qualities of people. Instead all they see are the tiny outer faults. Having devotion doesn't depend on being near or far from me. If you are near me and become very close, then you will just become full of resentment, and your dharma practice will not progress. You need to habituate [to dharma and virtue]. I will make aspirations for you. You should also make supplications to me and give rise to devotion.

“If the conduct and level of faith that you have right now doesn't change, then there is no doubt that in the next life you will have an exceptional rebirth and have abundant enjoyments. For practicing the dharma, you don't need to travel to many different lands.

“Furthermore, when you see lots of negative conduct [in others], then your mind becomes twisted. Engaging in the dharma of the worldly customs of your own country is good; accumulate merit on the side. But simply giving to beggars without hesitation is also sufficient if it is done with the intention of bodhichitta. There is no other good thing called ‘dharma’ besides that.

“You will not be able to imitate me. If a fox tries to jump where a lion jumps, he will break his spine. Most dharma practitioners are not able to practice in the

way that I do. So therefore, householder, do not waver from this strong faith you have now.”

Then the master Jetsun and his disciple went on, begging for alms in the practice of equal taste. They came to a village where there was a teacher of the mantra tradition. The teacher said, “Yogis, where are you from? From the looks of you, it seems you are enhancing your practice of perfectly pure view and meditation through the conduct of equal taste.”

The Jetsun replied, “Do you have the practice of view, meditation, and conduct, or not? As for mine, I could explain it, but you wouldn’t understand. Therefore, to make a good karmic connection, this morning we have come to ask you for some provisions.”

The teacher said, “I can certainly give you provisions. As I am a teacher of a tradition of mantra, I have some understanding of those practices. In my own tradition, I practice view, meditation, and conduct in this way.” Then, explaining his tradition’s view, meditation, and conduct in great detail, he asked, “Is it concordant with your own?”

The Jetsun said, “You should have fear of samsara and let go of this life. Have the intention to quickly attain buddhahood, and apply yourself. If you do not practice without distraction in accord with a qualified guru’s instruction, you will go down a mistaken path merely for the sake of wanting to be famous, while engaging in the view, meditation, and conduct of coarse words written in letters.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Alas! Listen here, great teacher!
Without giving up this life you have,
You won’t accomplish the benefit of others.

While not realizing samsara and nirvana to be one, And engaging in the
unsurpassed conduct of equal taste That comes only from looking at
books with black letters, Does that not carry you down the river of the
eight concerns?

With your view of union, free from extremes,
Have you not fallen off the cliff of the four possibilities? *10

With your meditation of mental nonengagement, *11
Have you not been bound by characteristics?

With your samadhi of great bliss,
Don't attachment and desire deceive you?

Without the blessings of body and speech,
Don't the phenomena of characteristics bind you?

When you meditate upon appearances as the guru,
Doesn't your awareness become distracted?

In teaching the Secret Mantra through symbols,
Have you not taught them devoid of symbolism?

The primordial purity of your own mind,
Is it not corrupted with fabrications and lies?

Without the noble guru's permission,
Aren't you just acting haphazardly?

Your activities of attachment to this life,
Are they not obstructing demons?

If you don't have view, meditation, and practice That is endowed with a
blessing lineage,

Because of the deception of beguiling demons,
It's certain you'll not be free from samsara's lower realms.

Therefore, follow a genuine lineage.

Practice well without self-concern.

Thus he sang, and the teacher became full of faith.

“So very true! How amazing!” he cried out. He prostrated, taking the Jetsun's feet to his head, and invited him to his home, where he gave abundant service and respect. He asked to follow Milarepa, and seeing that he was a person with karmic connection, the Jetsun allowed him.

Then they went to the Lachi Snow Mountain, where Milarepa gave him the abhishekas and instructions, thus ripening and liberating him. He became the

heart-son of Milarepa known as Ngendzong Tönpa Jangchup Gyalpo.

This is the cycle of meeting Ngendzong Tönpa and the song of the bamboo walking stick in Chim Valley.

*1 T: *mdzo*. Dzo are the male offspring of a hybrid cross between yaks and domestic cattle that are often used as beasts of burden.

*2 TDC gives the measurement of one “cubit” (*khru*) as “the length from the tip of the elbow to the base joint of the little finger,” which would make Milarepa’s stick a bit short. It’s possible the term formerly referred to a longer unit of measure.

*3 Whipcord is a general term for braided cord. The process typically requires four strands, which correlates to the two strands mentioned in this line and the two in the next example.

*4 TDC describes this species of bird (T: *lha bya gong mo*) as “a field-dwelling bird with yellow and grey feathers, variegated pattern on the belly, with red beak and feet.” Other sources describe this simply as a “mountain-dwelling bird.”

*5 The “King of Elephants” (T: *glang bo sa srung*) is an elephant that resides in the celestial realm of Tushita with white body, seven limbs, bare head, and six tusks, and is ridden upon by the gods Indra and Vishnu. (AKW) *6 Literally, “extracting the essence” (T: *bcud len*). This “is the practice of forsaking ordinary food and drink, and subsisting only on the essences one extracts either from flowers and other substances or from space” (*Stories and Songs*: 110).

*7 This seems to be an obscure reference to the *Vetalapañcavimśati*, a series of twenty-five stories told by a vetala, a type of spirit that inhabits cadavers in charnel grounds at will. One of his stories tells of a Prince Chandraprabha (T: *rgyal bu zla ’od*); however, there is no apparent direct connection between the vetala and the prince.

*8 Tushita is one of the six deva realms of the desire realm. It is said to be where the Indian Buddhist master Asanga went to receive teachings directly from the Buddha Maitreya.

*9 The six excellent medicines can refer specifically to six different medicinal herbs that are thought to be the most effective in Tibetan medicine; however, here the term is taking on a more general colloquial meaning of simply “good medicine,” not necessarily referring to the individual six medicinal herbs. Sandalwood is thought to have particularly powerful medicinal properties. (TN) *10 The four possibilities, also called the four extremes and taught extensively in the Middle Way (Madhyamika) philosophical teachings, consist of conceptually fixating upon things as being existent, nonexistent, both existent and nonexistent, or neither existent nor nonexistent.

*11 This is a technical term used in the context of Mahamudra meditation that describes the lack of mentally engaging an object with the conceptual mind. Through mental nonengagement, appearances arise to the mind without being obstructed by conceptuality.

19

Meeting Dampa Gyakpupa

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was dwelling at Lachi Snow Mountain, one night there appeared in a dream a beautiful girl adorned with precious jewels and bone ornaments. She said to him, “Yogi Milarepa, in accord with your guru’s instructions, you must go to meditate at Tisé Snow Mountain.*1 Along the way, you will meet with someone with karmic connection. You should accept him.” She said this and disappeared.

When he awoke, Milarepa thought, “This was the yidams and dakinis repaying the guru’s kindness. Since it is his admonishment and prophecy, I must go.”

Then he went from Lachi to Tisé, and on the road at the confluence of Gyak in Nyanang, Dampa Gyakpupa*2 encountered the Jetsun. He came up to Milarepa and invited him to where he himself was staying.

In the rows of a great ganachakra offering, Dampa Gyakpupa asked, “While sitting in the rows of this gathering, could the Jetsun please tell of what has arisen in his mind, and what is necessary for all practitioners, in the form of a song of realization?” In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization, “The Twenty-One Points of Mind”:

One is Secret Mantra, the great path of means; Two are the great key
instructions of the guru; Three is great perseverance in meditation:
These points are the three greatneses.

One is prana-control penetrating the vital point; Two is mind itself
penetrating into the expanse;

Three is penetrating mastery over your mind: These points are the three
penetrations.

One, the command of the guru is accomplished; Two, the reality of one’s
mind is accomplished; Three, others’ benefit is spontaneously
accomplished: These points are the three accomplishments.

One, the outer obstructing spirits and demons are pacified; Two, the inner afflictions are pacified;

Three, the sickness of body is pacified:

These points are the three pacifications.

One, one becomes expert in poetic words;

Two, one becomes expert in answering questions; Three, one becomes expert in the nature of mind: These points are the three kinds of expertise.

One, one sees bliss as not a real thing;

Two, one sees appearances nakedly;

Three, one sees them as free of labels:

These points are the three aspects of seeing.

One, the people gather together;

Two, the enjoyments are gathered together; Three, the dakinis gather together:

These points are the three gatherings.

These twenty-one necessary points of mind

Dawned in a yogi's mind and were put to song.

In general, dharma practitioners should cherish them well.

In particular, my disciple-sons should cherish them well.

For only a few in a hundred will the necessary points come together;

Therefore, attaining liberation is very difficult.

Now, while these necessary points have come together, Even though they are difficult, put them into practice.

Thus he sang. Dampa Gyakpupa then followed Milarepa as an attendant, and was given the abhishekas and instructions. Through meditation, he perfected his experience and realization and became one of the close sons of Milarepa who were teacher-meditators.

This is the cycle of meeting Dampa Gyakpupa.

*1 Tisé is one of the Tibetan names for Mount Kailash. *TDC* states the name is of Sanskrit origin; however, other sources say it is derived from the ancient Zhang-Zhung language of Tibet.

*2 The son of Jomo Urmo mentioned in the cycle of “The Song of Snow.”

20

Meeting Kharchung Repa

NAMO GURU

According to prophecy, the master Jetsun Milarepa and several of his disciples went to Lowo Lake after having gone to Tisé Snow Mountain. At that time, one of the disciple-meditators pretended to be ill and would walk no further, so the journey was interrupted. Thus, Milarepa stayed and taught dharma at Upper Lowo that summer. Autumn set in and the cold winds came. When they began the journey back toward Tisé, many male and female students accompanied him as far as Kora Pass. At the point where they saw him off, they prostrated and circumambulated many times. Then the students requested the Jetsun to sing a song about how their future meeting was uncertain. In reply he sang this song of realization on the way of a yogi:

I am just a man, a yogi of Tibet;

I am Milarepa.

I've studied little but have many key instructions.

Though I'm humble, I have great perseverance.

I sleep little and have great endurance in meditation.

I'm an expert in all by knowing one thing

And I understand everything to be one:

I am an expert in genuine reality.

On my small seat, stretching my legs is pleasant.

With thin clothes, my body is perfectly warm.

With small bits of tsampa, my stomach is full.

My example is that which all meditators aspire to.⁴⁸

I'm a gathering place for those with faith.

I'm an object of reliance for those fearful of birth and death.

I go in no fixed direction

And I stay in no one particular place.

For conduct, I go without reference points.
I have no attachment to material things
And no notion of clean or dirty food.
For me, the pain of the afflictions is small.
I have little self-regard and few desires.
I've little attachment to perceiver and perceived And I've loosened the knots
of the state of nirvana.
I'm a friend of the elderly, a shoulder to lean on, And a playmate for young
children.
I'm a yogi who roams the country far and wide.
May you devas and humans be healthy and happy.

Thus he sang. They said, "This is what the Jetsun's conduct is like. Please tell us
what we disciple-sons should do."

The Jetsun replied, "Since everything is impermanent, practice the dharma."
Then he sang this song of realization on the eight examples of impermanence:

You faithful disciple-sons who have come to this place, Do you fervently
practice the sublime dharma, or not?

Has heartfelt faith arisen, or not?

If you wish to practice dharma from the depths of your being, And you don't
have faith that turns back or changes, That example is described by the
wheel of the relative.*1

For its meaning, investigate your own mind:

Should I show you outer appearances as examples, or not?

To show you outer appearances as examples:

One is a vulture riding on the wind;

Two is a turquoise-petaled flower;

Three is a young fawn of the upper valley;

Four is the six excellent grains of the lower valley; Five is a well-fitting
garment of silk;

Six is a precious jewel;

Seven is the moon on the third day of the month; And eight is a man's

precious son.

No one has recited these words before.

If I don't sing the rest of this song,

The meaning of the words will not be conveyed.

Thus, to join these examples with their meaning:

A soaring vulture that disappears in the sky Is an example that illustrates
illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

The turquoise-petaled flower taken by frost Is an example that illustrates
illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

The young fawn of the upper valley killed by an arrow Is an example that
illustrates illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

The lower valley's six grains reaped by the scythe Is an example that
illustrates illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

The well-fitting silken garment cut by a blade,⁴⁹

Is an example that illustrates illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

The precious jewel that is found, then is lost, Is an example that illustrates
illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

The moon on the third day that shines and waxes Is an example that illustrates
illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

The man's precious son, that's born, then dies, Is an example that illustrates
illusoriness; It also shows impermanence.

Contemplate this meaning and practice sublime dharma.

These eight examples, so marvelous,
Are for you who send me off to put into practice.
Labor and activities will never end;
Be free of mundane activity and practice sublime dharma.
Thinking there'll be more time, this life goes to waste.
Since the time of death is completely unknown, Contemplate this meaning
and practice sublime dharma.

Thus he sang. Faith arose within all of them, and like a wall falling to the ground, they all prostrated to him and their tears flowed. Then, three young men among them said, "Please allow us to follow the guru as attendants, and take us along with you." To that, the Jetsun sang this song of realization, on the ten essential points of difficulty:

For the practitioner with no altruism,
It's difficult to tame ordinary people.

For the teacher in whose mind-stream dharma hasn't developed, It's difficult
to gain any merit.

For a meditator who has no perseverance,
It's difficult for signs of accomplishment to arise.

For wanton monks without vinaya discipline, It's difficult to receive any
service or respect.

For a mantrika without any samaya,
It's difficult to gain any blessings or power.

For a benefactor who is bound by avarice, It's difficult to gain any praise or
renown.

For a yogi who acts improperly,
It's difficult for *tendrel* to have any power.

For students who don't think of karma, cause and effect, It's difficult to gain

understanding of emptiness.

For monks who have disdain toward dharma,
It's difficult to find a spouse and home.*250

You spoiled children, faith may have arisen for you, But it is difficult to
attain freedom.

Now, you may have given rise to a sense of urgency, But later on you will
have regret.

Now make the aspiration to meet once again; It's through karmic connection
that we will meet.

Until we're able to meet again,

This yogi leaves you with these solemn words: Benefactors, may there be
auspiciousness for you.

May your bodies be free of wounds or sickness, May your life be without
obstructing conditions, May the father and his children meet again.

This yogi is happy in whatever land he goes to.

Now, dear children, you may go back to your homes.

Thus he sang. Everyone there clutched at the Jetsun's body and clothing while weeping, making aspirations, bringing his feet to their heads, prostrating, and circumambulating. When they left, one young man fervently pleaded with the Jetsun, so he attended and followed the Jetsun as the master and disciples all journeyed to Tisé. Milarepa gave the young man the abhishekas and key instructions, leading him to ripening and liberation. This student became known as Kharchung Repa, one of the close sons of the Jetsun.

This is the cycle of Milarepa's meeting Kharchung Repa at the Kora Pass of Tisé.

*1 The "wheel of the relative" is the wheel of the twelve points of interdependent origination. (DPR) *2 These lines as they appear in Tsangnyön's version could potentially be interpreted as: If someone who has disdain for dharma decides to give up their monastic vows, they will have a difficult time as a lay householder as well (TN). The word for "monks" here, in Tibetan could also mean "respectable persons," which would change the meaning somewhat.

However, these two lines seem to be a modified and contracted version of four lines found in the *Black Treasury* where the middle two have been left out. The full four lines translated read: "For dharma practitioners who have disdain toward dharma/ It is difficult for the siddhis to come./ For the women whom you protect/ It's difficult to find a spouse and home."

21

Meeting Repa Darma Wangchuk

NAMO GURU

During the waxing moon of the last month of autumn, when the master, the Jetsun Milarepa, and his students went to Kyitang in Purang, there were many people there.

The Jetsun said to the benefactors, “We yogis here are begging for provisions.”

Among the group there was a dark-skinned woman adorned with beautiful ornaments who asked, “Yogi, what are the names of your parents and family? Who are you?” In response to her questioning, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the lord gurus.

I supplicate you: please grant your blessings.

I've a father, Kuntuzangpo, All-Excellent Samantabhadra.

I've a mother, Drowa Sangmo, Excellent Lady.

I've an elder brother, Töpé Gyalpo, King of Hearing.

I've an aunt, Nangsal Drönmé, Illuminating Lamp.

I've a sister, Depé Cham-mé, Lady of Faith.

I've a companion, Rangjung Yeshe, Self-Arising Wisdom.

I've a son, Rikpé Kye'u-chung, Small Child of Awareness.*1

My texts are all of phenomenal existence.

My stallion is the prana which consciousness rides.

My benefactors are the four districts of Ü and Tsang.*2

I, myself, am a small white stupa.

I never before have sung such a melody,

So, now I will make the words clear:

My father, Kuntuzangpo, All-Excellent Samantabhadra

Relies on view and meditation as his sustenance.
For me, mundane appearances have never arisen.

My mother, Drowa Sangmo, Excellent Lady
Pours out the milk of key instructions to drink.
I've never had a famine of practice.

My brother, Töpé Gyalpo, King of Hearing*³
Wields the sword of means and wisdom in hand.
I rest with the cutting of phenomena's imputations, inside and out.

My aunt, Nangsal Drönmé, Illuminating Lamp
Having cleaned it, shows the mirror of one's mind.
It's never been rusted by latent tendencies.*⁴

My sister, Depé Cham-mé, Lady of Faith
Loosens the knot of avarice.
Thus, this yogi has no property or wealth.
Even when I have, I've never held on unrelentingly.

A companion, Rangjung Yeshe, Self-Arising Wisdom
Accompanies me, free of dualism.
We've never had fights with bad disposition.

My son, Rikpé Kye'u-chung, Small Child of Awareness
Holds the lineage of Victorious Ones.
I've never raised a snot-nosed child.

My texts, of all phenomenal existence, Teach theoretical knowledge by
illustration.
I've never looked at texts with black letters.

My stallion, the prana which consciousness rides,
Takes me to any place I desire.
I've never ridden a horse of flesh and blood.

My benefactors, the four districts of Ü and Tsang,
Give me provisions at the time they're needed.
My hands have never been strained by carrying a bag of tsampa.

For *offerings*, I offer to the three jewels.
For *reliance*, I rely upon the guru.
For *closeness*, my mind is close to the dharma.
For something *small*, my afflictions are small.
So therefore, I am a small white stupa.*5

Thus he sang. Then the woman said, "This all is truly amazing! Besides those friends and relatives, do you have samsaric friends, sons, wealth, and so forth?"
In reply, he sang this song of realization:

When I looked out at this enemy, samsara,
At first, samsara was enjoyable.
In the middle, appearances were masters of deception.⁵¹
In the end, I knew it to be a prison of demons.
Therefore, I have abandoned samsara.

Then, when I looked out at companions,
A companion, at first, has a goddess's smile.
In the middle, she becomes terrifying and fierce.
In the end, she's a demon who won't listen to anything.
Therefore, I've abandoned having a life-companion.

Then, when I looked out at children, At first, they have the smiles of a
celestial prince.
In the middle, they become a distant neighbor.
In the end, they become an enemy with karmic debt.
Therefore, I've abandoned having a child.

Then, when I looked out at wealth,
At first, wealth is like a precious jewel.
In the middle, one becomes completely dependent upon it.
In the end, it becomes like a bee and its honey.*6

Therefore, I've abandoned material wealth.

Contemplate these and practice sublime dharma.

Bearing dharma in mind, practice generosity.

Give without regret at the time of death!

Thus he sang. With faith, she invited the master Jetsun and his disciples into her home and paid them abundant service and respect. Then she received the dharma, and by meditating, took hold of the path.

While the master Jetsun and his disciples were residing at Dritse Snow Mountain, many students came to meet Milarepa. Among them there was a young man from the class of nobility who developed supreme faith toward the Jetsun and said, "All of the activities of the guru are truly wondrous. Please teach us dharma on how to practice during every activity." In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

All you faithful students who are gathered here,
When going, take appearances onto the path;
This is the way I go with the six consciousnesses self-liberated.

When sitting, sit in uncontrived naturalness;
This is the way I sit in essential reality.

When sleeping, sleep in the state of equality;
This is the way I sleep within luminosity.

When eating, eat within the state of emptiness; This is the way I eat while
abandoning perceiver and perceived.

When drinking, drink the water of means and wisdom;
This is the way I drink with continuity.

When going, sitting, sleeping, look at mind!
This is my virtuous activity without any sessions or breaks.

Thus he sang. Then they said, "We do not understand that kind of practice, so we are at great fault. If we could understand it, we would be so happy."

The Jetsun said, “Giving up, saying you don’t understand, is a sign of not being able to persevere in practice. If you can practice, then you will definitely understand; and if you understand, the benefits are like this.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Well now, all you fortunate students,
In the vase of this composite body
Is the coemergent deity’s form.
If you can lift the lamp of luminosity,
The dharmakaya will definitely shine upon everything, inside and out.

In the nest of samsara’s conceptuality
Is the garuda chick of bodhichitta.
If you develop the wings of means and wisdom,
It’s certain you’ll fly in the sky of omniscience.

In one’s own body, the snow mountain of Victorious Ones, Is the lion cub of
consciousness.
If you can meditate with the sixfold collection, attachment-free, You’ll
certainly gain dominion over samsara and nirvana.

Within the ocean of samsara’s ignorance
Are the merchant apprentices of the six types of beings.
If you are not separated from the three kayas’ ship, You’ll certainly be
liberated from the waves of suffering.
In the house of the five poisons, the concepts, Is the bandit who destroys
liberation.
If you seize him with the lasso of methods,
You’ll liberate yourself from the fearsome lands.

Within the sky-like dharmakaya
Is the jewel that fulfills all needs and desires.
If you can meditate without distraction,
You’ll certainly obtain the three kayas’ fruition.

In the city of the three realms of samsara

Are the binding shackles of the six types of beings.

If you know how to be freed through the guru's methods, Samsara will
certainly become self-liberated.

The guru, who is like a precious jewel,

Has a wellspring of the genuine key instructions.

If you can drink them with untiring faith,

You'll certainly dispel all the thirst of faults.

Thus he sang. The students returned home having developed faith. In particular, the young nobleman felt there was no way he could not practice dharma. Thinking, "I must attend and follow this guru," he too returned home. Being served by many humans and spirits, the master Jetsun and his disciples remained there with their practice flourishing until the last month of spring, at which point they left.

When they arrived at Tisé, where those students from before invited Milarepa to come to their homeland, from among the rows of the assembly where a feast with extensive service and respect was offered, the young man of nobility with supreme faith said, "Lama, you practitioners have the view, meditation, conduct, and fruition. Lama, please teach us dharma about your practice and way of gaining resolve." In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

When I recognize the view,

Attributes of outer appearances are liberated in their own place.

It's certain self and other don't exist as two; This view is free of reference
points.

When meditation has taken its own seat,

Attributes of virtue and nonvirtue are liberated in their own place.

It's certain happiness and suffering don't exist as two; This meditation is free
of fleeting experience.

When conduct is taken hold of within the mind-stream, Attributes of friend
and foe are liberated in their own place.

It's certain attachment and anger don't exist as two; This conduct is free of
any attachment.

When fruition is liberated in its own place,

Attributes of samsara and nirvana are liberated in their own place.

It's certain what to adopt and reject don't exist as two; This fruition is free of hope and fear.

When Milarepa had sung this, the man said, "Lama, although I have determined that I must practice the dharma, I do not dare do it without permission from my parents and family. I will ask for permission from my parents now, then I will practice the dharma. Allow me to attend you. Guru, please take me along with you."

The Jetsun replied, "When practicing dharma, if you do not contemplate the faults of samsara and become certain about them, because you will get involved in trying to please others, it will not happen." Then he sang this song of realization, "How Will There Ever Be Enough?":

Faithful practitioners of the sublime dharma,
If you don't cut the ropes of pleasing others,
How will there be enough attention paid?

If you don't collect alms without attachment,
How will there ever be enough gathering of respect and honor?

If you do not have contentment right now, How will there ever be enough
gathering of wealth?

If you don't realize the single ineffable reality,
How will there ever be enough of speaking with conventional terms?

If you don't realize the sole meaning without texts, How will there ever be
enough written black letters?

If you don't know how to make adverse conditions your friend, How will
there ever be enough removal of suffering?

If you cannot bring suffering onto the path,
How will there ever be enough reliance upon antidotes?

If you don't know thoughts to be dharmakaya,
How will there ever be enough blocking thoughts and appearances?

If you don't cast plans and activities behind,
How will there ever be enough meeting worldly goals?

If you don't cut activity and clinging,
How will there ever be enough thoughts and deeds?

If you don't cut completely right now,
How will there ever be enough putting it off?

If you don't forcefully liberate right now,
How will there ever be enough hoping liberation will happen on its own?

If you don't train mind's skill right now,
How will there ever be enough hoping it will come on its own?

If you're not decisive about this now,
How will there ever be enough planning for it later?

If you don't come to a conclusion about it now, How will there ever be
enough hoping it will come later?

When Milarepa had sung this, the young man gave rise to certainty, became decisive about practicing dharma, and received his parents' permission. Becoming a follower of the Jetsun, he was given the abhishekas and instructions and was ripened and liberated. He became known as Jo-gom Repa Darma Wangchuk, one of the close sons of Milarepa.

This is the cycle of meeting of Repa Darma Wangchuk at Purang.

*1 Since most Tibetan proper names have meanings, each of the names here was rendered in both Tibetan and English to give the flavor of how the proper name would sound in Tibetan. Milarepa elucidates their meanings in the song below.

*2 In the time of King Songtsen Gampo, Central Tibet (consisting of Ü and Tsang) was divided into four primary districts (T: *ru*): Yéru (*g.yas ru*) and Ruyag (*ru yag*) in Tsang, and Uru (*dbu ru*) and Yoru (*g.yo ru*) in Ü.

*3 "Hearing" in the Buddhist tradition signifies study.

*4 In old Tibet, mirrors were made from polished metal and had to be freed from rust in order for images to reflect clearly.

*⁵ The italicized words of this verse indicate the components of the phrase “small white stupa” (pronounced “chö ten kar chung”) in Tibetan. “Chö” (*mchod*) means offering; “ten” (*rten*) can mean to rely; “kar” (*dkar*) means white, but can also mean to be close; and “chung” (*chung*) means small, or few. (DPR) *⁶ Bees put all of their efforts into making and keeping their honey. (DPR)

Taming Naro Bönchung

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa, together with many of his disciple-sons, journeyed from Purang to Tisé. When they reached the pass, they were greeted by the *shidak**¹ of Tisé and Lake Manasarovar along with their retinues. They offered prostrations and vast, wondrous offerings to Milarepa. They also offered Tisé and Lake Manasarovar as sites of practice for the Jetsun and the disciples of his lineage. Furthermore, they agreed to protect those people who held the Jetsun's dharma lineage, and then they returned to where they resided.

When the master Jetsun and his disciples got to the shore of Lake Manasarovar, Naro Bönchung and his siblings went there to greet them in person because they knew of the Jetsun and his disciples' renown and of their previous journey to Tisé. Even though they knew who he was, they pretended not to, and said, "Jetsun, where have you and your disciples come from, and where are you going?"

The Jetsun replied, "We have come from a mountain retreat called Lachi and have come to Tisé to meditate."

Naro Bönchung said, "Who are you and what are you called?"

The Jetsun replied, "I am called Milarepa."

"Oh! Tisé Snow Mountain and Lake Manasarovar, here, are just like you: you are renowned far and wide, but aside from that, you are nothing so impressive. Even if I were impressed, since this mountain has been commandeered by us Bönpos, if you stay here, you will have to practice my tradition of Bön."

The Jetsun said, "This mountain has been prophesied by the Sage*² as a mountain for the holders of the Buddhist teachings in general; and in particular, it has been prophesied by Marpa as a sacred site of me, Milarepa. You Bönpos have been very fortunate to have stayed here previously; however, if you stay here now, you must practice dharma according to my tradition. If you will not do that, then go elsewhere."

The man said, “You seem to be two different people; from far away, you are well renowned, but up close, you are of little consequence. If you really are someone remarkable, then we can have a competition of our power in performing miracles. Whoever wins will take control of this site.” Then the Bönpo planted his feet on either side of Lake Manasarovar’s shore and sang:

Though Tisé, snowy white, is well renowned,
It’s just a mountain covered in snow.
Lake Manasarovar, here, is also renowned,
But it’s just water moving through water.⁵²
Milarepa, too, is renowned,
But he’s just an old man who sleeps in the nude,
Who sings out little songs from his mouth,
And holds a walking stick in his hand.
There’s nothing impressive at all about that.

For us Bönpos there’s the unchanging *svastikakaya*,^{*3}
The assembly of deities of the crown of Yeshe,^{*4}
And the wrathful victor Traktung Kha-gyingwa
With nine heads and eighteen arms.
His own emanation is Gekhö
Who with nine heads has many miraculous manifestations.
His sister is Sigyalma.
I, Bönchung, who’s been accepted by these,
When I perform miracles, I do it this way!

After Naro Bönchung had sung this, the Jetsun completely covered the lake without his body becoming larger, and without Lake Manasarovar becoming smaller. Sitting there, he sang this song of realization:

Kye kye! Listen here you devas and humans:
On the mountain of Vulture Peak
Upon the throne of the eight fearlessnesses^{*5}
The Victor Shakyamuni sits.
He, inseparable from the nondual wisdom kaya
As the sixth buddha, the great Vajradhara,

Along with the great lady, Nairatmya Devi,*6
Are within the dharma palace of Akanishta.*7
There's the nirmanakaya called Tilopa,
Who plays within the state of coemergence;
There's the great pandit Naropa, Guardian of the Gate;*8
And there's the Buddha, Marpa the Translator.
All of their blessings have entered me,
Milarepa, who is renowned far and wide.

To accomplish the command of Marpa from Lhodrak
I've come to meditate at Tisé Snow Mountain.
While accomplishing the benefit of self and other,
For you, Bönpo, with your incorrect views,
I reply to what you say with a song.

Renowned Mount Tisé, snowy white,
Its covering of snow upon the peak,
Is the bright, pure teaching of the Buddha.

The renowned turquoise Lake Manasarovar,
With its water moving through water,
Is the place where phenomena are carried to exhaustion.

I, the renowned Milarepa, This old man who sleeps nakedly,
Have emerged from the husk of perceiver and perceived.

The little songs that I sing
Are appearances dawning as my texts.
The bamboo walking stick I hold in my hand
Is the crossing of the ocean of samsara.
I've gained mastery over mind and appearances,
So for me, displaying different kinds of miracles
Doesn't depend on any worldly devas.
Tisé, king of all mountains in the world,

In general, belongs to all the holders of Buddha's teaching; In particular, it belongs to Milarepa's lineage.

You Bönpos with your incorrect views,
If you practice genuine dharma, there'll be benefit for all.
My uncontrived miracles are greater than yours.⁵³
Now you should go on to another place.
Look again at these miracles here!

Thus he sang. Then he lifted Lake Manasarovar upon the tip of his finger without harming any of the creatures that lived within it. Naro Bönchung said, "This time your miracle was, indeed, a bit more impressive. But since I came here first, I see us as equal. Now, we will have a competition of miracles and see who is better."

The Jetsun said, "I will not compete with magicians who, polluted by substances,^{*9} perform miracles by conjuring tricks that deceive others. If you don't practice according to my dharma, then you must go elsewhere."

Naro Bönchung said, "I will not renounce my Svastika-Bön, but if you win in our competition of miracles, I will give up and leave. Furthermore, since you're a Buddhist practitioner, if you kill or harm me, then it will be in violation of your vows; such action is not suitable for a Buddhist. Let us compete with miracles since I will not go otherwise."

Then he did a circumambulation according to the Bön tradition around Tisé.^{*10} The master Jetsun and his disciples did a circumambulation according to the Buddhist tradition and met Naro Bönchung in the valley of the Northeastern Fortress of Tisé near a giant boulder.

Naro Bönchung said, "It is excellent that you do circumambulations. Now, you should do it following my tradition," and he took the Jetsun's hand and dragged him in that direction.

Then the Jetsun said, "I will not enter your mistaken path and do circumambulations in an incorrect way. You shouldn't practice incorrect dharma; therefore, you should follow after me practicing dharma and doing circumambulations this way." Then he took the Bönpo's hand and, between their pulling each other back and forth, both of their footprints appeared in the rock. Then, by the force of the Jetsun's experience and realization, he overpowered the Bönpo and took him along, doing a Buddhist circumambulation.

When they got to the back side of Tisé in the north, Naro Bönchung said,

“Later, we should also do a Bön circumambulation.”

The Jetsun replied, “That will depend on how powerful you are.”

“This time, it seems you were the more powerful one. But we should still have another competition in strength.” Naro Bönchung moved a large boulder that was the size of a yak’s body in front of the boulder upon which they were standing.

Then the Jetsun moved a boulder that was twice the size of the heavy rock⁵⁴ the Bönpo had moved beside that one. The Bönpo said, “Again, you have won this time. But winning just once or twice doesn’t truly qualify as winning. We should continue with our competition.”

The Jetsun said, “Although the stars can compete with the light of the sun and moon, it is the sun and moon that clear away the darkness of the four continents; and although you and I can compete, you cannot compare with me. Therefore, Tisé Mountain belongs to me. I went along with this competition just to humor you, and through this display of magic, now everyone can see that my practice lineage of the *buddhadharma* is superior. Therefore, it is fine to have displayed miracles here.”*11

When the Jetsun sat within the Lotus Cave of the Fortress of Tisé’s western valley, and the Bönpo was to the east, the Jetsun extended his foot from the western side of the mountain all the way to a rock where Naro Bönchung’s practice hut was, and placed his footprint on its face. Then the Jetsun said, “Now, you do the same.”

Naro Bönchung also extended his foot to the west, but when it didn’t even get as far as the shore of the lake, all of the spirits in the sky above burst into laughter.

The Bönpo was a little bit embarrassed, but still he said, “We should continue the competition of miracles,” and did another circumambulation in accord with the Bön tradition. The Jetsun continued only doing Buddhist circumambulations, and when they met on the southern side of Tisé, rain began to fall.

The Jetsun said, “We need a shelter from the rain. Do you want to lay the foundation from the ground up, or put the roof on top?”

The Bönpo said, “You build the walls and I will put on the roof.”

Milarepa pointed to a great rock as big as three people standing and said, “Very well, you break up that rock.”

“Okay, I will,” he replied and went over to the rock.

The Jetsun began raising the walls and saw that the Bönpo had already split a

rock to be the height of an eight-year-old child, just as it should be. Then with his gaze and a threatening gesture, Milarepa broke the rock down its center and said, “Now, bring it here.”

“But you have broken mine,” the Bönpo replied.

“It’s true, one’s not supposed to do that in a competition of miracles. I will not break another with my gaze. Break off another one and bring it here.” Then the Bönpo broke off another rock like the one before and went to lift it, but the Jetsun employed his gaze to prevent him from lifting it.

The Bönpo said, “I have prepared the rock, now you have to carry it over.”

The Jetsun replied, “I have built the walls, and your job is to put on the roof. Now, you see if you can lift it up and bring it over here.”

Naro Bönchung again went to lift the rock, but glancing nervously about, he found he could not.

The Jetsun said, “Your mere attainment of performing common miracles is no match for my yogi’s miracles and power that come from attaining both the common and supreme siddhis. If I used my gaze to overpower you, then you would not even be able to break the rock. But you broke the rock even though I didn’t use my gaze; so compared to others, you’re pretty good.⁵⁵ Now, if you do it, you should do it like this,” and with only one hand, he lifted one of the two rocks upon his shoulder, and put his handprint in it.

“Now it’s too high.” The Jetsun then trampled the rock with his feet from above, leaving his footprint in it.

“Now it’s too low.” He lifted the rock again from below and left his head and handprints in it. This site is known as the Cave of Miracles.

At this point, the Bönpo finally admitted that the Jetsun had won. The Jetsun and Naro Bönchung had many other competitions of miracles, and the Jetsun’s actions always proved more wondrous.

After that, Naro Bönchung said, “You called me a magician. Compared to me, you are the magician. But I am not convinced by your miracles. Therefore, a second time [we will compete], and on the fifteenth of this month we will see who can get to the peak of Tisé Snow Mountain the fastest. Whoever wins will take control of Tisé, and we will see who truly has attained supreme siddhi.”

“If you say so, that’s fine. However, it’s a pity that you think of your insubstantial bit of experience as being the supreme siddhi. In order to attain the supreme siddhi, you must see the natural face of mind. To be able to see that, you

must meditate having entered into the teachings of my practice lineage.”

The Bönpo asked, “What’s the difference between your mind and mine? Is one good and the other bad? What is the difference between Bön and Buddhism? The practices are equal, even though [it’s true that] in terms of doing tricks or the miracles you displayed before, you are a bit superior. So, our race to the peak of Tisé will settle it once and for all.”

The Jetsun accepted accordingly, then it was decided. At that point, it is said that Naro Bönchung unrelentingly invoked and supplicated his deity. Meanwhile, the Jetsun didn’t stray at all from his usual conduct.

In the early morning of the fifteenth of that month, Naro Bönchung was wearing a blue tunic, playing a ritual bell, and riding a drum into the sky. The Jetsun’s disciple-sons saw this. But when the Jetsun saw it and just remained seated where he was, Rechungpa said with fervor, “Jetsun, Naro Bönchung is already flying on his drum and is halfway up Tisé Mountain! Will the Jetsun get to where the Bönpo is by just sitting here?” All of the disciple-sons offered similar supplications.

The Jetsun employed a gaze and said, “Now, watch!”

As Milarepa stared upon him with his gaze, the Bönpo wasn’t able to go any higher up the mountain, only able to circle it. When the sun was beginning to rise, the great Jetsun snapped his fingers once and, using his cotton cloth garment as long wings, flew. In an instant he reached the peak of Tisé just at the moment that the sun shone upon it. There, the Jetsun directly encountered, vividly clear, the lineage gurus, the deity Chakrasamvara, and his retinue, all with cheerful demeanor. Though its essence was equality, he was very happy and cheerful at this.

Then, Naro Bönchung arrived up to the neck of Tisé Mountain and, unable to bear the Jetsun’s brilliant compassion, fell from the sky. The drum under him tumbled down the southern side of Tisé Mountain and his pride and arrogance faded. Humbling himself, he said, “Your power and miracles are truly greater. You have won Tisé Mountain. Now I must find another place to stay where I can still see this sacred site.”

The Jetsun said, “Although the ordinary devas of this world have accepted you and you can perform a few common miracles, I have actualized self-arisen wisdom. Though you can compete with people who have supreme siddhi, you will never to be able to outdo them, as I showed you before. Since above, the vajra fence of Tisé peak is a site where the wisdom deity, glorious Chakrasamvara,

resides, you have no place to go. Here, I asked the Victorious Ones of the past for permission to show that my Buddhist dharma is greater and was granted the opportunity. You have fallen from the sky, and your drum has tumbled down. I did this in order to cut through your great pride. Now, if you want to come to the base of this site, you must come in reliance on my power. It is for these reasons that I have these powers. Listen here,” then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa who is so kind.

By the kindness of Marpa the Translator
And the compassion of all the previous Victorious Ones,
As before, in the great city of Shravasti,
The Bhagavan Shakyamuni Buddha
Defeated the six *tirthika**¹² teachers With the wheel of dharma;
And so the Buddhist teachings were spread.

Likewise, at Tisé, king of all the world’s mountains, The repa yogi of Tibet
Defeated the Bönpo through dharma, as well.
Thus, the Sage’s teachings and practice lineage shone like the sun.
This happened through miraculous power and strength.

The power of the yogi Milarepa
Has come through many conditions and causes.
Because I have the lineage blessing,
The power of this lineage arose.
The power of Vajradhara arose.
The power of the root guru,
With his key instructions, love, and wisdom, arose.
The power of Marpa the Translator arose.
The power of this view, which is
Beyond the mind and free from extremes, arose.
The power of primordial purity arose.
Being free from distraction and without reference point, The power of this
meditation arose.
The power of great luminosity arose.

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Sustaining it loosely with whatever arises,  
The power of this conduct arose.  
The power that is spontaneous and relaxed arose.  
With the dharmata being pointed out,  
The power of this fruition arose.  
The power of the myriad appearances, self-liberated, arose.  
Practicing in accord with the guru's command,  
The power of this samaya arose.  
The power of not falling into faults arose.  
Mixing adverse conditions with meditation,  
The power of this practice arose.  
The power of appearances dawning as friends arose.  
By taking it to completion with perseverance and hardship, The power of this  
yogi arose.  
The power of Milarepa arose.  
That power having defeated mistaken dharma,  
Because I have dominion over snowy white Tisé,  
The teachings of genuine dharma will spread at this site.  
That is the kindness of the previous Victorious Ones.  
I supplicate and make offerings to the wisdom deities.

When Milarepa had sung this, the Bönpo said, "I believe in your power and miracles. They are truly wondrous. Now you can tell me a place I can stay where I can still see this site."

The Jetsun said, "Very well, you should stay over there," and he took up a handful of snow and hurled it over to Takla Peak in the east. When he did that, a bit of snow appeared on the mountain peak. In reliance on the Jetsun's power, when they both reached the foot of Tisé Mountain, the Bönpo said, "I will sometimes come and do circumambulation at Tisé; you can tell me where I should stay during those times."

The Jetsun said, "Very well, come and do circumambulation, and at that time you can stay here." By his command, a stupa was placed in a crevice of one of the foothills at the front of Tisé, where Bönpos would stay when they came to circumambulate.

The lineage of students of the Jetsun continued to maintain control of the snow, mountain, and lake there.

This is the cycle of taming Naro Bönchung at Tisé Snow Mountain.

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\*1 A local protector deity similar to an earth-lord spirit.

\*2 Shakyamuni Buddha.

\*3 T: *g.yung drung*. The Sanskrit term “svastika” here translates the Tibetan word “yung-drung,” which means unchanging or indestructible. In Asian iconography, the swastika is a positive symbol for good fortune, auspiciousness, and indestructibility, as used here. This has no connection with the much later use of the symbol by the Nazi Party in Germany.

\*4 “The supreme divine principle of Bön is referred to as Yeshe. This supreme deity has the same quality of cosmic totality that is found in most theistic religions. *Ye* means ‘primordial’ or ‘original’; *shen* means ‘divine’, ‘heavenly’, or ‘spiritual’ but also has an anthropomorphic implication” (Trungpa 1991: 221).

\*5 This is a lion throne, on which Buddha Shakyamuni is often depicted. Lions are a symbol of fearlessness.

\*6 Nairatmya Devi is a deity of the Hevajra mandala.

\*7 Akanishta is the name of a buddha realm.

\*8 The great Indian master and scholar Naropa was known as a faultless debater at Nalanda University and held the title “Guardian of the Northern Gate.”

\*9 “Substances” here seems to be referring to intoxicating substances. (DPR) \*10 Bönpos circumambulate counterclockwise, while Buddhists traditionally circumambulate clockwise.

\*11 Generally, those who have achieved the common siddhis (the ability to perform miracles) are bound by oath not to display them to others unless it is genuinely for a greater benefit.

\*12 Tirthikas are non-Buddhists. The term sometimes carries the same negative connotation as “heretics” (T: *mu stegs*).

## 23

### The Later Visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress

NAMO GURU

After the master Jetsun and his disciples spent time at and circumambulated Tisé Snow Mountain, they again went to Drakya Vajra Fortress in Kutang. At that time, the students from before came to meet Milarepa.

Inquiring after the Jetsun's health, they asked, "Are you well?"

"I'm extremely well. Are you all well?" he replied.

"Thanks to the kindness of the guru, we have had no poverty nor any sickness or deaths amongst us. We are so pleased that the guru has been able to circumambulate Tisé without any obstacles and has met us here. Guru, please tell us of the way in which you are so happy."

The Jetsun replied, "This is how I'm happy." Then he sang this song of realization, on the twelve kinds of yogic happiness:

Like a criminal who is freed from his dungeon pit,  
The yogi who's abandoned his homeland is happy.

Like a fine horse who's been released from chains,  
The yogi free of perceived or perceiver is happy.

Like an animal who's been wounded stays where she is, The yogi who stays  
all alone is happy.

Like the king of birds who soars in the sky,  
The yogi who has resolve in the view is happy.

Like the wind that moves throughout the sky,  
The yogi without any obstruction is happy.

Like a shepherd who cares for his flock of white sheep, The yogi who  
sustains his experience of clarity-emptiness is happy.



Like Mount Meru, the central king of mountains, The yogi who is free of movement and change is happy.

Like the flowing of a great and vast river,  
The yogi with unbroken flow of experience is happy.

Like a human corpse in a charnel ground,  
The yogi who abandons activity is happy.

Like a stone that's thrown into the ocean,  
The yogi who doesn't turn back is happy.

Like the sun that shines up in the sky,  
The yogi who illuminates everything is happy.

Like a palm tree sheared of all its leaves,\*<sup>1</sup>  
The yogi without any later births is happy.

May these twelve kinds of yogic happiness  
Be a dharma gift for all of you students in answer to your question.

Thus he sang. Then the students departed with great faith.

To see what kind of renunciation, revulsion, experience, and realization Rechungpa had, the Jetsun sang this song of realization, about the twelve things that tend to be misleading:<sup>56</sup>

The phenomena of the world will only deceive;  
I strive only for what is genuine.

The distractions of material things will only deceive; I bring nonduality into my experience.

Servants and retainers will only deceive;  
I roam, all alone, in mountain retreats.

Material goods and wealth will only deceive; If I have something, I give it away for the dharma.

Objects appearing outside only deceive;  
I look at the mind that is inside.

Conceptual thinking only deceives;  
Therefore it is wisdom that I pursue.

Dharma's provisional meaning only deceives;  
I gain certainty in the definitive meaning.

Texts with their black letters only deceive;  
I meditate on the whispered lineage instructions.

Explanations with conventional terms only deceive;  
I rest naturally, uncontrived.

Both birth and death only deceive;  
I look at unborn reality.

Ordinary consciousness only deceives;  
I train in the natural expression of awareness.

The techniques for holding the mind only deceive;  
I rest within the abiding nature.

Thus he sang. Then Rechungpa thought, "It is certain that the guru is an actual buddha free of any of these things that deceive. He sang this song considering the faults of us disciples, who are not able to practice." Then Rechungpa offered this song that summarizes the key points of his own view, meditation, and conduct:

Father Jetsun guru, please kindly listen.  
My deluded mind—oh, how unfortunate!  
With your noose of compassion, please accept me.

At the juncture of eternalism and nihilism, The view of extremes has been  
lost.

I have no certainty in the abiding nature.

At the juncture of agitation and dullness,

The meditation of bliss and clarity has been lost.  
I'm reluctant to put a stop to my mind of attachment.

At the juncture of adopting and rejecting,  
Spontaneous conduct has been lost.  
I'm reluctant to do away with mistaken confusion.

At the juncture of phoniness and deception,  
Pure samaya has been lost.  
I'm reluctant to fully get rid of hypocrisy and deceit.

At the juncture of samsara and nirvana,  
Seeing my own mind is Buddha has been lost.  
I'm reluctant to realize the dharmakaya.

At the juncture of hope and fear,  
The four kayas' result has been lost.  
I do not recognize my own true face.

Precious father, Jetsun Guru,  
Before, you cared for me with your kindness and compassion.  
I pray we remain inseparable; please protect me.

Having supplicated in this way, the Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, you have experience and realization besides what you just told me. It is not suitable to keep it secret from me; therefore offer it forthrightly." Through the compassion of the Jetsun, right away, Rechungpa's experience and realization grew. Then Rechungpa offered this song, on the seven things to be found:

By the kindness of the father Jetsun guru,  
I've realized the meaning of seven things to be found:

I've found emptiness within appearances,  
So now I don't think there are truly existent things.

I've found dharmakaya within emptiness, So now I don't think there are any  
actions or efforts.

I've found nonduality in the myriad appearances,  
So now I don't think there's any meeting or parting.

I've found equality between the white and the red,  
So now I don't think there's any adopting or rejecting.

I've found great bliss within the illusory body,  
So now I don't think there's any suffering.

I've found the ultimate within the relative,  
So now I don't think there is any confusion.

I have found buddhahood within my own mind,  
So now I don't think that samsara exists.

Thus Rechungpa sang. Then the Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, what you have is a mere meditative experience; it is not fully qualified. This is what a fully qualified experience in meditation consists of." Then he sang this song of realization, on the eight kinds of mastery:

When appearances and emptiness are not separate,  
This is mastery of the view.

When waking and dreaming are not distinct,  
This is mastery of meditation.

When bliss and emptiness are not distinct,  
This is mastery of conduct.

When this life and next are not distinct,  
This is mastery of the abiding nature.

When mind and space are not distinct,  
This is mastery of the dharmakaya.

When happiness and suffering are not distinct, This is mastery of the key  
instructions.

When afflictions and wisdom are not distinct

When afflictions and wisdom are not distinct,  
This is mastery of realization.

When one's mind and buddha are not distinct,  
This is mastery of fruition.

Thus he sang. Again, through the compassion of the guru, Rechungpa's realization gradually grew. Then he offered this song of his own mind's ultimate realization [attained through his] practice, which summarizes the six bardos:

I prostrate to the exalted gurus.

In the bardo between appearance and emptiness,  
There is no view of eternalism or nihilism.  
I do not hold any conceptual tenets.  
Now I understand nonarising and what is beyond intellect.  
That is the view of this mendicant.  
Even in a gathering of realized friends, I won't feel ashamed.

In the bardo between bliss and emptiness,  
There's no continual reference point for shamatha practice.  
I don't rigidly force my mind to focus.  
I rest, undistracted, in the primordial state.  
That is the meditation of this mendicant.  
Even in a gathering of experienced friends, I won't feel ashamed.

In the bardo between attachment and nonattachment,  
There is no bliss that is defiled.  
I don't practice wrong livelihood with pretense.  
Now, all appearances arise as friends.  
That is the conduct of this mendicant.  
Even in a gathering of yogi friends, I won't feel ashamed.

In the bardo between having faults and being faultless, There is no purity or  
impurity.  
I don't have any hypocrisy or phoniness.  
Now I take my own mind as my witness

NOW, I TAKE MY OWN MIND AS MY WITNESS.

That is the samaya of this mendicant.

Even in a gathering of disciplined friends, I won't feel ashamed.

In the bardo between samsara and nirvana,

Sentient beings and buddhas are not different things.

I've no desire for results that come from hopes and fears.

Now, any suffering dawns as bliss.

That is the fruition of this mendicant.

Even in a gathering of siddha friends, I won't feel ashamed.

In the bardo between words and their meaning,

There are no conventional terms that scholars use.

I don't have uncertainties or any doubts.

All phenomenal existence dawns as dharmakaya.

That is the realization of this mendicant.

Even in a gathering of learned friends, I won't feel ashamed.

When Rechungpa had offered this song, the guru was very pleased. "Rechungpa, that is a true, qualified experience. You are what is called a disciple who is a worthy vessel. There are three ways to please the guru: the first is to please the guru with faith and prajña; in the middle, one should, with the unmistakable entryway of study and contemplation, enter into the gate of the Mahayana's [Secret] Mantra and develop perseverance in its practice; and then through having meditated, finally, one should gradually give rise to special experience and realization. Without delighting in empty words and lip service, in order to bring the key point into your experience, look inwardly and meditate as much as you can.

"My guru Marpa said it is okay if you do not know the full extent of the sutras and tantras. Therefore, without following after conventional terminology, you should look inwardly while meditating according to the guru's command. I practiced without forgetting that special instruction he taught. By doing that, my mind turned from samsara, and all of these good qualities arose in my mind-stream. You should also do as my guru Marpa taught."

Rechungpa said to the Jetsun, "Please tell me what the guru Marpa said to the Jetsun."

The Jetsun sang this song of realization, “Thirty Instructions the Guru Taught”:

Son, for reliance, the jewels are excellent, he said.

Keep to faith as your friend, he said.

Concepts are a great demon, he said.

Pride is a great mara, he said.

Slander is a great negative action, he said.

Jealousy is harmful on the path, he said.

Alcohol brings one to ruin, he said.

If you don't confess misdeeds through the four powers,<sup>\*2</sup>

You'll wander among the six realms of beings, he said.

If you don't make efforts in the accumulation of merit, You won't attain the  
happiness of liberation, he said.

If you don't abandon the ten nonvirtues,

You must experience the sufferings of the lower realms, he said.

If you don't meditate on emptiness and compassion,

You won't attain ultimate buddhahood, he said.

If you want to attain buddhahood in this life,

Look undistractedly at your mind, he said.

For the ultimate condensed meaning of the tantras,

Meditate on the Six Dharmas, he said.

For the ultimate condensed meaning of the instructions, Meditate on Secret  
Mantra, the path of means, he said.

If you wish for respect, renown, and gain,

You'll be delivered to the mouth of Mara, he said.

If you praise yourself and disparage others,

You'll fall off a frightful precipice, he said.

If you don't tame the elephant of mind,

Then you'll be deceived by the key instructions' words, he said.

To rouse bodhichitta is the greatest crop, he said.

The view of birthlessness is excellent, he said.

For practice, the path of means is profound, he said.

Apply it with the nadis and pranas, he said.

Recognize coemergence, he said.  
Follow a noble lord, he said.  
Don't let your life be carried by distraction, he said.  
Look at the unborn nature of your mind, he said.  
Don't hope for happiness in samsara, he said.  
Don't see suffering as a fault, he said.  
If you realize the mind, that is buddhahood, he said.  
There is no need for many elaborations, he said.  
There are no more profound points than these, he said.  
Put them into practice, he said.

When Milarepa had sung this, Rechungpa's experience and realization were enhanced immensely.

Then the master Jetsun and his disciples, while keeping to asceticism, all engaged in practice. When they did this, many dakinis performed a ganachakra and said, "Milarepa, when you are practicing the view, meditation, and conduct, if you partake of just a bit of the food and clothing of humans as well as a bit of the samaya substances of the dakinis, your virtuous activity will be greatly enhanced. Therefore, you should partake of them. We will obtain them for you."

The Jetsun replied, "The food and wealth of other ordinary ones cannot compare with the good qualities of experience and realization. Since I have such qualities, it is fine not to have provisions of food and wealth." Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the father guru.

I, the yogi Milarepa,  
From within the abiding nature will sing you a song.  
I'll do a dance in the space free of true existence.  
Listen, assembly of mamos and dakinis.

This reliance on confidence in cause and effect  
Is faith with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

Staying alone in solitary places Is samadhi with which ordinary ones' cannot



compare.

This resting evenly, free of perceiver and perceived, Is view with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

This postmeditation that's free of forgetting  
Is meditation with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

This mindfulness without perceiver or perceived\*3  
Is conduct with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

This union of compassion and emptiness  
Is fruition with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

This clothing that's free of any feeling of cold\*4  
Has softness and excellence with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

This samadhi that's without any hunger  
Is meat and beer with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

This drinking from the river of enlightenment  
Is drinking with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

Giving rise to contentment from within  
Is food and wealth with which ordinary ones' cannot compare.

Marpa Lotsawa, the translator,  
Is a siddha with whom ordinary ones cannot compare.

The view of one's mind as the face of the deity  
Is the yidam with which ordinary ones cannot compare.

I, the yogi Milarepa,  
Am a meditator with which ordinary ones cannot compare.

This body that's without any sickness Is a doctor with which ordinary ones cannot compare.

Now listen once more, assembly of dakinis:

Where nothing is clear, it is clear for me.<sup>57</sup>

This very luminosity is clear.

Where there is no heat, I feel warm.

This very single cloth is warm.

When there's nothing comfortable, I feel good,

This very illusory body feels good.

Where there is no joy, I feel quite joyful,

This very dream is so joyful.

This yogi here feels better and better.

Is Drakya Vajra high, or not?

If Drakya Vajra isn't high,

Then how could vultures soar below?

If the icy new year's wind isn't great,

Then how could water in the mountain and valley freeze?

If the garment of chandali isn't warm,

How could I feel warm with a single cotton cloth?

If I don't eat samadhi for my food,

How could I survive being hungry with an empty belly?

If the river of enlightenment isn't drunk,

Then how could I survive being thirsty without water?

If the guru's instructions are not profound,

Then how is it obstructions and maras don't come?

If this yogi does not have realization,

How could I wander in mountain retreats with no people?

This is all due to the kindness of the wise guru.

Put efforts in practicing just like this.

Thus he sang. The dakinis said, "What you have said is wondrous, indeed! Tomorrow, a fortunate worthy disciple will come; you should accept and care for

him,” and they departed like a vanishing rainbow.

Then several students from Kutang came to meet the master Jetsun and his disciples. They requested dharma teachings and the Jetsun gave them the transmission and advice as well as the explanation of the benefits of taking refuge.

The students said, “Guru, is this also your practice and refuge?”

The Jetsun answered, “Yes, this is my refuge and virtuous activity. This refuge has satisfied me well; therefore you all too should sincerely, without pretense, go for refuge in the unsurpassed three jewels. In accord with the benefits of refuge that I have explained since yesterday, I have been satisfied.” Then he sang this song of realization on classifying the sources of refuge and inciting one to dharma:

I prostrate to the guru lords.

The Buddha, dharma, and the sangha,

These are the outer sources of refuge.

Taking refuge in them has satisfied me.

If you, too, took refuge in them, that would be good.

The guru, yidams, and the dakinis,

These three are the inner sources of refuge.

Taking refuge in them has satisfied me.

If you, too, took refuge in them, that would be good.

The nadis, pranas, and the bindus,

These three are the secret sources of refuge.

Taking refuge in them has satisfied me.

If you, too, took refuge in them, that would be good.

Appearance, emptiness, and the inseparability of those, These three are the ultimate sources of refuge.

Taking refuge in them has satisfied me.

If you, too, took refuge in them, that would be good.

If you do not take refuge in these sources

Who always protect from suffering

who always protect from suffering,  
A rain of days and hours will fall  
Upon the decrepit house of your illusory body;  
It will be tormented by the drops of months and years.

It's sure that decrepit house, your illusory body, will disintegrate.  
It's time to make preparations to die happily!  
Like the example of your shadow at sunset,  
No matter how far you run, it will always be there.  
I've never seen liberation by running away.

When dharma practitioners see death,  
It is the master who incites them to virtue;  
They examine and see what joy they have in death.

When those with negativity see death,  
It is the master who teaches them virtue and negativity.  
They examine and see what regret they have.

When those who are rich see death,  
It is the master who teaches them to let go of wealth and enemies.  
They examine and see what generosity they can perform.

When the elderly see death,  
It is the master who teaches this life's impermanence.  
They examine and see what disillusionment they have.\*5

When the youthful see death,  
It is the master who teaches urgency in life.  
They examine and see what diligence in practice they have.

Comfort and well-being are provided by parents.  
What can be done for those orphans who suffer?

An inner fleece is soft and warm.  
What can be done if one has never worn it?

The fruit of the harvest clears away poverty.  
What can be done if one can't do the work?

Speed is found with a Gyiling steed.\*6  
What can be done if one has never ridden it?

Making one's life about dharma brings happiness.  
What can be done if one can't practice dharma?

For those without food, be generous to them;  
Reduce your sleep and do virtuous activity!  
Remember the suffering of the lower realms.  
Contemplating that, practice the sublime dharma.

Thus he sang. Then many of the students became devotees of the dharma. In particular, there was a young man who gained unwavering faith in the Jetsun and requested him to accept his service.

The Jetsun thought, "This is the one that the dakinis predicted last night; therefore I must accept and look after him." He accepted him as an attendant and gave abhishekas, key instructions, and advice to him. The young man meditated and thus was ripened and liberated. That disciple became known as Rongchung Repa and became one of the close disciples of Milarepa.

This is the cycle of the later time when Milarepa went to Drakya Vajra Fortress and met Rongchung Repa.

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\*1 Once the branches or leaves of a palm tree have been cut, they do not grow back. This is a symbol for the yogi not being reborn due to karmic compulsion.

\*2 The four powers of confession are (1) feeling remorse for what one has done; (2) relying upon an object to whom one confesses, such as the Buddha or one's guru; (3) engaging in some type of remedial activity, such as reciting a purifying mantra; and (4) resolving not to commit the misdeed in the future.

\*3 Literally, "This mindfulness that is not separate" (T: *tha dad med pa'i dran pa 'di*).

\*4 This is a reference to Milarepa's single cotton cloth and his practice of chandali.

\*5 They examine their disillusionment with samsara.

\*6 T: *gyi ling rta*, a breed of horse from Amdo that is renowned for its exuberant running.

## 24

### Meeting Shengom Repa

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at Drakya Vajra Fortress observing silence, on the early morning of the eighth day of the waxing moon, dakinis came wearing the attire of young human females, and with a single voice sang this melody of prophecy:

EMA! Yogi observing silence,  
You who have perseverance in hardship,  
With vast knowledge that sees samsara and nirvana,  
Solitary lion in the midst of snowy mountains,  
Brave and agile one, listen to us.

We four dakinis who have come here are sisters—  
Lion cubs who act as your companions.

Today, very early this morning,  
From this place, Drakya Vajra Fortress,  
Go to the east of Paltang Lake.

Engagement in negativity for wealth  
Will be transformed into pure virtue;  
And several beings who have entered wrong paths  
Will enter into the genuine path.

By that, it is certain the benefit of beings will be accomplished.

Singing this they disappeared, and the Jetsun reflected on the dakinis' prophecy. Then, along the road that goes toward the east, a shepherd encountered him, seeing the Jetsun moving through the air without his feet touching the ground. He gained unwavering faith. He offered his food to the Jetsun and requested the dharma. The Jetsun taught the shepherd the dharma of karma, cause and effect; the faults of samsara; the difficulty of finding the freedoms and resources; and

the uncertainty of when death will come. Through that, those dharmas arose in the shepherd's mind-stream.

“Lama, because of the dharma you just taught me, I have reflected on the suffering of samsara and have no need for the mundane happiness of this life. Should the suffering that the guru spoke of fall upon me, there would be unbearable suffering due to karma; it would be almost like death. Please teach me dharma that will be beneficial for this.”

The Jetsun said to him, “Very well, I will teach as you have said.”

The shepherd said, “I have a cave for hiding sheep that other people are not able to find. Please come there.” Thus he invited Milarepa to Hidden Cave Sheep Fortress.\*1 He offered Milarepa excellent service, and in response to his request for dharma that would be an aid for suffering, the Jetsun gave him an object on which he did shamatha meditation.

Then the shepherd said, “When my mind is resting, no suffering comes at all. But when mental activity proliferates and I think of the suffering of samsara, it's completely unbearable. Please accept me and grant continual happiness.”

The Jetsun said, “If it is continual happiness that you need, then you must completely abandon negative actions and practice the pure dharma just as I do.”

“Then, since I want to have continual happiness, I shall practice pure dharma. Thus, Lama, please take me with you while I serve you as an attendant.”

The Jetsun, thinking he was a disciple with karmic connection, accepted him as his attendant, took him along, and gave him the abhisekas and instructions. Among all those with realization, he became a supreme and special being known as Dziwo Repa.

Early on the morning after he met Lukdzi Repa,\*2 again the dakinis appeared and said, “There is a place called Lapuk, go there.”

According to their prophecy, he went there. When he arrived, there was a great rich man with many sons who was a fervent devotee<sup>58</sup> of Bön. As he had become very ill, his son went to have a divination done for him. According to the divination, as a ransom, he had to kill one hundred yaks, one hundred goats, and one hundred sheep and hold a banquet and Bön ritual; if the meat was offered in these rites, he would recover. To get ready for the great Bön ritual, the rich man's sons brought down the yaks, goats, and sheep and prepared to kill them. At that point, the Jetsun arrived in their village and told a woman who had brought him water that he needed some provisions.

The girl said, “In this village there is a rich man who has become ill. For his rites, they are doing a great Bön ritual. Go there, and they will see to it that you get provisions.”

The Jetsun went to the home of the sick man and entered, making it past the dogs and people without obstruction. They said, “Lama, as our precious loved one is sick, please go out.”

The Jetsun said, “I can go if you like. I’m just begging for any leftover food you could gather for me.” They collected some and brought it to him. The relatives of the rich man were there surrounding him and healers were examining him. The Jetsun went over to them as well to beg for some tsampa.

As soon as the sick man saw the Jetsun’s face, faith arose and his outlook changed. He clutched at the Jetsun’s clothes. “Lama, please look with compassion upon this man who will live for only tonight or tomorrow,” he said, with tears welling up and falling.

The Jetsun said, “Just your having this much faith in me is an excellent *tendrel*. If I free you from this sickness, would you be able to let go of this life and devote yourself to practicing dharma?”

“If I am freed of this illness, I will do whatever the guru commands and will practice dharma. My sons, too, will enter the dharma.”

When the man had said this, the Jetsun thought of the dakinis’ prophecy that said there would be someone who engaged in negativity for the sake of wealth who would be transformed so that he acted with pure virtue, and that there would be benefit for beings. “This is him,” Milarepa thought.

“Even if you kill these yaks, goats, and sheep that you have prepared, it will not help you; in fact, it will do nothing but harm you. You should release and save them. I will use a method that will certainly free you from this illness. To what religion are you devoted?”

“I do not disbelieve in the Buddhist dharma, but I am a devotee of Bön.”

“Very well, send away these Bönpos and healers, and I will do a Bön ritual that will benefit you.”

His oldest son said, “Is it impermissible for the guru to perform a ritual while the other Bönpos are here?”

The Jetsun replied, “That would be fine. However, the type of illness you have will not be helped by any kind of rites with material offerings or many examinations by healers. You can recover from the illness, but everyone should



be sent elsewhere.”

The sick man said, “This time, do as the guru says,” and so all the ritual performers and healers were sent out.

With that, the people said, “The performers of the rites and healers have come out, but the yogi hasn’t! This is no good. Has the rich man died?” All of them were distraught over what they saw.

Meanwhile, the sick man asked, “What things need to be gathered for the guru?”

The Jetsun said, “For me to perform this ritual, no ransoms or materials need to be gathered. Listen here to my Bön ritual!” Then chanting a song of the dharma put to a Bön melody, he sang this song of realization of giving examples for the twenty-one family members:

SO YANG YANG YANG YANG YANG OOOO\*<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of time where there was mere appearance,<sup>59</sup>

For all that there was at the beginning of existence,

Names\*<sup>4</sup> were given to perceived outer objects.

Based on the collected skandhas of the elements

Came the great city, the three realms of samsara.

Names were given to the inner perceiving mind.

Awareness, empty and clear, dawned as a variety of appearances,

The basis of all karma and afflictions.

Names were then given to that castle built—

The deceiving castle of the defiled world.

The father, mental engagement of clinging to a self,

Was given the name “father.”

The mother, [the mental factors of] intention and interest,\*<sup>5</sup>

Was given the name “mother.”

From the craving and emanating of those two:\*<sup>6</sup>

Came their son, the twelve points of interdependence,

And their daughter, the eightfold consciousness.

Then twenty brothers and sisters arose;

These were twenty-two family members who arose

There were twenty-two family members who arose,  
Because of the arising of these family members,  
The eighty-four thousand afflictions arose,  
Three hundred sixty hindering spirits arose,  
Eighty-four thousand demons and obstructing spirits arose,  
And the four hundred and four kinds of disease arose.  
This is the first chapter: enumerating the family members.

The twenty-two different family members  
Became afflicted by the ignorance of mind  
Along with every other human illness:

The upper parts are afflicted with a fever:  
The heat of anger blazes like a fire;  
One wheezes at enemies like a yak.

The lower parts are afflicted with an illness of cold:  
The cold of desire agitates like water;  
The infection of selfishness blocks the urine.

The middle is afflicted with the tumor of delusion:  
The edema of self-clinging swirls like a pond.

The limbs are afflicted by an illness of wind.  
The arrogance toward qualities disturbs like one who is lewd.<sup>60</sup>

The heart is taken by a combination illness.\*<sup>7</sup>  
Praising self and slandering others, one is pierced like a thorn.

Sick with the five poisons in the bed of the enemy, distraction,  
The head rests on the pillow of perceiver and perceived.  
One has no appetite for the food of virtue,  
And there's a craving thirst for the water of nonvirtue.  
The medicine of virtuous activity makes one vomit.  
The mucus of idle chatter is flung in the ten directions.  
On top, one covers up with the mantle of the eight concerns

On top, she covers up with the mantle of the eight concerns.  
Underneath, the small mat of pretense is laid down.  
One is surrounded by the infants of the ten nonvirtues.  
Many material things go along with the mind of confusion.  
There is strong clinging to desirable food and wealth.  
This horrible disease, oh, how unfortunate!  
This is the second chapter: the types of illness.

What is it that brings benefit to this?  
Divinations and Bön practice bring benefit.  
Therefore, this yogi will consult divination and astrology.

The messenger—the motivation of life’s impermanence—  
Is sent to summon a guru—a master of divination.  
Then the mat of stable faith is laid out  
And the drink of respect and devotion is poured.  
All is laid upon the divination—devotion to dharma;  
The divination of profound meaning is requested to be cast.  
The guru, a master of divination,  
Lays out the chart of the four elements.  
Then the year cycle of twelve dependent links is calculated  
And the trigrams of the eight consciousnesses are cast.  
These are turned by the *mewa* of the nine progressive yantras.\*8

Then the friends and enemies of virtue and nonvirtue conflict.\*9  
This is the third chapter: casting the divination.

The master of divination says:  
For the twenty-two family members,  
The reading is not good, it’s a negative reading.  
On the basis of the divination of samsara and nirvana,  
Since samsara without any beginning,  
The overflow of confusion’s ignorance spilled  
And the acrid smell—the scorch of pure vision—came forth,  
Along with the defilement of attachment and aggression

Along with the detriment of attachment and aggression.

By the conditions of the overflow, acrid smell, and defilement,\*<sup>10</sup>

The male deity of wisdom disappeared in the sky;

The local deity of great bliss departed and is no more;

The *dralha* deity of self-awareness, too, went back and is gone.\*<sup>11</sup>

Because of the departure of these three deities,

Ghosts brought harm to everything.

They harmed with the bad view of the eight worldly concerns,

And the “origin of suffering,” that ruinous demon,<sup>61</sup> arose.

The high demon with the blazing fire of anger does harm.

The low demon with the churning water of desire does harm.

The naga-demon with the darkness of ignorance does harm.

The *gyalgong*\*<sup>12</sup> with the turbulent wind of pride does harm.

The class of *tsen* with the deception of jealousy does harm.

Vajrasadhu\*<sup>13</sup> with the partiality of selfishness does harm.

The mamu with the boasting<sup>62</sup> of taking the self as real does harm.

The haunting ghost\*<sup>14</sup> with the latent tendencies and bad karma does harm.

Due to the harmful nature of these demons,

From birth until death, one’s life-force is weak.

From meeting until parting, family affairs are bad.

From accumulation until exhaustion, affairs of money are bad.

Due to incorrect outlook, affairs with enemies are bad.

To block this negative divination, I’ll perform a Bön practice.

This is the fourth chapter: the negative divination of compromised life-force.

Now this yogi will chant a Bön ritual.

When fervently chanting a practice of Bön,

A Bönpo learned in the profound scriptures does accordingly:

On the very first morning, the beginning of time,

The ritual mat of the three pitakas is laid down.

The ransom of hearing, contemplation, and meditation is offered.

The clean food offering of samaya is laid out.

Chanting and meditating of the four tantras begins  
And a select offering of freedom from attachment is made.

For the male deity of wisdom disappearing in the sky  
I give the pointing-out that meets with ignorance—the base.

For the going away of the local deity of great bliss,  
I do an exorcism<sup>63</sup> of the four maras' adverse conditions.

For the departing of the *dralha* deity of self-awareness,  
I offer the ransom of natural revulsion.

For the bad omen of the eight worldly concerns,  
I strike with the knife of desire-free awareness.

For the ruinous demon of the origin of suffering,  
I put a hex\*<sup>15</sup> on him in the space of great bliss.

The high demon with the blazing fire of anger  
I soak with the wisdom of emptiness.

For the low demon of the churning water of desire,  
I make the ritual offering of the emptiness of mind itself.

Delusion, the naga-demon of darkness,  
Is [countered] by the eight nagas of self-liberated appearance.

The *gyalgong* of the turbulent wind of pride  
I stab with the deer's horn of the wisdom of emptiness.

For the class of *tсен* with jealousy that deceives,  
I plant the arrow of all-accomplishing wisdom.

For the *mamo* of boasting that takes the self as real,  
I recite the ritual of the emptiness of self and other.

For Vajrasadhu of the partiality of selfishness,  
I offer the small torma of cherishing others.

The haunting ghost of the latent tendencies and bad karma  
I threaten with the empty mental factors.

If there are ghosts of suffering, I threaten them like that.

If there are ghosts of wealth, I isolate them like that.

If there is something to be offered, I offer it like that.

Mind itself, in reality, is without birth or death;  
Weakened life-force I expel with Bön.  
The self-arisen companion is without meeting or parting;  
Bad family affairs I expel with Bön.  
The noble riches have no exhaustion;  
Bad affairs of money I expel with Bön.  
Negative divinations and evil powers I expel with Bön  
I throw bad omens into the abyss with Bön.  
Suffering dawns as an exhortation toward revulsion;  
All adverse conditions I expel with Bön.  
This is the fifth chapter: recovery from the demons.

The twenty-two family members  
Are liberated from the sickness of the ignorance of mind.  
The strong wheeze of self-clinging is cleared.  
The complexion of luminosity-emptiness wisdom is healthy.  
The food and water of bliss-clarity samadhi is delicious.

With awareness, gratitude is shown for what was done.  
Now recovered, a thanksgiving feast free of bias is thrown.  
As a messenger, the young child of awareness is sent  
From the mountain of the dharma of the Great Perfection  
To the watchful herders always sustaining meditative experience.  
A yak of the nine progressive yantras is selected;  
A sheep of the four sections of tantra is selected;  
And a goat of the three pitakas is selected.  
Upon the field of equality,  
Gather the guests of manifold wisdom.  
Upon the jewel-torma\*<sup>16</sup> of emptiness Is plastered the butter of hearing and  
contemplation.  
The arrow and banner\*<sup>17</sup> of self-arisen wisdom is planted And the feast is  
laid out for everyone!

The guru, the master of divination,

Is adorned with the turban of devoted interest, respect, and faith.  
The Bönpo learned in the profound scriptures  
Rides the stallion of means and wisdom.  
The male deity, the Bön kaya, \*18 Samantabhadra, Is offered the yak of the  
nine successive yantras.  
The *dralha* of the five sambhogakaya families  
Is offered the sheep of the four sections of tantras.  
The life deity, 64 the nirmanakaya *sugata*,  
Is offered the goat of the three pitakas.  
The divination healer that clears the elements\*19  
Is offered the torma of the four immeasurables.  
This is how excellent offerings are made.  
This is the sixth chapter: the feast of thanksgiving.

As to the goats, sheep, and yaks from before:  
For the goat of the vast Bön essence\*20  
The butcher of omniscient primordial wisdom  
Grinds the sword that is sharp with prajña.  
He slaughters with the two accumulations,  
Cuts the aorta of the two obscurations,  
And peels off the outer hide of conceptualization.  
With the intentions of sutras and tantras, he cuts up the quarters  
And cuts at the joints with scriptures and logic.  
With the cleaver of upadeshas, it's cut into pieces.  
The various sections of meat of the "Bön phenomena"  
Are put into the cauldron of the vast "Bön essence"\*21  
The spontaneously present three kayas are put on the three-legged hearth\*22  
And the fire of the four immeasurables is lit.  
Experience and realization cook it to completion  
And it's lifted out with the union of meditation and postmeditation.

In the excellent house of the vast Bön essence,  
From the city of the confused six classes,

A variety of guests gather in the marketplace.  
Made with the skilled hands of the five wisdoms,  
Food and drink of the multiplicity being as a single taste  
Are served to all without discrimination.

To the guru endowed with lineage and prajña, Serve the upper portion of  
abundance.

To the guru who transmits the upadeshas,  
Serve the aorta of the liberation path and awakening.

To the guru who guides sentient beings from samsara,  
Serve the eyeball, the clear sense faculty.

To the guru who is learned in both meaning and word,  
Serve the tongue that savors exquisite tastes.

To the sangha that keeps the vinaya rule,  
Serve the joy that's peaceful and pure.

To the Bönpo who understands cause and effect,  
Serve the meat and liquor of benefiting self and other.

To the yogi who realizes birthlessness,  
Serve the fat of great bliss.

To the *sthaviras*\*<sup>23</sup> who protect the teachings, Serve the larynx that benefits  
all.

To the practitioner of Secret Mantra's methods,  
Serve the upper section of the experience of great bliss.

To the meditator who meditates on impermanence,  
Serve the lower section of enlightenment's path of means.

To those who do not fall into the bias of tenets,  
Serve the upper chest bone that is harmonious with all.



To the ones with compassion free of bias,  
Serve the hand joints of the four immeasurables.

To the person who has revulsion toward the mundane world, Serve the breast  
meat free of the root of attachment.

To the leader who promotes the public welfare,  
Serve the square shoulder blade of aspiration.

To the healer of nourishing bodhichitta,  
Serve the loin of this and next life.

To the person with faith, devoted interest, and respect,  
Serve the heart-tip of the key points of instruction.

To the faithful who are never separate from virtue,  
Serve the liver without deception toward cause and effect.

To those with faith who have great diligence,  
Serve the kidneys of both wisdom and means.

To the spiritually immature beginner,  
Serve the fat lump of skill in the provisional and definitive.

To the yogi, never separate from the experience he sustains,  
Serve the entrails of meaningful instructions.

This is the seventh chapter: serving superior ones at the banquet.

In that way the banquet is excellently held.

Now comes the distribution of the ordinary ones' banquet.

The all-base is the same, but the paths are different;

There is a difference between refined and lowly guests.

To monks who act with arrogance,  
Serve the penis of perceiver and perceived.<sup>65</sup>

To teachers who merely follow the words,

Serve the rib cage that outwardly looks liberated but is empty inside.<sup>66</sup>

To the master who's arrogant and cares about fame,  
Serve the meatless nape of the neck.

To the haughty ones who do black magic, Serve the spinal fluid<sup>67</sup> of  
malevolent demons.

To monks with partiality and bias,  
Serve the spine of disharmony and conflict.

To those who beg for food with joy in distraction,<sup>68</sup>  
Serve the nose tip of wasted meditation.

To dharma practitioners who roam about the town,  
Serve the ear of superficial practice.

To disciples with little faith and incorrect views,  
Serve the spleen that does more harm than benefit.

To ones who create discord throughout the region,  
Serve the bile that's bitter to all.

To the great teacher who doesn't realize the nature of mind,  
Serve the diaphragm that's vast and vacuous.

To the yogi who practices by looking outside,  
Serve the lung that is large but has little meaning.

To the meditator who boasts much with little understanding,  
Serve the chest's hide of decline.

To Buddhist monks and Bönpos who do house puja and eat beings,  
Serve the underbelly of amassing attachment and aggression.

To diviners who speak with exaggeration and lies,  
Serve the water-holding bladder.

To those with the view of cause and effect as meaningless,  
Serve the tail of falling to the extremes of eternalism and nihilism.

To those who are not oriented toward the way of virtue,  
Serve the anus of self-deception and others' demise.

To those who fixate in shamatha,  
Serve the brains of delusion and ignorance.

To cunning charlatans who claim they have great dharma teachings,  
Serve the intestines of returning back to samsara.

To those with great attachment to busyness,  
Serve the tumor of getting entwined in everything.

To those who are indifferent toward birthlessness,  
Serve the parts with no fat or flesh.

To those with little merit and much lack of the root of virtue,  
Serve the Adam's apple of neither benefit nor harm.

To those with little learning who act as masters,  
Serve the entrails where the lower parts meet.<sup>69</sup>

To those who sit on rocks doing "dumb" meditation,  
Serve the tripe that's smooth outside and coarse within.

To leaders who just gather riches,  
Serve the gullet of the downward path.

To women who are stingy with a fiery mouth,  
Serve the muzzle with its inner and outer orifices.<sup>70</sup>

To rich men who are bound with avarice,  
Serve the belly of accumulating and leaving behind.

To a person who puts stock in this life,

Serve the testicles that look good outside but are foul within.

To students whose speech is pure but whose heart is dark,  
Serve the entrails that are rotten but disguised as good meat.

To women who engage in licentiousness,  
Serve the urethra that is as hard as a rock.

To parents who have many family members in their home, Serve the skin  
that's been stretched thin.

To those who get married with nothing at all,  
Serve the bowels of this life and next, not different.

To the unfortunate ones who have turned from dharma,  
Serve the clear broth that's without any meat.

To the person who puts off practicing dharma,  
Serve the remnants of laziness and corruption.

To the many beings in the bardo state,  
Serve the meat scraps of the ritual offerings.

The butcher, through omniscient wisdom,  
Bestows the four abhisekas of the self-liberated five gates.

The ladle of the wisdom teacher  
Is filled with the sweet liquor of experience.

This is served to all without regard to high or low rank.

Supplicate that you may have the base.\*24

Now eat this meat and drink this liquor.

This is the eighth chapter: the banquet.

Now for some discussion about asking forgiveness:

Buddhas, please listen to what I say here

With the precious jewels residing in unmanifest space,

The guru sitting at my crown as an ornament,

And dharma companions in whatever rank they sit:

And unarma companions in whatever rank they sit.

First, establish the notion of the impermanence of life.

In between, [reading] key life stories, straighten out your character.

In the end, to the degree that you are able,

Have resolve through meaningful and purposeful speech.<sup>71</sup>

All direct causes that were mine but were left hidden,

Anything that I left incomplete,

And any downfalls due to ignorance or lack of understanding, I pray, in these rows, this assembly will forgive.

Now, the head of the household will sing a song of pride:

First, whenever I fall ill,

I'm a yogi who possesses diligence

And meets with a diviner, a master of Bön.

Then when I receive the divination,

I, a yogi with a generous heart,

Offer up a ransom without any sense of loss.

When I hold the thanksgiving feast,

I am rich and my wealth is never exhausted.

Then when I hold the banquet,

I'm a yogi who has experience

And knows the rank of every guest.

Then, when I engage in the discussion,

I have tolerance toward everyone.

When the banquet of experience is held,

I request forgiveness without any uneasiness

And make aspirations that samsara be emptied.

This "Bön," whose "Bön" is it?

The twenty-two members of the family is Bön.

When one is seized, it is Bön that releases it.

When there is bondage, it is Bön that frees it.

When there is suppression, it is Bön that lifts it.

This is the tradition of how we discuss.

Get drunk on the liquor of dharmata;

Play in the experience of the Great Leap<sup>72</sup> across.

This little song with both of their power, such play and delight!

The blessing of practice, how wonderful!

Being filled on kind speech, so fluid and unbroken;

The laughter of happiness, so clear and sustained;

The pouring forth of practice, ever onward flowing;

The roar of blessings, unblocked and continuous;

I'm so happy and joyful for the guru's kindness!

This is the ninth chapter: the discussion.

The Jetsun gave his blessing in this way, singing with a Bön melody. When the sick man became free from his illness, his sons, healers, servants, retinue, and spiritual teachers were overjoyed. The people of that village, too, said, "The sick man has been revived and turned from the point of death. The Buddhist practice indeed has more blessing than the Bön practice!" Everyone gained unwavering faith in the Jetsun.

At that point the man who had been sick said, "Lama, everything that you have done here was not Bön, it was the Buddhist dharma. Before, I was a devotee of Bön, but now I have devotion and trust in Buddhism. Please allow me and all my sons to enter the gate of dharma."

The Jetsun gave his assent and the rich man and his eight sons who were there all entered into the dharma.

Among them, one son had previously trained in Bön and knew completely all the good qualities of a Bönpo. He too gained unwavering faith in the genuine dharma and the Jetsun. He said to Milarepa, "Generally, the words and appearances of the genuine dharma and the Bön religion\*<sup>25</sup> are similar. However, there is a difference in their compassion and activity. In particular, when performing the rituals of the Way of Shen,\*<sup>26</sup> at least one sentient being will be slaughtered in the end. The sources of refuge and objects of veneration are only worldly deities. From doing these practices, one has no confidence at all at the time of death, and dies with a sense of fear and terror. Therefore, now, I too will turn from Bön and practice the dharma." Then he requested to follow and attend

the Jetsun.

The Jetsun, thinking that the son was a suitable disciple to be tamed, accepted him, and through the abhishekas and instructions, ripened and liberated him. That man became known as Shengom Repa, one of the close sons of the Jetsun. The father and his relatives offered the most excellent service while the Jetsun stayed at Lang-go Ludü Fortress, Hidden Cave Sheep Fortress, and so forth; as well as Palkhü Fortress. In this way, they blocked the gateways to the lower realms and samsara, and took hold of the path of liberation and omniscience.

This is the cycle of meeting Dziwo Repa, the main realized one [in this cycle] at Lapuk Pema Fortress and Hidden Cave Sheep Fortress, and Shengom Repa, the close son of Milarepa.

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\*1 In Tibetan, Bepuk Mamo Dzong (T: *sbas phug ma mo rdzong*).

\*2 Lukdzi Repa, or “Shepherd Repa” (T: *lug rdzi ras pa*), is the same person as Dziwo Repa, or “Herder Repa” (T: *rdzi bo ras pa*), above.

\*3 “This is the first line of a chant in which the Bönmonks intone their hymns. Milarepa derisively mimicked the Bön way of singing in this song” (Chang 1999: 258). Throughout this song, Milarepa uses elements of Bön culture and ritual as metaphors for Buddhist principles.

\*4 The word for “name” in Tibetan (*mtshan*) can also mean “characteristics” or “attributes.”

\*5 “Intention” (T: *sems pa*) and “interest” (T: *mos pa*) here refer to two of the fifty-one mental factors taught in traditional Buddhist teachings. Intention is the quality of mind that moves or urges the mind to a particular object. Interest is the quality of the mind that holds on to and does not lose its object once it is apprehended.

\*6 The “father and mother” have “craving” (T: *sred pa*) and give birth to “children.”

\*7 In Tibetan medicine, an illness that is caused by a combination of wind, bile, and phlegm imbalances (T: *'dus pa'i nad*).

\*8 These three lines use examples from the traditional astrological chart common to both Tibetan Buddhist and Bön astrological tradition, which in turn is based upon Chinese astrology. The chart consists of two concentric circles. The outer circle is related to the twelve-year cycle and the inner circle contains the eight trigrams (*par kha*). In the center of the circle are the nine numerical squares or “mewa” in Tibetan (*sme ba*) (Mumford 1989: 108–109).

\*9 “Friends and enemies” are terms used in astrology to refer to relationships between the five elements that “nourish” or “deprive” another element respectively. Astrologers determine whether “the five elements are in conflict (*khruḡ pa*) [here *'thabs*] or in harmony (*mthun pa*)” (Mumford 1989: 107).

\*10 The “overflow, acrid smell, and defilement” here refer to a traditional Tibetan superstition: when boiled milk overflows on the stove/hearth (*thab shor*) the acrid smell of the scorched milk (*gzhob*) upsets the local deities who then bring illness upon the violators. (TN) In Milarepa’s song here, due to the “overflow,” all of the different deities that are associated with good energies left.

\*11 The male deity, local deity, and *dralha*, as well as the malevolent spirits sung about below, are all common figures in the Bön pantheon. Milarepa uses them as examples paralleling elements from the Buddhist path.

\*12 “Gyalgong” is a type of demon or ghost. (TDC) \*13 “Vajrasadhu [T: *rdor legs*] was the god of gambling

and war when he was subdued and samaya-bound by Padmasambhava to be a protector of the teachings” (Nalanda Translation Committee).

\*14 This is the equivalent of what Westerners refer to as a ghost. *TDC* says “A ghost that, once having died, brings harm to those who remain living.”

\*15 In this practice (T: *nan*), one writes down the name of the person or being concerned and puts the name in a container with various ritual substances. Based on the ritual performed, the one whose name was used contracts an illness or dies. (TN) \*16 Sources differ on this ritual object (T: *'brang rgyas*). One says it is a torma shaped like a heart (*TDC*), another says it is shaped and decorated like a jewel (TN). Dan Martin says it is a torma covered in butter that is used to offer local deities when treasure is desired to be unearthed from the ground. Sakya Pandita tells that he was not able to find an Indian source for this torma in his *Classifying the Three Vows*, so it may have originated with the Bön tradition (Martin 2001: 63).

\*17 This refers to an arrow with silk banners tied to it used in various rituals.

\*18 This is the Bön equivalent of the dharmakaya.

\*19 “Divination healer” (T: *mo sman*) refers to the tradition of Bön itself, and “clearing the elements” means clearing sickness. (TN) \*20 See note below on Bön essence.

\*21 Bön phenomenon (*bon can*) and Bön essence (*bon nyid*) are the Bön equivalents of *dharmā* (phenomenon; T: *chos*) and *dharmata* (nature of phenomena; T: *chos nyid*), respectively, in Buddhist philosophy.

\*22 A traditional Tibetan stove commonly used in nomadic culture that is built with three legs (T: *sgyed pu*).

\*23 The sixteen arhats charged with protecting the teachings by the Buddha Shakyamuni (T: *gnas brtan*).

\*24 “Base” here refers to the realization of the nature of mind. (DPR) \*25 Literally, “the practice of Shen” (T: *sgrub gshen*). See the next note for an explanation of “Shen.”

\*26 T: *snang gshen*. Shen (Tönpa Shenrap) is the principal teacher figure in the Bon tradition, akin to Shakyamuni in the Buddhist tradition. The “Way of Shen” is another way of referring to the Bön religion.



# 25

## Meeting Rechungma

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa, along with his attendant and heart-son Rechungpa, was begging for alms in the practice of equal taste and benefiting beings near the Five Small Lakes at the border of the region of Drik. At that time, word spread; people said, “The Jetsun and his disciple-son are practicing at Tisé Snow Mountain and near Lake Manasarovar.” Thus, it became well known they were there.

Some students from Choro at the Drik border also heard of them and were convinced that they were truly wondrous and astounding. Devotion arose in the students and they said, “The siddha master and his disciple are coming; therefore, let us go to see them.” They took with them abundant provisions to be of service and show their respect, and met the Jetsun and his disciples.

Among them was a young lady who, having heard the life story of the Jetsun, obtained unwavering faith. She was an emanation of a wisdom dakini imbued with great faith, diligence, prajña, and compassion. She was from a good family and had fortunate circumstances. Five young women, with this young lady at the head, all in single voice then offered this song, challenging the father Jetsun and his son to see if what had been said about his experience in practice was true:

We take refuge in the sublime three jewels.

With your compassion, grant your blessings.

These two exalted repa yogis

Are greatly renowned far and wide.

All you faithful men and women gathered here,

Please don't speak, and listen a while.

We young ladies of noble family

Offer this music with pleasant melody.

In verse, we'll illustrate through examples.  
Keep whatever of its meaning is useful within your heart.  
It is offered for you two repas.

Snowy white Tisé is well renowned;  
Those who haven't seen it still hear of it from afar.  
Some say, "It's like a stupa of crystal snow."  
But when one approaches and is able to see,  
The head of the mountain is wrapped in snow,  
Its sides are completely surrounded in snow,  
And its edge is adorned with grass-covered hills.  
But that in itself is nothing astounding;  
What is so amazing about that?

The Invincible Turquoise Lake,\*<sup>1</sup> so renowned.  
Those who haven't seen it still hear of it from afar.  
Some say the lake is like a turquoise mandala.  
But when one approaches and is able to see,  
It's just a hole filled with water  
With streams that trickle from it;  
Fields and rocks surround it there.  
But that in itself is nothing astounding;  
What is so amazing about that?

The Poto Red Rock,\*<sup>2</sup> so renowned, Those who haven't seen it still hear of it  
from afar.  
Some say, "That rock is like a heap of gems,"  
But when one approaches and is able to see,  
It's a rock that juts up from the meadow;  
A forest of trees grows on it there,  
And water surrounds its outer edge.  
But that in itself is nothing astounding;  
What is so amazing about that?

You are renowned as the Great and Little Repas.  
Those who haven't seen you still hear of you from afar.  
Some say, "They're yogi siddhas, indeed!"  
But when one approaches you and is able to see,  
You're an elder and a youth—nothing amazing.  
Lying around nakedly without any shame,  
You both hum little melodies.  
You both dress in any way you like  
And clad your bodies with cotton cloth.  
You live on food that you've begged to receive  
And you both do whatever it is that you please.  
But that in itself is nothing astounding;  
What is so amazing about that?

For we sisters who've gone everywhere,  
This morning's journey has been of little use.  
There's no place we sisters haven't gone  
And this morning's journey has only been hard on our feet.  
We sisters have seen everything  
And today all we've seen is an old and a young man.  
We sisters who have heard everything,  
Today we've heard lots of useless talk.  
You two are either the Victorious One's successors  
Or simply obstructions made by some demon.  
Since there's no other possibility apart from these two, We've determined  
you're a demon's obstructions.  
If you understand this song, then give a response.  
If you didn't understand, then yogis, please leave this land!

Thus they offered their song of dispute. Then the Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, this snow mountain and its three lakes are sites of practice that were prophesied by the Bhagavan.\*<sup>3</sup> If we do not respond to such disparagement, they all will accumulate negative karma and the greatness of this place will be misconstrued.

Since we yogis who sustain uncontrived conduct with our three gates have become objects of derision, let us respond from within the yogic nature and point out those things they perceive as faults to be good qualities. Now, join your father!”

And so they sang this song of realization in reply to the sisters’ song:

You faithful students who have gathered here,  
Youths who are skilled in melodious song,  
You five ladies with poetic words,  
Lady leader of song: focus on my meaning and listen.

Do you know who we are, or not?  
If you don’t know who we are,  
We are the repas, great and small.  
I, the old man singing on the right,  
I am the yogi Milarepa.

This youth on the left accompanying me  
Is the yogi, the junior repa, Rechung Dordrak.\*4  
To expand on your pleasant words and meaning,  
I’ll directly answer your questions using symbols.  
Keep the meaning of this song that arose  
From experience and realization in your heart.

The renowned snowy white Tisé Mountain,  
Those who haven’t seen it still hear of it from afar.  
Some say, “It’s like a white crystal stupa.”  
When one approaches and is able to see,  
The head of the mountain is wrapped in snow.  
That head of the mountain covered in snow  
Was prophesied before by the Sugata.  
It became known as the Great Snow Mountain.\*5  
It’s the hub, the navel, of Jambudvipa.  
It’s the place where the white lion majestically stands.  
This mountain that’s like a white crystal stupa  
Is the palace of the Glorious Chakrasmyara

is the palace of the glorious Chakrasamvara.

The snow mountains that surround its edge

Are the residing seats of five hundred arhats,\*6

An object for the offerings of all the eight classes.\*7

Those grass-covered hills that surround their edge

Are hills with fragrant incense

Which produce a medicinal elixir for healing life-threatening illness.

It's a great site where accomplishment is attained,

A place where undefiled samadhi is found.

There is no place more amazing than this;

There is no place that is more wondrous than this.

The renowned Invincible Turquoise Lake,

Those who haven't seen it still hear of it from afar.

Some say it's like a mandala of turquoise.

When one approaches and is able to see,

It is a hole that is filled with water.

This hole that is filled with water

Was prophesied before by the Sugata.

He called it "The Lake That Is Never Warm."

It is the source where the four great rivers mingle, A place where fish and  
otters swim about.

This lake that's like a turquoise mandala

Is the palace of the eight great nagas.

The small streams there that trickle from it

Are flowing rivers of an elixir of milk.

It's the cleaning bath of a hundred offering deities, And it possesses the eight  
good qualities of water.

Its edge is adorned with meadows and rocks.

It's a treasure house of the lesser nagas.

It's a place where Jambutrisha trees grow,

Which gave the southern continent, Jambudvipa,\*8 its name.

There is no place more amazing than that.  
There is no place that is more wondrous than that!

The Poto Red Rock, so renowned,  
Those who haven't seen it still hear of it from afar.  
Some say that rock is like a heap of gems.  
When one approaches and is able to see,  
It's a rock that juts up from the meadow.  
This rock that juts up from the meadow  
Was prophesied before by the Sugata  
And became known as the "Black Piercing Mountain."\*9  
North of the forest of the Central Land  
Is the border between India and Tibet,  
A place where striped tigers roam about.  
In the forest that grows within that place  
Are trunks of medicinal sandalwood,  
The tree with six excellent medicines.  
This rock that is like a heap of jewels  
Is a palace of divine sages,  
A solitary place prophesied by dakinis,  
A dwelling place of the siddhas of the past.  
Because water surrounds its outer edge,  
It is difficult for anyone to travel there.  
There is no place more amazing than that.  
There is no place that is more wondrous than that!

We who are known as the great and small repas,  
Those who haven't seen us still hear of us from afar.  
"They're yogi siddhas, indeed!" they say.  
When one approaches and is able to see,  
We're just an elder and a youth—nothing amazing.

This elder and youth that are nothing amazing Have exhausted all concepts of

names and signs.

We who lie around naked without any shame,  
We're free of the clothing of perceiver and perceived.  
We dress in any way we like:  
We've given up the contrivance of embarrassment.  
We both sing little melodies  
That come from the depths of our experience.  
With our bodies clad in cotton cloth  
The heat of blissful chandali blazes.  
Living on food that we have begged for,  
Our craving for desirable things is subdued.  
Doing whatever it is that we please,  
The sixfold collections are relaxed, at ease.  
We are gurus who guide fortunate ones;  
We're asked for instruction by ones with faith.  
We're an object for you male and female benefactors to circumambulate.  
We are a place where wise ones come to consult,  
Where meditators offer their realization and experience.  
We're ones who have cut imputations from within.  
We've determined the base, the basic nature,  
And actualized the unborn reality.  
We've penetrated the innate mind in its own place.  
The signs of accomplishment on the path have arisen in our minds.  
We realize dharmakaya for the benefit of self  
And have compassion for the benefit of other.  
There is nothing more amazing than this!  
There is nothing that is more wondrous than this!

You faithful students who have gathered here,  
You who have roamed everywhere,  
Your previous pilgrimages have tired you.  
If you want to do pilgrimage, go to Aryavarta.\*10

You have been to every place.  
Your previous journey has made your feet sore.  
If you go somewhere else, then go to Bodhgaya.

You who have seen everything,  
All you've seen until now has been meaningless.  
If you want to look at something else,  
Then look at the magical sights in Lhasa.

You who have heard everything,  
All you've heard until now has been useless chatter.  
If you want to listen to something else,  
Then listen to the whispered lineage key instructions.

You who have stayed near many people,  
Until now they've all been your relatives.  
If you want to stay near someone, stay near a noble guru.

You who have done everything,  
All you've done until now has just become karma.  
If you want to do something, practice the sublime dharma.

This reply came from an old man's mouth.  
If understood and reflected upon, it contains key instructions.  
If you don't understand, then this little song  
Is just about us yogis doing as we please.  
You students, now go back to your homes.

Thus he sang. From among them there, the young lady standing in the center gave rise to exceeding faith. With many tears flowing forth, she took the jewel that was tied to her belt, as well as the jewels ornamenting her head, and offered them into the Jetsun's hand. They said, "We five sisters will enter the gate of dharma and wander in mountain retreats. Please, out of your compassion, give us the profound instructions." Then they sang this song of supplication:

The compassionate lineage of experience and realization, Passed from the  
dharmakava oreat Vairadhara



anantakaya, great vajrasara,

Like a flame that passes from lamp to lamp: Its lineages holders, were they  
not Tilopa and Naropa?

He who traveled, undergoing many great hardships,  
To be in the presence of Tilopa and Naropa,  
Was that not the translator Marpa?

The wondrous one who underwent hardship  
In the presence of the translator Marpa,  
Is that not the Great Repa of austerities?

One with naked body and lustrous complexion,  
Whose myriad speech has the voice of Brahma,  
His mind of wisdom and love is unceasing luminosity, I bow to the body,  
speech, and mind of the father repa.

We five sisters assembled here  
Previously have not accumulated much merit.  
Though we've human bodies, we've an inferior birth\*<sup>11</sup>  
Without any freedom to practice the sublime dharma.  
Right now, by the blessings of the Jetsun,  
Faith was born deep within our minds.  
The precious jewel upon my belt  
And the jewels I wear upon my head  
I offer to you, Repa Lord.  
With kindness, please grant us the sacred dharma.  
We ask you, please speak into our ears  
A little of the life story of you great repa lords.

In this way, they supplicated with the wish to enter the gate of dharma. The Jetsun said, "I have no need for the jewels of your belt or crown. If you all wish to practice dharma from your heart, there are other gurus who are more learned in dharma and who are better than I. You should seek the dharma somewhere else. I have no attachment to food or clothing, and I wander in empty lands with no humans. You cannot follow my way of living. It is doubtful that you can

endure having such harsh conditions with such little food and clothing. Therefore, listen to this song.” And so he sang this song of realization:

Through the blessings of the Lord Vajradhara,  
He underwent astounding hardship  
To come into the presence of Tilopa and Naropa.  
Lotsawa, speaker of two languages,  
Is that not the translator Marpa?

I, Milarepa, who was sustained by his compassion,  
My father was Mila Sherap Gyaltzen,  
My mother was Nyangtsa Kargyen,  
And I was called Töpa-ga.\*<sup>12</sup>

Previous causes have effects that are undecieving,  
And because of our family’s little merit  
My father Mila passed away.

All of our illusory food and wealth  
Was taken by force by my aunt and uncle;  
My family then became their servants.  
For food, we had what a dog would eat;  
For clothing, we just wore patches and rags  
That would fight against the wind.

We were continually burdened by my uncle’s beatings, And my aunt looked  
on us with moody temper.

I took the seat of a lowly servant,  
And sufferings fell upon us, one after another.  
Our suffering and despair were completely unbearable.

With the gurus Yungtön and Rangtön Lhaga  
I perfected training in sorcery, curses, and hail.  
I sent ruin down upon the people of the land  
With my aunt and uncle at the fore.  
Then thinking of that, I gave rise to remorse.

“The one blessed by the lords Naropa and Maitripa Resides at Lhodrak  
Chükhyer Phu,” it was said.

I’d heard of that father *lotsawa* from afar, And after a difficult journey, I  
arrived in his presence.

At the feet of the kind father, I, Milarepa, stayed  
For six whole years and eight months more.

I built for the sake of purification

A nine-story tower replete with a courtyard.

Then the kind father accepted me.

With the ultimate view of Mahamudra

I was pointed out the profound abiding nature;

He gave me the Six Dharmas of Naropa, the path of means; And the river-  
flow of the four abhishekas, the path of ripening.

For the practices of the glorious Naropa,

He gave advice for developing confidence in them.

Then, free of any laziness,

I renounced this life and meditated.

Through that, I entered the gate of perpetual happiness.

This is the way I became a yogi.

If that pleases you five sisters, then you may go.

Thus he sang. They all gave rise to supreme, unwavering faith in the Jetsun’s story and begged to attend and to be taken with him. The Jetsun said, “You all are spoiled, treasured children of rich people and you would never be able to endure the hardship of following after me. If you do practice dharma, you would have to undergo hardships like this. Can you do it? Think carefully.” Then he sang this song of realization inquiring into their level of enthusiasm:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.

You five sisters assembled here,

If, from your heart, you wish to practice sublime dharma And think you must  
follow after me,

Consider this song’s meaning, and you’ll get your answer:

Through perseverance with resolve,

• • • • •

And taking on many hardships,  
Can you practice the command of the guru?

Though you have henceforth abandoned Your homeland, that prison of  
demons,  
Can you roam in the ruggedness of mountain retreats?

The demon that tethers you—relatives and kin—  
Though you know their harm and abandon them,  
Can you also rely upon a qualified guru?

Food and wealth—the demon of deception—  
Though you know they're poison and abandon them,  
Can you take on the hardship of scarce provisions?

Though you abandon fine and soft cloth from Ü,  
Can you kindle the bliss and heat of chandali?

Though you abandon intimate ones in your homes,  
Can you roam in empty lands with no people?

Though you abandon the eight worldly concerns,  
Can you take a humble position with your three gates?

Though you abandon taking this life to be permanent, Can you meditate on  
death's uncertain time?

If you can do all of these, then come follow me.

According to the rule of the Kagyu gurus,

I'll give you instructions of the Secret Mantra's path of means; I'll give you  
the gateway abhishekas and blessings.

Thus he sang, and the young women rejoiced with glee. The leader of them said,  
“Since our bodies of the four elements have been born as women, we have an  
inferior birth. However, the all-base mind has no distinction between male and  
female. We have contemplated the faults of samsara. Having done so, we are  
powerless to do anything but practice the guru's command. Thus, let us attend you

as you take us with you. Please do not worry whether we are able to practice or not.” Then they sang this song expressing their desire to follow him as attendants and their confidence in being able to practice the guru’s commands:

Precious father, noble guru Whose naked body has lustrous complexion,  
Through austere conduct you benefit others.  
We bow at the feet of the Jetsun Repa.

We five sisters assembled here  
Have obtained an inferior birth in this life,  
But bodhichitta is beyond male or female.  
We have contemplated the faults of samsara;  
Through taking on hardship and suffering  
We’ll practice the command of the guru.

Our homeland, the prison of Mara,  
Forever abandoning it, we’ll roam in mountain retreats.

Mara’s diversion—relatives and kin—  
Forever abandoning them, we’ll rely on the guru.

Mara’s deception—food and wealth—  
Forever abandoning it, we’ll undergo hardship.

Abandoning, too, the soft cloth of Ü,  
We’ll kindle the warmth of the bliss of chandali.

Abandoning the intimate companions of our homes,  
We’ll roam in empty lands with no people.

Abandoning the eight worldly concerns,  
We’ll take humble positions with our three gates.

Abandoning the thought that this life is permanent,  
We’ll meditate that the time of death is uncertain.

In short, we will practice the guru’s command.

Precious, genuine qualified Guru,  
We young ladies here, we sisters five,  
Request to be the guru's servants.  
With kindness please teach us the sublime dharma.

When they had sung this, the Jetsun realized that they were disciples with karmic connection, and he accepted them as attendants. At that time, the father Jetsun and his son were staying at the Five Small Lakes. He gave the five women the abhishekas and key instructions, and set them to meditate. After three nights, the leader of the sisters began to gradually develop good qualities such as the heat of chandali.

Later, she became ill. In order to see whether or not she was able to roam in mountain retreats, and to see whether or not her faith was unwavering, Milarepa told her she could leave as she pleased. Although she was ill, she continued to roam in mountain retreats. Thus, she had gained confidence in withstanding adverse conditions.

One day, when the Jetsun was staying in a different area, the young lady came to see him where many other students had all come to meet the Jetsun at that time. To see whether the young lady had lost her faith or not, the Jetsun sang this song of realization with a hidden meaning:

I supplicate the guru lord.  
I take refuge in the yidam deity.  
All these faithful students gathered here:

If you can't renounce the eight worldly concerns,  
Do not say you are a faithful one;  
Faith changes under adverse conditions.

If you don't avoid the ten nonvirtues,  
Then do not say you have discipline;  
There's a danger you'll go to the lower realms.

If you can't renounce your self-deception,  
Don't say that you are keeping samaya;  
There's a danger you'll go to vajra hell.

If you haven't studied and contemplated in an unbiased way, Don't criticize  
the other yanas;

There's a danger you'll renounce dharma and scorch your own mind.

If you haven't realized the dream-like nature,

Don't disregard virtuous and negative karma;

There's a danger you'll go to the three lower realms.

If you don't know the mind-streams of others, Do not denigrate people or  
their views;

There's a danger you'll fall into arrogance.

If you haven't mixed mind with dharmata,

Do not say you've had excellent experiences;

There's a danger the obstructions of Mara will come.

If you've not arrived at the ineffable meaning,

Do not say you have a high view;

There's a danger you'll be left just wishing for fruition.

If spontaneity has not risen up from within you,

Don't glance about and do as you will;

There's a danger the stone you throw will hit your own head.

This dharma I've spoken, keep in your minds;

Consider its meaning and clearly understand.

Thus he sang. From among them there, only Rechungma\*<sup>13</sup> understood the meaning. "Regarding the guru's conduct of a siddha, my faith hasn't wavered for a single moment," she said. Then she offered this song on fifteen points of realization:

I prostrate to the guru lords,

To my single father, the Jetsun guru.

I have faith and respect without any break.

The single refuge, the three precious jewels:<sup>73</sup>

I shall choose no other support but them

I shall choose no other support but them.

When taking the key instructions of the guru's whispered lineage, I'll not just patch any terms together.\*14

In the yidam practice of the Jetsun, I'll not break the practice of the four-session yoga.

With the nature of illusory appearances,  
I'll not leave an imprint by clinging to things as real.

The luminous nature of the mind,  
I'll not mar with the defects of concepts.

Things' abiding nature—the object to be understood—  
I'll not hide under stains of perceiver and perceived.

The essence of mind is the innate state;  
I'll not make it a support for latent tendencies.

Mind is dharmakaya, its nature is emptiness;  
I'll not sully it with the stains of attributes.

Being stricken by illness in this body of four elements, I won't put blame on other friends.

Demons and obstructions are our practice's friend;  
I won't seek out divinations or think erroneously.

Toward the confused projections of latent tendencies in a dream I'll not grasp with concepts that cling to them as real.

Angry enemies are my gurus who teach patience;  
I won't think of or act out of revenge toward them.

The conduct of the siddha guru  
I'll not imbue with the imputations of analysis.

Buddhahood is self-arisen and spontaneously present; I'll not seek out a result



other than this.

For disciple followers who are worthy vessels,  
The flow of compassion's river will never cease.

Lord Guru, one with genuine kindness, Please guide me, a disciple of inferior  
intellect.

Please accept me with your hook of compassion.

When she had sung this, the Jetsun was very pleased and decided that Rechungma was a qualified yogini, fit to be a companion in conduct. He gave her all of the key instructions without any left out. Then Milarepa said to Rechungpa, “You are very good at teaching female disciples, so you should look after her.” Then he gave her over to Rechungpa, who took her for a while as his samaya companion.

After that, she went to meditate in the island of Semodo in Precious Sky Lake\*<sup>15</sup> in the north, where she practiced in complete silence for eight years. By the end of this period, she actualized the ten signs of practice, the eight qualities, and the abandonments and realization of the paths and bhumis. In this life, she went to the pure land of the dakinis.

She was one of the four disciple-daughters of the Jetsun. This is the cycle of meeting Rechungma at the five small lakes at the border of Drik in Choro.

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\*<sup>1</sup> Mapham Yutso (Invincible Turquoise Lake) is the Tibetan name for Lake Manasarovar.

\*<sup>2</sup> In Tibetan, Drakmar Poto (T: *brag dmar spo mtho*).

\*<sup>3</sup> The Buddha.

\*<sup>4</sup> “Dordrak” is a contraction of Dorje Drakpa, Rechungpa’s proper name.

\*<sup>5</sup> Riwo Gang Chen, another name for Mt. Kailash/Tisé (T: *ri bo gangs can*).

\*<sup>6</sup> Arhats are realized beings who have become completely liberated from the afflictions and suffering.

\*<sup>7</sup> The eight classes of devas and spirits are devas, nagas, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, and mahoragas (*TDC*).

\*<sup>8</sup> “Jambutrisha” is a modified transliteration of the Tibetan that appears in the original (*shing ’dzam bu tri sha*); it, in turn, is a Tibetanized transliteration of a Sanskrit word. “Jambu” is the name of a fruit (possibly *Syzygium cumini*).

\*<sup>9</sup> T: *ri nag po ’bigs byed*, pronounced “Ri Nakpo Bikche,” literally means “Black Mountain That Pierces.” The exact geographical reference of this name is uncertain. James Valby says that *’bigs yo* is the Vindhya Range in India (JV). According to Hindu myth, the Vindhya Range once vied with Mount Meru in height but was subdued so that the trajectory of the sun would remain in relation only to Meru. There may be a correlation with this myth and the place mentioned in this song. There is also a reference to “Bikche” in the famous *Praise to the Twenty-One Taras*.

- \*<sup>10</sup> The name for Northern India in classical Sanskrit literature (T: *'phags pa wa ti*).
- \*<sup>11</sup> “Inferior birth” (T: *skye ba dman*) is a reference to the fact that they were born as women, and should be taken to mean “disadvantaged,” particularly during the era and culture in which this takes place.
- \*<sup>12</sup> Milarepa’s name as a youth (T: *thos pa dga'*) means “delightful to hear.”
- \*<sup>13</sup> The young woman previously mentioned.
- \*<sup>14</sup> This means she will not make up her own interpretations and will follow the teaching just as it is given.
- \*<sup>15</sup> In Tibetan, Namtso Chukmo (T: *gnam mtsho phyug mo*).

## Meeting Khyira Repa

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa placed each of his heart-sons in their own retreat in the mountains and then went himself to an isolated place called Nyishang Gurta, a very high and rugged mountain along the border of Nepal and Tibet. It was covered in thick fog and clouds from which snow and rain continually fell. To the right were high rocky mountains with steep cliffs where howls of beasts resounded and vultures, the king of birds, would soar. To the left were soft hills with rich grass where grazing animals—deer, antelope, and wild sheep—would leisurely jump and play. In front was a beautiful forest with a variety of bright-colored flowers, where monkeys and langurs would train their skill. There, peacocks, nightingales, and many beautiful birds with lovely voices would sing their songs, tweeting and dancing to the sound with their wings. Below, in front of Milarepa's retreat cave, was a brook that flowed unceasingly down from the snow and through the rocks, babbling pleasantly as it went.

The place where Milarepa stayed was remote and delightful. It was a solitary place that had all the conducive conditions for practice. It was known as Katya Cave. There, the virtuous spirits would pay him service as the Jetsun Milarepa remained in the samadhi of continual river flow.

One day, from above the site there came the clear sound of a dog barking, followed by a great crashing noise. The Jetsun thought, "Up until now, my meditative concentration has flourished greatly in this place. But now, has some kind of obstacle arisen?" He went outside the cave, and sitting on top of a large boulder, rested within a state of nonreferential great compassion.

Then, in front of him a deer approached. It was black and every hair in its fur had a silver tip. The deer moved as though it were terrified. Unbearable great compassion arose in the Jetsun's mind, thinking, "It is by the power of previous bad karma that a body such as this is taken. He has not done anything wrong in this life, yet he must experience such unbearable suffering. What a pity! I will teach the dharma of the Mahayana and lead him to eternal happiness." Then he

sang this song of realization to the deer:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator:

Grant your blessing that the suffering of beings be pacified.

You sentient being with a deer's body and thorny head, Listen here to Mila's song!

Running away from appearances outside,

You'll never be liberated from confused appearances of ignorance inside.

You cannot abandon your outer body or your mind;

The time has come to renounce confused appearances and ignorance.

The truth of karmic results is far too fast;

How could you escape outwardly with your illusory body?

If you want to escape, escape with the inner mind itself.

Let mind itself escape to the land of enlightenment.

Other means of escape are only confusion.

To destroy mind's confusion, stay right here.

With the outlook that you have right now,

Dying seems completely unbearable.

You hope that on the mountain's far side you'll be free; And fear that on this side you will be caught.

With hopes and fears, you wander in samsara.

I'll teach you the Six Dharmas of Naropa

And the meditation of Mahamudra.

Thus, he sang this song of realization with a voice and melody like Brahma's, so pleasing and beautiful to hear. Anyone who heard it would have been completely captivated. By the compassion of the Jetsun, the deer's fear and suffering were pacified. With tears streaming from his eyes, he relaxed with the Jetsun, licked his clothes, and went to sleep on Milarepa's left side.

The Jetsun thought, "The barking I heard before must have been a ferocious dog that wanted to harm this deer. I wonder what it is like." Then a female dog appeared, red in color with a black tail and a cord around its neck. All four of her

claws were shredded from running on rock, and her tongue was flapping from her mouth like a banner.

“This dog that barks ferociously with great aggression and malevolent mind, and that runs, shooting through space like lightning, is who was chasing the deer and wanted to do it harm,” Milarepa thought. “Whatever outer-appearing things this dog sees, she takes them as enemies. She’s never free of such aggression; how good it would be if I could pacify her anger.” Then he sang this song of realization to the dog with a heart of great sorrow and compassion for her:

I bow at the feet of Lord Marpa from Lhodrak:  
Grant your blessing that the aggression of beings be pacified.

You sentient being with a dog’s body and the face of a wolf, Listen here to  
Mila’s song!

Whatever appearances there are, you take as your enemy; Aggression and  
malevolence agitate your mind.

Through negativity, you were born with the body of a dog And remain in a  
state of suffering with hunger.

There’s no chance for relief from the painful afflictions.

If you don’t capture your own mind inside,

How can capturing others’ bodies outside be of any help?

If you want to catch something, it’s time to catch your own mind.

Abandon your aggression, and stay right here.

With the outlook that you have right now,

The affliction of aggression is so unbearable.

On the other side of the mountain, you fear you’ll lose your prey.

And on this side of the mountain, you hope you will catch it.

With hope and fear you wander in samsara.

I’ll teach you the Six Dharmas of Naropa

And the meditation of Mahamudra.

This dharma, which the Jetsun taught with great compassion and with a melody like Brahma’s, pacified the dog’s aggression. The dog then whimpered and wagged her tail at the Jetsun. Making bowing gestures and licking his clothes, she

lay down on his right side, tucking her snout between her two paws. With tears trickling down her face, she and the deer lay there sleeping like a mother and her child.

The Jetsun thought, “There must be a bad man following these two animals, and if he tracks them down, he will come here.”

After a little while, a man with dark complexion and angry eyes, with his hair tied at the top of his head, arrived. He held up the bottom of his chuba\*<sup>1</sup> on both the right and left. He wore an antelope-skin hunting coat with a lasso slung over his shoulder, and carried arrows and a bow in his hands. He was breathing heavily, with his head so covered in sweat that it gleamed as if it were blood.

When he reached the Jetsun, he saw the deer and the dog lying at the Jetsun’s side like mother and son. He thought, “Did this meditator do something bad to them?”

He became angry and shouted, “These repas and yogis go all over the place! They’re up into the high snow mountains when you go to kill game, they’re down at the lakes when you try to catch fish and otters; and in between, they’re in the villages when you’re trying to make a profit or fight. If one or two died, there would be no fault with that! You may be able to take my deer and dog, but now let’s see if your cotton cloth can take my arrow.”

He took an arrow, fitted its notch in his bow, and went up to the Jetsun. The Jetsun thought, “If I can teach dharma to these animals who are naturally ignorant and they understand, then if I teach dharma to this human, he will too.”

Then he said, “Human, there is plenty of time to shoot arrows, so take your time and listen to my song.” Then, abiding within a state of wisdom, love, and power, and with a melody like Brahma’s, he sang this song of realization to Khyirawa\*<sup>2</sup> Gönpö Dorje:

I supplicate you, Siddha Lord:

Grant your blessing that the five poisons be pacified.

You sentient being with human body and face of a demon, Listen here to  
Mila’s song!

It’s said human bodies are precious and rare,

But to look at you, there’s nothing rare at all.

You’ve the body of a demon with much negativity.

You disregard the sufferings of the lower realms.

You work for the desires of this life.  
But you won't get what you want through negativity.  
  
If you give up attachment within, you'll attain siddhi.  
You'll never be able to tame outer appearances.  
The time has come to tame your own mind.  
Killing this deer will not content you.  
If you kill the inner five poisons, you'll get what you wish.  
Though you tame outer enemies, there'll only be more.  
Tame your inner mind, and there'll be no more foes.  
Without wasting this human life doing negative deeds, If you practice  
    sublime genuine dharma, it would be excellent.  
I'll teach you the Six Dharmas of Naropa  
And the meditation of Mahamudra.

The man sat quietly and listened as Milarepa sang. Then the man thought, "I can't be completely certain about what he said. Before, the deer would be very frightened and the dog very aggressive. But I've never seen anything like this; today the two lie together on either side of this man like mother and child. As for me, I've never dropped an arrow even in the snowy white mountains of winter, but here I've helplessly dropped one. Either this man is a master of black magic or he is truly a special guru. I should look and see how he lives."

Gönpo Dorje went into the retreat cave and saw that Milarepa had no provisions other than some roots and their leaves, and no other belongings at all were to be found. He staggered as faith arose within him. "Lama," he asked, "who is your guru, and what is the dharma that you practice called? Where do you come from? Who is your companion and what do you own? If I am acceptable to you, I will offer you the life of this deer and follow you as an attendant."

Then the Jetsun said, "My country and companions are just as you see. If you can follow me, then come on!" Then he sang this song of realization to Khyirawa Gönpo Dorje:

The gurus Tilopa, Naropa, and Marpa:  
These three are Milarepa's gurus.  
If these three gurus are okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa!

The guru, yidams, and dakinis:

These three are Mila's objects of veneration.

If these objects of veneration are okay for you,

Then follow behind this repa!

The Buddha, dharma, and sangha, these three:

These are the sources for Mila's refuge.

If these sources are okay for you,

Then follow behind this repa!

View, meditation, and conduct, these three:

These are Milarepa's practice.

If these three practices are okay for you,

Then follow behind this repa!

Slate mountains, snow mountains, rock mountains, these three: These are  
Mila's places of practice.

If these places of practice are okay for you,

Then follow behind this repa!

Deer, antelope, and mountain sheep, these three:

These are Milarepa's livestock.

If these livestock are okay for you,

Then follow behind this repa!

Lynx, coyotes, and wolves, these three:

These three are Milarepa's guard dogs.

If these guard dogs are okay for you,

Then follow behind this repa!

Song birds, grouse, and vultures, these three: These three are Milarepa's  
house birds.

If these three house birds are okay for you,

Then follow behind this repa.



The sun, moon, and stars, these three:  
These three are Milarepa's offerings.\*3  
If these offerings are okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa.

Gods, ghosts, and rishis, these three:  
These three are Milarepa's neighbors.  
If these neighbors are okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa!

Monkey, langurs, and bears, these three:  
These three are Milarepa's playmates.  
If these three playmates are okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa!

Bliss, clarity, and nonthought, these three:  
These three are the friends that cheer Milarepa up.  
If these friends are okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa!

Nettles, garlic, and leaves, these three:  
These three are Milarepa's diet.  
If this diet is okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa!

Water from mountains, snow, and earth, these three: These three are  
Milarepa's drinking water.  
If this drinking water is okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa!

Nadi, prana, and bindu, these three: These three are Milarepa's clothing.  
If this clothing is okay for you,  
Then follow behind this repa!

When Milarepa had sung this, the hunter thought, "His actions are in harmony

with his words,” and even more faith arose within him. Tears streamed from his eyes, and he prostrated, taking Milarepa’s feet to the crown of his head. He offered the precious Jetsun the deer, his dog, bow and arrow, his hunting coat of antelope skin, and lasso. Then he said, “I and this dog here have committed many great negative deeds. From now on we will not commit any negativity. I beg you to guide my dog, Lokchang Marmo,<sup>\*4</sup> to the higher realms. Please lead this black deer to the path of great bliss. And I ask you to please teach me, Khyirawa Gönpö Dorje, the dharma and lead me on the path of liberation.” After he said that, he offered this song:

On my left sits a black deer ornamented with antlers.  
If I kill him, for merely seven days my appetite would be satisfied.  
This man doesn’t need that, so I offer it to you, Guru.  
Please lead this black deer to the path of great bliss.  
Please lead Lokchang Marmo to the path of awakening.  
Please lead Gönpö Dorje to liberation.

This dog that sits to my right, Lokchang Marmo,  
If let loose, she can capture any bird of the sky.  
This man doesn’t need her, so I offer her to you, Guru.  
Please lead this black deer to the path of great bliss.  
Please lead Lokchang Marmo to the path of awakening.  
Please lead Gönpö Dorje to liberation.

My black lasso that’s adorned with a noose,  
If used, it can round up any yak of the northern plain.  
This man doesn’t need it, so I offer it to you, Guru.  
Please lead this black deer to the path of great bliss.  
Please lead Lokchang Marmo to the path of awakening.  
Please lead Gönpö Dorje to liberation.

This coat of antelope hide adorned with fur lining, Wear it and you’ll stay  
warm in the snowy white peaks.  
This man doesn’t need it, so I offer it to you, Guru.  
Please lead this black deer to the path of great bliss.  
Please lead Lokchang Marmo to the path of awakening.

Please lead Gönpo Dorje to liberation.

In my right hand, I hold an arrow.

It is ornamented with four red-colored feathers.

When shot, it pierces whatever it hits.

This man doesn't need it, so I offer it to you, Guru.

Please lead this black deer to the path of great bliss.

Please lead Lokchang Marmo to the path of awakening.

Please lead Gönpo Dorje to liberation.

In my left hand, I hold a bow.

It is ornamented with the bark of the white birch.

When pulled, its sound roars like thunder.

This man doesn't need it, so I offer it to you, Guru.

Please lead this black deer to the path of great bliss.

Please lead Lokchang Marmo to the path of awakening.

Please lead Gönpo Dorje to liberation.

Thus he supplicated with this song. He offered the deer, dog, and so forth to Milarepa and said, "Guru, please accept me as a servant. I will go to my home and get provisions from my family and return. Will the guru stay here? Please tell me where you will be."

The Jetsun was pleased with the offering of the deer and that the hunter's mind had turned toward the dharma. Then he said to the hunter, "Son, that you have abandoned negative deeds and will practice virtue is truly wonderful. But it will probably be difficult for you to go home and then come back later as you intend.<sup>74</sup> However, even if you did, because the place I stay is never certain, it will be difficult to find. Therefore, if you want to practice dharma, you should cut all ties to your family and follow me at once. This is the reason why I wander and the place I stay is never certain." Then he sang this song of realization:

This unusual man, a repa of mountain retreats,

In the three months of summer, I meditate in snow-mountains.

The air clears away any dullness I have.

In the three months of autumn, I beg for alms in the practice of equal taste.

I have no tsampa to revive my body's four elements.<sup>75</sup>

In the three months of winter, I meditate in the thick forest.  
It is my blanket that keeps out the cold harsh wind.

In the three months of spring, I stay in slate hills and plains.  
Those places cut wind, bile, and phlegm.\*<sup>5</sup>

In all seasons I meditate with undistracted diligence.  
This alleviates the suffering when the body's elements decay.  
Continuously, without distraction, set out the watchmen: That is the way to  
conquer the five poisons.

I eat whatever provisions I get:  
Having few desires is the sign of happiness.  
I always put effort into practicing dharma.  
That's the sign this yogi has great diligence!

Thus he sang. Then the hunter said, "Such a guru is amazing, indeed! I wish to practice dharma from the depths of my heart. I will go to my family to say a few words to them and gather a few provisions for practice. I will return quickly. Please remain here."

The Jetsun replied, "If you really want to practice dharma from the bottom of your heart, then meeting with your family is pointless. To practice dharma by undergoing hardship, you don't need to have any special provisions. Things like plants and fruits from the trees, these are the substances of austerity; they will do just fine. The time of death for this human life is uncertain. Besides, there is the danger that the excellent intention you have right now might change. You should stay here now. Before you go to speak with your family, first, listen to my advice." Then he sang this song of realization:

Now listen! Listen here, you hunter!  
The thunder's sound is great, but it is empty sound.  
The rainbow's color is lovely, but it will disappear.  
The mundane world may seem delightful, but it is just a dream.  
Sensory pleasures are blissful, but they're the cause for nonvirtue.  
Though compounded things seem permanent, they will quickly disintegrate.

Yesterday's things aren't here today.  
A person with us last year, this year may have died.  
A good friend may turn into your enemy.  
Food that's nutritious could turn into poison.  
Those you care for with kindness fight with you in return.  
One's own negative action just harms oneself.  
Among one hundred heads, you cherish your own.  
Among your ten fingers, the one cut will hurt.  
Among your family, it's yourself that you cherish.  
This life is impermanent, you will soon die.  
It's no good to put off practicing dharma;  
The time has come to help yourself.  
The family you love will propel you into samsara.  
Now the time has come to follow a guru.  
You'll be joyful in this life and happy in the next.  
The time has come to practice genuine dharma.

When Milarepa sang this, Khyirawa Gönpö Dorje irreversibly turned toward the genuine dharma and did not go back to his family. He received the instructions from Milarepa and meditated. When he had attained a little bit of experience, he offered it to the Jetsun and said, "Please, accept me with compassion, and tell me the key instructions for how to continue in practice." Milarepa was pleased and said, "The good qualities of practice are starting to show; now you should follow these practice instructions." Then he sang this song of realization:

To follow a noble guru, Supplicate from your heart again and again.

When meditating on the yidams and dakinis,  
Meditate clearly on the creation stage again and again.

When meditating on death and impermanence,  
Think about death's uncertain time again and again.

When meditating on Mahamudra,  
Meditate in short segments again and again.

When meditating on beings as your parents

When meditating on beings as your parents,  
Remember their kindness again and again.

When meditating on the profound whispered lineage teachings, Bring  
yourself forth with perseverance.

To reach the ultimate goal of dharma,  
Make your practice stable without highs and lows.

To see when your views are concordant with dharma, Without doing different  
things, bring it all into one point.

To reap the harvest of the sublime dharma,  
Abandon every last worldly activity.

Provisions will be offered by the deities,  
So don't accumulate things through unwholesome deeds.  
Do not become rich by hoarding like a miser;  
This is the samaya of the dakinis.  
Therefore give up such intentions and actions,  
And with your mind, let go of this life.

Thus he sang. Then Milarepa bestowed all the abhishekas and key instructions in a complete and perfect way. Through meditating on them, the man perfected his experience and realization. He became known as Khyira Repa, one of the heart sons of the Jetsun. From that time forth, as well, the deer and the dog were liberated from the suffering of the lower realms. It is also said that the bow and arrow the hunter offered remain at that cave to this day.

This is the cycle of meeting Khyira Repa, the heart-son of Milarepa, at Nyishang Gurta.

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\*1 “The long robe traditionally worn by Tibetan men and women. When walking through a forest, it is necessary to hold up the bottom so that it does not get caught in underbrush or rocks. (KTGR)” (*Stories and Songs*: 37).

\*2 “Khyirawa” means hunter.

\*3 The word for offerings here (T: *spyang gzigs*) refers to material symbolic offerings typically put on a shrine.

\*<sup>4</sup> Red Lightning Lady (T: *khyi mo glog spyang dmar mo*).

\*<sup>5</sup> In Tibetan medicine, imbalances of wind, bile, and phlegm are the primary causes for illness.

## The Offering of the Khokhom King and the Scrutiny of Tseringma

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa was observing silence at the Katya Cave at Nyishang Mountain in Mönyul while remaining in the yoga of continual river flow. At that time, there were several hunters who had come from Nyishang who happened upon Milarepa. Seeing him observing silence and sitting there with a gaze, they had some apprehensions and became afraid. After a moment, they all fled. Then later they returned, aiming their bows at Milarepa.

They said many things to him, like, “Are you a human or a ghost? If you are a human, then you must be just mocking us.”<sup>76</sup> But the Jetsun remained silent, maintaining his gaze.

The hunters first shot many poison arrows at Milarepa, but none of them pierced him. Then they tried to throw him in the ravine, but they were unable to move his body. They surrounded him with fire, and though the fire burned, Milarepa’s body was not scorched. Then they threw his body over a cliff down to a great river at the base of the rock. But the Jetsun remained in the lotus posture. Then, without touching the water, he hovered above it and moved back up the center of the river. He flew all the way back up again to where he had been sitting before, all the while remaining silent. All of them, amazed, went back to their village and announced to everyone how there was such a man up in a mountain cave.

Khyira Repa overheard them and said, “Among men, this yogi of Tibet is truly excellent, he is my guru! All of his conduct and activities are signs that he is a genuine siddha. He can even make animals meditate.” Then he told the story of how Milarepa got his deer and dog to meditate and how he himself became a dharma practitioner. From that, everyone there developed faith and respect.

The fame of the Jetsun came to fill all of the land of Nepal. There was a king of the Nepali cities of Yerang and Khokhom\*<sup>1</sup> who, when he heard of the Jetsun, also became amazed and developed faith and respect.

One day, Tara said to the king in a prophecy, “The *kashika* cloth and all-



victorious *arura* herb that are in your treasury should be taken and offered to the great Tibetan yogi, a great tenth-level bodhisattva who is residing now at Katya Cave in the southern mountains of Nepal in Nyishang. This will have great significance for this and future lives.”

The king sent a man who spoke the language of Tibet to investigate the situation, and the man came to meet the Jetsun. He saw by the Jetsun’s conduct how he had completely abandoned the concerns of this life and was amazed. Developing faith, he thought, “This is probably Milarepa. However, I must make sure.”

“Lama, who are you? What is your name?” he asked. “You have nothing to eat or drink; doesn’t this cause you to suffer? What is the reason for having no belongings whatsoever?”

The Jetsun replied, “I who am called Milarepa of Tibet am a yogi.” Then he sang this song of realization on the reason for how he did not suffer while having no belongings:

Lord Guru, I prostrate to you.

I am called Milarepa.

These days I have no desire for wealth.

I don’t make any provision of material things.

First, I’ve no suffering of amassing and hoarding.

In the middle, I’ve no suffering of protecting what I have.

In the end, I’ve no suffering of attachment and clinging.

I have nothing, and having nothing is excellent!

These days, I’ve no desire for friends or companions; I don’t seek to be surrounded by affection and love.

First, I’ve no suffering of focusing on others.

In the middle, I’ve no suffering of hostile replies.

In the end, I don’t have the suffering of parting.

Having no affectionate and loving companions is excellent!

These days, I’ve no desire for profit and fame; I don’t seek to hear any pleasantries.

First, I have no suffering of striving for it.

In the middle, I've no suffering of it abating.  
In the end, I've no fear of its decline.  
I'm happy with no pleasantries said about me!

These days, I have no desire for a country;  
I don't seek out any certain place to stay.  
First, I've no suffering of taking sides.  
In the middle, I've no suffering of craving for my country.  
In the end, I've no suffering of trying to please others.  
Having no certain place to stay is excellent!

Thus he sang. With faith, the man went back to the king and offered a thorough report about what Milarepa was like. The king also developed faith and respect and said to the man, "Go and invite him and see if you can persuade him to come here. If you cannot, then present him these two things." The king gave him the *kashika* cloth and the all-victorious *arura* herb, and sent the man off.

When the servant again met the Jetsun, he said to him, "The dharma king of Khokhom and Yerang has sent me to invite the great yogi of Tibet. Please, you must go."

The Jetsun replied, "Generally, when I go into towns, I don't try to please other people. In particular, I don't try to please kings. I have no desire at all for the material enjoyments of good food or drink. There are no stories or talk of dharma practitioners freezing or starving to death. People who serve kings abandon the guru. So, to do as Marpa from Lhodrak has commanded me, I will not go. You may go back to where you came from."

The man said, "I have come here alone for the express purpose that a great king has summoned this yogi. Would it not be best for you to come?"

The Jetsun said, "I too am a great *chakravartin* king. There is no king who is happier or who has amassed more riches and power than I have."

The man replied, "If you have the seven royal possessions of a *chakravartin* king, then you are indeed a greater and richer king.\*2 Show me!"

"If your worldly king with his retinue of ministers also obtained a dominion such as mine, then he would truly be a supreme king. He would have wealth and power in this life and the next." Then he sang this song of realization:

Your king and ministers who wish for happiness,  
If they protect a dominion like the yogi Milarepa's. Then in this life and the

If they protect a dominion like the yogi Milarepa's, then in this life and the next, they'll have prosperity.

This is what Milarepa's dominion is like:

Faith is my precious wheel;  
I engage in virtuous action day and night.  
Wisdom is my precious jewel;  
It fulfills the hopes of everyone, self and other.  
Discipline is my precious queen;  
She adorns me with her ravishing beauty.  
Meditative concentration is my precious minister;  
He gathers the two accumulations of merit and wisdom.  
Heedfulness is my precious elephant;  
It carries the great load of the Buddha's teachings.  
Diligence is my precious supreme horse;  
It carries the afflictions to the land of egolessness.  
Hearing and contemplation is my precious general;  
He subjugates the army of the enemy, wrong thinking.  
If you had a dominion like this,  
You would gain the renown and glory of a king.  
Always victorious over unfavorable conditions,  
Your subjects would be incited to virtuous action.  
Mother sentient beings, without any left out,  
May you fulfill this king's command!

Thus he sang. The envoy said, "This is the way of dharma. How wondrous! Yogi, if you will definitely not come, the king has said to offer you these two things." Then he offered him the *kashika* cloth and the all-victorious *arura* herb. The Jetsun accepted the offerings with dedications and aspiration prayers.

At this time, Rechungpa and Shengom Repa both had come to invite Milarepa [back to Tibet]. Unable to track down the Jetsun, on the road they encountered bandits from Nyishang and Nepal. When they were about to be attacked, they cried out that they were yogis and begged them not to attack.

The bandits replied, "Only the Sentsa\*<sup>3</sup> yogi [Milarepa] can be considered a

true yogi.<sup>77</sup> Poisonous arrows will not strike him, fire cannot burn him, and water will not carry him away. If you throw him off a cliff, he flies back up. He even refused the invitation of the king of Khokhom.”

Then the two repas offered the bandits a gift and asked them to show them where Milarepa was, and so the bandits showed them.

When they met the Jetsun, they saw he was wearing the *kashika* cloth and had placed the all-victorious *arura* herb upon a flat rock. The two repas made prostrations to the Jetsun and asked, “Have you been well?” inquiring after his health.

The Jetsun replied, “I’m well, and this is the way in which I’m well!” Then he sang this song of realization:

This is a land where many flowers grow  
In the midst of where trees dance and sway.  
It’s a land where many birds sing myriad songs.  
It’s a place where monkeys and langurs train their skill.  
In such a solitary place as this  
To roam in mountain retreats alone feels good.  
Meditating with the guru at my crown feels good.  
The self-blazing heat and bliss of chandali feels good.  
The self-liberated eight concerns of illusory body feel good.  
Self-purified confusion, like a dream, feels good.  
Luminosity free of the darkness of ignorance feels good.  
Buddhahood without practicing transference\*4 feels good.  
If the bardo came right away it would feel good.\*5  
In the undefiled space of great bliss I feel good.  
I, an old father who feels so good,  
I’m familiar with the sweet and delicious fruits.  
I’m familiar with the cold and warmth of mountain water.  
Reflect on my meaning, and understand.

Did those bandits not overtake you?  
If so, you should contemplate your previous karma.  
When you have no wealth, you are free of foes:  
Abandon hoarding and maintaining my disciple-sons!

Abandon hearing and maintaining, my disciple-sons.

If you tame your mind-streams, you'll be free of foes: Abandon your anger and aggression, my disciple-sons!

If you recognize your own minds, you'll be free of foes: Look on the face of the deity, my disciple-sons!

If you give rise to compassion, you'll be free of foes: Meditate on cherishing others, my disciple-sons!

Thus he sang. Then Shengom Repa said, "It is because a yogi like the Jetsun has this way of being happy and free of enemies that we have come to invite you to return. Accordingly, there is no need to remain only in mountain retreats. We ask you to please come back to Tibet and benefit sentient beings there."

The Jetsun said, "Staying in mountain retreats is the most genuine form of benefit to sentient beings. I can return to Tibet, but my remaining strictly in solitude like this is not a bad form of virtuous activity, for it repays the kindness of my guru's command. All of the good qualities of the yogi's paths and bhūmis arise in mountain retreats. Even if one has the good qualities of the signs of experience, it is the heroic pride of a yogi to rely on solitary places. Therefore, you should remain in strict retreat in the mountains." Then he sang this song of realization:

Since the guru's kindness cannot be repaid  
Until sentient beings are completely exhausted,  
I will repay his kindness with practice.  
Though the Jetsun is completely without any want,  
This is the heart advice of all the siddhas.

The small white-mouthed wild ass of the north  
Even at death, his dignity is not lowered.  
This is not out of hope of being freed;  
This is a wild animal's heroic pride.

The carnivorous tigress of the south  
Though starving, she won't eat the meat of her own kind.  
This is not because there is a need for this; This is the great beast's heroic  
pride.

The white snow-lioness of the west

THE WHITE SNOW HONESTY OF THE WEST  
Though cold, she'll never leave the snow.  
This is not because there is no place to go;  
This is the king of beast's heroic pride.

The vulture, king of birds, in the east  
Stretches out the feathers of his wings.  
This is not because he ever has fear of falling;  
This is that high flyer's heroic pride.

With Milarepa's perseverance in meditation,  
He abandons the activities of the world.  
This is not because he cares about praise or fame; This is a natural sign of  
having revulsion.

Yogis who are liberated from everything  
Wander in remote and solitary places.  
This is not because they have fear of confusion;  
This is the story of all the siddhas.

The monk disciple-sons gathered here  
Follow the discipline of keeping strict retreat.  
This is not because it's the desire of a human master; It's the story of  
traversing the path of freedom.

For the faithful ones who are fortunate  
I've sung this song of key instructions.  
This is not just something done when there's nothing to do; It's the practice  
tradition of this lineage.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa said, "Please accept me that I may practice these. Jetsun, your appearance is not like that of other humans. Who is it that offered this excellent cloth and *arura* to you?"

"It was offered by the god of men," he replied, then he sang this song of realization:

In the capital of Yerang and Khokhom Lives a king, a lord of men.

Because the Jetsun Tara gave a prophecy  
To this dharma king, a bodhisattva,  
Milarepa received his invitation  
At the Katya Cave in Nepal.  
But for fear of death, I did not go.\*6  
Thus, the dharma king of Nepal  
Bestowed upon me this soft white cotton garment  
As a companion for my ashé chandali.  
He bestowed this supreme all-victorious *arura* herb, The antidote for sickness  
of the elements.  
In the land, here, of that king  
All beings, for seven years, will be free of sickness.

Thus he sang. The two repas said, “You did not come here for the sake of the eight worldly concerns but to do your practice: how wonderful that is!<sup>78</sup> We ask you to now please return to Tibet to benefit sentient beings there.” Because of their fervent requests, the Jetsun went and stayed in Nyen-yön Cave at the confluence of Lachi.

While Milarepa was staying there, Tseringma came and investigated the Jetsun. As he was enjoying a girl of a low class in the acacia forest, he saw Tseringma in a white silver mirror. Then she saw him vanish into space.

The next year, when Milarepa was staying in Chonglung, Tseringma again came to investigate the Jetsun. She saw him there riding on a lion with ashes and *rakta*\*7 smeared on his body and wearing a garland of flowers upon his head. For clothing he wore the sun and moon. In his hand he held a parasol and a victory banner. When she approached, she saw him vanish into the sky, and so she was not able to attack him.

This is the cycle of the Khokhom king making an offering in Mönyul, and a brief account of Tseringma’s investigation for attack.

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\*1 Khokhom and Yerang seem to be the modern-day Nepali cities of Bhaktapur and Patan, respectively.

\*2 Traditionally a chakravartin king, a ruler who is particularly potent due to previously accumulated merit, has seven possessions as enumerated in Milarepa’s song below: a precious wheel, jewel, queen, minister, elephant, horse, and general.

\*3 This term is obscure, but clearly refers to Milarepa here.

\*4 Or “phowa,” a yogic practice in which the practitioner’s consciousness is ejected to a buddhafield at the

time of death.

\*<sup>5</sup> If Milarepa were to die suddenly, and then entered the bardo state, he would be happy, with no regrets.

\*<sup>6</sup> Remembering death, the impermanence of life, Milarepa remained in retreat to practice.

\*<sup>7</sup> T: *rakta*. Rakta is the Sanskrit word for blood, and is transliterated in the original text. “Rakta” is used as a sacred substance in the anuttarayoga tantra (highest yoga tantra) tradition. Here, Milarepa is depicted as demonstrating a form of “yogic conduct.”



## The Five Tseringma Sisters' Investigation

*Garland of an Array of Pearls*

NAMO GURU\*1

Though born in the range of snowy mountains,  
 You are not tainted with worldly faults.  
 Because you are blessed by Naropa's lineage,  
 You are an extraordinary one who underwent austerity.  
 A supreme healing medicine for the sickness of beings,  
 Object of veneration, bright like the sun and moon,  
 You who are renowned as the Lord Mila,  
 Father Repa, with respect I pay homage.

In the snowy mountain range of the north, on the border of Tibet and Nepal where the people speak different languages, there in that glorious land, at the prosperous place between Drin and Dingma,\*2 was a magnificent marketplace where one could get anything that one wished. It was a palace of the naga king Dungdra, a place where wealth and riches flourished naturally.

On the east side of a jewel-like rock that looks like a majestically poised lion, and on the left corner of the noble lady Lhamen Tashi Tseringma,\*3 in the center of the encircling crystal dwellings of the snow mountain deities,\*4 there lies the Menlung Valley where the Mayang River flows. There on the banks of the Lohit River, in a solitary retreat in the Menlung Valley of Chuwar,\*5 a place with great blessings, the great Repa Lord, the yogi Mila, was residing, meditating one-pointedly in the yogic practice that is like a flowing river.

In the first summer month of the male water-dragon year, at midnight on the eighth day of the waxing moon, eighteen great demons came, leading all of the

devas and ghosts of phenomenal existence. They exhibited myriad magical displays and omens such as storms and earthquakes. Among those demons there were five terrifying malevolent rakshasa females who displayed a variety of hideous forms and attempted to disturb Milarepa's meditative concentration. When this happened, the Jetsun sang this song of realization of "Summoning the Army" to the deities and dakinis:

Lord, precious guru with the three kindnesses,  
One from Lhodrak, whose name is widely renowned,  
This fortunate one fervently prays to you.  
Father, from unmanifest space, consider me.

To this solitary place near Chuwar of Drin,  
I, a repa yogi from Tibet,  
Came to meditate with one-pointed concentration.

When experiences arise from gathering the *dhatu*s,\*6  
I see any kind of amazing shows.

In general, the ghosts of phenomenal existence Are assembled here without  
any left out.

In particular, these five ladies, these apparitions,  
Show themselves with hideous forms  
And seek to harm me with malevolent power.  
They try to disturb me with obstructions.

One lady is like a smiling skeleton;  
I see her lift Mount Meru into her lap.

One's face, like a jackal, is red, dripping with blood;  
In a single gulp, I see her swallow the ocean.

One is utterly fearsome with the Lord of Death's form,  
Crashing the sun and moon like a pair of cymbals.

One lady, smeared in ashes, roars with laughter;  
I see her throw the stars down to the earth.

One is ravishing with the form of a goddess,  
A lady whom one never gets enough of seeing.

I see her smile and try to seduce.

There are also emanations of yakshas.  
I see them reach out disembodied arms.  
I see them shake all the plants and shrubs.  
They rearrange the earth, rocks, and mountains.  
I see pits surrounding me in the four directions.  
I see the four borders guarded by giants.  
I see the sky filled with fire.  
I see the earth filled up with water.  
The spirits that fill up the surrounding space,  
I hear their thunderous malevolent roars  
With voices that are fearful and discordant.  
They shout, “You can’t stay here! Go away!”  
They shower my body with disease and illness.  
They shout, “We’ll tear your mind from your body!”

When hindrances such as this arise, Guru, you who are endowed with  
blessing;

And yidam deities who grant the siddhis;  
*Dakas* who are naturally present;  
Dakinis who reside within basic space;  
And dharmapalas who guard against hindrances:  
You are my support, so I summon you to battle!  
Marshal the forces of miraculous power!  
Bless the body and speech of this yogi.  
Sages,<sup>\*7</sup> with your wrathful dress, Bare your fangs and dreadful visage.  
Males and females with your awesome wrath,  
Some of you have bodies of the Lord of Death—  
He with form most haughty and insolent.

Assembly of wrathful ones filling the sky,  
Your mouths let out lightning and tongues of flame.  
Thunderclaps of mantra’s roar

Make a rain of HUM and PHAT come down.  
With twelve long roars of forceful laughter,  
You drive away the army of obstacles.  
Outer obstacles of body are cleared externally;  
Inner obstacles of mind are cleared from within.  
Bad conditions are transformed into the path of awakening.  
Throw these evil demons down the river!  
Do you hear me, assembly of dakinis and yidams?  
I beseech all of you superior beings!

Thus the Jetsun proclaimed this song of realization, fervently supplicating the guru and yidams. Then the horde of ghosts, led by the eighteen great demons, thought, “With the way this yogi has just spoken, is he concerned at all? Some concepts have arisen in his mind, and it seems he is, so we will have a chance to contend with him! We are somewhat pleased by this, but since we still do not know the extent of Milarepa’s meditative experience or inner confidence in realization, we will try to intimidate the Jetsun with more frightful and terrorizing speech. We must find out what fearless confidence of view he has!” Then the multitude of ghosts sang this song to the Jetsun, “A Prophecy of Hindrances”:

Singing your song so vividly clear,  
Elucidating with skill in singing,  
You summoned an army of dakinis and deities.  
With such conduct of a yogi in mountain retreats,  
Are you not a great repa with yogic discipline?

We have no physical body, no support for mind,  
So we’re terrible and fearful, it’s definitely true!  
Though we instill anguish in others’ minds,  
With attentive ears, now listen to our song.

The one who is named the Nam Lo King,  
A turquoise dragon with golden wings,<sup>79</sup>  
Beneath where he soars in the midnight sky,  
Lies a valley, an auspicious forest and meadow.<sup>80</sup>

Surrounded by the petals of the Lhamen Snow Range,<sup>\*8</sup>  
This pasture is the unequaled Menlung Valley.

There, on this special eighth day of the lunar month,  
During the waxing of the moon,<sup>81</sup>  
Just past midnight, in the sky shrouded in darkness,  
Gathers a host of eighty-four thousand obstructing spirits.  
We devas and ghosts of all phenomenal existence—  
From the lesser devas<sup>\*9</sup> up in the sky, To the *mahoragas* down beneath the  
earth— Emanations with unpleasant form;  
With magical bodies we've come to this place.  
We've contemptuous and malevolent minds

And we do many things to harm and disturb.  
Chiefly, there are the eighteen great demons,  
Then the retinue demons that guard the ten directions,  
And the fifteen great demons that strike children.  
In particular, here are the five great rakshasa demonesses.  
When they smell the flesh and blood of humans,  
They cannot help but smack their lips.  
These are rakshasa women of worldly deeds.

We devas and rakshasas assembled here  
Discussed and cast our dice for lots.  
The ominous cross-mark<sup>\*10</sup> has fallen on you!  
The casting we charted said it's you we should take!  
You've fallen into this and there's no way out!  
Since you haven't any control,  
Your vitality and life-force will be taken away.  
We'll snuff the ins and outs of your breath.  
Your consciousness will be parted from its support.  
We'll eat your body, all its flesh and blood.  
Your life and good fortune will come to an end.  
You'll be taken away by the Lord of Death

You'll be taken away by the Lord of Death.

The noose of negative karma has taken its hold.

Here, in the last watch of the night,

You must pass over to the other side.

All of the actions you've done previously,

Do you have regret for them now, or not?

Yama's messenger\*<sup>11</sup> will take you away; Are you prepared to die happily, or not?

Do you have confidence that's free of fear

Toward the great abyss of the three lower realms, or not?

These are our questions for you, yogi.

Tonight you'll have to follow after us And the Yama of karma will be your guide.\*<sup>12</sup>

The light and dark of the bardo is very frightful;

You must go to some other unseen land.

Thus, for your body, it's time for a refuge, a guide.

For speech, it's time to ride the horse of aspiration.

For mind, it's time to go\*<sup>13</sup> to another city.

*Kyihu! Kyihu!* Alas, you poor yogi!

You have no relatives or any friends.

In this place so horrifying and full of anguish,

The path of solitude is hard to traverse.

You must go alone without any companion.

Don't stay! Don't stay! You must quickly go!

Thus all of the ghosts and demons sang.

Then the Jetsun reflected, "All you ghosts, as well as all other phenomena that exist, are just projections of the mind. There is nothing that isn't like that. This is taught in all of the sutras, tantras, and treatises. This very essence of mind that is naturally luminous and free from all elaborations is what was pointed out to me through the nectar of my noble guru's oral instructions. The nature of mind is free of arising and ceasing. Even if the Lord of Death's army of millions and billions

should surround it and rain down a myriad of weapons, they could not kill, cut, or transform [mind's nature] into something bad. Even if a billion light rays of the buddhas of the three times and ten directions should gather with their good qualities combined, it could not be fabricated to be made truly existent as the form of something with color or form. [Mind's nature] is this very uncontrived basic character.

“This present body is taken as real due to clinging to perceiver and perceived. And the end of these aggregates made up of the base elements that have been born is death. So, if you devas and ghosts have a need for them, then I will happily give them to you. All things are impermanent and changing phenomena. Right now, while I have control, if I exercise generosity with my mind, then I would do great benefit by giving away my body.

“Now, because of the confused concepts of perceived and perceiver, I see all the images of these devas and ghosts here. These appearances of harmers and someone to be harmed are like floaters that appear to an obscured eye. Since beginningless samsara, by the power of ignorance—the cause—obscurations arose through continual habituation to negative tendencies, these concepts which are adventitious coverings like clouds or fog. So then, why do I have such fear and anguish toward them?”

Then he rested evenly in the abiding nature—the base—and sang this song of realization about confidence in realization through complete mastery of fearlessness:

This place named Dingma Drin,  
A marketplace where they gather to sell their wares,  
Is a place to where Indians and Tibetans travel.

The fierce Tseringma on the snowy heights  
With a topknot of resplendent crystal,  
Queen, divine physician, upon the hem of her skirt,  
Is that pasture not the summer place, the Menlung Valley?  
At Chuwar, delineated there in its corner,  
You eighty-four thousand obstructing spirits gather.  
From those in the deva realm of Controlling Others' Emanations\*<sup>14</sup>  
Down to the mahoragas beneath the ground;  
From the speech-free nagas<sup>82</sup> up to those hovering in space;\*<sup>15</sup>

*Gandharvas, putanas, and kinnaras;*  
Mahoragas, *kumbandas*, rakshasas, and demons;  
Vetalas, yakshas, and bhuta spirits.  
An inconceivable number has assembled;  
Every one of their names, I'm not able to utter.  
In particular are the five fearful rakshasa demonesses.  
You shouted horrific things at me.  
“You must traverse from this life to the other side!” you said.

Having great fear only toward death, I trained in the deathless innate state—  
That's the basic key point of the self-liberation of samsara.  
This essential reality has been pointed out to me.  
Naked inner awareness, free of support,  
Its movement is pure and clear—that's confidence in view.  
I've determined my mind is luminous and empty.  
I have no fear of birth or death.

Having great fear toward the eight freedomless states,  
I meditated on impermanence and the faults of samsara.  
I put deep trust in the refuge, the three jewels,  
And developed careful heed toward karma, cause and effect.  
By training my mind-stream in bodhichitta, the means,  
I cut the continuum of obscurations, the latent tendencies.  
I realize that whatever appearances dawn are illusions.  
I have no fear of the three lower realms.

Having great fear of how life is fleeting,  
I made a connection of the nadi-prana path.  
Since I've trained in Three Vital Points of Mixing,  
When the appearances of the sixfold collection cease,  
I have confidence in dharmakaya's pointing out;  
Then ejecting consciousness out the aperture of Brahma,  
Unborn mind is transferred to *dharmadhatu*.



I have no fear of dying now.\*16

Now, you worldly devas and yakshas  
Who seek to take the lives of beings,  
My illusory body of skandhas here, This object of impermanence and decay,  
No matter what, it must be cast away.  
So, ghosts, if you want it, take whatever part you like.  
In general, I offer it as a ransom\*17 for all beings.  
In particular, I dedicate it for the sake of my kind parents.  
By dedicating this offering of my body's flesh and blood,  
May you be satisfied, have great joy,  
And put an end to the connection of debt  
We've had from beginningless samsara until now.  
Be free of all grudges and retribution.

The movement of mind, insubstantial and empty,  
Ghosts, you can't see it, nor even can I.  
The buddhas of the three times have never seen it.<sup>83</sup>  
Though the eighteen hell realms arise as foes,  
If I think, "How frightful!" then it's I who am menaced.  
I'm a space-like yogi of emptiness.  
Because I understand the true nature of confusion,  
Ghosts, I have no fear of you.  
Everything is a manifestation of mind.  
E MA! The phenomena of samsara's three realms Not existing, they appear:  
how wonderfully amazing!

After the Jetsun had sung this song of realization about gaining mastery of fearlessness, he then pronounced these words of truth\*18 to the demons: "Since beginningless samsara, all the way up until now, we've had an unspeakable number of births and have had more bodies than there are atoms. [During this time] we have only accumulated the composite aggregates of suffering and abandoned them meaninglessly. Not even for a moment have we done anything meaningful.

“This present body of defiled aggregates comprised of the four elements and the thirty-two impure substances, if you assembly of devas and ghosts want it, why should I not give it to you? Since sentient beings—the six classes of beings<sup>84</sup>—have all been my parents, I give up my body as a ransom to cast away any karmic retributions and as redemption for any grudges. From the top of my head down to the soles of my feet—my twelve different branches, with the head making thirteen; my five sense faculties; my five vital organs; my six inner parts; my flesh and bones; marrow and fat; my brain and membranes; oils and blood; my hair and nails; skin and odor; my breath and life-force; vitality and complexion; and so on—all of the things that each of you may desire, take them right now and be contented. May you have only delight.

“Further, because of this offering of my body, flesh, and blood, from this day forward may the negative intentions of malevolence and aggression of this assembly of yakshas and rakshasas be pacified. May your mind-streams be completely filled with only undefiled great compassion. With that compassion as the substantial cause and cooperating condition,<sup>\*19</sup> from now on may you do no harm or injury to sentient beings. By turning away from such harm and injury, may your minds have great love. With many intentions of loving-kindness and joy, may you all have the wealth of abundant happiness.” Thus, the Jetsun made this aspiration with words of truth.

With that, all of the assembled devas and ghosts became inspired and filled with devotion. Their manifestations of magic and ill omens were tamed and they came to abide in a state of great peace.

From among them, the five extremely savage rakshasa dakinis who had displayed such fearsomeness said, “Yogi, that you would offer your flesh and blood without any attachment or feeling of loss toward your body is truly amazing. However, we sincerely did not wish to harm or injure you. We only came to examine what kind of meditation experience and confidence in realization you have. Generally, all outer illusions of demonic obstructions are caused by the inner conceptual mind. Upon your arrival, we thought you had a bit of trepidation as you summoned an army of deities and dakinis. Seeing that you had doubts and fear, we said many unpleasant things and inflicted harm. But now that you have spoken such words of truth, we who have come here have great regret and shame.

“Now, yogi, cut the outer and inner movement of mind that is so treacherous, and rest in the equipoise of the unfabricated nature of mind. Doing that, when

you encounter any other obstacles besides what we have created here, even if the entire realm of Brahma\*<sup>20</sup> should quake, they will not be able to intimidate or disturb you.” Having given this heart advice, it is said that from the sky, the five savage yakshas, all in single voice, offered this song to the Jetsun:

*Kye!* Listen here great Repa Yogi!

By accumulating merit, you’ve obtained a human birth.

With the fortune of the freedoms and resources gathered,

Fulfilling your aspiration, you met the dharma.

Because of your karmic propensity of training, you engage in meditation;

Thus you’re a supreme being, a son of noble family.

We unfortunate worldly ones,

Because of inferior intellect, are obscured.

Because of an inferior rebirth, we have bodies of women.

Having accumulated no merit, we have malevolent minds.

Having accumulated bad karma, we must wander in space.

Sentient beings who are so deluded<sup>85</sup>

Cannot know the realization in others’ mind-streams;

Thus, we’ll use words to give examples;

Gain certainty in their meaning through inference.

Though it’s possible you may have some doubts,

Sit down, relax, and listen to our song.

At the prosperous gate<sup>86</sup> of China in the east The women there weave bolts of fine silk.

If the weft shuttle doesn’t go awry in the warp threads,\*<sup>21</sup>

No wind outside will be able to unravel it.

Be astute! Then a quality garment will be made.

In Gyimshang, Mongolia’s\*<sup>22</sup> capital to the north, They go to war with strength and might.

If there is no internal political revolt,

They won’t have fear of even Gesar’s\*<sup>23</sup> men.

Rule through peace, wise, brave warrior!<sup>87</sup>

In the west, at the narrow pass of the Persian king,  
On its hero's gate with calling trumpets,<sup>88</sup>  
If the iron nails inside do not break,  
They won't have any fear of the catapults outside.  
Fasten it well from inside! It's a magical gate.

In the south, Nepal, a land of bored-out stones  
Where trunks of medicinal sandalwood grow:  
If the trees of the Thayu\*<sup>24</sup> aren't felled from within, The Mön outsiders  
won't attack with their axes.  
Protect the trees and inner affairs! It will remain a forest land.

At the solitary place of Chuwar in Drin,  
You, Milarepa, have excellent meditation.  
If your inner concepts don't turn to ghosts,  
You won't be frightened by outer demons and obstructions.  
Yogi, train your inner mind-stream.  
Do not have doubts, you with yogic discipline!

At the rocky mountain of dharmata-emptiness,  
You took hold of the fortress of unwavering samadhi;  
You donned the armor of bodhichitta  
And sharpened your weapon of compassion and prajña.  
Though you were surrounded by the four maras' army,  
You didn't go to the city of perceiver and perceived.  
Though the world of Yama arose as your foe,  
You won't lose the battle; your victory is certain.

Outside, desirable appearances make a great show;  
Inside, shamatha's meditation has much dullness and agitation.  
Attachment to your homeland has long accompanied you.  
Your wisdom of vipashyana is only momentary.  
The enemy devas and ghosts of concepts are very skilled.  
With hopes and fears all lying in wait,

There's a danger you'll be bound by the noose of ego.  
With the sentinel of your mindfulness and awareness,  
Protect well the fortress, O yogic practitioner.  
Four examples and their meaning in this song make five—  
Pleasant words, like pearls, strung on a thread.  
The mirror that illuminates reality is bright in your mind.  
Understand this well, you fortunate one.  
Thus they sang this song of four examples and their meaning to the Jetsun.

Then the Jetsun replied, “Generally, all the outer obstructing devas and ghosts of the class of maras come from the substantial cause of inner conceptuality. Though what you have said here is true, in my yogic tradition, we don't see obstacles as faults. Whatever omens or magical displays should manifest, I see them as being kind and take them as something desirable.

“With the instruction on taking bad omens as good fortune,<sup>89</sup> [obstacles] crack the whip of diligence for beginners who are lazy; then those persons immediately apply the antidotes and intensify their awareness. By doing this, they incite their bodies and speech to spiritual practice, which becomes the cause for meditative concentration to quickly dawn in their mind-streams. For those who are familiarized with the path and have gained stability, [obstacles] foster mindfulness-wisdom. They make the glow of the luminosity of awareness shine forth and they become trained in inner samadhi experiences. Due to that, the special bodhichitta arises in the mind-stream, and enhancement of the path improves more and more.

“At that point, the classes of demons are transformed into dharmapalas. When you see the dharmapalas as nirmanakayas, adverse conditions become siddhis. Obstacles are brought to the path, and concepts dawn as the dharmakaya. The faults become liberated as good qualities, and you will attain all the favorable conditions for the common path. Ultimately, within the nature of knowable phenomena, neither devas nor ghosts exist. The characteristics of hopes and fears to be adopted and abandoned are self-liberated in their own place. The realization that confusion is baseless, and the dawning of samsara as Mahamudra, is called the dharmakaya free from meeting and parting in which adventitious concepts dissolve into basic space.” Then the Jetsun taught these points in verse:

In this world, the pure realm of the Victorious One,  
There is one renowned as a second buddha

On the victory banner of the teachings that do not set.<sup>90</sup>  
He's like the crowning jewel at the top,  
He's an object for all to respect and make offerings.  
The sound of his rippling banner of fame  
Completely pervades all directions.  
Is this not the Lord Maitripa?

One who served at his very lotus feet with respect  
And who drank the vital elixir  
Realized genuine meaning free of extremes:  
Mahamudra, the pinnacle view.  
He completely perfected all good qualities  
And became unsullied by any faults.  
Emanation of the Sugata in human form,  
That supreme being, Marpa, taught like this:

However outer appearances may arise,  
When they're not realized, they're confused appearances.  
It's through attachment to objects that you become bound.  
When realized, they appear as illusions;  
Objects that appear dawn as mind's friend.  
But in ultimate reality, they never appeared;  
As the unborn dharmakaya they are pure, he taught.

This consciousness, the inner movement of conceptual mind,  
When not realized, is ignorance.  
It is the basis of all afflictions and karma.  
When realized, it becomes self-aware wisdom  
And all the good qualities are perfected.  
In ultimate reality, there is no wisdom.  
Carry dharmas to the point of exhaustion, he taught.

This body of the perpetuating skandhas,<sup>\*25</sup>  
When not realized is the body of the four elements.

When not realized, is the body of the four elements,  
Suffering and sickness come from that.  
When realized, it's the deity's body of union  
That transforms ordinary fixation.  
In ultimate reality, there is no body;  
It is pure, like the sky free of clouds, he taught.

These appearances of male and female demons and yakshas,  
When not realized, are maras;  
They create obstructions and inflict harm.  
When realized, obstructing spirits are dharmapalas;  
A variety of accomplishments will arise from you.  
In ultimate reality there are no devas or ghosts.  
Carry concepts to the point of exhaustion, he taught.

Generally, within the ultimate yana,  
Through the *anuttarayoga* tantra\*<sup>26</sup> of Secret Mantra, When the gathering of  
dhatus aligns with the nadis,  
The forms of outer ghosts are seen, he taught.

Not knowing that one's perceptions are mistaken  
But thinking they are real—that is utterly deluded.  
Until now I have been fooled by delusion  
And entered the den of confusion and ignorance.  
The benefit of devas and the harm of ghosts were taken as real.  
But now, through the kindness of the siddha lord,  
I know it won't do to accept nirvana or reject samsara:  
Anything that arises dawns as Mahamudra.

Through realizing that confusion is without any base, The water-moon of  
awareness becomes clear, free of silt;  
The sun of luminosity becomes free of clouds;  
The darkness of ignorance is cleared to all ends;  
Delusion's deception disappears with no trace;  
A glimmer of the way things are dawns within.

So, these precious concepts that perceive ghosts  
Illuminate the unborn base. How wondrous indeed!

Thus, authenticating the teaching of his guru, the Jetsun sang these songs of realization on giving rise to certainty in the oral instructions.

Then the assembly of devas and ghosts led by the eighteen great demons said, “You’re a yogi who has attained real stability. We didn’t realize that. We feel very sorry and have regret for inflicting harm and creating obstructions before. Thus, we ask you to please forgive us. From now on we will be your subjects and listen to whatever you command. Henceforth, we devas and ghosts will do whatever activity you command us to accomplish.”

Milarepa accepted this and the assembly of devas and ghosts, like a falling wall, prostrated to him. It is said that they then dispersed and went back to their own abodes.

This is the story of how the great Repa Lord, whose name is not lightly uttered, the glorious Shepa Dorje, replied with a song of realization to the five worldly female dakinis. It was written down in letters with the power of perfect memory by Ngendzong Bodhiraja,<sup>\*27</sup> in the poem called “The Garland of an Array of Pearls.”

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\*1 This and the subsequent three chapters are part of a single larger cycle in the original text with the full title “The Five Tseringma Sisters’ Investigation and Sequence of Answers to Their Questions (T: *tshe ring mched lngas drod nyul dang zhus lan gyi rim pa*).

\*2 The “place between Drin and Dingma,” hereafter called as it is in Tibetan “Dingma Drin” (*ding ma brin*), is a location in Tibet at the border of Drin (*brin spo*) and the southern part of the region of Dingri.

\*3 “Divine Physician Auspicious Long Life Goddess” (T: *lha sman bkra shis tshe ring ma*). In Tibetan culture, mountains are often personified and themselves referred to as the deities that are associated with them. In this work, the name Tashi Tseringma refers, interchangeably, to both the mountain and the deity. The mountain is also known as Gaurishankar in Sanskrit.

\*4 This passage literally states, “in the center that was surrounded by the crystal snow mountain *nyen* deities” (T: *gangs lha gnyan shel gyis bskor ba’i dbus*). TDC defines “nyen” as “Local deities (*sa bdag*) that bring severe illness.” As an adjective, the word “nyen” can mean severe or powerful.

\*5 Chuwar (T: *chu dbar*) literally means “between the rivers,” thus the site of Chuwar lies on a small isthmus at the confluence of the two rivers, today marked by Chuwar Monastery. In this narrative, the rivers at this site are referred to as Mayang and Lohita (“Lohanta” in the *Black Treasury*). The names used at the site today are Rongshar Tsangpo (Mayang) and Tashi Oma (Lohita).

\*6 *Dhatus* here refer to prana. During yogic practice, when the pranas move and gather in the nadis, it causes various appearances to arise for the yogi.

“Gathering the constituents [or dhatus] (*kham* *’dus pa*) of vital energy refers to yogic energetic practices.



Wherever visualization is focused, the vital energy gathers there. Through this kind of practice, the vital energy currents are said to gather and then enter, dwell, and finally dissolve in the particular chakra upon which one is focused. In ultimate yogic practice the energies enter and dissolve into the central channel, discursive thought is arrested, and the experience of nonconceptual bliss-emptiness occurs” (Kongtrul 2007: 391).

\*7 T: *drang srong*. This word typically translates the Sanskrit word *rishi*, an Indian ascetic seer or sage. In Tibetan it means someone who is “without deceit or hypocrisy in body, speech, and mind; and is honest and straightforward” (TDC).

\*8 Literally, “Divine Medicine Snow Mountain” (T: *lha smen gangs*). This is a reference to Tashi Tseringma (Mount Gaurishankar). “Petals” refers to the various peaks of the mountain.

\*9 “Lesser devas” refers to devas in the realm called “Controlling Others’ Emanations”; see note below in the next song.

\*10 Literally, “the northern cross” (T: *byang khram kha*). This reference is obscure; however, the north is sometimes associated with death and ill omens. (DPR) \*11 “Yama” is another name for the Lord of Death.

\*12 “Yama of karma” (T: *las kyi gshin rje*) refers to one’s personal karma as the primary moving force at the time of death. Unless one has stability of mind, one has no control over where the mind-stream will go at the time of death.

\*13 T: *’pho*. This is the same word as in the practice known as *phowa* and means to “transfer” or “move to another location.”

\*14 “Controlling Others’ Emanations” (T: *gzhan ’phrul dbang byed*; S: *paranirmitavaśavartin*) is the highest of the six deva abodes within the desire realm.

\*15 “Those hovering in space” (T: *nam mkha’ lding*) is a synonym for garuda.

\*16 From among the five types of *phowa* [or transference] (dharmakaya, sambhogaya, nirmanakaya, guru, and pure realm *phowa*), this passage is connected with dharmakaya *phowa* (DPR). “Our ordinary notion of *phowa* is that one ejects one’s consciousness out of the body to a pure or enlightened realm. However, once we have realized the nature of mind, we have accomplished the purpose of *phowa*. Mind is already in a state of perfect purity. Whatever state of mind we have—a discursive mind, a mind bound up in passion, anger or ignorance, or simply a mind engaged in the perception of an object—the moment we realize mind’s nature, consciousness is released from any obscuration or confusion and transformed right on the spot. That is dharmakaya *phowa*” (Dzogchen Ponlop 2006: 147–148).

\*17 “Ransom” (T: *glud*) here has the sense of effigy. It is a common practice in Tibetan rituals to offer something up to demons or obstructing spirits to appease them.

\*18 The phrase “words of truth” (T: *gsung bden pa’i tshig / gsung ngag bden pa*) has the sense of making a powerful proclamation. Because the words spoken are true, particularly in relation to the Buddha’s teaching, they hold a special power to facilitate various ritual-like acts such as exorcism or consecration. (ATW) \*19 A substantial cause (T: *nye bar len pa’i rgyu*) is defined as “that which primarily produces the continuum of its own substance as its specific result”; for example, a seed is the substantial cause for a sprout. Cooperating condition here means a condition necessary to assist the arising of its result. (TDC) \*20 The “Realm of Brahma” (T: *tshangs pa’i ’jig rten*; S: *brahmaloka*) includes all of the six classes of the desire realm, up through the first level of the form realm. (TDC). Other sources say this includes the first three levels of the form realm or the entirety of the form and formless realms (Buswell 2014: 142).

\*21 In the craft of weaving, the weft thread is passed in between the warp threads, which are set in the loom, by means of a threaded hand-held shuttle.

\*22 The name “Gyimshang” (T: *gyim shang*) shows up in a number of unrelated contexts in Tibetan literature. In this context it seems to be a synonym for Mongolia. (DPR) \*23 Gesar is a very well known mythical warrior-king of Tibet.

\*<sup>24</sup> The Thayu (T: *sta ru*) are a people native to Nepal whose livelihood is centered around forest life.

\*<sup>25</sup> Perpetuating skandhas are the five skandhas of form, feeling, perceptions, formations, and consciousness, which are perpetuated moment-to-moment, life-to-life, due to karma and afflictions.

\*<sup>26</sup> Highest yoga tantra; one of the four classes of tantras, and the one most associated with Milarepa's lineage.

\*<sup>27</sup> The *Black Treasury* attributes this account to both Ngendzong Tönpa Bodhiraja and Repa Shiwa Ö.

## The Five Tseringma Sisters' Investigation

*Garland of the Light of Amrita*

NAMO GURU

Emanation of the Sugata, ornament of my crown—  
 Blessed by the amrita that flowed from the mouth  
 Of the supreme among beings, Marpa Lotsawa,  
 And by his wisdom, spontaneously arisen,  
 That was born from the heart of the whispered lineage,  
 He is the yogi whose name is renowned as Mila—  
 To the father Repa, I prostrate with respect.

On the wondrous border of the two countries, Nepal and Tibet; at the left slope of the Azure Queen Snow Mountain\*<sup>1</sup> enveloped in mist; beneath the thick<sup>91</sup> floating golden-colored clouds; and in the center of a crystal fence that encircles the lower confluence of Dingri, there, on the banks of the Lohit, the river of siddhi, is a blessed site, the palace of Chuwar in Menlung Valley. There, the reality of the secret teaching, the supreme and unsurpassed yana, dawned in an unbiased way within the mind of the great Repa Lord, the one whose name is widely renowned as the yogi Milarepa.

With immeasurable bodhichitta, for this being whose mind was completely trained and purified, with the four joys stabilized from below,\*<sup>2</sup> then ascending and reaching the throat-center, the place of enjoyment, a treasury of vajra songs burst forth by their own power. Because of the unbroken stream of blessings of the practice lineage, he realized the transformation of ordinary appearances into wisdom. Through the ascetic conduct of a madman, he was a great daka with the power to annihilate faithless demons and negative forces.

Not wavering from the dharmata, the innate state, he sought after the benefit

of others with great love. With the *ayatana* of the totality of the elements,\*<sup>3</sup> he could transform and overpower that which appeared, to become nonappearing. Displaying various miracles with his body, he benefited a number of humans and spirits who had faith in virtue and goodness.

On the eleventh night of the first summer month of the female water-snake year, five women, radiant and beautiful, came into his presence. They did many circumambulations around him and, all together, they did eight pairs of prostrations.<sup>92</sup>

They offered him a sapphire ladleful of yogurt that was said to be made from gayal's milk.\*<sup>4</sup> Then arranging themselves in a row on his left side, they made a request: "We five women here request the Jetsun to give us the vows of bodhichitta. Please consider us."

The Jetsun reflected, "I have never seen such a special and precious ladle. And the quality of this yogurt is truly excellent; I've never seen anything like it. Humans would not be able to find such a thing. Since they did their prostrations and circumambulations in the opposite way, they must be ghosts or devas." Though he knew this to be so, in order to examine their conduct and to see whether they were speaking truthfully or not, he pretended to be ignorant.

"Who are you? Where do you come from?" he asked. Then he inquired further with this poetic song of realization:

Lord Vajradhara, essence of the four kayas,  
In this time of conflict and degeneration of the teachings,  
Seeking the benefit for a few fortunate ones,  
In this range of mountains covered in snow,  
The northern land of Bardhana,\*<sup>5</sup>  
Here he emanated in a translator's body.  
Supreme human, with the lion's roar,  
He uttered the sound of the unsurpassed yana.  
By merely hearing the sound of that,  
It is said, one won't fall to the lower realms.

So, for that reason I have a request:  
I put my hope in you, Lord, to grant siddhi and blessing  
To those beings<sup>93</sup> who rely on me.  
Father, through your hook of compassion

I pray their minds are uncontrollably moved  
And the sprout of realization grows.

Now, please listen further:  
Victors and your heirs who reside  
In the pure realm of the sky,  
Once I, a yogi of the Mahayana path,  
Have opened the lotus of those to be tamed,  
Deities, with your lattice of light rays  
That radiate from the sun of your compassion,  
Make the petals of intellect's lotus flourish.  
On this very day, bring into being  
The cluster of stamens of the four immeasurables.

You beautiful ones in rank on my left,  
Sisters, I have a question for you.  
There's nothing special I wish to ask:  
Are you humans, ghosts, or devas? I cannot tell.  
You have such wondrous female forms:  
Five queens, like none I've ever seen,  
Five women, so radiant and beautiful,  
Five goddesses radiating light.  
At first, when I saw you from afar  
Like chameleons,<sup>94</sup> you women were gathered in the market, Like mist that  
shrouds a place in darkness.  
Looking closely, what I saw was unclear and ephemeral,  
I could not be sure what I was seeing at all.  
Then when I came onto the road,  
I saw you there coming in a line  
Like pearls strung on a string;  
You noble women who abide with discipline,  
Walked gracefully smiling; such a display.  
Now that you've arrived at my side,

You're like the great star in the east before dawn\*6  
Gradually fading and fading away.  
With the way you disperse and come together,<sup>95</sup>  
I thought, "Are these not worldly ghosts or devas?"  
When looked at, you cannot help but smile.  
You spirits glancing back and forth at each other,  
Are you *tramen* dakinis,\*7 or what?

A Buddhist circumambulation is to the right,  
You went to the left, the opposite way.  
By this too, I thought you were devas or ghosts.  
When you perform eye-prostration\*8 you go to the right From this as well, I  
thought you were devas or ghosts.  
You did prostrations arranged in front  
And for each nine of them you asked of my well-being three times.  
You nod repeatedly when doing one eye-prostration.  
This is a queen's way of doing eye-prostration.  
Though it's similar, your way is not the same.

Between each eight prostrations you ask of my well-being twice Your knees  
are planted upon the ground.  
This way of prostrating like a man,<sup>96</sup>  
It's the prostration of devas and ghosts, it's not like others'.

This gift that you have given to me,  
A ladle that is made of sapphire  
Bedecked with a variety of jewels,  
It's the wealth of devas and ghosts, never found by men.

I'm an old man from a faraway land;  
Having seen, without bias, many different places,  
I could never tell of all the things I've heard  
Or of the many wondrous things I've seen.  
All the food that my palate has savored

Is far more than any others have had;  
But in all I've experienced, this wild gayal's yogurt  
Is like nothing I've ever seen before.  
Here, I tasted a truly wondrous food,  
The food of devas and ghosts, something humans don't have.  
If I told of it to another, they would be amazed.

In particular, you said, "We request the bodhichitta vows."  
You are spirits who pay heed to virtue,  
Faithful ones with great joy in the teachings.  
It's certain you have tendencies from previous training.  
Delight and joy arose for me at this as well.

Now keep listening, you lovely women,  
There's more I don't know and wish to ask.  
Tell me the truth untainted by lies.  
When you came this morning, from where did you come?  
In the evening then, where will you go?  
Where is the palace in which you reside?  
In which class or group do you belong?  
In what domain of activity do you engage?  
What siddhis do you have the power to bestow?  
Where have you met previously with me?

Did you hear [of me] from elsewhere?  
How did you come to know of me?  
Tell me with dignified and honest speech.

Thus he sang this song of realization. When he had asked these questions, the magical ladies again spoke in reply: "Jetsun, genuine being, by the power of the merit accumulated in your previous lives, this time you have met with an exceptional siddha-guru. The light rays of the nectar of speech have been transmitted to your mind. Therefore, you see all the eight worldly concerns and desirable objects as illusory. Through great love, you've mastered performing

others' benefit. Thus, you have committed to quickly cross the stormy waves of the great river of samsara. Because you have assiduously pursued accomplishment by undergoing many different hardships, you refined your skill in samadhi—inner awareness—and so have the higher perceptions on a vast scale. Therefore, you can see the hidden thoughts of others' mind-streams like a reflection in a mirror. Though you already know our class, clan, family lineage, and so forth, pretending not to know, you have asked us these questions. Why should we keep silent? We will tell you everything just as it is. So, great Jetsun, please listen to us a little.” After explaining with these spoken words, the magical ladies, in single voice, sang this poetic song:

In Tibet, the land of red-faced rakshasas,  
On the banks of Pakshu\*<sup>9</sup> in the Land of Snow, In this snowy range of  
malevolent yakshas,  
At this time of the five degenerations,  
A being, rare to be born, came to this place.  
Is he not the yogi, Lord Mila?

Because of your previously accumulated merit,  
At this time, a guru, a spiritual friend,  
And the lineage of siddhas accepted you.  
Because of the blessings—the flow of amrita—  
Your mind was moved toward the dawning of  
Sounds and appearances in your mind as illusions.  
You gave up the worldly, so difficult to renounce.

With great perseverance in undergoing hardship You practiced without a  
moment's distraction.  
Thus, now you've become a yogi of space;  
You dwell as the essence of dharmakaya—the ultimate.

Without moving from the state free of fabrication,  
Through the ayatanas of the exhausted elements,  
You subdue appearances to make them invisible,  
You send out many emanations, and so forth.  
You have displayed these many miracles



And all those beings who have faith in you  
Are full of joy and are awe-inspired,  
So their hairs stand on end and they shed many tears.  
Therefore, Jetsun, jewel of our crowns,  
You are worthy of respect and offering by all.  
Glorious Jetsun, protector of beings,  
Shepa,\*<sup>10</sup> son of the Victorious Ones, This is all we wish to say to you:

We are ones of little merit.  
We are spirits who traverse the sky.  
By the power of your great love,  
From billowing, cooling clouds of compassion,  
The rain of the amrita of blessings falls  
Upon us five women sitting before you here.  
Having moistened and completely appeased  
The continuum of harsh afflictions difficult to subdue,  
Please make grow the precious sprout  
Of the unsurpassed vehicle's supreme intention.

Radiant lord of yogic conduct,  
Majestic lord over all the yogis,  
You've trained in awareness samadhi experience.  
Thus, you see the character and faculties of others' mind-streams,  
Along with their class, clan, and family lineage, without any mistake; But  
you've pretended not to, and asked these questions.

You said, "I do not know who you are":  
We are worldly yaksha women.  
Our class is Adzidharata,\*<sup>11</sup>  
Shmashana\*<sup>12</sup> women who roam in charnel grounds.  
We are worldly female dakinis.

As for our domain of activity, we do many things.  
We bestow any kind of mundane siddhi.

This morning, we came from the expanse of the sky.  
We came by parting the clouds above.  
We came by riding the steed of the sun's rays.

This evening we will go to the land of India.  
To the Cool Grove, Shitavana Charnel Ground;  
We go to hold a ganachakra.

As for the palace in which we reside:  
To the right side here above the lower confluence,  
Stands a snow mountain with a high three-sided peak.  
On its topknot, its crystalline crown,  
The luminous sun and moon beautifully shine.  
Up above this stupa's base,  
White clouds hover—a wreath for its head.  
Below its hips, at the foundation,  
All is enveloped with a chilly mist.  
This mountain, renowned as the Azure Snow Queen,  
It is the palace of us ladies here.

Jetsun, we have met you before;  
In the first summer month of last year,  
We came inflicting harm and creating obstructions,  
But you were not afflicted by anger then;  
The rain of virtue also fell.  
Full of regret, we begged your forgiveness.  
Today, again we have come to your side.  
You, supreme human and protector,  
What comes from your mouth is like a rain of nectar.  
Since we're tormented by thirst for something to drink,  
With this river-flow of pure amrita,  
Please dispel our torment, supreme being!

After they sang this poetic song, the Jetsun replied, "Before, you were very

savage and erratic. Even though you tormented and inflicted harm upon me again and again, I know that all appearances are just the magical display of mind and I have certainty that mind itself is luminosity-emptiness. Therefore, I do not have even an atom's worth of fear or apprehension toward confused appearances, these demonic obstructions.

“Inferring from what you have said, I realize that you have done harm toward ordinary beings as well as to other genuine beings who make efforts in practice. Therefore, with a mind of remorse and regret for all the many actions you have done before, you should acknowledge and confess them. You should vow that from now on, you will do no harm or ill, even at the risk of your own life. If you make this commitment, then I can give you the precepts of refuge and bodhichitta. If you don't act in this way, it will be like ‘a court case that leads one to ruin’ or like ‘tethered dzos going over the cliff.’\*<sup>13</sup> You will not be a suitable vessel for the profound teachings or to be given the vows of the supreme yana. You should understand the meaning of the song of this old man, so focus without distraction and listen astutely.” Thus explaining in prose, he then gave a reply in this song of realization sung in well-formed and poetic verse:

In this glorious evening, at dusk,  
A glowing light shines clear from the east  
And darkness is dispelled to every end.  
Is that not the crystalline moon?  
Riding the horse of the glow of moonbeams  
You came, light swirling around your bodies;  
Is this not you, the worldly dakinis?  
On the banks of the Lohit River  
Is a joyful, natural solitary site.  
At that glorious palace of Chuwar  
Is a madman with the conduct of yogic discipline.  
His elemental body is without cold or heat.  
Knowing no embarrassment he sleeps naked.  
He has the essential point of mental nonengagement.  
Without a moment's distraction, he doesn't meditate on anything.  
He who looks at the characteristics of space,  
Is this not the meditator Mila?

I, a repa with yogic conduct,  
And you, five ladies with magical power,  
We've sung our songs back and forth to each other.  
This is certainly due to our previous aspirations.  
Up until now, we did not know each other.  
Now that we do, how joyful I am!

Last year, in the late part of spring,  
You powerful women of samsaric existence,  
Acting as leaders, stirred up and deployed  
An assembly of worldly devas and ghosts.  
You hoisted the banners of the four battalion ranks.\*1497  
Having prepared to wage your battle,  
You then rained down savage weapons.  
But these obstructions did nothing to me.

I have determined that appearances are mind And I know that mind itself is  
empty.

Toward magical obstructions—these confused appearances—  
I don't experience any apprehension or fear.

Through merely seeing you, without control,  
Immense and unbearable compassion arose.  
A gentle rain of virtuous dharma fell  
And you developed devotion and respect.

You five women with astounding beauty,  
Tonight, here, again you came,  
Prostrating and circumambulating again and again  
And presenting me with wondrous gifts.  
With one-pointed respect, you joined your palms  
And offered a request with poetic words:  
“From the gathering of the clouds of bodhichitta  
Please let the rain of dharma nectar fall.”

If you do, indeed, have such a motivation of respect,  
The jewel upon the crown of my head,  
Upon the lotus seat of the three nadis,  
The peerless lord with such great kindness,  
Marpa the Translator,  
Sits in the form of the pure sambhogakaya.  
From his compassion, the moon that is free of clouds,  
Bright, stainless light rays radiate  
Into the lotus\*<sup>15</sup> hearts of beings to be tamed.  
With the beautiful flowers opening up,  
The stamens of realization vibrate and move.  
Do you see this, worldly dakinis?  
If you don't see, it's due to great obscuration.  
All of your grave misdeeds and flaws  
From before, since samsara without beginning,  
If you don't admit and confess these deeds, You'll not be a vessel for the  
    profound teachings.

Until now, you were savage and erratic,  
You'd habituated in evil and deceitful conduct.  
Thus, henceforth you must be brought to resolve:  
Take on the conduct of commitments and vows.

There's no other meaning of the Buddha's teachings than this:  
If you don't think properly about cause and effect—  
About the karma of virtue and nonvirtue—  
You'll have the unbearable suffering of the lower realms.  
So I ask you, please be heedful and mindful  
Of the results that come of the subtlest karma.

If you do not look upon desires as faulty  
And do not turn from attachment deep within,  
You'll never be free from the prison of samsara.  
With the understanding that all is illusion

With the understanding that all is illusion,  
Rely on the antidote for the cause of all suffering.

If you don't show gratitude toward the kindness  
Of the six realms' beings who have been your kind parents,  
You will deviate toward the lower yana.  
Since that is so, with great love,  
Please train in bodhichitta mind.

Yoginis of the Mahayana path,  
If you listen to these well-spoken words,  
We siblings' view and conduct will be harmonious.  
Temporarily we'll traverse the same path,  
And without any doubt we shall meet  
In the pure realm of Abhirati\*<sup>16</sup>  
With its perfected enlightened activity and good qualities.

Having sung this song of realization, he said, "Beautiful ones, the sentient beings of the polluted age have afflictions that are extremely coarse. Therefore, it is very difficult for the antidotes to arise immediately. Take the commitment that is suitable for your individual levels and abilities."

Then the beautiful ladies supplicated: "Jetsun, because you have unbearable great love, you taught repeatedly, emphasizing the key point of cause and effect. This is truly wondrous. But, previously, at the great charnel ground known as Singhala, from the *kshetrapala*\*<sup>17</sup> dakinis such as the Lion-Faced Wisdom dakini, the Tamala Lady of the Mountain Wilderness, and Tummo Ngosangma, as well as several *jetsunmas*\*<sup>18</sup> who attained accomplishment, such as the yogini Bhina Vajra, we heard a great deal about the benefits and qualities of bodhichitta and about positive and negative karma. Therefore, please do not teach only this to us. It is true we manifested malevolent omens and magic here, but this was to test your confidence of experience in meditative concentration in your retreat, to further enhance your realization, and for us to serve as a general watch guard of the teachings. Apart from this, we would never do the slightest harm. Therefore we beg you, you must give us the precepts of giving rise to supreme bodhichitta."

After they offered this request, the Jetsun accepted, saying, "Beautiful ones, with such earnest supplication to receive the precepts, why shouldn't I give them

to you? Arrange a mandala, what offerings you have, and do prostrations. Since I have no desire for any worldly material offerings for the precepts, please offer me each of your worldly siddhis by uttering your names.”

The ladies were extremely happy at this and did as Milarepa commanded. Sitting in a row, with the greatest respect, they joined their palms and spoke forthrightly. In the center of the five was their leader, who said, “I am the leader of us here, and my name is Tashi Tseringma. I offer you the siddhi of Proliferating Shiva’s Lineage.”\*19

Then the woman who was seated to the right of the leader spoke: “My name is Tingi Shal Sangma. I offer you the siddhi of the Illuminating Mirror.”\*20

The woman seated on her right said, “My name is Chöpen Drin Sangma, and I offer you the siddhi of the Jewel Treasury.”\*21

The woman on the left side of the leader then spoke: “My name is Miyo Lo Sangma, and I offer you the siddhi of the Provender of Mayang.”\*22

Then the lady seated to the left of her said, “My name is Tekar Dro Sangma, and I offer you the siddhi of the Proliferation of Four-Legged Animals.”\*23

Then the Jetsun gave, in order, the refuge vows, the pratimoksha vows,\*24 and the Mahayana bodhichitta vows of aspiration and engagement. Once they were properly conveyed, he explained the general meaning of them and gave detailed advice on how to practice them. The worldly dakinis were overjoyed and amazed.

They said, “Though we are not able to practice this as well as the great Jetsun has instructed us, we will train accordingly and will not go against your command. We will never forget your kindness to us.” Then, thanking him with words of deep gratitude, they took the Jetsun’s feet to their heads, then prostrated and circumambulated many times. With their magical power, they flew into the sky until they could barely be seen. Then they went further and further until, it is said, they disappeared into light.

Later, when the next month had passed, on the evening of the eleventh day, the haughty chieftains of the eight classes of devas and rakshasas that had come before to inflict harm returned with each of their respective retinues and infantry. Also, the Shmashana worldly dakinis, having transformed into ravishing and beautiful young women, came fully adorned, wearing flowing clothing, a variety of precious ornaments, and long golden necklaces on their shoulders along with short necklaces. Together with their many retinues of servants, they came to the sky in front, where the devas and rakshasas rained many kinds of flowers down upon the Jetsun. They offered incense, a variety of music, and made gifts of

sublime food and drink.

“Jetsun, it is said that there is no other refuge than the pinnacle of realization that has come from your mind—this refuge of the ultimate path, the intention of the buddhas of the three times. Please teach this assembly of devas and rakshasas assembled here the dharma of the definitive meaning.”

Then the Jetsun said, “This is a song on the view of the pinnacle of realization, instructing only on the abiding nature of the definitive meaning.” Then he sang this song of realization:

At the border of Tibet and Nepal  
Lies the wondrous place of Dingma Drin.  
At that marketplace where one can get any goods desired,  
There lives the divine Men-tsun-mo,<sup>\*25</sup> glorious protector of humans.  
On the queen of snow mountains, with its glorious splendor,  
Is the topknotted one with immutable life.  
Her name is renowned as Tashi Tseringma.  
On the left corner of the mist-covered mountain  
Is a medicinal pasture surrounded by snowy cliffs.  
Is this not the Menlung Valley of Chuwar?  
At that site is one with single-pointed practice.  
Am I not called the yogi Mila?

Before, you inflicted harm on me  
And laughed with deprecating insults.  
You mundane, worldly devas and rakshasas,  
Extremely haughty and impudent,  
Who wandered here to inspect this yogi,  
Is it not you who have gathered here today?

Last night when the moon was in the sky, Five rapturously beautiful women  
Gave rise to the supreme, unsurpassed motivation,  
And committed [to offer] the siddhis that give whatever one desires,  
Then flew to the sky and disappeared.

Moreover, you ravishing and wondrous five,



You beautiful female emanations,  
Tonight in the white moon's luminous glow  
You display an enticing and sensuous dance  
With silken garments loose and flowing  
Beautified with ornaments and necklaces.  
Principal lady, you made your call,  
And the eight classes of devas and rakshasas,  
Their ranks, battalions, and companies,  
Along with the retinues of their similar class,  
Came filling the sky with offering clouds,  
Food with a hundred different flavors,  
And offerings of myriads of different music.  
You who asked for the view of definitive meaning,  
Are you not the devas and ghosts of all phenomenal existence?  
Listen astutely to the words I say:  
If they are words of truth, then listen, one and all!  
This is not mere idle chatter, listen to this song!

In general, the beings of the three realms of samsara  
Have different desires with respect to enlightenment.  
They have differing views of clinging to "I."  
They have many different modes of conduct;  
They have many views of the self—the ground.  
In order to be harmonious with your minds,  
The all-knowing Buddha gave the teaching  
That "everything exists" for you lesser beings.

According to the ultimate truth,  
Not only are there no obstructions, there are not even buddhas.  
Meditators and meditated do not exist.

The bhumis traversed and the paths' signs don't exist.  
The resultant kayas and wisdom don't exist.  
Therefore nirvana does not exist

Therefore, nirvana does not exist.

They're merely imputed with words and names.  
The support, the three realms with their animate dwellers,  
Is unborn and unestablished from the beginning.  
It is baseless and innately unarisen.  
There is no karma or karmic ripening.  
Therefore there's not even the name samsara.  
That's how it is in ultimate reality.

EMA! If sentient beings don't exist,  
Then where do buddhas of the three times come from?  
Without a cause, no result is possible.

Thus, according to the relative truth,  
There is samsara and nirvana.  
“Everything exists,” thus taught the Sage.  
Existence, the appearance of things,  
And nonexistence, empty dharmata—  
These two are in essence inseparable, with one taste.  
There is no self-awareness and other-awareness;  
All is in open and spacious union.  
Accordingly, the learned ones with realization  
Do not see consciousness, they only see wisdom.  
They don't see beings, they only see buddhas.  
They don't see phenomena, they see phenomena's very nature.\*26  
From that, compassion spontaneously arises.  
Powers, fearlessness, *dharani*,\*27 and so on Whatever buddha qualities there  
are  
Arise just like a precious jewel.  
That is the realization of this yogi.

For the ears of you devas and ghosts gathered here, Bön is more pleasing than  
profound dharma.  
In the land of Abhira\*28

You value madmen more than wise ones.  
Foxes and wolves wandering charnel grounds  
Have fear and terror of the lion's roar.  
There may be some here who are suitable vessels  
And by hearing these points, they'll be liberated.  
I am happy and joyful indeed,  
SOH!<sup>\*29</sup> May you be joyful, happy, and gain sudden victory!

After singing this song of realization, he explained its meaning: "Generally, the entire collection of eighty-four thousand dharmas that our teacher, the Buddha, taught were in harmony with the minds of the beings to be tamed; therefore he gave his teaching in a variety of vehicles. But, ultimately, they all take you to a single destination. That single point is the ground, the unfabricated dharmata. Merely understanding this reality will not bring one to liberation; one must actualize the path that one is training in; and the essence of the path is the union of emptiness and compassion. There are an inconceivable number of ways to traverse the path, but if one summarizes it, they all carry one to the union of means and wisdom, or the inseparability of the two truths."

From among the devas and rakshasas there, the five dakinis who had given rise to bodhichitta rose from their seats and arranged themselves on Milarepa's left side. Then, together in single voice, they proclaimed this praise of the way of seeing good qualities:

Under the shining luminosity of the midnight sky,  
In the range of snowy mountains in the north,  
Is a tucked-away valley, a seat of natural gold—  
The Menlung Valley, a pasture where medicinal riches descend.  
Within it lies Chuwar, the site endowed with blessing.  
Now in this time of the teachings' degeneration  
There is one with incredible undertaking of hardship.

For food, he eats the nectar of nonconceptuality; He drinks his own natural  
urine to quench his thirst;  
He has no shame with regard to clean and unclean;  
He engages in yogic conduct that's like a madman's.

In order to measure your experience

in order to measure your experience,  
The year before last in the first summer month,  
We went to Lachi Nayön Chudo.  
You were there in the thorny teakwood forest  
Acting heedless and wearing no clothes.  
You enjoyed the pleasures of girls of low caste.  
We saw you looking into a white silver mirror.  
With the magical power of your body,  
You displayed the ayatana of exhaustion,  
And we saw you vanish into space, free of form.  
Seeing that, amazed, we went away.

Later, in the middle autumn month,  
When you were practicing at Chonglung Rock,  
We came to investigate your meditation.  
You wore the clothing of the sun and moon  
And your head was adorned with a wreath of flowers.  
Your body was smeared with ashes and rakta.  
You held a parasol and victory banner in your hands.  
Riding upon the king of fierce beasts,  
You rode into the expanse of the sky,  
And then you completely disappeared.  
At that time, we had no chance to obstruct you.

Then last summer, in the first month,  
We thought, "We will obstruct your meditation  
And intimidate you, yogi."  
So, in the center of an expansive great ocean,  
For clothing you wore a great blazing fire.  
On your head a venomous snake adorned your skull.  
Leaning with your back upon the blade of a sword,  
You sat cross-legged on the tip of a spear.  
As you played upon the orb of a wish-fulfilling jewel,

We saw you swallow the mountain whole.  
At that we were awed and bewildered.

Since you've complete control over the awareness of mind,  
You've an emanated body that manifests and disappears.  
Because you display many miraculous powers,  
You are a yogi who is like Indra.  
Your mind is free of fear and pride.  
Because you've abandoned doubts, hopes, and fears,  
You are a yogi who is like a lion.  
With no terror, no panic, and no discouragement,  
Since you've faced your obstacles and have no fear,  
You are a yogi who is like an elephant.

When beings see you, they're happy and their hairs stand on end.  
When others merely touch or look upon you,  
Obstacles are cleared, and others' benefit is accomplished;  
Thus, you are a great wish-fulfilling jewel.

Lord yogi who is an expression of the sky,  
You're never swayed by distractions toward characteristics  
And you've realized true meaning that is without letters,<sup>\*30</sup>  
So we had no chance to bring demonic obstructions.

We did not know how to obstruct you,  
And to block our malevolent obstructions through inflicting harm,  
You displayed many amazing things—  
A myriad of signs and magical displays.  
Then you taught the dharma with words of truth,  
And all were placed on the path of peace and happiness.

On that auspicious night last month,  
You made grow the precious sprout,  
The causal basis for omniscience.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

Spiritual friend who teaches the unerring path,  
Jetsun, you glorious protector of beings,  
In the future in the eastern direction, In the realm known as Abhirati,  
When you're invited as a heart-son  
Into the palace of Buddha Akshobhya,  
All the dakas and dakinis  
Who reside above, below, and on the earth,  
And all the devas of the pure virtuous kind—  
With parasols, victory banners, the sound of music,  
And gatherings of beautiful offering clouds—  
Will come before you to greet you and show the way.  
When they lead you to the celestial abode,  
Those who have seen you and heard your speech,  
Manifesting as humans or spirits,  
Those of us included within your retinue,  
May we follow you and be your servants!

After they offered this song on the way of seeing the special good qualities to the Jetsun, they concluded with pure aspirations. Again, the Jetsun thought, “These worldly dakinis and demons are savage and extremely difficult to tame; they still must be bound under oath and subdued.”

Then he said, “Beautiful ones, it is wonderful that you have expressed your faith and devotion to me and thus made the aspiration to have compassion from now into the future. Here, so far, I have taught you how to traverse the path of omniscience with the vows of bodhichitta of the supreme family. Now, there is a special, quick path, a teaching that has many methods and no difficulty. I will give you the transmission and samaya commitments of the Vidyadhara Mantra [the Vajrayana]. Each of you should offer to me your life-force; arrange tormas and whatever you have to offer.”

At that they were overjoyed. They arranged vast offerings and tormas and did many prostrations and circumambulations. Then each of them graciously offered her life-force and sat next to the Jetsun as she had before. With that, the Jetsun gave them the abhisheka of the Knowledge-Entrustment of Lady Tara<sup>\*31</sup> and conferred the yidam, the Goddess Kurukulle,<sup>\*32</sup> and the transmission of the heart mantras.

Once he gave permission for these, he instructed them assiduously and said, “Beautiful ones, from now on, all of us gathered here are bound by samaya as master and disciples. Therefore, during any of the four activities, in whatever you do, always meditate with the guru at the crown of your head. Whatever happens, whether good or bad, search for no other master apart from the refuges, the three jewels. The outer environment is the naturally existing celestial palace, and all the inner inhabitants, all sentient beings, are the yidam deity. Therefore, whatever beings you see, you should treat them with devotion and interest; it is not okay, even for a moment, to disparage, abuse, hurt, or harm anyone. At all times and in all ways, do not be separated from the pride of the deity.”

Then the five dakinis supplicated Milarepa: “Jetsun, with the tradition of the Vidyadhara Mantra, traversing the path is swift and easy. With many methods, it is accomplished without difficulty. Your bestowing of the special samayas is extremely kind. Our impure mind-streams of sentient beings have had strong continuity, since beginningless samsara, in cultivating latent tendencies. In particular, we have taken the low births of women and have low intellect. So what the Jetsun has taught us has not yet developed in our mind-streams; however, we will train gradually with diligence.

“Though we may not be able to perceive other sentient beings as the yidam deity, we will refrain from harming them. We will benefit and support the people in the nearby lands with whatever comforts we can provide. In particular we will protect, guard, and keep fully hidden\*<sup>33</sup> all of those in the retinue of the followers of your teaching. We will be your subjects and provide whatever favorable conditions are necessary.” After committing themselves in this way, they did many circumambulations and prostrations to the Jetsun. Then, it is said, they flew into the sky and disappeared.

This is the story of how the leader of the five worldly dakinis, Tashi Tseringma, sang songs in the form of questions and answers about giving rise to the supreme motivation with the great Repa Lord whose name is not lightly uttered, the Glorious Shepa Dorje, at the left corner [of the Mountain of Tashi Tseringma] in Dingma Drin.

At the peak of the auspicious and glorious Azure Mountain, the fortunate and gifted one, Repa Shiwa Ö, directly compared meditative experiences with the sister Tashi Tseringma and repeatedly asked questions. Later, meeting the lotus feet of the Jetsun three times, with delight, he also gave some needed information. In the forest of Omchung Pal,\*<sup>34</sup> an isolated and delightful place

where accomplishment is attained, Ngendzong Tönpa Bodhiraja and the yogi Shiwa Ö together, for the sake of fortunate students of the future, discussed and assiduously wrote this down without adding anything or leaving anything out. This completes the well-arranged writing known as “Garland of the Light of Amrita.”

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\*1 The Azure Queen Mountain (T: *mthon mthing rgyal mo*) is another name for the mountain of Tashi Tseringma.

\*2 The “four joys” (T: *dga' ba bzhi*) refers to “a realization of chandali that is taught in the context of the completion stage in the mother anuttaratantras; the four joys that arise from when the bodhichitta is stabilized and reverted upward from the ‘jewel’ to the centers of the four chakras—the navel, heart, throat, and crown” (TDC).

\*3 The ayatana of the totality (T: *zad par gyi skye mched*) is when “the yogin who has attained mastery of meditative concentration is able to transform whatever he or she focuses on, such as the four elements, however he or she wishes through the power of samadhi. ‘Totality’ here has the meaning of ‘limitless extent or dimension’” (TDC).

\*4 This seems to be the gayal, or *Bos frontalis* (T: *ba men*), a large ox-like semidomesticated bovine (Jäschke: 860).

\*5 This term is obscure but seems to be another name for Tibet (T: *ba dha na*). *The Black Treasury* reads *parta shi* (DN 517), and *The Twelve Great Sons* reads *par do na* (BCC 164a).

\*6 The morning star, Venus (T: *tho rangs shar gyi skar chen*). (DPR) \*7 T: *phra men DA ki*. “Tramen” is sometimes used interchangeably with “dakini.” The word literally means “variegated,” or “hybrid,” and may also refer to female deities that have the bodies of humans and heads of different animals (Simmer-Brown: 311; RY).

\*8 T: *spyen phyags*. Chang (1999: 331) states: “The translator presumes that this term refers to a certain eye-gesture (mudra) performed for the purpose of veneration. This may still be used in India, but is no longer extant in Tibet.” This seems to be correct. (DPR) \*9 Pakshu is an old name for the Brahmaputra River.

\*10 Shepa is part of Milarepa’s name, Shepa Dorje (Laughing Vajra). “Son of the Victorious Ones” is an epithet for bodhisattva. This line could also be translated: “Laughing bodhisattva, to you...” (T: *rgyal sras bzhad pa khyod nyid la*).

\*11 This reference is obscure.

\*12 Shmashana (T: *sme sha na*) is “a race that is said to be of low caste in India” (TDC). “Shmashan” is the Sanskrit name for a charnel ground where bodies are brought to be cremated.

\*13 The court case and the dzos (a hybrid cross between a male or female yak and domestic cattle) are both analogies for dharma commitments that are not followed through. If one goes to court but then the case isn’t resolved, then one will fight even more. Likewise, if one makes a commitment to engage in dharma practice but does not follow through, the outcome will be worse than if one had not taken the commitment at all. Similarly, the tethered dzos exemplify committing misdeeds after one has taken vows. When they are tethered together, two dzos will be lost if one goes over the cliff; likewise, the negative impact of misdeeds is even greater than if one had never taken the vows at all. (TN) \*14 This refers to the four ranks of maras.

\*15 “Kumuda” (T: *ku mu da*) seems to be a type of white lotus. TDC states: “(Sanskrit) A flower that grows from the mud; when the moon shines at night, its petals open, and when the sun shines during the day, the petals close.”

\*16 Abhirati is the “Pure Realm of Manifest Joy” (T: *mngon dga'i zhing khams*), the pure realm of the



Buddha Akshobhya.

\*17 Kshetrapalas are worldly protector deities.

\*18 “Jetsunma” is the feminine form of “Jetsun,” idiomatically meaning venerable or revered one.

\*19 Lady of Auspicious Long Life (T: *bkra shis tshe ring ma*). The siddhi of Proliferating Shiva’s Lineage is connected with mundane longevity and well-being.

\*20 Beautiful Lady of the Azure Face (T: *mthing gi zhal bzang ma*). The siddhi of the Illuminating Mirror is connected with higher perceptions.

\*21 Crowned Lady of Beautiful Voice (T: *cod pan mgrin bzang ma*). The siddhi of the Jewel Treasury is connected with wealth.

\*22 Unmoving Lady of Noble Mind (T: *mi g.yo blo bzang ma*). The meaning of this siddhi, the Provender of Mayang (T: *rma g.yang zas kyi dngos grub*), is not completely clear. Mayang is one of the two stated rivers at Chuwar. It is a fertile region, as the siddhi offered here is connected with farming. (DPR) \*23 Lady Who Goes toward the Pure Aim (T: *gtad dkar ’gro bzang ma*). The siddhi of the Proliferation of Four-Legged Animals is connected with livestock.

\*24 The *Black Treasury* specifies that these are upasika, or female layperson’s, pratimoksha vows (DN 529).

\*25 James Valby explains this term (*smān btsun*) as “a dakini of the *menmo* class.” Menmos are minor deities derived from the Bön tradition that reside in lakes and sometimes in the mountains. They are usually associated with medicine and healing.

\*26 Using the Sanskrit terms, this would be translated: “They don’t see dharmins, they see dharmata” (T: *chos can ma mthong chos nyid mthong*).

\*27 Also called “retention” (T: *gzungs*), dharani is the ability to remember everything heard and is one of the qualities of a buddha.

\*28 Abhira is an ancient Vedic clan and the Abhira kingdom is mentioned in the *Mahabharata*; however, its reference here is not completely clear.

\*29 This syllable signifies a war cry (T: *bsa*).

\*30 You have realized the true reality that is inexpressible.

\*31 “Knowledge-entrustment” (T: *rig gtad*) abhishekas are generally associated with kriyatantra. (DPR) \*32 Kurukulle is a manifestation of Red Tara.

\*33 The Tseringma sisters are making a commitment to keep practitioners of Secret Mantra hidden from other humans and malevolent spirits.

\*34 T: *’om chung dpal*. This place is near Chuwar, as it is sometimes also referred to as Chuwar Omchung. (DPR)

## The Five Tseringma Sisters' Investigation

*Golden Garland of Stupas*

NAMO GURU

Guru of the precious lineage,  
Deva of devas, lord of dakinis,  
Blessed one, the jewel of his crown,  
A beautiful lotus flower with stamens,  
This was the translator, the great lotsawa.

By touching his palms to his head,  
Empowerment was conferred; and with the lineage instructions,  
He became ripened and liberated—a fortunate one.  
To the Repa Lord who perfected his practice,  
To the feet of Glorious Shepa, I bow!

Subsequently, this reply to the beautiful lady's request  
About the points of liberation of the treacherous\*<sup>1</sup> bardo Was written to  
remind those of lesser intellect,  
Unaltered, through the retention of clarifying words.

When the four abhishekas were first conferred upon him, the lord, the great siddha who surpasses all other humans, had an instantaneous vision of the assembly of deities within [the mandala of] glorious Chakrasamvara, the thirty-two outer kshetrपाला dakinis, and the sixteen awareness consorts along with offering goddesses appearing in the sky in front. At that very time, the one whom the guru and dakinis assented be called by the name Glorious Shepa Dorje\*<sup>2</sup> was admonished to practice by the command of the lord Great Lotsawa. Thus,

undergoing many hardships of austerities of the body, he perfected many good qualities through practice in Secret Mantra with its great power of *tendrel*. In reliance on his elemental body, he definitively attained the supreme siddhi of Mahamudra, the rainbow-like mental body.

The Jetsun Milarepa, that great being, was staying in the wondrous land to the east of Dingma Drin, on the border of the splendid Mön region west of Lower Khumbu. Under billowing and swirling dark clouds, at the pathway where the dark planet Rahu moved,\*<sup>3</sup> and on the left slope of Khyung-go Tashi Snow Mountain\*<sup>4</sup> where white clouds hovered, lay the beautiful turquoise fields of the pasture, Menlung Valley, a playground<sup>98</sup> of medicinal minerals beautified with jasmine flowers.<sup>99</sup> The Tashi Oma River and Dütsi Ngödrup River\*<sup>5</sup> both smoothly flowed by. There, by the banks, was a natural, blessed solitary site. At that glorious palace of Chuwar, Milarepa remained with his mind unmoving from the state of the suchness of all phenomena, free of elaborations, luminous, with neither coming nor going.

In the male wood-horse year, during the first autumn month when the twenty-fourth constellation shone, and when the waning moon was in the sky, the market of Dingma Drin was plagued by a great epidemic. There were many types of disease, such as white and black pox, blood disease, blackening fever, *anyavali*, *bhidampali*, *kshanayarjali*, and dark *dharjali*.\*<sup>6</sup> Many humans and livestock died.

The following month, on the eleventh day of the middle autumn month at twilight, a radiant and beautiful lady came, wearing white silk with red spots and flame designs drawn upon it. Her lower hem was bordered by the five precious gems, and her upper garment, made of silk, was covered in pearls, tassels, and garlands, all with ravishing beauty. Around its edges were turquoise-colored diamonds, and on either side of her upper garment were golden peacocks embroidered with their necks crossing each other. She took Milarepa's feet to her head and circumambulated seven times, and then did a set of nine prostrations.

"Jetsun, our queen has become extremely ill, please come to the other side of the snow mountain." Thus she invited Milarepa, it is said.

The Jetsun replied, "The day is getting late, I will not go now. You can stay here for the night. Tomorrow morning, you and I will go back together."

"We can go by the Miraculous Light Path of Samanta Tsari;<sup>100</sup> it will not be difficult. Please, you must come today." Thus she pleaded, it is said.

The Jetsun replied, "Where is this road? I am an old man, and I have never seen such a road before. Which direction is it? You be my guide."

Then she produced a white woolen blanket from her side, and lifted it toward the sky. She said to Milarepa, “Get on top of this blanket, and it will carry us there.”

It is said that just as soon as the Jetsun had placed a foot on the blanket, in an instant, like a flash of lightning, they went off. On the left slope of the Azure Queen Snow Mountain, there was a white silken tent adorned with golden draping. It was strung with ropes of sapphire and staked with conches and tent pegs of coral. Within was a beautiful lady with long braids that enwrapped her body and reached the floor. She had one extremely bloodshot eye and her head was lifted slightly on a pillow.

It is said she told the Jetsun, “Jetsun, I’ve become extremely sick; I ask you to please help me.”

The Jetsun carefully asked her, “What has caused your sickness? How long have you not been well? What is your condition now?”

It is said that she then reported: “As to the condition for my becoming ill, last summer there were herders who lit a great bonfire.\*7 The smoke from that fire caused me to become ill. As to when, it was during the first month of autumn during the waning moon that I became a bit unwell. Then, since the eleventh of the middle month of autumn, it has become extremely painful, and so I sent for the Jetsun. Because of my own breath, a variety of human illnesses have broken out in this land, and the epidemic has caused great disturbance here. This is the state of things.”

When the Jetsun heard this, he thought, “The cause of the epidemic that struck last year is this woman. It is not possible for me to benefit anyone for the time being. Right now, she must keep to her previous commitment.”

Then he said to the woman, “Beautiful one, previously, I gave you the precepts of the supreme motivation of bodhichitta, and you were given the recitation transmission of the yidam deity. I taught you the dharma of karma, cause and effect, but you have not abided by your commitment, and have not kept your oath. You could not bear a slight discomfort and thus have broken your vows by harming all these innocent beings, spreading harm and detriment. Because of this breakage of samaya and because of your previous deeds, I cannot trust you at all. Now, if you commit to putting a stop to this epidemic, then I will see if I can help a little bit. If you do not accept, I will leave right now. Jaded woman bound by oath, this breakage of samaya is a great negativity.”

She became very fearful and astonished. Seizing the feet of the Jetsun she

fervently pleaded, “We are ignorant sentient beings; though we have this slight sickness of delusion, please do not say this! Generally, if the virtuous worldly devas of the higher class are not harmed, then for the most part, we will not do any detriment. In particular, we have not purposefully disregarded the Jetsun’s command; nor have we intentionally done any harm to beings ourselves, or sent anyone else to do so. For example, just as the river here overflowed in the last month of summer, saturating all of the river banks, in the same way, the demons of our class along with their retainers, as well as the servant *pishachas*\*<sup>8</sup> and *rakshasas*—the many hundreds that enjoy flesh and savor blood—created harm and detriment.\*<sup>9</sup> However, if I become well, I will heed the Jetsun’s words and clear away the sickness of those beings. Please, I beg you, look upon me with compassion!”

With that, that very evening, the Jetsun recited from the hundred-syllable purifying ritual, then made many supplications to the guru and three jewels, and performed a life extension ritual of Ushnishavijaya.\*<sup>10</sup> From the next morning onward, she was able to rise from her bed and prostrate to him. Then, for seven days, directing his awareness, he sent blessings upon her, and she became very well. Her complexion became even more beautiful and more abundantly radiant than before.

Then the Jetsun said, “Beautiful one, now you have completely recovered. Therefore, I will now go to help the beings in the town. Tell me, what substances are most agreeable for you, and what kind of practices should be done?”

“Jetsun, because of our strong interdependent connection, when I am well, the people will also gradually become well. However, if you want them to recover quickly, it is a common oath for all us worldly dakinis that if one of us is not well, then we make everyone unwell and create disturbance; further, all the devas and ghosts of samsaric existence are stirred from the depths in support. Thus, the practices you should do are reciting the dharani of the Essence of the Tathagata’s Ushnisha\*<sup>11</sup> many times, reciting the profound sutra section of the Mahayana, the Cleansing Vase Water Ritual entailing the sequestering off of the town, arranging vast tormas and puja offerings such as the select white and red offerings, ornamenting those with as many types of food as you have, and then dedicating. With these, the people’s illnesses will be quickly pacified.”

Then the Jetsun went to the Rock Fortress of Drin and said to the people there, “I had a dream indicating that your Lady was probably displeased due to smoke from a bonfire that struck her. This caused a disturbance. Then all the devas and

ghosts of samsaric existence became upset; because of that you have this epidemic. Now, you should do these rites for clearing obstacles and use these select offerings that I have collected.”

The people did accordingly and, along with the select offerings, they arranged a vast array of *tsok*\*<sup>12</sup> and *torma*, made supplications to the guru and the three jewels, and offered *tormas* to all the dharmapalas. This they followed by dedicating to all the devas and ghosts of samsaric existence. Through merely proclaiming the power of truth, the great epidemic was eliminated after a short time.

At the end of that month, on the twenty-ninth, the five Tashi Tseringma goddesses, the leader and her attendants, came before the Jetsun surrounded by a retinue, an assembly of many local and medicine deities. They offered to the Jetsun abundant gifts of excellent food and drink with tremendous flavor filling many vessels crafted from a variety of precious substances. Making countless prostrations and circumambulations, they arranged the offerings within his sight in front. The five worldly dakini sisters said, “Now we have been resuscitated back from near death. Jetsun, there is no one kinder than you.” Then they offered him this song with pleasing words:

Up within the sky's expanse,  
Churning billows of black clouds gather  
In order that the Naga King Nga-dra  
Sustain beings with nourishment;  
They're a sign of this nectar—the light falling rain.  
The slow easy drizzle of the rain that falls  
Is the sign of the balance of the earth's moisture and warmth.  
The thunder's trembling and rumbling roar  
Is the voice of the quarreling hot and cold elements.

Like those clouds, too, below  
Is a three-sided snow mountain, with its peak high in the sky.  
The crystalline crown of its stupa-base  
Is inlaid with the light of the stars  
And the radiance of the sun and moon.  
It is there that our Men-tsun-mo palace stands.  
Enwrapping the left slope of the snow mountain

Is a crystalline playground above the lower confluence.  
It is adorned with a canopy of rainbows—  
This is the wondrous pasture, the Menlung Valley.  
It's a place where plants and the six grains grow,  
An auspicious land arrayed with colorful flowers.  
This medicinal playground is a sight to be seen  
Where the local deities dance and play.

In particular, there is a blessed ground: At the Chuwar nirmanakaya palace  
Resides a wondrous human being.  
Is it not Lord Mila the yogi?  
In your previous lives, you gathered merit,  
So now you've attained a precious human birth.  
Free from the slightest bit of laziness,  
You never parted from the practice of meditative concentration,  
And so realized the reality of unborn mind.  
Then through *trulkhor* you gained control of the body.  
You have no fear caused by the obstruction of distraction,  
Therefore you are a mountain-like yogi.  
Since you've perfected the good qualities through prana,  
Your naked body is radiant.  
Through many actions of yogic discipline,  
You perform beings' benefit perfectly, O noble man.  
Now in this time of degeneration,  
You've come to the land of the red-faced ones.  
In general, you're a great ornament for the whole land.  
In particular, you shine as the pride of us ladies!

On the eleventh day of this month,  
Due to the blazing of a filthy fire,  
I was oppressed by an illness of the four elements.  
Afflictions and torment stirred in the depths of my mind.  
I experienced sensations of suffering.

My mind and body nearly parted.\*13

When this affliction came upon me,  
Lord, by the hook of your compassion,  
You gave me the blessing of transference.  
You recited mantra from a purifying ritual.  
Then you pointed out to me the mind beyond birth and death  
And the certainty of realization quickly arose.  
The four illnesses gathered, dissolved like clouds.  
My body became pleasant and light, like cotton,  
And many realizations dawned in my mind.

You blocked the obstacle of untimely death: The heat that had drawn in from  
my extremities was restored;  
The ins and outs of my breath, that were cut, were re-conjoined;  
Thus the messenger of the Lord of Death was put to shame.  
Lord yogi, you are so incredibly kind!

I, your subject with the obscuration of inferior birth,  
Am forgetful and my mindfulness is weak;  
But your restoration of my life-force here  
Is something, that in this life, I could never forget.  
To repay the kindness of protecting me  
I'll offer any siddhis that you may wish  
And never transgress any command you give.  
From this time forth until the attainment  
Of ultimate, unsurpassable enlightenment,  
Through the river-flow of pure aspiration,  
Like the body with its shadow,  
May I accompany you, not separate for a single instant.  
Then, when you have actualized buddhahood  
In the pure realm that's tamed by your rupakaya,  
Just like the first five disciples of the Buddha,  
May we be the first of your retinue;



May we drink the very first nectar.  
Then, by the good qualities of that nectar drunk,  
We shall attain the kingdom of dharma.  
And for all beings with ignorant misunderstanding,  
From the gathering clouds of the four magnetizing activities,\*<sup>14</sup>  
May a rain of many nectars fall;  
And by that, may all beings be completely fulfilled!

Thus, led by the Men-tsun-mo, Tashi Tseringma, the five dakinis sang this to the Jetsun. After they made this pure aspiration, the Jetsun wondered, “If I teach these yaksha demonesses who have showed such gratitude for the recovery of their illness some instructions on the creation and completion stages of Secret Mantra, will they be able to meditate upon them?”

Then he said, “Beautiful ones, you have spoken this way regarding recovery from your illness. Since you are actual practitioners of the path of Secret Mantra, if you have an instruction that can make you come out of the deep thicket of samsaric existence, and having crossed the treacherous path of samsara’s birth and death, will leave you free from the experience of suffering of samsaric existence from this time forth, will you be able to practice it?” Then he sang this song of realization on instilling joyful inspiration:

Under the canopy of the eastern sun  
Is the auspicious high peak of Menlha Mountain.\*<sup>15</sup>  
On its crystalline top, the garuda peak,  
Shines a light of gold and red hue  
With hanging white clouds enwreathing its head.  
The lower part is a hem of five different rainbows  
In between is slate delineated with turquoise meadows  
That are shrouded in thick, dark clouds and fog.  
Is that not the Azure Queen Snow Mountain?

On that snow mountain is a palace abode,  
Where lives a woman with remarkable form.  
A noble lady, a queen, so beautiful,  
She sings songs enticing to hear,

So radiant and ravishingly alluring.  
Is this not the *menmo* Tashi Tseringma?

This time you experienced terror and fear,  
Your pride was burst, it's certainly true.  
Your body was afflicted with the four elements' disease.  
Your mind suffered unbearably.  
Your breath, like mist, was vanishing away  
And your transient life-force was almost at its end.  
This was due to your previous bad karma  
And here you experienced its result.  
If you do not turn from this negative conduct,  
Then the lowest hell will be more fearsome than that.

This time you didn't die; you quickly overcame it.  
Toward the stirring of your seed of faith,  
I was motivated by compassion.  
By the true blessing of the Secret Mantra  
The mara of the Lord of Death was fooled;  
You were snatched from the clutches of the Yama of karma.  
Your bad omens' negativity turned to prosperity;  
Bad conditions and obstacles were transformed into life.  
Do you feel happy, beautiful one?

Though it is difficult to show gratitude,  
You said to me, "Thank you, Lord, for your kindness."  
You offered poetic words of gratitude  
And I was delighted by that song you sang.  
From now on, if you listen and do as I say,  
Without any fear, you will be liberated  
From the path of great suffering without any freedom;  
From the place of four great rivers and their waves\*<sup>16</sup>  
And the eight freedomless states, difficult to escape;  
From the dense, thick forest of samsaric existence

Where bandits, the four maras, lie in wait;  
And away from the tight, treacherous path of the three bardos.  
The wide, open path where unceasing happiness is found  
Goes to the precious land of peace,  
This I confirm without any doubt.

I am nothing so wonderful,  
But my lineage is truly marvelous, indeed.  
From great Vajradhara of the sixth family,  
All the way up to the translator, Lotsawa.  
All are emanations of the Sugata.  
This lineage of people is unbroken,  
Thus, what I say is of very high value.

In the center of India are the greatly renowned  
Glorious Naropa and Maitripa;

Their fame pervades every direction, So surely you've heard their names  
before.

Blessed by both of these two siddha lords  
Is the one from Lhodrak, Marpa Lotsawa.  
At the feet of the father nirmanakaya,  
I stayed for six full years and eight months.  
Like a shadow to his body, I accompanied him  
And I took the lord's command as authentic.  
Because he was deeply pleased [with me he bestowed],  
The profound tantra of Hevajra,  
And Chakrasamvara endowed with blessing,  
The essence tantra of Mahamaya,  
The glorious Guhyasamaja, like space,  
The protector of teachings Chatupitha,  
And the Buddhakapala Tantra,  
This essence cycle that teaches the ultimate meaning.\*<sup>17</sup>

From the tantras' explanations, like an ocean of speech,  
He took their vital essence, a precious jewel, from its depths.  
From that he extracted the profound points, the essential meaning,  
Then lumped them together like a piece of pure refined gold.  
"I'll give you everything with nothing added or left out," he said.  
With the dakinis as a witness, in this way he swore.  
Thus I was given completely the whispered lineage's instructions.  
Because of the father's kindness, he is always in my mind.  
To repay him, I make the offering of practice.  
Through the key point of prolonged meditation,  
I gained control of the five elements and prana  
And have confidence in the conduct of equal taste.  
When my mind has agitation, I'm never distressed.  
Child, if you would like to have happiness,  
Listen to what I say and follow me;  
Follow my example, and practice like me.

At this time, you have taken hold of the path;  
From the next life onward, you will always have happiness.  
This present body has many illnesses

And your mind experiences heat and cold.  
With the proximate cause of the mental afflictions  
And the passing conditions coming together,  
The results of previous karma arrive;  
It's in this way your obscured perceptions arise.  
This is also just a dream and is momentary.  
But when those [moments] are multiplied by hundreds of thousands,  
You have the sufferings of the lowest hell;  
So long a time, and so difficult to bear.

In reality, these appearances do not exist.  
"External suffering is experienced  
Due to the confusion of nonvirtuous latent tendencies."

Thus said our teacher, the Buddha Shakyamuni,  
In reply to Vajragarbha  
In the sutras of definitive meaning.  
Therefore these imputations are the basis of confusion.  
If you don't understand that everything is mind,  
Even through attaining dominion of the realm of Brahma  
There will be no happiness to be found.

Meditative equipoise is the dhyana\*<sup>18</sup> of the ground— Though one may  
abide there for eons, it's a lower path;  
Omniscience is impossible to attain.  
Therefore, to purify the obscurations  
And the latent tendencies of karma and afflictions,  
Meditate continuously on bodhichitta;  
Perfecting that, look at unborn reality.

Now we have met due to our karma.  
Banish all laziness and slothfulness  
And don the great armor of diligence.  
Not being distracted for even an instant,  
Quickly accomplish something meaningful, you fortunate ladies,  
Men-tsun-mo sisters, you beautiful ones.

Then Milarepa instructed, “Contemplate carefully these songs that explain reality. In particular, immediately practice what they teach. You may think that what is called the ‘four resultant kayas’ is something you must search for separately; however, that which is called ‘buddhahood’ is not a separate continuum to be searched for elsewhere. For all of us sentient beings, the luminosity at death is dharmakaya, the pure [illusory body] of the bardo is the sambhogakaya, the variety of births is the nirmanakaya, and the inseparable single taste of the three kayas is the *svabhavikakaya*.<sup>\*19</sup> These are spontaneously present within us, but we do not recognize it. In order to recognize it we must have the profound instructions of the unbroken lineage of siddhas.”

The women said, “Jetsun, at the time when Master Padmasambhava<sup>\*20</sup> came to

Tibet, we went to greet him at Khala Rong-go\*<sup>21</sup> to inflict harm. But with a fierce subjugating mudra, he subdued us into being subjects. We graciously offered him the essence of our life-force mantra. At that time we listened to much dharma on cause and effect from the sutras. As well, in the charnel ground of Munpa Dradrok\*<sup>22</sup> in India, we received the abhisheka of the great mandala from the master Chok-kyi Cocha\*<sup>23</sup> and one who engaged in the conduct of yogic discipline, Kanhapa,\*<sup>24</sup> and we obtained many teachings of the Secret Mantra Vajrayana. Therefore, we are suitable vessels for the secret teachings. In particular, because we have now experienced such fear and terror from this great sickness, it is clear we would not be able to bear even an instant of the suffering of sentient beings in the hell realms. Therefore, please protect us from these fears, and today, consider us and give the instructions that point out how to actualize the pure four kayas.” Then they sang this song:

In the pure realm of the glorious, luminous sky, Thick clouds hover, golden in color.

They are the precious jewel of the naga kings’ crowns,

A truly marvelous magical display.

Floating and flying under those clouds,

In that space are kinnaras, the lesser devas,

Asuras, as well as female gandharvas.

All of them partake in many sensory pleasures.

With song and dance, they play with great delight.

Underneath these hovering thick clouds

Lies the medicine alcove of auspicious Lower Dingma.

The upper end is surrounded by *nyen*\*<sup>25</sup> devas’ snow mountains; At the lower end, dwell the freshwater *nyen*;

In between, lies a high turquoise meadow

Where the Menyul\*<sup>26</sup> devas make a great show of their play.

Because a nagas’ treasury lies beneath

This crystal playground, the Menlung Valley,

Is a land that’s a wellspring of lush plants and crops,

A land where four-legged animals flourish.

In that pasture is a joyous solitary place,

The Chuwar nirmanakaya palace.  
At that site is a supreme and wondrous being  
With a precious and beautiful body.  
By merely hearing or seeing him,  
The obscurations of all beings are cleared away.  
By manifesting his mudra forms,  
He displays a myriad of miracles.  
Having realized the reality of mind itself—omniscience—  
He has mastered dharmata-space.  
With his pure and gentle speech  
He utters the sound of dharmata-emptiness.  
Thus, we, the devas and ghosts of all phenomenal existence,  
Having fostered the seed of faith,  
Listen to and respect his command.  
He is a wish-fulfilling jewel who grants all desires;  
He is a son of the Victorious Ones.

We worldly dakini goddesses  
Who have come to rely on you,  
We who have beautiful female forms,  
Until now in samsara with no beginning  
Our mind-streams have had the confusion of ignorance  
And we've taken births\*<sup>27</sup> within samsaric existence: First, we're helpless but  
to take rebirth,  
Then we think, "I'll stay alive for a while,"  
But the call of Yama, the Lord of Death,  
Hangs over our heads, oppressive and dark.  
He holds the noose from which we cannot escape.  
There is no control over when we will die.  
The luster of the body's four elements will be plundered  
And the inner life-force will be stopped.  
Then the appearances of the bardo will dawn.

In this treacherous path, first dark, then light,<sup>101</sup>  
Ruthless executioners chase after us;  
We experience the suffering of wearying torment.  
Then, the wanderer with only four skandhas\*<sup>28</sup>  
Is led without knowledge to an unknown land  
By the winds of karma and latent tendencies.  
Without any control a new birth is sought out.  
Within this waterwheel of samsara  
Is the ocean of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

Up till now, we've had no refuge from sinking  
Within these shifting waves that move and stir.  
Now, master and captain, by your power,  
We have the vessel of bodhichitta.

From fear and the uncondusive winds of view, The islands of rakshasas  
where sensory pleasures deceive,  
And from the harm of the *makara*\*<sup>29</sup> of karma We are protected with bliss  
and fearlessness.  
And reaching the far shore, the land of jewels,  
A land of many kinds of riches,  
Merchants, wearied by a long journey,  
May refresh themselves, sleep leisurely,  
And take whatever they wish or need.

In the dreadful valley of samsara  
Is the forest of the fearsome eight freedomless states,  
Thickly veiled and black with darkness.  
There, the fearsome beasts of the afflictions,  
When seen, bare their frightening fangs,  
The thorny torment of the faults.  
In the midst of the eight sufferings' thorns,  
We've lost our way, confused, in the dark.



Your speech is completely free of stains  
And by this, like the full autumn moon—  
White, not covered by any clouds,  
And with illuminating rays of light—  
The darkness of ignorance is cleared away.  
We ask you to show us the pure, open path.

Reveal the three hidden tight treacherous paths  
In the bardo, that fearsome road.  
Until now, we've been taken by the mara bandits,  
Tightly bound by the shackles of karma,  
And thrown in the well with no hope of release.

Now, Lord Guru, source of refuge,  
One whom no one has the confidence to counter,  
Protector friend, by your power and strength To liberate us from the  
treacherous path of fear,  
We ask you, please give instructions to point out dharmakaya,  
The luminosity at the time of death.  
Please give instructions to point out sambhogakaya,  
The pure illusory body of the bardo.  
Please give instructions to point out nirmanakaya,  
The freedom to choose where one takes rebirth.

If you cross to the other side of the three treacherous bardos,  
There is a place where one is freed from demonic obstructions.  
It's the fearless path that's free of arrogance,  
The eternal land from which one cannot turn back,  
A vast pure land of bliss and joy;  
We have heard it said this place exists.  
Until now we've not been there nor ever seen it.  
Protector of beings, guru of compassion,  
With your protection, please show us the path.  
Please show us this land that we have not seen.

For those of us weary of objects of fear,  
All those protectorless, who lament and wail,  
Here, right now, not at any other time,  
Please help us to actualize the resultant four kayas.

Thus they supplicated. Then as a mandala offering they offered a golden lotus inlaid with many jewels on top of a white silver mirror.

The Jetsun spoke: “Beautiful ones, since you have shown great devotion toward me and have earnestly requested the dharma, I must bless you in the tradition of my lineage. Arrange a tsok.”

That very evening they arranged tsok substances of sixty types of food. They made a mandala offering with heaps of grain, and the Jetsun conferred the whispered lineage abhisheka of the yogini, the Coemergent Mother, and then blessed them. At that point, he gave them the instructions known as Pointing Out the Three Kayas, the key points of liberation from the treacherous bardo, and then sang this song of realization on the way of traveling to the pure realm of Sukhavati:

In the land of India, the heart of the world, Lies the great temple of  
Vikramashila.\*30

There, within that fountainhead of knowledge,  
Is the pandit who keeps the northern gate,  
Lion of Men who is without compare  
Because he defeated every mistaken opponent.

He is like a great powerful champion.  
This man who was not ignorant in the four classes of tantra  
And attained the siddhis both common and supreme,  
Is he not the great pandit, the Lord Naropa?

Naropa’s very own supreme son,  
Father who had such perseverance in hardship,  
He’s the one from Lhodrak called Marpa Lotsawa.  
His name is widely renowned, like the roar of thunder;  
This lord with such kindness said to me:

“In this time of degeneration of Shakyamuni’s teaching,  
Human life is short and lacks in resources.  
Since obstructions of the class of maras are many,  
There is no leisure of longevity.  
There is no limit to what can be known,  
And there’s no way you’ll understand the full extent of the tantras.  
Therefore, son, make practice your essential purpose,” he taught.

I do not have any laziness;  
I’ve followed after the lord’s command.  
I sought out remote mountain retreats  
And meditated, undergoing hardship of body.  
Thus, a bit of experience has arisen in my mind-stream.

Now, fortunate women, pay close attention:  
In general, we beings of the six realms  
Should know the Six Dharmas of the Bardo as the ground.

Through entering and arising in the three paths of existence, One wanders  
again and again in samsara’s three realms.\*<sup>31</sup>

At the juncture of these three tight, treacherous paths,  
Three travelers\*<sup>32</sup> on a very long journey Are received with joy and delight  
By the watchmen of their friends and kin.

But if they don’t meet with ones to welcome them,  
It’s the enemy, the executioner’s emissary,  
Who comes and investigates their deeds.

If they’re not accompanied by the three guides\*<sup>33</sup> to support them, Those  
merchants, who are unfamiliar and afraid,

Are awaited on the road by inescapable bandits—

Three messenger demons with their directive.<sup>102</sup>

In a fearsome, hidden place, unseen,  
They take on many different frightful forms  
And with deceiving words, avert the travelers’ minds;  
They lead them astray along the path.

Then, all the way up to the seventh week,  
In the bardo of becoming of light and darkness,  
Beings experience the sufferings of heat and cold.  
Then following after the power of karma  
Again they enter the prison of samsara.

Now, if one desires to be free from that prison,  
Right now, in the bardo of samsara and nirvana,  
The true nature is pointed out to be Mahamudra.  
You must gain certainty in the view of the ground.

In the midst of appearances of the bardo of birth and death,  
To train in developing the radiant power of mind's awareness  
You must put efforts in the paths of creation and completion.

In the bardo of the path is the true nature of reality.  
In order to recognize innate wisdom,  
You must meditate on the whispered lineage instructions.

In the bardo of dream and sleep,  
To transform latent tendencies into the path,  
You must train in luminosity practice and the illusory body.

Finally, in the bardo of becoming,  
Even if you've actualized the three kayas,  
You must travel into the three pure realms.

If you do not actualize them,  
In the bardo of the continuum of rebirth,  
Through pure aspiration you make a connection,  
And by the undeceiving interdependence of cause and effect  
You'll attain a body with freedoms and resources  
And your previous karma will awaken.  
Then, you'll perfect the realization of the path.

Without it taking long at all

without it taking long at all,  
You'll attain liberation without a doubt.

You five women here, so remarkable,  
Listened to me with one-pointed respect.  
You've asked about this point repeatedly,  
So I have given the bardo instructions.  
Even if one were to draw them from the heart of Lord Marpa from Lhodrak,  
There would be no points more profound than these!

Thus he sang this song of realization. Then the beautiful ladies arose and each made seven prostrations and circumambulations. They offered a mandala inlaid with jewels; praised the great good qualities of the Jetsun's body, speech, and mind; and made the offering of bliss-emptiness, the wisdom of the four joys, produced through bodies in union. Then they said, "You have explained the dharma of pointing out the bardo thoroughly and in great detail. Please give a brief teaching on its meaning that is easy to practice." Then they offered this song:

Lord, protector of beings, endowed with kindness, Just like turning iron to  
gold,  
With the pure nectar of the whispered lineage,  
You've transformed our suffering into bliss.  
Father, buddha, we prostrate to you.  
With your love, never be separate from us and always protect us.

To the perception of a trained mind,  
The completely pure field of dharmadhatu  
Is the palace of great bliss, free from elaborations.  
Lord Guru, is this not your seat?

In the center of an assembly of clouds of dakinis  
Is the lion throne of awareness-emptiness inseparable  
With the lotus of relinquishing the faults of existence.  
Free of the clouds of many concepts,  
Upon the luminous discs of the sun and moon,  
There the Father Jetsun sits

There are further jewels too.

One doesn't get enough of seeing his radiant body,  
With face that's vivid and beautiful.  
He is ornamented with a host of good qualities,  
And embellished with the marks and signs,\*<sup>34</sup>  
Thus he is just like the youthful bodhisattvas.  
Seeing his body, we praise this joyful lord.

His speech is the pleasing and melodious song of gandharvas.  
It's the sound of dharma, self-appearing, yet empty.  
By the roar of the great bliss lion,  
Tirthikas and maras quake with fear  
And the torment of the fortunate is cleared away.  
We praise his speech heard in the ten directions.

With mind unshakable like a vajra,  
You know every knowable thing.  
From the sky that is completely free of view,  
The light rays of bodhichitta  
Dispel the dark ignorance of those to be tamed.  
We praise this lord with unwavering mind.

Lord, essence of the buddhas' body, speech, and mind,  
Since you're the source of many siddhis,  
You are like a wish-fulfilling jewel.  
Like the pinnacle of a victory banner,  
Take your seat upon the crown of my head.  
I purify with true intention.  
Without any distraction night and day,  
Should one supplicate, prostrate, and make offerings to you,  
All hopes and wishes will be fulfilled,  
All that one desires will be accomplished.  
Precious Lord, like a powerful sovereign,  
I praise and prostrate to you.

From the mass of clouds of your compassion  
The rain of the wisdom nectar of your blessing falls  
And at the stream of milk, fortunate ones drink.  
Right within this very life,  
They will tame the harsh afflictions,  
The sprout of realization will grow,  
And they'll reach the thirteenth bhumi of Vajradhara.  
Plentiful will be the flowers and fruits  
Of your kayas, wisdom, and activity.  
They will satisfy fully every being.  
May they quickly be harvested.

Until that has been accomplished,  
Having given rise to great undefiled samadhi  
That comes from the bliss of this defiled body—  
The support for traversing the messenger path—  
In order to abide in the samadhi of bliss-emptiness  
With the wisdom of the four joys  
And in order to enter into the Middle Way's reality,  
May I become a thoroughly trained prajña-consort.  
Thus, with joy, please grant your permission.

In conclusion we make this request: Regarding this dharma of liberation from  
the treacherous bardo,  
Through your hinting words, we didn't fully get the meaning.  
With practical instruction, please explain in detail  
And give the key points of Pointing Out the Four Kayas.\*<sup>35</sup>  
Please give an instruction of the condensed practice saying,  
“When the time actually comes and you enter the bardo,  
There is nothing more [you need] than this concise instruction.”

Furthermore, by your power,  
We've become subjects under your will.

By teaching us various core instructions,  
Our mind-streams and faculties are content  
And we'll perfect the result of practice.  
Within the appearance of this very life,  
We'll have realization and many good qualities.  
Jetsun, may we be equal to you.

Thus they offered to the Jetsun this song concluding with virtuous aspirations.

Then the Jetsun said, "Beautiful ones, one is exhausted by the conditioning of the eight freedomless states in the three realms, the ground, and goes successively, again and again, through the three paths of existence.<sup>103</sup> With weary body, three types of travelers traverse this long path: persons who have the instructions and also put them into practice, persons who have the instructions but do not put them into practice, and persons who do not have the instructions nor do any practice. The first of these will have no fear of places such as the path of becoming, the fearsome treacherous path, or the places where demons lurk, because they are liberated through the key points of meditation.

"The last type of persons are equivalent to completely ordinary beings. Once they enter the fearsome treacherous path they are naturally led by demons. They experience the unending cycle of birth and death, like a waterwheel, in samsara's three realms.

"The middle type of persons have previously been taught instructions for clearing away trepidation on the fearsome treacherous path and for investigating the retinues of demonic obstructions. Thus, if you have unwavering faith, the prajña of interest toward the profound, as well as the unyielding armor-like diligence, then in accordance with disposition, faculties, and time, I will gradually explain.

"Now, to teach you what to apply at the junctures when each of the three kayas are actualized:<sup>\*36</sup> at the time of death, on the treacherous path, where, after all vitality has ceased and the ayatanas of the outer and inner elements have gradually dissolved, one is freed from the bonds of the afflictions in their entirety. Like the sun and moon shining in a cloudless sky, the dharmadhatu, where all elaborations are completely pacified, the unfabricated natural state whose essence is emptiness, will dawn just as it is at that time. That very luminosity at the time of death is the dharmakaya. You must recognize it for what it is. In order to recognize that, right now, you must understand the reality of the



view of the abiding nature that is pointed out by a noble guru, and you must train in the path luminosity that symbolizes [reality].

“The path of the bardo of becoming is the treacherous path where the mental body, based on one’s previous body, will be tormented by karma’s henchmen. In that bardo of light and dark appearances, all of the sense faculties are intact and the body is not impeded by anything. One has the miraculous light body of karma. That very [illusory body of the] bardo is the sambhogakaya.

“When the appearance of the deity of union that is like an illusion arises, one purifies the body of residual latent tendencies. You should recognize that for what it is. In order to recognize it as such, now, at this time, you should train in the clear visualization of the deity’s form of the creation stage and the paths of illusory body and dreaming that are symbolic.

“The final stage on the path of the bardo of becoming is the treacherous path where without control one is blown by the karmic winds of consciousness. When searching for a place for rebirth, a womb for the disembodied consciousness,<sup>\*37</sup> attachment and aggression arise toward a man and woman engaging in sexual intercourse.<sup>\*38</sup> Through the key point of remembering the previous instructions, perfecting skill in the antidote without being separated from the experience of bliss-emptiness, karmic appearances do not arise. These various rebirths that are then taken according to one’s wish are the nirmanakaya.<sup>104</sup> You should recognize this for what it is. In order to recognize it as such, now, at this time, develop the wisdom of the heat of chandali, the path of liberation; then in reliance on a karmamudra in the path of passion, through experiencing the complete reality of the third abhisheka, jealousy is purified.

“This is a combined, complete summary of the way of actualizing the resultant three kayas at the time of death; you should understand it in this way. Even the whispered lineage’s pointing out of reality, the vital elixir drawn from the heart of Marpa from Lhodrak, [which is] the ultimate key point of the path of means, has nothing more to offer than this.

“This yogi’s conviction is that there is no other immediate practice [for the bardo]. Therefore, beautiful ones, you should understand and practice it.”

Among the five dakinis, the leader, Tashi Tseringma, had tremendous faith and devotion toward the path of means’ profound pointing out of reality. So again she put her head at the Jetsun’s feet and said to him, “From this time forth, in all my births I will follow you and be a karmamudra. Until I have perfected the experience and realization of these points of pointing out the bardo, please think

of me.” Thus she fervently supplicated. Performing many prostrations and circumambulations, she then returned to her own abode. So it is said.

This is known as “The Golden Garland of Stupas,”\*39 where the great Repa Lord, whose name, Shepa Dorje, is not lightly uttered, and the five worldly dakini goddesses sang songs with questions and answers regarding the key points of liberation in the treacherous bardo.

SAMAPTA\*40

The lord, precious jewel, who is so kind,  
Repa who has attained the siddhis,  
And the worldly dakinis of the shudra caste,\*41  
The five karma Shmashana dakinis:  
The meaning from their questions and answers  
Were sung in beautiful poetic songs,  
Words strung together like a garland of flowers.  
This true intended meaning of the experience of instantaneity<sup>105</sup>  
Is not suitable to be written in letters.  
But for fear that I would come to forget  
And for the future lineage-holder descendants  
To become inspired and give rise to devotion,  
I wrote it in letters in accord with the guru’s words.

Three times I asked to write this down,  
And with a smile, he did not grant permission.\*42  
In order to prevent the dakinis’ anger,  
Who have disdain toward self-creation, I did not do it.  
“Until one gives practice instruction and examines  
Meditators in the future, yet to come,  
You should withhold the instruction and not show the writings.”  
Thus my lord guru commanded me.  
If you should transgress this command,  
You will incur the punishment of the dakinis;

Thus, please do not propagate it, but keep it hidden.

In the time of the Muni, the perfect Buddha,<sup>\*43</sup>  
During the late waning moon of the month of miracles,<sup>\*44</sup>  
In the forest of Omchung Pal,  
A grove where soft-furred animals roam,  
My elder brother,  
My vajra sibling with samaya,  
The Guru Bodhiraja, and  
I with the name Shiwa Ö  
Assiduously conferred in depth;  
Then asking questions, we reviewed and clarified it.

This dharma of liberation in the treacherous bardo Is called the “Golden  
Garland of Stupas.”  
Because it is meaningful, it was so named.  
By whatever merit is gained through its writing,  
May all beings be liberated in the bardo.

This is the cycle of the response of the cloth-clad one, the great yogi and unequalled lord, given at the request of the Five Sisters including the qualified mudra Tashi Tseringma. These key points of liberation in the treacherous bardo were afterward discussed and written down by two repas. Thus concludes these notes, an offering of service.

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\*1 The word “treacherous” here is often used as a synonym for the bardo (i.e., treacherous path). The Tibetan word it translates (*phrang*) generally refers to the narrow paths that go along the sides of very steep cliffs, which occur frequently in Tibet. The Tibetan word vividly illustrates the precarious situation one encounters in the bardo, or in-between state.

\*2 Laughing Vajra, the secret name for Milarepa.

\*3 The presence of the planet Rahu indicates an eclipse in ancient Indian cosmology.

\*4 Auspicious Garuda Peak Snow Mountain (T: *gangs khyung mgo bkra shis*), yet another name for Tashi Tseringma Mountain.

\*5 The Tashi Oma River (Auspicious Milk River) (T: *bkra shis 'o ma'i chu bo*) is the name used today for the Lohit River; and the Dütsi Ngödrup, or Amrita Siddhi, River (T: *bdud rtsi dngos grub kyi chu bo*) is another name for the Mayang River (today called the Rongshar Tsangpo).

\*6 The names of these illnesses are obscure, and in the Tibetan are given as transliterations of Indian names

for the diseases, but no references could be found for them. Both *The Black Treasury* and *The Twelve Great Sons* give alternate spellings for some of them (DN 541; BCC 195b).

\*7 T: *dmār thab*. The bonfire mentioned here, more specifically, is “a fire in which flesh, skin, and hair are burned; it was believed by ancient [Tibetan] shamanistic culture that such fires would upset local deities” (TDC).

\*8 T: *sha za*. Literally, “flesh-eaters.” A type of preta similar to rakshasas and yakshas who eat human flesh.

\*9 When the river overflows, it covers the river banks entirely, all at once. There is no need to make each part of the river bank wet individually. Likewise, if Tashi Tseringma is happy, then there will be no need to appease each of the other spirits individually. (ATW) \*10 T: *rnam par rgyal ma*. A female long-life deity.

\*11 This is connected with the practice of Ushnishavijaya (T: *de bzhin gshegs pa'i gtsug tor nas byung ba'i snying po can gyi gzungs*).

\*12 This term is difficult to translate with one word in English. It can refer to a puja where many offerings are made as well as to the collection of offerings themselves. It literally means “gathering,” or “accumulation” (T: *tshogs*).

\*13 That is, I nearly died.

\*14 The four magnetizing activities are pleasant speech, generosity, harmonious conduct, and concordant conduct (integrity).

\*15 Literally, “Medicine Deity Mountain” (T: *smān lha*), another name for the mountain of Tashi Tseringma.

\*16 The four rivers are birth, old age, sickness, and death. (DPR) \*17 Each of these tantras is part of the Marpa Kagyu lineage.

\*18 Dhyana means “meditative concentration.”

\*19 Svabhavikakaya is the union of the three kayas (dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanikaya); it is the total entity of buddhahood.

\*20 Padmasambhava (eighth century) was a powerful practitioner of Secret Mantra invited to Tibet by the king to help establish the Buddhadharma in Tibet.

\*21 Danyi Khala Rong-go (T: *zla nyi kha la rong sgo*) is one of the twenty-five sacred sites of Kham (Eastern Tibet) and the site where Padmasambhava is said to have hidden the treasure (T: *gter ma*) Barchey Kunsel, later revealed by the tertön Chokgyur Lingpa.

\*22 Literally, “Resounding Darkness” (T: *mun pa sgra sgrog*). This is possibly a conflation of the names of two of the eight renowned charnel grounds, Munpa Mizepa and Kilikili Dradrokpa (Kongtrul 2008: 274).

\*23 Literally, “Armor of the Directions” (T: *phyogs gyi go cha*). No reference was found for this master.

\*24 Also known as Krishnacharya, one of the eighty-four mahasiddhas. Literally, “One of Black Conduct” (T: *spyod pa nag po*).

\*25 Nyen are a type of local deity who when disturbed are noted to inflict illness.

\*26 T: *smān yul*; literally, “Medicine-land.”

\*27 T: *nying mtshams sbyor*. This term in Tibetan connotes joining up or making a connection with one’s new body.

\*28 Literally, “Four [skandhas] of name.” In the bardo, one is without a body (the skandha of form), leaving only the four skandhas of mind or name (T: *ming bzhi 'khyams po*).

\*29 A makara (T: *chu srin*) is type of sea beast in Hindu mythology. In Tibetan it literally means “sea monster” or “water dragon.”

\*30 Along with Nalanda, one of the two most important centers for Buddhist study in ancient India. It is generally thought, however, that Naropa was the keeper of the northern gate at Nalanda.

- \*31 The three paths of existence (T: *lam srid pa gsum*) refer to birth, death, and the bardo. The three realms of samsara (T: *gnas kham s gsum*) are the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm.
- \*32 The three travelers, as Milarepa explains below, are those who have the instructions and practice them, those who have the instructions and do not practice them, and those who do not have the instructions at all.
- \*33 No specific reference has been found regarding what the three guides refers to. (DPR) \*34 This refers to the thirty-two major and eighty minor physical marks and signs, respectively, of a buddha.
- \*35 This seems to be the same teaching Milarepa mentions above, “Pointing Out the Three Kayas,” as the fourth kaya (the svabhavikakaya) is the totality of the “three kayas.”
- \*36 Milarepa here is saying he will give instructions on how to practice in the three bardos, each of which corresponds to one of the three kayas.
- \*37 The Tibetan literally says “scent eater” (*dri za*). The Buddhist teachings refer to beings in the bardo in this way because they cannot eat coarse food but are thought to subsist on odors.
- \*38 The man and woman, here, are to be the new parents of the wandering consciousness.
- \*39 T: *mgur chu*. This literally refers to the base section of a stupa.
- \*40 This is Sanskrit for “finished.”
- \*41 The lowest caste in the Hindu caste system.
- \*42 The author requested Milarepa three times to record this story, but each time, Milarepa only smiled without answering.
- \*43 During this current age of the Buddha Shakyamuni.
- \*44 The first month of the Tibetan calendar (T: *cho 'phrul*).

## The Five Tseringma Sisters' Investigation

*Garland of Clouds of Bliss-Emptiness Wisdom*

NAMO GURU

On the eighth day of the month of the female fire-bird just past the first part of the night,<sup>106</sup> it is said a vivid bright light shone at the nirmanakaya palace, the solitary site of Chuwar. Then hearing the bustling sound of many people, Milarepa thought, “Who is there?” A wonderful scent unlike any he had smelled before filled his nostrils.

At that point, [the five] Tashi Tseringma [sisters appeared] fully adorned with ornaments: one of the retinue came carrying burning incense with many different delightful scents; another brought many provisions of food and drink; another brought many types of sound [offerings]; one carried fine clothing; and one brought a variety of flowers. Then the five of them made many prostrations and circumambulations, emanating many pleasing objects and offered them. Then all five, in a single voice, sang this song:

Lord, precious and qualified guru,  
 So fortunate with a body of freedoms and resources, The name that the guru  
 and deities gave you, Is it not Shepa Dorje?  
 The name that your father and mother gave you, Is that not Mila Töpa-ga?  
 And the name you are known by throughout the land, Is that not the Siddha  
 Repa?

You with these wondrous three names:

At the left side of the Lhamen\*<sup>1</sup> Queen Mountain, On the banks of the Lohit  
 River, Is the palace of Dungdra, the Naga King,  
 A site that is the source of all desires.

There, at Chuwar, in the marvelous Menlung Valley, You pursue practice as  
 the essential nuriose And you've tossed away the eight worldlv concerns.

You've been drawn from the wilderness of samsaric existence.  
Yogi, how truly amazing you are!

We five ladies, in these bodies, have come here miraculously.  
With poetic words and gentle speech,  
We offer you whatever enjoyments you like.  
Lotus, conch, picturesque, and elephant:  
Do we here have these four, or not? \*2  
Will you grant us permission to practice karmamudra?  
Descending, swirling, reversing, and spreading: Do you know how to apply  
these?  
If you know, it is the supreme swift method.

You are definitely one of the messenger path.  
The anuttaratantras of the Kagyu teachings say, "You should summon  
different females:  
Goddesses, nagas, and yaksha spirits."  
Among all the kinds of service  
Mudra is the most marvelous, it is taught.  
Thus, we do accordingly here.  
Now, understand this, O great yogi,  
With naked body so radiant!

Thus with this song, they exhorted him. The Jetsun then replied:

In the first part of this night,  
You gave an answer in your brilliant, clear song.  
Upon the Khyung-go Snow Mountain with crystal top, With a canopy of dark  
southern clouds,  
Are the many flowers of the stars and planets.  
Men-tsun-mo, this is your palace.  
With great power and long life you remain for an eon: This results from the  
abandonment of taking life.  
Your wealth equal to that of Vaishravana \*3  
Is the result of abandoning avarice.

That your excellent retinue heeds your command Comes from assiduously practicing patience.

To have enthusiasm and delight in virtue  
Is diligence free of laziness.

That you, now, have met me here

Is from excellent aspirations that you have made.

This song, up to now, with profound auspicious connection, To join with meaning, here I'll explain:

With my lineage of the great pandit Naropa, One gains control in the nadi-prana path.

Among all offerings that can be made,

This offering of a genuine mudra

Is truly the most extraordinary.

I'll give the characteristics of the four qualified mudras: The lotus with radiance makes bliss blaze; The conch makes joy and bliss quickly come; The picturesque makes it stable and undefiled; With the elephant one realizes the true nature of things.

Free of any fault or flaw,

Men-tsun-mo Tashi Tseringma,

In your secret prajña lotus

Is the space of E which is marked with VAM.

The jewel of upaya is a blue HUM

And PHAT will bind the bindu of both.

Joining upaya and prajña together

Is the offering of the bliss of union.

The four joys and the four moments

Are the nature of the very essence of the four kayas.

When descending, it descends like a turtle's crawl.

When swirling, it swirls in the avadhuti.

When reversing, it reverses like the ways of four animals.

When spreading, spread it with the liberating mudra.



*Thig* refers to the path of nirvana.\*4

*Lé* is the bliss of equal taste.

*Lay* means the various types of [action].

*Kyi* is the bliss-emptiness joining.

*Chak* is when “this” meets with “that.”

*Gya* is the sealing of samsara and nirvana.

*Lay* is to do “this” and “that.”

*Kyi* goes together as a companion of that.

*Chak* is the inseparability of bliss-emptiness.

Because nothing is beyond that, it is *gya*.

This *samapatti*\*5 is the swift messenger path.

It’s the path that fills one with undefiled bliss.

It’s the path that’s the source of clarity-emptiness siddhi.

It’s the path of dharmakaya, nonconceptual, free of elaborations and concepts.

It’s the path of the sambhogakaya of great bliss.

It’s the path of the nirmanakaya, variety in clarity-emptiness.

It’s the path of the union of bliss, clarity, and nonthought.

This is called the swift messenger.

Therefore by engaging in the path of passion, You too will surely attain liberation.

I will also seize the fortress of birthlessness.

You are so fortunate, you qualified ladies!

Having sung this song of realization, from that time forth, the ladies acted as the Jetsun’s karmamudra and were his benefactors for provisions of food and drink. Through the offering of their three gates, they fulfilled their sacred bond and pleased him.

Generally, Tashi Tseringma, Zulema of the medicinal pasture of Lachi Snow Mountain, the *menmo* of Lingpa Rock, the lake *menmo* of the Nepal Road, and the local goddess of the Yolmo Snow Mountain, these five, acted as *karmamudra* for the Jetsun. The most superior of these was Tashi Tseringma.

The song of request and response between the being with the power to summon

spirit women to be his mudra, the glorious Shepa Dorje, and the goddess of the land, Tashi Tseringma, is called “Garland of the Clouds of Bliss-Emptiness Wisdom.” The two brother repas, having made a request and offering a mandala, were happily granted permission [to write this down].

SAMAYA GYA GYA GYA For these dharma cycles of Tseringma, the command seal is the Glorious Shepa Dorje, the one who taught them. The secret seal is the requester, the five dakini sisters. The two samaya seals are the compilers, Acharya Bodhiraja and Repa Shiwa Ö. By placing these three seals, this wondrous and supreme dharma is thus completed.

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\*1 Lhamen (T: *lha sman*) literally means “medicine goddess” and, here, is a reference to Tashi Tseringma.

\*2 These names refer to the four types of female consorts, which each have their own particular traits.

\*3 Guardian King of the North who is considered to be a deity of wealth.

\*4 The following ten lines give an explanation of each syllable in two Tibetan phrases: “thiglé lay kyi chagya” (*thig le las kyi phyag rgya*; in Sanskrit, *bindu karmamudra*) and “lay kyi chagya” (*las kyi phyag rgya*, S: *karmamudra*).

\*5 Union, or joining.

## Repa Dorje Wangchuk

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying above the Reka Dukchen Boulder at Dingma Drin, he instructed his disciple-sons and several other students and had them meditate. All of them developed excellent experience in general. In particular, there was a young man of the Tak clan\*<sup>1</sup> who had faith and diligence. Attaining some realization, he gained unwavering faith in the Jetsun.

While sitting in the rows at a feast offering held by the practitioners who had received teachings, the man said, “Jetsun, after contemplating the faults of samsara and the good qualities of liberation, I would feel devastated to remain for even a moment idly doing meaningless things. Having attended and followed the Jetsun, I have meditated day and night without distraction; therefore, please guide me. In comparison to the good qualities of the Jetsun’s form and the lineage of gurus, mundane, worldly virtue is useless and false. Please teach me dharma connected with this meaning.”

Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

My lineage is that of Great Vajradhara.

My great-grandfather is Tilopa Sherap Sangpo, My grandfather is the great  
pandit Naropa,

My old father is Marpa Lotsawa,

And I, myself, am Milarepa.

This is the continuous lineage of profound instructions.

These are the six points about the lineage.\*<sup>2</sup>

Now Milarepa will explain six falsehoods: In solitary places that have water  
and wood, To say that one needs attendants is false.

Eating companions, too, are of little use;

They assault the ears with negative speech.

When chandali blazes within the body.

To say one needs woolen blankets is false.  
Such a load to carry is of little use;  
I have no desire for such a nest for lice.

When I'm eating the food of samadhi,  
To say one needs meat and beer is false.  
Things that make me vomit are of little use; I've no desire for things that are  
cooked or boiled.

When attachment has reversed from within,  
To say you need material wealth is false.  
Hoarding and protecting are of little use;  
Busy merchants irritate the ears.

When developing perseverance in meditation, To say one needs disciple-sons  
is false.  
Having many audiences is of little use;  
They'll definitely interrupt your virtuous activity.

When meditating on the whispered lineage instructions, To have many  
dharma explanations is false.  
This kind of study is of little use;  
It's sure that you'll just develop pride.

This upadesha of six falsehoods, this vajra song, Understand and remember it  
well!

Thus he sang. Again, the young man asked, "This is truly wondrous! For the sake  
of all ignorant sentient beings such as myself, please teach the dharma by giving  
more sets of six that tell of the Jetsun's own great qualities." Then Milarepa sang  
this song of realization:

There's never been anything great about me, But to express the greatness of  
my lineage, I will explain the six greatnesses.

To explain Mila's six greatnesses:  
The guru and three jewels' kindness is great.

The assembly of yidam deities' blessings are great.

The dharmapalas' power is great.

The profound instructions of the whispered lineage are especially great.

Milarepa's perseverance in meditation is great.

The monks and disciple-sons' faith is great.

Now to explain Mila's six types of bliss:

The appearance of empty, uninhabited places is bliss.

For the mind, the guru's instructions are bliss.

Having this hard little cushion beneath me is bliss.\*3

To stay in an empty cave is bliss.

The equality of being hungry and full in this illusory body is bliss.

*Trulkhor*, the body's method of settling, is bliss.<sup>107</sup>

Now to explain Mila's six things that gather: In the daytime, people gather in assemblies.

At night, the dakinis gather in assemblies.

Bodhichitta gathers in the life-force chakra.

My own mind gathers in the object of nonduality.\*4

Day and night, food and clothing are gathered in assemblies.

Now to explain Mila's six fortresses:

They are Rakma Enlightenment Practice Fortress, Chonglung Red Rock  
Garuda Fortress,

Poto Red Rock Sky Fortress,

Mönyul Tiger Cave Lion Fortress,

Katya Crystal Cave Water-Wood Fortress, and White Rock Horse Tooth  
Central Channel Fortress.\*5<sup>108</sup>

Now to explain Mila's six excellences:

The view of Mahamudra is excellent.

The practice of the Six Dharmas of Naropa is excellent.

Profound conduct of the path of means is excellent.

The fruition, the spontaneously present three kayas, is excellent.

The blessings of the Kagyu gurus is excellent.  
The instructions of Milarepa are excellent.

You benefactors and disciple-sons staying here, There are few who practice  
the dharma that brings benefit.

People rush to engage in negativity that's harmful.

Suffering is the result of negativity

And happiness is the result of virtue.

Do not make suffering for yourself;

Help yourself and accomplish your happiness!

Make aspirations that we meet again and again!

When Milarepa had sung this, all of the students and disciple-sons greatly rejoiced and went back to their own abodes. The young man stayed to follow and attend Milarepa. He became one of the close sons of the Jetsun, known as Takgom Repa Dorje Wangchuk.

This is the cycle of meeting Repa Dorje Wangchuk.

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\*<sup>1</sup> Tiger clan (T: *stag rus*).

\*<sup>2</sup> This line is difficult to translate into English. It could more literally say, "There are six 'is-es' here," meaning each of the above lines indicates an "is" about the lineage (T: *de ni yin pa rnam drug lags*).

\*<sup>3</sup> Using the hard rock as a cushion is very comfortable for Milarepa. (KTGR) \*<sup>4</sup> The mind "gathers" in the object that is free of the duality of perceived and perceiver. (KTGR) \*<sup>5</sup> In Tibetan these are pronounced Rakma Jangchup Drupé Dzong, Drakmar Chonglung Khyung-gi Dzong, Drakmar Poto Namkha Dzong, Mönyul Takpuk Senge Dzong, Katya Shelpuk Chushing Dzong, and Drak-kar Ta-so Uma Dzong.

## Meeting Dharmabodhi

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa, along with Rechungpa and his other disciples, was staying at the Nyanang Belly Cave, turning the wheel of dharma of the essential meaning. At that time, there were five contemporary siddhas: Guru Tsemchen of Latö, Dampa Sangye of Dingri, Shila Bharo of Nepal, Dharmabodhi of India, and Milarepa of Nyanang.

Shila Bharo had invited Dharmabodhi, and while he was residing at the Nepal Fortress to turn the wheel of dharma, many people of Tibet and Nepal came to see Dharmabodhi in person. Milarepa's disciple-sons also wanted to meet him, and so Rechungpa gave many reasons to the Jetsun as to why it was good to meet Dharmabodhi. The Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply:

By the lord guru's blessing, many siddhas have come.

The teachings of the Buddha, so wondrous, have spread  
And the happiness of beings has gloriously shone.

That many people have met the siddha lords

Is a sign that a few are qualified.

Dampa Sangye of Dingri and

Guru Tsemchen of Latö, as well;

Shila Bharo of Nepal;

Dharmabodhi of India;

And Milarepa of Gungtang:

All of them have mind, that which is merely aware, And each became self-sufficient through meditation.

They each understand mind's self-luminous nature.

They all have the power of miracles and transformations.

They all are fully trained in compassion and emptiness.

They display temporary wondrous shows.

But I am the expert in songs of experience.

But I am the expert in songs of experience;  
I have greater perseverance and renunciation; The others don't have these  
special qualities.

Thus, I myself, won't go to meet them,  
But you, my sons, by all means go.  
It is not because they have any faults,  
But because I am so old that I will not set out.  
I aspire that we will meet in the land of Uddiyana.  
Do not be doubtful; I have confidence we will.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa spoke up, "If they haven't any faults, then the people will slander you, saying that, out of attachment and aggression, you did not come." Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply to the argument that it was proper for him to go:

I supplicate all the siddha lords:  
Grant your blessing that my faults be purified.

If you give rise to doubts over unfavorable speech, Then you will just become  
confused.

When you are wholeheartedly practicing meditation, A lot of coming and  
going is an obstacle.

When meeting with the guru lord,

If there's lots of contrivance, friends and deities will get upset.

On the path of means of the profound Secret Mantra, If your mind is divided,  
nothing can be accomplished.

The siddhas, indeed, do have great blessing,

But there'll just be irritation with so many gathered.

But son Rechungpa, you and your brothers, please go!

Thus he sang. Rechungpa said, "Because people will accumulate negativity if you do not, please, you must go! It would also be beneficial for us."

Then the Jetsun relented, "Very well, I will go to greet Dharmabodhi." With that, Rechungpa and the other monks were very happy and said, "If the Jetsun is going, since Indians like gold, it's best if we could obtain some gold before he goes." Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply:

I supplicate all the siddha lords:



Grant your blessing that this beggar's desires be exhausted.

May all deeds turn to the dharma.

If all deeds have not turned to the dharma,

Then you've little understanding of the practice of bodhichitta.

When meditation's samadhi has arisen, there is no desire for companions.

If you desire a companion when the meditation of self-liberation dawns,

Then you've little understanding of continual meditation.

Milarepa doesn't work to obtain any wealth.

If Milarepa did work to obtain wealth,

He would have little understanding of letting go of activity.

Dharmabodhi does not wish for gold.

If Dharmabodhi wished for gold,

He would have little understanding of being a siddha.

Rechung Dordrak desires no profit.

If Dorje Drakpa did desire profit,

He would have little understanding of relying on a guru.

Thus he sang. Milarepa said, "All of you go on ahead, I will come along afterward."

Thus, he sent his disciples ahead of him, and they arrived at the Nepal Fortress still doubting that the Jetsun would come. Then, the Jetsun emanated as a crystal stupa, went flying through the sky like a shooting star with nothing impeding him, and then came down among the disciple-sons. Dharmabodhi, seeing this, was amazed. The disciples who had misgivings about the Jetsun were overjoyed that he had come flying through the sky. Together, the master and his disciples approached Dharmabodhi, surrounded by many people, and Dharmabodhi of India came down from his throne and prostrated to Milarepa of Tibet. Because of this, all the people had confidence that Milarepa was even more excellent than Dharmabodhi, and the whole assembly came to continuously perceive them both as buddhas.

The two siddhas both sat together on the same throne, joyfully speaking with

each other. Dharmabodhi said to Milarepa, “It is wondrous that you are so happy staying all alone by yourself.” The Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply:

I supplicate the guru, the nirmanakaya.

Kagyü siddhas, please grant your blessings.

To Dharmabodhi of India, the principal one here, And to the fortunate people  
of Tibet and Nepal,

I, Milarepa, the yogi of Tibet,

Now sing a wisdom song of experience.

If I don’t sing such a song of experience,

Then the people won’t recognize a nirmanakaya siddha.

The five crooked nadis are straightened through prana.

The five errant pranas are straightened out on the cushion.

The five polluted elements are scorched by fire.

The trunks of the afflictions, the five poisons, are felled.

The enemy, the karmic pranas of concepts, are straightened in the central  
channel.\*1

The hero who tames these harmful enemies

Will not be bound up by negative friends.

Thus he sang. Dharmabodhi said, “Your way of taming enemies is excellent, indeed. Tell us of an excellent friend that is in harmony with what you just sang.” Then Milarepa sang this song in reply:

I supplicate all the siddha lords:

Grant your blessing that companions may dawn from within.

The mother, the five quintessence nadis,

Meets with the father, the five quintessence pranas, Then the son, the five  
quintessence dhatus,\*2 is born And one sees one’s own face, the five  
quintessences of mind.

This is the boasting of seizing the fortress,

The palace of the central channel.

The edict is proclaimed to the four chakras.

The armies of the net of illusion

Are bound by the law of no fixation

ARE BOUND BY THE LAW OF NO FIXATION.

Whatever arises is the *tendrel* of awareness.

One meets with the friend who points out one's own face.

All sentient beings within the three realms

Are pervaded by this suchness of the self.

That is the close friend of this yogi.

Because my excellent friend, the awakened mind itself, Never comes nor goes, I am happy.

Thus he sang. Dharmabodhi was pleased and said, "Generally, the experiences of the yogi cannot be described; nonetheless, tell us the key points of the view, meditation, and conduct." In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

If you can look at your mind without distraction, Then empty speech is meaningless.

If you mix with the experience of self-awareness, Then the stupid meditation of a sleeping corpse is meaningless.

If you understand the way interdependence arises, Then the eight concerns' conduct is naturally destroyed.

If you're not wrapped up by any error toward mind, You'll be free of deception, pleasing others, and hypocrisy.

As to the kayas and wisdoms [that transcend] samsara and nirvana, If the blessings of the lineage do not enter you, Accomplishment won't come simply through desire and effort.

When Milarepa had sung this, Dharmabodhi said, "The view, meditation, and conduct of the yogi is truly wondrous."

The Jetsun said to him, "Now, you tell me the profound key points of your practice." Then Dharmabodhi sang this song of realization:

These fortunate ones assembled here

Supplicate my practice lineage of excellent view.

Through this excellent karmic connection,

Grant your blessing that we may quickly meet.

What benefit is there in looking at the mind Whose concepts and latent tendencies have not collapsed?

What benefit is there in meditating for a long time Where self-clinging and

craving for pleasure have not been abandoned?  
What benefit is there in the conduct of pride  
If one does not strive to benefit beings?  
What benefit is there in a joyful retinue that's gathered  
Where no one listens to the guru's speech?  
This is the basis of deception, hypocrisy, and shame.  
If the result is not the benefit of others,  
One will not attain unsurpassed enlightenment.

If one says how things are, then there will be regrets; For if one creates  
conflict, that's a great basis for ruin.\*3

Remaining silent is profound instruction.

Yogi of Tibet, you sing melodious songs.

My songs are not so melodious,

But some inspiration arose, and so I sang.

In the glorious pure realm of the expansion of bliss, Through the delight of  
singing, may we quickly meet.

Thus Dharmabodhi sang. Again, they both joyfully spoke for a long time with each other. Then Dharmabodhi of India journeyed on his way, and the master Milarepa of Tibet with his disciples journeyed upward.\*4 The master Jetsun and his disciples returned to Nyanang, and upon meeting some students, they were offered a drink of welcome and asked about the meeting. The Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply:

When the sun and moon meet the sky, the four continents are illuminated.

When a mother meets her child, her torment is allayed.

When moisture meets warmth, plants will grow.

When siddhas meet, the country is happy.

The siddha Dharmabodhi

Came to the forest of the Nepal Fortress

And granted an audience to Milarepa.

Dharmabodhi then arose

And made prostrations to Milarepa.

Thus, the people who gathered entertained some doubts.  
With the mudra of his illusory body,  
He joined his palms, planted his knees,  
And asked after my health within the dharmadhatu.  
In reply I stamped the Great Seal.\*5  
In the temple of purity and nonduality,  
We conversed in ineffable luminosity.  
It is certain we've a connection of an excellent aspiration Previously made at  
the time of the Victorious One.  
Talk of this excellent meeting of my brother and friend Will resound through  
the lands far and wide.

Thus he sang. The students were all overjoyed and amazed, and by the power of Dharmabodhi prostrating to the Jetsun, the Jetsun's fame and merit grew even more.

This is the cycle of meeting with Dharmabodhi.

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\*1 The central channel is another name for avadhuti. It is taught in the yogic tradition here that when the prana enters the central channel through practice, various powerful yogic experiences arise.

\*2 Here, another word for bindu.

\*3 Not everyone is ready to have the truth told to them; those who do try to tell someone who is not ready will have regrets about disturbing others' minds. (ATW) \*4 The meaning implied here is that they journeyed back up into the mountains of Tibet from Nepal. Geographical locations in Tibet are commonly described in terms of their altitude.

\*5 Mahamudra.

## Winning the Debate Arisen through Jealousy with Power and Magic

NAMO GURU

Because he gained full control over his own perceptions, the Jetsun Milarepa could overpower all perceptions of others. Dharmabodhi of India had offered prostrations to Milarepa, so his fame spread, and all of the offerings collected on behalf of the living and the dead of Nyanang were given to the Jetsun. He stayed at the Nyanang Belly Cave with his merit expanding and his practice and benefit for beings flourishing.

At that time, there were some teachers from a monastic college of philosophical studies who were jealous of the Jetsun and derided him heavily, saying he was a heretic, a perverter of the dharma. At one point, there was a small famine that plagued the region of Nyanang and many of the people went to the teachers for loans. The teachers said, “Since we do not know the perverted dharma, we never received any of the offerings collected for the living and dead. All of our wealth and provisions have been used up for our school of the pure, genuine dharma, which is of no use to you. If you need a loan, then you should go ask that one who perverts the dharma to whom you offered when you had something to give.”

Since the teachers would not lend them anything, some of the people said, “From one point of view, what they say is true: we definitely should take the Jetsun as our outer source of refuge. However, in this life we also have needs, so we should make offerings to the scholars as well,” and the local people and the monastery came to an agreement.

At that time, Lotön Gendunbum and Ratön Darma Lodrö, the leaders, along with the other teachers at the monastery, held a council. Some said, “If we do not banish Milarepa from this land, then our teaching and activity for beings will not flourish. Whether the dharma of Milarepa is perverted or not, it is best that we banish him.”

The leaders said to that, “If we banish him, it would bring shame upon us, and rumors would spread among the local people. You three teachers who are most

learned in grammar, scripture, and logic should go and have a dharma discussion with him. Nothing will come out of Milarepa's mouth besides his tongue, and he will not be able to answer correctly. Out of a hundred questions, he may only get a couple correct. By attacking him as a group and not letting up, you will defeat him. He will be disgraced and helpless and will leave on his own accord."

Those three teachers were sent, and conveyed through Rechungpa that they would like to meet with the Jetsun. Rechungpa, not in favor of this, went to the Jetsun and said, "There are three teachers who say they would like to meet you; should I send them in, or not?" The Jetsun answered, "Lhodrak Marpa said to me, 'Whatever you can do to benefit sentient beings with your body, speech, or mind, even if it is through joking or casual conversation, you should do.' Therefore, send them here."<sup>109</sup>

So they were brought in. After a hot meal and rinsing his mouth with water,\*<sup>1</sup> the Jetsun said, "Listen, if these offering substances of the faithful ones were to strike the earth, then the earth would split. If they struck rock, then the rock would split. If they struck water, the waters would stop flowing.\*<sup>2</sup> Therefore, teachers, I request that you please do a dedication in accord with the sutras."

The leader among them rose, snapped his fingers and said, "Oh, very well, sir, we three teachers hold the vows of the three trainings and wear the three dharma robes, the source of all merits. So it is fine whether or not we recite the sutras. But you must have some real guts to accept these devotional offerings and use them for yourself! Who do you think you are?" Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization of practice and realization:

The essential point of the genuine dharma's ultimate yana,  
Which has the taste of amrita and includes the scriptures, logic, and  
upadeshas,  
That crown ornament revered by all the learned and pure Remains  
inseparably as the ornament on the crown of my head.

I divide my practice into three parts:  
One third is the meditation of the yidam's creation stage;  
One third is the practice of nadi, prana, and bindu;  
And one third is the meditation of Mahamudra.

The yoga of my four sessions' meditation is bodhichitta.  
The accumulated offerings of faith in real things, I purify as empty.

The accumulated offerings of the foolish and faithful, I dedicate as tormas.  
The accumulated offerings of my own faith, I offer to the deities.  
The accumulated offerings of the leftover tormas, I give to the bhuta spirits.  
Because this yogi who turns the wheel of ganachakra  
Knows that offerings have no intrinsic nature,  
As a recipient of offerings, I'm not bad, but good!

Thus he sang. One of the teachers said, "If one does not have the good qualities of knowledge that come from study, it is like someone without hands trying to climb a rock; it will be impossible for them to attain liberation. If one does not do the practice of meditation, just like a blind man looking at a temple, one cannot see the genuine reality. In order to practice the creation stage, one must know how to meditate upon it. Do you know the creation stage? How do you meditate on it?" In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

When meditating on the yidam creation stage  
My body, appearance-emptiness, is like a rainbow in the sky.  
Since there's nothing to grasp on to, craving is exhausted.

My speech, sound-emptiness, is like an echo in an empty valley;  
Since there is nothing good or bad there, adopting and rejecting are  
exhausted.

My mind, luminosity-emptiness, is like the light of the sun and moon;  
Since there is no bias there, self-clinging is exhausted.

My ordinary body, speech, and mind  
Are the self-arisen vajra body, speech, and mind.

With nothing left of the ordinary three gates, my mind is blissful.  
Whatever I do is in accord with dharma—how happy!  
That dharma is progressing on the path—what a delight!

Thus he sang. Then the teacher said, "All of what you said may just be talk. Now tell us what are nadi, prana, and bindu, and how do you meditate upon them?" Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

When I'm meditating on nadi, prana, and bindu,



There are three principal nadis and the four chakras.  
The body's craving is exhausted, I seem to disappear.  
Dhatu is refined into letter—it shines without stop.  
Since I see reality's face, there is no mistake.  
Prana collects in the avadhuti and hits the vital point.  
Both the white and red elements meet together.  
Bliss, clarity, and nonthought are spontaneously present.  
The knot of mind's doubt is directly dissolved.  
Dharma isn't left just to speech—it mixes with my mind-stream.  
Mother and child luminosity mix into one.  
The skandhas of defiled craving and desire dissolve.  
Appearance and emptiness mix into one—how blissful!  
Emptiness is no longer just a theory—so joyful!  
Confusion is exhausted into space—what a delight!

Thus he sang. Again the teacher said, “Marmots that live underground can sleep without moving for four months with only a single prana-breath, and although fish stay in the water continuously, it is impossible for them to drown. This is because of their good qualities of prana. However, they do not have a horsehair's worth of good qualities in their minds. Your prana ability is also like that. Because it's necessary to have qualities in the mind, tell us how you practice the meditation of Mahamudra.” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

When I'm meditating on Mahamudra,  
In the nature of reality, I rest without effort.

Without any distraction, I rest loosely.  
In the state of emptiness, I rest with clarity.  
In the state of bliss, I rest with awareness.  
In nonconceptuality, I rest radiantly.  
Within the variety, I rest in equipoise.  
While resting in the nature of mind,  
Many certainties dawn, unhindered.  
Without any effort, self-luminous activity is accomplished.  
Not wishing for results, I'm completely happy.  
Free of hope and fear, I feel so joyful!

free of hope and fear, I feel so joyful!

Confusion dawns as wisdom—what a delight!

Thus he sang. Then the teacher said, “We thought it was just your tongue wagging in your head. But what you have just said is good, even excellent. It seems that you just memorized what’s been written in texts. Tell us of the guru who taught you this.”

The Jetsun said, “I have studied my own mind, and appearances have dawned as my texts. If I am not separated from appearances, then I am never separated from texts. Appearances have been pointed out to me to be mind, and mind has been pointed out to be luminosity. Those who have pointed this out are my gurus.” Then he sang this song of realization:

The venerable gurus of this man  
Take my pure body as their buddhfield.  
My five pure pranas are their lion thrones.  
My five pure nadis are their lotus seats.  
My five pure dhatus are their sun and moon seats.  
The empty mind itself is the guru’s form.

Vajradhara, with the wisdom-kaya,  
Tilopa, endowed with the six higher perceptions,  
Naropa of the net of magical display,  
And the form of Marpa with incomparable kindness—  
All adorn my crown, inseparably.

If you know how to look with the eye of devotion,  
You are no different from Vajradhara.  
If you know how to supplicate with respect and faith,  
From the gathering of the clouds of compassion, The gentle rain of blessings  
will unceasingly fall.  
If you know how to make the offering of practice,  
You’ll receive the treasure-lode of all the siddhis.

Thus he sang. Then, all three of the teachers uncontrollably gave rise to faith. They rose, offered prostrations, and said:

Lack of understanding, ignorance, and confusion—these three

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING, IGNORANCE, AND CONFUSION – THESE THREE.

How great are these hidden faults in the world.

“So it is said, and how true it is! We thought you were someone who consumed others’ offerings thanks to your crazy, know-nothing dharma. But, you have answered all of our questions without any difficulty. We confess that earlier we debated with you wrongly. Your gurus cannot be seen by just anyone. But since we supplicate you with devotion, that may be enough for us to receive the entire treasury of siddhis. So we ask you to please give us the oral instructions.” As they said this with humility and respect, the Jetsun was very pleased and gave them abhishekas and instructions, and sent them to meditate.

They gave rise to experience and realization, and became the three realized teacher-meditators that are like snow lions.

At one time, the master Jetsun and his disciples, along with all the teachers, had been invited to where a great banquet was to be held in Nyanang. Alongside thrones that were erected for both Lotön and Darlo was the row of teachers. A throne was also erected for the Jetsun, and alongside where he sat was the row of all the repas. Just beyond the middle of where the repas were arranged sat the three teachers who had previously gone to dispute the Jetsun, dressed and acting as yogis. They drank liquor from *kapalas*,\*<sup>3</sup> gulp by gulp. Lotön and Darlo both saw this and became upset.

“If we let these charlatans who destroy the teachings remain in this land, then our own teaching will be destroyed,” they said quietly, acting as though engaged in genuine discussion. As they slandered them, they thought, “We need a skillful way to banish them.”

Then Lotön said to the Jetsun, right from within the full row, “O yogi, you are truly special. Therefore, you are surely very learned in *pramana*.\*<sup>4</sup> If that is not actually the case, then with such dress and conduct you will destroy the Buddha’s teachings and bring ruin to everyone, yourself and others. Due to that, you would be expelled from the commitments of a dharma practitioner. Therefore, give us a rough presentation of the tenets of *pramana*.”

The Jetsun replied, “Teacher, you should not be attached to the fortress of conventional terms. Rather, while in meditative equipoise, rest within the state of innate dharmata. In postmeditation, apply the antidotes to the afflictions as much as you can. Let the good qualities of the nature of reality arise and abide within. Moreover, since the result of the five poisons, such as jealousy, is being carried to the lower realms, do not let your own mind-stream be scorched. I do not know

about your system of pramana, but within my system of pramana, in the first part of my life, I received the ‘valid’\*<sup>5</sup> key instructions of the guru. Then, with ‘valid’ perseverance, I meditated in ‘valid’ mountain retreats. Through that, the ‘valid’ signs of experience developed in my mind-stream. Thus, the ‘valid’ benefactors with faith present their offerings to a ‘valid’ recipient. You ‘valid’ teachers who desire fame, indeed, have ‘valid’ jealousy. Thus I fear that you will experience the ‘valid’ suffering of the ‘valid’ hell realms. Other than that, I definitely don’t know any ‘valid’ pramana. If you need me to explain this in more detail, then listen to this song.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of the guru free of afflictions.

Sentient beings of the polluted age have great jealousy.

Now, Lotön and Darlo, listen to me.

If I’d not been born from my mother’s womb,

How could I have drunk the sweet milk from her breast?

If I had not drunk the sweet milk of her breast,

How could I have eaten a few mouthfuls of flour?

If I had not eaten those few mouthfuls of flour, How could my body have developed through its consumption?

If my body had not developed through consuming,

Then how could I have crossed the mountain-pass threshold?

If I had not crossed the mountain-pass threshold,

Then how could I roam the lands with no fixed direction?

If I had not roamed the lands with no fixed direction,

How could I have met the guru lord?

If I had not met the guru lord,

Then how could I have received the whispered lineage key instructions?

If I had not received the whispered lineage key instructions,

Then how could I wander in rugged mountain retreats?

If I had not wandered in rugged mountain retreats,

How could signs of experience and realization’s heat develop?

If signs of experience and realization’s heat hadn’t developed,

Then how could I be warm with a single cloth?

If I were not warm with a single cloth,

Then how could male and female benefactors have faith?

Then how could male and female benefactors have faith?  
If male and female benefactors did not have faith,  
Then how could you teachers become so jealous?  
If you teachers were not so jealous,  
Then how could you teachers end up in the hell realms?

In the fields up in the heights,  
The grazing animals dance and play.  
The wolves are agonized by that.  
Are those wolves not simply deluded?

Like that, in the Nyanang Belly Cave,  
The teachers of words are agonized  
Over the merit of Milarepa.  
Are you teachers not simply deluded?

You monks and scholars have become so jealous  
Toward the faithful food offerings of the male and female benefactors.  
Are you monks and scholars not even more deluded?

Do not take the empty sound  
Of your meaningless words to be true, O great teachers!  
The tirthikas also know such words and terms.  
All kinds of concepts follow after such words,  
And two-thirds of your life pass by unnoticed.  
Therefore, tame the demon of clinging to a self.  
Words give rise to other words, and you never stop talking.  
I know nothing about “valid” pramana.  
So this time, you teachers have won this debate!

Thus he sang. Then Darlo said, “You did not answer my question using any dharma language; you just sang a song that ordinary people would use when trying to deceive people. I too could sing such a song. You may be able to deceive ignorant ordinary people, but you can’t deceive me. If you can give an appropriate answer using dharma language, then that would be fine. But instead, your mouth

eats only faith offerings and sings improper songs.<sup>110</sup> Since you enjoy eating faith offerings, then you need a bit of this to go with it. Now eat!” The teacher took a handful of dirt and threw it at the Jetsun’s face.

The Jetsun wiped the dirt from his face, smiled, and said, “Oh, you great teachers who embrace the words and logic of scripture for the sake of this life, it’s like that, isn’t it? You have such strong negativity, and in particular, the studies of the first part of your life have given you the ability to create the ropes of suffering; it’s really impressive.<sup>111</sup> I have trained and understand that all dharma acts as an antidote for the afflictions; but the measure of your dharma training is that you have trained and understand the afflictions to be your companion. Therefore, how could our dharma language and dharma practice be harmonious with each other?”

At that point, Rechungpa thought, “Although I don’t match even a single body hair of my guru, if I do not liberate this evildoer who does harm to his body, I will have a severe root downfall, but if I liberate him then I will accumulate great merit.”\*<sup>6</sup> Then he took a stick and was about to beat the teacher with it when the Jetsun stopped him and said, “Son, Rechungpa! The wealth that does not help when one is in need, the antidote that does not help when one suffers, and the dharma that does not help in adverse conditions are all very unfortunate. Generate the strength of the antidote, and with mindfulness restrain yourself! I must crack the whip of mindfulness and awareness for my son.” Then he sang this song of realization to Rechungpa on cracking the whip of awareness:

Lord, protector of beings, jewel of my crown.

I bow at the feet of Marpa, who is so kind.

Grant your blessing that I may bring adverse conditions to the path.

Son, Rechungpa, listen a moment, free of distraction.

Dharma practitioners with satisfied mouths and happy bellies

Act like ordinary people when adverse conditions arise.

With their unwholesome minds, they make their own suffering.

If you fight with someone, you’ll surely lose it all.

Son, listen a moment to your guru’s command.

The king of dharmic view is like the sky.

Son, train your garuda chick’s wings of awareness;

Do not let your garuda chick’s wings become weak.

If you let your wings become weak,  
You'll fall into the abyss of bias.  
Son, Rechungpa, listen to your guru's command.

The king of dharmic meditation is the sea.  
Son, train your little fish of awareness;  
Do not let your little fish become weak.  
If you let your little fish become weak,  
There's a danger you'll fall into the net of delusion.  
Son, Rechungpa, listen to your guru's command.

The king of dharmic conduct is the snow mountain.  
Son, you should train the lion cub of awareness;  
Do not let your lion cub become weak.  
If you let your lion cub become weak,  
There's a danger it will get lost in the blizzard of the eight concerns.  
Son, Rechungpa, listen to your guru's command.

The king of dharmic fruition is a precious jewel isle.  
Let your merchant apprentice of awareness set up shop;  
Don't let the merchant apprentice's watch guard become weak.  
If that watch guard should become weak,  
Then you've the danger of losing the jewel of dharmata.  
Son, Rechungpa, listen to your guru's command.

Son, don't let anger get strong, or your mind will be scorched!  
Don't let your afflictions grow; apply the antidote!

As he sang this, Rechungpa's anger was pacified. The benefactors scolded the teacher; they also scolded Rechungpa a little. But they had even more devotion for the Jetsun than before.

When all of the people had gone back to their own abodes, the teacher Darlo had not publicly disgraced the Jetsun and was very unhappy that he himself had been disgraced. That evening, bringing a side of meat and many volumes of texts,

Darlo and Lotön, along with several monks, offered their confession, saying they needed to meet with the Jetsun. Rechungpa said, “There is no need for a confession, nor is there need for further debate. Therefore there is no need for any meeting,” and so kept them from an audience with Milarepa.

Pleased with requests of some other monks,<sup>\*7</sup> the Jetsun said, “To not commit any faults from the start is best. But if one does commit any, it is best to confess them in a heartfelt way. Show in the teachers.” Saying that, he granted the teachers a meeting.

They offered the Jetsun the side of meat and said, “We confess that yesterday you were right, and so we offer you this meat. These texts we place as an arbiter, to act as the standard that clears up<sup>112</sup> our dharma discussion. Let us now have a friendly chat about the dharma.”

The Jetsun said, “Teacher, there is a worldly proverb that says you can tell if someone has eaten or not by how rosy their face is.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, you can know if someone understands dharma or not, and whether they practice dharma or not, by whether or not their afflictions and self-clinging have been tamed. If the afflictions and self-clinging are tamed, then that is a sign of understanding and practicing dharma. Someone may come out victorious in all the dharma discussions and debates, but if they have not shaken even a bit<sup>114</sup> of their self-clinging or afflictions, then they merely have surface-level knowledge and practice, and although they win in discussions with empty words, it just adds to their pride. Thus, since this is a means for staying even longer in samsara and for becoming more deeply entrenched in the hell states, to engage in discussion would bring definite defeat. Therefore, that you have confessed is wonderful! Now that we’ve had this discussion, you may go back to your homes.”

Again, Darlo spoke: “No one but a buddha can know whether someone’s afflictions and self-clinging are tamed. Although someone may not have tamed them, if they know how to discuss and engage in debate, then they will not stay even longer in samsara or become more deeply entrenched in the hell states. You are saying that learned ones have great negativity. You think that the stupidity of not giving a response in debate is only a small negativity, but it is very heavy. One may think one is doing virtue and yet end up deep in the hell states. Since one needs to determine whether one understands correctly or not, it is essential to engage in discussion. Since we are learned, we can guide you. For this discussion, yogi, you can make a thesis about a dharma topic you are familiar with, and we will examine to see if it is correct or not. Or else, if you think that we are not



learned in a particular dharma, then you can ask us a question first, and we will give an answer.”

Then the Jetsun said, “If the teacher absolutely will not listen, all of us here have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears. Those here have spent time with us, so they know who we are. I will ask a question about a topic of dharma of no consequence,<sup>115</sup> and I will also propose a thesis. So, teacher, please answer: Is this space obstructing or not?”

The teacher said, “No one would ever ask that kind of question. But since I have accepted to guide you, then I must answer. Of course, space is unobstructing.”

The Jetsun replied, “I say that space is obstructing.”

The teacher said, “Where is your proof statement that backs up what you say?”

When he said this, the Jetsun rested evenly in the samadhi called “Space That Is Hard and Obstructing Like a Vajra”<sup>116</sup> and said, “Let’s see whether space is obstructing or not. Go ahead, get up, sit down, and move about.”

He tried to move as Milarepa said, but he was not able to move at all from the seated position he was in, nor was he able to open his mouth to speak; and for a while, he was stuck like that. Meanwhile, in that space, the Jetsun did various activities—he got up, walked about, lay down, and sat in the lotus posture. Then the Jetsun came out of his samadhi and said, “What happened? How was it you were obstructed by the unobstructing space?”

The teacher replied, “You have had tirthika masters who are learned in black mantra and tricks. But apart from someone able to do such black magic and tricks, everyone who has a mouth will say that space is unobstructing.”

The Jetsun said, “Is it so that everyone accepts space as unobstructing without having analyzed space? Do animals also say that space is unobstructing? You and your masters who are proponents [of the view] that space is unobstructing have been proven false. This may be due to ‘black mantra,’ but I have sufficiently shown you that space is obstructing. Now the thesis that I will propose is that the rock of this cave is unobstructing. What do you say to that?”

The teacher answered, “Unless you perform some of your black mantra or tricks, it is not suitable to be anything but obstructing.”

The Jetsun said, “In accord with what you previously agreed to, since I don’t think that you are learned in tricks, you should perform a trick to make this rock that I see here unobstructing.”

He said, “Whatever tricks you may know or do, though it may deceive ordinary people, [it won’t deceive me].”<sup>117</sup>

The Jetsun said, “I thought you knew everything. For you, everything is wrong. You would even say that one who has attained buddhahood would be foremost among those doing unsuitable things, with them falling like rain.”\*8

Lotön said, “Just as you showed that space is obstructing, yogi, show us a sign that this rock is unobstructing.”

Then the Jetsun rested evenly in the samadhi called “Exhausting Space” and went up through the rock and back down; he went forward through the rock and came back; he put half of his body in the rock and half outside. After displaying various things like this, [he threw the rock in the air] and when it landed, he picked it up again. He said to Rechungpa, “Bring a pillar!”

Rechungpa went and brought back a large boulder shaped like a pillar and put it down [underneath the boulder Milarepa held]. The Jetsun then put his handprint in the upper rock, which can still be seen today.

Then Lotön said, “You have made the rock seem unobstructing. If this is not just a trick, then we too should be able to pass through the rock. I will see if it is really unobstructing.”

The Jetsun said, “It is unobstructing for you as well. If it weren’t, when the rock fell, would I not have been killed?”

Lotön said, “Well, the rock never came near me. What use is there saying anything about it being unobstructing if there is no rock in the first place?”

The Jetsun said, “That in itself is a sign of its unobstructive nature. Just because you didn’t see a thing directly does not mean that thing does not exist.”

At that point, the teacher Darlo became even angrier, but Lotön began to doubt himself. “This seems to be genuine, but it is difficult for us logicians to come to believe in something like this. If all of these things aren’t just the yogi’s tricks, and are signs of his being on the path, then you should have trained in the six paramitas. Tell us how to practice the six paramitas.” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

The victorious great refuges are the three precious jewels.

Great bliss resides at the crown of my head.

Be inseparable from me, from my heart, I pray.

Take, with the hook of undistracted compassion,

The six beings who have all been your father and mother.

THE SIX BEINGS WHO HAVE ALL BEEN YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,  
With a mind of love, always keep them.

The yogi of the Mahayana\*<sup>9</sup>

Does not hear the dharma that's free of words;  
He does not ponder the true meaning of emptiness;  
Nor does he meditate on the unborn reality.  
He turns away from the ten nonvirtues.

What benefit is generosity with hope for repayment,<sup>118</sup>  
Where you don't loosen the knot of avarice?  
What benefit is there from pretentious discipline  
Where you're not free of deceit and hypocrisy?  
What benefit is the patience of ambition for fame  
Where you can't bear the weapons of others' harsh words?  
What benefit is there in the striving for virtue  
That isn't free from laziness and sloth?  
What benefit is there in forced meditation  
That is not free of the distraction of mind?  
What benefit is there in cultivating prajña  
Where appearances don't arise as one's friends?  
What benefit is there from extensive hearing  
Without understanding the profound permissions and prohibitions?  
What benefit is there in speaking of cause and effect  
When one's practice isn't harmonious with what to adopt and reject?  
What benefit is there in assuming a monk's appearance  
When one's own mind-stream isn't in accord with dharma?

You've a mistaken view if you want to have wisdom  
Without killing the poisonous snake of the afflictions.  
You've a mistaken view if you want bodhichitta  
Without taming the storm of jealousy.  
You've a mistaken view if you want honor and respect  
Without abandoning the harm of beings.

You've a mistaken view if you want equality  
But don't abandon the bias of clinging to an "I."

Without taming the demon of clinging to a self,  
The hammer of the afflictions will beat the yogi.  
Without transforming your actions into the accumulations,  
You will be a hindrance for others' virtue.  
Without dharma having mixed with your mind-stream,  
Meaningless words will upset others' minds.  
Not meditating in this life is meaningless—  
Be without regret at the time of your death!

Thus he sang. Then the teacher Darlo said, "It seems you have indeed heard the name of the six paramitas. Well, how then should one practice the ten paramitas?" In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Lord Marpa the Translator who is so kind, Please be a refuge for sentient  
beings of the polluted age.  
Grant your blessings that dharma may pacify jealousy.

Listen, Darlo, you teacher wishing for fame:  
While never thinking that you will die,  
You've pondered over words' connections or contradictions,  
Thirty-two years of your life have passed without your noticing.  
If you practiced right now, that would be excellent.  
The afflictions of beings in the polluted age are coarse,  
Impossible to bear for those with negativity.

Now, on the other side,\*<sup>10</sup> self-clinging has been relinquished; "Generosity"  
is nothing other than that.

On the other side, deceit has been relinquished;  
"Discipline" is nothing other than that.

On the other side, there is no fear of reality;  
"Patience" is nothing other than that.

On the other side, practice is constant;

On the other side, practice is constant;

“Diligence” is nothing other than that.  
On the other side, one abides naturally;  
“Meditative concentration” is nothing other than that.  
On the other side, one realizes the abiding nature;  
“Prajña” is nothing other than that.  
On the other side, all activity becomes the accumulations;  
“Means” is nothing other than that.  
On the other side, the four maras are vanquished;  
“Power” is nothing other than that.  
On the other side, the two benefits are accomplished;  
“Aspiration” is nothing other than that.  
If you’re aware of the afflictions, your own hidden faults,  
“Wisdom” is nothing other than that.  
When you genuinely practice, this is how it is;  
The sound of empty words has little purpose.

Thus he sang. Lotön said, “All you’ve said is in accord with what’s true. Yogi, it seems you have experience in meditation.”

Darlo replied, “All of these are just words and metaphors. But they will not stand up. There are tirthikas who can perform qualified miracles and tricks, too. The ten paramitas you just described are nothing more than mere names and do not have the same meaning as these texts. Now I will teach you the meaning of what is in these texts. All knowable things should be determined with pramana. Therefore, pramana is important. If one understands pramana, one will understand all other texts implicitly.

“First I’ll ask a question about pramana. If you can answer, then I will consider you worthy. Generally, in pramana, there is the definition of generalities, and in particular there are the definitions of direct and inferential valid cognition, as well as contradictory reasons, reasons with connection, and indefinite reasons.\*<sup>11</sup> Now, give an explanation of these tenets.”

The Jetsun replied, “Teacher, the innermost part of your mind has been given over to demons. Since you don’t have any trust in yourself or your yidam, or even any belief toward the pure buddhas, how could you give any to me? The dharma that you are so happy with—the soup of pramana completely devoid of any seasoning and with the undesired consequences of compassion, renunciation, and

pure vision\*<sup>12</sup>—you drink while scorching the palate and tongue of your own mind-stream, and your belly becomes filled with pride. Then above, you let out the belch of self-praise and ignorance and vomit up jealousy. Down below, you fart out denigration of others and you defecate and urinate out contempt. I know nothing about this harmful bad medicine that makes everyone, self and others, sick, or this perverted dharma that makes them accumulate negativity.

“But, I have determined that all appearances are mind. And since the luminosity and emptiness of mind is unhidden from me and I have confidence in that, I don’t have any of the dharma that requires inference. If the reasons of contradiction, connection, or that are indefinite are something you need, then the teacher’s mind-stream that is contradictory with the dharma is the contradictory reason; that very contradictory reason being afflicted is the reason of connection; and the appearing mirage of a dharma practitioner, replete with reasons of both contradiction and connection, is the indefinite reason.”

Lotön rubbed his head with his robes and chuckled. Darlo, while shaking his head and hands, burst out, “Ha ha! Whatever you say! You don’t even know the head or tail end of your own shit. These here who accept that you are a buddha are laughable! Furthermore, you say that the innermost part of my mind has been given over to demons, but who is the judge of that? If it is with an understanding of pramana that one praises oneself and denigrates others, then by holding yourself as a buddha, and denigrating me, you too understand pramana! You are someone with no merit or karmic connection. Therefore, you don’t give answers with the necessary dharma language. Rather, you give useless explanations that are bigger than a donkey’s penis. You shouldn’t show anyone; you should hide them and just keep quiet.”\*<sup>13</sup>

The Jetsun said, “I tried to keep quiet, but you wouldn’t let me. You don’t have any use for my reasons, but these reasons have made me very happy, so I have a great use for them. My speaking of the basic nature has made you feel bad, and it seemed as if I was praising myself. But the mind of all of us sentient beings is luminosity-emptiness, untainted by the faults and qualities of samsara and nirvana. This is called ‘buddha of the all-base’; it is also called ‘buddha nature.’\*<sup>14</sup> The ignorance toward and lack of recognition of this within oneself is given the names ‘adventitious stains,’ ‘afflicted,’ and ‘sentient being,’ and through that one wanders in samsara. Being aware and recognizing one’s own mind is given the names ‘wisdom,’ ‘perfect purity,’ and ‘buddha,’ and through that one goes to nirvana. In accord with that intention, the Buddha also said:

All beings are fully pervaded by buddha nature:

All of these beings, without any left out, are buddhas.

And:

All sentient beings are buddha in essence.

However, they are obscured by the adventitious stains.

If those are cleared away, that is buddhahood itself.

And:

If one realizes mind, because it [itself] is wisdom, there is no buddha to be sought anywhere else. Meditate well with this understanding.

“Someone who realizes that the mind is primordially luminosity-emptiness is a buddha. Moreover, my own realization of mind is the basic nature. But teacher, you do not have any trust in this. All who are gathered here can witness that the innermost part of your mind has been given over to demons. Although it is the basic nature, to point that out to you would hit you too hard, so I will not teach it.”

The teacher said, “Incredible! If everyone has reason to believe my mind is given over to demons, then let them show it. I’m better than those who spend their lives in deceit, doing tricks, and singing dirges to deceive others.”

The Jetsun smiled, “Well, if you say it’s okay to try and convince you, then I must. Listen and understand what I have to say! There is something besides this side of meat you brought that is in the hand of someone else. Is its purpose not a sign of your mind being given over to demons?”

The teacher’s face turned black. Although the Jetsun told him not to, Rechungpa, without listening, went and laid out the meat. There was a beautiful young girl in the assembly who had little devotion toward the Jetsun but did have devotion toward Rechungpa. Rechungpa went to her and took a bracelet off her wrist. At this, the teacher Darlo was embarrassed and ashamed; he vehemently denounced the Jetsun and his sons, and then left.

Rechungpa was pleased, showed everyone the bracelet, and then went over again to where the young lady worked. He took the teacher Darlo’s rosary off her wrist and brought it for the people to see, and then everyone believed in his corruptness. Lotön thought, “If Milarepa was not made aware of the situation by others, then he must be who he says he is. But, I should test him.” Then he said,

“The debate is sufficient,” and with that, he took the texts and went back.

That evening, Lotön poured blood into the Buddha’s begging bowl, filled the kapala with milk, and took the pictures of the Buddha and his retinue that sat on his shrine and turned them upside down. Then he thought, “If Milarepa knows about this, then I can be sure that he genuinely has the higher perceptions and can perform miracles.” The next day, he went to see the Jetsun. First he met Rechungpa, who said to him, “Well, teacher, since you have disgraced yourself and the teachings, have you come to have your faults brought to light?”

“Since I have faith in the guru, I have come to meet the Jetsun,” he said, and then went in.

The Jetsun, smiling, said, “Teacher, you do not have to test me like this. All of the dharma that you accept in a hidden, hypothetical way, I know directly. I know that you have poured the nectar of the five poisons in the bowl of the golden *rupa*, and poured what is to go in the begging bowl into the kapala. Disregarding the way you know to do things, you have also turned the pictures of the Buddha Shakyamuni and his retinue on their heads. Do not do such things that a dharma practitioner would never do. Don’t put contents in the wrong containers, and without disregarding what you know, put the Buddha’s picture back correctly.” Lotön was overwhelmed, shrunk with fear, and gave rise to special, uncommon faith in the Jetsun. He said, “Yogi, please teach some dharma from your own experience. I have truly become someone who has trust.”

In reply, the Jetsun said, “It is excellent that you have trust and confidence. But to talk about my meditation experience to someone who is not a proper vessel would be very regrettable. Listen now to the reasons for that.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator:

Grant your blessing that this beggar may keep the secret words.

Boasting about the view of the Secret Mantra’s dharma,

To debate with you, teacher, who have partiality and bias,

Over conventional terms would be a regrettable loss.\*15

To have discussion and idle chatter

Regarding undistracted meditation would be a regrettable loss.

When keeping the conduct of Secret Mantra secret,

To reveal the yogic disciplines in public would be a regrettable loss.

For one attaining enlightenment through meditation



For one attaining enlightenment through meditation,  
To engage in study would be a regrettable loss.  
When pouring the key instructions into an excellent vessel,  
To bestow them upon unsuitable ones would be a regrettable loss.  
To leave the solitary place taken up in the beginning  
Empty in the end would be a regrettable loss.  
To sing the yogi's profound songs of experience  
Among assemblies of many would be a regrettable loss.  
If I tell of the regrets, there are too many;  
That should suffice to answer your question for now.

Thus he sang. The teacher said, "Although you will not speak of your meditation experience, it seems that meditation has caused prajña and wisdom to be revealed in you. Please briefly speak about the view, meditation, and conduct of bestowing abhishekas and the graduated paths and bhūmis."

The Jetsun said, "I don't know anything about your tradition, but my tradition is like this." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.  
In reply to this great teacher, I sing this song.  
Without positing contradictions and connections,<sup>\*16</sup> listen to the meaning:

When there is nothing that is looked at, this is supreme seeing;  
This is mind itself, luminosity.

When nothing is searched for, this is the supreme discovery;  
This is mind itself, the precious treasure-lode.

When there's nothing to eat, that is the supreme satiation;  
This is the food of samadhi that completely liberates.

When there's nothing to drink, that is the supreme quenching;  
This is the water of bodhichitta amrita.

This wisdom that is merely self-aware  
Is nothing that can be expressed through speech.

This is not an object of the shravakas or the immature;\*17  
It is also not the domain of learned logicians.

If you realize the reality that's without bestowing and receiving,  
That is known as the supreme abhisheka.

If you realize the reality that's free of high and low,  
That is known as the supreme bhumi.

If you realize the reality that's free of traversing,  
That is known as the supreme path.

If you realize the reality that's unborn and undying,  
That is known as fulfilling the supreme need.

If you realize the reality that's incomprehensible,\*18  
That is known as supreme pramana.

If you realize the reality beyond greater or lesser,  
That is known as the supreme yana.

If you realize the reality beyond good or bad,  
That is known as the supreme means.

If you realize the reality free of duality,  
That is known as the supreme view.

If you realize the reality free of reference point,\*19  
That is known as the supreme meditation.

If you realize the reality free of adopting and rejecting,  
That is known as supreme conduct.

If you realize the reality that's free of effort and exertion, That is known as  
the supreme fruition.

Those who are devoid of having such meaning [include]  
Great teachers who have become arrogant through study

Great teachers who have become arrogant through study,  
Scholars who boast with words,  
And meditators who are focused on adopting and rejecting.  
Though these three hope for liberation, they only remain bound;  
They are bound by the ropes of duality.  
Though they wish for freedom, they only stay caught;  
They're caught by the hook of perceiver and perceived.  
Though they wish to get out, they sink into the mire;  
They sink into the mire of the three realms of samsara.

Thus he sang. Lotön, abandoning his arrogance and pride, prostrated to the Jetsun. Though he requested the dharma, the Jetsun did not give any. He gained unwavering faith in the Jetsun and said, "The debates we have engaged in are the true debates. You have won, indeed," thus offering his concession.

He went home and said to Darlo, "As Milarepa said, I don't know if all that we logicians know, lacking revulsion, disillusionment, and pure vision, is a help for attaining liberation or a hindrance. I have regret for thinking the higher perceptions and miraculous abilities of Milarepa, these signs of accomplishment in practice, were just tricks. I now have confidence in them."

Darlo said, "Your belief in him makes you truly gullible. You have become a lord of evil dharma. But as for me, I only think of his higher perceptions and miracle-working as the act of a great spirit to be accepted as a disciple and to be tamed; I don't see him as someone who has a hair's worth of dharma. Furthermore, I did not have inappropriate relations with that girl!" Holding such incorrect views, he died. Having attachment to his own errant views, he took rebirth as a fearsome great demon who acted as a witness to oaths.

The Jetsun said, "Through making a negative connection with me, Darlo has gone to the very end of samsara." Those scholars who denigrated the Jetsun incurred great loss for themselves. Later, Lotön attended the Jetsun and through meditation became the greatest of the five close disciples of the Jetsun who were teacher-meditators, the stories of whom are elucidated below.

This is the cycle of Milarepa winning the debate arisen through jealousy with power and magic.

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\*1 "This refers to the original monastic tradition of rinsing one's mouth out after a meal to ensure that one

does not violate the precept of not taking solid food after noon. It was done before a dedication was chanted. Normally Milarepa, who was not a monk, wouldn't have done this ritual, but he is doing so here out of respect for his monastic guests. (KTGR)" (*Stories and Songs*: 90).

\*2 "Milarepa is using these analogies of the earth quaking, rocks splitting, rivers stopping, to speak of the potent dangers of accepting offerings. For unsuitable recipients to accept offerings would be harmful to their practice and realization. (KTGR)" (*Stories and Songs*: 90).

\*3 S: *kapāla*; T: *kapAla*. Skull-cup; a ritual object used by practitioners of the Vajrayana tradition.

\*4 T: *tshad ma*; S: *pramāṇa*. The field of pramana in the Buddhist context covers the topics of logic and epistemology. This term is often translated as "valid cognition," "validity," or "genuine," as it can refer to a valid type of consciousness or valid sources of knowledge, such as the "Valid Teacher," the Buddha. Pramana provides the basic framework for debate in the Buddhist context.

\*5 "Valid" here translates the Tibetan *tshad ma* or pramana (see note above).

\*6 Here, the word "liberate" (T: *bsgral*) means to kill.

\*7 Presumably some other monks went in behind Rechungpa to request Milarepa to see the teachers.

\*8 Milarepa is pointing out that Lotön would even find the miracles that an enlightened Buddha could perform, which "fall like rain," to be unsuitable. (DPR) \*9 Milarepa is referring to Mahayana practitioners who do not go beyond their mere conceptual understanding of the teachings as is illustrated through Darlo and Lotön.

\*10 The Tibetan word for the Sanskrit *pāramitā*, which means "perfection," literally means "gone to the other side" (T: *pha rol tu phyin pa*).

\*11 Generalities, direct and indirect valid cognition, and the three types of reasons (contradictory, connective, and indefinite) each are important topics in the pramana teachings.

\*12 "Undesired consequence" is a technical term used in pramana logic. Stating an undesired consequence of an opponent's position is a way of pointing out its illogicality.

\*13 Darlo is making a pun. The Tibetan word here for "explanation" (*'doms*) has a completely different second meaning of "genitals." The Tibetan word for "show" (*ston*) can also mean "teach." T: *mi dgos pa'i 'doms nas chas rtags bong bu bas che ba de ma ston par sbos la kha rog par sdod zer*.

\*14 Sugatagarbha (T: *bde gshegs snying po*).

\*15 The word translated as "regrettable loss" here (T: *phangs*) has the sense of deep loss of something that is cherished, or deep regret over a missed opportunity.

\*16 Milarepa is telling the teacher not to engage in his usual manner of analyzing and criticizing as he would in debate. Contradictions and connections (T: *'gal 'brel ma bsdebs*) are key components of the Buddhist system of logic (pramana).

\*17 "Immature" refers to ordinary beings. (KTGR) \*18 The reality that cannot be comprehended by means of logic and reasonings employing terminology. (KTGR) \*19 Reference point or focal object (T: *dmigs gtad*).

## Rechungpa and Tipupa

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa had ultimately been victorious in defeating the jealous debaters through his power and miraculous ability. However, his heart-son, Rechungpa, was not satisfied with this, as the Jetsun did not win by replying directly with words on the scholars' terms.

He thought, "These scholars who have no belief in miracles and were not satisfied must be defeated by countering them with words, or else they must be defeated through the use of fierce black magic. Although I received teachings from the Jetsun on such magic, it was probably just mere words.\*<sup>1</sup> That these scholars said these miracles were mere tricks is something that needs to be rectified, but the Jetsun will not do it. For the purpose of bringing one to buddhahood now, in a single lifetime, the instructions of the guru are, indeed, profound. But to defeat the scholars, I will need to go to India and train in logic."

Rechungpa conveyed his wishes in the presence of the Jetsun. The Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, if we had lost the debate, how could the scholars have given their respect? If you go to India to study logic in order to defend yourself in debate, you will only be going for the sake of this mundane world. If you forsake genuine practice and train in terminology, although you might learn something, it is far from certain that you would win every debate, nor will you ever have mastery over all words and logic. To know how to respond to all questions and debates you must attain buddhahood, and to attain buddhahood, you must meditate. Thus, relinquish this life, and remain and practice the meditation of recognizing your own true nature. Even if you have the power to kill others through black magic, without the power to guide them you just bring ruin to both yourself and others. Furthermore, because of the black magic that I performed, I had to undergo many hardships in the presence of Marpa. Therefore, you should remain and focus on contemplating the shortness of life and the uncertainty of the time of death."

Rechungpa insistently made his plea to go to India. The Jetsun said, "If you insist on not listening and go on to India, I will not send you there in order to

study logic. When I came into the presence of Marpa from Lhodrak, he gave only four parts among the whispered lineage's nine Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis. Thus, there are still five that remain in India. There is a prophecy that if a son of my lineage goes and receives them from the lineage of Naropa, he will bring them back and benefit sentient beings. Though this is so, because I previously could not forsake my meditation practice, I did not go to receive them myself. I am now old and have gained full confidence of mind, so I will not go. Now, you go and bring them back. To go to India you will need gold," he said.

Milarepa and Rechungpa collected together the gold that had been offered to them, which came to a large sum. Then, as a departing drink for Rechungpa, all of the students, including Shendormo and Leksé Bum, held a ganachakra. Within the assembly row where it was arranged, the Jetsun presented all the gold to Rechungpa.

He said, "Son, Rechungpa, contemplate the meaning of this song. Go and receive these dharma teachings from India." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator:

Grant your blessings that I carry on your example.

My son with little hearing\*<sup>2</sup> has lost the debate, So doubts arise, and he's  
giving up his practice.

He wants to study, so he'll wander to distant lands.

Such is the treacherous path of the doubtful yogi.

If you go to the land of India,

Receive the Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis From the lineage of the  
great pandit Naropa.

Do not lend yourself to strands of debating terms.

In the beginning, my place of encounter was unmistakable: I encountered and  
served Marpa Lotsawa.

In the middle, my place of meditation was unmistakable: I meditated at the  
White Rock Horse Tooth Peak.

In the end, my place of alms-gathering was unmistakable: With no guide or  
friends, I've gathered alms throughout the land.

Now I'm free of rejecting samsara and adopting nirvana.

Thus, for this yogi, there is no turning back.

When I had left the presence of Marpa from Lhodrak And was staying within  
the rugged mountains,

The Buddha Guru said this to me:

“The chakravartin king, holder of the jewel;

The birds of five families fly in dharmata’s expanse.<sup>119</sup>

First is Awareness: The Torch of Wisdom;

Second is the Nadis, Pranas, and the Lattice of Chakras; Third is Great Bliss:

The Precious Jewel of Speech; Fourth is Equal Taste: The Mirror of  
Outer Phenomena; Fifth is Self-Liberation: The Mahamudra:

In India all of these five dharmas

Still remain and should be secured.”\*3

But now I’m old and cannot go,

You, Son, a holder of Marpa’s lineage,

Secure this from the land of India.

Thus he sang. Happily, Rechungpa picked up a select offering of gold, tossed it  
toward the Jetsun’s body, and then offered this song:

At the risk of my life, may I accomplish

The intention and meaning of the guru’s command.

May I receive, in accord with the prophecy,

The warm breath of the dakinis, the key instructions.

By the compassion of the one with wisdom and love, I pray you accept me to  
be inseparable from you.

Bless me to remember and never forget

The vajra garlands of your commanding words.

Rechungpa, who is guideless and without any friend, Please protect him in  
whatever he encounters

On the fearsome and treacherous paths of India;

Wherever I travel, please look upon me.

When wandering in this human land, without a guide, May I meet one with  
whom I have good karmic connection.

May appearances that are obstacles on this path  
Be transformed and dawn as precious jewels.

Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization to Rechungpa:

To my son, Rechungpa, who is going to India,  
I'll give some counsel in seven sets of three:

First, is the great path of Secret Mantra;  
Second, are the guru's great key instructions;  
Third, is your own great prajña:  
May you have these three things of greatness.

First, you need to give service to the learned ones; Second, you need to have  
faith in the guru;  
Third, you need to have perseverance for yourself: May you have these three  
necessities.

First, make prana-control penetrate the vital point; Second, penetrate into the  
expanse of dharmata;  
Third, penetrate the mastery of dharma:  
May you have these three ways of penetrating.

First is to see the luminosity of bliss;  
Second is to see the myriad appearances;  
Third is to see the scriptures, logic, and upadeshas: May you have these three  
things to be seen.

Cherish as a companion the qualified mudra; Cherish the mind of the  
experience of bliss;  
Cherish the conduct that is elephant-like:\*4  
May you have these three things to be cherished.

To propagate instructions to bad vessels is a regrettable loss; To sing of your  
experience in songs is a regrettable loss; For the yogi to wander in cities  
is a regrettable loss: May you consider these three regrettable losses.



First, dharma friends gather in assemblies;  
Second, dakinis gather in assemblies;  
Third, daily provisions gather in assemblies:  
May you have these three things that gather.

Contemplate this song's meaning, and put it into practice.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa prostrated to the guru and then set out for India. Accompanying him were fifteen monks along with a Dzogchenpa\*<sup>5</sup> named Khyitön as their leader.\*<sup>6</sup> In Nepal, Rechungpa and Khyitön were able to engage in a little bit of dharma activity, and along the way met a disciple of Tipupa\*<sup>7</sup> named Bharima.

They asked the king of Khokhom for a permit to travel. He said, “You are the heart-son of the siddha who previously wouldn’t accept my invitation,” and according to his wish, Rechungpa received the permit and travel provisions. When he arrived in India, Rechungpa met Tipupa and received all of the dharma teachings that he had desired. Tipupa also developed faith in the Jetsun and entrusted Rechungpa with the gift of an agarwood staff.

Rechungpa also met Machik Drupé Gyälmo,\*<sup>8</sup> received the key instructions on Amitayus, and trained in black mantra with the tirthikas. When he arrived in Nepal, Tipupa’s disciple Bharima clarified the faults of dharma of the jealous lotsawa and so forth. These stories of Rechungpa’s journey to India and Nepal can be found in detail in his biography.

Through the illuminating samadhi, the Jetsun saw when Rechungpa had returned and went to greet him in the center of the Palkhü Plain. There, the father and son met again.

This is the cycle of Rechungpa and Tipupa.

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\*<sup>1</sup> This implies Milarepa probably just spoke about the teachings of black magic to Rechungpa without giving the full transmission of them. (TN) \*<sup>2</sup> This means “who has studied little.”

\*<sup>3</sup> These are the five Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis that Marpa did not receive from India and that Rechungpa went to retrieve at Milarepa’s command.

\*<sup>4</sup> Yogic conduct that is fearless and unrelenting, and that makes efforts to benefit beings.

\*<sup>5</sup> One who practices Dzogchen, or the Great Perfection.

\*<sup>6</sup> Khyitön, which means “Dog Teacher,” is also known as Ra Lotsawa (Thrangu 2001: 12).

\*<sup>7</sup> Rechungpa received the Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis from Tipupa, who himself was said to be an incarnation (through the practice of “entering the deceased”) of Marpa’s son Darma Dodé.

\*8 Literally, “One Mother, Queen of Accomplishment,” and known as Ekamatrika Siddharajñi in Sanskrit (T: *ma gcig grub pa'i rgyal mo*). Because of her mastery of the practice of long life, she was said to have lived to be over five hundred years old (Thrangu 2001: 15).

# 36

## Mégom Repa

NAMO GURU

While the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Nyanang Belly Cave, a merchant of the Mé clan came to meet the Jetsun. The merchant developed unwavering faith toward him and offered all the material things he had to the father Jetsun and his sons. Then being instructed in how to enter the gate of dharma, he meditated, and outstanding experience and realization developed in his mind-stream. The Jetsun gave the pointing out of the view, meditation, and conduct in union, and immediately the merchant saw the natural state of his own face and attained immeasurable delight and joy. Following his receiving of this instruction, in the assembly rows of a ganachakra offering, Drigom Repa said to Mégom,\*<sup>1</sup> “Do you have confidence in the dharma and the key instructions? How have signs of experience developed for you?”

Mégom said, “Yes, I do have confidence in the key instructions given out of compassion by the root and lineage gurus. Whatever arises, whether it is happiness or suffering, I have no need for anything other than the key instructions of the guru, and I have developed a strong and stable motivation never to abandon mountain retreats.”

The Jetsun was pleased and said, “Yes, Mégom, that is it. If you have confidence in the guru and the key instructions, you will be powerless *not* to give rise to experience and realization. However, they will not develop quickly, so you must be able to meditate in mountain retreats.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.

All who are assembled here, Mégom and so forth, Contemplate and put into practice

The song of this old man who has experience.

Because my confusion has been cut from the root, Self-awareness has dawned as my guru.

If self-awareness hasn't dawned as your guru, Then you must never be parted  
from a siddha lord.

All appearances have dawned as my texts.  
If appearances haven't dawned as your texts,  
Then you must never be parted from the genuine teachings.

Revulsion naturally arises for me.  
If revulsion hasn't naturally arisen for you, Then you must never be parted  
from the antidote.

I have realized the unborn reality.  
If you've not realized the unborn reality,  
Then you must maintain concern for karma, cause and effect.

I've understood samsara and nirvana are not two.  
If you've not understood samsara and nirvana as not two, Then you must  
meditate on the union of the two truths.

I'm fully trained in the inseparability of self and other.  
If you're not fully trained in the inseparability of self and other, Then you  
must never be separate from bodhichitta.

Realization naturally dawns for me.  
If realization hasn't naturally dawned for you, Then you must never be  
separate from discriminating awareness.

There is no meditation and postmeditation for me.  
If there is still meditation and postmeditation for you, Then you must practice  
the path of means in a solitary place.

Experiences continually arise for me.  
If they do not continually arise for you,  
Then you must never be separate from the three nose-tips.\*2

I've realized the three kayas are intrinsically present.  
If you've not realized the three kayas are intrinsically present, Then you must

join the stages of creation and completion.

For me, the six consciousnesses are completely relaxed.

If, for you the six consciousnesses aren't completely relaxed, Then you must not be separate from your commitments and samayas!

Thus he sang. Mégom was delighted and said, "Please accept me with kindness and give a single teaching that includes the pointing out of the union of view, meditation, and conduct." Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

I prostrate to the lord of blessings.

The union of view is such a delight!

The union of meditation, oh such joy!

The union of conduct makes me happy indeed!

These three kinds of union are incredibly amazing!

If you don't understand the union of view,

How can you know all phenomena are dharmakaya?

If you don't understand the union of meditation, How can suffering dawn as an ornament?

If you don't understand the union of conduct, Then how can revulsion naturally arise?

The sentient beings of the six realms of samsara And the wisdom of nirvana Are inseparable. They are of one nature.

Know this to be the union of view.

The myriad appearances of red and white

And the wisdom of dharmata

Are inseparable, one essence, in the dharmakaya.

Know this to be the union of meditation.

Like a water-moon, it pervades everything; Like a rainbow, there's nothing to be identified; Like the light of a candle, there is radiant clarity.

Know this to be the union of conduct.

These are possessed by all sentient beings;  
They are the three types of union.  
Nonduality is the key point of view,  
Nondistractedness is the key point of meditation, Union is the key point of  
conduct.  
These three inseparable is the key point of fruition.  
My son, you should practice like this!

Thus he sang. All of the disciple-sons generated a great positive motivation. Then when Mégom went by himself to stay in mountain retreats, he said to the Jetsun, “Please give me advice that will be easy to carry along with me.”

The Jetsun replied, “I have practiced in this way, and because of that, the good qualities have developed in my mind-stream. You should also practice in this way.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I, the yogi Milarepa,  
By looking nakedly, see the essence.  
Free of elaborations, what I see is like the sky.  
By resting directly, I realize the abiding nature.  
I realize the empty essence of all things.  
By relaxing at ease, wisdom holds its own ground.  
The clarity and mire of the river of awareness are separated.  
Completely casting them away, I cut through concepts and recollections.  
I’ve resolutely cut off the abyss of the six realms.  
Through recognizing my mind as buddha,  
I have no thing I wish to accomplish.  
When realization dawns from within,  
It is like the sun that rises over the darkness.  
The collections of concepts and afflictions,  
Without contrivance, dissolve in their own place.

Thus he sang. Mégom was overjoyed, and according to his guru’s instruction he meditated alone in mountain retreats. By doing that, signs of experience of the paths and bhūmis and outstanding good qualities of experience and realization arose in his mind. This close son of Milarepa known as Mégom Repa benefited many fortunate ones to be tamed.

This is the cycle of Mégom Repa.

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\*1 “Meditator of the Mé Clan.”

\*2 The “three nose-tips” (T: *sna rtse gsum*) are connected with nadi-prana practices of the subtle body.

## Sahle Ö

NAMO GURU

The Jetsun Milarepa went begging for alms in the practice of equal taste between the Nyanang Belly Cave and Ngokang. He stayed a few days at Lashing and then traveled to Naktra. On his way there, he encountered a young lady sixteen years of age with dark skin, who had bright yellow hair and was wearing beautiful clothing and ornaments. She had been to fetch water when the Jetsun said, “Young lady, please give this yogi today’s meal.”

The young lady replied, “If we whose doors are by the road gave meals to every beggar that came by, we would never manage.” Then she went on to her home.

The Jetsun remained there, and that evening the young lady had an excellent dream. Recalling the dream she thought, “We do not generally know when there is a buddha who is in human form. It is possible that the one called the Jetsun Milarepa is a buddha. If so, then last night’s dream is certainly due to his compassion. I will see who he is.” Then she went carrying one day’s food that she had prepared, and served it to the Jetsun.

“Yogi, where are you from?” she asked.

The Jetsun replied, “I’m one of the beggars in your neighborhood.”

“Are you not the Jetsun Mila who stays at the Nyanang Belly Cave?”

“Yes, that is also so.”

With faith that overwhelmed everything within her body, every hair on her body stood on end. She prostrated to him and said, “You are the one who was in my dream last night.”

Milarepa asked, “What was the dream?”

“I dreamt that the sun and moon were inside of me, but they had no light. Then another sun and moon dawned in the east, and the light from those lit up the sun and moon within. The sun and moon went out of my body, and then mixed with the light of the sun and moon of the east. With that, I could see the entire universe become completely illuminated. If I follow and attend the Jetsun, will



the dharma dawn for me?”

The Jetsun said, “It is possible that it will.” He blessed her with his samadhi and returned to the Nyanang Belly Cave. Then not long after, the young lady from before came with a friend. She came into the presence of the Jetsun and requested dharma teachings. Then, offering a piece of gold as a gift, she sang this song of offering:

EMA! Great Repa Yogi,  
Great siddha, now please kindly listen.  
When I look at my body that was born,  
I see it is impermanent like dew on grass  
And that makes this girl uneasy.

When I look at the friends who accompany me,  
I see they're impermanent, like the guests at a gathering.  
That too makes this girl uneasy.

When I look at wealth that's been amassed,  
I see it's impermanent, like the honey of a bee.  
That too makes this girl uneasy.

When I look at the land where I was born,  
I see it's like the prison of an evil king.  
That too makes this girl uneasy.

In the day, I investigate with intellect,  
And at night, without sleeping, I ponder and think.  
By the power of my previously gathered merit,  
This one time I've attained a human body.  
Months and years follow at my back;  
But only days and hours lead on in front.  
With every moment that passes, my death comes closer.  
Like a rotting tree trunk, my body's soon to collapse.  
My breath, like mist, will soon dissolve.  
When I think of these things, I feel uneasy.  
With my mind in a tangle, I can never sleep

with my mind in a tussle, I can never sleep.

Lord Father, Great Jetsun, at your feet I supplicate: May my mind stay  
focused on the genuine dharma.

Now, Lord, Great Jetsun, please be my refuge!

With your kindness, please grant me the sublime dharma.

Thus she sang. In order to test whether she was able to practice dharma devotedly and to see if she would still practice if drawn toward mundane concerns, the Jetsun said to her, “I have no need for your gold. It is not possible for you rich girls to practice the dharma. Even if you could, it is difficult to become self-sufficient through the dharma. Now, since you are young, your focus on mundane, worldly activity is strong.” Then he sang this song of realization in reply to her:

Glorious Chakravartin King, Nirmanakaya!

I bow at the feet of Marpa, so kind.

Up in the wondrous palace, the divine garden

Of the heavenly realm of Tushita

Are wondrous divine flowers

With sweet fragrance and luster.

But common bees can never find them.

Even if they find them, they cannot draw the nectar.

In Jambudvipa, to the south of Mount Meru,

Is a bathing pool with the eight good qualities\*<sup>1</sup>

That cleanses all negativities, obscurations, and latent tendencies.

Ordinary birds are not able to find it.

Even if they find it, they will not stay.

To the north of Bodhgaya\*<sup>2</sup>

Are medicinal trees of sandalwood

That clear away all bodily illness.

But no sick man can ever find them.

Even if they are found, they won't know how to use them.

In the north, in the land of snows

At the border of Nepal and Tibet,  
There lies a protector of all miserable beings,  
The self-arisen image of Wati Sangpo.\*<sup>3</sup>

But unfortunate ones can never encounter it.  
Even if they encounter it, they won't have faith.

In this limitless ocean of samsara,  
Are the miserable beings lacking in confidence.  
They wander throughout the three lower realms.  
Though it's possible they attain the freedoms and resources, They cannot  
consistently accumulate merit.  
Even if they accumulate some, they are carried by delusion.

Though one gains a human birth with the freedoms and resources That is like  
a shining daytime star,  
Feeling comfort, they travel that path of comfort  
And don't enter the path of the genuine dharma.  
Even if they enter the gate of dharma,  
Those who correctly keep samaya are few.

By the kindness of the father Jetsun,  
All appearances are made of gold;  
I have no need for your little treasures.  
This song with five examples and their meaning, making six, I have sung for  
a faithful student.  
But your faith right now is merely passing,  
And it is difficult for it to become constant and unchanging.  
Therefore, young girl, it is best that you go.  
In the future, you can focus one-pointedly on dharma.  
Care for your spouse as though he were divine.  
Care for your children to whom you're karmically indebted.<sup>120</sup>  
Restore the ruins of the fortress on high.  
Work vigorously in the fields and cultivate them fully.

Care for your livestock just like your own child.  
Above, make offerings to the three jewels and the guru.  
Below, care with kindness for the suffering and poor.

In between, have respect for your parents-in-law.  
Be friendly with the neighbors in your own land,  
And make supplications to this old man.  
Aspire to meet the dharma in the future.  
I aspire that your life be auspicious and long.

Thus he sang. The young lady made prostrations to the Jetsun and said, “Remembering the faults of samsara, I wish only to practice the dharma from the core of my being and have no desire at all for mundane, worldly things. And here is the reason why.” Then she offered this song to him:

I bow at the feet of the Jetsun who is so kind.  
Grant your blessings that my wishes may be fulfilled; Lord, Great Repa,  
please kindly listen.  
These words that I offer you with devotion,  
You’ll know if they are sincere or not.

I have such great sadness and despair.  
And pondering over what can be done,  
I remember impermanence and death from deep within.  
Since I was born to my mother, up until now,  
I’ve seen many die, both old and young.  
Life is impermanent like a dewdrop on grass;  
Days and hours go by unnoticed.  
There is no place, anywhere,  
Where death will not come; this I understand.  
That I will die is completely certain,  
And once I die, there’ll be no control over where I’m born.  
When I contemplate the sufferings of the lower realms, I’m terrified,  
thinking, “I could suffer like that.”

*Contemplating the other modes of samsara*

Contemplating the other modes of samsara,  
I'll engage in the bad karma of getting married.  
When doing the work of samsara,  
You leave your kind parents behind;  
You are yoked, and then taken to an unkind man.  
It's a foundation laid out near the three lower realms, Where the tree of the  
higher realms and liberation is felled.

He carries away your parents' food and wealth, And meaninglessly, you work  
as his slave.

This companion who jumps with you into samsara:  
First, he's a divine prince, with a sweet smile;  
In the middle, he's a demon, with an angry black face; In the end, he's a  
young bull, always ready to beat you.  
Thinking this, weariness has arisen within.  
Therefore, this girl will practice sublime dharma.  
For companions, I'll stay with vajra brothers and sisters.

Then, as for corporeal sons you give birth to:  
Very few are endowed with any merit.  
Though it's possible that a few do have good karma,  
Most are just after karmic debts to be repaid.  
First, they plunder your body's beauty;  
In the middle, they plunder food from your mouth;  
In the end, they plunder wealth from your hands.  
Thinking this, weariness has arisen within.  
Therefore, this girl will practice sublime dharma.  
For a son, I'll care for the child of awareness.

As for temples, guesthouses, and so on,  
Very few were built with any real meaning.  
All of these prisons of samsara  
First bring suffering to your mind;  
In the middle, they torment your body;  
In the end, they send you to utter ruin.

in the end, they send you to utter ruin.

Thinking this, weariness has arisen within.

Therefore this girl will practice sublime dharma

And will build the castle of fearless meditation.

Besides the stream of virtue of the faithful—

The forms and teachings of the Tathagata—\*4

All field and farm work is meaningless.

First you fight over empty land; In the middle, you fight over getting water;

In the end, you fight with other people.

Thinking this, weariness has arisen within.

Therefore this girl will practice sublime dharma;

I'll tame the field of my savage mind-stream.

If you seize the mind with the bodhichitta intention, Then it will be possible  
for merit to come.

If not, then through focusing on the gathering of wealth— Raising sheep and  
cattle—you'll have negative karma.

First, mere covetousness will be thrown over by strong desire; In the middle,  
pride and jealousy grow;

In the end, it will be a signal for enemies to come.

Thinking this, weariness has arisen within.

Therefore this girl will practice sublime dharma;

With compassion I'll care for cattle, sheep, and the six classes of beings.

Not taking hold of your own faults,

You will always see faults in others.

How can you ever be harmonious with everyone?

Even the Buddha, our omniscient teacher,

Who is free of the stains of such flaws,

Was seen to have a heap of faults

By unwholesome and nonvirtuous ones.

Thus, you'll never be harmonious with everyone

And will never be able to please them.

Thinking this, weariness has arisen within.  
Therefore this girl will practice sublime dharma;  
Now I'll look at the face of my own mind.

For you, an emanation of the Buddha,  
All appearances have dawned as gold.  
Even if they do not dawn in this way,  
There is no existence or nonexistence.  
Since I have abandoned attachment,  
I must offer my worldly, mundane piece of gold.

All the Victorious Ones have said, "Abandon those things that generate great attachment."

All the buddhas, too, have said,  
"If you use illusion-like food and wealth  
Toward virtue, they will become meritorious."  
Thus I have heard with my ears.

On that account, I offer this to you,  
And having received this sign of my devotion,  
Please kindly teach the sublime dharma, I pray.

Thus she offered this song. The Jetsun accepted her gold, returned it to her, and said, "If you will truly practice even at the risk of your life, then you have entered the gate of dharma. Therefore, prepare offerings for the guru and the yidams." Then, with devotion, she made a vast collection of offerings.

The Jetsun then gave her the upasaka vows from the sutra tradition as well as the abhishekas from the mantra tradition, and then gave her the name Sahle Ö.\*5 Taking the instructions to heart, she was then sent to meditate, and the good qualities of the signs of experience quickly developed. She became capable of remaining in the mountains.

The Jetsun said, "I am so pleased with your perseverance and meditation. By the experience and realization that you have attained, you will be able to stay in the mountains. Now go to the mountains to meditate in solitude. Keep this essential instruction in your heart until we meet again." Then he sang this song of

realization of instruction:

Qualified guru with great compassion,  
Three precious jewels, excellent sources of refuge,  
The dakinis and dharmapalas, with your great power,  
All of these I've described, to you I bow.

I don't know how to sing songs with poetic words,  
But these words have the blessings of the lineage.  
Their meaning is the intention of the Victorious Ones.

O faithful meditator Sahle Ö, Wipe the dirt from the mirror of mind  
And look into the space of the stainless sky.  
With the blessings of all the previous siddhas,  
Go meditate in the mountains, in solitary places.  
The reason for wandering in mountain retreats  
Is to gain mastery; look at mind's nature.  
Now I'll explain the way to look:  
Listen without distraction, Sahle Ö!

Taking the mountain up there as an example,  
You should meditate free of any movement.  
To give rise to the Buddha's good qualities,  
Do this with determination that forbears pleasure and pain.

Taking the river down there as an example,  
Meditate without breaking the flow.  
To receive the blessings of the guru,  
You must have continuous respect and devotion.

Taking the sky here as an example,  
Meditate without center or edge.  
Look at the reality of the true nature;  
Do so with means and wisdom in union.

Taking the sun and moon as an example,



Meditate without clarity becoming obscured.

Know the six types of beings to have been your parents; Have compassion that fully encompasses them all.

Taking the ocean down there as an example,

Meditate without any dullness and torpor.

Look directly at your own mind;

Practice according to the guru's speech.

Taking the earth as an example,

Meditate completely free of change.

To be an appropriate vessel for the instructions, Make faith stable within the all-base.

Looking inwardly at your own mind,

Meditate without any labels or terms.

To make appearances dawn as your texts,

Make your very own mind what you study.

At all times and in every way,

Procure the provisions of inexhaustible generosity.

Beautify yourself with the ornament of discipline.

Shake off and wear the animal hide of patience.

Ride the magical horse of diligence.

Seek out the noble city of meditation.

Become wealthy with the riches of prajña.

Not forgetting the kindness of the guru,

Make many offerings of your experience and realization.

Do you understand this meaning, you woman of faith?

Thus he sang. Her faith grew further and she arranged a vast array of offerings and offered them to please the Jetsun. Then, according to the Jetsun's instruction, she gave up all the deeds of this life and went to meditate in the Nangyul Mountain of Nyanang.

The great Jetsun then went to the Red Rock of Drin, and while in a state of luminosity in which clarity is not obscured, he looked upon Rechungpa with great love. A beam of bright light from a crystal stupa came directly to him. Due to the power of the black magic that Rechungpa had trained in with the tirthikas, a great storm gathered and disturbed [the vision]. Thinking, “Has my son Rechungpa encountered an obstacle?” he flew from Poto Red Rock to Lachi. On his way, he touched his foot down on the side of the rock known as Rechen Practice Cave, where he left his footprint. Again, while in a state of luminosity, he saw Rechungpa and knew that although his life was not in any danger, he had obstacles of nondharmic mind states.

Then he went on the road to Nyanang to check up on Sahle Ö. On the way, he encountered several monks, whom he asked of her whereabouts. They said, “She remains in the same retreat that she was originally in. Her body never moves. She never speaks. It’s as though she disregards everything. It seems she has fallen into a fault in her meditation.”

The Jetsun thought, “That she can meditate like this is not a fault, it’s a very good quality.” Then he went to where she was. She too, in a state of luminosity, saw that the Jetsun was coming and so went into the valley to meet him. She prostrated to him and asked after his health, and then sat down without saying anything. Then to awaken experience within her, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

Sahle Ö, who has taken into your mind-stream

The dharma of relying on solitary mountain retreats: First, with devotion you  
relied on the guru,

And through the power of blessing, your mind-stream was ripened.

You relied on the supreme taste of the path of means’ nectar, And have  
developed certainty in the genuine dharma.

Your meditation hasn’t been too tight or too loose,

So the signs of experience of those previously on the path have dawned  
within.

Since you’ve had no obstacles or adverse conditions, You have no questions  
now and that is also excellent.

Even if you practice with effort in the dharma,

That is like filling up on poisonous food:

It’s not possible to have liberation.

The musk-deer stays for a long time in caves.  
The black raven's vajra recitations are many.<sup>121</sup>  
The white-bellied fish<sup>122</sup> with her breath control is excellent.  
The white-cored stalk is skilled in extracting nutrients.  
Marmots meditate on the absorption of cessation.  
Brahmans practice austerities for a long time.  
Parrots know how to intone empty rhetoric.\*6  
If the factor of liberation doesn't dawn in your mind, Though you search with  
longing, you won't find the freedom path.

Merely blocking the proliferation of thoughts That swirl in your mind like a  
pool of water  
Will not liberate you from the ocean of samsara.

With the chandali of meditating on attributes,  
Unbiased prajña will burst forth.  
With the chandali of resting the mind,  
You will recognize the bardo's pristine awareness.  
With the chandali of innate reality,  
You'll realize reality free of birth and cessation.  
With the chandali of bindu and nadi,  
You'll be free of clinging to things as real.  
The central channel, the avadhuti, that is free of effort Is uncontrived, self-  
arisen, and primordially pure:  
There the knot of duality is untied in its own place.  
Its essence is the key point of Mahamudra.  
Do you realize this, dear Sahle Ö?

Thus he sang. Then Sahle Ö offered her realization to him:

There is one who holds the lineage of Vajradhara  
Who received the prophecy of the four classes of dakinis.  
Through the compassion of Tilo and Naro,  
Holders of the teachings of the practice lineage,

The intention of the tantras dawned in his heart.  
The harvest of compassion of the translator Marpa Lotsawa Expands in all  
the ten directions,  
And pure fruit ripens for every one of his students.  
Because of this fruit, I take to my crown  
Your lotus feet that liberate my own mind-stream.

Great Repa of Gungtang, with such compassion,  
Your banner of renown flies in the ten directions.  
Precious jewel upon my crown,  
With faith and respect, I supplicate you,  
Father, guru, who has been so kind  
To myself and all of those to be tamed.

You steer our analysis to the dharma And establish us upon on the unerring  
path.

Through abhisheka you ripen mind-streams that are unripe.  
Through means you liberate those without freedom.

These appearances that dawn as a variety outside,  
Through your pointing-out are like an illusion.  
Awareness meets dharmata, the mother.  
The magical displays of the wavering mind  
Dissolve in their own place, like waves of the ocean.  
Through the great strength and force of my practice, I directly cut through  
every conceptual imputation,  
All the deviations of the mundane path.

The unmistakable path has taken birth in my mind.  
I understand the Secret Mantra's path of means.  
I don't mistake higher paths for those that are lower.  
I wanted buddhahood, but I couldn't realize it,  
So in the guru's presence I fervently requested  
The excellent support of the Secret Mantra.

Together, with my special dharma brother Ngendzongpa, We compare our experiences and realization.

I'm a clever lady, grounded and smart.  
Those who try to deceive me, I make them my meal!  
I make short my time in ignorant sleep  
And prolong my mind-stream in the state of shamatha.  
I turn down all men to their face.  
Many years have gone by since I gave up my soft pillow.

Mahamudra's reality descends upon my head;  
I rest within it one-pointedly, undistracted.  
In my striving for the state of nirvana,  
I am not separate from emptiness and compassion,  
Thus I have no pride or disregard for others.  
I'm never unhappy with discussing the dharma.  
The guru who is endowed with kindness,  
I've always seen him as the Buddha.  
I offer this song in deep gratitude to him.  
May the dakinis revel in this feast of sound!

Thus, she offered her realization. The Jetsun was pleased and said, "So, the young lady has shown more signs of meditation. For vipashyana to dawn like this is very rare. You have entered into the path of omniscience, and you should continue to meditate in mountain retreats."

Accordingly, Sahle Ö remained inseparable from mountain retreats and meditated. Through this, she became a self-liberated dakini who benefited the teachings and sentient beings.

This is one of the stories of the four primary female disciples of the Jetsun that were written down by Ngendzong Tönpa Jangchung Gyalpo, who has the *dharani* of perfect memory.

This is the cycle of Sahle Ö.

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\*1 This refers to the eight good qualities of water: sweet, cool, soft, light, clear, clean, does not harm the

throat, and helps the stomach (*TDC*).

\*2 In Tibetan, Bodhgaya is referred to as the “Vajra Seat” (*rdo rje gdan*).

\*3 “Wati Zangpo (*wati bzang po*) or the Jowo of Kyirong (*skyid grong jo bo*). A famous sandalwood image of Avalokiteshvara in the form of Khasharpana, which is one of the five statues brought from Nepal by Akaramatishila at the order of King Songtsen Gampo...This highly venerated image is said to have spoken several times to the temple keepers and to have given prophecies. People used to come from all over central Tibet to seek its blessing. About the size of a five-year-old child, it was saved by Tibetan refugees and is now preserved by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at Dharamsala in India” (Shabkar: 390).

\*4 These two lines refer to the work of making statues and working for the teachings of the Buddha. Besides that kind of work, no other work, such as working in fields or on the farm, has any meaning.

\*5 “Vivid Light.”

\*6 These lines give examples of methods that could be used in connection with dharma (staying in caves, vajra recitations, breath control, extracting nutrients [or rasayana], etc.) but fail because of being devoid of the “factor of liberation.”

## The Story of the Yak Horn

NAMO GURU

Sahle Ö, the yogini of the awakened class, made progress in her practice, and the Jetsun Milarepa went to Palkhü in order to greet his heart-son Rechungpa. Along the way, he stayed at Betse Döyön Fortress. Rechungpa, who was approaching from Gungtang, had given rise to a slight bit of pride. Within the state of luminosity, the Jetsun saw this and went out to greet him.

When the father and son met each other in the center of the field at Palkhü, Rechungpa thought, “I have now gone to India twice, and this time, I went according to the command of the guru in order to benefit beings and the Buddha’s teaching. In terms of blessings and compassion, the Jetsun is greater, but I am more learned in scriptures and logic. When he greets me, I wonder if he will also prostrate to me in turn.”

Thinking this, Rechungpa gave the Jetsun the agarwood staff that Tipupa had given him to offer, and prostrated to Milarepa. But the Jetsun had no intention at all of prostrating in return. Although Rechungpa was displeased at this, he said to Milarepa, “Lama, since I have gone to India, what sites have you stayed at? Are you physically well? Where are my master and his disciples going? Are my repa companions well?”

The Jetsun thought, “Is this pride of Rechungpa because of some evil done by those tirthikas? Is it by the curse of some demon? Whatever the case, I must use methods to clear away this obstacle of pride.” Smiling, he sang this song in reply:

I’m a yogi who traverses the snowy mountainsides.

My body is healthy; it flourishes in the mandala of space.

The harsh illness of the five poisons has been removed;

Thus depression never comes, and I am happy.

I’ve relinquished the distraction of attachment to busyness; All alone, I  
attained mastery, and so I am happy.

I have relinquished the variety of activities; In uninhabited, solitary lands, I  
am happy.

I've relinquished the family life with its worldly suffering; Without the work  
of hoarding or protecting, I am happy.

I've no wish to be learned, I have not studied texts;  
With virtuous activity free of worries, I am happy.

I don't have great pride or flaunt my speech;  
Since I don't debate or have disputes, I am happy.

I know nothing of deception or hypocrisy;  
Without having to do "this" for "that," I am happy.

Without any arrogance or desire for fame,  
Gossip and slander are no more, and so I am happy.

Anyplace is fine—anywhere, I am happy.

I can wear any clothes—with anything, I am happy.

Any food is fine—with what I get, I am happy.

At anytime, I am always happy.

I, the old father Milarepa,  
Because of the kindness of Marpa the Translator,  
Know samsara and nirvana to be complete within the mind;\*<sup>1</sup>  
Thus I'm a yogi who is always happy.  
The repa companions have excellent health;  
In solitary mountains, their practice has flourished.

Son, Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa,  
Have you returned from India?  
In all the places you went and paths you took,  
Have your mind and body been free of fatigue?  
Are your mind and awareness vivid and bright?  
Have your songs of realization and your voice been blissful?  
Did you accomplish the instructions of your guru?  
Did you obtain the dharma that was desired?  
Did you obtain the other key instructions to make nine?<sup>123</sup>



'There were things unknown: do you now know mine?  
Are you free of pride and self-regard?  
Is all that you have done for the benefit of others?

Rechungpa has returned from a foreign land!  
Let this melody be a gift for your arrival.

Thus he sang. Then Rechungpa sang in reply:

To fulfill the lord guru's command, his vajra speech,  
I went to the land of India.  
The road was fearsome and treacherous;  
Thus, I endured many hardships and sufferings.  
But it was worth the price of enduring such hardship.

I met Tipupa, the Tree of Secret Mantra\*<sup>2</sup>  
And I met Machik Drupé Gyalmo.  
I saw the yidam deity of great wonder  
And witnessed signs of the prophecies of dakinis.  
As to the upadeshas we wished to receive,  
I received Awareness: The Lamp of Wisdom  
Nadis, Prana, and the Lattice of Chakras  
Equal Taste: The Mirror of Outer Phenomena  
Great Bliss: The Precious Jewel of Speech<sup>124</sup>  
Samaya of the Mirror of One's Own Mind;  
Samaya Substance: The Sun of Realization.  
I received Conduct: Striking Water with the Sword<sup>125</sup>  
Self-Liberation: The Mahamudra;  
And Deathlessness: The Extraction of Amrita;  
Further, I received the Gold-Like Dharma;  
Pointing Out the Essential Points of the Bardo;  
Key Instructions on Resting for a Session in Meditation;<sup>126</sup>  
The Three Symbols and Five Precious Things;  
The Six Dharmas To Be Put into Practice;

Necessary Key Instructions for This Life, and so forth:  
These were the inconceivable key instructions.

The mamos and dakinis gathered like clouds,  
And the gurus and deities were very pleased.

Their minds and mine mixed together as one.  
Siddhis came down like a rain of flowers.  
The *tendrel* of good omens was placed around my neck.  
The celestial birthright was placed in my mouth.  
The upadeshas and naked instructions were put into my hand.  
And aspirations for auspiciousness acted as my guide.

At midnight, my meaningful intentions were accomplished,  
Then the sun of joy and happiness dawned.  
Now I've met with my Jetsun Guru.  
The Cycles of the Formless Dakinis and so forth,  
This genuine dharma that I have received,  
Since it came due to your previous activity,  
Please see if it is suitable for you,  
And invest me with due praise and honor.

When he had sung this, he offered the manuals of instructions into the Jetsun's hand. Then in order to cut through Rechungpa's pride, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

Rechungpa, whom I've raised since you were a young boy,  
Don't boast of your hardships, listen to my song.  
This meaningful song, a golden strand of speech,  
This pleasing melody, the secret roar:  
If it seems reasonable, then keep it in your mind.

The Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis  
Were invested in you before by the dakinis.  
But one who wants greatness for himself  
Will die at the knife of evil men.

Rich people, who amass their hoard with avarice,  
Are just giving wealth to their hateful enemies.  
Seeking out wealth, enjoyments, and food  
Is a premonition of dying of starvation.  
Evil ones not taking stock of themselves  
Is the deceptive means for bringing their own demise.  
The amassing of slaves by leaders and officials  
Is the destructive demon that brings the good land to ruin.

An evil man not respecting his wife Is a bad omen of bringing ruin upon  
himself.

A dharma practitioner who can't take his own seat  
Is the ruinous tree of the teachings' decline.  
Not keeping the dakinis' key instructions secret  
Is the root of upsetting the dakinis.

Son, regarding yourself highly over these key instructions Means you want  
your mind-stream to stray into corruption.  
Saying lots about dharma with empty words  
Means you want to put a stop to your good meditation experience.  
Boasting so much about what you did  
Means you want to waver over accepting your guru.

A disciple not having respect for his guru:  
There is no greater regret than that.  
A meditator who doesn't remain in the mountains:  
There is no greater loss than that.  
Practitioners who haven't relinquished close ones:  
There is no greater ruin than that.  
Scholars who have not engaged in practice:  
There is no greater shame than that.  
Monks who have not kept their discipline:  
There is no greater shame than that.

My handsome son called Rechungpa,  
If this is reasonable, then keep it in your heart.  
If it's not reasonable, then do as you please.  
I'm an old man with fear of death,  
So I don't have time for lengthy chatter.  
Since you're young and you think so well of yourself,  
You'll deride, in return, the one who tells you  
You are prideful, ill-mannered, and use coarse speech.

Translator Marpa who has been so kind,  
Grant your blessing that this beggar exhausts the eight worldly concerns.

Thus he sang. Then he picked up Rechungpa's manual and the agarwood staff, and with the feet of miraculous power,<sup>\*3</sup> he ran ahead. Rechungpa felt very tired and could not keep up. Running after him, he sang this song:

Father Jetsun Guru, kindly listen.  
It's impossible for the minds of son and father not to meet.  
All these key instructions, this stainless speech,  
I offer to you, the Father Jetsun.

The dakinis cleared up mistakes, omissions, and additions Of these Dharma  
Cycles of the Formless Dakinis.  
These profound and most-profound teachings were sealed by command.  
Please, look upon me, O Jetsun Guru!

Furthermore, the Connection of the Long-Life Practice,  
The Dakini's Symbol of Secret Word,  
The Abiding Nature of the Vajra Body,  
And the Sacred Bond of Drupe Gyalmo,  
These, too, I offer to the guru lord.

Further still, the Profound Protection of Signs,  
The Upadesha for Healing Illness,  
The Crushing Key Points of Healing Demons, and so forth,  
These many upadeshas that are like refined gold.

I offer them to you, O Guru Lord.

The King of the Six Excellent Medicines  
The Samaya Substances of the Dakas and Dakinis,  
I've carried these back on my shoulder.  
I offer them to return the kindness of the guru.  
This staff of agarwood, supreme king of medicines,  
Was invested with power by the dakinis.  
It is wondrous and invaluable.  
It was sent to offer as a gift in the Jetsun's presence  
By Tipupa, the Tree of Secret Mantra.

They are wonderful indeed. Please accept them, And look upon this weary  
Rechungpa.

Think of me with love, and stop a while.  
If you were to allow me to rest,  
It would be a most supreme generosity.  
To assist with the hunger and thirst of others  
Is the king of all kindnesses that one could perform.  
To give the wealth of kindhearted words  
Is superior for the destitute.  
To give excellent advice that teaches the path  
Is the samaya for all dharma kings.

Thus he sang. The Jetsun listened to Rechungpa's song as he ran. At the end of the song, he sat down and replied to him with this song of realization:

It is excellent if father and son are harmonious:  
To be harmonious with all is truly king,  
And to be harmonious with your father is king of kings.  
To be discordant with everyone is a bad portent;  
To be discordant with your father is a portent of demons.  
For good conduct, harmony with your father is excellent.  
One should repay one's mothers' kindness.  
Conduct that's harmonious with people is comely.

Conduct that's harmonious with people is comely.  
By pleasing your dharma friends, your wishes are fulfilled.  
By pleasing your guru, blessings will come.  
By regarding yourself humbly, you perform self-benefit.  
A practitioner is one who relinquishes his bad attitude.  
If you honor others' disparagement, that is loving-kindness.  
If you maintain humility, you will gain renown.  
If you are without hypocrisy, your samaya is pure.  
If you spend time with noble ones, the qualities develop.  
If you have few concepts, malicious gossip is blocked.  
If you have great bodhichitta, excellence comes.  
These are the things that the learned ones do.  
A fool doesn't distinguish friend from foe.

These Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis,  
In terms of my path, neither help nor hurt.  
As to Tipupa, Tree of Secret Mantra,  
My connection with him is more profound than yours.  
Of the dharma of Machik Drupé Gyalmo,  
There is no better disciple than me.  
The Secret Words of Mamos and Dakinis  
Were entrusted to me; whom else would they teach?  
In the Golden Mandala of the Woods and Fields\*<sup>4</sup>  
I've feasted in many a ganachakra.  
As to the yidam Vajrayogini,  
I've been with her longer than I have with you.  
Of the pure fields of the dakas and dakinis,  
There is not one with which I am separate.  
I have more concern than you  
Toward whatever it is that you do.  
Son, don't be bound by arrogant fame-seeking.  
Go and meditate in solitary retreats!

Thus he sang. Then the master and his disciple walked on together. This is the first part of the cycle of the Yak's Horn, "The Meeting."

When the Jetsun and his son were on the road, Rechungpa thought, "If it had been another guru, upon my return from India, I would have received a cheerful and warm welcome. But since my guru lives with such conditions and clothing as he does, how could I expect such a welcome from him? I spent time in India and learned all of these teachings of the Secret Mantra; attaining enlightenment through austerities and hardship will not do. I should be able to meditate and practice with desirable objects." Thus he ruminated with great pride and gave rise to negative thoughts and views about the Jetsun, of which the Jetsun was aware.

Along the path, there was a yak's horn, and the Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, pick up that yak's horn and bring it along."

At that, Rechungpa thought, "My guru sometimes says completely useless things. Sometimes he gets angry like an old dog, and sometimes he has desire like an old man, just as the old saying goes. What use is this yak's horn?" Then he said to the Jetsun, "It's useless for eating, and it's useless for drinking. We should just leave it."

"We won't become fettered by such an object and there will come a time when it will be useful." Then the Jetsun took hold of it himself.

Over the center of the great field of Palmo Paltang, there was no hiding place even big enough for a small mouse. Where the sky had been clear, dark clouds began to gather. Then hail, brought in by a fierce wind, began to fall. Without having the chance to look at his guru, Rechungpa covered his head and sat down. When the hail began to slow a bit, Rechungpa searched for the guru but couldn't find him, so he sat and waited for a while. Then, Rechungpa heard the Jetsun's voice coming from within the yak's horn that was resting upon a raised piece of ground. He went over to it, and thought, "This is the same horn that the Jetsun was holding before." He went to pick it up, but he wasn't able to move it. There it stayed, stuck to the ground. Rechungpa looked inside, and without the yak's horn getting larger, or the Jetsun's body becoming smaller, there the Jetsun sat right within the opening of the yak's horn, like the image of a mirror and with a quality of expansiveness. Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization to Rechungpa:

The lord guru's blessings have entered my body:

I'm not a meditator who sits in ordinary form.

Circumambulate and prostrate to

This display of miraculous body, Rechungpa!

The guru's blessings have entered my speech:  
I'm not a meditator who speaks idle chatter.  
I have a treasury of songs with key instructions;  
Keep their meaning in your mind, Rechungpa!

The guru's blessings have entered my mind:  
I'm not a meditator for whom wrong notions arise.  
For the higher perceptions—the manifestation of awareness— Have devotion  
and respect, Rechungpa!

My son Rechungpa's view is like a vulture, the king of birds: Sometimes it's  
high, and sometimes it's low.  
Between high and low, stop and think!  
Don't be so hurried, my cloth-clad attendant!  
If the son is equal to the father, then come inside this yak's horn.  
A comfortable and spacious house is inside this yak's horn.

Rechungpa's meditation is like the sun and moon: Sometimes they shine  
brightly, and sometimes they're clouded.  
Between bright and obscured, stop and think!  
Don't be so hurried, my cloth-clad attendant!  
If the son is equal to the father, then come inside this yak's horn.  
A comfortable and spacious house is inside this yak's horn.

My son Rechungpa's conduct is like the wind:  
Sometimes it's calm and sometimes it's rushing.  
Between calm and rushing, stop and think!  
Don't be so hurried, my cloth-clad attendant!  
If the son is equal to the father, then come inside this yak's horn.  
A comfortable and spacious house is inside this yak's horn.

My son Rechungpa's fruition is like a field's harvest:  
Sometimes it's excellent and sometimes it's blighted.  
Between excellent and blighted, stop and think!



between excellent and blighted, stop and think!

Don't be so hurried, my cloth-clad attendant!

If the son is equal to the father, then come inside this yak's horn.

A comfortable and spacious house is inside this yak's horn.

For the mind that's plagued by minor adverse conditions,\*5

This yak's horn guesthouse is delightful—an excellent place.

Son, your father beckons you to come!

Son, it's improper not to come to your father's home.

I'm an old man, I'm long in the tooth.

I've never gone to the land of India.

Thus I'm of little importance, and I'm in these cramped quarters.

Son, Rechungpa, your body is young.

You've gone to India and served many scholars and siddhas.

You've become important, so step into these wide, open quarters.

Inside this yak's horn where it's dry,

There is no clinging to ego or to things as real.

So, Rechungpa, come inside this yak's horn!

Thus he sang. Rechungpa thought to himself, "Will I be able to fit inside?" Then he tried to enter the horn, but not even his head or hand would fit. Rechungpa thought, "The Jetsun's power may be real, or it may not be. But I do know the hail was real." Then trembling as he wept, he put his mouth up to the horn and offered this melody:

Father Guru, Jetsun, please listen:

This lineage servant, Rechung Dorje Drak,

His view, meditation, conduct, and fruition

Are not high or low, clear or obscured, calm or hurried,

Nor are they good or bad: they are right in their own place.

Whether my cotton cloth is wet or dry, I supplicate you!

Whether I match my father or not, I supplicate you!

Thus he sang. Then the Jetsun came out from the yak's horn and gazed into the sky. The wind settled, the clouds dissipated, and the warm sun shone down,

drying Rechungpa's cloth garment. While sitting for a moment, the Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, your power is fine as it is. I knew that you did not need to go to India. Since I am satisfied with the teachings of Mahamudra and the Six Dharmas of Naropa, I never went to India. That you have now gone to India and received this other dharma that was wished for is excellent."

Rechungpa said, "Lama, now I am hungry and cold; please let us go over to that tent to beg for alms."

"Now is not the time for begging for alms."

"I am famished right now. Please, we must go over."

"Okay, very well, we'll go ahead. In the first big tent there, there are two or three people with whom we have *tendrel*, we can go up there to beg first."

Rechungpa replied, "They beat people who beg for alms; don't be too eager for the big tents. The people in the smaller tents won't deride us. We should go over here to the smaller tents in the camp first."

Then they went to the door of the small yellow tent and announced that they were seeking alms.

A frightful old woman from inside came to the door. "It's probably easy for you yogis to come begging here day and night, but it's difficult for us. It's not okay for you to come saying you want something to eat. The person whom you ask needs food, too.<sup>127</sup> I have already given what I had to other beggars this morning, so I have nothing. Go beg from someone else!" she said with contempt.

The Jetsun said, "In the evening there is nothing to be eaten. Since the sun is about to set, we should go somewhere to sleep." Then they went and slept on the other side of the camp. In the middle of the night there was a clamor that came from the tents and went on for some time. Toward the end of the night, the noise stopped, and then the sun rose.

The Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, look at the tents."

Looking, Rechungpa replied, "That old lady last night who wouldn't give us alms isn't there at all."

Milarepa said, "Well, let's go over there. There are things to eat and things to do."

The master and disciple went over to the tents, where they saw that the old woman had passed away; she had died because of speaking harshly to a holy man. The people from the other tents had taken her money. For food, there was a small bag full of soft butter and tsampa and a bucket full of yogurt that was fermenting.

The Jetsun said, “Son, Rechungpa, all phenomena are like this. Last night, we felt we missed out at not getting any of this. Today, it has been left behind for us both. I’d like some food, hand me some.” Then the master and disciple took the deceased woman’s things and offered them as substances in a ganachakra. The edible leftovers Rechungpa packed up, and they prepared to leave.

The Jetsun said, “Rechungpa, it is not good to take food from a corpse without doing something beneficial for it. There is a worldly proverb that says, ‘The old people eat the food, and the young people do the work.’ Therefore, you carry the corpse, and I will lead it.”

Then Rechungpa, disrespectfully stepping on Milarepa’s shadow, carried the old woman’s body as the Jetsun led. Coming to a meadow, Milarepa said, “Now, put the corpse over here.” Touching his staff to the corpse’s heart center he said, “Rechungpa, all beings, like this, will die. But those who do not think that it will happen to them miss the opportunity to practice the genuine dharma. We both should also be very vigilant and aware of this.” Then he sang this song of realization on the six examples of illusion and impermanence:

The guru’s kindness is beyond comprehension!

When the understanding of impermanence arises in your mind-stream, All  
activities become dharma practice.

By remembering death again and again,

You are victorious over the demon of laziness.

As in the case of this woman last night,

The time of death cannot be known.

Rechungpa, don’t let your mind-stream be hardened:

Listen to your guru!

Look there at objects appearing outside:

Appearances are impermanent, like last night’s dream.

Remembering that dream, confusion makes me uneasy.

Have you cut the root of confusion, Rechungpa?

When I think of this, I remember the sublime dharma.

This scarecrow of a body that yearns for pleasure,

Everything done to please it is the cause of suffering.

This body is just a bag of filth,

So don't think so highly of yourself; listen to my song!

Look here at your own body:

It's impermanent like a city of gandharvas.

Its growth and decay make me uneasy.

Have you cut through birth and death, Rechungpa?

When I think of this, I remember the sublime dharma.

A malicious-minded person has no chance for happiness.

Frenzied thinking is the basis for disputes.

Your bad disposition comes from yourself.

Don't be so eager to realize mind; listen to this song!

Look at the perceiving mind inside:

It's impermanent like a little bird in the trees.

It doesn't stay where you put it; that makes me uneasy.

Have you achieved stability of mind, Rechungpa?

When I think of this, I remember the sublime dharma.

Inside, the life-force prana is as fragile as a single horsehair: It is uncertain,  
about to break,

Just like the life-force of this old woman last night.

Don't be attached to this life; listen to my song!

Look back at the breath moving inside.

Breath is impermanent, like mist in the sky.

The mist dissolves and goes; that makes me uneasy.

Have you discerned the natural purity of movement, Rechungpa?

When I think of this, I remember the sublime dharma.

Keep company with an evil brood and you'll develop hatred.

Friends of evil ones say negative things,

Like the old lady householder. Did it do her any good?

Son, don't invest your hopes there; listen to my song!

Look at your circle of friends:

Friendships are impermanent, like guests at a gathering.

Having gathered, they will certainly part; this makes me uneasy.

Have you set your relations aside, Rechungpa?

When I think of this, I remember the sublime dharma.

An estate-holder won't consume all the wealth he's amassed; This is the way  
of karmic existence.

Accumulating wealth through avarice

Is like this old woman and her bag of food.

Don't have great attachment; listen to my song!

Look here at wealth that you have amassed.

Wealth is impermanent, like the bees' honey.

Your food eaten by others, this makes me uneasy.

Have you opened mind's treasure, Rechungpa?

When I think of this, I remember the sublime dharma.

Thus he sang. They finished the work of handling the old lady's bones, and her consciousness was led into the dharmadhatu. Then they took the edible food and went to Betse Döyön Fortress.

This is the second part of the cycle of the Yak's Horn, the main section.

Later, when the father Jetsun and his son were staying at Betse, Rechungpa's understanding expanded. While in this state of joy, he had a variety of different thoughts. The Jetsun, knowing this, at one point said to Rechungpa, "What kind of experience has arisen for you?" Then Rechungpa sang this song of realization to the Jetsun, "How Experience Arose":

While staying in my guru's presence,

An experience like a sharp weapon dawned.

Outer and inner imputations were cut—what a delight!

While sitting in the midst of many people,

An experience like a butter lamp dawned.

The key instructions became clear for others—what a delight!

While staying on the snowy white peaks,  
An experience like a white snow lion dawned.  
It overpowered other appearances—what a delight!

While staying on the side of Red Rock,  
An experience like a vulture, the king of birds, dawned.  
I've shattered all confines—what a delight!

While wandering without bias throughout the land,  
An experience like the striped bee<sup>128</sup> dawned.  
I have no attachment to contact—what a delight!

While I was sitting within samsara,  
An experience like a lotus flower dawned.  
Worldly faults don't stain me—what a delight!

While sitting in the midst of the mundane world,  
An experience like white quicksilver dawned.  
Not sullied by its contact—what a delight!

When staying in villages of faithful students,  
An experience like the Jetsun Mila dawned.  
I sang melodious instructions—what a delight!

This delightful feeling is the guru's kindness.  
This uncontrived mind abides as buddha.

Thus he sang. Then the Jetsun said, "If these experiences aren't flawed with pride, then you have understood the guru's kindness, which is truly marvelous. You must have this kind of view toward those experiences; however, it seems you do not have it." Then he sang this song of realization:

When compassion arises from deep within my heart,  
I see that sentient beings of the three realms of samsara  
Are like they've entered into a pit of fire.

The symbolic whispered lineage's

Key instructions that I hold within my heart  
Are like salt that dissolves within water.

When wisdom dawns from within,  
The string of doubts over whether “this is it” or not  
Is like dreaming when meditating; waking up is postmeditation.

When great bliss is seized through the view,  
All phenomena that appear like this  
Are self-liberated like bubbles in water.

When the character of knowable things is understood,  
This wisdom that’s aware of the abiding nature  
Is like the sky that is freed of clouds.

When the silt of movement is settled and the mind is clear, This wisdom of  
awareness that’s self-arisen  
Is like a white silver mirror that’s been wiped clean.

When the all-base has dissolved into dharmakaya,  
These skandhas that have taken rebirth through craving  
Are like an egg that’s crushed with the stomp of a foot.

When the rope of clinging has been cut,  
The threshold of the bardo of becoming  
Is like a snake tied in a knot that comes untied.

When the adopting and rejecting of conduct is freed, The mind that abides  
free of activity  
Is like a lion that’s perfected the three powers.

Clear appearance, clear emptiness, and clear wisdom:  
When one has these three kinds of clarity,  
It’s like the shining sun in a cloudless sky!

The senses and their objects are divided like horses and yaks.  
The heads of the mind and skandhas are cut

THE BONDS OF THE MIND AND SKANDHAS ARE CUT.  
I've fully utilized this precious human birth,  
And this yogi has completed all that is to be done.  
Son, do you have anything like this?  
Don't have such great pride, Rechungpa!

Thus he sang. It is said that Rechungpa then gave rise to a wrong motivation. The Jetsun said, "Now, let us, father and son, go to meditate in an empty land with no people such as Lachi or Tisé."

Rechungpa said, "My body is weary. If I cannot go to a temple in a nearby village to stay and be refreshed, I will not be able to travel and meditate."

The Jetsun replied, "If you are really practicing dharma with your whole heart, then acting like this will suffice." Then he sang this song on eight things that suffice:

Son, your own body as a monastery will suffice:  
The vital points of the body are the deities' palace.

Your own mind as the guru will suffice:  
Certainty is the supreme noble being.

Outer objects as your texts will suffice:  
Such variety of appearances are the path of liberation's symbols.

Samadhi as your food will suffice:  
Shamatha is the birthright of the deity.

To wear chandali as your clothing will suffice:  
Its blissful heat is the dakinis' garment.

To cut your ties with friends will suffice: Solitude is the divine master of  
feasts.

To turn away from your enemies will suffice:  
Enemies are just passersby on the road.

For obstacles, to meditate on emptiness will suffice:  
They are just the variety of mind's magical display.



If you want to do it right, then do it like this.  
If you don't, then you will go down the wrong path.  
I'm an old man who is concerned about death;  
I don't have the leisure to chat on with you.  
You're young, with vital heart, blood, and flesh;  
Though my advice would be helpful, you won't give it any heed.  
To one with the mistaken view of self-regard,  
Speaking straightforwardly is just a waste.  
If you'll meditate, then come and follow me.  
If not, then you can just do what you want.

Singing this, the Jetsun got ready to depart. Then Rechungpa grabbed the Jetsun's clothes, and sang this song in reply on the eight insufficiencies:

Though the body will suffice as the monastery,  
I must have a bed with a roof overhead  
Or else rain, wind, and enemies will harm me.  
This is one thing that is insufficient.

Though the mind will suffice as the guru,  
I must have a guru who will give pointing-out.  
If there's no one to supplicate, there's nothing to be done.  
This is another thing that is insufficient.

Though sensory objects will suffice for texts,  
Obstacles and doubts will come up anywhere.  
Without manuals to make things clear, there's nothing to be done.  
This is another thing that is insufficient.

Though samadhi will suffice for food, The body must have some  
nourishment.  
This illusory body relies on food.  
This too is something that is insufficient.

Though chandali suffices for clothing,

One needs to hide one's shame wherever one goes.<sup>129</sup>

Everyone is concerned for their modesty.

This is another thing that is insufficient.

Though it's best to cut one's ties to friends,

One needs friendly relations wherever one goes.

Whether good or bad, everyone has friends.

This is another thing that is insufficient.

Though avoiding one's enemies suffices,

Evil ones are always met on the path.

Hostile enemies could arise anywhere.

This is another thing that is insufficient.

Though for obstacles, to meditate on emptiness is sufficient, Spirits and  
hungry ghosts have malevolent intentions.

It's difficult to tame the demon of clinging to an "I."

This is another thing that is insufficient.

When you stay with the guru and are harmonious,

Then whatever he does will be pleasant.

But please, come to where I wish.

I ask you, please come to the town for while.

Thus he sang. The Jetsun said, "Very well, if I come, the way in which I go will be fine. But if I do not come, the way in which you will go will not be fine. If you absolutely will not go into the mountains where there are no other people, then let us go for a while to Poto to teach the dharma." Then the master and his disciple went to Poto Red Rock.

This is the last part of the cycle of the Yak's Horn.

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\*1 Samsara and nirvana are not something separate from the mind.

\*2 Because of the many tantric teachings he held, "Tree of Secret Mantra" (*gsang sngags sdong po*) is another name for Tipupa given to him by Naropa (Thrangu 2001: 7).

\*3 The feet of miraculous power (T: *rdzu 'phrul gyi zhabs*) is an ability attained through yogic practice in

which one can run at a supernormal speed.

\*<sup>4</sup> The Golden Mandala of the Woods and Fields (T: *shing spang gser gyi mandal*) is the name of the place in India where Rechungpa met Machik Drupé Gyälmo (Shabkar 1994: 153).

\*<sup>5</sup> Milarepa is most likely referring to the hail that has made Rechungpa wet and cold. (TN)

## Song of the Wild Asses

NAMO GURU

The father Jetsun Milarepa and his son went to Poto. On the way, as they approached Drin, Rechungpa said, “Tonight, I will stay here. I will meet with the benefactors of Drin.”

The Jetsun replied, “Son, first let us go together to Poto, just father and son, without the knowledge of the other monks, disciple-sons, or benefactors.”

At this, Rechungpa grudgingly went, and the father and son arrived together at the Kyipuk Nyima Fortress at Poto Red Rock.

Then the Jetsun said, “Rechungpa, you go and fetch some water; I will build a fire.” Rechungpa went to get the water. When he had obtained it, he arrived upon a slope, in the center of the vast, spacious, and beautiful field between Poto and Kyipuk Cave. There, a wild ass was giving birth to her foal. Then to each of those, the mother and child wild asses, again, was born another foal. Then again to each of those, another foal was born. This gradually continued until there were a hundred wild asses and a hundred young foals, all of them playing there.

“These wild asses are more wonderful than those of Paltang,” Rechungpa thought, and stood there for a while distracted by the show.

Meanwhile, when the Jetsun had built the fire, he opened up Rechungpa’s manuals. Within a state of great compassion, he said with words of truth, “The Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis, and so forth, that I have sent to be searched for in India, I pray that the dakinis hold and protect within space these teachings and things that are beneficial for sentient beings. And the black mantra of the tirthikas, and so forth, may the dharmapalas set aside such teachings and that which will be harmful to sentient beings.” Then he sat reflecting for a short while, and in the fire, he burned all but a few special scrolls.

Back in Rechungpa’s vision, one of the more powerful wild asses became a wolf and chased all of the other wild asses over the pass. Then Rechungpa nervously thought, “Oh, I’ve been distracted; if I don’t get back quickly, the Jetsun will scold me,” and so he hurried back.

When he reached the high suspension bridge,<sup>130</sup> he could smell the smoke from the burning paper, and thought, “Is that my texts that are burning?” Then he approached and saw all of the manual covers lying there, flat and empty. His heart felt like it would pop out of his chest<sup>131</sup> and in a state of deep vexation, he asked, “Where have my texts gone?”

The Jetsun replied, “You took so long to fetch the water, I thought that you had died. Thinking you were dead, I had no use for them; they would just be a distraction from virtuous activity. So I burned all of these useless texts. What took you so long?”

Then Rechungpa, with the same pride as before, thought, “My guru has such anger and attachment that he would dare to do something like this to me. Maybe I should go back to be in the presence of Tipupa, or else go to another land.” With his faith completely lost, Rechungpa remained there silent for a while. Then, he said, “Because I stayed and watched the show of the hundred wild asses and foals, I suffered a loss. Going to India with the gold that the Jetsun gave to me himself, and disregarding the fatigue of my own three gates, all of that was completely meaningless. I will go to another land.” Thus he displayed many airs and expressions of having lost his faith.

Then the Jetsun said, “Rechungpa, my son, you don’t have to lose your faith. This is the result you have reaped from your own distraction at the show. Son, if you like shows, then I will give you a show to watch. Now look!”

Then, on the crown of the Jetsun’s head appeared a precious throne, with a lotus and a sun and moon disc seat. On the top of that sat the translator Marpa himself, completely inseparable from Vajradhara surrounded by the lineage gurus. On either side of Milarepa’s eyes and ears shone the sun and moon. From his two nostrils came light rays, like strands of yarn, radiating with the five colors. From between his eyebrows was a circlet of hair from which various light rays radiated. On his tongue was an eight-petaled lotus on which sat a sun and moon disc seat. On top of this were all of the Sanskrit letters,<sup>132</sup> made of light, fine as though written with a split hair, circling and radiating light rays. In his heart center was a knot of auspiciousness from which light rays radiated. Emanating all of this, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Listen now, my son Rechungpa: There, upon the crown of my head,  
Is a jeweled throne, hoisted by lions.  
Upon the seat of a lotus, sun, and moon,  
Sits Marpa Lotsawa, so kind, not separate from Vajradhara.

All of the other lineage gurus  
Surround him like a string of pearls.  
If you know how to look with the eye of faith,  
All the blessings you desire will fall like rain.  
Son, if something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.  
Though the wild ass show was great, they are only animals.<sup>133</sup>

Son, Rechungpa, listen again:  
From above the tips of my ears  
Shine the sun and the moon;  
They shine in the manner of a rainbow.  
They are the unobscured expansion of luminosity—  
Means and wisdom in perfect union.  
Son, if something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.  
Though the wild ass show was great, they are only animals.

Son, Rechungpa, now listen still:  
From the nostrils of my nose  
Radiate light rays of the five colors—  
They shine, like threads of precious jewels.  
The very essence of the Secret Mantra  
Is prana-control penetrating the central channel;  
It's a sign of training in the prana's vajra recitation.  
Son, if something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.  
Though the wild ass show was great, they are only animals.

Son, Rechungpa, listen here:  
In between my two eyebrows  
Is a circlet of hair, swirling like a conch:  
From that radiates a myriad of light rays.  
That amrita of illumination, free of stains,  
Is light to incite the buddhas' compassion.  
Son, if something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.  
Though the wild ass show was great, they are only animals.

Though the wild ass show was great, they are only animals.

Son, Rechungpa, now listen here:

As for my voice, upon my speaking tongue,

There is a lotus flower with eight red petals.

On it are the sun and moon and all the letters.

The sound of vajra speech resounds ceaselessly

With the content of the scriptures.

If you know how to look with the eye of respect,

All dharma will dawn as your own speech.

Son, if something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.

Though the wild ass show was great, they are only animals.

Son, Rechungpa listen to me:

In the heart center of my vajra body

Is a precious knot, blazing with light.

It has the nature of the unchanging three kayas

And symbolizes emptiness-compassion inseparable.

Son, if something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.

Though the wild ass show was great, they're only animals.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa sat there in resentment,<sup>134</sup> with his eyes averted elsewhere. Then he said, "I didn't knowingly do anything bad; the show of wild asses was more interesting. In showing his signs of accomplishment, the Jetsun did not engage in any negativity. Now please give back my texts."<sup>135</sup> He continued to sit in resentment. Then getting up he stomped around, and sitting again, he propped his chin up with his hands with elbows on his knees, and began humming a song.\*1

Meanwhile, the inside and outside of the Jetsun's body became transparent and luminous. At his secret center was Chatupitha, at his navel center was Chakrasamvara, at his heart center was Hevajra, at his throat center was Mahamaya, at his forehead center was Buddhakapala, and at his crown center was Guhyasamaja, each with their retinue deities. Everything within the rainbow tent\*2 was radiant, without any essential essence. Displaying this vividly and brightly, he then sang this song of realization:

Son Rechunona now listen again

Son, Kunchungpa, now listen again.

The body of this yogi here  
Is the dependently arisen palace of goddesses:  
Within reside the assemblies of victorious deities.  
At my secret center, the chakra of sustaining bliss,  
Are the deities of Chatupitha.  
The mandala of undefiled bliss expands.  
It is the coemergent wisdom kaya.

At my navel, the chakra of emanation,  
Is the assembly of emanated deities of Chakrasamvara.  
In this mandala with its sixty-two branches  
Abides the essence of the vajra body.

At the heart center, the chakra of dharma,  
Are the nine emanated deities of Hevajra.  
They are the very essence of the three *sattvas*. \*3  
It's the mandala of the vajra mind.

At the throat, the chakra of enjoyment,  
Resides the assembly of deities of Mahamaya.  
It's the illusory play of appearances,  
The mandala of vajra speech.

At the forehead center is the white conch chakra,  
There resides the assembly of deities of Buddhakapala.  
Endowed with the essential meaning of the wisdom class, Here abides the  
vajra mandala of nonduality.

In the great bliss chakra at the crown  
Is the assembly of deities of Guhyasamaja.  
With nadi and bodhichitta inseparable, Here abides the mandala of great  
bliss.

Son, if you know how to meditate on your body as the deity's, The body's  
clarity, without obstruction, will manifestly shine; Ordinary body



becomes the rainbow body.

Son, if a show is great, then this is great.

Son, don't lose your faith; give rise to pure vision.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa said, "The signs of the Jetsun's accomplishment are wondrous indeed. But I don't have my texts, so I'm not impressed. Please give back my texts."

Then the Jetsun moved around the area unimpeded by rocks, boulders, or any objects at all. He zipped around riding on a boulder, and then went to the river, where he sat directly on the surface. Fire blazed from his body, and then water spouted from it. He emanated his body many times and subsumed the emanations back into one. Then he went into the sky where he sat for a while in mid-air. Performing all manner of different things, he then sang this song of realization:

Son, Rechungpa, listen again.

My being unhindered by any object

Is a sign of appearances and mind mixing as one.

Riding on the boulder and zipping around

Is a sign of my ability for "entering the deceased."\*4

This conduct of making the water like earth

Is a sign of blending the four elements into one.

Fire blazing from my body and the ripples of water

Is a sign of overpowering with the exhaustion [of the elements].\*5

Dividing into many then subsuming into one

Is a sign of being able to benefit beings through emanations.

Moving about in the sky

Is a sign of prana and mind penetrating the central channel.

Son, if a show is great, then this is great.

Though the wild ass show was great, they're only animals.

Supplicate that you not enter into wrong views.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa said, "The Jetsun's signs of accomplishment are like children's play. All of this haphazard behavior is not impressive at all; it's just irritating. If you have great compassion, then please give back my texts."

Then the Jetsun said, “Son, don’t lose your faith in your father. If you can supplicate, all phenomenal existence will dawn as your texts. Supplicate to me that your experiences will be sustained spontaneously.”

Then Milarepa went to a narrow path that the merchants of Drin had used and that had been blocked by a boulder. As though it were a mound of dough, he cut the boulder, lifted it like water, and stamped it down like mud. Then he took the boulder and, with one hand, threw it into the great river down in the valley, and after that, sang this song of realization:

Son, Rechungpa, listen once more.  
At this place with a tight and narrow path  
Sits an iron boulder with eight sides.  
Those who wanted to go up met with its right side.  
Those who wanted to go down met with its left.  
A hundred blacksmiths couldn’t break it apart.  
A hundred bellows couldn’t cause it to melt.  
If you cut it like dough, you cut it like this.  
If you lift it like water, you lift it like this.  
If you pack it like mud, you pack it like this.  
If you shoot an arrow, you shoot it like this.  
If you know how to see your father with faith,  
Even if you don’t want them, all good things fall like rain.  
All you need will become a treasure-lode of wealth.  
If something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.  
The wild ass show was great, but it was only animals.  
Son, Rechungpa, transform your outlook.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa said, “If you perform the miracle of restoring my texts, then that will make me give rise to faith. Other than that, I am unimpressed,” and still faith did not arise within him.

Then, using his garment as wings, the Jetsun took off into the sky from the cliff’s edge of Red Rock. Like a vulture, he hovered in the air; like a hawk, he set off; and like lightning he darted down. Doing all manner of things while flying, he sang this song of realization:

Son, Rechungpa, listen again.  
This is Poto Red Rock Sky Fortress:

At the peak of this Sky Fortress,  
When the vulture soars, he flaps his wings.  
When the little bird flies, his little heart flutters.  
A human has never flown before,  
And still it's not possible for a human to fly.  
When an old man like me flies, he flies like this.  
When I soar like a vulture, I soar like this.  
When I set off like a hawk, I set off like this.  
When I dart like lightning, I dart like this.  
When I float like the wind, I float like this.  
If you know how to bring into experience  
Miracles of the interdependent body through faith,  
You'll have mastery, and samsara and nirvana will be mixed into one.  
If something is wondrous, then this is wondrous.  
The wild ass show was great, but they are only animals.  
Son, Rechungpa, train your mind-stream.

Thus he sang. Though Milarepa showed these miracles, aside from merely watching them, Rechungpa still had no desire to rouse any faith. Then the Jetsun, again using his garment as wings, soared into the sky. While circling around, he sang this song of realization:

Son, Rechungpa, listen again.  
At the Red Rock of Mönri Mountain  
Came a herd of meaningless wild asses.  
Within merely a single instant  
In the birthless dharmadhatu of one taste,  
Many forms arose unobstructedly.  
Then one wild ass, turning into a wolf,  
Followed after the flock and crossed over the pass.  
Knowing the true nature of afflictions and hidden faults Is the antidote for all  
things to be relinquished;  
Perceiver and perceived will cross over the pass.  
These emanations of Milarepa Were a pointing-out of the essence  
For Rechung Dorje Drakpa

FOR RECHUNG DOIJE DIAKPA.

I, the old father Milarepa,  
This magical body that I displayed,  
This wondrous and miraculous show,  
You didn't think it was great at all.  
But the emanation of the hundred wild asses and foals, You thought that show  
was truly great.

This is a sign, Rechungpa, of your incorrect view.  
All the various miracles I performed  
Still could not make you give rise to faith.  
Faithless disciples of this polluted age:  
When I think of them, this yogi feels sad.

Son, Rechungpa, listen here:  
Solid wood and horns that are hard  
If you try to bend them, then they will be bent.  
But there is no bending your hardened mind.  
Bend your mind from within, Rechungpa.

Tigers of the south and wild yaks of the north  
If you try to tame them, then they will be tamed.  
But you won't tame your self-clinging.  
Tame your strong self-clinging, Rechungpa.

Birds of the sky and mice of the earth  
If you try to seize them, they can be seized.  
But you won't seize your confused presence of mind.  
Seize your confusion with mindfulness, Rechungpa.

The dharma of hearing and the dharma of contemplating  
If you train in them, then intellectual understanding comes.  
But there's no way to understand intellectually your own insubstantial mind.\*6  
Meditate on the unborn mind itself, Rechungpa.

A loving father and kindhearted mother If you try to leave them, then they  
can be left.

But you won't leave this bad attitude and high self-regard.  
Leave your bad attitude and self-regard, Rechungpa.

The home of your fatherland and the wealth therein  
If you try to abandon them, they can surely be abandoned.  
But you won't abandon this desire for happiness and comfort.  
Abandon striving for happiness, Rechungpa.

Elegant jewelry and beautiful women  
If you try to abandon them, they can be abandoned.  
But you won't abandon nice beds that are warm and soft.  
Abandon the ignorant sleep of a corpse, Rechungpa.

The rocks of the mountains both here and over there  
If you try, then you can meet them face to face.  
But you won't meet your own face of wisdom.  
Look at your own face, mind itself, Rechungpa.

For the command of the king and order of the queen,  
If you make an appeal, then you may be excused.  
But there's no place to appeal to the Lord of Death.  
Take death onto the path, Rechungpa.

Dispel your mind-stream's negative perceptions.  
Let rest your conduct's negative airs.  
Look at your mind-stream's coarse way of thinking.  
Leave behind your wrong views, this demonic obstacle.  
Abandon the demon-friend of self-clinging.  
At death, I'll have no last testament other than that, And in life, I have no  
heart advice but that.  
Hold this within your mind-stream, Rechungpa!

Thus he sang. Then he lifted higher and higher into the sky, until he was out of

sight. Then deep regret arose in Rechungpa, and uncommon faith arose within him. He thought, “Now the Jetsun has gone. Since my mind was not tamed, I wouldn’t let go of a few measly texts. And then, though the Guru Jetsun showed all of these miracles, still faith didn’t arise. Now, out of disgust with me, the Jetsun has gone away to a celestial realm. Someone with wrong views such as I cannot go to a celestial realm. What use are any texts without the guru? I will throw myself off this cliff.” Thinking this, he made the aspiration that in all of his births he might always be in the presence of the Jetsun and that his mind might mix as one with his.

Then, with all his might, he jumped off the cliff. With his body lying there, broken, on the side of the rock, the shadow of the Jetsun, who was flying in the air, fell upon him. Then wailing with a lamenting melody, he tried to fly up after the Jetsun, but he could not get his body to fly. Then on foot he ran, stepping on the shadow of Milarepa’s body as he followed after him. When he arrived at the upper side of Red Rock, from a hollow on the side of a rock cliff, Rechungpa heard a voice and could see some bodily form that inexplicably appeared there.<sup>136</sup> There, the Jetsun had emanated three bodily forms. The form in the center then sang this song of realization, accompanied by the forms on the left and right, in response to Rechungpa’s repenting cry:

Son, Rechungpa, listen here:

From one father Jetsun come two other Jetsuns.

Now three emanations are sitting here.

If you make an offering, to whom will you make it?

If you confess your misdeeds, to whom will you do it?

If you ask after someone’s well-being, whom will you ask?

If you take any vows, from whom will you take them?

If you receive abhisheka and key instructions, from whom will you receive them?

For the pointing out of profound reality, from whom will you receive it?

For absolute refuge, to whom will you go?

For your deepest hopes, to whom will you entrust them?

Son, toward the display of these emanations,

If you’ve given rise to faith, then speak the truth in your heart.<sup>137</sup>

Your negative conduct is a prize for the Lord of Death; If you have fear of that, then quickly abandon it.

For your obstructing demons of mistaken thoughts,  
Give rise to regret and then confess.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa, weeping with tears streaming down his face, offered this song:

Father of wisdom, love, and power,  
Jetsun guru, please listen to me.

Whatever appearances the Jetsun manifested,  
I, Rechungpa was obscured with wrong view.

The one whom I ask of his well being with joy,

The one to whom I make offerings and prostrations with devotion, The one  
from whom I receive abhishekas and instructions, The source of refuge,  
the ultimate pointing out,

The Jetsun in the center, it's with you I do these.

You cared for me with compassion, this is the truth in my heart.

From now on, bind my negative conduct.

Please protect this beggar who has had wrong views.

Thus Rechungpa sang. He approached and embraced the form of the Jetsun in the center so fervently, that he briefly fainted. Then when he came to, the father and son went to the cave.

The Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, if you wish to attain enlightenment, you must be able to meditate according to the naked key instructions. For us, debate terms and the black mantra of the tirthikas are useless. Because the *Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis* is valuable to me, it was not burned. The other texts, however, would be practiced with the hopes of attaining buddhahood, but for fear that they would lead one astray into the lower realms, I burned them. Listen to this song."

Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Son, Rechungpa, whom I've raised since you were small, You were sent to  
gather key instructions.

But with so many textbooks on debate,

I feared you'd become someone who just talks about scripture.

You hope to lay out the seat of a meditator.

But with so much of this mere talk,

I fear you will lay out the shoes of some great teacher.

You hope that by knowing the single point, all will be liberated.  
But with so many conventional terms,  
I fear that by knowing much, you'll not understand the single point.

You were sent to seek out the genuine dharma.  
But with the accumulation of so much karma,  
I fear you've become someone with attachment and aggression.

The dharma that I sent you to find  
Has flown in between the rocks.  
Now it is in the hands of the dakinis.  
If you supplicate, then they will bestow it.

All the black mantra, the magic and so forth,  
I threw into the fire's blaze.  
It is offered to the Bhagavan Agnideva.\*7  
Since this benefits everyone, self and other, I am satisfied.

Son, don't have great anger; it will scorch your mind-stream.  
Don't suffer too much; your body and mind will be wasted.  
Don't fabricate too much; just rest, relaxed.  
Repay the kindness of your guru.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa supplicated, thinking, "The speech of the guru is the Buddha's speech and thus is certainly true." All of the texts, such as the *Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis*, that were of benefit to sentient beings and the teachings fell into Rechungpa's hand and he was delighted beyond measure. He never was separated from the view that the guru was the Buddha in person. "Previously, I paid much respect and service to the guru, but I still need to do more," he thought, and made a promise to do so, which he carried out fully.

Then, calling his dharma brothers and other students, they all gathered and held a ganachakra as a welcoming gift for Rechungpa's return. In the row of that assembly, Seben Repa said to Rechungpa, "It seems you went to India to get the key instructions and knowledge of the Jetsun's prophecy. Now if someone debates us, how shall we defeat them?"



The Jetsun said, “Rechungpa, tell of the manner of defeating the debaters according to your Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis.” Then Rechungpa offered this way of defeating the debaters as a melody:<sup>\*8</sup>

With the lineage of the great Vajradhara,  
Defeat the debaters of lineages to be rebuked.  
With the Guru Buddha Repa,  
Defeat the debaters who are desirous gurus.  
With the whispered lineage key instructions of the path of means, Defeat the  
debaters who are demons fabricated by mind.  
With Equal Taste: The Mirror of Outer Phenomena,  
Drive out to all ends the faults that lie hidden.  
With Great Bliss: The Precious Jewel of Speech,  
Scorch concepts with the fire of wisdom.  
With Nadis, Pranas, and the Lattice of Chakras,  
Carry away to all ends, dullness, agitation, and vacant mind states.  
With Self-Liberation: The Mahamudra,  
Tame the demon of clinging to the five gates as “I.”  
With Awareness: The Lamp of Wisdom,  
Dispel the darkness of ignorance and sloth.  
With Conduct: Striking the Water with the Sword,  
Loosen the knot of the eight concerns in its own place.

Thus he sang. The Jetsun said, “This way of defeating the debaters is excellent, indeed. In addition to that, you need these key points of view and meditation.” Then he sang this song of realization:

The view is wisdom, which is empty.  
The meditation is luminosity free of fixation.  
The conduct is the continual stream of nonattachment.  
The fruition is nakedness free of stains.

With this view, the wisdom that is empty, There’s the danger of straying into  
mere talk.

If you don’t develop certainty in reality,

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Words will not liberate the clinging to a self.  
Therefore, certainty is extremely important.

With this meditation, luminosity free of fixation,  
There's the danger of straying into mere abiding.  
If wisdom does not dawn from within,  
Though you may abide stably, there is no liberation.  
Wisdom won't develop from dullness and agitation;  
Thus, undistracted mindfulness is very important.

With this conduct, the continual stream of nonattachment,  
There's the danger  
of straying into improper behavior.  
If the view and meditation don't dawn as its companion,  
Then yogic  
discipline becomes a friend of the eight concerns.  
Therefore, being free of attachment and obscurations is very important.

The fruition that is nakedness free of stains  
Has the danger of being clothed in the garments of characteristics.  
If confusion doesn't collapse from within,  
You just meditate with a mental aspiration; it'll be of little meaning.  
Therefore, the collapse of confusion is very important.

Thus he sang. The entire assembly gave rise to certainty and rejoiced with great delight.

This is the cycle of the Song of the Wild Asses.

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\*1 According to *DSD* this type of song (*shugs glu*) could either be a love song or a “mountain song.”

\*2 His body.

\*3 The three *sattvas* (or “beings”) are the *samayasattva*, the *jñanasattva*, and the *samadhisattva*.

\*4 The ability to transfer consciousness into other bodies such as corpses (T: *yul la grong 'jug*).

\*5 This refers to the *samadhi* called “the *ayatana* of the exhaustion of the elements” in which one gains control over the outer elements of fire, water, *etc.*

\*6 There's no way to understand the true nature of mind with ordinary dualistic thinking.

\*7 Of the guardians of the ten directions, *Agnideva* (T: *me lha*, literally, “Fire Deity”) is the guardian of the southeast.

\*8 This song gives six of the nine *Dharma Cycles* of the *Formless Dakinis*, the first five of which

Rechungpa brought back from India.

# 40

## Lengom Repa

NAMO GURU

After the Jetsun Milarepa's heart-son Rechungpa had returned from India, while in the rows of a feast gathering of most of Milarepa's disciple-sons and students at Poto Red Rock, the Jetsun had sung a song of realization prophesying the future arrival of the incomparable Gampopa.

Then students from Chuwar invited Milarepa to come to their land, and so he stayed there. A meditator of the Len clan from Dakpo, captivated by what he had heard of the Jetsun's renown, came to meet Milarepa in person. At the moment he saw the Jetsun's face, an excellent samadhi of bliss, clarity, and nonthought arose. He developed supreme faith.

He said to the guru, "I am a meditator from Dakpo. I have previously received various instructions from several gurus, such as some instruction on the Great Perfection.\*<sup>1</sup> I have also done analytical meditation that uses discriminating prajña; and I have some experience in the practice of equal taste. However, aside from a mere basic understanding of these, I have not gained<sup>138</sup> any confident experience in any of them. Guru, since I heard of your renown, I have come to request the dharma from you. Please grant me dharma."

The Jetsun replied to him, "Have you had experiences like these in your practice?" Then he sang this song of realization:

Have the guru's genuine key instructions  
Not strayed into becoming mere words?  
Has your discriminating prajña  
Not strayed into clinging to duality?  
Has the view that is to be realized  
Not been taken by the enemy—perceiver and perceived?  
Has your meditative concentration without reference point  
Not been undone in the treacherous path of characteristics?  
Has your conduct of the practice of equal taste

Has your conduct or the practice of equal taste  
Not strayed into having doubts?  
As for the fruition of nirvana,  
Have you not hoped to get it from somewhere else?  
Has experience disconnected from your mind-stream Not become like water  
in a stagnant pond?  
Has the innate emptiness of the nature of mind  
Not been sullied by imputations?  
Do all yogis who wander in the mountains  
Not get taken by the demon of trying to please others?  
Thus, this vicious cycle of ignorance and confusion Turns round and round  
like a potter's wheel!

Thus he sang. Then the man said, "That is, indeed, how it has been for me. But now, I ask you to give me the abhishekas and key instructions so that it will not be like that." Accordingly, the Jetsun gave him the abhishekas and key instructions and put him to meditate. Due to the man's previous latent tendencies, he was not able to relinquish his virtuous activity encumbered with characteristics. He also had many thoughts of going into places where people lived. The Jetsun knew this, and when the meditator came to offer his realization in Milarepa's presence, the Jetsun said, "Lengom, if you do not meditate one-pointedly, abandoning the frenzied thoughts of wishing to go to places where people are and the virtuous activity encumbered with characteristics, there is a danger that you will remain in the three realms of samsara." Cautioning him in this way, he sang this song of realization:

Holding a lineage that is genuine,  
Purifying confusion into space,  
And seeing the right time for what should be done: One endowed with these  
is a yogi.

When meditating on Mahamudra  
There's no need to concentrate with characteristics.  
When freedom from elaborations arises from within, What's the use of  
refuting with analysis?

For all yogis who wander into towns,

Who try to please their friends and relatives  
And engage in conduct that is pretentious and improper, The inseparability of  
awareness and emptiness is left hidden.

Abandon your concepts: they bring such affliction.  
At death you'll have regret; thus, before you die, Through remembering death  
and impermanence,  
Be cautious of the enemy of the afflictions.  
There's a danger you'll fall into the abyss of the six realms.

While always roaming in mountain retreats,  
If you don't look directly at your mind,  
There's a danger you'll fall into neutral activity.

If you don't supplicate the guru lord  
With great devotion and great faith,  
There's a danger your experience will be obscured.

If you don't meditate on the profound path of means With fierce diligence  
and effort,  
There's a danger the enemy—the afflictions—will win.

Always roam in mountain retreats as your monastery.  
If you do, it's certain the qualities will grow.

Thus he sang. These words penetrated Lengom's hidden flaws, and he thought of how true what the Jetsun said was. He stayed alone in mountain retreats meditating, and a special realization arose. Lengom went to offer his realization to the Jetsun, who was pleased and said, "That is excellent. Since you still must have these things to adopt and abandon until you attain enlightenment, understand them." Then he sang this song of realization:

A son, a wife, and trying to please,  
These three are the bonds of the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must abandon these.

Goods, wealth, and arrogance, these three,

These three are the obstacles of the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must abandon these.

Close ones, benefactors, and disciples, these three, These are what discourage  
the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must abandon these.

Liquor, fatigue, and sleep, these three,  
These three are the bandits of the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must abandon these.

Chatting, laughing, and entertainment, these three, These three are the  
distractions of the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must abandon these.

The guru, key instructions, and faith, these three, These three are foundations  
for the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must adopt these.

Solitary places, good companions, and provisions, these three, These three are  
the walking stick of the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must adopt these.

Nondistraction, nonthought, and bliss, these three, These three are the spouse  
of the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must adopt these.

Relaxation, spontaneity, and naturalness, these three, These three are the  
demeanor of the yogi.  
Dharma practitioners must adopt these.

Nonattachment, nonaggression, and higher perceptions, these three, These  
three are the yogi's signs of the path.  
Dharma practitioners must adopt these.

Thus he sang. Lengom said, "By the kindness of the Jetsun, I have abandoned all  
of these things to be abandoned, and by so doing, I have implicitly adopted those

things to be adopted. Thank you for making it so that I am always happy.”

The Jetsun replied, “Son, that is it. A yogi who maintains everything that should be abandoned and adopted is always happy and well. If you turn from them, you will always suffer. The dividing line between happiness and misery is in what to adopt and abandon.” Then he sang this song of realization on the dividing line between happiness and misery:

The yogi who knows his own face and is in contact with the true nature’s reality is always happy.

The practitioner who follows after confusion and produces suffering is always miserable.

The yogi who rests within noncontrivance and is unchanging and pure with whatever happens is always happy.

The practitioner who follows whatever feelings arise, letting attachment and aversion come as they please, is always miserable.

The yogi who realizes appearances are dharmakaya and cuts through hopes, fears, and doubts is always happy.

The practitioner who acts improperly and rashly and doesn’t keep the eight concerns in check is always miserable.

The yogi who, knowing everything is mind, takes whatever appears as a friend is always happy.

The practitioner who wastes this life and has regret at the time of death is always miserable.

The yogi who has mastered realization fully and seizes his own place in the abiding nature is always happy.

The practitioner who indulges in desire and seeks out attention is always miserable.

The yogi for whom characteristics are liberated in their own place and who has continuous experience is always happy.

The practitioner who, following after words and terms, has no resolve about mind is always miserable.

The yogi who abandons worldly deeds and is free of objectives and reference



points is always happy.

The practitioner who struggles to collect provisions and works to protect his wife and family is always miserable.

The yogi who has revulsion from within and realizes everything is an illusion is always happy.

The practitioner who takes the path of distraction and binds his body and speech in servitude is always miserable.

The yogi who, riding the horse of diligence, traverses the path of liberation is always happy.

The practitioner who enters the shackles of laziness, the foundation stone of samsara, is always miserable.

The yogi who cuts the imputations of hearing and contemplating and watches the show of mind is always happy.

The practitioner who accepts the dharma but always engages in negative conduct is always miserable.

The yogi who cuts through hopes, fears, and doubts and continually rests in the innate state is always happy.

The practitioner who gives his leash to other people, trying to please and be harmonious, is always miserable.

The yogi who leaves everything behind and practices the sublime dharma is always happy.

Thus he sang. Then excellent motivation emerged for Lengom, and the other disciple-sons greatly rejoiced. During meditative equipoise, they were able to abide without wavering from the state of Mahamudra; in postmeditation, appearances dawned for them as illusions, and they made efforts in abandoning negativity and practicing virtue. The Jetsun became very pleased with Lengom Repa, who later became the close dharma friend of Dakpo Rinpoche [Gampopa] and was the first among his benefactors and disciples.

This is the cycle of Milarepa's close son Lengom Repa.

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\*<sup>1</sup> Dzogchen, or Mahasandhi (T: *rdzogs pa chen po*).

## The Noble Gampopa

NAMO GURU

Noble Gampopa, the supreme heart-son of the Lord of Yogis, Shepa Dorje, was foretold in the matchless prophecy made in Guru Marpa of Lhodrak's song of realization explaining the omen of four pillars that appeared in the Jetsun's dream. The yidam Vajrayogini also prophesied to the Jetsun that he would have twenty-five close disciples who were siddhas, and that they would be like the sun, moon, and stars. Among those, that prophecy said that Gampopa would be supreme, like the orb of the sun.

In general, the perfect Buddha also prophesied Gampopa many times in the Mahayana sutras, such as *The King of Samadhi Sutra*. In particular, the *Mahakarunapundarika Sutra*<sup>\*1</sup> says:

Ananda, in the future time, after I have died, in the northern mountain range, there will be a monk called "the Physician." He has served the previous Victorious Ones especially well and shown service and respect to many hundreds of thousands of buddhas. He has perfectly entered into the Mahayana, and has entered it in order to bring benefit and happiness to many beings. He has studied thoroughly, holds the pitaka of the bodhisattvas, and praises the Mahayana. He will be an excellent teacher of the Mahayana.

According to this prophecy, at this time when the five degenerations flourish, in this Land of Snows in the north, the one known as "Dakpo Lhajé"<sup>\*2</sup> is renowned in samsara's three levels, and for him the offering banner of renown is waved. Within the state of luminosity, the Jetsun saw this bodhisattva mahasattva<sup>\*3</sup> who manifests the realization of the tenth bhumi. By the blessing of his samadhi, and through summoning him with his mind's emanation, Gampopa came into the presence of the Jetsun. This biography, which tells how he was like the sun of the Buddha's teaching and established sentient beings in unsurpassed enlightenment, is like a mere single drop from an ocean.

This great lord was born in Tibet in the Sewa Valley of Nyal, of the Nyip clan. His father was a doctor named Utso Gabar Gyalpo who had two wives, Yanglaza

and Samten Drönma. Each of them gave birth to a son, and the older of the two, this lord, was given the name Darma Drak. His father, who was skilled in worldly affairs, trained his son, who also became very skilled and learned in worldly affairs. When he had reached the age of merely fifteen years, he studied the Mantra tradition of the Nyingma school, including the root tantra of Guhyagarhba, the Heruka Gyalpo Tantra, the Tantra of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (Shitro), and the Seizing the Net of Great Compassion Tantra. He became learned in many dharma cycles of the Nyingma tradition, as well as becoming supremely skilled in the eight branches of his father's Dharma Medicine.

At the age of twenty-two, Darma Drak got married to the beautiful daughter of a powerful chieftain named Shang Darma Ö. She gave birth to both a son and a daughter. At one point, the son passed away, and Darma Drak carried the body away to be buried. When he returned, his daughter had also passed away. Then after several days had passed, his wife became bedridden with illness. Though he performed every medical treatment and ritual, there was nothing that helped. She remained sick for some time and the time of her death finally came, though she did not wish to die. The lord read volumes of scriptures written in precious golden ink to her, and he thought to himself, "Though her body's strength is at its end, still she does not die. She must be attached to something."

He said to her, "It is due to not understanding the composite nature of samsara that sentient beings suffer. Those who wish to linger in samsara, which is without any true happiness, are afflicted. Seeing these confused sentient beings who suffer greatly over dream-like relatives, I become so disheartened. Your bodily strength has gone, yet you have not died. It seems that you are attached to something. If you are attached to any outer object, I will give it to the monasteries. Any wealth or money you are attached to, put it to virtuous use by offering service and respect to the sangha or by giving to people who are in need. There is nothing you should be attached to. The two of us have met each other because of the connection of our previous aspiration. But, due to the power of negative karma, you have contracted this illness, and everything that I have done to help you has done nothing but cause you more grief. Whether you live or die, there is nothing for me to do but practice the genuine dharma."

His wife replied, "Now, I am ready to die; I have no attachment to land, food, or wealth, nothing at all. But, Lhajé, I do have attachment to you. So that you are not seduced by another woman, I will send my older brother to stay with you. Furthermore, the householder's life in samsara is never truly a happy one;

therefore, Lhajé, you must wholeheartedly practice the genuine dharma.”

To that the lord said, “Even if you do recover, husband and wife will eventually part. If you die, I will only practice dharma and will not take on any other wife. Would you like me to take an oath?”

She said, “You have never deceived others or lied to them, but this time, in order for me to have full confidence, please take the oath.”

He prepared to take the oath and since she requested a witness, he made his uncle Palsö witness the oath. Placing a volume of scripture written in precious gold upon his head, he took the oath.

The wife said, “Lhajé, I will be watching from the grave to see whether you practice the genuine dharma or not.” She took his hand and gazed at his face. With a single tear falling from her face, it is said that she took her last breath and died.

Then the lord took all of his wealth and divided it up into three portions. One portion he gave as an offering on behalf of his wife, to pay for the cremation, and to place her remains in *tsa-tsas*<sup>\*4</sup> for a stupa that was to be erected. It became known as the Stupa of the Jomo and is still in Nyal. The second portion of his wealth he gave away as charity for the sake of dharma. And the third portion, he retained for his own—the precious lord’s—dharma provisions.

After taking care of his wife’s affairs, his mind felt at ease, and he thought, “Now, I must practice dharma.” He went to meditate alone at Nyithong. His uncle Palsö thought, “My poor nephew has been left behind by his treasured wife and is now truly grieving,” and brought him some meat and beer. The uncle and his nephew talked about the situation in detail, and the lord said, “Uncle, since my wife has passed away, I am truly happy.”

At this his uncle became furious: “You would never be able to find such a good wife as the one you had. If Shang Darma Ö were to hear of this, he would vow to come after you.” Then his uncle threw a handful of dirt at him.

To that the lord questioned,<sup>139</sup> “Uncle, have you already forgotten? You were the witness for the oath I took just a few days ago. Am I not practicing dharma as I promised?”

His uncle said, “Nephew, you are right. Though I have become old, I seldom think of the dharma. This really is a great fault. Nephew, practice dharma, I will look after your estate and wealth.”

Then the precious lord, without his relatives being aware, went to Puto

Monastery in Penyul. Meeting Putowa Rinchen Sal\*<sup>5</sup> in person, he said, “Precious guru, I have come from Nyal for the sake of dharma. Please allow me to enter the gateway of the dharma and lend me some food.”

Putowa said, “I have no food to lend you. If you have some yourself, bring it, and I will allow you to enter the gateway of dharma.”

The lord thought, “If I had the means then I wouldn’t ask; this seems a bit pointless. Generally, in the Guhyagarbha Tantra it says that the guru with the four kinds of compassion acts for the benefit of sentient beings. They are unceasing compassion, spontaneous compassion, the compassion of fulfilling supplications and exhortations, and the compassion of meeting the needs of those to be tamed. A guru who has all of these types of compassion acts for the benefit of sentient beings, it is taught. It seems this guru does not have great compassion,” he thought. Because there was no previous karmic connection, he did not have devoted interest in Putowa.

He went back to his homeland for a while and took some provisions for his dharma practice, primarily sixteen measures\*<sup>6</sup> of gold. He then went to a monastery in Penyul called Gyachak Ri. There, in the presence of Lama Gyachilwa, he became a monk, taking full monastic ordination, and was given the name Sönam Rinchen. Then from Geshe Shawa Lingpa and Jadul Dzinpa, he received many dharma teachings such as the *Sutralamkara*, the *Abhisamayalamkara*, and the *Abhidharmakosha*.\*<sup>7</sup> From Mangyulpa Loden Sherap, he received many teachings on the tantras, such as Hevajra and Guhyasamaja, as well as the abhishekas and key instructions. From Geshe Nyukrumpa and Gyachak Riwa, he received all of the teachings of the Kadampa lineage. After having received all of these teachings, he thought, “Now I must practice,” and he remained at Gyachag Ri.

The lord had exceedingly great wisdom and compassion, and his avarice and attachment were very small. He had extremely great faith and diligence and very little laziness and sloth. During the day he exerted himself in the action wheel of dharma activity and the study wheel of hearing and contemplating; then at night, he turned the renunciation wheel of meditation.<sup>140</sup> His body, tireless in such virtuous activity, was never harmed by insects or parasites. Although he only ate once every five or six days, he was never hungry, and his body always experienced bliss. He could sit within a single stretch of samadhi for many days. Coarse attachment and aggression disappeared. When sleeping, his dreams showed the signs that appear for someone who is approaching the tenth bhumi, as

explained in the *Sacred Golden Light Sutra*.<sup>\*8</sup>

At one point, he had a vision within his meditative experience, and there appeared a dark-skinned yogi with an enormous body. He carried several tattered rags upon his shoulders and a bamboo walking stick in his hand. In the vision, the yogi placed his hand upon Gampopa's head, spat on him, and then left. With this, Gampopa's shamatha meditation became excellent, and the certainty of vipashyana grew within him. With an experience of great joy, his mind became very clear. Seeing some of his fellow monks, he explained what had appeared to them. They said, "If visions such as yogis and villages appear to fully ordained monks who have kept their discipline perfectly such as yourself, it is the magical work of Pekar,<sup>\*9</sup> and there is a danger that obstacles will come. You should go to the abbot and request the transmission of White Achalanatha, and receive the blessings of making tormas offerings to the ordained sangha in puja practice. If you do this, that will ward off any obstacles."

He received the transmission of White Achalanatha from the abbot, made one hundred tormas offerings to the sangha, and did mantra recitations. But the vision of the yogi came to him more often than before.

At that time, the Jetsun Milarepa was staying in the Kyipuk Nyima Fortress at Poto Red Rock with Rechung Dorje Drak, Shiwa Ö, Seben Repa, Drigom Repa, Ngendzong Tönpa, and so on—the greatest of his heart-sons. The students Dzesé and Khujuk from Drin and others were also gathered there. While turning the wheel of dharma of both the provisional and definitive meaning, the senior repas said to the Jetsun, "Now the Jetsun's body has grown old. If you should pass on to another pure realm, we will need someone who can come in your stead to dispel our hindrances, enhance our practice, and be an object of merit for the benefactors. Jetsun, in whomever you have trust to be able to do this, it would be fitting for you to give them the instructions completely, like filling a vase, and invest them with power. Without this, the current gathering of disciples will not be able to carry on and protect our lineage."

The Jetsun, slightly displeased, said, "There is a disciple who will be able to spread and make my activity flourish. I will look to see where he is tonight. Come back tomorrow morning and I will tell you." The following morning, the Jetsun arose earlier than usual and summoned all the disciples to gather in front of him, and so all the repas and students came.

The Jetsun said, "The noble being who will hold my teachings, the vase who will be filled with the key instructions and who will be able to spread the

teachings in the ten directions, is one who has been ordained as a fully ordained monk with the name 'Lhajé.' He will come very soon. Last night in my dream, this son was carrying an empty white crystal vase, and I filled it with amrita from my own white silver vase until his was completely full. A son was born to an old father. He will be like the sun of the Buddha's teachings and will be able to benefit limitless beings. Ha ha!" He laughed and sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the lord gurus.

I supplicate the one who is so kind.

The milk of the white lioness of the east

Is certainly milk with greatness and potency.

But there is no greatness before its potency is experienced;

The greatness one knows after it is experienced

Is what is experienced by Indra, the lord of devas.

The leap of the striped tiger in the south

Is certainly a leap with greatness and might.

But there is no greatness before vying with that leap.

The greatness known after vying with it

Is seen in Dombi Heruka's ride.\*10

The bile of the fish in the west<sup>141</sup>

Is certainly a bile of bitterness.

But there is no bitterness before experiencing it.

The bitterness after one experiences it

Is only experienced by the nagas Gawo and Jokpo.\*11

The powerful turquoise dragon in the north

Certainly has greatness and powerful strength.

But one cannot feel his greatness before vying with his strength.

The greatness after vying with him

Is seen in the vying of the champions Lhaga and Luga.\*12

The milk of the lioness in the east

Must be poured with a ladle of precious gold.



It cannot be poured into an ordinary container.  
If you pour it into an ordinary container,  
The container will break and its contents will spill.

The key instructions of Lords Naropa and Maitripa  
Are certainly very profound. Though this is so,  
There is nothing profound before one has meditated.  
Only after meditating can one understand its profundity.  
My venerable father Marpa has received them  
And Milarepa has meditated upon them.

A few words of Milarepa's meditative experience,  
Though they certainly will liberate the vital points,  
Are not given to unworthy vessels.  
If a worthy vessel comes, I will give them freely.  
If my son the teacher arrives, I will give them to him!

Thus he sang.

At that time, the precious lord\*<sup>13</sup> had gone out for a while to do circumambulations. That year, there was a great famine in that land, and below the monastery gate there were three beggars sitting there hoping to receive something.

One of them said, "How wonderful it would be if for the sake of this year's famine, this evening, the excellent sangha of Gyachak Ri were to give out food as charity to everyone. If they did not discriminate against anyone who comes for the distribution, we could be included among them. Then, after each of us ate our fill, we could gather some bits of leftover tampa and go over near Gyachak Ri and enjoy ourselves as much as we like by eating what we collected."

Another one of the beggars said, "I have a better idea that's easier to fulfill than yours. It would be nice if we could gather up one *dré* or so of greens whether ripe or not, add some chili, cook it, make a big pot\*<sup>14</sup> of soup, eat it, and go back inside to rest."

The elder of the three said, "We're men! Even if we're hungry, we should still smile and laugh. If a bird is hungry, it will still soar like a garuda.\*<sup>15</sup> Don't make such talk focused on your bellies. There is a monk who is pure coming to do

circumambulations at the mountain in the west. If he heard us talk like this, it would be shameful for us. If you want to make an aspiration, you should make it a big aspiration. Aspire to be an immaculate descendant of the luminous deities, a dharma king who spreads the Buddha's teachings throughout Tibet, the Land of Snows; to be a sovereign like Tsé Dé\*<sup>16</sup> would, indeed, be wonderful; to rule the land of Tibet in this life would be good.

“Or else, consider the Lord of Yogis, Milarepa, in the western Lachi Snow Mountain Range, who lives on the food of austerity and samadhi, wears only a single cloth, and survives with the heat of chandali. He meditates day and night and remains in the state of luminous Mahamudra. When he moves to different places, he goes by flying through the air. To be in his presence would be the greatest thing; how wonderful it would be to renounce this life and practice as he does. Or else, even just to see his face would be so wonderful.” As he spoke, tears began streaming down his face.

At that moment, when he heard the Jetsun's name, Gampopa uncontrollably gave rise to great faith. So great was his feeling that he fainted and did not regain consciousness until midnight. When he came to, while shedding many tears, he stood up and prostrated in the direction of where the Jetsun resided. Many times he supplicated, “Jetsun, Jetsun, please accept me!”

Then again and again, he performed the seven branches,\*<sup>17</sup> the main practice of virtuous activity, and had experiences and samadhi unlike any that had arisen before. The next morning, thinking, “Will I meet the guru Jetsun?” he called the three beggars. He gave them quality food—meat, butter, and so forth—even more than they had wished for. The beggars were completely satiated, and the lord said, “I wish to meet this guru that you speak of. It seems you know a lot about him. Could you please lead me to him? In my stash of wealth, I have sixteen measures of gold, and I will give you half, which you can use to practice dharma yourselves.”

“We do not know anything about this guru,” the two younger beggars replied.

The elder of them said, “I can help you.” That night they made offerings to the three jewels. In a dream filled with supplication, Gampopa blew a long *radung*\*<sup>18</sup> whose sound pervaded the entire world. There is no trumpet in all of Ü and Tsang today with as great a sound. Then while in the sky without any support, he beat a great drum with a sound that was loud yet pleasant and pure, that was heard by countless humans and animals. A young girl who looked to be from Mön said to him, “You sounded the drum for the people, but it also was heard by the

animals.” Then she gave him a skull-cup full of milk. “This will not be enough for the animals here, but drink this and it will help not only these animals but all the sentient beings of the six realms.”

Much later, Gampopa reflected back and said about the dream, “Those humans who heard the drum were those who must train gradually along the paths and bhūmis and are not suitable vessels [for the Vajrayana]. The Kadampa gurus are so very kind. The animals that heard my drum are my great yogi disciples who stay in mountain retreats. This dream was an omen that I will rely solely on the guru Milarepa’s key instructions on the path of means and Mahāmudrā.”

Accompanied by the old beggar, the lord departed. With great faith and diligence, he went along saying, “When will I meet my guru?” with tears constantly streaming down his face. When it was time to eat, he had no appetite. He journeyed onward forgetting to rest. When they arrived at Tsinesar in Upper Nyang, the old man pretended to be sick and said, “I’m not very familiar with the way from here on. But there is a monastery called Sakya up ahead, you can go there and ask for help.”

With his companion having abandoned him, Gampopa suffered as he wandered the plain like a blind man. Throughout the night, he wept with his face to the ground. The old beggar [appearing again] said to him, “Son, you have almost made it, don’t cry like this. I will show you the way.” Much later, Gampopa came to have confidence that the beggars were emanations of the Jetsun.

Gampopa continued on, asking along the way. At Drangso Trawa Pass, he met many merchants from Latö and asked them the way. One merchant chieftain named Dawa Zangpo from Nyanang said, “The Lord of Yogis, the one called Milarepa, the siddha guru who is greatly renowned throughout Tibet, the Land of Snows, is now residing at Chuwar in Drin.”

Thinking, “Then it is there that I will meet the Jetsun,” he was overjoyed. He hugged the merchant around his neck, weeping many tears. Then having asked about the way, he went in the direction of Dingri. In the center of a great field, he came across a bench there and stopped to sleep. As he had not eaten for a couple of days, his body was completely fatigued, and the wind element of his body became severely unbalanced. Thus, he lost consciousness. He fell off the bench and remained unconscious until midnight. When he finally came to, there was not an inch<sup>142</sup> of his body from head to toe that didn’t ache. His thirst was dire, but there was no one to carry him any water, so as he lay there, two days passed by.

Then he thought, “If I cannot meet the Jetsun in this life, in the next life I will be born in the presence of the Jetsun wherever he may be. May my mind completely mix with his.” Thus he made this aspiration. “In this life, the next life, and in the bardo between them, there is no other source of hope but the Jetsun.” Thinking this, he shed many tears and supplicated resolutely.

Then one day, a Kadampa teacher from Jayul came. “Where are you going?” he asked Gampopa.

“I am going toward Drin to meet the Jetsun Milarepa in person.”

“Well, I too am going in that direction.” Then he asked, “Are you not sick?”

“My body is not well at all,” Gampopa replied. “I am also very thirsty. Could you give me some water?” The teacher gave him a bowl of water that he drank to the last drop. After that he was fully refreshed, and they went on together.

At the same time, the Jetsun was teaching dharma at Tashi Gang and was in a happy mood. While teaching he would suddenly stop and meditate, and sometimes he would burst into laughter. One of the benefactors of Drin there, a female benefactor who was a qualified student named Dzesé, said to the Jetsun, “Jetsun, sometimes while teaching, you sit there meditating, and sometimes you laugh. Is it because you think of the qualities of suitable disciples and sometimes you think of the mistaken thoughts of those unsuitable disciples?”

He replied, “I am not thinking of the qualities of suitable disciples or the faults of unsuitable ones.”

“Then, Jetsun, why is it that you laugh?”

“My son, the teacher from Ü, arrived at Dingri today, where he sat against a bench. His entire body was in pain and he called out, ‘Guru Jetsun, please look upon me!’ With great faith and devotion, he shed many tears. Having compassion for him, I blessed him through my samadhi. Then I became very happy, and so I laughed,” said the Jetsun, as he wept with tears.

The woman then asked, “When will he come into the Jetsun’s presence?”

“He will arrive by the evening of the day after tomorrow.”

“Do we have the karmic fortune to be able to meet this man?”

“Yes, you do,” he replied. “Whoever puts down a seat for him when he first arrives will be sustained by samadhi. Whoever meets and guides him upon his arrival, I will lead to the domain of liberation and great bliss.”

Gampopa and the Kadampa of Jayul arrived at the center of the marketplace. There, a lady benefactor was weaving, sitting at the head of her loom. Gampopa

asked, “It is said that the lord of yogis, one called Milarepa, is staying in this land. Do you know where he resides?”

The lady benefactor asked, “Where do you come from?”

“I am from the sun-like region of Ü\*<sup>19</sup> and have come to see the Jetsun,” he replied.

“Then I will give you some provisions. Please come inside.” Then going inside, she gave them a seat and served them sweetened tea as well as other provisions. Then she said, “The Jetsun knew ahead of time that you would be coming and also gave a prophecy about the future. Yesterday, he saw that you were fatigued and sent you blessings through his samadhi. I requested to come and usher you to meet him.”

Gampopa thought, “That is true; because of the guru’s blessing, I did not die. He knew that I was coming and that I’m a destined disciple.” Thinking this, a little bit of pride arose in his mind.

The Jetsun knew this and in order to break his pride, he did not permit a meeting with him for half a month. The teacher Seben Repa then brought Gampopa an earthen pot and some wood, and set him up to stay in a small cave on a cliff.

[After two weeks,] the lady benefactor ushered him to meet the Jetsun. When he came into Milarepa’s presence, the Jetsun blessed both Rechungpa and Shiwa Ö, transforming their appearance into his own, and then sat down. Since Gampopa was unable to say which one was the real Jetsun, Rechungpa, pointing with his finger, said, “The Jetsun is in the center.”

With that, Gampopa made a mandala offering with the sixteen measures of gold, and offered a block of tea to the Jetsun in the middle. After he related his journey from Ü in detail, he said, “Jetsun, I ask you, please tell me your life story.”

Then the great Jetsun sat for a while with his eyes half opened. Then he took a small piece of gold from the center of the mandala that Gampopa had offered and threw it into the sky and said, “An offering to Marpa from Lhodrak!” Then from the sky came inconceivable light, sound, and so forth. The Jetsun took a skull-cup full of liquor, drank some, said to Gampopa, “Drink the rest!” and gave it to him. Gampopa, being a fully ordained monk standing in the midst of a crowd of people, could not accept it.

The Jetsun said, “Don’t think too much, just drink!” Then, afraid of missing the auspicious *tendrel*, Gampopa drank the whole contents without leaving a drop,

thus taking hold of the lineage. Knowing this and that he was a suitable vessel for all the key instructions without any left out, Milarepa asked, “What is your name?”

“Sönam Rinchen,” he replied.

“You have accumulated great masses of *merit* and are most *precious* among all sentient beings,” the Jetsun said three times.\*20

Then the Jetsun thought, “Whoever hears the name of my son will be liberated from samsara. But I should not speak of this now.”

The Jetsun then said to the teacher from Ü,\*21 “That you have come here out of faith for me is truly marvelous. I have no desire for your gold or tea. My life story is like this.” Then Rechungpa and Shiwa Ö both accompanied him in singing this song of realization and welcome:

In the unfabricated sky of dharmakaya,  
Clouds of unceasing compassion gather.  
Destined refuge and protector of beings,  
I bow at the feet of Marpa, so kind.

Seated on my right is my son Rechungpa;  
On my left is seated Shiwa Ö.  
Those on both left and right join me in singing.  
Lhajé, now please listen to our song.

In the glorious and stainless pure realm  
Were many who spoke highly of themselves.  
But the two, Naropa and Maitripa,  
Are renowned in the central land of India  
And illuminate it like the sun and moon.  
The heart-son of these two father siddhas,  
Embodiment of the buddhas of the three times’ essence, Is the translator  
Marpa Lotsawa.

Because he’s chief of the mandala,  
This fortunate one who ravishes the mind  
Is renowned among the dakas and dakinis.  
Hearing his name I could not bear it

hearing his name I could not bear it

And through great efforts I went to him.

As soon as we met, I obtained joy and bliss.

Bowing at his lotus feet

I told him I needed the profound key instructions

For attaining buddhahood in this very life.

My Father Buddha also said,

“There’s an instruction that’s like a mother, a guide,

That in this very life cuts the continuum of samsara.

This was taught out of the compassion of Naropa.”

Since I was poor, I had no material things,

But striving with my three gates, I fulfilled my samaya.

Through the compassion of he who knows the three times,

Because he knew my altruistic intent,

With great love, he thought of me:

“The key instructions of the four lineage transmissions

I will teach without adding to them or taking away.”

Making this oath, thus he gave them.

“Now in this age of the teachings’ corruption

There are many adverse conditions; there’s no leisure in this life.

So without getting lost in conceptual knowledge,

Engage in the essential practice,” he said.

To repay the kindness of my guru,

I cracked the whip of the fear of death.

Then through the power of meditating with great diligence,

Concepts and bad omens I made my friends.

Because the three poisons’ own nature is awareness,

The spontaneous presence of the three kayas was pointed out.

In order to transfer to qualified students

All experience and realization, the lineage’s blessing,

The key instructions that include all that is profound,

Teacher, I bestow them upon you.

Practice them and make the teachings flourish.  
Lhajé, while keeping this in your heart,  
Please don't be rigid; just rest, relaxed.

The story of this yogi is just like that.  
We can speak about it slowly and thoroughly.  
Gold is not agreeable for an old man like me,  
And I have no stove to boil your tea.  
If you want to hold the Kagyu teachings,  
Look at my conduct, and practice like me.  
The teacher's question was answered in this song.

Thus he sang. "This is my welcome for the teacher," said the Jetsun. The lord then brewed some tea and offered it, which the Jetsun enjoyed immensely. Then he said to Rechungpa and the others, "We should offer the teacher tea in return; go get some." He went off to get some tea and brewed it. "We need to add some seasoning," he said. The Jetsun added some cool water to it, and the tea took on a superior flavor.

Then the monk from Jayul requested blessings from the Jetsun and to make a dharma connection with him. The Jetsun said, "Whatever object of attachment you have, offer it to me for a blessing."

"I have nothing to offer," he replied.

The Jetsun said to him, "You are hiding lots of gold on your body, but you claim to have nothing. Such a shame. What use is a blessing with no faith, or key instructions without any certainty. Further, you have come here for the sake of wool trade. Go on, may you have no obstacles in your endeavors."

Gampopa thought, "When in the presence of the Jetsun, there is no place for pretense or hypocrisy. One needs to have a focused and present mind." With this, he never became separate from the perception of Milarepa as a buddha.

Then the Jetsun said, "Teacher from Ü, have you previously received abhisheka?"

Gampopa relayed that he had received some abhishekas and key instructions from previous gurus and told of how samadhi had arisen in his mind-stream.

The Jetsun burst out, "Ha ha! If you squeeze sand, you will not get oil. You will only get oil from mustard seeds. Meditate on my *a-tung* chandali, then you will



see the essence of mind. For this practice, I am not saying that the abhishekas you received before are unqualified, but because the great power of *tendrel* is involved, you must have the blessings of my tradition.”

Then, in accord with the tradition of the whispered lineage, with a *sindhura* mandala,\*<sup>22</sup> Milarepa gave him the blessing of Vajrayogini. He was given the key instructions, and excellent experiences arose for him through meditation. Recollecting the instructions of his previous gurus, Gampopa did much analysis of the view, meditation, and conduct in order to cut through doubts and uncertainties toward the Jetsun. Then afterward he requested the key points of view, meditation, and conduct directly, and the Jetsun cleared all remaining uncertainties. After that, Milarepa sang this song of realization on the greatness of the Secret Mantra in general, and in particular of the practice lineage:

With certainty in view, look at your mind.

If you search for something outside of the mind,

It's like a strongman looking for wealth—

Is it not like that, my dear teacher-physician?

With certainty in what meditation is, don't clear away the faults of dullness  
and torpor.

If you clear away the faults of dullness and torpor,

It's like lighting a lamp in the middle of the day—

Is it not like that, my dear teacher-physician?

With certainty in what conduct is, don't sort out what to adopt or reject.

If you sort out what to adopt and reject,

It's like a bee getting caught in a trap—

Is it not like that, my dear teacher-physician?

With certainty in what samaya is, rest in confidence of the view.

If you don't keep it this way and look for some other samaya,

It's like a river flowing back upstream—

Is it not like that, my dear teacher-physician?

With certainty in what fruition is, rouse certainty in mind.

If you search for some other unobtainable fruition,

It's like a frog leaping into the sky.

It's like a frog leaping into the sky—

Is it not like that, my dear teacher-physician?

With certainty in what the guru is, ask your own mind.

If you search for another guru apart from that,

Then you are abandoning your own mind—

Is it not like that, my dear teacher-physician?

Thus all appearances are subsumed in one's mind—

Is it not like that, my dear teacher-physician?

Thus he sang, and Gampopa thought, “This is so true.” Perseverance developed for him and he meditated. On the first evening, he meditated nakedly outside a cave, and heat and bliss blazed within him. At daybreak, he fell asleep upright, with his body motionless like a stone. Then after seven days of meditating, with heat and bliss blazing within him, he had a vision of the five families of Victorious Ones.

When he told the guru of his experience, Milarepa replied, “This is just like when you press on your eyeball while looking at the moon and then see two moons. This means you have taken hold of the pranas of the five elements. It is neither a fault nor a positive quality.”

Though he was told it was not any particular good quality, still, he felt very inspired and continued to meditate. Early, on several mornings, after three months of meditating, the thousandfold universal realm swirled about him like a spinning wheel. Then he had many dry heaves, fainted, and remained unconscious for a long time. He told of this to his guru.

The Jetsun said, “The prana of the *lalana* and *rasana* have entered the *avadhuti*. This is neither a fault nor a positive quality. Continue to meditate.”

Then again on another morning, filled with great compassion, he saw the sphere of the moon on top of his head. He told of this to his guru.

The Jetsun said, “The *bindu* at the crown chakra of great bliss is expanding. This is neither a fault nor a positive quality. Continue to meditate.”

Then one evening at dusk, he saw the Black Line Hell,<sup>\*23</sup> and because of that, the heart-prana filled into his upper body and he developed a deep feeling of depression. He told of this to his guru.

The Jetsun said, “Your meditation belt was too short, and this bound up the

nadis. Lengthen your belt a little. You have taken hold of the upward moving wind; it is neither a fault nor a positive quality. Continue to meditate.”

One day, he saw vividly all the desire devas of the six realms, and a rain of amrita came down through their ranks arranged from top to bottom. The devas all were contented and satisfied. He said to his guru, “I saw my mother die of thirst,” and the Jetsun said, “The rain of nectar is the expanding of the bindu in the lalana and rasana at the throat chakra of enjoyment. Your mother’s thirst was because the avadhuti has not opened. Do these *trulkhor* exercises.”

For a month he did the vigorous *trulkhor* exercises of “beating.”<sup>143</sup> He constantly had the desire to leap, quake, and shake his body, and he had the urge to uncontrollably weep and wail. “Is this some kind of demon?” he asked his guru.

“The bindu has filled the heart chakra of dharma. Do not stop doing the *trulkhor* exercises and continue in your efforts in meditation. It is neither a fault nor a positive quality.”

Continuing with his practice, Gampopa then needed little food. One day, he saw the sun and the moon in the sky in front, eclipsed by Rahu. Upon Rahu there were two lines, thin like the hair from a horse’s tail. He told this to the guru, and the Jetsun replied, “The winds from the lalana and rasana have entered the avadhuti. It is neither a fault nor a positive quality.” Then he said, “What a brave man you are! And now...and now...” Three times he repeated this.

Then Gampopa meditated fervently, and after a month he saw the mandala of red Hevajra. He thought, “The guru’s saying ‘And now...and now...’ must have been referring to the appearance of the yidam deity.” He told his guru, and the Jetsun said, “The rakta\*<sup>24</sup> that came from your mother is stabilized in the heart chakra of dharma. It is neither a fault nor a positive quality. Now you should meditate with vigor.”

Again, he applied himself to meditation. One day, he saw the mandala of the skeleton of Luyipa Chakrasamvara.\*<sup>25</sup> He told his guru, and the Jetsun said, “The bindu has filled the navel chakra of emanation. It is neither a fault nor a positive quality. Continue to meditate.”

He continued his efforts in meditation, and on the fourteenth day, for the entire night, his body became like the entire realm of space. From the top of his head to the soles of his feet, his body was filled with all the sentient beings of the six realms, and most of them were drinking only milk. Some of them drank milk after drawing it from the stars. There was a continuous great noise that came

from no apparent source. In the morning, Gampopa loosened his meditation belt and the experience went away. He told his guru, and the Jetsun said, “The karmic pranas have taken the bindu into the inconceivable thousands of channels throughout your body; and the karmic pranas have been transformed into wisdom pranas.” He then gave him the practice of supreme chandali, and Gampopa meditated.

One day, the whole valley appeared completely full of smoke, and when evening came, it became completely dark. Not able to see the path, Gampopa went along like a blind man to visit the guru. The guru said, “There is no problem, just sit and meditate.” The Jetsun gave him the practice of Dispelling Hindrances Above,<sup>144</sup> and practicing this, Gampopa’s experience became like the sun rising at daybreak.

Then one night, Gampopa’s body appeared completely without any flesh or blood, but only as bones linked together with many channels. He told his guru, and the Jetsun said, “The pranas have become too forceful; practice gently.”

Then at dusk, he did the meditation and recitation of his yidam. At midnight, he did guru yoga and made many supplications. Before daybreak, he engaged in prana-control practice. When the sun was just beginning to dawn, he slept for a short while. In a dream that was not based on previous latent tendencies, twenty-four different signs appeared. Upon awakening, he had a bit of conceptualization about the dream, wondering, “Was it a good dream or a bad one?” He thought further, “The guru Jetsun is an actual omniscient buddha in person; I can ask him.” Before his food had even boiled, he rose right then and went to see Milarepa.

The Jetsun was staying near a rock in Chuwar and was there lying down, rubbing his head with a thick cloth. Gampopa offered prostrations and said, “Jetsun, I have something very important to ask you. Please awake so that I may.”

The Jetsun said, “Some concepts have arisen for you. This came to me this morning in my meditation. What is it that’s troubling you?”

“My precious guru, I had some signs in a dream, please listen to them and tell me if they are good or bad signs.” Then Gampopa sang this song of realization:

Lord yogi with the conduct of yogic discipline,  
Wondrous one clad in cotton cloth,  
Wish-fulfilling jewel who ornaments my head,  
One worthy of respect, like the crown of all.

Your name, Mila, is renowned far and wide;  
Its renown pervades all directions.  
When I heard it, delight arose in me.  
Under the Pleiades in the east I pursued you  
Without any concern for heat or cold.  
Just like in the life-story of Arya Sadaprarudita,<sup>\*26</sup>  
I wondered when I would meet you, Repa Lord.  
On the long road, I underwent many hardships,  
Then at the place I reached after two and a half days' journey,  
With my life-force fading, I nearly died.  
But by the power of fervent devotion,  
Like the direct vision of Dharmodgata  
In the City of Fragrances in the east,<sup>\*27</sup>  
In the supreme abode of Tashi Gang

I met you, the Father Jetsun Repa.  
I thought, "Now my journey's complete."  
With such great joy, my hairs stood on end.  
Though I have no illusory wealth to offer,  
I have the ground—revulsion from samsara;  
I have the path—the fear of birth and death;  
I've completely let go of mundane perceptions;  
I'm of single mind to practice, and this arose from deep within.  
Lord, you've taken me with your hook of compassion.  
I will not forget you, and you will always be with me.

Lord Guru, your subject has something to tell you:  
Last evening, I did the yidam's recitation;  
At midnight, I supplicated the lord;  
After that, I exerted myself in prana-control practice;  
At the end of the night, right before dawn,  
When I made a short session for some sleep,  
Without being affected by previous latent tendencies,

This wondrous dream arose:

There was a summer hat with a silken brim  
Ornamented with a draping red silk;<sup>145</sup>  
Upon it was placed a vulture's feather.  
I dreamt I was wearing it upon my head.

There were boots of a majestic green  
With embossed brass placed all around the top  
And beautified with clasps of silver.  
I dreamt I wore such a pair of boots.

On a white silken garment with gold threads and jewels  
The top was embroidered with golden threads  
With a crescent-shaped pattern of red dots.  
I dreamt I wore this over my body.

Upon a belt of cloth from Mön  
Were ornaments of a bright variety of flowers  
With tassels of silk adorned with pearls.  
I dreamt it wrapped three times about my waist.

Upon a piece of felt made of goat's hair  
Whose shape was not formed by cutting it,  
Was a silver ornament that clasped it together.<sup>146</sup>  
I dreamt I wore this wondrous garment on top.

A staff of mango and sandalwood  
Was inlaid with the seven precious substances,  
Its handle enmeshed with a golden weave.  
I dreamt this was held within my right hand.

An authentic vajra kapala  
Was filled with the golden amrita nectar.  
Thinking of this as my drinking bowl,

I dreamt it was held in my left hand.

A pair of multicolored bags\*28

Filled with white rice of India:

Thinking of these as my dharma provisions,

I dreamt I carried them upon my right shoulder.

A skin of the krishnasara deer

With head and four legs still intact:

Thinking of this as the cushion for my seat,

I dreamt I carried it on my left shoulder.

After this, I looked out to my right

And there, upon a beautiful golden field

Where calves and sheep were grazing about,

I dreamt I thought, "I am their herder."

After that, I looked out to my left

Where I saw a turquoise meadow

With many different colored flowers.

I dreamt many women were prostrating.

In the center of this field

Were golden flowers with innumerable petals.

Upon this seat of a mound of lotus flowers,

I dreamt I sat with the bodhisattva posture.

I dreamt that in front, a spring came forth.

I dreamt that light swirled at my back.

I dreamt my body blazed like a mass of fire.

I dreamt the sun and moon shone in my heart.

This is the marvelous dream I had.

Yet I do not know if it's a good one or not.

Lord yogi, knower of the three times,

I pray that you tell me of its meaning.

After Gampopa supplicated Milarepa to hear of the signs that appeared in his dream, the Jetsun said, “Son, teacher-physician, do not let your mind be uneasy. Let your mind rest, relaxed at ease. Do not get caught up in the layers of the web of concepts that cling to a self. Let the knot of doubt be loosened in its own place. Cut the rope of duality at its thinnest point. Burst through the mat of latent tendencies at its thinnest point. Do not let the proliferation of thoughts become great; be without contrivance, and rest within freshness. I am a yogi who is trained in the illusory body, so I can interpret dreams. I also know how to transform dreams. I have full confidence in sealing dreams with suchness, and fully understand the suchness of dreams. Thus, son, this old father will now explain the omens of which you spoke. I will explain it in detail to make it clear and point out its symbolic meaning. Listen, focused, without distraction. Listen vividly and relaxed.” Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply to Gampopa’s recounting of his dream:

Lhajé, this song has your question’s answer:

Listen vividly and relaxed, with attentive mind.

Son, you have heard the Chakrasamvara tradition of Zangkar;<sup>\*29</sup>

You’ve studied the Kadampa tradition in Upper Ü;

You’ve the power of remaining in excellent samadhi:

I think all of this is wonderful!

In the confused latent tendencies of your dream

You got caught up in omens and fixated upon them.

Son, have you not studied much? Such things are false.

Have you not read the sutras, tantras, and treatises?

In the definitive meaning of the Prajñāparamita sutras,

It is taught that dreams are not anything real.

They are empty, hollow, and meaningless;

They’re without any essence, so the Buddha said.

Likewise, as in the eight examples of illusoriness,<sup>\*30</sup>

It’s just as above, but in greater detail.

Has this point not gone to your mind?

Nonetheless, the omens in your dream



Are a wondrous prophecy of what is to come.  
I, a yogi who has trained in dreams,  
Know how to explain such illusions.

The white hat that you wore on your head  
Is a sign your high view overlays the lower ones.  
The silk brim added by a Chinese maiden  
Shows the profound and subtle dharmata.  
The color of the beautiful crest  
Means clearly distinguishing and not mixing the tenets.  
The vulture feather on the top  
Is the highest view of Mahamudra,  
A sign of seeing the unborn essence.

Your wearing of the pair of boots  
Is a sign of climbing to the higher yantras, up from the lower:  
Their green color and embossed brass ornaments  
Are a sign of attaining the four kayas as fruition  
And show the gathering of the two accumulations.

The shiny earrings with silver clasps,  
Because you've abandoned all pitfalls of conduct  
And don't act heedlessly, however you wish,  
Are a sign of conduct that's elegant and pleasing,  
The proper conduct of the Youthful Bodhisattva.\*<sup>31</sup>

Your wearing the white silk robe with ornaments  
Is a sign of your mind-stream unsullied by faults.  
The threads of refined gold circling the top  
Are a sign of unwavering altruistic heart.  
The crescent pattern with red dots  
Is a sign of benefiting beings with love.

The belt made of cloth from Mön  
Wrapped three times about your waist

wrapped three times about your waist  
Is a sign of holding the three vows in your mind-stream.

The beautiful ornaments of white flowers  
As well as the silk laden with pearls,  
Because you are well adorned with the three trainings,  
Are a sign that disciples will have inspiration and faith.

The staff of mango and sandalwood  
Is a sign of finding the guru according to your wish.  
The seven precious substances inlaid upon it  
Are the good qualities of that lord.  
The web of gold, enmeshing the handle,  
Is a sign of accepting fortunate ones  
With the vital points of the whispered lineage's key instructions.

Holding the staff within your right hand  
Is a sign you will go to a buddha realm,  
Having traversed the path with more and more ease.  
The authentic vajra kapala you had  
Is a sign that symbolizes the empty essence.  
Its being filled with amrita  
Is a sign that symbolizes the experience of bliss.  
Your thinking of it as your drinking bowl  
Is a sign that symbolizes those three as one.  
Carrying the kapala in your left hand  
Is a sign you'll never be parted from meditative experience.

The beautiful multicolored shoulder bags  
Are a sign of bringing whatever appears to the path.  
Carrying this double bag upon your shoulder  
Is a sign of traversing the Mahayana path  
Through the union of wisdom and means.  
The grains of Indian white rice inside

And thinking of them as your dharma provision  
Are a sign that your life will be without obstacles  
And that you'll be sustained by the food of samadhi.

The krishnasara deer pelt upon your left shoulder  
Is a sign of mindfulness without distraction.  
The head and four legs still intact  
Is a sign you'll clear away the suffering of the six types of beings,  
Because you're trained in the four immeasurables  
And you continuously habituate to bodhichitta.  
Thinking of it as your cushion  
Is a sign that the realization of the inseparability  
Of compassion and emptiness will develop in your mind-stream.

After that, when you looked over to the right  
At the beautiful golden field there,  
That's a sign of the expansion of outer and inner good qualities.  
The sheep and goats scattered grazing there  
Are a sign you'll fulfill the desires of beings  
By being a refuge, both materially and through dharma.

Thinking that you were the herder of those  
Is a sign that you'll care, never separate from compassion,  
For those without a protector from suffering.

Then you looked over to your left,  
And there you saw a turquoise meadow.  
That's a sign you'll see the wisdom of bliss and joy  
By continually cultivating undefiled samadhi.  
The adornment of many flowers there  
Means that signs of experience will gradually dawn without bias  
And is a sign that you'll develop many experiences.  
The many ladies prostrating there  
Are a sign of having command over the dakinis

That abide within the nadis and bindus.  
The field of golden flowers at the center  
Is the sangha, like clouds that adorn the sky,  
With perfectly pure discipline  
And the realization of samadhi—  
This is the sign of your retinue's gathering.

The seat of a mound of lotus flowers  
With many petals and golden hue:  
Because you understand there is no abiding in existence,  
Just as mud does not sully the lotus,  
It's a sign you won't be sullied by the faults of samsara.

As to your sitting in the bodhisattva posture:  
Because of your compassion you don't stay in nirvana,  
Just like the Youthful Bodhisattva.  
That's a sign you're a nirmanakaya who has come  
To help all six realms' beings who have been your mother.

The spring that burst forth to the front  
Is a sign that the dominion of dharma will spread.  
The swirling of light at your back  
Is a sign that virtue will spread throughout Tibet.  
Your body that blazed like a mound of fire

Is a sign of the melting of the ice-block of concepts  
Through the wisdom of  
chandali's blissful heat.

The moon that shone within your heart  
Is a sign of always remaining within  
The luminous state free of coming or going.

Son, it's not a bad dream; it's a good dream, indeed.  
A prophecy of what will come in the future:  
If this omen is explained, it is good, a sign of dharma.

With whatever dreams that may manifest,  
If you cling to characteristics, they become an obstacle.  
If you know they're illusions, they become the path.  
If you don't understand dreams, then you won't know how to explain them.  
Good dreams that seem bad, you'll say are evil.  
You must train in dreams, then once that is actualized,  
A bad dream can be a good omen and explained as good.  
In short, whatever faults or good qualities there may be,  
Don't regard them as great, O son of noble family.  
Keep this within your mind, dear monk!

Thus he sang. Milarepa said, "O son, teacher-physician, these omens that came to you are indeed a prophecy of the future. They are signs that dharma will develop in your mind-stream. This old father, knowing how to interpret it, has explained it in detail. Do not forget the meanings of the symbols that I have pointed out to you, and henceforth come to determine whether my explanation is true or false. When you have determined that they are true, at that time, a special devotion toward me will arise within you, unlike what you have now. Son, when this happens, a special realization of seeing the essence of mind, free of contrivance, will dawn. In this life, you will be liberated from both birth and death.

"Son, if you want to be a genuine meditator, you should not have great attachment to the omens in dreams. If you do, you will become influenced by demons. Only follow the instructions of the guru and your own determination; do not heed others' advice, as it is the cause for mind becoming confused. Do not look for the faults of companions around you. Don't give sway to unwholesome thoughts. Don't involve yourself in correcting others. Not knowing others' mind-streams is a cause for downfall.

"Our confused appearances in this bardo of birth and dying are like a dream that is continuing on right now. The latent tendencies we create through our activities in the daytime come to us in that night's dream; they appear to our consciousness, mind's delusion. In the bardo of dreaming, the illusions within them are compounded delusion. Once those latent tendencies have been fully ingrained, then following after our virtuous and negative karma, we come to experience the feelings of suffering and happiness in the bardo of becoming. To purify this, if you can perfect the training in dream yoga and illusory body yoga

right now, then in the bardo you will arrive at the state of the sambhogakaya. Therefore, you should practice them with vigor.”

Then the lord said, “Please accept me and give an instruction on these bardos that is easy to put into practice.” Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the guru lords.

In particular, I go for refuge to the one who is kind.

Son, in reply to your supplication,

I sing this melody about the bardos.

In general, the beings of samsara’s three realms

And the buddhas in the state of nirvana, these two,

Within the true nature of things, are of one abiding nature.

Practice this bardo of the view.

The white and red that dawn as a variety

And the inexpressible mind itself

Are one in the indivisible primordial state.

Practice this bardo of meditation.

Confused appearances that appear as a variety

And one’s own mind that is unborn

Are one in nondual coemergence.

Practice this bardo of conduct.

The latent tendencies that appear in last night’s dream

And knowing they’re false upon awakening

Are one within the illusion-like state.

Practice this bardo of dreaming.

The five impure aggregates

And the five pure buddha families

Are one in the state of the completion stage without concept.

Practice this bardo of the path of creation and completion.

The father tantras that arose from means

And the mother tantras that arose from wisdom  
Are one in the coemergent third abhisheka.  
Practice this bardo of the vital point.

The changeless dharmakaya for the benefit of self  
And the unceasing rupakaya for the benefit of other  
Are one in the indivisible innate state.  
Practice this bardo of three kayas.

The womb of the impure illusory body  
And the form of the pure deity  
Are one in the state of the luminous bardo.  
Practice this bardo of fruition.

Thus he sang. Then the Jetsun said, “Teacher of Ü, Dorje Drakpa, and Shiwa Ö, await your dreams tonight, and tomorrow morning this old father will interpret them.”

They each waited for their dreams, and in the morning, Shiwa Ö came first to the Jetsun and said, “Last night, I had an excellent dream. In the east the warm sun rose and I dreamt that it dissolved into the center of my heart.”

Then Rechungpa said, “I dreamt that I went to three great valleys and shouted in a loud voice.”

Then Gampopa, while weeping, said, “I had a very bad dream.”

The Jetsun said, “You don’t know if it was good or bad. Tell me the dream.”

“I dreamt I slaughtered many men of different races and stopped their breath. I must have great negativity.”

“Teacher-son, you don’t need to weep. Look at your hand.” Then the Jetsun took his hand and said, “Son, you haven’t given me any doubt in my hopes for you. I have had great hopes that you will be someone who liberates all sentient beings from samsara, and this is something that will indeed happen. A son has been born to this old father. Now I have served the activity of the Buddha’s teaching.

“The dream of Shiwa Ö was middling. Because your motivation is small in scope, you will not benefit vast numbers of beings. But you will go to a pure realm. Rechungpa, because of your impudence, you disobeyed my command

three times. You will take rebirth in three different valleys, as three different geshes renowned far and wide.”

Then Gampopa, the physician from Nyal, meditated with great exertion for another month. First, he had a vision of the seven Medicine Buddhas. He became able to take only a single breath each day. When he released his prana, the vision dissipated. In the afternoon, when he bound his prana, he saw the infinite sambhogakaya pure realm. Becoming distracted by this, he released his prana and saw that it had become evening. Thinking that it would disturb his guru’s samadhi, he did not go to tell him of his experience that evening. In his early morning session, when he again bound his prana, he saw the Buddha Shakyamuni as the principal figure in a retinue of a thousand buddhas.

When the sun rose, he went to his guru and prostrated before him. Without Gampopa needing to tell of his experiences, the Jetsun said, “Now you have seen the yidam deity’s face: you saw both the sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya directly. Now, you must see the dharmakaya. I want you to stay in the presence of your old father, but due to the connection of previous aspirations, you must go to Ü and meditate there. The obstacles that you have met so far in meditation I have cleared away. Now there is the obstacle of the higher perceptions. When such higher perceptions arise, because there is the danger of being overtaken by the mara of the divine son,\*<sup>32</sup> it is very important to keep these experiences extremely secret. Generally, because the Secret Mantra is to be kept secret, the accomplishments should be attained in secret. The maras will not overpower those with the sharpest faculties, and those people will be able to benefit beings; thus they should gather disciples and care for them.”

“When will it be time to teach disciples?”

“When you see the essence of mind and it becomes stable, then it will be time to look after disciples. After some time, you will develop the realization of clear insight\*<sup>33</sup> toward the essence of mind unlike what you have now. At that time, you will gain clear and stable certainty through seeing directly that your old father is a buddha. At that time, you should gather disciples and look after them. If the prana enters your fingers, then you will be able to overcome any difficulties with prana. See if you can do it now.”

Then on top of a flat rock Gampopa made a pile of dirt, and focusing on his fingers, brought the prana into their tips. By midnight, the ashes had dispersed. The next morning, in the presence of his guru, he told him what had happened.

Milarepa said, “You have not attained mastery over the prana, but it has



become workable for you. You will be able to perform miracles such as emanating and transforming and will obtain the supreme and ordinary siddhis. Now you do not need my assistance; you may go and practice on your own. Go to Gampo Dar Mountain in the east, which is like a royal seat; its peak is like a precious ornamented hat like the one I am wearing. There is a wooded meadow like a golden mandala, and in front there are seven mountains like mounds of jewels that look like seven ministers prostrating before the king. At the neck of this mountain is where your disciples are. Go there, and benefit beings.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Teacher-son, will you go to Ü, or not?

If the teacher goes to Ü

Sometimes appearances of food will dawn.

When the appearances of food do dawn,

Eat the undefiled food of samadhi.

Know that everything sweet and delicious is an illusion.

Whatever appears, bring it to your experience as dharmakaya.

Sometimes appearances of clothing will dawn.

When the appearances of clothing dawn,

Wear the clothes of chandali’s blissful heat.

Know that everything soft and fine is an illusion.

Whatever appears, bring it to your experience as dharmakaya.

Sometimes appearances of your homeland will dawn.

When appearances of your homeland dawn,

Take up the homeland of dharmata.

Know that all homelands are an illusion.

Whatever appears, bring it to your experience as dharmakaya.

Sometimes appearances of wealth will dawn.

When appearances of wealth dawn,

Take up the seven noble riches.

Know that all types of wealth are an illusion.

Whatever appears, bring it to your experience as dharmakaya.

Sometimes appearances of friends will dawn.  
When appearances of friends dawn,  
Rely on the friend of self-arisen wisdom.  
Know that all friends are an illusion.  
Whatever appears, bring it to your experience as dharmakaya.

Sometimes appearances of the guru will dawn.  
When appearances of the guru dawn,  
Supplicate with him always above your head;  
Never forget to meditate with him in your heart.  
The guru, too, is like an illusion or dream.  
Know that everything is like an illusion.

Gampo Dar Mountain in the east  
Is like a king sitting upon his seat.  
The mountain behind is like a hoisted white banner.  
The mountain in front is like a mound of jewels.  
Its peak is like a jeweled crown.  
The seven other mountains are like the bowing ministers.  
The wooded meadow is like a mandala.  
At the mountain's neck are the ones to be tamed.  
You should go there and act for the benefit of beings.  
Son, you will accomplish the benefit of beings.

Thus he sang. Milarepa said, “Your name shall be Gelong Dorje Dzinpa Dzamling Drakpa.\*<sup>34</sup> Then he gave him the command of abhisheka and blessing. Granting him all the dharma in its entirety, Milarepa gave him a piece of golden arura on which he placed saliva from his tongue. He also gave Gampopa a tinder pouch and said, “Now go to that land to meditate.”

Then Gampopa, in accordance with the prophecy, went to Ü, and the Jetsun accompanied him as far as Champoche. When they reached a stone bridge, they stopped at the near side of it. “Teacher from Ü, for the sake of *tendrel*, I will not cross the river with you. Let us, father and son, speak here for a while. Put down your load and sit down.

“Teacher from Ü, abandon the arrogance and pride of your paternal relatives. Cut the ropes of relatives and close ones. Without the binding ropes of this life, become a child of the mountains. Practice by bringing all dharmas into one. Make supplications to me, your old father.

“Furthermore, it is not suitable to spend time with people for whom the three poisons are copious; you will fall under their shadow. How is this? There are people who take all appearances as their enemies; because they always denigrate people and the dharma, they are stuck. Anger burns within them like fire. For example, a snake does not have wings nor hands or feet; there is no feeblere creature than a snake. But when seen, people have fear and flee from them; this is a sign that snakes have great aggression within them. Because they have such great aggression, they take everything outside to be their enemy.

“Also, some people stow away everything from bored rocks to knots of wood. They say that when they get old, they will need provisions, and that when they die, they will need food for the charnel ground. They say that without wealth they cannot practice dharma, that in order to accumulate merit, they must have wealth. Getting involved with things like debt and interest, they engage in wrong livelihood. Within, they harbor great attachment that boils like water.

“There are some who say, ‘Now is not the right time to meditate on genuine reality’; there are those who do not cultivate compassion, who stray onto the path of the shravakas; and there are those who by disregarding [relative] means have a nihilistic view. These people have great ignorance within them, like being shrouded with darkness. If you try to give such people good advice, they will not listen. If they do listen to your advice, first they will ask you who your teacher is, and what dharma you practice. Then based on that, they will only get upset. They listen with such narrow minds that they abandon any good thing, are left without refuge, and will end up in the great hells of torment. So because of your interaction, engaging with them, others will accumulate nonvirtue in their mind-streams. Therefore it is not suitable to spend time with people who have an abundance of the three poisons:

‘If you stay seven days amongst the shravakas,

Your actions will become like theirs.

In general, you should be extra vigilant

Like an animal that has been wounded, or like a bird.’

“Without getting too close with others, remain peaceful and tamed. Have great patience. Be harmonious with everyone. Maintain impeccable cleanliness. Have

very few concepts. Without being distracted by tea, beer, or dharmic activities, remain in mountain retreats; do not speak; and remain sealed in caves. Pass your time in these three ways. Even though you realize that your own mind is buddha, do not abandon the guru, the vajra master. Though accumulation and purification are pure in their own place, make efforts to gather even the smallest accumulation. Though you realize that karma and results are like space, avoid doing even the slightest negativity. Though there is no difference between meditation and postmeditation, continually practice the four-session yoga. Though you understand self and other to be equal, do not denigrate the dharma or persons. Thus it is said. Son, on the fourteenth day of the horse month of the rabbit year, you should come to see me.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Son, when the state, free of elaborations, dawns within the mind,

Do not follow after conventional terms.

There’s the danger of being bound by the eight worldly concerns.

Son, rest in the state that’s free of pride:

Do you understand this, Teacher from Ü?

Son when self-liberation dawns from within,

Do not posit pramana syllogisms.

There’s the danger of making useless efforts.

Son, rest in the state that is free of concepts:

Do you understand this, Teacher from Ü?

Son, when you realize your mind is emptiness,

Do not differentiate between one and many.

There’s the danger of falling into nihilistic emptiness.

Son, rest in the state free of elaborations:

Do you understand this, Teacher from Ü?

Son when you’re meditating on Mahamudra,

Do not strive in virtuous activity with body or speech.

There’s the danger that nonconceptual wisdom will disappear.

Son, rest in the state that is uncontrived and relaxed:

Do you understand this, Teacher from Ü?

Son, when signs and prophecies arise,  
Do not fixate on them with conceited joy.  
There's the danger of receiving a demon's prophecy.  
Son, rest in the state free of fixation:  
Do you understand this, Teacher from Ü?

Son, when you have gained certainty in your mind,  
Do not give rise to attachment and clinging.  
There's the danger you'll be carried off by the demon of conceited joy.  
Son, rest in the state free of hopes:  
Do you understand this, Teacher from Ü?

Thus he sang. Then the Jetsun placed his foot on the lord's head. "Teacher from Ü, I have bestowed upon you all four abhishekas, here on one seat. Now, rejoice!"

Furthermore, by the abhisheka of the deity having been bestowed upon his body, his body was blessed as the mandala of the deity. By the mantra abhisheka having been bestowed upon his speech, his speech was blessed to be mantra. By the dharma abhisheka having been bestowed upon his mind, the unborn mind, the dharmakaya, was pointed out to him. The guru's placing his feet upon his head unobstructedly empowered him as a full-fledged<sup>147</sup> vajra master. Bestowing the speech abhisheka of samadhi, he said, "I have one remaining profound key instruction, but it is too precious to give away. Now you may go."

The Jetsun remained where he was, and the Lord Physician crossed the river and went on some distance. Again, he barely heard Milarepa call out, and [he rushed back]. When he arrived at the Jetsun's side, [the Jetsun] said, "Even though this key instruction is so precious,<sup>148</sup> if I do not give it to you, to whom will I give it?"

Then the Lord Physician gleefully said, "Should I offer a mandala?"

"You don't need a mandala. Do not waste this. Now, here is the upadesha."

Milarepa then lifted up his clothes, exposing his naked rear covered with a web of calluses. "There is no profounder upadesha than *to practice*. It is through practicing, with my bottom becoming like this, that good qualities have arisen in my mind-stream. You too should develop perseverance and practice." Thus, the instruction became well imprinted upon the Lord Physician's mind.

Then, according to the guru’s prophecy, he went to the east to Daklha Gampo, where he accomplished vast benefit for beings and the teachings. These accounts are written clearly and extensively in Gampopa’s own biography.

Then the Jetsun went to Chuwar where his disciple-sons had gathered. “The teacher-physician will benefit many sentient beings. Last night, I dreamt that a single vulture flew from where I was to Ü, where he landed upon the peak of a great mountain. In every direction, it was surrounded by many geese. Then, after a while, the geese lifted off, each gathering five hundred more of their own retinue, and the valley became completely filled with geese. This shows that while I am a lay-yogi, later, there will be many monks in my lineage. Now I have fulfilled my duty to the Buddha’s teachings.” And he was very pleased.

This is the cycle of the supreme heart-son of the great Jetsun, the noble Gampopa.

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\*1 Great Compassion White-Lotus Sutra (T: *snying rje chen po padma dkar po*).

\*2 The Physician of Dakpo.

\*3 Bodhisattva Great Being.

\*4 Small reliquaries often containing the ashes of someone who has died.

\*5 Putowa Rinchen Sal (1027–1105), a student of Dromtönpa, was one of the forefathers of the Kadampa lineage.

\*6 “Sang” (T: *srang*), translated here as “measure,” referred to a weight of approximately 37.5 grams. The amount here, sixteen sang, would be six hundred grams or a little over twenty-one ounces (just under one and a half pounds).

\*7 Each of these texts is studied widely still today as a part of the training of the Sutrayana.

\*8 *Suvarna-prabhasottama-sutra* (T: *mDo gser ’od dam pa*).

\*9 Pekar (T: *pe dkar*), here, may be an alternate spelling for the legendary Tibetan dharma protector Pehar Gyalpo, but it is not clear (Buswell 2014: 638).

\*10 Dombi Heruka was an Indian mahasiddha. Originally a king, he left his kingdom to engage in deep yogic practice in the forest. His kingdom having fallen into disarray, he was summoned by the council of Brahmins to return to rule. When he left the forest (apparently with no intention to return to his throne), he is said to have been seen together with his consort riding a ferocious pregnant tigress.

\*11 Famous naga kings.

\*12 According to traditional Tibetan history, Lhaga and Luga (T: *lha dga’* and *klu dga’*) were the two strongest men in China entrusted with transporting the Jowo Shakyamuni along with the princess Kongjo when she was sent to marry the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo (Gyaltzen 1996: 147).

\*13 Gampopa.

\*14 The Tibetan word translated as “pot” here (*slo*) actually refers specifically to a container used in the process of winnowing grains (*TDC*).

\*15 Literally, “Even if a bird is hungry, he will still keep his garuda horns” (T: *bya ltogs rung khyung ru deng nge bya ba yin*).

- \*16 Tse De (T: *tse lde*) was a king of the Western Kingdom of Tibet, Guge, who probably began his reign in 1057 C.E. (Gyatso 2005: 75).
- \*17 Practiced as a method of accumulating merit, the seven branches are paying homage, offering, confession, rejoicing, requesting to teach the dharma, requesting to remain and not pass into nirvana, and dedication.
- \*18 A *radung* is a long bass trumpet used ceremonially in Tibetan monastic rituals.
- \*19 This is an epithet for the central region of Tibet (T: *nyi ma dbus*).
- \*20 With this statement, Milarepa makes reference to Gampopa's name: "Sonam" means merit, and "Rinchen" means precious.
- \*21 This refers to Gampopa.
- \*22 *Sindhura* literally means "sediment from the banks of the Indus," referring to red earth from a place sacred to Vajrayogini, though the word is used for sacred red earth from any place. Lead oxide (red lead powder) is often used as a substitute. (Roberts in *RY*) \*23 T: *myal ba thig nag*. One of the eight hot hell realms that are taught in traditional Buddhist cosmology. In it, black lines are drawn on the bodies of its inhabitants, which the hell guardians use as a guide to saw them in half.
- \*24 "Rakta" means blood in Sanskrit, and here refers to the red bindu.
- \*25 Luyipa was one of the mahasiddhas of India who held a lineage of the practice of Chakrasamvara.
- \*26 Arya Sadaparudita (T: *rtag ru ngu*) is also known as the Ever-Weeping Bodhisattva. His story is told in the *Prajñāparamita Sutra* in eight thousand verses. He underwent great hardship in anticipation of the teaching of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata (Patrul 1998: 154).
- \*27 The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata (T: *chos 'phags*) lived in the City of Fragrances and was renowned for teaching the *Prajñāparamita*. Sadaparudita heard of this and longed to receive those teachings. Before meeting him in person, because of his deep faith and devotion, Sadaparudita had a vision in which he could hear Dharmodgata teaching (Patrul 1998: 154).
- \*28 T: *sum gal khra bo dor gcig*. This style of bag is actually one piece but is designed so that each end can be filled; when it is slung over the shoulders, there is equal weight at either end. (TN) \*29 This reference is obscure, but could refer to a region (*bzang dkar*) in current day Ladakh that was heavily influenced culturally by the Tibetan Plateau throughout history (Powers 2012: 746).
- \*30 There are different enumerations of the eight examples; one lists them as a dream, an echo, a city of gandharvas, an optical illusion, a mirage, an illusion, a reflection, and a city produced through magic.
- \*31 Literally, "the youthful son of the Victors" (T: *rgyal sras gzhon nu*); this is an epithet for Mañjushri.
- \*32 This symbolizes our craving for pleasure and convenience.
- \*33 Vipashyana (T: *lhag gis mthong*).
- \*34 "Bhikshu, holder of the vajra, renowned throughout the world" (T: *dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa dzam gling grags pa*).

## Lotön Gendun

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying in the Omchung Pal Forest,\*<sup>1</sup> a friend of Darlo, the teacher who had previously debated with the Jetsun, named Lotön Gendun came to visit Milarepa, going through Rechungpa and Seben Repa. He offered many prostrations, and said, “Great precious Jetsun, when I met you, I had devoted interest. I saw the way that my friend Darlo died, and I could not determine if the things to abandon in our dharma tradition were something I should place more emphasis upon or lessen. I came to have faith in you and so I have come into your presence to request dharma I can practice. Please, I ask you to teach me.”

Then the Jetsun said, “You should place emphasis on abandoning all manner of dharma practice that does not embrace mindfulness of death; and activities that entail goals and objectives should be lessened.” Then he sang this song of realization:

In general, the Victorious One, Lord of Humans,  
 Taught the dharma to subdue the eight worldly concerns.  
 Now, for all those arrogant scholars  
 Do the eight worldly concerns not increase?  
 The Victorious One taught that keeping discipline  
 Is to abandon all mundane activity.  
 The monks, these days, who are “keeping discipline,”  
 Are they not just engaging in more activity?  
 The way of the sages of previous times  
 Was taught to cut all ties to close ones.  
 But with the way of renunciants in this day and age, Do they not just increase  
 their attempts to please others?  
 In short, when one has the dharma that does not embrace mindfulness of



death, Then whatever one does will be mistaken.

Thus he sang. Then Lotön said, “Before, I was like that, and I have regret. Now, since I am mindful of death, please give me dharma to put into practice.”

The Jetsun thought, “Now, I will see whether he is able to apply himself only to meditation or not.” Then he said, “If you have no desire for this life, though it will be a bit longer, it is also possible to attain enlightenment through the path of characteristics.\*2” Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the father gurus.

EMA! Listen here you great teachers: The discipline of pratimoksha, the root,  
Is the pillar of the great house of the teachings.  
Keep it forthrightly, without wavering!

The logic and reasoning of exposition and study  
Is what cleans off the jewel of the Buddha’s teaching.  
Take off the rust of incorrect thought!

The precepts of the three trainings  
Are the friend of the Buddha’s teaching.  
Do not take such a friend as a foe!

The logic and discussion of the Mahayana  
Are to destroy the ignorance of opponents.  
Transform the perceptions of ordinary ones!

Thus he sang. Then Lotön requested fervently, “Right now, I only practice the dharma of mere words, thus please teach me the essence of dharma.” Knowing that it was the right time for taming this one to be tamed and thinking that he must now accept him, Milarepa sat there silently for a while. Then the monk asked Rechungpa and Seben Repa to intercede for him in requesting to receive the dharma in its entirety, and they petitioned the Jetsun on behalf of Lotön.

The Jetsun was pleased and said, “The two repas have petitioned well for you to receive the dharma in its entirety. Since the teacher is capable of meditating and the requester is worthy, I must bestow the key instructions. But you must meditate! If you conceptually understand dharma but do not meditate, this is what will happen.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the guru lords.

For you, teacher, the two meditators made a request.

Their greatness is known throughout three valleys.<sup>149</sup>

This teacher, who has studied and trained in terms, Has asked to enter the path of key instructions.

The requester and his interceders are worthy, indeed.

I, the yogi Milarepa,

Am the treasured child of the Buddha Marpa.

My words are not hearsay, nor do they stray from the point.

They're without personal ambition or hostility.

They're words whose meaning penetrates the heart.

They're easy to grasp, with excellent meaning.

If you examine them with logic, you'll find they hold up.

Now listen well to what this old man says.

Having mixed dharma with your mind-stream but not meditated on it, You'll remain ordinary like a preta who moves through the sky: He knows the extent of the sections of tantra,

And the logic of connections and contradictions.

He correctly knows terms, grammar, and pramana,

And has higher perceptions and magical power.

He has excellent resources and material wealth,

And his intellectual prowess is very sharp.

However, he doesn't practice the actual dharma

And is not concerned with subtle cause and effect.

Thus, he has not let go of great worldly arrogance.

His concepts of ambition have not been exhausted,

And so emptiness and compassion do not develop.

He will never cross the river of samsara;

The sprouts of suffering will never dry up.

He is expert in knowable things but still seeks the higher perceptions.

The concepts that establish connections and contradictions\*<sup>3</sup>

Are the firewood that scorches his own mind-stream.  
Your very own faults bring your own negativity.  
Thus, you should practice the genuine dharma.

The medicinal nectar that can revive one from death: If the person who is  
sick does not take it himself, Though he has the nectar, what good will it  
do?

If you want to be quickly relieved from an illness, You must take the  
medicine that revives you from death.

The nectar of the deathless gods,  
The asuras have a lot of it themselves,  
But because they cannot make any use of it,  
Asuras mostly have untimely death.

What good does the deathless nectar do them?  
If you want to be freed from untimely death,  
You must partake of such nectar yourself.

The most excellent food with exquisite taste,  
Though Yama's storehouse has a lot of it,  
He cannot eat the food himself.  
So, Yama most likely will die of hunger.  
What good did that excellent food do for him?  
If you want to be free of hunger's illness  
You must partake of the excellent food yourself.

Thus he sang. Lotön was delighted by this and said, "I am able to develop  
certainty in everything the Jetsun said; that explanation was very profound.  
Please, also teach me the essential points of the six paramitas." Then Milarepa  
sang this song of realization:

I know nothing of being a scholar of words Nor have I great skill in giving  
talks.

Though this is so, this requester is worthy.

All dharma is subsumed in the six paramitas:  
Generosity is the dharma of kings.

When owners give away what they have,  
They attain the kingdoms of the higher deva realms, Which is a cause of  
distraction for those practicing dharma.

Discipline is the stairway to liberation for all.  
Everyone who has entered the Buddha's teachings,  
Layperson or monastic, cannot do without it.  
Take hold of the teachings, all of you here.

Patience is the special quality of a sage.  
Following after the Buddha Shakyamuni,  
It is clothing of hardship for all to wear.  
You must excellently wear the mantle of patience.

Diligence is the direct path to liberation  
It is necessary for all genuine dharma.  
If one doesn't have it, there's no hope at all.  
Ride the horse of diligence, and you'll come along.

These four dharmas accumulate merit;  
They're the indispensable guide for everyone.

Now as to the dharma connected with wisdom:  
Meditative concentration is the threshold of both accumulations.  
Upon this threshold one must perfectly sit.  
It's the method for protection for when distraction comes.  
It must be joined with both accumulations.

Wisdom, the dharma of definitive meaning,  
Is the single treasure of all the buddhas.  
When engaged, it's an inexhaustible treasure-lode of wealth.  
It's the sublime offering—wealth to be cast away

Toward all worldly sentient beings with none left out.  
By becoming free of all the freedomless states,

The supreme leisure is granted.  
The accumulation of wisdom is a precious jewel.  
Gradually one is brought to supreme excellence.

This is my reply for the teacher's request;  
Reflect on it happily and put it into practice!

When he had sung this, all of Milarepa's disciple-sons experienced great enhancement in their practice. Then the Jetsun said to Rechungpa and Seben Repa, "I will give the abhishekas to the monk. Arrange the offerings." Accordingly, they arranged the offerings. Milarepa bestowed the abhishekas and key instructions, and sent Lotön to meditate. A variety of experiences arose for him.

At one point, when many of Milarepa's disciple-sons were present, Lotön came to the Jetsun and said to him, "A variety of appearances have arisen for me, and although I meditate, my mind doesn't rest and has proliferating thoughts. If this is a fault, please give me a method for eliminating it. If it is a good quality, then please give me an enhancement practice and a method for resting."

The Jetsun thought, "He is actually meditating." Then he said to Lotön, "Teacher, although a variety of appearances have come up and your thoughts proliferate, they do not exist apart from the one thing. Whatever faults or good qualities there may be, put effort into practicing with the view." Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the gurus.  
Lotön, and everyone gathered here, listen:  
Do you understand what appearances are?  
If you don't understand what appearances are,  
Appearances appear as anything.  
If you don't realize it, then that's samsara.  
For those who realize it, they appear as dharmakaya.  
When appearances dawn as dharmakaya,  
There's no need to search for any other view.

Do you understand the method for resting the mind?  
If you don't understand the method for resting the mind, Not allowing mind

itself to move about, Do not contrive with your own mind.  
Rest in your own nature, like a small child.  
Rest like an ocean free of waves.  
Rest in clarity like a candle flame.  
Rest without pride like a human corpse.  
Rest without movement, like a mountain.  
Mind itself has no imputations.

Do you understand the way experiences dawn?  
If you don't understand the way experiences dawn,  
The sun's energy clears away darkness;  
Concepts don't need to be abandoned for something else.  
Without any base, they dawn like a dream.  
Without any fixation, they dawn like water-moons.  
With nothing substantial, they dawn like rainbows.  
Without any bias, they dawn like space.

Do you understand the antidote for bad experiences?  
If you don't understand the antidote for bad experiences, Though winds may  
be strong, their nature is space.  
Though waves may be big, their nature is the ocean.  
Though southern clouds may be thick, their nature is the sky.  
Though the mind's thoughts proliferate, their nature is unborn.

For engaging in balanced awareness,  
Consider the key instruction of consciousness riding the prana.  
When the thief of concepts begins to come,  
Consider the key instruction for recognizing the thief.  
When your mind is distracted toward outer objects, Consider the key  
instruction of the crow flying from a ship.\*4

Do you understand the method for engaging in conduct?  
If you don't understand the method for engaging in conduct, You should  
engage like a great majestically poised lion.

Engage like a lotus that grows from the mud.

Engage like a crazy elephant.

Engage like wiping a crystal ball.

Do you understand the way that the fruition will dawn?

If you don't understand how the fruition will dawn, From nonthought comes  
the dharmakaya.

From bliss itself comes the sambhogakaya.

From clarity comes the nirmanakaya.

The innate state is the svabhavikakaya.

I am an expert in the four kayas

I do not move from the dharmadhatu.

View, meditation, and experience, these three,

With the antidote, conduct, and fruition, make six.

A yogi takes these up when experiences dawn;

You too should practice accordingly.

Thus he sang. Lotön, according to the guru's command, developed great perseverance and meditated. He developed extraordinary experience and realization, to which the Jetsun sang this song of realization of pointing out:

I prostrate to the father gurus.

This luminous mind itself, free of arising and ceasing: Consciousness rides  
the wind;\*<sup>5</sup> thus it pervades every direction.

It is free of object and effort; thus everything needed is present in oneself.

It is free of color and shape; thus it is beyond all objects of the sense  
faculties.

It is without words or letters; thus it is beyond all objects of speech.

It is free of imputations and conventions; thus it is beyond any object of  
mind.

Through practice of the profound key instructions, When blissful heat  
develops in the body,

Profound certainty arises from within And imputations of outer appearances  
are cut.

Without relying on means, the goal will not be accomplished.  
The whispered lineage key instructions are wondrous indeed!  
The meditation on the profound path of means  
Is the height of what this yogi has realized.  
This is the way that I have practiced.

Thus he sang. Milarepa further advised, “Teacher, do not fasten your mind to any support or ground. Do not block any of your sense gateways. Do not fall into any bias. Do not aim for anything as ultimate. There is nothing that exemplifies it. It cannot be expressed as anything. A realization will come in which any name can be given to it, and they will have the same meaning.”

Accordingly, Lotön practiced in the mountains without any distraction. As to his attainment of realization, he cut through all outer doubts through study, and all inner doubts through meditation practice. And so, as a snow lion-like teacher-meditator, he became one of the close sons of Milarepa.

This is the cycle of Lotön Gendun.

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\*1 Glorious Small Tamarisk Forest (T: *'om chung dpal gyi nags 'dabs*).

\*2 This refers to the Sutrayana, or the “non-Vajrayana” path.

\*3 Connections and contradictions are key components of traditional Buddhist logic (pramana).

\*4 When at sea, crows may fly away from a boat, but they will always return. Likewise, when the mind is left uncontrived, it will return to a natural state of rest.

\*5 The word “wind” can also refer to prana (the inner, subtle winds); here it is being used in both senses as a metaphor.



# 43

## Dretön Repa

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Poto Red Rock in Drin, there was a teacher from Drin of the Dre clan\*<sup>1</sup> who had heard of the Jetsun's renown but had never met him. With faith, he came to see the Jetsun in person. In the cave where Milarepa dwelled there was nothing besides some bare necessities. The teacher thought, "He doesn't even have any scriptures or Buddhist images, no dharma materials at all, not to mention any kind of material comforts. What will happen to him when he dies?"

The Jetsun knew these thoughts had arisen in his mind and said, "Teacher, there's no need to think like this. I *do* have such supreme scriptures and holy images, therefore I will not have any regrets at the time of death; I will be joyful." Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the father gurus.

In my body, the mandala of Victorious Ones,

Resides the deity—the essence of the sugatas\*<sup>2</sup> of the three times.

With the blessing of having no attachment to sense pleasures,\*<sup>3</sup>

I make offerings all day and night.

I am content with having no outer substance to offer.

In the natural-born palace of the three realms

Are the six types of beings who have buddha nature.

Since great wisdom has been pointed out to me,

Wherever I reside is a boundless palace;

Whomever I'm with is the yidam deity;

Whatever I do is the dharmadhatu.

I'm content without having an outer support for my offering.

On the white and red\*4 paper of outer appearances I apply the ink of great wisdom.

I write the letters of the five sense faculties  
And I know all that appears is dharmakaya.  
I'm content without texts of black letters.

All sentient beings of samsara's three realms  
Have buddha nature but don't realize they do.  
Through connecting with the profound key instructions, I've the excellent  
samadhi not separate from the three kayas.  
At death, when it comes, I'll be joyful indeed!

Thus he sang. The man thought, "What they say about him having the higher perceptions is really true, so the other claims they make about him must be true as well." Thus he developed unwavering faith. "Lama, please accept me as your student," he said, wholeheartedly offering himself.

The Jetsun thought, "This is a disciple with karmic connection." He gave the abhishekas and key instructions and set the teacher to meditate. Excellent experiences of bliss arose for Dretön and at a time when there were many disciple-sons gathered, he came to report this to Milarepa.

He said to the Jetsun, "Before, such happiness had never dawned within me, and so I had great attachment to material wealth. For the Jetsun, such bliss dawns without any fixation toward anything whatsoever. Now, I request to roam in mountain retreats as the Jetsun does and come to know such happiness."

The Jetsun was pleased and said, "If one wanders in mountain retreats, one is always happy and, later, could be a guide for others to have happiness like this." Then he sang this song of realization on the eight wondrous kinds of happiness:

Lord, Wish-fulfilling Jewel, Nirmanakaya, Great precious Chakravartin  
King,  
Supreme lamp that dispels the darkness of ignorance, At the feet of Marpa  
the Translator, I bow.

The Poto Red Rock Sky Fortress  
Is a place where the four ranks of dakinis gather.  
At the site where this old man has such delight,  
Through experiences of joy I sing this song

through experiences of joy, I sing this song.

You with sharp intellect and endurance in meditation, Sit here, disciple-son,  
and listen to me.

This mountain retreat without any bias  
Is the guide for sustaining meditative experience.  
Is there someone who has such a path?  
One who knows his body is the monastery is happy.  
Mind's nature is pure like space—E MA HO!\*5

This stable and unwavering faith  
Is the guide for relinquishing samsara.  
Is there someone who has such a path?  
One who's liberated samsara and nirvana in its own place is happy.  
This perfection of the four kayas in your mind—E MA HO!

This meeting of the appearances of the six consciousnesses Is the guide for  
taking adverse conditions to the path.  
Is there someone who has such a path?  
One who can carry craving to its exhaustion is happy.  
The cutting of the rope of perceiver and perceived—E MA HO!

This noble guru endowed with lineage  
Is the guide for clearing away the darkness of ignorance.  
Is there a person who has such a path?  
One who follows the guru as a buddha is happy.  
Mind's recognition of its own nature—E MA HO!

This cloth that's free of heat or cold Is the guide for roaming in snowy  
retreats.  
Is there anyone here who has such a path?  
One free of the fear of heat and cold is happy.  
Sleeping nakedly in the snow—E MA HO!

These key instructions that connect one with mixing and transference Are the  
guide for vanquishing the fear of the bardo.

Is there someone who has such a path?  
One who has no next rebirth is happy.  
Arriving at the space of dharmata—E MA HO!

This profound path of means of the whispered lineage Is the guide for  
separating the silt from the clearness of mind.

Is there someone who has such a path?  
One for whom the bliss of body and mind expands is happy.  
Prana-control penetrating the central channel—E MA HO!

A yogi who's trained in emptiness and compassion  
Is a guide for cutting the elaborations of terms.  
Is there someone who has such a path?  
The one with a realized retinue is happy.  
The gathering of nirmanakaya as a retinue—E MA HO!

Through this old man's giving rise to joy,  
I sang a little tune of experience on the eight kinds of happiness.  
To brighten up the practice of you who are gathered here, This yogi sang it  
with delight.  
Don't forget it and keep it at the center of your heart.

Thus he sang. Dretön and the others in the retinue all were overjoyed. Dretön said, "This is all truly wondrous. Now, I ask you, please give a teaching that is easy to understand and keep in mind on cutting through the deviations of the practice of view, meditation, conduct, and fruition."

"You should practice like this!" Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:  
I prostrate to the father gurus.

If you are gaining certainty in the view,  
Study will not become a deviation for your mind-stream.  
But as long as you've not realized awareness, the abiding nature, Don't speak  
of the view of emptiness with mere words.

Whatever it is that appears or resounds  
Shows the result of the harm or benefit you've done

shows the result of the harm or benefit you've done.

Thus, never disregard cause and effect.

Without knowing the distinctions of the different yantras You will cling to  
names for the very nature of mind.

Such a view will just be another way of clinging to an "I,"

So you shouldn't denigrate others' names for it.<sup>150</sup>

If you are practicing meditation

But the true nature has not become manifest for you, Then you have not cut  
through imputations from within, And the experience of luminosity has  
not dawned in your mind.

If this elixir of experience has not embraced you,

Don't cling to the fortress of emptiness.

Knowable objects are the union of appearance and emptiness, But don't let  
yourself be swayed into ordinary desires; Don't cling to what's empty as  
being empty— Don't throw out every grain of characteristics.

Within the waves of defiled bliss

The coarse conceptions still remain:

The taste of true bliss will never be relished.<sup>151</sup>

The nonconceptuality of stable shamatha—

Do not take that as being genuine reality.

When engaging in the conduct of equal taste,

If experience of this hasn't dawned from deep within, And appearances have  
not yet been blessed,

If the five objects do not dawn as bliss,

Then conceptual elaborations have not been exhausted.

Do not engage in such wrong yogic discipline—

It will not carry you to the path of liberation.

If the fruition becomes manifest

You will not fall into the extremes of hope and fear Where you search for  
buddhahood somewhere else

Without seeing the essence of your own mind.  
The form kaya that appears for those to be tamed  
You will not be attached to as being the true essence of the buddha.  
When concepts dissolve into dharmakaya,  
You will take existence to be completely negated.  
Good qualities, enlightened activity, and the pure realms, These are the self-  
display of wisdom.  
Do not take these to be solid things outside.

Thus he sang. Dretön developed stable certainty and, meditating for a long time in mountain retreats, developed the experience of the special qualities of the signs of experience in his mind. He came to be known as Dretön Tashi Bar, one of the close sons of Milarepa who were teachers of meditation.

This is the cycle of Dretön Repa.

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\*1 Dretön (T: *bre ston*) literally means “Teacher of Dre.”

\*2 “Essence of the sugatas” could also be translated as “sugatagarbha” or “buddha nature.”

\*3 Having no attachment to sense pleasures as being truly existent. (KTGR) \*4 Red and white here does not refer to red and white bindu. Sometimes appearances in the day when the sun is shining are referred to as white and those at night correspond to red. In short, red and white appearances refers to all appearances of perceiver and perceived that are like “paper” in Milarepa’s example here. (KTGR) \*5 “E MA HO” is an expression of amazement.

## Likor Charuwa

NAMO GURU

There was a monastery where all of its residents had great hostility [toward Milarepa] and scoffed, “That so-called Jetsun Milarepa is a nihilist!” Ignoring his disciple-sons’ pleas not to go there, Milarepa went straight to the entryway of the monastery’s assembly hall.

When they saw him standing there, the monks all gathered and beat him many times. After that, they took him inside and tied him up to a pillar, but then Milarepa appeared outside. The monks beat him again there, but Milarepa reappeared inside the temple. No matter how much they beat him, Milarepa remained silent and did not flinch. When they tried to push him outside, they could not move him at all. They called more monks, and though they tried, they could not move him. Tying ropes to his body to pull him, some of them pulled from the front, some of them pushed from behind, but they could not move him. He just sat there like a boulder. They tried and tried until they all were exhausted.

Amazed by this, some of them said, “When we pull you inside, you end up outside. When we try to take you outside, you stay inside. How is this possible that we cannot take you out?”

The Jetsun replied, “Since I am a nihilist, when I’m killed, it doesn’t exist; when I am beaten, it doesn’t exist; when I’m dragged inside, it doesn’t exist; when I’m kicked outside, it doesn’t exist. All of this is because fixation on samsara and nirvana as two different things doesn’t exist!”

Some of the better monks said, “We confess that we have antagonized someone who is a true siddha-yogi. Now, please leave.”

The Jetsun said, “I am not a siddha, I have no such attainment. You do not know who is a siddha and what siddhas do. Give up mistaken views of others and thinking so highly of yourselves. Having such wrong views is to be more scorned than the ten nonvirtues. To think highly of yourself is self-clinging and therefore a cause for falling into samsara.”

The monks replied, “You are most certainly a siddha. Please tell us, why have

you come and said these things to us?” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

Like a crystal ball, or a sentient being in the bardo, Nothing can obscure me; I  
am free of hindrance.

I cannot be caught or sent away.

This way I moved, like a shooting star,

Was to transform your outlook that's devoid of faith.

Thus, Milarepa has performed these acts.

Now I shall not do any more,

For I'm certain your wrong thinking has been dispelled.

When Milarepa had sung this, several of them said, “How marvelous! Why will you not perform any more of these miracles?”

“Such conduct has three contexts in which it should be performed.” Then he sang this song of realization:

To transform the outlook of those with no faith,

To bring enhancement to the experience one has,

And to point out the fruition, these are the three.

These are the times to perform such deeds;

At other times one should not do them, it's taught.

This is what the lord guru said.

Thus he sang. Some of the monks said, “To be so knowledgeable about such points you must have studied very well.”

The Jetsun replied, “I did study, but I don't think much of it. Though I did some study, I forgot it all, but that's just fine.” Then he sang this song of realization:

When you realize the nature of equality,

It's fine to forget the close ones you have.

It's also good to forget your objects of attachment.

When you realize wisdom beyond mind,

It's fine to forget the things of perceiver and perceived.

It's also good to forget about pleasure and pain.

When you realize no thinking and no feeling, It's fine to forget about your



experience.

It's also good to forget about decrease and increase.

When you realize the three kayas are intrinsic within, It's fine to forget the deity's creation stage.

It's also good to forget the conceptual dharma.

When you realize fruition abides within yourself,

It's fine to forget the fruition through efforts.

It's also good to forget about relative dharmas.

Through meditating on the instructions of the whispered lineage, It's fine to forget about conventional speech.

It's also good to forget the dharma that makes you prideful.

When you realize all appearances are your texts,

It's fine to forget about the texts with black letters.

It's also good to forget about dharma that's heavy to carry.

Thus he sang. Then the monks said, "Until attaining enlightenment, because there are still doubts and flaws, it's not okay to forget about the dharma that one has learned." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

When you recognize confusion is your mind

And you find the confidence that it is without any base,\*<sup>1</sup>

It's not possible for effort to ever arise

And one is delighted with the changeless reality.

When you realize the single reality's nature,

It's not possible for there to be things to adopt and reject.

It's so joyful to clear up ignorance.

When you realize reality is without any ceasing, It's not possible for hopes and fears to arise.

You are so happy to destroy confusion.

With ignorance, you wander in the three realms.

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Through the upadeshas of the siddha guru
The sense pleasures, attachment-free, become a great ornament.

I've not trained in the terms of scholars;
All tenet systems are intellectual dharma.
It has little benefit for stopping the afflictions.

All you great teachers, guard your pride!
Both the true nature and confusion
At the time of realization are of a single essence.
Don't abandon samsara, you faithful ones.

Let appearances rest in their own place, uncontrived, And finally, seal this
with space.
The buddhas have given it many names.*2

When Milarepa had sung this, all of the monks there had faith. They stopped accumulating the negativity of wrong views and their pure vision increased.

Among that sangha of monks there was one whose inner potential had awakened, named Likor Charuwa; he followed the Jetsun as attendant. He was given the abhishekas and instructions, was set to meditate, and excellent experiences arose for him.

Then Likor Charuwa thought, "The Jetsun has such compassion and power, if he were able to act a bit more in accord with conventional conduct, he would be able to attract many geshees from Ü and Tsang into his retinue. Through his affluence and fame, he would be able to bring great benefit to sentient beings and the Buddha's teachings."

He came to the Jetsun, and conveyed his thoughts. The Jetsun replied, "I have no need to do anything other than what my guru commanded. Those who have a worldly way of thinking can do as they please." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa the Translator.

Since I've realized the appearances of sound are just echoes,*3

I don't let it stop my yogic conduct.

I throw away all preparations and pleasantries.

Wealth and fame, you may do whatever you please!

I have confidence that food and wealth are illusions.

I happily let go of the food and wealth I obtain.

When I don't obtain any, I don't yearn for it at all.

Good merit, you may do as you please!

I know my followers are like apparitions.

So the learned and righteous who come from every direction I don't try to flatter or try to please them.

Monks, you may do as you please!

In the natural state, which is equality,

I realize attachment and anger are suffering's cause.

I've cut all such ropes and tormented mind states.

Relatives, you may do as you please!

In the dharmata free of elaborations,

The elaboration of clinging creates suffering for oneself.

I release the shackles of perceiver and perceived.

Craving, you may do as you please!

In the luminous nature of the essence of mind,

I don't see any stains of conceptuality.

I throw away all analysis;

Conventions and terms, you may do as you please!

Thus Milarepa sang. Then Likor Charuwa said, "Of course, for someone like the Jetsun this is fine, but I was talking about how to benefit the teachings of the Kagyu lineage and more inferior sentient beings."

The Jetsun replied, "Just as I kept my vow fully when I first took it, I do so now, and will do so in the future. It is certain that I bring great benefit to both the teachings and sentient beings."

"What vow did you take?" asked the monk.

"My vow was like this, and those of you who follow after me should do the same." Then he sang this song of realization:

Because I had great fear of samsara,
The translator Marpa showed me great kindness.

Until I savor the supreme taste of the genuine dharma, I won't let my mind be
distracted by outer objects.*4

Until I master the path of means,
I will not abandon my yogic conduct.

Following after Naropa's instruction,
I'll always uphold the Kagyu teachings.

Giving rise to the bodhichitta of aspiring and engaging at the start, I won't
practice the dharma for only my benefit.

Marpa's spontaneous and secret conduct
I will spread throughout all of Tibet.

Whatever it is that pleases the guru,
From now on, I will strive to do.

Through the compassion of the Jetsun, Likor Charuwa's outlook changed. "Just as the Jetsun vowed, I too will practice": he made this aspiration and strong vow with his mind, and he unrelentingly meditated in mountain retreats. In this way, the wondrous qualities of the path developed in his mind. Thus, Likor Charuwa became one of the close sons of the Jetsun who were meditator-monks.

This is the cycle of Likor Charuwa.

This completes the second cycle: accepting of the fortunate ones to be tamed, the heart-sons of the Jetsun.

*1 "These two lines mean that one recognizes that the appearances of outer objects are confused projections of the mind, so they do not exist apart from mind, just like the appearances of outer objects in a dream. Knowing that, one knows that these confused appearances have no ground; that they do not truly exist outside. This realization is similar to the experience of a lucid dream. (KTGR)" (*Stories and Songs*: 101).

*2 "The implication of this last line is that the true nature of reality is inexpressible. (KTGR)" (*Stories and Songs*: 101) (T: *sangs rgyas dag gi bla dgas lags*).

*3 The "appearances of sound" here, in particular, refers to what others say.

*4 Literally, "I won't let my mind engage in outer objects" (T: *phyi rol yul la sems 'jug ri*).

Cycle Three

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

45

Replies to the Questions of Students

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Cuckoo Solitary Fortress,*1 Rechungpa requested of the Jetsun, “Please teach a practice to do with one’s three gates.” In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

With your body, keep the samaya of nonconceptuality.

With your speech, sustain the conduct of a buffalo.*2

With your mind, look at the unborn nature of mind.

Thus he sang. Then Rechungpa sang:

Because of our ignorance, we do not understand:

How does one keep the samaya of body?

How does one sustain the conduct of speech?

How does one look at the nature of mind?

The Jetsun replied:

The three nonconceptual samayas of body

Are to maintain the vows of the three trainings.

The samaya of speech is to sustain noncontrivance.

Look at the completely liberated nature of mind.

Rechungpa then commented on his guru’s speech:

Within the dharmakaya—coemergent union—

Is the sambhogakaya—conceptuality liberated in its own place—

And the nirmanakaya that performs boundless benefit for beings.

The ground is the revulsion of the pratimoksha.*3

The path is the key point of training in bodhichitta,

The fruition is to keep the samaya of Secret Mantra.

To turn away from the eight worldly concerns in this life,
Abandon hoarding and maintaining with desire;
Keep [samaya] by abandoning hypocrisy and wrong livelihood.
For body, like a crazy man, be without concepts.
For speech, like a dumb person, do not speak.
For mind, like a small child, be attachment-free.

Thus he sang. Then the Jetsun said, “If you don’t understand these vital points, this is what will happen.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Looking for freedom with the thought of “I,” it cannot be attained.
Not having liberation is like a banner knot that is loosened and tightened.
Not having realization is like a blind man wandering in a field.
Without pratimoksha, there is no revulsion.
Without bodhichitta, there is no benefit for others.
Without Secret Mantra, there’s no pointing out.
The eight concerns are the signal that summons this life.
Desire is the hail that destroys all virtue.
Hypocrisy is the prison of samsara.
If concepts arise, that is perceiver and perceived.
By talking, you’ll not cut the traces of conventional terms.
If there is passion, that’s the cause of samsara’s bonds.
If there is no lineage, the teaching is severed.
If there’s no samaya, that’s the Lord of Death.
Beings alternate between being friends and discordant foes.
If some fundamental ground is found, that is adopting and rejecting.
If birth is found, that is fixation on things as real.
If there’s no realization, there is only a wish.
If reality can’t be shown, then it is meaningless.

Thus he sang.

Once, the Jetsun was sitting, covering his head. Then one of the younger repas

asked, “Why is the Jetsun sleeping?” Then he sang this song of realization:

When I cover my head, I cannot see far.
Worldly eyes, though clear, are completely blind.
I’ve taken up dharma conduct by sleeping naked.
The eight worldly concerns are the cause of distraction.
Everything one does comes down to the mind.
Continuous experience, without break, is truly marvelous.
I, a yogi who does different things,
Whatever they are, I do them in the space of bliss.

Thus he sang.

Another time, when the Jetsun was staying at Tsikpa Kangthil Fortress,^{*4} Rechungpa asked him, “If a yogi develops experience, realization, and power, is it acceptable to demonstrate it?” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

The lion that dwells within the snow,
The tiger that dwells within the forest,
And the fish that dwells in the sea, these three:
When these three hide, it’s marvelous.
When these three hide, they have few enemies.
These three are the three outer examples.

If we join these with the inner meaning:
The body of the yogi, that’s one;
The Secret Mantra’s path of means, that’s two;
The experience of fruition, that’s three.
If you hide these three, it’s marvelous.
If you hide these three, there’ll be few enemies.
There are very few who can hide these three.
Therefore, there are few siddhas in Tibet.

Thus he sang.

Another time, Shengom Repa was having many doubts and asked the Jetsun about them. Then after Milarepa gave him a detailed and lengthy explanation, he

sang this song of realization in summary:

If you don't realize many as one taste,
That's the view of permanence within luminosity meditation.
If you don't realize the union of great bliss,
That's the view of nihilism within emptiness meditation.
If you don't know how to meditate with everything that appears,
Then nonconceptual meditation is conceptual.
If you don't realize all you meet is ordinary,¹⁵²
Then your nondual meditation is contrived.
If you don't realize your own mind is unborn,
Then nonreferential meditation is full of effort.
If you don't reverse your attachment,
Then your uncontrived conduct is full of adopting and rejecting.
If you don't understand "free of adopting and rejecting,"
Then the virtue you do becomes nonvirtue.
If you don't understand "free of birth and death,"
Engaging in effort is the cause of samsara.

When Milarepa had sung this, all of Shengom Repa's doubts were completely cut through.

On another occasion, the Jetsun was staying at Crystal Cave Water-Wood Fortress*⁵ on the banks of the Chuwo Sang River on the side of Tseringma's mountain.*⁶ Rain had not fallen for some time, and several of the benefactors of Drin began to fight over water rights. When they came to the Jetsun, he said, "I don't know anything about worldly affairs. The rain will come; you do not need to fight."

Then Rechungpa supplicated him to help them reconcile their argument, to which the Jetsun replied, "It is meaningless for any yogi to get caught in the middle of disputes." Then he sang this song of realization:

A glorious mountain with abundant good qualities, A site that is the source of
all one needs or desires,
I give praise respectfully with my three gates
At the feet of the Great Translator Lotsawa.

The main parties, the mediator, and the arbitration, these three, Are the cause that makes the pain of bias arise.

If you want to seize your own place without bias,
Do you know how to be an impartial mute?

Homelands, wealth, and relatives, these three,
Are the cause of the bonds of samsara's three realms.
If you want to be liberated from the river of suffering,
Do you know how to cut the root of entanglements?

Selfishness, hypocrisy, and deception, these three,
Are the cause of falling into the three lower realms.
If you want to see the freedom of the higher realms,
Do you know how to have a forthright mind?

Explanations, spiritual guides, and discussions, these three,
Are the causes of pride and jealousy.
If you want to practice the genuine dharma,
Do you know how to maintain a humble position?

The kitchen, housework, and trying to please others, these three, Are the causes of destroying the yogi's meditative concentration.
If you want to sustain innate wisdom,
Do you know how to be without embarrassment and have little desire?¹⁵³

The master, servant, and engaging in studies,
These are the cause of distraction and worry.
If you want to practice in solitude,
Do you know how to be without masters and servants?

Sorcery, power, and improper behavior, these three
Are the causes of the yogi giving up his own life-force.
If you want to see the complete result of dharma, Do you know how to be like the lark's example? *7

This melody of seven causes of contradicting the dharma

Along with their seven successive remedies
Arose through experience and I put them to song.
Through virtue, may you attain enlightenment.

After he sang this song and supplicated the three jewels, a great rain fell and all of the quarreling subsided.

Another time, the monk disciple-sons requested the Jetsun to accept them and teach them the major key points of the Six Dharmas and Mahamudra. The Jetsun replied, “If you wish to practice properly, these key points are important. Keep them in your mind.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Father, though you demonstrated going to nirvana,
From the pure realm of the pure sambhogakaya
You act for the benefit of the three realms’ beings.
Translator Marpa, at your feet I bow.

Sons Dewakyong*⁸ and Shiwa Ö, Ngendzong Tönpa, and so forth,
Cherished sons whom your father cared for,
Fortunate disciples who are sitting here,
Now listen to this song of ten important points,
The condensed meaning for the key points of practice.

For the deity’s form that is like a rainbow,
Its union, its empty nature, is important.

For demons and ghosts, mind’s magical emanations,
Understanding that they’re illusory, appearing nonexistents is important.

For the Jetsun guru who is extremely kind, Devotion that never ceases is important.

For activities and work that never come to an end,
To completely cut their ties is important.*⁹

For the practice with the nadis, pranas, blissful heat, and chakras, Effort without distraction is important.

For integrating dream and illusory body practices,
Strong motivation to join them is very important.

For the essence of mind that is naked and luminous,
To practice free of terms is important.

For the variety of appearances that are emptiness,
The key instruction that cuts their base and root is important.

Toward all sentient beings without realization,
Continuous compassion and love are important.

Toward one's own mind, the unborn dharmakaya,
Confidence free of hope and fear is important.

This father's sons should cherish these points.
Put them into practice, my disciple-sons.

Thus he sang. The disciple-sons gave rise to strong motivation. Then Rechungpa requested the Jetsun to give a pointing-out of the wisdom of the four joys. After an extensive explanation, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

In a solitary place such as a forest,
See the four activities as equality.

Make the four inner elements completely balanced, Then the four joys'
wisdom will dawn in the mind.

Thus he sang.

Another time, the Jetsun Milarepa went to beg for alms at Phu Yak Za in Drin. The benefactors he encountered said, "There is a place called Lasé Monastery where there is a very pleasant cave. If you stay there alone, we can serve you. However, there is a demoness there who may try to harm you."¹⁵⁴

"Tell me, what are this cave and demoness like?" the Jetsun asked.

"The cave is very pleasant, but the demoness there will eat whoever stays there. If she can be tamed, please tame her."

So the Jetsun went there and stayed in the cave. In the middle of the night, a

woman came. “Who is here in my home?” she asked threateningly. At that, Milarepa meditated on loving-kindness and compassion.

“There is a demon and a defiled one¹⁵⁵ here,” she said, and then went away.

She called a great army of demons, who then came overthrowing mountains, hurling lightning bolts, and displaying a whole myriad of magic.

As the Jetsun was sitting in a state of samadhi, the demons were not able to do any harm to him. The army of demons said, “We need our place to sleep! Whatever the reason it was you came here, now, go back to your own home! If you do not go, we will call more of our armies, and then whoever gets your flesh and blood will eat it.”

The Jetsun, with great compassion, then sang this song of realization:

You assembly of pretas, listen well:

Vicious and cruel demoness

And all the preta spirits here,

Your own karma has ripened for you.

You have malicious minds and such great suffering.

You rouse evil intent and exhaust your merit.

You wish to eat something, but you rarely can.

With such great hunger, you have no good fortune.

You’ve accumulated bad karma and accomplished no benefit.

Boasting and bragging will not tame your enemies.

This magic of you malevolent demons

Just makes this yogi want to laugh.

I, a yogi, have thorough reason

For seeing your magic as tainted and false.

If you want this bed, then take your stand.

Let us continue with our discussion:

You’ve cast many meditators out from this place

But I have come to eradicate this problem.

You are the ones who possess this place

But I have found what had not been found before.

All you ghosts here, don’t any of you leave;

Call every demon and spirit to join!

Thus he sang. Then the leader of the ghosts said, “You are wearing the armor of emptiness and compassion; we cannot defeat that.” Then all of them prostrated and offered their life-essences to the Jetsun, and thus they were bound. Then Milarepa taught them the dharma of karma, cause and effect, and he returned to the benefactors.

The benefactors asked, “Have the demons been tamed?”

“Yes, they have,” he replied, and then he sang this song of realization:

At the Lasé Monastery in Drin

With this illusory body in lotus posture,

I rested in nondual equipoise.

Upon the focal object that is unborn,

I rested my mind without any distraction.

The demoness’ malevolent minds were transformed into awakening

And they became disciples free of such malice.

Now whoever goes there will have no reason to despair.

Whoever sits there, their practice will flourish.

This site is now the Auspicious Goddess Cave,^{*10}

And the one who dwells there is an unsurpassed protector upasaka.

All of us are now good friends.

You should think like this, and whoever wishes should go.

You will attain the siddhi of long life, free of illness.

Thus he sang. All of the benefactors were overjoyed, developed faith, and offered their respect and service. The Jetsun stayed there for several days.

One herder who had gained faith said to Milarepa, “Please teach me some dharma that will benefit my mind.”

The Jetsun said, “Even if the dharma is taught, those who really practice it are few.” Then he sang this song of realization:

In the ocean of the suffering of samsara,

Though the dharma of giving rise to disillusionment is taught,

Those who have revulsion are very few.

With what remains of our lives that are passing by,

There is no leisure time to remain idle.
However, those who remember death are very few.

At this time of having gained a human birth with freedoms and resources, It's
rare for someone to keep perfect discipline.
Even those who keep the single-day precepts*¹¹ are few.

Though the benefits of the freedoms of the higher realms
And the faults of samsara are taught,
Those who enter dharma's gateway are few.

Though the profound key instructions of the whispered lineage
Are taught without any stinginess,
Those who practice them are few.

Though the explanations and pointing out
Of the genuine dharma of Mahamudra are given,
Those who recognize their minds are few.

Though by staying in mountain retreats—the guru's intention—
Delight will always arise,
Those who gain accomplishment are few.

The profound path of means of Naropa, Though it is taught without any
concealment,
Those who have signs of accomplishment are few.

Your human life with its freedoms and resources,
If you want to make it meaningful, then follow after me.

Thus he sang. The herder developed unwavering faith and became a follower of the Jetsun. He was given the abhishekas and instructions, and after meditating he gained excellent realization.

On another occasion when the Jetsun Milarepa was begging for alms to benefit beings, he came upon a large village. In the center of it there were many people

playing all kinds of games such as dice, throwing stones and arrows, and chess.*12 The Jetsun went over to the women who were sitting in the center making things from wool. He said, “I am in need of some provisions.”

A young girl replied to him, “Guru, do you not have any homeland, no parents, or relatives?”

“I do and they are better than other people’s.”

The girl said, “If you have them, then your relatives should be able to provide you food for your dharma practice. Please tell us about your family.” In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

My homeland is the all-excellent great bliss.

My field is excellent motivation.

My house is great compassion.

My father’s side is the great family of Tathagatas.

My father’s relatives practice dharma in the ten directions.

My paternal ancestors are Tilopa and Naropa.

My father is the king of means.

My mother, she is excellent prajña.

My elder brother is pure samaya.

My younger brother is strong diligence.

My older sister is bright, clear faith.

And I am spontaneously self-arisen.

I have meditated on the abiding nature.

My elements are the elements of the good qualities.

I am one who spontaneously encounters the deity.

Whatever arises, arises as dharmakaya.

Thus he sang. All of those who were playing had gathered around, and the girl said, “Guru, this is all quite amazing. You have very little to do, so please stay and be our object of service; be our object of reverence who dispels negative conditions in this life and the next. Your blessing, I’m sure, would be very great.”

Some other young men said, “Yogi, our games and the work of our women are a sign of our happiness. Is this what the enjoyment of the gods is like? Your voice is very good, please sing a song about these things.”

“In reply to your question, the activities of you men and women are not like the enjoyments of the devas. This is what they are like,” then he sang this song of realization:

The images of devas in the homes of all you laypeople here
Are like the root of accumulating karmic results.
This butter lamp of the bonds of avarice
Is like the fire that ministers stand in front of to warm their bellies.*13
The owners of many goats and sheep
Are like the blades of the rakshasa’s teeth.
The parents of many young children
Are like the slaughter-pen of a heedless hand.
The sweeping and cleaning of these old decrepit houses
Is like gandharvas in an empty barn.
The landlord who has many types of conduct
Is like a treasurer of mistaken views.
Your dice, stones, arrows, and so forth
Are like the games of the fighting asuras.
Your games of chess, go, and the like
Are like the basis of quarreling in an evil royal family.

Laying out the ground of gambling and sport Is like the bhuta spirits fighting
over tormas.¹⁵⁶

Your production from spinning and weaving
Is like cobwebs on the tops of the trees and grass.
Your playing with all kinds of music, song, and dance
Is like the deception of a messenger demon.
Those who look upon this show
Are like grazing animals craving after a mirage.
The commentators of all of these games
Are like one’s head and hands being consumed in a fire.¹⁵⁷
For those who are distracted by desire toward this,
It’s like being herded to a gandharva’s belly.

Thus he sang. All of them gave rise to faith, prostrating to him and giving him much respect and service. In particular, the young girl invited him to her home and made abundant offerings of service to the Jetsun. She received teachings from him and practiced, taking hold of the path at the time of death.

Another time, when the Jetsun Milarepa went begging for alms in the practice of equal taste, he came to the center of a large town where many people were working on a house, and there at that place he lay down to sleep. One of the female benefactors said to him, “Yogi, I will bring you some food if you patch up this bag for me,” leaving the bag and materials to fix it with Milarepa.

After some time, she returned to pick up the bag and said, “When they say that yogis should just be kicked out, they are really right. Here, you have nothing to do, and you couldn’t even put on one patch. How shameful.”

Then the Jetsun went to where the workers were eating and said, “I am looking for provisions.”

The female benefactor said, “I have no need for someone who doesn’t help with the work when his body is free but helps with the eating when his mouth is free!”

“I was busy doing something more important than your work, so I wasn’t free to do it,” Milarepa replied.

The lady said, “What work was it that you were so engaged in?”

He replied, “I am free, but in my being free, I was busy doing these practices.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the guru lords.

In particular, the one who is so kind, protect me, I pray.

When people like you look at me, I seem to be free.

But when I look, I seem to be busy.

In the field that is birthless and free of extremes,

I build the castle of meditative concentration;

Therefore, I’m not free to build an earthen castle.

On the northern plain of dharmata’s emptiness,

I tame the rough earth of the afflictions;

Therefore, I’m not free to plow my father’s field.

At the border of ineffable nonduality,
I tame the enemy, the demon of clinging to an “I”;
Therefore, I’m not free to tame hostile enemies.

To the palace of nondual mind itself,
I invite the bride of dharma practice;
Therefore, I’m not free to take an ordinary wife.

In my own body, the mandala of the Victorious Ones,
I care for the small child of awareness;
Therefore, I’m not free to care for a snot-nosed child.

In the all-joyous courtyard of my upper torso,
I amass the wealth of hearing and contemplating;
Therefore, I’m not free to amass material wealth.

On the mountain of unchanging dharmakaya,
I look after the wild horse of self-awareness;
Therefore, I’m not free to look after cattle and sheep.

Out of the mud of flesh and bones,
I build the stupa of spontaneous presence;
Therefore, I’m not free to make any tsa-tsa molds.

In the center of my heart, a three-sided vessel, I hoist up the oil lamp of
luminosity;
Therefore, I’m not free to make offerings for oracle trances.¹⁵⁸

In the shrine room of bliss and emptiness inseparable,
At the thangka*¹⁴ of the mind in equipoise, I make the offering of the
unchanging feast;
Therefore, I’m not free to make material offerings.

On the paper of the completely pure mind itself,
I write the letters of nonattachment;

Therefore, I'm not free to take down any notes.

Into the skull-cup of emptiness,
I pour the poisons in sets of three and five;
Therefore, I'm not free to do black magic rites.

At the threshold where love's anguish meets my mind,
I care for my kin, the six realms' beings;
Therefore, I'm not free to care for my own family.

The key instructions I received from the father gurus,
I carry that load into my mind-stream;
Therefore, I'm not free to do ordinary activity.

In the solitary mountain retreats,
I practice toward the essence, enlightenment;
Therefore, I'm not free to fall into the sleep of ignorance.

With my mouth, the opening of a three-sided conch,
I sing out this melody of the key instructions;
Therefore, I'm not free to idly chatter.

Thus he sang. Hearing this, everyone's outlook changed. They asked, "Are you the Jetsun Milarepa?"

"Yes, I am the one who cannot work," he replied.

"Oh, how fortunate we are!" Saying this, they all did many prostrations and circumambulations and made abundant offerings of respect and service. There, too, the woman offered her confession.

There were some youths among them who said, "We also want to practice dharma in the presence of the guru. What is your monastery? Who provides you with your provisions?" Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

I prostrate to the father gurus.
Mountain retreats without any fixed direction
Are this yogi's monastery.
Male and female benefactors of this land,
I hope you can provide this yogi's provisions

I hope you can provide this yogi's provisions.

You wonder why this yogi roams

In the monastery of mountain retreats, free of people:

These were key instructions spoken by the guru.

When carried, they're lighter than the feather of a bird.

Keeping them secret is easier than hiding precious gold.

When in fearsome places, they're mightier than a fortress.

I am a yogi, a lion among humans.

In the three months of winter, I'm in bliss in the forests.

In the three months of summer, I'm in bliss on the snow mountainsides.

In the three months of spring, I'm in bliss where rocks meet the plains.

In the three months of fall, I'm in bliss begging with equal taste.

With the bliss of the guru's key instructions in my mind,

Singing melodies of experience is bliss.

On my body, this cloth of cotton is bliss.

So blissful is this way I live.

May everyone, too, find happiness like this!

Thus he sang. One of the people there followed Milarepa as an attendant and attained excellent realization. All of the others made commitments to always practice virtue.

On another occasion, when the great Jetsun went begging in the practice of equal taste, he came to a wedding where male and female practitioners of both sutra and tantra, and most of the local people, had gathered.

"I am seeking provisions," the Jetsun said. But the dharma practitioners at the head of the rows paid no heed to him and laughed.

The leader said to him, "Yogi, where are you from? Where are you going?"

"I'm someone who never mingles with mundane crowds and lives his life in the mountains where there are no people."

"Oh! Then, are you not Milarepa?"

"Yes, indeed, I am. But since I don't know anything at all about the eight worldly concerns, I don't ever join groups of dharma practitioners."

"If it is indeed true that you are Milarepa, the nadis of his throat center have

opened, and he is able to sing about any dharma without any difficulty. Therefore sing a song for our assembly here about what kind of motivation we should have.” In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization on the ocean of samsara:

May the unequaled guru always be seated at my crown.

Is samsara a great ocean?

However much you scoop out, it's never exhausted.

Are the three jewels like Meru, the king of mountains?

There is no one who can bear them away.

Is samaya just empty talk?

There is no one who really keeps it.

Is the genuine dharma of the vinaya like lepers' corpses on the road?

No one tries to lay hold of it.

Are the fur-lined cushions full of thorns?

Those “great” teachers do not stay upon them well.

Is striving in the vinaya discipline without any meaning?

Ordained monks don't keep their discipline.

Are there Mongolian bandits in the mountain retreats?

Meditators just travel down into the towns.

Are there inferior gates of birth in the bardo state?

Students just exert themselves in cleaning.*¹⁵

Are woolen clothes in the next life very precious?

The nuns all labor over wool in their looms.

Is there some fear that samsara will be emptied?

Monks and nuns give up their vows to have kids.

Is there nothing to drink or eat in the next life?

Male and female benefactors don't give anything away.

Is there suffering in the divine realm of Akanishta?

There are so few people who go there.

Is there happiness in the hells below?

All the people with harsh mouths are trying to get there.

Suffering and the lower realms are the result of negativity.

Abandon nonvirtue, and put effort in virtuous actions;

Then you'll be without regrets at death, and your mind will be happy.

Thus he sang. They said, “This is really the Jetsun Milarepa!” and they all had faith and respect for the Jetsun. They gave him genuine respect and service, and he taught the dharma to them. Through practice, several of them took hold of the path at the time of death.

If these accounts were divided up, they would make several cycles.

This is the cycle of the Jetsun's replies to the questions of students and disciple-sons, in which interactions of the Jetsun with his heart-sons and various students were recounted in no particular order.

*1 In Tibetan: Khujuk Enpa Dzong (T: *khu byug dben pa rdzong*).

*2 Keep silent like a buffalo.

*3 Pratimoksha (T: *so thar*) refers to the vows of individual liberation, primarily connected with refraining from doing harm and cultivating revulsion for samsara.

*4 Wall-Foot Sole Fortress (T: *rtsig pa rkang mthil rdzong*).

*5 In Tibetan: Shelpuk Chushing Dzong (T: *shel phug chu shing rdzong*).

*6 Literally, “On the neck of Tseringma” (T: *tshé ring ma'i mgul*).

*7 This is referring to an obscure story in Tibetan folklore; a reference has not been located for it (T: *'jol mo'i rnam thar mkhyen lags sam*).

*8 Dewakyong is another name for Ngendzong Tönpa; the reason for the redundant mention of his name here is not clear.

*9 If one understands there is no worker and no work (if one realizes they are empty of a true essence), then one has “cut their ties”; one should gain confidence in “cutting the ties” without abandoning the work. (KTGR) *10 Tashi Lhamo Puk (T: *bkra shis lha mo phug*).

*11 Nyen né (T: *bsnyen gnas*).

*12 Literally, “kings and ministers” (*rgyal blon*). These are apparently old traditional Tibetan games, but it is unclear how they are played.

*13 It was customary in Tibet for ministers and rich people, in particular, to build fires to keep warm; also implied in this example are the ministers' large bellies that come from having lots of rich food. (DPR) *14 A

thangka (T: *thang sku*) is a traditional painting made on canvas that depicts sacred images.

*¹⁵ Rather than study, students engage in mundane tasks such as cleaning.

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Bönpo Mountain

NAMO GURU

After Jetsun Milarepa stayed at the Nirmanakaya Palace in Chuwar, he cleared up the unequaled Gampopa's doubts about the key instructions. Then he went to the east, where a great rain fell nonstop, day and night, and several of the disciples became fatigued.

Finally, once the sky cleared and the warm sun shone, the master and seven of his disciples, making eight, went to the peak of Bönpo Mountain to refresh themselves. There, experiences of bliss arose for all of them.

Seeing Tseringma's Snow Mountain, the peerless repas asked, "What is that snow mountain over there?"

In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization about the greatness of the Azure Queen Snow Mountain:

That's the neck of the Azure Lhamen Goddess Queen!
At the peak of Bönpo Rock Mountain
Eight people who've abandoned activity gather.
Do you feel happy, my disciple-sons?

This father is joyful, my mind is happy.
At this happy gathering of lord and subjects,
This old man will sing a song of the signs of happiness.
This old song sung by an old man
Contains thirteen old signs of auspiciousness.
Sons Dewakyong and Shiwa Ö,
Come here and join in with me.
The rest of you repas listen to our song.

Repas sitting here upon your seats,
Do you know this snow mountain here, or not?

If you don't know this snow mountain here,
It is Lhamen Tashi Tseringma.
From her hips all the way up to her high peak
Is like the excellent length¹⁵⁹ of a three-sided conch.
Before anywhere else, the sun will shine
Upon the silver lattice adorning her neck.
The top of her head, her crystal crown,
Is ornamented by white floating clouds.
At the foundation, below her hips,
It is always shrouded in mist and fog,
Rain always falls gently without force,
And rainbows always shine with offering clouds—
It's a sign of the riches of the Mayang River Valley.
Many grazing animals always wander about.
Flowers—the fields' ornaments—are bright with many colors.
Medicinal herbs with great power grow there:
This extols the greatness of the Lhamen Snow Mountain.
This was my greatest site of practice.
For all of you repas who have asked the question, I've pleasantly set forth this
melody.

Thus he sang. All of the repas were delighted with the song and asked, “This deity upon the snow mountain, how powerful is she? Does she practice good dharma or bad dharma?” Then Milarepa sang this song in reply:

The beautiful goddesses, the Five Tseringma Sisters, Are principal among the
Twelve Tenma Goddesses.
These mundane worldly dakinis
Translate the languages of Tibet and Nepal.
They're the lady sovereigns of Chuwar Drin.
When these deities are given offerings, they will protect you.
In general, they are supporters for all dharma activity.
In particular, they're the keeper of this yogi's command.
They will always be with you, my disciple-sons.

This human and these deities have a profound connection.

In general, Tibet was established on the path of virtue; In particular, siddhis dawned for this practice lineage.

Thus he sang. The repas said, “How amazing! It seems these deities became students of the Jetsun. If that’s so, tell us what dharma you taught them, and how they have served you.” Then he sang this song of realization in reply:

On the neck of that snow mountain, I taught the dharma.

Milarepa, is he called a human?

To the retinue Lhamen and local deities who practice, I taught the dharma that distinguishes good and bad karma— The sutras’ provisional meaning of cause and effect.

The class of animals with aggression and malevolence, The four classes of nagas, too, listened to this genuine dharma.

These five great *nyen* siblings invited me to teach; These *tsen* emanations, these five sisters were my benefactors.

Many *menmo* goddesses gathered around

And all the devas and ghosts provided provisions.

I established the land in virtuous dharma.

I’m not someone with any great power

But, meditating on love and compassion,

With peaceful speech, I taught the dharma to them.

I tamed these formless devas and ghosts with methods.

Since I have no regret for my actions before,

Now that I’m old what regret is to be had?

I’ve no fear of dying; I’ll be joyful at death.

All you repas sitting here, who’ve abandoned activity, Persevere in meditating and have joy in death!

Thus he sang. Then the repas said, “Between humans and spirits, who is better able to practice the dharma? Who is able to bring more benefit to beings?”

The Jetsun replied, “Humans are able to bring themselves and others benefit through the dharma more strongly. But Tseringma can be considered to be a human and is especially devoted to keeping my teachings. I have left behind crowds of people, and I meditate having let go of the eight worldly concerns; thus

I am lord over all the deities. You all too should let go of the eight worldly concerns and meditate without distraction.” Then he sang this song of realization:

The lord guru’s blessings arose from the expanse, And I cut the ropes of clinging to relatives.

Wandering about the land without any bias,
I repay his kindness through my actions.

I relinquished the activities of the world.

By the power of practicing meditation as he commanded, In postmeditation I took adverse conditions to the path.

Taking a humble status, I meditated alone.

Thoughts of old age and death accompanied my practice And the joy of experience arose from within.

I’m a yogi with no desire for worldly merit,
Who has thrown mundane happiness far behind.

I bore in mind the lower realms’ suffering,
And without ever pleasing any benefactors,
I wander in the mountains and do my practice.

Through the blessing of the one so kind

My students were carried by the wind and are equal to the sky.¹⁶⁰

Sitting at the edge, it entered the center.

Making it my subject, I become a lord.

Through keeping humble status, I became a king.

Through leaving humans, I met the deity.

Through undergoing suffering, I attained bliss.

Through perseverance, I developed compassion.

Through staying alone, I’ve gained a retinue of many disciples.

Through the whispered lineage’s practice, the dharma has spread.

The translator Marpa, who is so kind,

As an ornament sits upon my crown.

Although I am old, I am an old tiger.

This is my song of joy at death, free of fear.

You repa-disciples sitting here,
Do not be distracted by this life's concerns;
With perseverance, make efforts in practice!

The Jetsun and his disciples stayed there for a few days and, on the tenth day of the lunar month, performed a ritual offering. After that, some of the repas expressed their intention to go into the mountains and some to inhabited areas to beg for alms in the practice of equal taste, and some asked to stay with the Jetsun. All of this was conveyed to Milarepa through Rechungpa. From within the rows of tenth lunar day feast practice, Rechungpa also asked the Jetsun to give some advice to the repas. The Jetsun then, in a song of realization, taught these six points of urgent advice*¹ to the unequalled Gampopa, Rechungpa, and his other disciple-sons.

My son, the teacher who has listened*² widely, And Rechungpa with great
perseverance,
All the repas who fill these seats here,
With the teacher and meditator at the head,
Have requested me to say a few words.
So for that purpose, this is what I say:

If you listen to this old man, it would be wise.
If you look at the birds, you'll be an expert in time.
If you're content with your wealth, then you are rich.
If you judge your ability, you can keep yourself safe.
This song of poetic examples above,
Now, to connect with the key points of their meaning:

Henceforth from this tenth-day offering
Some of you said you will go see the countryside, Some said you will pursue
solitude,
And some of you said you will stay by my side.
Meditators who desire honor and wealth
Desire to be quickly taken by demons.
To be cared for by your father would be wise.

To mind his words is excellent.¹⁶¹

Don't merely listen with your ears

To these key instructions that I have,

But without forgetting, keep them in the center of your heart.

One fully trained in the practice of bindu Though training in awareness by
means of the messenger, Apart from a qualified awareness-lady,

Oh, do not rely on any other karmamudra!

That's as dangerous as climbing a tree of razors.*³¹⁶²

Bringing to completion the recitation of mantra, Also give rise to the
motivation of great compassion.

Then, through the clear samadhi of the yidam,

Oh, do not practice black mantra or magic!

This is not the general meaning of the teachings.

There's the danger of being born as a karmic rakshasa.

With mastery over prana and mind,

One displays forms, such as emanating as beasts.

With miraculous power of the physical body,

But without being able to act with the gaze,

Oh, do not take human corpses from the charnel grounds!

There's the danger of upsetting the flesh-eating dakinis.

Apart from the guru with the three kindnesses, and so forth, And one's vajra
brothers and sisters,

With holders of incompatible views

No matter how high their dharma view may be,

Oh, do not speak of your realization or meditation experience!

There's the danger the practice lineage's blessing will vanish.

To people whose samaya you've not examined,

Without having the signs from the dakinis,

Due to having concern over worldly wealth,

Or to students who just simply ask,

Oh, do not give the teachings of the whispered lineage!
There's the danger of your experience being obstructed.

In the midst of ordinary people's towns, Away from the solitude of mountain
retreats,

Oh, do not engage in the conduct of yogic discipline Nor perform the
profound ganachakra

Unable to transform unfaithful ones' perceptions!

There's a danger that others will disparage you.

This little song of practices that number six,

In general, is the crown ornament of dharma practice.

In particular, you disciples should keep it in mind.

Thus he sang. The heart-sons all gained great certainty in what the Jetsun had sung. Some of the younger repas who had said that they wished to remain with the Jetsun said, "Since we are in the polluted age, please also give those of us with inferior faculties advice that is fitting for our minds." In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

Listen again, my disciple-sons:

In this polluted age of the Buddha's teaching,

You should write "perseverance" in stone.

If your shamatha should become stagnant with sleep, Restore the awareness
of your three gates.

When the spark of wisdom starts to dim,

Restore it with the fire of mindfulness again and again.

If you wish to be freed from the prison of samsara, Put effort in meditation
without distraction.

If you take great delight in nirvana,

Abandon all activities of samsara.

If from your heart you think, "I will practice the dharma,"

Listen to my words and follow me.

LISTEN TO MY WORDS AND FOLLOW ME.

If you want to bring your practice to completion, Think of cause and effect,
and the uncertainty of the time of death.

If you practice for a long time, The buddhas of the three times will be deeply
pleased.

If you are not hypocritical toward the dharma,
Then repay the kindness of the guru.

If you don't mistake these words and their meaning, Then you will have
interest in it,¹⁶³

And by this, later you'll have certain bliss.

When Milarepa had sung this, they all were overjoyed. Then, letting go of this
life, they exerted themselves in practice.

This is the cycle of Bönpo Mountain.

*1 T: *ang drug*. Literally, "the six *angs*." *Ang*, in Tibetan, is a word with no meaning alone but when used at the end of a sentence indicates a strong urging. Its presence is indicated in the translation here by the word "Oh."

*2 Or studied.

*3 In traditional Buddhist teachings, Shalmali is said to be a type of tree found within the hell realms that has razor-sharp leaves.

Bestowing Abhisheka and Consecration

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Nyanang Belly Cave, he had a direct vision of Vajrayogini. In a prophecy, she released the command-seal of the single-lineage key instructions of the dakinis' whispered lineage and gave him permission to teach them to a few worthy vessels.

While he was bestowing the vase abhisheka that grants the abhisheka of the whispered lineage to a few of his heart-like disciple-sons such as Rechungpa and Ngendzong Tönpa, he said, "I am now an old man. Vase, go and bestow the abhisheka upon the disciples."

The vase then lifted itself into the air and bestowed the abhisheka upon each of the disciples. At the same time, many sounds of music and cymbals came from the sky; a fragrant scent unlike any they had experienced wafted through the air; and divine flowers rained from the heavens. Many excellent signs like these appeared. Then all of the disciples present actualized the wisdom of the abhisheka. All of the disciple-sons were amazed, and the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

In the stainless mandala of the whispered lineage, Offerings, without attachment, were arranged.

When the abhisheka of the precious vase water was bestowed, That pointed out the wisdom of the Buddha.

With the offerings of the mandala deities given, And the many kinds of music resounding,

The vase, on its own, bestowed the abhisheka, And wondrous wisdom dawned. How excellent!

This is the compassion of the Kagyu gurus!

Thus he sang. Then all of the disciples were sealed by the command of keeping this secret for some time.

Rechungpa, upon completing a painting of Vajrayogini, went to Milarepa to

have it consecrated.

The now aged Milarepa said, “I don’t know anything about elaborate rituals, so I will invite the jñanasattvas*¹ to remain here within the samayasattva.*² May this flower arise as a banquet offering!”

When the Jetsun threw the flower, many supports of body, speech, and mind made of rainbow light came and dissolved into the painting as the painting vibrated and shook. Then many celestial flowers rained down, and as they touched Milarepa’s head, he took them, and the flowers then pervaded his entire body. Everyone was amazed. Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

The assembly of the dharmakaya jñanasattvas Entered the form of the samayasattva.

Supports of body, speech, and mind made of light came And dissolved,
giving the pointing-out consecration.

Milarepa, who is old, did not rise up

But the assembly of the wisdom dakinis

From the dharmakaya pure realm of the Victorious Ones Were invited with
the rupakaya flowers

And directly dissolved into the yidam deity.

In order to observe this consecration,

I took up these wondrous flowers

And beautifully adorned my head and body.

Further, the yidam dissolved into me.

And everyone was amazed at that.

It’s a sign that all here have great fortune.

Then Rechungpa and everyone there saw the Jetsun and Vajrayogini as completely inseparable.

This is the cycle of “Bestowing Empowerment and Consecration.”

*¹ Literally, “wisdom beings”; in the Vajrayana creation state practice, jñanasattvas represent the essence of the yidam deity.

*² Literally “samaya, or commitment being”; in the Vajrayana creation stage practice, this is the practitioner who arises as the deity.

Shendormo and Leksé Bum

NAMO GURU

The couple Shendormo and Leksé Bum, benefactors who had great faith from the very beginning, invited the Jetsun Milarepa to Tsarma. Immediately upon meeting him, Shendormo took Milarepa's hand.

“Now that I have become old, I am afraid of my impending death. I regret not having had the opportunity to practice dharma in the presence of the Jetsun,” he said as he wept openly.

The Jetsun replied, “Benefactor, apart from the truly noble dharma practitioners, the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, and death is something that all sentient beings will experience. If you have fear of death, then it would be fitting for you to practice dharma at the time of death.” Then he sang this song of realization:

As for us mundane, worldly beings,
 There's not a single one who is without
 The four rivers of birth, old age, sickness, and death.
 Again and again, we spin in the ocean of samsara
 And, not realizing it, we are distracted by the waves of suffering.
 While not having a single moment of happiness,
 Through fearing we will suffer, we create suffering.
 In hopes of gaining happiness, we engage in negativity.
 If you want liberation from this suffering,
 It's good to be free of bad conduct and negativity.
 It's fitting to practice the sublime dharma at the time of death.

Then Shendormo said, “Since I do not remember the suffering of birth, please teach about it.” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

Well then, faithful benefactor,
 To explain about the suffering of birth:

The all-base consciousness wanders in the bardo And through passion and aggression, it enters the womb.

When you enter into the mother's womb,

It's like a fish getting caught in a net.

While lying within the fluids and blood,

You take such filth as your bed.

Through the power of bad karma, you take an inferior body And experience suffering in negative places.

Though you remember the previous life, you can't say a word.*1

You experience many types of heat and cold.

For nine or ten months, you have a hell being's body.

When the time has come to be born from your mother,

It's like being pulled through a tight drawing die.*2

When you come forth from the womb's opening,

It's like leaving behind a pit of brambles.

When you're taken onto your mother's lap,

It's like a hawk snatching up a little bird.

When the fluids from the womb are cleaned off your body, It's like being flayed alive.

When the umbilical cord is snipped,

It's like your life-line is being cut.

When you are placed into the cradle,

It's like being bound and put into a dungeon.

If you don't realize the reality of birthlessness,

The suffering of birth is fathomless.

The sublime dharma that's needed at the time of death,

By putting it off, you're wasting your good fortune.

It is fitting to apply yourself to practicing the sublime dharma.

Thus he sang. Then Shendormo said, "Please also tell us something about the suffering of old age." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

Well then, you honorable benefactors, To explain about the suffering of old

age:

The body's four elements degenerate;
This suffering of old age brings such despair.
Though straight at birth, your body starts to bend.
Though you place your foot firmly, you totter and reel.
Though it's black at birth, your hair turns white.
The clear eye faculty becomes obscured.
The head, the main part, gets confused.
The ears that heard sounds begin to go deaf.
The color in the cheeks fades away.¹⁶⁴
The nose on your face also shrivels up.¹⁶⁵
Those strong, bright bones, the teeth, fall out.
The king of speech, the tongue, gets tied.
The debts of killing lice grow many.
Though you gathered food and relatives, they all depart.
Suffering and worry are abandoned just to return.¹⁶⁶
Though you speak the truth, no one will listen.
The children you lovingly raised get angry.
You give away all you've amassed, without thanks in return.
Many curse you for taking too long to die.

If you don't realize the reality that is beyond "old age"
Then the suffering of old age is fathomless.
If you don't remember the sublime dharma when you get old, Your previous
karma will fully ripen.
Right now for as long as you breathe,
To practice the genuine sublime dharma would be excellent!

Thus he sang. Then Shendormo said, "We have taken what you said to heart. Now, please tell us about the suffering of sickness." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Well then, benefactors who have revulsion,
To explain about the suffering of sickness:
Sickness suddenly attacks the body

Sickness suddenly attacks the body,
And pain comes unexpectedly.
The demons of wind, bile, and phlegm come upon you.

When blood and pus start to boil and cause pain, Sickness and discomfort
cause the senses to collapse.

Though you lie in a comfortable bed, you toss and turn a lot.
By the power of your previous karma of avarice,
Though you're given good food, it just comes right back up.
Though you stay in a cool place, the fire element makes you hot.
Though you wear warm clothes, the water element makes you cold.
Though friends and relatives surround you,
There's no way they can take your suffering of sickness.
Though Bön doctors are experts in healing,
It's difficult to eliminate the illness of previous karma.

If you don't realize the reality beyond "sickness,"
The suffering of sickness is fathomless.
Since you don't know when sickness will come your way,
For fear of suffering, it's fitting to practice the sublime dharma.

Thus he sang. Then Shendormo said, "When I die, I will see if I will be able to practice dharma. Teach about the suffering at that time." Then Milarepa sang this song in reply:

Well then, benefactors with renunciation,
The suffering of death is so fearsome.
When that single time of death arrives,
And the death lord's messenger comes to take you,
He's not deceived by wealth and riches,
And there's no place a hero can fight with his sword.
He is not deceived by the learned and wise,
And scholars can't use their stories on him.
It's no use for the poor to beg and plead.
Evil ones can't use deception at all.

Fox-like cowards have no place to run.

The branch nadis withdraw inward from the extremities, Like being pressed
between two mountains.

The objects of the sense faculties all withdraw.

Healers who have hopes of helping are left behind.

The Bönpos of divination, who hope to protect, run away.

The deities and protectors above for whom you do recitation and practice
Will give no reply to your signs and words.

Though the movement of breath hasn't yet ceased,

Still, the body starts to reek of death;

The last spark of heat is drawn within.

Then some look at the astrology of stars and planets

And some cry out from their suffering.

Some contemplate their food and wealth—

How others will use all that they've amassed.

Though there are many who love you, you will go alone.

Though you have good friends, they'll be sickened to look at you.

Your precious body will be folded into thirds.*3

They'll take your body far away, then flee.

Whether burned with fire, thrown in the water, or thrown in a pit, When
you're no more, this is sure to happen.

Can you bear all of this, you faithful ones?

On the morning that your breath comes to a halt

No amount of worldly wealth

Will be of help to you at all.

So, what is it that those with avarice think?

Though loved ones gather all around you,

They have no way to help for even a moment.

When you see that you will be parted from them,

Alas, what can your loved ones do for you?

When such a time arrives,
Anything that isn't connected with the genuine dharma
Won't be of any benefit at all.
At the time of death, you should have no regrets.
Don't have any fear at the time of death!

Thus Shendormo, having entered the gateway of dharma, received the guiding explanations and meditated on them so that at the time of death he took hold of the path.

At that point, Leksé Bum said, "Although the Jetsun and his disciples will not remain here permanently, please, you must stay for at least a few nights." Because she fervently made this request to him, Milarepa and his disciples stayed for seven days. During that period, there was a gathering of all the people of Nyanang to make tsa-tsas.

After that, Leksé Bum asked, "Would the Jetsun and his disciples like to go for some entertainment?"

"I will not go," Milarepa replied.

"Very well. Since today is a meritorious day, please help me make offerings in my shrine room and make tsa-tsas. Since it is for the sake of sentient beings, I ask you to please also look after my child and the goats and sheep. Also help me by cleaning the house and dishes." With that she put on fine clothes and jewelry and then went off.

The Jetsun and disciples were immersed deep in their practice, so they did not help with anything that the lady had asked of them. The sheep went out into the fields to eat the crops and when she returned home, her baby was crying.

Seeing that they had done nothing at all, she said to the Jetsun, "It's fine that you didn't do the other things I asked of you. But being a dharma practitioner requires that one has great compassion; a bit of trouble for my baby, the goats, and sheep is virtuous activity. It couldn't possibly be a fault."¹⁶⁷ Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

In my abode, the vast field of great bliss,
Caring for the goats and sheep of the changeless ground, I did not look after
those of flesh and blood.
Those with flesh and blood are for Leksé Bum to look after.

The mother of compassion and loving-kindness

THE METHOD OF COMPASSION AND LOVING KINDNESS

Cares for the infant of awareness,
So I wasn't free to look after the one with snot and poo.
The infant with snot and poo is for Leksé Bum to look after.

On the stable mountain of changeless meditation,
I made the tsa-tsas of undistracted mindfulness,
So I wasn't free to make any tsa-tsas from clay.
The round clay ones are for Leksé Bum to make.

Upon the offering shrine of the upper torso,
I offered lamps of luminosity meditation,
So I wasn't free to place those with white cotton wicks.
Those with white cotton wicks are for Leksé Bum to offer.

In the run-down house of this illusory body,
I scrubbed and cleaned the latent tendencies,
So I didn't scrub and clean your house.
To scrub and clean that house is for Leksé Bum to do.

Toward the variety of mundane things of existence,
I trained and trained in the skill of illusoriness,
So I wasn't free to clean your cups and plates.
The work of washing and rinsing is for Leksé Bum to do.

Thus he sang. Leksé Bum replied, "Jetsun, please do not disregard the virtue that we worldly people do. Besides you, I have also served other resident lamas." Then Milarepa sang this song in reply:

Resident lamas without any compassion
Are like revering a Te'u-rang*4 deity.
How frightful is the ruin of self and other!

The dharmic activity devoid of good intention
Is like a fool caught in the web of deception.
How frightful is the burning of desire!

The generosity of those with bias
Is like having to pay back a banquet feast.
How frightful are the many offences of not fulfilling hopes!

Making offerings to inappropriate objects Is like entrusting your wealth to a
charlatan.
How frightful is such a basis for delusion!

Giving without compassion
Is like tying yourself to a whipping post.¹⁶⁸
How frightful to bind yourself up so!

To have a high view without taming your mind-stream
Is just like boasting and speaking with doubts.¹⁶⁹
How frightful to disregard cause and effect!

The meditator who doesn't get to the vital point
Is like a liar who puts the roof on his house of deceit.
How frightful to think he's doing something of meaning!¹⁷⁰

Conduct in which *tendrel* does not arise
Is like a crazy man who drinks salt water.
How frightful is the increase of desire and craving!

Samaya that involves the eight worldly concerns
Is like wrapping filth in silk.
How frightful to be rotten from within!

The fruition where one's desires have not been abandoned Is like a human
figure made of clay.
How frightful it is to disintegrate under adverse conditions!

Thus he sang. Leksé Bum, having developed regret, offered the best piece of turquoise from her jewelry as a gift to Milarepa and then asked him to take her with him. The Jetsun then sang this song of realization, "The Vajra Verse" to Leksé Bum.

Listen now, wealthy Leksé Bum,
Who has such clear, bright intelligence.
When you turn in and look at your body,
Do meditation that's free of desire for comfort.
When you turn in and look at your speech,
Do meditation that's free of expression.
When you turn in and look at your mind,
Do meditation that's free of concepts.
Without distraction in body, speech, and mind,
Do meditation that's free of meditating.

Thus he sang. She meditated and experiences arose for her. Then she offered the seven branches to the guru.

Wondrous lord clad with the cotton cloth,
You with pride free of reference point,
Who, free of any worry or fear,¹⁷¹
Have confidence that's completely free of attachment;
To the repa with yogic discipline, at your feet I bow.
Great repa, I make offerings to you.
To the repa with yogic discipline, I confess my negativities.
Guru, I rejoice in you.
I supplicate you to turn the wheel of dharma.
I supplicate that you not pass into nirvana.
I dedicate this virtue for the sake of all beings.

When I turn in and look at my body,
Though I do meditation free of desire for comfort,
Still, my desire for comfort continues to come.

When I turn in and look at my speech,
Though I do meditation free of the desire to speak,
Still, my desire to speak continues to come.

When I turn in and look at my mind

When I turn in and look at my mind,
Though I do nonconceptual meditation,
Still, concepts continue to come.

Though with undistracted body, speech, and mind
I do meditation that's free of meditating,
Still, meditation continues to come.

Please give key instructions for clearing hindrances and enhancement.

In reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization on clearing hindrances and enhancing the practice:

Listen, listen now, Leksé Bum!

For your body, when you have desire for comfort,
Separate yourself from your relatives and friends
And give away all the wealth you've amassed.
Remain in the state that's free of attachment.

For speech, when you desire to say something,
Leave the eight worldly concerns behind;
Give your pride and self-importance to the wind.
Remain in the state that is free of pride.

For mind, when concepts are present,
Take hold of your mind with the hook of mindfulness.
Not fixating on samsara and nirvana as two,
Remain in the state of equality.

Sustain the state free of following after things that arise.
If there still is some kind of meditation,
Meditate with compassion upon sentient beings.
Meditate on your body as the Great Compassionate One.*5
Meditate with the guru at the crown of your head.
Extend the meditation on emptiness,
Then afterward, seal it with dedication.
Understand this and practice the sublime dharma.

Thus he sang. She practiced as the Jetsun had said and became a yogini who took hold of the path.

This is the cycle of Shendormo and Leksé Bum.

*¹ It's said that while in the womb, one is still able to remember one's previous life, but because of still being in the womb, one cannot speak. (DPR) *² T: *'jur mig*. A drawing die is a small hole that metal wires are pulled through to reduce their cross-section diameter.

*³ Folding the body in thirds is connected with how a corpse is prepared for disposal.

*⁴ A Te'u rang deity is "a type of malicious spirit, associated with hungry ghosts, which is said to influence the weather and send hailstorms" (Harding 2003: 337).

*⁵ Avalokiteshvara.

Preparing to Have Joy at Death

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Nyanang Belly Cave, the eight worldly concerns were manifesting slightly for his heart-son Rechungpa. The Jetsun had advised him again and again to abandon them, but Rechungpa thought, “I have relinquished my own homeland, and I believe I am untainted by the faults of the eight worldly concerns. But the Jetsun says to relinquish one’s homeland is only practicing dharma half-way. Can this really be so?”

The Jetsun said, “This is what is said in the general dharma language; however, that in itself is not enough.”¹⁷² Then he sang this song of realization:

The essence of the lord of the family,
 In the palace of great bliss at the crown of my head, Guru unstained by any
 faults,
 You are ornamented with a host of good qualities.
 Never satisfied when looking at him, I praise this lord.

Though you’ve abandoned your homeland for foreign lands, Still, you must
 properly keep to their customs.
 If you prefer to have praise and fame,
 At that point, you’ve arrived at the eight concerns.

Though you’ve abandoned food and service for small morsels, Still, you must
 properly amass them in great hoards.
 If you prefer a full belly of tasty food,
 At that point, you’ve arrived at the eight concerns.

Though you’ve abandoned fine woolen clothes for ragged garments, Still, you
 must properly sew and tailor them.
 If you prefer them to be soft and warm, At that point, you’ve arrived at the

eight concerns.

Though you've abandoned house and home for earthen caves, Still, you must make proper preparations.

If you prefer one that will withstand attack,

At that point, you've arrived at the eight concerns.

Though you've abandoned large fields for small, Still, you must properly keep to the ways of farming.

If you prefer great, excellent crops to your small ones, At that point, you've arrived at the eight concerns.

The true reality of samsara that is free of any base, If analyzed, there is nothing to be identified; If that is realized, then that is nirvana.

Yogi, always be free of any fixation

Toward the dharmata, the empty nature of everything.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa asked, "Since my practice in Secret Mantra's path of means has become stable, is it okay to rely upon just a few sensory pleasures?"

The Jetsun replied, "It is okay to use sensory pleasures to support your practice, but it's not okay to use your practice to support sensory pleasures. When I came from Marpa of Lhodrak's side, I had abandoned the eight worldly concerns. He told me that I should practice in reliance on a few sensory pleasures. I practiced accordingly, and because of that, some good qualities arose in my mind-stream. You too should abandon the eight concerns, and without thinking that you have any leisure for practicing, practice now!" Then he sang this song of realization:

The lord guru's life-story is impressed upon my mind, And I never forget his advice that was like amrita.

If you think you have leisure to put off the dharma, you will miss your chance.

Mix dharma with your mind-stream, and apply yourself in meditation.

If you're attached to this life, the next life will be difficult.

To delight in temporary pleasure is a great hindrance.

If you think you have leisure to put off the dharma, that is foolish.

If you fear your death, apply yourself in meditation.

If you engage in negative action, you'll fall to the lower realms.
If you're deceitful or conniving, you'll just lose yourself.
If you develop malicious intentions, you'll exhaust your merit.
If you want to purify your karmic results, apply yourself in meditation.

If you wish to wear nice clothes, your outlook is confused.
If you wish to eat good food, you'll strive in negative conduct.
If you long for pleasing words, you'll be wrecked by fame.
Abandon the eight concerns, and apply yourself in meditation.

If you wish for a rich patron, you'll encounter enemies.
If you wish to be surrounded by many retinues, you'll have great regret.
If you want to amass many things, you'll have many wrong views.
Make your mind harmonious with the dharma, and apply yourself in
meditation.

If you can meditate, then realization will dawn in your mind.
If you cannot, then you'll just have empty speech and lies.
Since you don't have much time left to meditate, Exert yourself in meditation
without distraction.

If you mix your mind with dharma, everywhere you'll have bliss.
Remaining alone is also excellent.
My son, Rechungpa, let your mind abide
In the precious samadhi of clarity-emptiness meditation!

Thus he sang. Milarepa thought, "Rechungpa has only lessened his involvement with the eight concerns somewhat, but his hidden faults have not been fully revealed. I must do this by inciting him to revulsion."

When they came upon Nyanang, where there were many butchers, the master and his disciple Rechungpa went begging for alms. There were stacks of flesh, piles of animal heads, flayed skins displayed, and pools of blood collecting all around. Many sentient beings were tethered waiting to be slaughtered there, and in the center of them was an old man from Mön with a crippled arm. A large black sheep managed to escape the man's grasp, and as it ran the sheep's

intestines were pulled through a small tear in its flesh. Terrified, the sheep let out loud screams, limping and hobbling over to the Jetsun and his son for protection. As the sheep's life came to its end, the Jetsun wept with many tears and performed transference for the sheep, placing its consciousness on the bodhisattva path. Then he sang this song of realization with unbearable great compassion:

EMA! Sentient beings of samsara, Look to the path of liberation.

Alas! These here with such negativity—such a shame!

Ignorant of karma in this human birth with leisures, How devastating is this
killing of beings!

How regrettable to have such self-delusion!

How shameful,¹⁷³ indeed, to kill one's parents!

What's to be done with this stacking of killed flesh?

What to do with all this pooling of blood?

Eating meat, however hungry one is;

Such confused perception, thinking anything;¹⁷⁴

Such negativity without any compassion;

Delusive ignorance that's obscured everything;

What can be done with such cultivation of negativity?

Giving torment however they please;

Such wickedness of those who act this way;

How shameful! Oh, such sadness and heartache!

So busy with negativity in all that they do,

Later, they won't remember a single moment.

When I see such people, I fear for them.

I think of those with such negative conduct, and I am disturbed.

Rechungpa, doesn't it make you think of the sublime dharma?

If it does, then give rise to sadness and disillusionment.

If you meditate, go to mountain retreats.

If you contemplate, contemplate the guru's kindness.

If you escape something, escape from the root of nonvirtue.

If you let go of something, let go of mundane deeds.

If you keep something, keep your promise to practice.
If you understand, then bring your life to the dharma.

Thus he sang. Then disillusionment and renunciation arose deep within Rechungpa, and he wept with many tears. “Lama, now I will do as the guru says and will abandon the eight concerns and the provisions of food obtained through negativity; I will meditate. To which isolated mountain will we, master and student, go and meditate?” Then in reply, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

EMA! Sentient beings of samsara
Are in darkness, obscured by negative
karma.

The thief of conceptuality creates much agitation;
The jewel of meditation
will likely be lost.

It’s time to set the watchman of nondistractedness.

Men with negativity never think that death will come.

Rechungpa and I will go to Lachi Snow Mountain.

The continuum of samsara is a long, treacherous path.

The bandits of the five poisons agitate and churn;
They’ll likely seize the
child of awareness.

It’s time to seek out the guide of primordial wisdom.

Men with negativity never think that death will come.

Rechungpa and I will go to Lachi Snow Mountain.

The mountain of faults is very high.

The afflictions are like the hunter and his dog;
It’s likely they will kill the
deer of samadhi.

It’s time to flee to the ultimate true nature.

Men with negativity never think that death will come.

Rechungpa and I will go to Lachi Snow Mountain.

In the worn down house of the illusory body,

Days and hours fall like rain.

The drops of the years and months beat down.

The worn house of the illusory body will soon collapse.

It’s time to make preparations to have joy at death.

Men with negativity never think that death will come.
Rechungpa and I will go to Lachi Snow Mountain.

The ocean of samsara is very deep.
It's time to swim with the child of awareness.
It's likely you'll be distracted by the waves of confusion.
It's time to escape to the land of nonduality.
Men with negativity never think that death will come.
Rechungpa and I will go to Lachi Snow Mountain.

The swamp of lust is truly vast,
And the thick mud of home-life is very deep.
It's likely the elephant of renunciation will get stuck within.
It's time to pursue a place for the meditation of liberation.
Men with negativity never think that death will come.
Rechungpa and I will go to Lachi Snow Mountain.

The view and meditation of the lower vehicle is a steep precipice.
The immature, with inferior minds, have many deeds.
It's likely they'll fall off the cliff of the six realms.
Men with negativity never think that death will come.
Rechungpa and I will go to Lachi Snow Mountain.

Thus he sang. The master and his disciple departed together, and most of the people at the market uncontrollably gave rise to faith. With this, they showed respect to the father Jetsun and his son. Although they offered many material provisions to them, Milarepa and Rechungpa said that it was food produced through negativity and the eight worldly concerns. Without accepting the provisions, they went on to Lachi Snow Mountain.

This is the cycle of preparing to have joy at death.

Going for Refreshment, and the Beer-Drinking Song

NAMO GURU

While the Jetsun Milarepa and his son were staying at the Great Cave of Taming Demons*¹ in Lachi, they were attacked by the wrathful magic of some spirits. Rechungpa went into the back part of the cave and stayed there, hiding, while in a state of samadhi. The devas and ghosts displayed a variety of fearsome forms to the Jetsun and rained down many weapons upon him. They cried out many threatening things to Milarepa, like, “Whichever one of us seizes your flesh and blood will carry it away!” To that, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

I supplicate the guru lords!

Grant your blessing that the harsh poison of the afflictions be pacified!

O you pretas, so pitiful,

Army of demons, it’s due to karma you’re so deluded.

When you’re habituated to such a malevolent mind, You come to wish harm
upon all sentient beings.

With a lust for eating flesh and blood,

You take great delight in killing, cutting, and taking breath.

You’ve taken bad births as preta demons;

Now you commit negative deeds; and you’ll be born in the hells.

Not thinking at all of the seed of liberation,

You’ve no way to freedom. How pitiful!

I sit upon the vajra seat of emptiness;

This magical body sitting here, If you can take it away, I’d be happy with
that!

With the compassion of bodhichitta,

I’m happy when the hordes of demons gather.

Having sung that, the Jetsun rested in equipoise in the Samadhi of the Totality of Water. After a moment, even more demons came and gathered. Among them was a fearsome female demon who asked, “Where did he go?”

One of the demons replied, “He’s sitting on the other side of the river, there.”

Then when the demon threw a stone, the Jetsun appeared in person and said, “Here I am!”

The demons became frightened and ran away. The demons later returned and again did all kinds of magic, but they could not touch Milarepa. The devas and ghosts said, “This time, let’s all make friends!” Then, in a state of great compassion, the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

Listen well, now, all you spirits!

You army of ghosts with negative karma,

With bad karma and negativity, you bring suffering upon yourself.

All phenomenal existence arises as dharmakaya for me, So you band of
demons are a great ornament.

Now, listen well, you devas and ghosts!

If you seek refuge in the three precious jewels, You’ll find unmistakable,
excellent abodes.

If you don’t take flesh and blood for your food, You’ll attain the freedom of
the higher realms.

If you abandon harming beings,

Then you’ll quickly take hold of the path to enlightenment.

If you can abandon nonvirtuous actions,

You’ll enter the teaching of the Buddha.

If you can practice the ten virtuous actions,

Then you’ve understood the guru’s key instruction.

If you can pacify the confusion of the three gates, You’ll enter the ranks of
the vidyadharas.

If you can make the commitment of holding the vows, Then we all here can
be good friends.

If you can keep the vows of samaya,

Then I shall accept you as my students.

Thus he sang. Then, with faith, the devas and ghosts confessed their harmful actions. “Now we will be subjects of your command; please teach us the dharma.” The Jetsun transmitted the refuge and bodhichitta vows to them and explained the dharma of karma, cause and effect. All of the spirits then offered their life-force to Milarepa, vowed to keep their commitment, and left.

Then the Jetsun asked Rechungpa, “What happened to you last night?”

“While I was resting in the state of luminosity, a great vision came to me. Last night while the Jetsun was in his bed, someone threw a stone at him. Did it hit his body?”

“Last night, in a state of great joy, my body transformed into water. Perhaps a stone did hit me; my chest hurts. Take a look!” The Jetsun again transformed his body into water, and Rechungpa removed the stone. After this, the Jetsun felt much better.

Then, when many other disciple-sons came to see the Jetsun, he said, “Let us go up to that high mountain standing before Lachi for a little refreshment.”

The disciples said to Milarepa, “Your body is now quite old, you will not be able to make it up the mountain. Please, you should not go.”

But Milarepa replied, “With something as easy as this, it will be fine,” Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the gurus.

I, Milarepa, wish to go to the mountain peak.

But, Milarepa has become old;

His four elements have weakened and cannot go.

Inanimate mountain, lay yourself down!

As soon as he had finished singing, the top of the mountain bent down. The Jetsun got a foothold, and up he went to the top. There he sat for a while on top of the mountain peak in the center of dense rainbow light. Then, he took off and flew down to the students and said, “Someone brought beer to me up on the mountain peak.”

“Tell us, how can we also get up there? How can we get the beer?” they asked.

“To get to the mountain peak, you should meditate according to this instruction.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Dear disciples, if you want the view from the mountain, To seize it, seize the
luminosity of your own mind.

To subdue it, subdue it like a net.

To bind it, bind it like an ensnaring knot.
To hold it, take hold of it like a hook.
Meditate like that to get to the peak
Of freedom; then enjoy the view
And drink the beer of experience.
You qualified men and women, now come within!
Look and be satisfied by the view.
Those unqualified who stay outside,
If you're not able to drink the pure beer,
Can you not at least drink the weaker beer? *2
If you cannot practice toward pure enlightenment, Can you not at least attain
the higher realms?

Then Rechungpa said, "I can practice toward enlightenment. Please allow me to drink the beer too."

"Well then, just as Marpa did, who was supremely kind, drink the beer like this," then he sang this song of realization:

He who has mastered essential reality,
For whom primordial reality is without any break, At the feet of Marpa the
Translator I bow.

The traits of my father are just like this:
He's pure and clear just like the sky;
All-pervading like the sun and moon;
Inseparable from me, he sits upon my crown.

Humans are chief among the six types of beings.
Every spring and every fall
They reap the harvest that's without any essence, Then they prepare their
golden beer.

Now, let's brew a batch of beer and drink!
So how is it that we brew this beer?
On the hearthstone of body, speech, and mind,
Place the copper pot of emptiness.

Into this, put the barley of pure, excellent faith And pour in the water of
mindfulness and compassion.

Stoke the fire of great wisdom,

Then cook 'til it's a mash free of center or edge.

In the midst of the floor of equality,

Upon the cloth of great bliss,

Add the starter of the genuine instructions.*3

Then let it rest on the bed of the four immeasurables.

It will ferment into a mash of "many with one taste."

Pour it into the clay pot of formative force,

Then brew it with inseparable means and wisdom.

It is strengthened into beer of the five wisdoms.

From the tap of the source of all desires,

The beer, the undefiled nectar, is filtered.

The raw material, the cause, is the Heruka of Perfect Purity.

The other ingredients, the conditions, are the Dharmadhatu Heruka.

The color is the Padma Heruka.

The taste is the Vajra Heruka.

The scent is the Variety Heruka.

The sensation is the Alluring Heruka.

Now when this yogic beer is drunk, The first draft*4 is dharmakaya, clear and
pure.

The second is sambhogakaya, the perfect buddha.

Third is nirmanakaya, appearing as anything.

The weaker beer of continual flow

Will be drunk down by the qualified ones.

There's no worry that unqualified ones will drink.

Here's another example of how to drink:

The first portion of beer of pure experience

That's brewed in the state of dharmata

Is offered to the buddhas and guru with three kindnesses

is offered to the Buddhas and guru with three kindnesses.

The middle portion of wisdom and means
Is enjoyed by the assembly of mandala deities
Summoned through the state of samaya.

The weaker beer of common and supreme siddhis, Once experience has been
sustained,

Accomplishes the wishes of self and other.

In the serving ladle with its six excellent traits Is the beer of the pure
whispered lineage.

If you drink this beer, bliss will blaze forth.

If you taste it, you will attain nirvana.

This is the way to drink yogic beer.

It has qualities that cannot be found anywhere else.

This wonderful conduct is so amazing.

E MA! Is this not marvelous?

Then the disciples all developed certainty.

This is the cycle of the beer-drinking song and going for refreshment at the Great
Cave of Taming Demons.

*1 In Tibetan, Dūdül Pukmo Che (T: *bdud 'dul phug mo che*).

*2 Ardussi discusses the Tibetan beer-making process: “When the *glum* [fermented barley, pronounced ‘loom’] is first infused, the beer which is strained off is the first or strongest beer. More water is added and stirred in, making a second, weaker infusion. A third infusion will be very weak in alcohol.” (120) *3 Ardussi states: “The cooked barley is spread out onto a large rug (often called a *brdal phyar*) or winnow to cool, before adding the starter. Tibetan beer starter, like that for *sake*, contains not only yeast but also mold spores (*Aspergillus oryzae*) chemically essential for fermentation...*Phabs* [pronounced “pop”, the Tibetan word, here, for starter] is stirred into the cooled barley, which is then kept warm for several days while it ferments as a kind of damp mash (*glum*). It is then infused with water (*bsings*) in a large pot, where it absorbs the alcohol, thereby becoming ‘strengthened into beer’ (*chang du ngar*).” (119) *4 This refers to the cycles of infusion mentioned in the above footnote, called “chang dangpo” (first beer), “chang nyipa” (second beer), and “chang sumpa” (third beer).

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Ramding Sky Cave

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa, along with Rechungpa, Drigom Repa, and a few other disciples, was staying at Ramding Sky Cave, Rechungpa and Drigom Repa had much discussion about the view of meditation of Naropa and Maitripa. The Jetsun said to them, “Listen to my song, and then continue your discussion.” Then he sang this song of realization:

What delight! Being free of conventional terms is so joyful!

The kind lord guru sits at my crown.

Realization inseparable from his continually dawns in my mind.

You two teacher-meditators who engage in analysis, If your words don't come
from your inner understanding, You're just making noise and inflating
your pride.

Cutting imputations from within,

Is that not called the view free of extremes?

Using scripture and reasoning is a great ornament to that.

Concepts dissolving into dharmakaya,

Is that not called self-arisen meditation?

Connecting it with experience is a great ornament to that.

Purifying the six collections in their own state, Is that not called the conduct
of equal taste?

Connecting it with the proper time is a great ornament to that.

The arising of the experience of bliss-emptiness, Is that not the point of the
whispered lineage instructions?

Connecting it with the four abhishekas is a great ornament to that.

Differentiating clear appearance and emptiness, Is that not called the stages
of the path?

Connecting it with the path's signs is a great ornament to that.

Carrying one's mind to the point of its exhaustion, Is that not called
buddhahood in one life?

Connecting it with the four kayas is a great ornament to that.

One who has scripture, logic, and the upadeshas, Is that not called the guru
who holds a lineage?

Being connected with compassion is the guru's great ornament.

Faithful ones who have great compassion,

Are those not called students who are suitable vessels?

Connecting them with devotion is a great ornament to that.

One gains resolution about the mind through the view; Meditation then takes
this and brings it to experience; Through conduct, one brings it to its
completion.

Its actualization is the four kayas;

The result is asserted in terms of mind.

Realization is seeing it all come down to one thing.

When he had sung this, everyone's doubts were completely cut.

Then the Jetsun said to Rechungpa, "If you want the very essence of dharma,
this is what you need." Then he sang this song of realization:

Awareness-holding disciple-son, listen here,

If you want to practice dharma, this is what you need:

The embodiment of the buddhas of the three times, The guru who develops
all qualities,

You must have confidence in the dharmakaya.

Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

The instructions spoken from the guru's mouth

Are the supreme medicine for vanquishing the five poisons.

You must have confidence that they are amrita.
Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

With the liberating wrathful enlightened activity That is part of the guru's
conduct,
You must have confidence the guru is a nirmanakaya.
Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

These thoughts and memories that move in the mind, Though they [appear to]
arise, they're unarisen and free of base or root.
You must have confidence in undistracted mindfulness.
Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

These ocean waves of the poisons and ignorance
Are like a rope tying wood that's consumed by fire.
You must have confidence there is nothing that binds you.
Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

The bliss of the devas in the desire realm
Is like the change of the four different seasons.
You must have confidence that samsara has no comfort.
Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

All composite phenomena
Are impermanent like lightning in the sky,
Like a waterfall, or burning incense.
You must have confidence that this life has no leisure.
Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

It is certain that everyone will die.
Since no one remains and all pass away,
You must have confidence in attaining deathlessness.
Do you have certainty in this, Rechungpa?

Then all of the disciples developed deep certainty. After some time, the

students of Nyanang invited Rechungpa to come and receive some offerings, and the Jetsun gave him permission to go there for half a month. The other repas also went to the village for alms.

In the meantime, Dzesé, Khujuk, and other benefactors and students from Drin came to meet Milarepa. When they saw the Jetsun sitting loosely dressed and fully exposed, the students did not dare come near him. Dzesé went to place some clothes on him, then the students gathered around.

They said, “We worldly people are shocked and embarrassed to see the Jetsun completely exposed like that. We ask you to please, out of compassion for us, cover your private parts.” Then the Jetsun, ripping off his clothes, became completely naked. He rose and sang this song of realization:

Always traveling around in human domains,
I've naturally forgotten my own native land.
Spending much time with the noble lord,
I've naturally forgotten my friends and relatives.
Striving in practicing the genuine dharma,
I've naturally forgotten the dharma of ordinary men.
Roaming alone in mountain retreats,
I've naturally forgotten all worldly distractions.
Watching the monkeys and langurs play,
I've naturally forgotten all about calves and sheep.
Holding on to sharp flint and steel,
I've naturally forgotten all about household affairs.
Remaining without master and without servant,
I've naturally forgotten about polite, pleasant speech.
Staying alone, completely relaxed,
I've naturally forgotten about embarrassment.
Going with whatever arises in the mind,
I've naturally forgotten all about modesty.
With chandali blazing within my body,
I've naturally forgotten all about wearing clothes.
Meditating in nonconceptual wisdom,
I've naturally forgotten all my concepts.

Meditating in the union of luminosity,*1

I've forgotten all about elaborations.

These twelve things that I've forgotten

Are the way of this yogi here.

Students, you should all do the same.

I've released the knot of perceiver and perceived.

Why should I have a need to follow your customs?

One doesn't attain enlightenment through artifice; The dharma of you people
is too hard to practice.

I will remain alone and relaxed.

I won't be deceitful or lie about being embarrassed.

I don't know how to do contrived conduct.

Thus he sang. The students showed him great respect and reverence, then departed.

Meanwhile, although Rechungpa had spent only a day at each of the villagers' houses, he had been gone for quite a long time. When he came back to see the Jetsun, the entryway to the cave was closed. Rechungpa thought, "Is he unhappy with me because I spent too long?" Then he offered his guru this song:

There is no reference point in the innate, true dharma.

If there is a reference point then it is not innate.

In the Great Perfection there is no bias.

If there is bias, it is not the Great Perfection.

Mahamudra has nothing to block or create.

If there's blocking or creating, it is not Mahamudra.

In the experience of great bliss, clarity is not obscured.

If clarity is obscured, it is not great bliss.

In the Great Middle Way nothing can be identified.

If there's identification, it's not the Middle Way.

I, Rechungpa, traveled around the town;

Is the Father Jetsun happy and well?

Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization from atop the cave entrance:

Apart from mind, there is no buddha.

There is no quicker path than the nadis and pranas.
There's no other friend than the three precious refuges.
There is no more excellent experience than bliss and emptiness.
There is no one kinder than the genuine lord.
Beings should take him to their crown,
And put into practice the unerring instructions.
This is how to develop certainty in your being.
If you gain realization within yourself,
Then the lineage instructions have been received.
When you have determined your own mind,
Signs of experience and confidence will quickly arise.
When loving-kindness has arisen in the mind,
Then sentient beings are accepted with compassion.
When one sees the buddha guru,
Blessings are naturally received.
I've put a few lines together here;
If you understand the meaning, there's dharma there.
If you didn't understand, it's just a little ditty.¹⁷⁵
Son, Rechungpa, are you well?
This old father here is feeling quite fine!

With that, he opened the cave and they went inside. "I was just kidding around just now. But I can see that you still have great attachment to the eight worldly concerns. You must abandon them and meditate in the mountains." Then he sang this song of realization:

The blessings of the lord guru lie within the mountains, Grant your blessing
that I stay in mountain retreats.

O Rechungpa, you fortunate one,
Focus your senses and listen to my song.

When staying in isolated mountain retreats,
Don't think of the worldly things your relatives say.
If you do, then old enemies will be revived.

When meditating near the guru,
Don't think of a reward for your accumulated merit.
If you do, then an army of bad conduct will ensue.

When offering tormas to the *bhuta* spirits, Don't think of hoarding those balls
of torma.
If you do, then you too will become such a spirit.

When meditating with undistracted concentration, Don't take time to meet
with your friends.
If you do, then those friends will kill your spiritual practice.

When you have perseverance in hardship,
Don't think of meat, beer, and delicious food.
If you do, then you'll be born as a hungry ghost.

When meditating on the whispered lineage's path of means, Don't think like
students yearning for intellectual knowledge.
If you do, you'll enter an erring path.

When you're staying in isolated mountains,
Don't think of leaving to engage in activities.
If you do, then negative mind states will quickly arise.

Son, with perseverance, finish the result with dharma.
With endurance, abandon samsara's suffering.
Son, we're connected through aspiration;
May your father's realization arise within you.
This realization of all appearances as dharmakaya, May it be perfected in the
experience of my son.

This song touched him deeply, and Rechungpa prostrated to the Jetsun. Then he
offered this song to him:

Through the father guru's kindness, I have practiced the dharma.
I left my good and loving parents behind
And relinquished my homeland, so hard to relinquish.

I still have feelings of longing for my friends.

I put off hoarding food, wealth, and clothes.

I have no conditions for avarice or nonvirtue.

With hardship and *rasayana*, I meditated in caves.

But desire for gathering and gaining continues on.

For meeting, I have met with an actual siddha.

For obtaining, I've obtained the whispered lineage instructions.

For meditation, I meditate with undistracted diligence.

I still desire to encounter and hear teachings.

For deeds, I do my father service.

For practice, I practice toward buddhahood in one life.

For staying, I stay in mountain retreats.

I still have a mind of doer and deed.

Lord Vajradhara, with your unmoving essence,

Grant your blessing that these thoughts may be transformed.

When Rechungpa had sung this, the Jetsun gave Rechungpa many pieces of advice, and his realization increased greatly. Then the Jetsun and his son were invited to the Belly Cave by the people of Nyanang.

This is the story of Ramding Sky Cave.

*1 The union of luminosity and emptiness.

Rechungpa's Departure for Central Tibet

NAMO GURU

The benefactors of Nyanang gave the Jetsun Milarepa abundant service and respect, and he stayed at the Belly Cave there. While Rechungpa was staying in the upper cave, the guru, yidam, and dakinis came to Rechungpa and exhorted him by means of a sign in his dream [to request Milarepa to tell his life story]. Then, in response to his supplication, Milarepa told his life story.

Then Rechungpa had a strong wish to go to Central Tibet. Some students compared the master and disciple, saying, "The son is superior to the father because he has gone to India." So the younger students went to be in the presence of Rechungpa, while the older ones went to Milarepa.

At one point, the students came to offer their respect and service in the presence of the father and son. To Rechungpa they made excellent offerings, but they offered only the smallest amount to Milarepa.

Then Rechungpa thought, "If I have received this much, then the Jetsun has certainly received even greater offerings." He went to the Jetsun and said, "Jetsun, have you received excellent offerings today? Between the offerings received by us both, master and disciple, it would be good if we hold a ganachakra for all of the repas."

"Very well," Milarepa said. "My share is over there under that slab of stone; go ahead and take it." Then Rechungpa rose, went over, and saw that there was only a single piece of rotten meat, a gourd of sour beer, and a mere serving of tsampa.

Rechungpa returned to his cave and thought, "Is this how these students act? This guru is like the buddha; I cannot match even a single pore on his body. Such service is no good. Before, I remained near the guru, and I am completely satisfied in the key instructions I have received in their entirety and in my service to him. Now, if I stay around, not only will I not be of service, I will only be an embarrassment. I will ask the Jetsun's permission to leave."

Then rising early in the morning, he went to see Milarepa. In his cave, the Jetsun was there lying down, rubbing his head. Mégom Repa, too, was there in his

bed. Rechungpa thought, “My guru here has actualized the dharmakaya for self-benefit, yet sometimes he acts with conduct that seems strange to others.”

Knowing what Rechungpa was thinking, the Jetsun sang this song of realization on the four modes of conduct:

Son, Rechungpa, now please listen.

I, your old father, Milarepa,

Sometimes I sleep, and while I sleep, I meditate.

When I meditate while I'm lying down,

I've the instruction of ignorance dawning as luminosity.

This is something I have but no one else does.

If everyone had this, I would be very pleased.

I, your old father, Milarepa,

Sometimes I eat, and while I eat, I meditate.

When I meditate while I am eating,

I have the key instruction for seeing food and drink as a ganachakra.

This is something I have but no one else does.

If everyone had this, I would be very pleased.

I, your old father, Milarepa,

Sometimes I walk, and while I walk, I meditate.

When I meditate while I walk,

I have the key instruction for seeing walking as circumambulation.

This is something I have but no one else does.

If everyone had this, I would be very pleased.

I, the old father, Milarepa,

Sometimes I act, and while acting, I meditate.

When I meditate while doing this action,

I have the key instruction for liberating action into dharmata.

This is something I have but no one else does.

If everyone had this, I would be very pleased.

Son Rechungpa, you too should practice like this.

Mégom, get up, and boil up some gruel.

Giving many reasons, Rechungpa then asked Milarepa for permission to go to Ü. Then he offered this song of realization:

I wish to roam the countryside with no fixed direction,
And to go and circumambulate holy Lhasa,
To encounter the two Jowo statues in person,
To see the glorious Samye monastery,
To circumambulate the Yoru Tradruk Temple,*1
To go and see the great seat of Mar-Ngok*2
To go and see both Loro and Nyal
And beg for alms in the practice of equal taste;
I beg you, I must go to Ü.

Having been requested in this way, the Jetsun replied, “Son, though there are beings for you to guide in Ü, the time has not come for you to go. Do not go against what your guru says; listen to my song.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Born of the family of Secret Mantra with its supreme methods, Lord of the
pure four kayas and four joys,
Hidden buddha in human form,
Supreme among beings, to Marpa I bow.

On this auspicious day of the waxing moon,
This special eighth day of the lunar month,
I, with yogic perception, am feeling so happy.
The sun’s light rays warm me like a fire-crystal.

You who bear the spear and banner in an army of hundreds,
My attractive son, called Rechungpa,
Please don’t say these words you just spoke.
Are you just saying this now, or have you had it on your mind?
Do not let your ears be distracted;

Wipe the rust from the mirror of your mind, And listen clearly to this old
man’s song.

When you go to solitary mountain retreats,
What good will come from wandering the countryside?
When you meditate on the guru as buddha,
What good will come from circumambulating Lhasa?
When you're watching the show of your own mind,
What good will come of seeing the sights of Samye?
When you cut fabrications from within,
What good will the seat of Mar-Ngok do?
When you're meditating on the key instructions of the whispered lineage,
What good will Nyal and Loro be?
When you're gaining certainty in your own mind,
What good will circumambulating Tradruk be?

Rechungpa continued to fervently offer his request, to which Milarepa sang this song of realization:

You white snow lion of the snows on high,
Don't go to the valleys, but keep to the high snows.
If you go down into the valleys,
Do you not fear your turquoise mane will be damaged?
Show off your turquoise mane, and stay in the high snows.
Listen now to your guru's words.

You vulture, king of birds, upon the high rock,
Don't go to the lowlands, but keep to the high rock.
If you go down into the lowlands,
Do you not fear your wings will be damaged?
Show off your wings, and keep to the high rock.
Listen now to your guru's words.

You tiger that stays up in the high forest,
Don't go to the forest's edge, but stay in the high forest.
If you go down to the edge of the forest,
Do you not fear your striped fur will be damaged?

Show off your striped fur, and stay in the high forest.
Listen now to your guru's words.

You golden spotted fish of the high lakes,
Don't circle the edge, but stay in the center.
If you circle the edge of the lake,
Do you not fear getting caught in a net?
Show off your golden spots, and stay in the center.
Listen now to your guru's words.

You, Rechung Dordrak from Gungtang,
Don't roam the country; stay in mountain retreats.
If you go and roam the country,
Do you not fear your experience and realization will be obscured?
Sustain your experience and realization, and stay in the mountains.
Listen now to your guru's words.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa said, "If I stay around my guru, I will not be of service to him; I will only be an embarrassment. Therefore I ask you to let me travel the country and display my experience and realizations." Then he offered this melody:

Father Jetsun Guru, please kindly listen.
I, a white snow lion of the snows on high,
If I don't roam throughout the high snows,
There is no way to display my excellent mane.
Rechungpa won't stay; to Ü I will go.
Now I plead for my guru's assent.

I, a vulture, king of birds, upon the high rock,
If I do not fly up into the sky,
There is no way to display my excellent wings
Rechungpa won't stay; to Ü I will go.
Now I plead for my guru's assent.

I, a tiger in the high forest.

If I cannot roam throughout the vast jungle,
There is no way to display my excellent striped fur.
Rechungpa won't stay; to Ü I will go.
Now I plead for my guru's assent.

I, the golden spotted fish in the lake,
If I do not swim to the edge of the lake,
There is no way to display my golden spots.
Rechungpa won't stay; to Ü I will go.
Now I plead for my guru's assent.

I, Rechung Dordrak from Gungtang,
If I do not roam the countryside,
My excellent experience will not be displayed.
Rechungpa won't stay; to Ü I will go.
Now I plead for my guru's assent.

Then the Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, until your experience and realization are perfected, you should not leave your guru's side." Then he sang this song of realization:

You, Rechung Dorje Drakpa,
Who've trained your mind-stream by hearing and contemplating dharma,
Understand these words I sing:

Without having desiring faith in the dharma,
Don't go begging with a desire to eat.

Without realizing the nature of things,
Don't give lofty lip service about the view.

Without training your skill in inner awareness,
Don't engage in a stupid fool's meditation.

Without knowing how to sustain and care for the key instructions, Don't hide
behind¹⁷⁶ the black letters of books.

Without understanding the teachings of profound dharma,
Don't confuse others with your little bit of study.

Without knowing how to expand your merit, Don't rush to obtain the wealth
of humans.

Without turning from attachment from within,
Don't treat faith offerings like regular wages.

Without having purified the extent of the latent tendencies' appearances,
Don't speak of the higher perceptions you think you have.

Without having actualized the unsurpassable state,
Don't let yourself be benefactors' object of offering.

If you cannot practice the words of virtuous activity fully, You should not get
up from the guru's side.

Son, Rechungpa, don't leave, stay here for now!

Thus he sang. Rechungpa continued to fervently offer his request and Milarepa responded, "I swore to the benefactors that I would not send you to Ü, but if you will not listen to what I have said and insist upon going, and since promises are like dreams and illusions, it is okay for me to give you permission. Now go ahead and prepare to go."

Rechungpa was so ecstatic that he nearly wept. For several nights, Rechungpa and his guru lay with their pillows touching, and Rechungpa received the teachings of the whispered lineage. Also, having written these in some *pechas*,*³ he had nothing else to prepare when it was time for him to depart. He wore nothing other than his single white cloth, and he carried a gayal's horn and a bindle upon his back. Carrying a manual of the whispered lineage instructions under his arm, he went to receive the Jetsun's blessing.

The Jetsun thought, "Rechungpa has accompanied me for a very long time, and I do not know if we will meet again." Milarepa journeyed with him for a distance. When they reached the top of the pass, the Jetsun said, "In what manner will you go?" Then Rechungpa offered this song of his manner of going:

Taking the genuine dharma's view as an example: I'll go to the border of
appearance-emptiness.

Eliminating eternalism or nihilism, I'll go.
Taking the unchanging path, I'll go.
Though my view may be feeble, I have no regrets.

Taking the genuine dharma's meditation as an example:
I'll go to the border of bliss-luminosity.
Eliminating agitation and dullness, I'll go.
Taking the path of luminosity, I'll go.
Though my meditation is feeble, I have no regrets.

Taking the genuine dharma's conduct as an example:
I'll go to the border of yogic discipline.
Eliminating improper behavior, I'll go.
Taking the path of nonattachment, I'll go.
Though my conduct is feeble, I have no regrets.

Taking the genuine dharma's samaya as an example:
I'll go to the border of perfect purity.
Eliminating hypocrisy and deceit, I'll go.
Taking the path without pretense, I'll go.
Though my samaya is feeble, I have no regrets.

Taking the genuine dharma's fruition as an example:
I'll go to the border of spontaneous presence.
Eliminating hopes and fears, I'll go.
Taking the four kayas' path, I'll go.
Though my fruition is feeble, I have no regrets.

Taking the Jetsun Marpa as an example:
I'll go to the border of the whispered lineage.
Eliminating conventional terms, I'll go.
Taking the path of key instructions, I'll go.
Though my taking dharma to the path is feeble, I have no regrets.

Taking my guru Milarepa as an example:

I'll go to the border of perseverance.
Eliminating laziness, I'll go.
Taking the path of diligence, I'll go.
Though my diligence is feeble, I have no regrets.

Taking myself, Rechungpa, as an example:
I'll go to the border of having good fortune.
Eliminating wrong views, I'll go.
Taking the path of devotion, I'll go.
Though my supplication is feeble, I have no regrets.

Thus he sang. Milarepa said, "Your manner of going is excellent. Now, I tell you, if a child stays by his mother's side, he grows up well. If an egg is warmed by the hen's heat, it will easily come to hatch. If meditators stay with their gurus, then they will not deviate. Although you are leaving without heeding what I say, I will never forsake my love for you, and you should continually supplicate me."

Then Rechungpa wept with tears and said, "I always see the Jetsun as the Buddha in person, and previously, I have never put my hopes in anyone but the Jetsun. Still now, until attaining buddhahood myself, I place my hopes in no one but the Jetsun. After this life, in the bardo, too, please be my refuge and guide." Then he offered this melody:

Guru, with the Buddha's mind of great compassion,
Please be a guide for me, Rechungpa.
I wish to go to the pass of view,
But eternalism and nihilism lurk in many places,
The agitating bandits of bias are many,
And the pass of perceiver and perceived is too long.
Thus, until I've gone to the pass of genuine perfection,
Be your son's guide, O Precious One!
Liberate all my fears, O Nirmanakaya!

I wish to go to the pass of meditation,
But agitation and dullness lurk in many places,
Reference points are treacherous and tight,

And the leaves of concepts agitate [the mind].¹⁷⁷

Thus, until reaching the field that is unborn and free of elaborations, Be your son's guide, O Precious One!

Liberate all my fears, O Nirmanakaya!

I wish to reach the treacherous path of conduct,

But [cannot] due to attachment that has accompanied me for too long, The tight, treacherous places of hypocrisy,

And the agitation of the bandits of improper conduct.

Until I reach the path of spontaneity without attachment,

Be your son's guide, O Precious One!

Liberate all my fears, O Nirmanakaya!

I wish to build the fortress of samaya

But I have studied very little,

The neighbors of the antidote are of low class,

And the gate of duplicity is very great.¹⁷⁸

Thus, until I am surrounded by the trench of purity, unborn, Be your son's guide, O Precious One!

Liberate all my fears, O Nirmanakaya!

I wish to have fruition in its entirety,

But the traces of samsara and nirvana go far.

The path of nirvana is treacherous and tight,

And the bandits of hope and fear bring agitation.

Thus until I reach the household of the four perfect kayas,

Be your son's guide, O Precious One!

Liberate all my fears, O Nirmanakaya!

Rechungpa wishes to roam the lands,

But this illusory body's desire for comfort is great.

There is little basis for faith in Tibet,

And the bandits of arrogance bring agitation.

Thus, until the son comes into the father's presence,

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Be your son's guide, O Precious One!  
Liberate all my fears, O Nirmanakaya!

Thus he sang. The Jetsun said, "I will see you off and pray for your auspicious journey." Then he sang this song of realization:

If you ask what my lineage is, My lineage is not bad, it's an excellent one.  
It is the lineage of great Vajradhara.  
May this excellent lineage have auspiciousness.  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.

If you ask who are my gurus,  
My gurus aren't bad, they are excellent.  
My Gurus are Marpa and Ngok, these two.  
May these excellent gurus have auspiciousness.  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.

If you ask what is my genuine dharma,  
My genuine dharma's not bad, it's excellent.  
Mahamudra is my genuine dharma.  
May the genuine dharma have auspiciousness.  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.

If you ask what my yidam is,  
It's not a bad yidam, it is excellent.  
Vajrayogini is my yidam.  
May this excellent yidam have auspiciousness.  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.

If you ask who my dharmapalas are,  
They aren't bad dharmapalas, they're excellent.  
My protectors are Mahakala and Mahakali.  
May these excellent protectors have auspiciousness.  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.

With the view, conduct, and meditation, these three,

May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.  
With the ground, path, and fruition, these three,  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.  
With the nadis, pranas, and bindus, these three,  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.  
With bliss, clarity, and nonthought, these three,  
May my son, Rechungpa, have auspiciousness.

The Buddha is true, and the dharma is true, Likewise the sangha, too, is true.  
Thus, may auspiciousness be stable and never waver.

If you ask who I am,  
I am the yogi Milarepa.  
May Milarepa's auspiciousness fall upon his son!  
May the son's auspiciousness exceed that of his father!

Thus he sang. Then Milarepa gave further advice, "When you arrive in Ü, a bitch will grab you by the leg. When that happens, do not forget the guru or your practice." Then as the Jetsun sat there, Rechungpa prostrated to him and circumambulated.

Then the Jetsun thought, "He will turn to look back at me, so I will stay here until he does. Otherwise, Rechungpa will be sad." Thus, Milarepa stood there for some time, but Rechungpa did not turn back to look. Then the Jetsun thought, "He goes without looking back at all. Have wrong thoughts about his guru and dharma brothers arisen for him? He is someone who can follow the dharma and the lineage, and keep it secret." Then Milarepa bound his prana once, and went ahead of Rechungpa. In front of a rock shaped like a majestically poised lion, there, he emanated the forms of seven repas. Then, to test Rechungpa, together they sang this song of realization in single voice:

You repa, on the path, listen here,  
Who are you, and who is your guru?  
Who are your grandparents, and who are your ancestors?  
Who is your lineage, and what are your key instructions?  
What is your meditation, and what is your monastery?  
What's the name of this mountain, and what is this rock?

Which direction is it that you are bound?

Who is it that told you to go?

And who is it that is going now?

What manner is it that you go?

Then Rechungpa thought, “There is no other repa who would say such things before me here; these are emanations of the Jetsun.” Offering prostrations, he sang this song of realization on his manner of going:

Father, great Jetsun, please listen to me, Since you ask who I am,

I am Rechungpa of Gungtang.

My guru is Milarepa.

My grandparents are Marpa and Ngok.

My ancestors are Tilopa and Naropa.

My key instructions are those of the dakinis’ whispered lineage.

My lineage comes from great Vajradhara.

My meditation is of Lachi Snowy Range.

This mountain here is called Pee-Ling Surkha.

This rock here is a majestically poised lion.

I go in the direction of Ü.

The one who said to go is the Jetsun Guru.

This is how I go; please give some dharma for going.

When Rechungpa had sung this, all the emanations dissolved back into Milarepa’s actual form. “Since you did not look back at me at all as you went, I came here to test you. There is no fault with your samaya. The samaya between you and me is pure, and since we are free of meeting and parting, now, go on to Ü.”

Delighted at this, Rechungpa touched the crown of his head to the Jetsun’s feet, made many aspirations, and journeyed on to Ü.

Then the Jetsun went back to the Belly Cave and the same students from before came bringing many things to offer their respect and service. When they realized that Rechungpa was not there, they took the things they had brought to offer him and buried them in a brass vessel<sup>179</sup> within the cave.

They came to the Jetsun who was sitting in the open area around the cave. The students said, “Jetsun, previously you did not get up very early. Why have you gotten up so early today?”

The Jetsun replied, “I accompanied Rechungpa for a short while to see him off

on his journey to Ü. Upon my return, I felt very sad, and so I have just been sitting here.”

The students said, “Did the Jetsun not try to dissuade Rechungpa from going to Ü?”

“I did. I tried to dissuade him like this,” then he sang this song of realization:

My treasured son, Rechungpa, has gone to Ü

If what he wants does not befall him,

He does not listen to what others say.

“I must see the two faces of the Jowo,” he said.

“I must see Loro and Nyal,” he said.

“I must see glorious Samye,” he said.

“I must see the dharma center of Lhasa,” he said.

Then this is what I said to him:

“When relying upon the root guru,

What good is the Jowo Shakyamuni?

When roaming in the temple of rugged mountains,

What good are the seats of Marpa and Ngok?

When listening to the whispered lineage key instructions,

What good are the places of Loro and Nyal?

When looking at the show of your own mind,

What good are the sights of glorious Samye?

When cutting doubts from within,

What good is the dharma center of Lhasa?”

This is what I said to him.

Rechungpa, whom I raised with love,

Today has gone away to sun-like Ü.

When you students come, it’s merely a gathering.\*4

Thus he sang. Then the students said, “At this time when the guru’s body has become old, it is important [for his students] to stay nearby. Even though you tried to dissuade him, he did not listen. It was heedless of him to go.”

The Jetsun replied, “Rechungpa does not have any samaya related to shame or

heedlessness.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Though parents raise their treasured children,  
Only a few in a hundred will help their old parents.  
Of the disciples that do not have such samaya, too,  
Only a few in a hundred will help their aged master.  
The father’s been left behind just like an old dog,  
And the son, like a white lion, has gone to Ü.  
The father, like a fox, has been left behind,  
While the son, a striped tiger, has gone to Ü.  
The father’s been left just like an old rooster,  
While the son, like a vulture, has gone to Ü.  
The father’s been left just like an old ass,  
While the son, a Dochen stallion,<sup>\*5</sup> has gone to Ü.  
The father’s been left just like an old cow,  
While the son, a wild yak, has gone to Ü.  
With his body finer than a god’s, he has gone to Ü.  
With words softer than silk, he has gone to Ü.  
With speech clearer than a bell, he has gone to Ü.  
With mind brighter than brocade, he has gone to Ü.  
Smelling sweeter than sandalwood, he has gone to Ü.

Thus he sang. The students said, “You have so much love for him, so surely you arranged a companion to go away with him. Are you not wearied from going such a long distance?”

“I sent him off in this way,” then he sang this song of realization:

When he left, he was accompanied by an excellent companion.  
Other companions come and go,  
But Rechungpa’s companions are free of coming and going.  
That supreme friend is self-arisen wisdom.  
Accompanied by him, my son Rechungpa has gone.

When he left, he was riding an excellent horse.  
Other horses lose their stride,  
But Rechungpa’s horse will never lose its stride.



It is the stallion of prana and mind.  
Riding this, my son Rechungpa has gone.

When he left, he was wearing very warm clothes.  
With other clothes, one gets hot or cold,  
But Rechungpa's clothes don't let him get hot or cold.  
That cloth is chandali's blazing fire.  
Wearing this, my son Rechungpa has gone.

When he left, he had fine food to eat.  
Other foods may be delicious and sweet,  
But Rechungpa's food isn't delicious or sweet.  
Samadhi has the supreme, excellent taste.  
With this food, my son Rechungpa has gone.

When he left, he carried excellent wealth.  
Other wealth may be stolen by foes,  
But Rechungpa's wealth can't be stolen by foes.  
The wish-fulfilling jewel of the whispered lineage,  
Accompanied by this, my son Rechungpa has gone to Ü.

Thus he sang. Milarepa was a little sad, and he sat down. Then the students said, "Rechungpa seems to be indifferent to you. The Jetsun should just put him out of his mind. You still have others with you like Repa Shiwa Ö and Seben Repa. They can attend you here at the Belly Cave."

The Jetsun replied, "Yes, there are many other repas but few are like Rechungpa. Though there are many students, few truly have faith." Then he sang this song of realization:

Nyenchung Repa\*<sup>6</sup> of Gungtang, Ngendzong Dewakyong of Chenlung,  
Seben Tashi Bar of Dotra,  
Drigom Lingkhawa of Takmo,  
These are my four heart-like sons.  
But Rechungpa was with me since he was small,  
My friend since childhood is a thorn in my mind.

Now Rechungpa has gone; I think of him and I am sad.<sup>180</sup>

The view that is imputed with conventional terms,  
Though it's called the "view," it's just lip service.  
Those who abandon the distraction of perceiver and perceived  
And realize it one-pointedly are very few.

The meditation that is unborn within the mind,  
Though it's called "meditation," it is only shamatha.  
Those who join shamatha and vipashyana  
And penetrate this vital point are very few.

The conduct done with sporadic mind,  
It's called "conduct," but it's just busyness.  
Those who overpower the eight worldly concerns  
And master the dharma are very few.

The samaya that's contrived with duplicity,  
Though it's called "samaya," it's merely deceit.  
Those who take the commitment without violating it  
And place their own minds as witnesses are very few.

The fruition that comes from desire and longing,  
Though it's called "fruition," it's just deception.  
Those who are conclusive about dharmata  
And take hold of the path are very few.

The profound key instructions that are written on paper,  
Though they seem profound, they're just sketches and notes.  
People have little perseverance,  
And those who have a dharma lineage are very few.

The master who is taken and bound by this life,  
Though called a "master" is just very busy.  
People have very little devotion,  
And those who follow a qualified guru are few.

And those who follow a qualified guru are few.

Devotion that's expressed with eyes half-closed,  
Though it's called "devotion," it's merely fleeting.  
Those who completely turn their back on bad karma<sup>181</sup>  
And have the three types of disregard are very few.\*<sup>7</sup>

The small beautiful monasteries near the towns,  
Though they're called "monasteries," are part of the town.  
People who are without many distractions And roam in the mountains are  
very few.

The young Kadampa monks with thick heads,<sup>182</sup>  
Though they're called "young monks," they're just pretending.  
People who have great determination  
And keep true monastic discipline are very few.

The students of Nyanang who are so charming,  
Though they're called "benefactors," they're deceived by desire.  
The women are very timid,  
And those who give service and respect are very few.

In general, laypeople say they have faith,  
But the faith of you students is in your private parts.  
This yogi's faith is in his heart.  
When a rock grows old, it's encrusted with dirt.  
When clean water gets old, it's full of ripples.  
When trees get old, their dry leaves fall down.  
When mountain retreats get old, the wood and water get used up.  
When yogis get old, their realization is obscured.  
When students get old, their faith disappears.  
Students that are like peacocks look after their feathers.  
Students that are like parrots make useless chatter.  
Students that are like old cows look after their young.

It you students want to go, then the time has come.  
Not only is it time, but the time has passed.  
Buried in a brass vessel in the cave below,  
The tsampa and butter are nibbled by mice.  
The butter has spilled over and is rolling around.  
The beer has been turned over by a fox.  
The meat is being eaten by the crows.  
Go on ahead, quickly now!  
You students go on with happy hearts,  
And aspire to meet again with me soon.

Thus he sang. The group of students, all wide-eyed, looked at each other. They nudged each other with their elbows and went on their way feeling ashamed.

Because of what the Jetsun had said to them, they all had deep faith and regret. They offered their leftovers to the Jetsun and said to him, "Please sing us a song of realization so that the notion of impermanence may take birth in our mind-streams." The Jetsun, without accepting their offerings, sang this song of realization:

Listen here, you miserly students:  
To accumulate merit for the sake of renown,  
Going for refuge to protect from the fears of this life,  
Giving things in hopes of returns,  
Making offerings for your own self-interests:  
These four things won't last in the future.

To hold ganachakras for the sake of nice food,  
Being expert in dharma to make a name for yourself,  
Distracting your mind with mundane songs and chatter,  
Bestowing abhishekas to show your own greatness:  
These four will not let the blessings enter.

Teaching the dharma without the backing of scripture,  
Having pride while relishing prostrations and respect,  
Deception by accepting just anyone without examination,  
Teaching in order to get wealth and riches:

teaching in order to get wealth and riches.  
These four won't accomplish the benefit of beings.

Not staying alone and preferring distractions,  
Unable to bear hardship and delighting in pleasantries,  
Just wanting to chat when put to meditation,  
Having great skill in engaging worldly affairs:  
With these four you will not attain liberation.

This melody of these four sets of four,  
Students, commit to practicing these.

Thus he sang. Drigom Repa interceded, and when Milarepa accepted his respect and service, he requested Milarepa to teach the dharma further. Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization:

The sages above who have long life,  
Since they don't know the essence of all that arises,  
Take spontaneously arisen awareness as a foe  
And love to be absorbed in thoughtless meditation.

The lonely pretas that dwell below,  
Not knowing how to mix their minds,\*8  
Have jealousy and avarice toward other beings.  
By the power of bad karma, they endure hunger and thirst.

In this world, the middle, poor humans groan in misery.  
Not knowing that a treasure lies beneath the earth,  
They cheat and steal from neighbors and friends.  
With such lies and deceit, they make more misery for themselves.

The students of Nyanang who are like monkeys  
Don't wish to gain merit by way of the Jetsun  
But gain merit by giving to handsome repas.  
But offering to these repas just made you embarrassed.  
Now, don't give to deceiving demonesses,  
But gather merit by offering to goddesses

but gather merit by offering to goddesses.

Thus he sang. They all gave rise to great faith, making many prostrations and shedding tears. They said to Milarepa, “Jetsun, please remain in this place. We will offer our respect and service in accord with the dharma.”

The Jetsun replied, “I will not stay here for long; I will go. May you students be without obstacles to your health. I make this auspicious aspiration that we meet again in conditions conducive to dharma.” Then he sang this song of realization:

One, the blue sky of the morning before dawn;

Two, the sun and moon that circle there;

For only a brief time do they make a connection.

May you, the blue sky, remain here happily.

I, the sun and moon, will roam around the four continents.

May you, the blue sky, be free from clouds.<sup>183</sup>

I, the sun and moon, won't be seized by planets.

Again and again, make aspirations that we may meet.

Make aspirations of auspiciousness in accord with the dharma.

One, the lofty and spacious rock on high;

Two, the vulture, king of birds, that circles it;

For only a brief time do they make a connection.

You, the high rock, may you remain here happily.

I, the vulture, will soar through the heights.

May you, the high rock, not be destroyed by lightning.

And I, the vulture, won't be caught in any traps.

Again and again, make aspirations that we may meet.

Make aspirations of auspiciousness in accord with the dharma.

One, the long Brahmaputra that flows down below;

Two, the golden spotted fish that swims there within;

For only a brief time do they make a connection.

You, the Brahmaputra, may you remain here happily.

I, the fish, will swim to the River Ganges.

May you, the Brahmaputra, not be drawn into canals.

I, the fish, won't get caught in any nets.  
Again and again, make aspirations that we may meet.  
Make aspirations of auspiciousness in accord with the dharma.

One, lovely flowers within the garden;  
Two, a striped bee that circles around;  
For only a brief time do they make a connection.  
You, the flowers, may you remain here happily.  
While I, the bee, will circle the flowers of the Ganges.  
May you, the flowers, not be plucked and taken.  
I, the bee, won't be blown by the wind.  
Again and again, make aspirations that we may meet.  
Make aspirations of auspiciousness in accord with the dharma.

One, faithful students of Nyanang gathered together; Two, the yogi Milarepa  
whom they circle around;  
For only a brief time do they make a connection.  
You, the students, may you remain here happily.  
While I, the yogi, go to the rugged mountains.  
May you students not pass away  
While this yogi's realization and experience flourishes.  
Again and again, make aspirations that we may meet.  
Make aspirations of auspiciousness in accord with the dharma.

Thus he sang. Some of the students were very pleased and became his disciples.  
The others gave rise to boundless faith and went their own way.

When Rechungpa arrived in Ü, after going to a Kadampa monastery in Jayul, he  
was appointed a khenpo at Mindroling Monastery. There he met a woman, but  
through the compassion of the Jetsun, he had shame and returned to his guru's  
side. This story is told in detail in Rechungpa's biography.

This is the cycle of Rechungpa's departure for Central Tibet.

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\*<sup>1</sup> Tradrug Temple in the Yarlung Valley is said to have been built by King Songtsen Gampo, renowned as

the first dharma king of Tibet. Yoru is one of two early divisions of Ü (Central Tibet) where the temple is located.

\*<sup>2</sup> The seat of Marpa and Lama Ngoktön Chödor (T: *rngog ston chos rdor*). Milarepa met Lama Ngok, who was a senior student of Marpa, while studying with his root guru (see *The Life of Milarepa*).

\*<sup>3</sup> Tibetan-style books; they are loose leaf and usually held together with a cloth wrapping.

\*<sup>4</sup> Milarepa is pointing out that without Rechungpa, when these students come together, it is merely an ordinary gathering of people. (TN) \*<sup>5</sup> A breed of horse from Amdo (T: *'do chen pho rta*).

\*<sup>6</sup> This is another name for Rechungpa, as his family name was Nyen (T: *gnyan*).

\*<sup>7</sup> Disregard of food, clothing, and fame (T: *lto gos gtam gsum*). (DPR) \*<sup>8</sup> This seems to be a reference to the three types of mixing; see glossary. (DPR)



# 53

## Tongla

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Nyanang Belly Cave, early one morning just before dawn, the Lion-Faced Dakini came to the Jetsun in person. She said to him, “Milarepa, Dampa Sangye from India has come to Tongla; will you not go to see him?”

The Jetsun thought to himself, “I have no unsettling doubts that need to be resolved, but since he is a great siddha, there would be nothing wrong with going to meet him.” Then he bound his prana in a single breath, and off he went to Tongla in Nyanang.

At the pass, Milarepa ran into several merchants who were on their way down. He asked them, “Has Dampa Sangye of India come here?”

“We do not know who Dampa Sangye is,” they replied. “However, there is an old acharya\*<sup>1</sup> with a dark complexion who is sleeping at the inn.”

“These people do not know who he is,” Milarepa thought. He went on to see for himself. He saw that Dampa Sangye, too, had been exhorted by the dakinis to meet the Jetsun, and he had gone to sleep at a charity hostel<sup>184</sup> in Tongla. Milarepa thought, “It is said he has the genuine higher perceptions. I will test him.” So, emanating himself as a bunch of flowers, he waited by the side of the road. As Dampa Sangye walked past, Milarepa thought, “He did not see me, and has just walked past. It seems he does not have the unobstructed higher perceptions after all.”

Dampa Sangye then turned around and kicked the bunch of flowers. “Hey! Milarepa, you can’t stay there emanating your body as a bunch of flowers. Get up! You have been all along taking the dakinis’ life-force making them into songs. To punish you for putting such things to melody, the flesh-eating dakinis have taken your life-force breath and your heart and organs dripping with blood. Last night, we held a ganachakra feast where we ate them. So, you will not live beyond this evening. Do you have confidence in facing death joyfully?” The Jetsun suddenly resumed his usual form and sang this song of realization on the

six kinds of confidence in facing death joyfully:

The lion of the great freedom from extremes  
Bares his fangs without despair.  
He lies in the snow without fear or arrogance.  
That is what this yogi's confidence in view is like.  
With this view, I have delight in death.  
When I die, I will travel liberation's path.

The stag that is free of any movement,  
His many antlers grow in single taste.  
He sleeps in the meadow of great bliss and luminosity.  
That is what this yogi's confidence in meditation is like.  
With this meditation, I have delight in death.  
When I die, I will travel liberation's path.

The fish that is free of the ten nonvirtuous deeds, With golden spots, never  
separate from the ten virtues, Swims in the great river of experience's  
continual flow.  
That is what this yogi's confidence in conduct is like.  
With this conduct, I have delight in death.  
When I die, I will travel liberation's path.

The tigress whose witness is her own mind,  
With the bright stripes of spontaneously benefiting others, Roams in the  
forest without being too tight or too loose.  
That is what this yogi's confidence in samaya is like.  
With this samaya, I have delight in death.  
When I die, I will travel liberation's path.

On the paper of appearances, white and red,  
Awareness writes the letters of the mind.  
I realize the view that is free of duality.  
That is what this yogi's confidence in the dharma is like.  
With this dharma, I have delight in death.

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When I die, I will travel liberation's path.

The great garuda that flashes with a bright glow  
Stretches his wings of means  
and wisdom

And flies within the unconditioned sky.

That is what this yogi's confidence in fruition is like.

With this fruition, I have delight in death.

When I die, I will travel liberation's path.

Thus he sang. Then Dampa Sangye said, "You don't have any reason at all to be like that. Just giving outer examples does not do any good. If you are a genuine yogi, you must have resolve about this very present moment of awareness." Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization on the six happy ways of being resolved:

In solitary places where dakinis naturally gather I contemplate dharma alone,  
as I please.

I prostrate to the daka that cuts ego by the root.

Deathlessness soars in the birthless state of mind.

The signs of birth and death are freed in their own place.

When the view is resolved, my mind is blissful.

If you want such happiness, Dampa, you should do it too!

In the state of nonmeditation, meditation soars with nondistracted.

Signs of meditation and postmeditation are freed in their own place.

When meditation is resolved, the mind is blissful.

If you want such happiness, Dampa, you should do it too!

In the state of effortless conduct, conduct soars unimpeded.

All signs of hypocrisy are freed in their own place.

When conduct is resolved, the mind is blissful.

If you want such happiness, Dampa, you should do it too!

In the state of abhishekas not bestowed soars nonattainment.

The signs of the deity's form are freed in their own place.

When abhishekas are resolved, the mind is blissful.

If you want such happiness, Dampa, you should do it too!

In the state without keeping samaya soars the immaculate.  
Signs of vows to keep are freed in their own place.  
When samaya's resolved, the mind is blissful.  
If you want such happiness, Dampa, you should do it too!

Without hope of fruition, fearlessness soars.  
Signs of hope and fear are freed in their own place.  
When fruition is resolved, the mind is blissful.  
If you want such happiness, Dampa, you should do it too!

Thus he sang. Then Dampa Sangye said, "I have already experienced all that you have just said. Of the dharma practitioners of Tibet, you don't need any correcting! Even in India, it is rare to find a practitioner such as you. I do not need you, and you do not need me."

Saying this happily, he turned and was about to leave when the Jetsun took hold of his clothes and said, "Dampa Sangye, it is said that you have a practice called 'The Dharma of Pacifying Suffering'\*<sup>2</sup> that one practices by turning inward, in which one spontaneously realizes the Buddha's intention. Please sing a song of realization about this practice."

Dampa Sangye replied, "Has anyone ever heard of me singing a song before? I will not sing a song now. Now, let me go."

But when the Jetsun insistently made his request, Dampa Sangye sang this song of realization:

As for this Dharma of Pacifying Suffering,  
When taming malevolent male and female demons  
It makes *trulkhor* and ascetic practice strong.  
When the body is afflicted by illness,  
Awareness and space mix into one.

When subtle concepts start to arise, The bubble of the afflictions is burst.  
When lying in bed, hidden, all alone,  
Awareness settles nakedly.  
When staying in the midst of many people,  
Look at the essence of whatever arises.

When dullness sets in, use PHAT to clear it away.  
When thoughts proliferate, cut them at their root.  
When agitated, rest within space.  
When mind follows after an object,  
Look right at the reality of suchness.

With this Dharma of Pacifying Suffering,  
When bad omens arise, it turns them into auspicious fortune, So thoughts,  
you may do whatever you like.  
When afflicted with illness, practice is enhanced, So elements of the body,  
you may do whatever you like.  
When death comes, it is taken to the path,  
So, Lord of Death, you may do whatever you like.

As for this Dharma of Pacifying Suffering,  
It's the intention of the Victorious Ones of the three times.  
It's the secret word of Vajradhara.  
It's the key instruction of the four ranks of dakinis.  
It's the upadesha of the whispered lineage's vital points.  
It's the key to the upadeshas' skillful means.  
It's the Dharma of Pacifying Suffering!

The Jetsun was pleased as he sat there loosely clothed, completely exposed. Dampa Sangye said, "On your body, there's one thing you should keep hidden, but you have it there exposed, like the conduct of a madman. You shouldn't act in this way." Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization on the way of a crazy man:

I prostrate to the guru lord.  
I take refuge in the one who is so kind.  
Please clear obstructions and adverse conditions.  
Lead me down the path in harmony with dharma.

About this yogi Milarepa here, Others ask, "Is he really crazy?"  
I also wonder if I am crazy.  
To tell of the crazy nature of such craziness:

TO TELL OF THE CRAZY NATURE OF SUCH CRAZINESS.

The father, son, and lineage are crazy.  
At the top of the lineage, Vajradhara is crazy.  
The forefather Tilopa Sherap Sangpo is crazy.  
The ancestor Naropa, the great pandit, is crazy.  
My old father, Marpa Lotsawa, is crazy.  
And I, Milarepa, too am crazy.

This lineage of the great Vajradhara  
Was driven crazy by the demon of the spontaneous four kayas.  
The forefather Tilopa Sherap Sangpo  
Was driven crazy by the demon of Mahamudra.  
The ancestor Naropa, the great pandit,  
Was driven crazy by the demon of yogic practice.  
My old father, Marpa Lotsawa,  
Was driven crazy by the demon of the four sections of tantra.  
And I, Milarepa, too am crazy:  
I'm driven crazy by the demon of prana and mind.  
I'm driven crazy by the view that is free from bias.  
I'm driven crazy by the self-luminous meditation that's reference-free.  
I'm driven crazy by the self-liberated conduct free of fixation.  
I'm driven crazy by the fruition free of hope and fear.  
I'm driven crazy by samaya that's free of deceit.

Not only am I crazy, but demons harm me:  
As male demons, the guru's instructions harm me.  
As female demons, the dakinis' blessings harm me.  
The demon of blissful mind has come to stay for good.  
The ghost-lady of realization always spies upon me.

There are not only demons, but there is also illness: Mahamudra gives me  
pain in my back.  
At my front, I'm pained by the Great Perfection.  
I'm seized by the chronic illness of the vase breath

I'm seized by the chronic illness of the vast breath.

Above, I'm afflicted with the fever of wisdom.

Below, I'm afflicted by the cold of deep samadhi.

In the middle, the heat and cold of bliss-emptiness quarrel.

The key instructions are vomited from my mouth like blood, And the bliss of dharmata fills up my lungs.

Not only is there sickness, but I'm also dying: In the expanse of view, bias has died.

In the expanse of meditation, agitation and dullness have died.

In the expanse of conduct, hypocrisy has died.

In the expanse of fruition, hope and fear have died.

In the expanse of samaya, deceit has died.

In the state of the three kayas, the yogi has died.

On the morning after the death of this yogi,

Not with a shroud of woolen cloth,

But with outer appearances, my corpse will be wrapped.

Not with ordinary twisted twine,

But with the rope of the avadhuti will my corpse be bound.

It will not be carried by some snot-nosed nephew, But the child of awareness will take it up

And carry the dead corpse of this yogi away.

Not on the yellow earthen path

But on the path of great enlightenment will it be carried, And the four ranks of dakinis will be its guide.

The Kagyu gurus will lead the procession,

Not to mountains covered in rust or grass,

But up the mountain of glorious Samantabhadra.

Not the foxes and wolves of the charnel grounds, But foxes and wolves of means and wisdom will enjoy it there!

Then what remains will be buried in the tomb of Vajradhara.

Thus he sang. Dampa Sangye was very pleased by what Milarepa sang, and said,

“Yogi, your way of being crazy is truly excellent.”

The Jetsun said, “Wouldn’t it be great if we arranged and performed a ganachakra offering with us yogis gathered here?”

Dampa Sangye replied, “Well then, since you are the Tibetan here, you should host the ganachakra for this Indian.”

With that, the Jetsun took the top part of his skull, along with the brains, off of his head, and with his two knees and his neck, he built a three-legged hearth. Then sending out the blazing fire of chandali from his navel, he lit the fire, and from his brains, the five-colored lights radiated forth.

Dampa Sangye emanated seven different buddha forms standing on seven tall stalks of grass. Then the Jetsun, too, as an object for making the offering, emanated the eight guardian goddesses of the Chakrasamvara mandala. Once they were in place, he emanated seven forms of himself upon the seven stalks of grass, and offered a ganachakra with the six satisfactions.\*3

The Jetsun’s stalks of grass bent slightly and he asked Dampa Sangye, “There is no difference between the vase breath of us two practitioners. Why is it that my blades of grass are bent like this?”

Dampa Sangye replied, “There is no difference between the qualities of our realization and what we have abandoned. The only difference is that you were born in Tibet. Our view and conduct is exactly the same, and in the future, the disciples of the lineage, too, will come to have the same view and conduct.”

Then, through their magical powers, each of them went back to their individual abodes.

This is the cycle of Tongla.

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\*1 *Acharya* (T: *a tsa ra*) means master, or teacher, in Sanskrit. Here, instead of using the usual Tibetan translation for the term (*slob dpon*, pronounced “loppön”), the text uses a transliteration, indicating that the speaker thinks of the individual as a yogi or teacher from India.

\*2 “The practice in which one does not concern oneself with the causes of suffering, but rather focuses directly on the suffering itself. To do the practice, analyze the suffering to see if it truly exists or not. When you have determined its true nature, look straight at its essence, and let go and relax. (KTGR)” (*Stories and Songs*: 113).

\*3 “The six satisfactions (*tshim pa drug*) are: (1) the offering of samadhi satisfies the deities of the mandala; (2) amṛita satisfies inner original wisdom; (3) the bliss of blazing and dripping satisfies the deities in one’s body; (4) the feast of food and drink satisfies the yogis and yoginis; (5) offerings of song and dance satisfy the dakinis; and (6) spirits to whom we owe karmic debts are satisfied by the gift of the residual tormas. (Tulku Pema Wangyal Rinpoche and Trulzhig Rinpoche. Many thanks to Gene Smith for his help in



obtaining this description.)” (*Stories and Songs*: 116).

## The Hook of Compassion for the Dead, and Establishing His Sister Peta in Enlightenment

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Nyanang Belly Cave, in a place nearby called Lashing there was a large community of Bön practitioners. Among them was a rich Bönpo who had faith in the Buddhist dharma. Without the other Bönpos knowing, he had given respect and service to the Jetsun, received the abhishekas and key instructions, and practiced them.

The man had been stricken by a fatal illness and all of his relatives had gathered. In his last testament, he said to them, “When I die, offer all of my wealth and belongings to the master Jetsun and his disciples, and ask them to perform the funeral rites. In this life, you all have followed Bön, but in the next life you should follow the Buddhist dharma that is so beneficial.”

But the people gathered there did not find this to be worthwhile for them to listen to. Thus, out of fear they would not invite the Jetsun and his disciples, the dying man said to a girl who was there, “Go get me a knife.”

“To do what with?” she asked.

“Since no one will listen at all to my requests, I will kill myself. You will probably be condemned because you didn’t listen.”

They all replied, “Very well, we will do as you say.”

“Do not taint my funeral rites for the next life by doing our Bön rituals. Invite the Jetsun here,” and with that, he died.

Then, according to that Bönpo’s last testament, they invited the master Jetsun and several of his disciples to come, and they stayed in the upper level of the house. On the lower level, the Bönpos performed their rituals.

During the rites, beside the Bönpos’ mandala there stood the Bönpo who had just died, wearing a blue tunic and drinking beer. Peta, Milarepa’s sister, saw this, and the Bönpos said to her, “Milarepa and his gang are always disputing with us, but our practice has actually brought a man back from the dead. His has done no

such thing.” They sat there mocking Milarepa, while Peta went to tell the Jetsun what had happened.

“This is not the man back from the dead. This is something else they conjured up to make others believe in their practice. Shiwa Ö, you go down to them, take the apparition by his ring finger, and ask him what was the secret name that the Jetsun Milarepa gave him at the Nyanang Belly Cave when he was given the abhisheka.”

Shiwa Ö went down as the Jetsun had told him. Unable to bear the brilliance of the Jetsun’s compassion, just as Shiwa Ö approached, the apparition said, “I will go. I am the Bönpos’ thug, a demonic apparition named Ramizin. The Bönpos’ practice is useless, so I have come to act as their bully.” Then Shiwa Ö chased the apparition who wore the blue tunic down between the houses. On the other side of the mountain he turned into a wolf, it is said.<sup>185</sup>

Then everyone believed that it was not the man back from the dead. The Jetsun said, “Your dharma shows the path for Yama’s messenger.\*1 But I show the way for those who have died.”

The relatives of the Bönpo who had died said, “Does the Jetsun see the one who has died? If you can’t see him, how can you show him the path?”

“I see him. Because of the negative karma that he had previously committed, and by lacking just a slight bit of virtue, he has been born as a small, long-bodied bug in the upper valley, under a mound of yellow dried dung. I will now take him to the place of liberation.”

“Then, let us be witness to this so that we may believe you; show us how you take a bug to liberation.”

“Very well, let us proceed,” the Jetsun said.

Then all of the people who were gathered there together went to the mound of dried yellowish dung. First, Milarepa called out the man’s secret name, “I am your guru Milarepa! Come here!” he said. Then out from under the dung came the bug who then coiled up in the Jetsun’s lap and lay there. The Jetsun taught some dharma and then performed transference, ejecting\*2 the bug’s consciousness.

The dead body of the bug gave off subtle rays of light that dissolved into the Jetsun’s heart center. After mingling with the Jetsun’s mind for a while, the consciousness of the man became a brilliant glowing white A syllable. It was ejected from the Jetsun’s heart center into space and went higher and higher in the sky. Then he uttered, “The precious Jetsun has placed me in the bliss of liberation. Thank you!” Seeing this, everyone believed what had happened. They

prostrated, telling the Jetsun how incredibly wondrous this was.

The Jetsun said, “There are many more wondrous things than this.” Then he sang this song of realization:

May I receive the wondrous guru’s blessings.

I supplicate at the wondrous Marpa’s feet.

With your kindness and devotion, please look upon all beings in samsara with compassion.

First, I was able to meet this lord:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

I obtained the key instructions of the whispered lineage: This is the greatest of all wonders.

I abandoned mundane, worldly deeds:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

I stayed in remote mountain retreats:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

Realization and experience arose from within:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

Alone, I developed endurance in hardship:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

I have no interest in the eight worldly concerns:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

I have been able to please my guru:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

The way that this Bönpo gave his last testament: This is the greatest of all wonders.

His relatives did as he asked:

This is the greatest of all wonders.

When dead, he became liberated:  
This is the greatest of all wonders.

Faith was born in this assembly here:  
This is the greatest of all wonders.

Thus he sang. The relatives of the Bönpos said, “The object of his faith was unmistakable, indeed. In order to attain buddhahood at the time of death, one must do just as he has done.”

Then Repa Shiwa Ö said, “We all need to have a guide for the path such as we have here today. But to meet one and to have devotion toward him is very difficult.”

The Jetsun said, “You disciple-sons, to guide others on the path, these are the things you need.” Then he sang this song of realization:

The support of the Kagyu lords’ blessing is excellent; With it, one can attain  
the siddhi of the dakinis’ lineage.

You disciple-sons with unerring dharma lineage:

To purify the results of negative karma,  
You must keep the vows within your mind-stream.

To be the resident lama of benefactors,  
Bodhichitta and compassion must expand.

To be the master of an assembly of many,  
You must have the qualities of realization.

To please the guru who is a siddha,  
You need great perseverance and pure vision.

To partake of the food of the deceased,  
You must have the good qualities of the path of seeing.

To guide the consciousness beyond this life, Signs of the higher perceptions  
and accomplishment must come forth.

To transform perceptions for those who have lost faith, You must be able to

create miraculous emanations.

Today in the mandala of the weekly rites,\*<sup>3</sup>

We must help [the deceased] directly take hold of the path.

Bönpo disciple-sons and benefactors,

Do not have any doubts in your mind.

Thus he sang, and Milarepa's sister Peta said, "Brother, you have performed the weekly rites in this way for the dead here, but you did not do anything for our very own parents."

The Jetsun took his sister's hand and said, "Peta, you do not need to cry. To repay the kindness of both of our parents, I acted in this way." Then he sang this song of realization:

I supplicate the guru lords.

Accept me with your compassion, that I may repay my parents' kindness.

The amulet of my mother's body,

And the king of kindness of my ancestors,

When they left behind their illusory bodies,

They mixed their consciousnesses with my own mind.

They dissolved into the heart of the Victorious One, mind itself.

Through compassion, a pure realm of rainbow light dawned.

Their bodies, appearance-emptiness, dissolved into the deity's form.

To attain the self-arisen deity—how wondrous!

Their speech, sound-emptiness, mixed with ineffable mantra.

To merge their voices with mantra—how wondrous!

Their minds, wandering in the bardo, were summoned through samadhi.

Awareness, clarity-emptiness, was naturally pointed out.

Mind's own place was seized, so they are without confusion.

To be free of movement and change—how wondrous!

Throughout the period I engaged in practice,

The fierce mantra of love and compassion

Purified their obscurations, day and night;

The gateway of birth in samsara's six realms was cut.  
They were placed among the assemblies in the blissful pure realms.  
Their enjoyment of delight and joy expand  
In the pure realm of Sukhavati.  
A retinue of dakas and dakinis surrounds them.  
You don't need to worry, my dear sister Peta.

Thus he sang. Peta said, "This is wonderful! What sort of ritual did you perform for them?" Then he sang this song of realization in reply:

Lord, protector of beings, I supplicate you.  
Grant your blessing that I may repay my parents' kindness.

In the mandala of great bliss free of duality,  
I placed the assembly of deities of self-awareness and clarity.  
In the vase of the upadeshas and lineage transmission, I poured the water of  
the six paramitas.

The obscurations of the five poisons and avarice were purified.

With the amrita of the Kagyu gurus,

I bestowed the four abhishekas upon their body, speech, and mind.

The stages of the paths and bhumis of realization

I showed them to be great bliss, inseparable,

And made the tsa-tsa of the inseparable three kayas.

I performed the weekly rite free of defilement.

For the anniversary of profound ensuing cognition,

I made the offering of the excellent antidote.

I dedicated with Mahamudra

And made the aspiration that is naturally, perfectly pure.

Myself, our parents, and sentient beings,

All of our wishes were accomplished at once.

Remembering the kindness of the guru again and again, I repaid the kindness  
of my parents.

Thus he sang. Hearing this, Peta developed deep certainty. Then Milarepa sang this song of realization, exhorting his sister to practice:

I bow at the feet of Lord Marpa from Lhodrak,  
Grant your blessing that anguished love toward relatives may be pacified.  
Accept me with compassion that my mind-stream may mix with dharma.

Listen now, my sister Peta,  
Since you were young, you've had no perseverance in dharma.  
To think you'll practice when you're old, what good will that do?  
Not relying on the Jetsun guru,  
What good will friendly gurus do?  
Not obtaining the whispered lineage key instructions, What good does mere  
dry rhetoric do?  
If you don't recognize your own mind,  
What good does lots of training do?  
Those who don't seize their own place, which is unborn, Accumulate  
negativity with empty philosophical views.  
Those for whom experience doesn't dawn from within  
Are hypocrites, making lots of show.  
Those who don't watch the show of interdependence  
Have doubts and think highly of themselves.  
Hypocritical ones who have not given rise  
To bodhichitta and compassion have much purifying to do.<sup>186</sup>  
Those who don't ask, "Can I attain buddhahood?"  
Say they are dharma protectors, while secretly bloodthirsty for wealth.  
For those who don't aim to benefit all sentient beings, Their parents' kindness  
becomes a cause for samsara.  
Those who don't practice in accord with the dharma  
May be close ones but then rise up as enemies.  
Those who commit harm toward their friends  
May seem beautiful, but they're of the demon class.  
Those who don't meditate earnestly for a long time,  
Short-term are called "meditator," but they struggle in meditation.  
Those who don't help and have patience wherever they are able, Though they  
act like a good friend, have many regrets.



Having such agony for the sake of your mother  
Clears your negativity and obscurations, dear sister.

Thus he sang. She meditated and gave rise to excellent experience and realization. At this, the Jetsun was pleased and he sang this song of realization to inspire his sister:

Listen again, dear sister Peta,  
If you do not turn away from dharma,  
Suffering will completely be exhausted.  
If you do not say harsh things to others,  
You will be seen just like a god.  
If you do not have ill will toward others,  
Your own merit will flourish.  
If you do not have great attachment to this life,  
The next life will be happy and pleasant.  
When you do not develop vanity and pride,  
You'll attain a pleasing and beautiful body.  
If you can sustain your mind's own nature,  
You will quickly attain buddhahood.  
If you can stay strictly in retreat without speaking, You'll receive the  
blessings of the dakinis.  
If you do not have desire for mundane happiness,  
You'll purify the obscurations of karmic results.  
If you can meditate until your death,  
You'll be a heroic Victorious One equal to the sky.  
If your mind isn't enwrapped by faults,<sup>187</sup>  
You will be received by the dakas and dakinis.  
If your conduct is in accord with dharma,  
The dharmapalas and dakas will protect you.  
If you supplicate the guru lord,  
You will receive blessings and siddhi.  
Understand this and put it into practice.  
May you always enjoy bliss and glory.

Thus he sang. Peta remained in mountain retreats and was able to meditate. Thus, she developed extraordinary experience and realization. She became one of the four daughter-like disciples of the Jetsun Milarepa. At that time, too, the Bönpos developed unwavering faith.

This is the cycle of the hook of compassion for the dead, and establishing Peta in enlightenment.

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\*<sup>1</sup> Milarepa is saying that the Bönpos' practice creates the conditions for death to come.

\*<sup>2</sup> Literally, "ejected to a place," meaning he transferred the bug's consciousness to another location (T: *gnas spo*).

\*<sup>3</sup> During the forty-nine day period following death, special rites and ceremonies for the benefit of the deceased are held on one day of each week.

## Final Advice to the Students of Nyanang

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying in the upper valley of Tsarma in Nyanang, several benefactors were fighting over the dowry of a new bride, and so they came to the Jetsun for mediation. “Have all the people quarreling come to me,” he told them. They came and he gave them lots of dharma advice and sang this song of realization:

You selfish men carrying rocks in your heads,  
 You fight with each other to take for yourself  
 This woman who doesn't fight with you, yet brings you ruin.  
 She wears dark red on her body but just rots from within.  
 With her foul vagina, she yearns for a man.

The root cause of all ruin, indeed, is women,  
 And the land's contagion is evil men.  
 This bride who lives in a bad land and in a bad time If married will be  
 valuable.  
 She's filthy but many men fight over her;  
 This is the conduct of worldly ones' loss of judgment.  
 Young men, don't fight, take stock of yourselves.  
 Elders, don't be deceitful, for you'll bring your own negativity.  
 Steer this town's mob toward the dharma.

Thus he sang, and the quarreling subsided. Then one of the benefactors, a woman with faith known as Cham-Mé, said from among the rows of a feast where vast offerings of respect and service were made, “Precious Jetsun, tell us, how have you gone about benefiting beings? How many disciple-sons do you have? Among those, how many are siddhas?”

The Jetsun replied, “It is truly marvelous that these questions have arisen in

your mind. The dakinis gave me a prophecy that is like this, and I have accomplished beings' benefit in this way." Then he sang this song of realization:

I supplicate the guru and assembly of dakinis.

Grant your blessing that I may spontaneously accomplish the benefit of beings.

The nirmanakaya of the dakinis' prophecy

Is Gampopa from Dakpo who shines upon beings like the sun.

Rechungpa is the nirmanakaya moon.

The tiger of meditators is Jodar Shiwa Ö.\*1

Then there are twenty-five others, like Drigom Repa.

These are the main ones of whom the dakinis spoke.

There are twenty-five siddhas, one hundred with realization, And for one hundred eight, self-arisen experience dawns.

I've one thousand disciples who act in accord with dharma.

One hundred thousand made a dharma connection, But only a few really keep their practice.

These questions you've asked show you have excellent imprints.

Thus he sang. Then the disciple-sons gathered there said, "You have many students who have attained accomplishment!" They were all overwhelmed with joy, and felt very blissful and serene.

They then asked Milarepa to make a dedication for them, and the Jetsun said, "Here, both the receiver of offerings and the benefactors have had pure, virtuous intention, so therefore the dedication is present naturally. However, I will make a dedication to follow the example of the Buddha. You too should follow this example." Then he sang this song of realization:

Gurus, yidams, and assembly of deities,

Please fulfill the good wishes of this dedication.

I have the method of accomplishing buddhahood

For all assembled here, without exception;

Therefore, please act following my example.

Buddhas and bodhisattvas,

And sangha, too, please think of me.

The virtue of sentient beings, such as myself, Who practiced generosity,  
discipline, and so on Within great samsara without any beginning:

I rejoice in all these virtuous deeds.

By this virtue that I practice here—

Genuine generosity, the ornament and wealth of the mind, Which is the  
accumulation of the yogi's merit— May I attain buddhahood

For the sake of my masters, teachers, and parents.

Until that is attained, by my virtue here

While following a Mahayana guru,

May you have a body where you keep the three vows; May all wishes be  
accomplished,

And may you not accumulate negativity with each other.

Also, by the merit of this virtue,

With abundance of life, merit, prosperity,

Retinue, virtuous activity, and so forth,

May the obstacles that cut the lifeline

Of liberation be completely pacified.

Thus he sang, and expressions of approval and well-wishing<sup>188</sup> came from the heavens.

Then all the students of Nyanang, hearing that the Jetsun would go to another mountain retreat, made excellent offerings of service and respect to Milarepa and supplicated him to stay.

The Jetsun said to them, “I have stayed in this place for a very long time now and the benefactors are likely tired of me. I will go to another place to await my death. If I do not die there, then we will meet. In the meantime you should act in this way.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of the qualified lord guru.

Material wealth is like dew on the grass;

Without any attachment, practice generosity.

While having obtained the essence of the freedoms and resources, Protect  
your discipline as you would your own eyes.

Anger is the root of the lower realms;

At the risk of your life, you should practice patience.

With laziness, you won't accomplish benefit for self or other; Have diligence,  
and strive in virtuous action.

With confusion, you won't realize the Mahayana's meaning; One-pointedly  
familiarize with reality.

Buddhahood cannot be found anywhere else;

Therefore, look at the nature of your own mind.

Faith is like the autumn mist;

When it dissipates, you must have perseverance.

Thus he sang. Then the students said, "Whatever the Jetsun may say, we will not let you go off to another land. You must stay!" Thus, because they offered such fervent pleas, the Jetsun said to them, "If I do not die, then I will come back to see you. But if we don't meet, then from time to time, without forgetting these words, practice them." Then he sang this song of realization:

EMA! All worldly beings Care for their bodies like precious turquoise.

But due to adverse conditions, like old trees, they'll eventually fall.

From time to time, set the watchman, and be undistracted.

You amass your wealth as bees do honey,

But adverse conditions, like frost, will come their way.

From time to time, set the watchman, and be undistracted.

For beauty, you rub yourselves like precious silk, But due to adverse  
conditions, like a rainbow, it disappears.

From time to time, set the watchman, and be undistracted.

You spend time with family, like grazing beasts, But conditions, like hunters,  
may come your way.

From time to time, set the watchman, and be undistracted.

You care for your children like an egg,

But conditions, like rocks, may come upon them.

From time to time, set the watchman, and be undistracted.

Your visage may be as beautiful as a flower, But with adverse conditions, like

hail, it goes away.

From time to time, consider impermanence, and be disillusioned.

You spend time with each other well, like mother and child, But with adverse conditions, like friends and foes, you get into conflict.

From time to time, give rise to compassion for sentient beings.

You are happy when the sun warms you,

But suffering will come like a fierce harsh gale.

From time to time, be generous to those who are powerless.

Male and female benefactors gathered here,

If you cannot practice the genuine dharma,

Then if you live long, your wrongdoing will be long!

Putting effort into mundane activity is just hard work!

Thus he sang. The people said, “We will do as you have instructed. But we do not dare let the Jetsun go off to another place!”

Milarepa stayed for a short while at the Belly Cave, and when he finally left, he went to the lower valley and put his footprint in a boulder at the foot of the cave. Milarepa said, “The people of Nyanang should use this as a support for their devotion.” Then Milarepa left without the people being aware of his departure.

This is the cycle of the final advice to the students of Nyanang.

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\*<sup>1</sup> *Jodar* (T: *jo dar*) is a prayer flag with the six syllables of the “Jowo,” Avalokiteshvara (Tucci 1998: 309).

## The Physician of Yangé

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa along with five of his disciples journeyed to Tongla, they encountered five bandits. When the bandits searched their bundle of items, they found nothing other than skull-cups. They asked, “Are any of you the one they call the Jetsun Milarepa?”

“I am Milarepa,” the Jetsun replied.

The bandits all prostrated and said, “Well then, we are very fortunate indeed! Please give each of us some dharma teachings.”

The Jetsun taught the dharma of karma, cause and effect; the good qualities of the higher realms; and the faults of the three lower realms. Then he explained how these are each the results of virtuous and nonvirtuous deeds. “You all should understand what is to be adopted and what is to be rejected.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of the qualified guru.

Up in the celestial realm of Tushita,

As soon as rice is sown, it immediately ripens.

But it’s not because they are masters in farming crops: This is the result of  
previous lives’ merit.

Be generous, all you fortunate ones!

Below in the eighteen realms of hell,

As soon as the weapon strikes, right then the wound is healed.

But it’s not that the wound is excellently tended to: It’s the karmic result of  
killing in previous lives.

Relinquish your killing, all you fortunate ones!

Somewhere in the land of pretas,

As soon as they eat, they’re immediately hungry.



But it's not because they have a huge belly:  
It's the ripening of avarice in previous lives.  
Abandon your avarice, all you fortunate ones!

In the basin of the bathing pool  
Stands a wish-fulfilling cow.  
Whether she's milked or not, it's up to you.

Within the root of the embodiment of all trees  
Lies the supreme medicine that clears the five diseases.  
Whether the medicine is dug out or not, it's up to you.

Although you invite the master guru  
Who has the key, the upadeshas' vital points,  
Whether you open the two gateways is up to you.

Thus he sang. Then the bandits developed supreme faith and four of them offered their commitment never to attack, steal from, or kill others again. One of them followed Milarepa as an attendant and later attained excellent realization.

Then, the Jetsun and his disciples went down to Namar in Dingri. Along the way, they met a shepherd whom Milarepa asked, "In that land there, what is the name of the great benefactor?"

The herder answered, "He is called Lhajé Yangé. He is rich and has great faith."

Milarepa and his disciples went to him and found the physician standing in the midst of a great crowd of people.

The Jetsun said to him, "Benefactor, it is said you are very rich. We have come this morning to beg for today's meal."

The benefactor said, "On the other side of the pass is Milarepa, and on this side is Dampa Sangye. The coming and going of all these yogis never ceases. If I give food to every single one of them, I will be left with nothing. If I meet Milarepa himself, then I will offer my service and respect. But we do not have fortune enough to meet him."

The Jetsun replied, "I am Milarepa, so you may bring us something to eat."

He said, "Well, it is said that the Jetsun Milarepa can use any appearance as an

example to teach the dharma. Please teach some dharma using the bubbles in this irrigation ditch in front of us as an example.” In reply the Jetsun sang this song of realization of the impermanence of water bubbles:

I bow at the feet of the guru, the buddha of the three times.

May all appearances in this village be turned to dharma.

This life’s impermanence is like a water bubble; It’s nothing dependable, the guru taught.

Lazy ones are like thieves in an empty house;  
Don’t you know you’ll return empty-handed?

Youth is like a flower in the spring;  
There’s no knowing when it will fade.

Old age is like a fire in the field;  
Don’t you know it’s right upon your heels?

Birth and death are like the sun’s rising and setting; They happen again and again, said the Muni.

Sickness is like a little bird hit with a stone; Don’t you know your strength will be gone?

Death is like the depletion of a lamp’s oil;  
It’s certain that you will not always remain.

Bad karma is like water falling over a steep cliff; I’ve never seen it go back up.

Evil ones are like a poisonous tree;  
However much you keep to them, that much you lose.

Impaired samaya is like a crop of beans withered by frost; Those with grave samaya impairments are brought to ruin.

Dharma conduct is like the harvest of the field; However much you strive in it, that much you win.

The guru is like nectar and medicine; As much as you keep to them, that much you gain.

Samaya is like a watchman's tower;  
As much as you keep it, that much you gain.

Negative and virtuous karma are like the wheel of existence; Those who defile their vows will know defeat.

Samsara is like a poisonous thorn;  
As much as it spreads, that much you'll suffer.

The Lord of Death is like the shadow of the sun; I've never seen him successfully blocked.

When that single time arrives,  
Is there anything but to practice genuine dharma?  
There's no refuge or protector apart from that.  
Whoever obtains dharma will be victorious,  
But there is no one who wishes to practice genuine dharma.  
The households of samsara generate labor and toil; For the painful labor generated, they scramble and plunder.  
When speaking of the dharma, how happy they are, But when it comes down to the meaning, they're reduced to a mutter.  
Benefactor, don't talk too much; practice the sublime dharma!

Thus he sang. Then the physician said, "This is very helpful for my mind. Please also teach dharma to help me develop certainty in the dharma of karma, cause and effect, and birth, old age, sickness, and death." In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

In the state of the great birthless reality  
Falls the rain of nectar of the four immeasurables.  
You place all beings on the path of great bliss; I praise you, Lord, Wish-Fulfilling Jewel.  
With this key point, I praise the guru.  
Now, please listen to these words, you who sit here:

When you're young and your faculties are sharp, You never imagine old age  
will come.

But old age comes, like a seed underground.  
Gradually and slowly, it makes its way.

When your five senses' faculties are sharp,  
You never imagine that sickness will come.  
But sickness comes upon you all of a sudden.  
Forcefully and powerfully, it makes its way.

When, in this life, appearances seem solid,  
You never imagine that death will come.  
Death will come like a bolt of lightning.  
Swiftly and suddenly, it makes its way.

Old age, sickness, and death, these three,  
Come as easily as the hand meeting the mouth.  
Obstacles come suddenly, and sting like an arrow.  
The Lord of Death waits like a watchman over the pass.

This life, next life, and the bardo, these three, Like blind birds flying,  
arranged in their rows,\*<sup>1</sup>  
You're never parted from these three guests.  
Are you not frightened of your negative karma?

Hell beings, pretas, and animals, these three, Like the arrows of a powerful  
archer,

Lie in wait in tight, treacherous paths.

These three treacherous paths ever await you.

Are you not frightened of your previous suffering?

Does your present suffering not torment you?

Suffering is like the ripples on water:

Before one clears, another comes right behind.

If the time never comes when they all are cleared, Happiness and pain will be  
like travelers on the road, As soon as one goes, another one comes.

If there comes no time when they are stopped,  
Happiness and leisure will be like basking in the sun, Made impermanent by a  
rainstorm or blizzard:  
Do you not know they will quickly come?  
Contemplate this, and practice sublime dharma.

Thus he sang. Then everyone had faith and showed abundant respect and service. The people supplicated Milarepa to remain there with them permanently to be the object of their respect, but he refused. During the one night he did stay, he gave Lhajé Yangé the key instructions. Then he prepared to leave and all of the local people gathered and said, “If the Jetsun will not stay for even a few nights, please teach us some dharma that we may practice.” Then the Jetsun sang this song of realization in reply:

Listen, all you villagers gathered around,  
Will you definitely practice the sublime dharma or not?  
If you definitely intend to practice the dharma, When you are sleeping in  
your own beds,  
Do not be overtaken by the ignorance of sleep.  
In late evening, you should do the yidam deity’s recitation.  
In the first part of the night, supplicate the guru lord.  
At midnight, meditate, free of conception.  
Before dawn, strive in the prana-control practice.  
At dawn, you should confess the five poisons.  
When the sun is up, you should seal all appearances.  
But the main thing is to look at your mind!

The key instructions were received from the guru lord.  
Supplicate the yidam deity.  
Keep samaya with your vajra siblings.  
Make offerings to the three precious jewels.  
At your crown, meditate on great compassion.  
Recite the MANI PADME\*<sup>2</sup> essence.

Be generous to all of those who are poor.  
Have compassion on those without any power

Have compassion on those without any power.

Pay service to those who are learned and disciplined.

Have respect toward your father and mother.

The assembly of hundreds of wise, excellent gurus Practiced no other points  
but these.

May all temporal things be auspicious!

I aspire that your lives be long and free of illness.

Thus he sang. All of them obtained unwavering faith and Lhajé Yangé took hold of the path at the time of death. Then the master Jetsun and his disciples went to Chuwar.

This is the cycle of the Physician of Yangé.

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<sup>\*1</sup> According to Tibetan folk-lore, there is a species of bird in Tibet that is, in fact, blind, and that flies in a V-shaped formation following behind a sighted one of another species in the front. (TN) <sup>\*2</sup> This refers to the mantra of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion: OM MANI PADME HUM.

## The Later Journey to Central Tibet

NAMO GURU

Rechungpa, the heart-son of the Jetsun Milarepa, had some obstacles concerning the Princess Dembu, and in order to clear these, the Jetsun came to Rechungpa, emanating himself as a beggar. Rechungpa had a large piece of turquoise that came from the Yakdé Valley, which he wrapped with a cloth and gave to the “beggar.”

“My son does not have attachment to material things and has great compassion,” he thought. Due to the condition of giving the turquoise, Rechungpa became disillusioned about the Princess Dembu, left her, and returned to be with the Jetsun.

On the road, Rechungpa begged from the dying daughter of a rich Khampa and was offered two portions of dried meat, which he cut up finely in order to offer the Jetsun.

In Chuwar, the Jetsun, while sitting with his retinue of disciple-sons, said, “Rechungpa is coming carrying something that is so large it will not fit in this valley.” Rechungpa then quickly arrived. He gave a full bag of meat as a gift to the Jetsun and asked him about his health, to which Milarepa replied with this song of realization:

For this yogi who roams the noble snowy white mountains,  
 The mandala of his flourishing body expands.  
 Having cleared the harsh sickness of the five poisons,  
 I have no uneasiness; I am happy.

I've relinquished distractions of attachment to busyness.  
 Attaining freedom and control, I am happy.  
 Abandoning the many convoluted activities,  
 Staying in solitary lands with no people, I am happy.  
 Abandoning the home-life of worldly suffering,

Without temporary hoarding and maintaining, I am happy.

Not studying texts with intellectual ambition, Without any worries, my mind is happy.

Without desire to speak and without great pride,

Without debates or lip-service, I am happy.

Knowing nothing of deception or phoniness,

Without doing “this” for “that,” I am happy.

Without arrogance or desire for fame,

I say nothing wrong, so I am happy.

Wherever I stay is fine; where I am, I’m happy.

Whatever clothes are fine; with whatever I do, I’m happy.

Whatever food is fine; with whatever I get, I’m happy.

A man like me is always happy.

Son, Rechungpa, did you come here happy?

Thus he sang. Then the meat was cooked with some vegetables and served to all of the monks.

One of the repas said, “The Jetsun said that his heart-son Rechungpa was coming with a gift that was so big it would not fit in the valley. What was that gift?”

The Jetsun replied, “The offering of meat and vegetables won’t fit in the valley of your belly!” At that, everyone laughed.

Then the Jetsun said to the disciple-sons, “Now I will give you all an abhisheka, and for the sake of *tendrel*, you should offer me something. Rechungpa, if you don’t give anything, it is fine.”

Rechungpa, displeased, joined in the ceremony. In the center of the mandala, there was the piece of turquoise, unadulterated, that he had previously offered the beggar. Rechungpa was dumbfounded. Realizing that the beggar he gave the turquoise to was the Jetsun’s emanation, he had confidence it was the Jetsun’s compassion to have him part from the Lady Dembu.

The Jetsun said, “Rechungpa, if it were not for me, the value of this turquoise would have become your ruin. You have had uninterrupted devotion toward me and never abandoned your compassion for beings. I am satisfied.” Then he sang this song of realization:



The father guru's blessings are very powerful,  
Milarepa's miracle was very significant,  
And Rechungpa's compassion and generosity are very strong.

When you gave turquoise to the beggar, it was I who received it, And this evening it's a ritual gift for the Chakrasamvara abhisheka.

The compassion you have for those with no power  
Is like an offering to buddhas of the three times.  
Your offering with compassion to me, that beggar,  
Was indeed an offering to Milarepa.

Since all beings have been our fathers and mothers,  
To exclude or discriminate against any of them  
Is like eating strong poison without being aware.  
The minds of the wise and noble are harmonious,  
So to boast your own views with attachment and aggression Is like throwing  
all your training into the water.

The dharma that doesn't distinguish right and wrong,  
Is partial toward views, and denigrates true dharma  
Cuts the rope that takes hold of liberation.

All of one's happiness comes from others,  
And all benefit for others is the cause of one's happiness.

All types of harm are negativity for yourself;  
Therefore, generating the intention of doing benefit,  
One comes in the midst of the mandala deities.

Confess all of your negative downfalls  
And make strong commitments to keep your vows.

Thus he sang. Rechungpa gave rise to regret and confessed in the presence of the Jetsun and his dharma friends. Then he offered this song of realization:

With the karma of distraction, wishing for bodily comfort, I followed after  
appearances that led me along.

Deceived, I gathered karma of the lower realms.

I confess these before the body of my father guru.

Masters of deceit have a love of words;  
Such a skillful tongue is a cause for the hells.  
Lots of meat and liquor make for becoming a preta.  
Heedless speech and dishonesty:  
These I confess before the speech of my father guru.

Wishing for pleasure is the cause for malevolent mind.  
With desire for fame and doing unwholesome conduct,  
One accumulates all kinds of negative karma.  
I confess these before the mind of my father guru.

By wandering in the towns of evil lands  
The ritual practice of the powerful mandala was broken.  
With the activity of intimidating many demons  
The power of profound mantra strayed.  
By making plans for doing many things  
The stream of excellent samadhi was cut.  
This I confess before the mandala deities.

By staying in various sleeping quarters,  
I began to distinguish self and other.  
That I couldn't take defeat on for myself,  
I confess before my dharma friends.

Thus he sang. Then the Jetsun gave the abhisheka and extensive pointing-out instructions to all the repas. Sitting in the assembly row after the abhisheka, Repa Shiwa Ö said to the Jetsun, "Rechungpa is someone who has attained mastery over prana and mind and has taken a secret consort. Shouldn't the Jetsun consider this? Why is it necessary for Rechungpa to offer his confession here?"

The Jetsun replied, "You must understand the important key points of time." Then he sang this song of realization:

I bow at the feet of Marpa who is so kind.  
Grant your blessing that my mind-stream goes to the path.  
Accept me with compassion that I know my disciples' mind-streams.

Not knowing the right time for practicing dharma, the yogi goes astray.

Not knowing the right time to speak, the elder goes astray.

Not knowing the right time for giving food, the housewife goes astray.

Not knowing the right time for doing work, the servant goes astray.

Not knowing the right time for encountering foes, the hero goes astray.

Not knowing the right time for meeting adverse conditions, noble monks go astray.

Not knowing the right time for enduring suffering, benefit will go astray.

Not having endurance in meditation, your goal will go astray.

Not supporting one another, dharma friends will go astray.

If the student doesn't listen to the master, the relationship with the disciple will go astray.

The ways one can go astray are fathomless:

Practice as I tell you, my disciple-sons!

Thus he sang and they all developed certainty. Then Rechungpa made a commitment to accomplish whatever the guru commanded.

In a dream he had in which he put great effort into serving the guru, Rechungpa placed a bale of wool on a dog to carry, and cried out, 'Write down the words!' then they departed. When they reached a mountain pass in the dream, eighty-eight people were there and escorted them up. And there were eighty-eight people to receive them when they arrived. Rechungpa asked the Jetsun, "What is the meaning of this dream?" Then the Jetsun replied with this song of realization:

The dog means that you will have a companion;

Your mind-stream will be softer than wool;

The words mean you'll be learned in the meaning of terms; You'll cry out  
your experience by singing songs;

And you'll be greeted and escorted by eighty-eight.

Another evening, Rechungpa dreamt he took off his clothes and began washing with water. Then transforming into a bird, he flew up into a tree and looked into a mirror. He told his dream to Milarepa, who replied:

Peeling off the clothes of this life's eight concerns,

You washed with the stainless water of the instructions.

The body of the bird of loving-kindness and compassion

Flew with the wings of the two accumulations And landed on the top of the  
tree of enlightenment,

Then received the symbolic teachings of the mirror-dakinis.

On yet another night, Rechungpa dreamt that he was riding backward on a donkey and was wearing a garment of coarse yak hair.\*1 When he told the Jetsun of this, he explained:

You ride the donkey of the Mahayana

And turn your back upon samsara.

You greet nirvana right at your front

And will be the object of hope\*2 for all.

Again, on another night, Rechungpa dreamt that a jewel was placed upon his head. He was wearing stainless clothing on his body and was looking into a rust-free mirror. In his right hand was a vajra and in his left hand he held a kapala filled with food. He was seated upon a lotus seat in the vajra posture, and at his back, light swirled and radiated. His body was ablaze with fire and in front of him a pool of water sprang forth. In his heart, the sun and moon shone. To his left, many men and women were sitting in a row; and to his right, he looked after a single sheep and a herd of goats; then the single sheep multiplied into many. When he told the Jetsun of his dream, the Jetsun said, “This is what your dream means,” and sang this song of realization:

The jewel is you meditating with the guru at your crown, You have the  
stainless white cotton cloth of the Kagyu lineage, And you look at the  
mirror of the whispered lineage’s pointing out.

The vajra in your right hand means you have conquered conceptuality; Your  
left shows you sustain the experience of bliss-emptiness.

The lotus seat means you’re not sullied by faults;

The vajra posture means you abide in one-pointed samadhi.

Realization swirls radiantly at your back.

The signs of heat and experience burst forth in the pool.

In your body, chandali blazes like fire.

The sun and moon mean you abide in the state of luminosity.

On your left, the line of men and women

As the dakinis and dakinis invited them

Are the dakas and dakinis invited there.

On your right, the sheep and goats mean you'll protect your disciples, And the multiplying of sheep means the whispered lineage will spread.

Thus he sang. "Since all of these things will happen, you do not need to remain here at my side. You can now go forth; the time has come for those whom you will tame, so perform vast benefit for self and others." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization of advice:

Listen now, my son Rechungpa!

Since samsara and nirvana depend on conditions,  
If you can rely upon a noble guru,  
The effortless instructions implicitly come.

Listen now, my son Rechungpa!

Having abandoned attachment to your home,  
If you can keep to mountain retreats,  
Effortless siddhi will implicitly come.

If you abandon desire for material wealth—  
Negative karma with fixation as its root—  
And can be without fixation or attachment,  
The guide of great bliss will implicitly come.

Listen now, my son Rechungpa!

The root of samsara is giving birth.  
Having cut through the bonds of sons and nephews,  
If you can remain all alone,  
Then the completely pure realm will implicitly come.

Listen now, my son Rechungpa!

Though now the genuine dharma has spread,  
It's mixed with many things that only seem like dharma.  
Many people say they are gurus or masters,  
But they just use nice and captivating speech.  
Go teach them of the excellent lineage, my son.

Listen now, my son Rechungpa!

If you wish to practice dharma from the depths of your heart, You must  
employ dharma's antidote for the afflictions.

Do not just use hypocritical words.

Being free of the goal of comfort is important.

Listen now, my son Rechungpa!

If you wish to attain the fruition of buddhahood,

Do not concern yourself with the pleasures of this life.

Do not lose your true goal that depends on the mind.

Make meditation stable within your mind-stream!

“Rechungpa, in the past when I told you to stay, you wanted to go. But now you should go to the sacred site of Jarpo Forest at Shampo Snow Mountain. Benefit sentient beings there at Do of Loro at the border of Tibet.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Rechungpa, great son of this father,

Now, go to the land of Ü in Tibet.

You, most meaningful from among my four sons,

Go now, and meditate with the guru at your crown.

You, a son of the lineages,

Go now and keep samaya without distraction.

You lamp, a holder of the whispered lineage,

Go now and clear the darkness of ignorance.

Go and spread dharma to suitable ones.

Go and keep it secret from those unfit.

Go and place the life-force rod\*<sup>3</sup> of the teachings.

Go and accept the suitable ones with compassion.

Go and roam at the southern border.

Go to meditate at Shampo Snow Mountain

Go find a retreat at Tibet's border at Do.

Thus he sang. When Rechungpa was prepared to depart, he prostrated to the Jetsun and offered some words with this melody.

Rechungpa, great son of this father,  
Goes to Ü as the guru commands.  
While Rechungpa is traveling to Ü,  
Grant me blessings with your vajra body.  
With your speech of Brahma, clear all obstacles.  
With your mind free of concepts, guide me on the path.  
Father Jetsun, please stay in good health.

While your son Rechungpa is traveling to Ü  
Please continue to be my kind guide.  
When I go, O Precious One,  
Embodiment of the buddhas of the three times,  
Protector of beings, may you be well.  
You with higher perceptions and miraculous power,  
With your eye of dharma, may you be well.  
Precious one with kindness that cannot be repaid,  
One who clears the darkness of ignorance, may you be well.  
So meaningful to meet, with your magical power,  
Guide to enlightenment, may you be well.

Then as Rechungpa departed, the Jetsun sang this song of realization on the view, meditation, and conduct:

Son, do not take on any biased views.  
For meditation, keep to mountain retreats.  
For conduct, abandon negative friends.  
For samaya, let your perceptions remain harmonious.  
For fruition, contemplate your death!

“Son, in the year of the female wood-rabbit, on the fourteenth day of the horse month, you should return here. It is very important that you do.” Then he gave Rechungpa a piece of gold and many bits of heart advice. Though Rechungpa found it nearly unbearable to be separated from his guru, he was determined to go to Central Tibet as the guru commanded. Then as he wept, he offered this song of aspiration to meet his guru again:

The rivers of India and the rivers of Nepal

Are different in terms of the lands where they flow.  
But the rivers are all of single taste;  
They all will meet in the ocean's expanse.

The sun that dawns from the east,  
And the moon that rises from the west,  
Are different in relation to the four continents.  
But their light is all of single taste;  
It all meets in the cloudless sky.

The minds of the Victorious Ones and the six types of beings  
Are different only in terms of ignorance.  
The mind itself is of single taste;  
They all meet in the dharma expanse.

The father Jetsun who stays in the mountains  
And I, Rechungpa, who roam the lands  
Are different only in terms of our illusory bodies.  
In the dharmakaya we're of single taste.  
We'll meet in the realm of Akanishta.  
Father Jetsun, please stay well.  
I, Rechungpa, will go to Ü.

Taking the Jetsun's feet to his crown, he made many aspirations and departed for Central Tibet.

While he was staying in a monastery at Jarpo Forest, there was a lady\*<sup>4</sup> who came to offer her confession to him. At first, he would not see her, but then after a while, out of great compassion, and at the earnest requests of Rinchen Drak, he granted her an audience. As she was poor and destitute, she suffered with her three gates, and Rechungpa had great boundless compassion for her. Moved, he wept and gave her a piece of gold, then sang this song of realization:

At the feet of Mila, supreme among beings, I supplicate.  
I think of your kindness again and again: please accept me with compassion.

Your talk is unlike any I've heard.



When I was in my guru's presence,  
The large piece of turquoise, our basis of quarreling,  
Was placed upon the mandala.  
Seeing that made my hairs stand on end.  
Before, he told me, "Don't go to Ü."  
Now, "To Ü you must go," he says.  
I think of this and am truly amazed.

In the life example of the Father Jetsun,  
There was no difference between gold and dirt.  
He told me, "Here, now, take this gold."  
Thinking of this, I give rise to joy.  
With this gold that was given to me by my father,  
Make many statues of the buddha,  
And through that, purify the obscurations of your body.  
Recite many dharanis and mantras;  
Through that, you'll purify the obscurations of speech.  
Make many stupas and tsa-tsas;  
Through that, you'll purify mind's obscurations.  
Inwardly, leave your mind as the witness.  
Ultimately, practice the whispered lineage key instructions.

Again and again, supplicate the lord, And from time to time give rise to  
regret.

Act in this way and accomplish great benefit.

Thus he sang. With great love, he accepted both the lady and the uncle under his care. He gave them the instructions of the whispered lineage, put them to meditate, and through that the uncle became free of leprosy. It is said that the lady, giving rise to excellent experience and realization, became an excellent yogini who benefited others.

This is the cycle of the Later Journey to Central Tibet.

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\*1 This sets up a pun, which appears in the song below. The word for a particular type of coarse yak-hair cloth, which is black in color and often used to make tents, is the same as the word for “hope” (*re ba*).

\*2 See above note.

\*3 A “life-force rod” (T: *srog shing*) is a long piece of wood that is specially chosen and prepared with blessings and consecration, then placed as the axis and energetic center of a sacred stupa or statue.

\*4 The lady here, though not explicitly named, seems to be the Princess Dembu. In other versions of Rechungpa’s story, the king was displeased at Rechungpa’s eventual departure. The king blamed the princess and, as punishment, gave her away to the first man to arrive at the palace on the next morning, which turned out to be a maternal uncle with a skin disease (T: *mdze*, something similar to leprosy).

It seems, here, that the turquoise was a basis of quarreling between Rechungpa and the princess. Below, the “uncle” with leprosy, again, is not specifically named, but is synchronous with Princess Dembu’s new partner in the other versions of the story (Roberts: 208–213).

## Tashi Tsek

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was at Lhadro in Drin, there was a benefactor named Tashi Tsek who offered his service to the Jetsun. At that time there were many benefactors receiving dharma teachings. Tashi Tsek said, “Jetsun, when I hear lots of dharma taught like this, in the short term, I have a feeling of great joy. Although I don’t think I will be able to do a great deal of both practice and study, since the Jetsun himself has done meditation practice, I now have faith in what meditation can do. Ultimately, would I be most happy doing meditation?”

“Explanations are given and trained in for the sake of meditation. Therefore, if one studies without practicing and meditating, then study is useless.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Teaching dharma without practice just brings pride.

A son adopted but not cared for becomes a destructive demon.

Without instruction, a load of books is a useless burden.

Without transmission, they’re the yoke of swindlers; whom will they benefit?

When hearing the deception of the provisional yana, one is happy; But no one wants to hear the definitive speech of the guru.

Faithful benefactors and disciple-sons, practice sublime dharma!

Don’t listen to those who are heedless and deceptive.

Rely on humble, true words that are without fault.

Thus he sang. Then Milarepa said, “If you want to definitively practice the dharma, do lots of training. It will be helpful if you practice for a while in accord with its meaning. If you talk a lot, you will just become confused toward the higher and lower views; and doing many seemingly good things without truly taking hold of the mind, you will be deceived. If you have great attachment to this mundane world, though you may practice dharma, your practice will be full of hypocrisy. Furthermore, some dharma practitioners focus on their own few accomplishments and, developing pride about the good qualities of those, lose

their faith in the good qualities of the previous masters and do not receive any blessing.

“If you think you have lots of leisure to practice dharma, when actually there is no leisure at all, then when death comes, what is there to do? You should use all of the dharma understanding you have, and practice by looking inwardly. If someone does not combine study and practice into one, they may know a lot and think, ‘I should practice,’ but there will be no end to what can be intellectually known.

“If you speak with a noble master rich in the dharma, he will say there is not a bit of the dharma one doesn’t need; you will have lots of profound key instructions but will not know which ones to actually practice. You may choose one to practice, but then when signs of experience do not come, you may think, ‘Should I be doing a different practice?’ and no accomplishment of any kind will ever come. It will be like someone who studies something new for a long time but forgets what he knew before, like a flower in the hand of a child.”

Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Listen again, faithful benefactors:

Not understanding the strength of the truth of karma, Evil ones hope to attain liberation;

But they are pained by the passing of days, months, and years.

Unhappy ones are joyful when the days and months go by: “Will this season be a good one?” they always ask.

Without being aware, their human life passes on.

This is the discernment of a foolish man.

If you’re truly determined to practice the dharma, Make offerings to pure objects;

Take refuge in the three precious jewels;

Give service to the guru lord;

Be respectful to each of your parents;

Give generously without hope of repayment;

Do benefit for those who are powerless;

Engage in conduct with your mind-stream concordant with dharma.

If you practice dharma, you don't need much.

Having many commitments is false.\*1

Look to see if your mind-stream is joined with these!

Thus he sang. Then the benefactors said, "What you have said is easy to understand and helps our minds. We will practice in accord with your instructions. Please, give us more dharma advice that is appropriate for our understanding."

The Jetsun replied, "If you will listen, I have many excellent methods to share. Will you listen?"

"We will most certainly listen; please tell us," they said.

"Well then, since this will be beneficial for you in both this life and the next, it would be excellent if you did this." Then he sang this song of realization:

Well then, male and female benefactors,  
If you want to cultivate the ultimate crop,  
And you will listen to what I say:

Every being will surely die;  
Therefore, it's excellent to practice genuine dharma.

Though you gather illusory wealth, it will slip away; Therefore, it's excellent  
to practice generosity.

Though you've deep love for worldly relatives, they will part from you;  
Therefore, it's excellent to meditate on nonduality.

Though you build illusory castles from earth, they will collapse; Therefore,  
it's excellent to keep to solitary places.

Though you've food and drink for your body, it will all be used up;  
Therefore, it's excellent to accumulate merit.

There is no end to conditioned activities; Therefore, it's excellent to abandon  
activity.

Foolish speech will never be exhausted;  
Therefore, it's excellent to go without talking.

The key instructions alone are like rubbing oil on skin; Therefore, it's excellent to follow a learned guru.\*2

Experience is like the moon shining upon darkness;\*3  
Therefore, it's excellent to meditate like a flowing river.

These excellent ten basic key points  
Arose in this repa yogi's mind.  
Men and women of Drin, this is your dharma lot!

Thus he sang. All the men and woman benefactors there took refuge, roused bodhichitta, dedicated, and made aspirations. All of them developed a dharma outlook. Many among them became meditators and some developed good experiences.

This is the cycle of Tashi Tsek.

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\*1 It is false because you cannot keep them. (TN) \*2 If one only receives the key instructions without understanding the ultimate view, then those instructions are just like rubbing oil on the skin, which just stays on the surface; those instructions alone cannot fully penetrate one's mind-stream. Therefore one must rely on a guru who is learned and can explain the ultimate view and the meaning of the instructions. (KTGR) \*3 The moon illuminates the darkness only when it is present, but when it sets, the darkness returns. Likewise, meditative experiences are only passing, and one must meditate continually or the experiences will not become stable. (KTGR)

## The Students of Drin

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Stone Castle of Drin, Dzesé and Khujuk, along with all the other benefactor-students, requested the dharma. On the day they were to depart, Dzesé Bum said, “Please teach some dharma that is easy to understand for all of us who are gathered here today.”

The Jetsun said, “Very well, all of you focus your ears and listen.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Supreme and kind father Marpa, please grant your blessings.

Faithful ones gathered, turn your outlook toward dharma; Listen for a while  
without distraction.

You superior men should practice the dharma.

If a superior man is without dharma,

He is like a vulture, the king of birds.

Though his seat is high, it has little meaning.

Middling men should practice dharma.

If a middling man is without dharma,

He is like a tiger with bright stripes.

Though he has great heroic pride, it has little meaning.

Lesser men should practice dharma.

If a lesser man is without dharma,

He is like a merchant’s donkey.

He can carry a big load, but it has little meaning.

Superior women should practice the dharma.

If a superior woman is without dharma,

She is like a painting within a temple.  
Though its form is beautiful, it has little meaning.

Middling women should practice the dharma.  
If a middling woman is without dharma,  
She is like a tiny brown mouse.  
Though it's great at hoarding, it has little meaning.

Lesser women should practice the dharma.  
If a lesser woman is without dharma,  
She is like a female fox.  
Though it walks all about, it has little meaning.

You old folks should practice the dharma.  
Old folks who are without dharma  
Rot from the core, inside-out.

Young men should also practice the dharma.  
If a young man is without dharma,  
It's like putting armor and weaponry\*<sup>1</sup> upon an ox.

Maidens, too, should practice the dharma.  
If a maiden is without dharma,  
It's like tying a jewel upon a cow.

Youth should also practice the dharma.  
If a youth is without dharma,  
It's like the blooming of a poisonous flower.

Children should also practice the dharma.  
If a child is without dharma,  
It's like a thief possessed by demons.<sup>189</sup>

Whatever there is that's devoid of dharma,  
It will be without any meaning at all.



If you want to live meaningfully, Then in everything, practice the sublime  
genuine dharma.

The female benefactor Khujuk said, “Jetsun, you have these monks and disciples here with you now, yet you still are happy living in mountain retreats all alone. Do you have any other good friends?”

“This is what they are like.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the father guru.

This yogi roams in mountain retreats;

There I have twenty-one excellent friends.

The guru, yidam, and dakinis, these three;

They are excellent friends whom I supplicate.

The buddha, dharma, and sangha, these three; They are excellent friends to whom I go for refuge.

The sutras, tantras, and treatises, these three; They are excellent friends with whom I study.

The nadis, pranas, and bindus, these three; They are excellent friends of the path of means’ practice.

Bliss, clarity, and nonthought, these three; They are excellent friends of meditative equipoise.

Pure vision, devotion, and compassion, these three; They are excellent friends for accomplishing enlightenment.

The dakas, dakinis, and dharmapalas, these three; They are excellent friends who clear away obstacles.

Thus he sang. Then she said, “How wonderful! Can you use some examples to tell us what these friends are like when you are with them while doing your practice?”

Milarepa said, “They’re like this.” Then he sang this song of realization:

From great Vajradhara and down, And up from Marpa the Translator,

Siddha guru of the lineage

Siddha gurus of the lineage,

I supplicate you: please grant your blessings.

Upon the sun and moon seat at the crown of my head  
Sit these gurus of the practice lineage.

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like a strand of pearls  
strung together.

To be blessed by the guru—what a delight!

My supports are the three precious jewels;  
They look after me, undistracted, with compassion.

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like a mother caring for  
her treasured child on her lap.

To be free of weariness—what a delight!

On my right, the dakas give their blessing; They clear away all adverse  
conditions.

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like sharp weapons waving  
over my head.

To have no adverse conditions—what a delight!

On my left the dakinis give their blessing; They bestow the two kinds of  
siddhi.\*2

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like mothers and sisters  
who surround me with kindness.

To receive all one wants or needs—what a delight!

In front are gathered the dharmapalas with samaya; They perform the activity  
with which they're entrusted.

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like servants involved with  
their work.

To accomplish what one wishes—what a delight!

My three powers of dharmata's view Far outshine the lower yana.

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like the lion that roams in  
the snow.

To be free of dread—what a delight!

My meditation, the fledgling wings of wisdom and means, Soars in the space  
of dharmata.

If I give an example of what it is like:

It's like a vulture soaring high above.

To be without worry of falling—what a delight!

My conduct, the thriving stripes of strong, clear intention, Clears away any  
drowsiness.

If I give an example of what it is like:

It's like a tiger roaming the forest.

To be free of fear—what a delight!

My fruition is the three kayas manifest,

With the nirmanakaya that performs benefit for beings.

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like the play of the golden  
spotted fish.

To be free of weariness or fatigue—what a delight!

Sometimes I sing little tunes of realization; They far outshine appearances.

If I give an example of what they are like: They're like the turquoise dragon's  
roar in the sky.

Having no apprehension—what a delight!

I, the yogi Milarepa,

Roam without direction in mountain retreats.

If I give an example of what I am like:

I'm like the grazing animals that live in the hills.

To be free of fear—what a delight!

Delightfully I have sung for you

This song of five examples and their meaning, making six.

You humans and devas who reside in the towns, Without distraction, focus  
your ears.

Reflecting carefully, look at your own mind

reflecting carefully, look at your own mind.

May you not have any regret at death;

Make auspicious aspirations in accord with dharma.

Thus he sang, and everyone was satisfied. They all put effort into practicing virtue, and among them there were several young people who followed the Jetsun and attended him. To them, Milarepa gave the abhishekas and instructions, and had them meditate. Every one of them gained realization.

This is the cycle of the students of Drin, such as Dzesé and Khujuk.

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<sup>\*1</sup> This term (T: *khor gsum*) refers specifically to armor, helmet, and knife. This was typical gear that young men would wear in Tibet. (TN) <sup>\*2</sup> The common siddhis of the higher perceptions and supreme siddhi of enlightenment.

## Victory Over the Four Maras, and the Response to a Mantrika

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying at the Poto Red Rock Sky Fortress, some students from Ralung in Drin came to meet him. “Please give us an instruction that will benefit our minds,” they said.

The Jetsun replied, “If you all want to practice dharma like me, it would be excellent for you to abandon all things opposed to dharma, as I have. Therefore, abandon them.”

“What things are opposed to dharma?” they asked. Then Milarepa sang this song in reply:

*Ka ye!* Listen here, you students!

One, activities without any end;

Two, no satisfaction when trying to please others; Three, idle chatter with no sign of weariness:

These three things are opposed to the genuine dharma.

I leave these three things far behind.

If you leave them behind too, that would be excellent!

One, places that have rules and restrictions;

Two, groups that hope for something in return; Three, having servants who are required to please: These three things are opposed to dharma.

I leave these three things far behind.

If you leave them behind too, that would be excellent!

One, masters who have very little knowledge;

Two, disciples who are without any faith;

Three, dharma friends who don't keep samaya:

These three things are opposed to dharma.

I leave these three things far behind.

If you leave them behind too, that would be excellent!

One, husband and wife who always fight;

Two, enemy sons who come from your own body;

Three, angry servants who look after things:<sup>190</sup>

These three things are opposed to dharma.

I leave these three things far behind.

If you leave them behind too, that would be excellent!

Thus he sang. Then, with faith, all of the students went on their way.

One time, the Jetsun was blown by a huge gust of wind and fell off a cliff. When he fell, it seemed that a tree had pierced his body. The disciple-sons were very worried, but Milarepa showed them that his body was completely without any wounds and sang this song of realization:

I was blown by a giant gust of wind.

The result of the harm done by this mindless tree  
Was pain that was unbearable.

But then the dakinis gave me their medicine.

Thus he sang.

On another occasion the Jetsun fell from the great Poto Rock. When the disciple-sons went to take up his corpse, they saw him sitting there laughing. They asked him what had happened, and he sang this song of realization:

I extended the vulture wings of union,

And flying, I flew down from Red Rock's peak.

Falling, I fell into a deep abyss;

Playing, I played a joke on my students;

Liberating, I was liberated from samsara and nirvana;  
Pointing out, I've pointed out bliss-emptiness.

Thus he sang.

Another time, when Milarepa was sitting beside a great rock, a young girl came to him repeatedly telling him that he shouldn't sit there; yet there he remained.

Then the rock began to slide away, and with a wrathful gaze and wrathful mudra, Milarepa scattered the rock in every direction. His disciple-sons, thinking

that he had been seriously injured, went over to him, and Milarepa sang this song of realization:

This flower of a yogi's body,  
The dakinis saved from the life-crushing blow  
Of this red rock, Mara's executioner.

I never worried that such a mara would take me.

Thus he sang. Then his disciples said, "When the rock collapsed, when the Jetsun fell down the cliff, and when his body was pierced by a tree, he was always unharmed. How can this be?"

The Jetsun replied, "My skandhas have been transformed into the rainbow body and my afflictions transformed into wisdom. Since I understand birthlessness, I will never die. Since I have thrown the eight worldly concerns to the wind, it is a sign that the four maras have been brought to shame."\*1

"So, you have defeated the four maras?" the students asked.

"Yes, indeed I have. Furthermore my lineage, for thirteen generations, will not be plagued by such maras."

One day, a mantrika from Central Tibet came to meet the Jetsun. Seben Repa said to him, "What kinds of siddhas are to be found in the land of Central Tibet?"

The mantrika replied, "There are practitioners whom the spirits give service."

"That in itself does not mean that they are accomplished practitioners," said the Jetsun.

Seben Repa asked, "Does the Jetsun also receive such service?"

"I receive it like this." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

Through the cooking and boiling of samadhi  
That's like an inexhaustible  
treasury of space, I'm without desire for food for hunger and thirst;  
That is looked after by the dakinis.

But I've no thought that this makes me a siddha.

Thus he sang. The mantrika said, "Can practitioners who have had visions of their yidam deity be considered accomplished?" Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

If you see the essence of mind  
And clear away the darkness of ignorance,  
The dakinis will also show their faces to you.

In the expanse of dharmata, there is nothing to be seen; It is free of reference

in the expanse of unarmata there is nothing to be seen, it is free of reference point, without mental engagement.

All dharmas are, themselves, self-arisen and self-luminous.

This is spoken of by the dakinis.

There is no more powerful speech than the guru's.

“The ordinary and the supreme,

All one needs should be accomplished

In this life,” the dakinis too have said.

But even with this, I've no thought of being a siddha.

Thus he sang. Then the man said, “With what example can the mind be illustrated?” Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

This mind itself that is unborn

Cannot be illustrated by any example.

This mind itself that's without any ceasing

Can be exemplified by anything for those who don't realize it.

For the realized ones, the mind itself,

And example and exemplified are not two different things.

It's beyond any object of thought or expression.

This is the blessing of the lineage—how wondrous!

Thus he sang. Then the man's latent tendencies awakened and he attained unwavering faith in the Jetsun, whom he then followed and attended. Milarepa gave him the abhishekas and key instructions, and the man practiced, becoming a yogi with outstanding realization.

This is the cycle of conquering the four maras and the response to a mantrika.

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\*1 The four maras (or demons) are the mara of the skandhas, the mara of the Lord of Death, the mara of the afflictions, and the mara of the godly son.



## The Disciple-Sons' Developing Delight, and Displaying Miracles of His Body

NAMO GURU

When the Jetsun Milarepa was staying in Chuwar, for several days he was invisible. Some individuals could see his form but did not see him eating or doing any other kind of activity. Then, everyone saw the Jetsun sitting there, sometimes crying and sometimes laughing.

When this happened, Shiwa Ö asked him, “Jetsun, since yesterday you have been both visible and invisible. The people who saw you saw you only sitting in samadhi. Why was that? Today, what was the reason for sometimes crying and sometimes laughing?”

Milarepa replied, “Since yesterday, there have been many people here listening to my dharma teachings. Seeing their joys, I laughed, and seeing their sufferings, I cried.”

“Please tell the reason why this was,” he asked.

“Very well, first offer a mandala!” Accordingly, Shiwa Ö then offered a mandala.

“Yesterday, I went to teach the dharma for all the six different classes of beings. When I thought of the bliss of the devas and humans and of those who do virtue, I laughed. When I saw the sufferings of the three lower realms and of those who accumulate negative karma, I cried.”

Then Shiwa Ö asked, “What are the joys and sufferings of the six realms like? In particular, what is the bliss of the devas like?”

“Do not put your trust in the bliss of the devas; those who live there are like this.” Then he sang this song of realization:

I supplicate the lord who is so kind.

May your blessings pervade all sentient beings.

The bliss of humans and worldly devas, Such diversions are like the celestial

yak.\*1

Though their voices are like the turquoise dragon's roar, They are without any meaning at all.<sup>191</sup>

In the four ayatanas of the formless devas,  
There is no recollection of good or bad.  
With discernments dulled, they are without sensations.  
It is like having one's senses knocked out.  
Though many eons may elapse,  
They don't realize a single moment has passed.  
This is without any meaning at all.  
When they fall, they fall giving rise to a malicious mind.  
The nature of the causes and conditions of that state, For them, such talk is empty and meaningless.

Those in the seventeen levels of the form realms,\*2 too— The five higher levels that are pure  
And the twelve lower levels with their faults—  
Until their merit based on cause and effect has been exhausted, Those causes and conditions then fully ripen.  
Those who have virtue with limited bias,  
Meditators who practice with desires and fears,  
And those who practice dharma with the eight concerns: Though they say they accept dharma, their minds are impure.  
Due to the remaining seeds, the latent tendencies,  
Once a long time has passed, the malevolent mind re-arises.  
When that malevolent mind arises, merit is exhausted.  
When their merit is exhausted, then they quickly fall.  
As for the sufferings of those devas who fall,  
If explained in detail, you'd be distressed.  
Understand this and prolong your meditation.

Thus he sang. With a sense of deep disillusionment, the disciple-sons said, "Please tell us of the sufferings of the asuras." In reply, Milarepa sang this song

of realization:

I supplicate the guru and the assembly of dakinis.

Grant your blessing that bodhichitta may arise in my mind-stream.

None are greater than the sufferings of asuras;

Disturbed by their cruelty, they destroy self and other.

Confused toward mind itself, they delude themselves.

Because they've unpleasant feelings, their discernments are coarse.

They take whatever appears as their foe,

So they have not a single moment of pleasure.

Without any concern for their lives, they commit negative actions.

It is difficult for them to think of helping others.

So agitated by their discordant activity,

It's as if they do not listen to anyone.

To explain what such causes and conditions are:

It is desire for one's own happiness and others' pain; Having love for close ones and hate for foes.

With the conduct of pride and self-regard,

By the power of karma, they take a bad birth.

Taking a bad form, they delight in negativity.

Due to negative karmic results, they've aggression toward beings.

It's difficult to help them by any means.<sup>192</sup>

All you gathered here, meditate until death!

Thus he sang. Then Shiwa Ö said, "Now please tell us of the sufferings of us humans." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization in reply:

Lord, hidden buddha in human form,

I bow at the feet of Marpa from Lhodrak.

We beings here with a human birth

Have great power for both virtue and negativity.

We have the power of all the six elements, complete.

You young repas who desire to be scholars,

If you don't know the key and essential points,

It's improper to say you know a lot.  
If you don't realize the root of mind,  
To say you've practiced many years is just a lie.  
If there's no connection between the field of merit and your intention,  
    Though you give many things, it's all a waste.  
If you don't benefit others without any bias,  
Whatever excellent help you offer is just hope for return.  
Honest speech with poor judgment, where  
You don't know what's appropriate, is the basis for downfalls.  
If you know the appropriate way to bring benefit,  
Then a wise one's lie can be virtuous.  
To say "I am not affected by causes"  
Is the most deluded of the deluded and brings harm to all.  
When virtue dawns within the mind,  
Even earth, rocks, and plants are a cause for virtue.

There is no one more relaxed than a conscientious person.  
There is nothing hungrier than a dog wanting to eat.  
If one is heedless, nothing is more frightful than the authorities.  
Rich people have the suffering of having everything.  
Poor ones have the suffering of having nothing.  
Having everything and having nothing, both are suffering.

Son, if you can practice genuine dharma, you will meet with happiness.  
Understand this, and always meditate.

Thus he sang. Then the disciples said, "This is, indeed, how humans suffer; it is just as the Jetsun said. Although to speak of the sufferings of the lower realms is unbearable, it is helpful for compelling suitable ones toward the dharma. Please tell us about such sufferings along with the causes for being reborn in the hell realms." With that request, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

I supplicate the protector gurus:

Grant your blessing that fear of the lower realms may be dispelled.

Those who take flesh and blood as food And have the karma of killing  
Are scorched in the eight hot hells.

So, if you do not forget about virtue,  
Then it is possible to attain liberation.

Those who eat food that is not to be eaten,  
Have excessive fixation upon what they eat,  
And through that, conquer, subdue, and steal  
Will be reborn in the eight cold hells.

But if you don't develop wrong views toward dharma,  
It's taught you'll have a chance for liberation.

If it's possible for you to remember the precious jewels, When they're  
recalled, you are shown liberation.

Committing negative karma again and again,  
Under the power of the karma of negativity and wrong intention, Because  
they wish for their own happiness,

They kill their master, father, and mother  
And steal others' faith offerings to the three jewels.

With their speech that compels others to do wrong,  
They say, "There's nothing true about the dharma."

These are scorched in the hell of endless torment:

It is very difficult to escape from this.

Son, if you think of this, you will become depressed.

Focus your mind on dharma and put effort into meditation.

Thus he sang. Again the repas said, "If by merely hearing of them one has fear about these sufferings, what must it be like to actually experience them? Nevertheless, for the sake of sentient beings, please teach about the sufferings of the pretas." In reply, Milarepa sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the guru lord.

Please accept me with compassion to dispel the fear of the lower realms.

Hell beings delight in killing themselves,

But running away with fear won't bring them any freedom

But running away with fear won't bring them any freedom.

Since pretas take appearances as their foe, Where can they run? Where can they find refuge?

Animals eat each other for food;

Against whom can they retaliate? With whom can they fight?

In particular, the pretas' suffering

Is brought through malevolence and avarice.

When they are in such a state, they know no virtue.

With such miserliness, they cannot bear to eat,

And it is not possible for them to give to others.

Obsessively on the lookout and hoarding things,

Like a rat, they're never satisfied.

Then, what suffering they amass they inflict on others.

When one dies with an attitude of avarice,

In the bardo the perceptions of pretas arise;

With the karma of wrong outlook, they have hunger and thirst.

When they see the wealth and enjoyments of others,

They develop a malicious and avaricious mind.

With such karma they fall again and again.

Myself, a meditator with perseverance,

I sing in this melody here for you

Of the sufferings, causes, and results of pretas.

You repas here, my disciple-sons,

Understand my words, and prolong your meditation!

Thus he sang. Then Shiwa Ö said, "Please also tell us of the sufferings of animals." Then Milarepa sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the guru lord.

Please accept me with compassion to dispel the fear of the lower realms.

Animals are stupid with ignorance.

Stupidity is the cause for most of the animals.

By the power of ignorance and negative karma,

They do not realize dharma's truth

And do not distinguish between virtue and negativity.  
They exhaust their lives simply roaming about.  
They are unable to reason or discriminate;  
Like a stunned blind man they do everything out of ignorance.  
They do not understand virtue and nonvirtue.  
Like a crazy man, they do much wrong.  
Some mistakenly say it is good  
If one does not develop the faculty for finding relief.<sup>193</sup>

Those with the negativity of killing mindlessly  
Take rebirth as carnivorous beasts.  
Those deluded about what is good and bad  
Take rebirth as ordinary animals.  
Those beings that have a dull, stupid mind  
In the end will be reborn as animals.  
Those who have the karmic result of being an animal,  
There's no end to what can be said about it.  
Understand this well, and train your minds.

Thus he sang. Then the repas said, “Did the Jetsun teach the dharma to the six classes of beings while seated in only one place, or did he go to each realm?”

“I went to each of the realms taking a form in accord with the merit of each, and then taught them the dharma that was suitable for their minds.”

All the people who had gathered there to listen to the dharma—the monks, disciple-sons, and lay students—developed fear of the lower realms. With their outlook turned toward the genuine dharma, they all made effort in the abandoning of nonvirtue and in the practicing of virtue.

On another occasion, the Jetsun flew up into the sky and appeared with many different forms. Then all of them converged into one, and while invisible, he taught the dharma with a variety of voices. While he was displaying such inconceivable miracles, Seben Repa bound his prana. Although he tried to fly into the sky, he could do nothing but move about with his feet on the ground.

Then the Jetsun said, “You do not have devotion toward the guru, revulsion toward samsara, compassion for sentient beings, pure vision toward dharma

friends, and diligence in practice, like I do. Do not hope for signs of accomplishment without any effort. Furthermore, my disciple-sons, without having such virtuous causes, do not hope for the result of happiness.” Then he sang this song of realization:

Don't hope for enlightenment in a single life, Where your karma and many conditions haven't come together.

Don't hope for the guru's care  
Without placing your focus upon him.

Don't hope to be a master of others  
Without yourself becoming a disciple.

Don't hope to be someone on whom others can rely  
Without gaining mastery of your own mind.

Don't hope to gain signs of accomplishment and siddhis Without holding a genuine lineage.

Don't hope to attain the enlightenment that you aspire to Without being subdued through strong meditation and practice.

Don't hope to have bias-free compassion  
Without being free of the bonds of your own attachment.

Don't hope to have the view free of extremes  
Without being free of the bonds of clinging to things as real.

Don't hope to see reality's essence  
Without the pointing-out of seeing nakedly.

Don't hope to have unbroken meditation  
Without knowing the method for dispelling stains.

Don't hope for the sixfold collection to be relaxed  
Without cutting the fetters from within.



Don't hope to experience the great all-pervading essence\*<sup>3</sup>

Without clear resolve in the experience of samadhi.

Don't hope to have the fruition of the three kayas Without cutting through all subtle hopes and fears.

Don't hope to have the result of temporary happiness

Without regarding the nature of cause and effect.

Don't hope to attain the supreme goal of buddhahood

Without gathering the two accumulations to their highest point.

Don't hope to please your brothers and sisters

Without acting in accord with the [guru's] commands.

Don't hope to be free of devas and ghosts

Without perfect mastery of self-awareness.

Don't hope to overcome samsara's three levels

Without perfect mastery over appearances.

Don't hope to be free of virtuous and negative karma

Without elevating your mind beyond the ordinary state.

Don't hope for your mind to be free of pure and impure If you're a practitioner who keeps to monasteries.

Don't hope to elucidate for suitable ones

Without knowing the experiences and signs of accomplishment.

Don't hope to have liberation in the bardo

Without being trained in the key instructions.

Don't hope for your aspiration to come to fruition

Without keeping the trainings and vows appropriately.

Don't hope for the dakinis and dharmapalas to be pleased Without keeping your samaya pure.

Do not cross over the river of conventional terms  
Without having scripture, logic, and the key instructions.

Do not speak of others outside Without having the five higher perceptions.

Do not let your mind-stream go vagrant<sup>194</sup>  
Without realizing meditation that's without distraction.

Thus he sang.

On another occasion, whichever monk came into the Jetsun's presence, his body remained invisible to them. Some saw a light, some saw a butter lamp, some saw a rainbow, some saw water, some saw a bar of gold, some saw moving wind, and some saw nothing at all.

Then Repa Shiwa Ö said, "What is the reason for this occurrence?"

Milarepa replied, "It's like this." Then he sang this song of realization:

I supplicate the guru lord,  
Grant your blessing that I may emanate many forms.

Listen, my son, you attractive young repa.  
I have gained mastery over the element of earth;  
Thus, earth too is my very nature.  
I have gained mastery over the element of water;  
Thus, water too is my very nature.  
I have gained mastery over the element of fire;  
Thus, fire too is my very nature.  
I have gained mastery over the element of wind;  
Thus, wind too is my very nature.

Because I am trained in the emptiness of space,  
All phenomenal existence is mixed, inseparable, with me.  
Having mastery over appearances of mind and body,  
I can emanate as anything.  
Toward whatever form this miraculous body takes,  
Give rise to devotion and supplicate.

May you receive the blessings of all the siddha lords.

Thus he sang.

Again, one day, in front of his disciple-sons and faithful male and female students, Milarepa emanated as a teacher of dharma for each of them, and also as playmates for each of the children playing in the dirt. In short, he displayed a fathomless myriad of emanations. Then his disciple-sons asked about the reason for doing this. The Jetsun responded, "I am a yogi who is aware of all the faults of my own mind. These outer appearances are transformed into whatever I wish, and I have no difficulty emanating and gathering them with my own mind." Then he sang this song of realization:

I prostrate to the guru lord.  
The guru's blessing has entered my body,  
So I attained the miraculous body, the nirmanakaya.  
The guru's blessing has entered my speech,  
So I teach the key instructions by singing songs.  
The guru's blessing has entered my mind,  
So I've realized mind and accomplished buddhahood.  
I'm not burned by fire, nor carried by water.  
My conduct is like that of a dancing elephant.\*4

All beings who are pure,  
Through their own individual perceptions,  
See my body and hear my speech.  
Because of their accumulation of merit, they're liberated by seeing me.

Impure beings, because of their negative karma,  
Do not see my body at all.  
Through negativity, they experience suffering,  
And the Buddha's power does not bring them benefit.  
All of you, apply yourself to practicing dharma!  
There is no end to what I could say about this!

Alas, those with negativity, what a shame!  
Those who engage in wrong conduct will never be liberated.

When I see their suffering, my heart aches.  
We all must prolong our meditation!  
Without thinking what you will do in this life,  
You should think about what will happen in the next.

Thus he sang, and all of his disciple-sons were overjoyed.

And so Milarepa made the Buddha's teachings shine like the sun and established beings in temporary and ultimate happiness. The Lord of Yogis, Milarepa, completely mixed meditation with postmeditation and appearances with mind. For the benefit of beings, he showed his signs of accomplishment and sang songs of realization. His heart-sons with the dharani of not forgetting remembered these stories and wrote them down in letters, which became renowned throughout the realm of humans. Most of the stories and songs are collected here, though it would be impossible to tell them all.

This is the cycle of Milarepa's disciple-sons developing delight and the display of many miracles of his body. This also concludes the cycle of miscellaneous stories, thus completing the three cycles on how Milarepa gave the teachings of the practice lineage, contained within the eighth deed of the Jetsun Milarepa's life, how he benefited beings.

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\*1 Yaks do not concern themselves with virtue and nonvirtue. Here, "celestial" means that, living in a divine realm, they do not have gross sufferings.

\*2 The four form realms (consisting of seventeen levels) are highly refined states of meditative concentration.

\*3 The "all-pervading essence" is another name for tathagatagarbha, or buddha nature, which pervades all sentient beings.

\*4 Elephants symbolize fearlessness.

APPENDIX 1:  
Summary of Tsangnyön Heruka's  
*Life of Milarepa*

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## PROLOGUE

Tsangnyön Heruka's prologue praises Milarepa, telling of all his many good qualities, and sets forth the overall structure of the *Life* into two parts: (1) ordinary worldly deeds and (2) deeds of nirvana, which is supreme peace.

### ORDINARY WORLDLY DEEDS

#### *Birth*

The chapter begins by describing a dream of Rechungpa in which the Buddha Akshobhya recounts the life stories of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and in particular the Kagyu masters Tilopa, Naropa, and Marpa in an extensive way. At the conclusion of the discourse, the Buddha says that tomorrow he will tell the story of Milarepa. Upon waking from the dream, Rechungpa is compelled to ask Milarepa in person to recount his life story. Milarepa eventually begins his narrative by telling of his family lineage. He tells how his family became wealthy and influential in their region, how he came to be born with the name Töpa-ga (Delightful to Hear), and of the birth of his sister Peta Gönkyi.

#### *Truth of Suffering and Perfect Practice*

Further urged by Rechungpa, Milarepa tells of the death of his father, Mila Sherap Gyaltzen, and of the difficulties that then befell his immediate family. Knowing his own death was imminent, Milarepa's father had given his last testament, entrusting all of his wealth to their extended family, and telling them to look after his wife, Nyangtsa Kargyen, and two children until the young Töpa-ga comes of age. But Milarepa's uncle and aunt forcefully take possession of everything and put the three of them to work as their own servants. For many years Töpa-ga and his family endure great hardship in unjust servitude to his uncle and aunt. When Töpa-ga reaches the age of fifteen, Nyangtsa Kargyen holds a great banquet using the proceeds from a small piece of land she had inherited. She invites all who knew of Mila Sherap Gyaltzen's last testament, and at the height of the feast reads it for all present to hear. The aunt and uncle refuse to relinquish what is rightfully her and her family's and tell them to get out, striking the mother, Töpa-ga, and his sister. Töpa-ga's other relatives feel great

sympathy and offer to take care of them, but his mother refuses to accept charity and continues, without any other recourse, to remain with her two children, all working arduously for their keep. In this way, Milarepa explains, they knew no happiness.

### *Defeat of His Enemies*

Rechungpa then asks Milarepa to recount the evil deeds that he performed early in his life. Milarepa continues his story by telling how his mother, in her wish for revenge upon their hated enemies, sends Töpa-ga along with five companions to study black magic. She gives him things to offer such a teacher and tells him that she will take her own life if he does not return with competence in performing black magic. He and his companions go to meet a guru of black magic, Yungtön Trogyal, whom Töpa-ga offers everything he has along with his body, speech, and mind. After staying a while and having learned some black magic, his companions decide to leave, but Töpa-ga refuses to go with them, saying that he has not learned enough to satisfy his mother's wish. The guru asks why he has not gone with the others, and Töpa-ga explains the situation with his mother and family. Impressed by Töpa-ga's offering of body, speech, and mind, the guru verifies the story and agrees to send Töpa-ga to another guru, Yönten Gyatso, to learn the black magic called Zadong Marnak (Red-Black-Faced Rahu). Töpa-ga builds a meditation cell according to the guru's instructions and is successful in bringing about the signs of black magic. Curious to see how the magic has manifested, he goes back to his village and finds that the livestock have transformed into giant scorpions, spiders, and so forth and the house containing all of his relatives who were attending a wedding celebration has collapsed, killing thirty-five people inside. His mother gloats at the catastrophe, and the villagers, knowing it was the work of her son, set out to kill him. His mother sends gold, cleverly hidden in the garment of a wandering yogi, along with a letter to Töpa-ga, telling him of the success of the black magic and further inciting him to send a hailstorm. He returns to his previous guru and receives instruction on casting hail, and from nearby the village carries out his mother's request. Discovered by the locals, Töpa-ga is forced to flee.

DEEDS OF NIRVANA, WHICH IS SUPREME PEACE

*Meeting His Guru*

Rechungpa requests Milarepa to tell how he came to meet the dharma, and so Milarepa relates how he gave rise to great remorse over the black magic he had cast and was restless with the thought of needing to seek out the dharma. Töpa-ga's teacher of black magic, having similar concerns for his own actions, agrees to be Töpa-ga's benefactor should he commit to learning dharma and to come and help him gain higher rebirth and liberation. Thus, Töpa-ga was sent to study with a teacher of Dzogchen, Rangtön Lhaga. The Dzogchen master's boasting of the ease with which one could attain accomplishment in his tradition inspired Töpa-ga to do nothing more than stay in bed, without putting any effort into practice. Rangtön Lhaga acknowledges his own shortcomings in teaching and encourages Töpa-ga to seek out Marpa the Translator. Merely hearing his name, Töpa-ga feels great joy and devotion and sets out to find Marpa, frequently asking others of his whereabouts along the way.

Marpa and his wife Dakmema both have dreams foreshadowing Milarepa's arrival. When he does arrive, Marpa is plowing the field (something that is not usual behavior for him). There, the plowman (Marpa) tells Töpa-ga that he will introduce him to Marpa and then offering some beer, sets Töpa-ga to plowing the field while he goes inside. Töpa-ga drinks the beer, completes the plowing of the field, and is shown inside. When he enters, the plowman from before is sitting on a raised carpet. Töpa-ga still does not recognize him as Marpa. Marpa then tells Töpa-ga to prostrate, thus revealing his identity, and gruffly tells Töpa-ga that he will provide either food and shelter or dharma, but not both. Töpa-ga chooses to receive dharma and is given food by Marpa's wife for several days.

### *Purifying Negativity and Obscurations*

Milarepa continues his personal narrative, describing an episode in which he determines Marpa has a fierce temper—without thinking badly about him—and decides he must be careful how he acts around him. Marpa, knowing of Töpa-ga's previous studies and accomplishment in black magic, has him cast black magic upon three different groups of people, which he does successfully. Subsequently, Marpa demands that those whom he attacked be healed and restored before he gives any instructions. Töpa-ga falls into despair, and Marpa comes to console him, saying he only gives the instructions slowly. Marpa asks him to build a tower for his son Darma Dodé. Töpa-ga goes about building the tower, only to have Marpa change his mind midway, forcing Töpa-ga to tear it down and start building again in another location. This happens five different times, with Marpa giving a new reason each time for the tower building to be restarted. During this



harrowing process, Töpa-ga develops painful sores and undergoes great physical hardship. When Töpa-ga's fifth attempt to act in accord with Marpa's instructions for the tower is making good progress, Töpa-ga, thinking that because he was doing everything exactly as Marpa had said, sits down with high hopes to receive abhisheka along with Marpa's other students. Marpa demands an initiation gift for the abhisheka, and when Töpa-ga claims Marpa's promise to give it as payment after completion of the tower, Marpa scolds and beats him, sending him out. Töpa-ga is again dejected and Dakmema consoles him, encouraging him to continue on. Töpa-ga is further directed by Marpa to build a covered walkway. When another student of Marpa's arrives to receive abhisheka, Dakmema encourages Töpa-ga to attend and gives him items to offer as an initiation gift. Marpa refuses the gifts, saying they were already offered by other benefactors, and again chides Töpa-ga. Marpa again comes to Töpa-ga saying he will give the dharma upon Töpa-ga's completion of the tower and walkway. Dakmema continues to intervene on Töpa-ga's behalf, at one point giving him her own turquoise to offer Marpa as an initiation gift. Marpa refuses again, claiming that the turquoise is his own as Dakmema is under his domain, and proceeds to beat Töpa-ga, again sending him away. Töpa-ga, unable to make any material offering to Marpa, leaves without telling anyone. He encounters a man for whom he works reading scriptures in his home, and is able to earn some money. Meanwhile, Marpa is distraught that his "destined son" has left, and weeps, crying out, "Turn around, my fortunate son!"

Töpa-ga returns of his own accord, and it seems Marpa may teach him the dharma, but still Marpa insists that the remaining three stories of the tower be completed. Frustrated, Töpa-ga again leaves, at Dakmema's encouragement, to receive abhisheka from Ngok Chöku Dorje, a student of Marpa. Dakmema forges a letter from Marpa commanding Ngok to give Töpa-ga abhisheka, and she further gives Töpa-ga some precious ritual items of Marpa's as a gift for Ngok. Ngok, thinking Töpa-ga has Marpa's consent, is happy to see him and has him perform black magic on a group of dharma obstructors. Töpa-ga reluctantly consents, concerned about his own karma in committing the deed, and receives the abhisheka and teaching on Hevajra, but no signs of realization or experience arise in his subsequent meditation practice. Ngok is finally informed that Marpa did not actually give his consent, and he tells Töpa-ga that the abhisheka was pointless and that signs of meditation will not ever arise from it.

Time comes for Ngok to go and receive abhisheka from Marpa and he gathers all of his wealth and livestock to offer them to Marpa. At the time of giving

abhisheka, Marpa reveals that he knows that Ngok gave abhisheka to Töpa-ga, at which Ngok is terrified. Ngok relates what happened, and Töpa-ga reveals that Dakmema is the one who supplied him with the letter and gifts for Ngok. Dakmema and Töpa-ga both flee, and Ngok tells Töpa-ga that he cannot give him any teachings. Left with no place to receive dharma, Töpa-ga says he will kill himself, though Ngok dissuades him by saying that to kill oneself is the greatest of misdeeds.

### *Obtaining Abhishekas and Key Instructions*

Rechungpa begins the next chapter by asking Milarepa how he finally received the abhishekas and instructions. Milarepa continues, telling of how Marpa summoned Töpa-ga. He is reluctant and fearful of further rebuke from Marpa, but Marpa explains that his reasons for his previous wrathful behavior toward Töpa-ga were to purify his past misdeeds. He acknowledges the wrongs of Ngok, Dakmema, and Töpa-ga, but in the end says that because they were acting with a dharmic motivation, their behavior was “mostly correct.” In particular, Marpa explains that Dakmema’s foolish interceding resulted in leaving a slight residue of Töpa-ga’s negativity, but that the major negativities were eradicated. Marpa then agrees to accept Töpa-ga as a disciple, give the oral instructions, and support him in retreat. First the pratimoksha and bodhisattva vows are bestowed, and Töpa-ga receives the name Mila Dorje Gyaltzen.\*<sup>1</sup> The next day, the abhisheka of Chakrasamvara is bestowed where the entire mandala appears in the sky. Milarepa is given the secret name “Shepa Dorje” at this point by the guru and deities. The chapter concludes with Marpa explaining the many auspicious meanings of omens that had occurred up to this point in the story.

### *Arising of the Sprout of Experience and Realization*

Rechungpa begins the chapter by asking whether Milarepa went into the mountains or stayed by Marpa’s side. Milarepa explains that he was told to go to a cave, where he meditated, unmoving, with a lit candle upon his head for eleven months. Marpa then summons him; Milarepa is reluctant to leave, but Dakmema encourages him to follow through with Marpa’s command. Milarepa offers a song of the seven branches to Marpa and relates all of his understanding of dharma. At this, Marpa is pleased, returns home with Dakmema, and Milarepa continues to meditate. In his retreat, Milarepa has a vision of a dakini who urges him to ask Marpa for instructions on transference and “entering the deceased.” He leaves to make the request of Marpa, who expresses concern that obstacles may beset him

for leaving his retreat. Hearing of Milarepa's encounter, he determines it was, indeed, a prophetic vision, and sets out to look for the instructions Milarepa sought from amongst his texts. Not finding instructions on transference, he leaves for India to request them. Marpa returns successfully having obtained the instructions. Circumstances lead Milarepa to sing his prophetic song "The Four Pillars," which Marpa interprets as a foretelling of the future of the Kagyu lineage. The chapter concludes with Marpa determining which practices are most suitable for each of his students, with Milarepa receiving special instructions on chandali. The other students go to their own respective dharma seats, but Milarepa is told to stay with Marpa while in retreat for a few more years so that he may receive more instruction.

### *Leaving the Presence of His Guru to Go to His Homeland*

Rechungpa asks Milarepa how he came to leave his guru, and Milarepa replies by saying he did not stay for several years as originally intended but left to go to his homeland. In his retreat, he has a dream where his village was run down and his mother had died. With a strong desire to see his mother, he goes to see his guru to ask permission to return to his homeland. Marpa explains that the circumstances of Milarepa's coming to him at that time (while Marpa was sleeping) was an omen that they would not meet again, but that Milarepa would illuminate the Buddha's teachings like the sun; thus Marpa gives his permission for Milarepa to go. Before he leaves, Marpa gives Milarepa all the remaining oral instructions of the whispered lineage. Marpa tells Milarepa to stay a few days to clear up any doubts regarding the practice, and a ganachakra is held by Marpa, his students, and Dakmema in honor of Milarepa's departure. Marpa then gives Milarepa instruction on all the places he should meditate alone in the mountains, and gives him a scroll containing instructions only to be read when he should encounter obstacles in his practice. Marpa invites Milarepa to sleep near him that evening and with great affection and love for each other, they spend the night preoccupied by thoughts of each other without speaking. Marpa, Milarepa, and Dakmema each sing songs regarding Milarepa's departure, expressing supplication, instruction, and aspirations. With many tears, Milarepa sets off alone, walking backward as far as he is able in order to see his guru's face for as long as he can. Then when everyone is out of sight, he sets off to visit Lama Ngok, according to Marpa's instruction, to compare their understanding and experience. Milarepa comments that Ngok surpassed his own ability in explaining the tantras, that he was not far behind Ngok in terms of his practice, but that he

surpassed Ngok in the special Whispered Lineage of the Dakinis.

### *Practicing with the Yidam*

Rechungpa then asks Milarepa if he had only dreamed of his mother's death or if she had actually died. Milarepa recounts that when he arrives in his homeland everything is in ruins. He encounters many herdsmen who, not knowing who Milarepa is, tell of the village's history and how Milarepa's old house and fields are haunted and no one goes near them for fear of Milarepa's protectors. They also explain that his sister, Peta, who became a wandering beggar, was missing, and that his mother had died eight years before and her bones were still within the decrepit house. Milarepa goes to the ruins and finds his mother's bones, at which point he is overcome with grief. He mixes his mind-stream with his mother's and sees the true possibility for liberating his father and mother from samsara. He then takes a sacred text that had become ruined by water with the intention of giving it to his old tutor who had taught him to read. Finding the tutor had long since passed away, Milarepa offers it to his son. The tutor's son is initially hesitant for fear of retribution by Milarepa's protectors, but assured that the protectors would not follow the offering, the son accepts the gift of the text. Impressed by how Milarepa has turned from committing great misdeeds to a life of practicing dharma, the tutor's son says Milarepa should stay there for a while. Milarepa is eager to enter into the mountains to practice. Milarepa sings three different songs to this effect, emphasizing the impermanence and essencelessness of the mundane world. The tutor's son and his wife are deeply moved by this and Milarepa goes off into retreat according to his guru's command.

### *Meditating Undistracted in the Mountains with Great Hardship and Perseverance*

Rechungpa asks Milarepa about where he first practiced austerities and meditation, and Milarepa continues his story. After meeting his tutor's son, Milarepa receives provisions from him and goes to practice in a cave nearby his home village. When these provisions finally run out, he goes begging for some food amongst the nomads, and comes across his own aunt's tent. His aunt recognizes Milarepa and proceeds to beat and scold him for his past deeds. Milarepa sings her a song recounting all of his hardship, and she feels remorse. His angry and vengeful uncle later appears, and to save his own life Milarepa feels he must threaten him and his followers with black magic to ward them off. He does so and goes back into retreat. Dzesé, the girl to whom Milarepa was betrothed as a youth, finds him in his retreat cave. She relates that she can have

no husband as all men fear retribution from Milarepa and his black magic. Milarepa offers his fields and house for her to use if his sister Peta is found to be dead, but she refuses them. His aunt hears that Milarepa is offering up his house and fields, apologetically returns to Milarepa, and asks for them herself. Milarepa agrees to give them if she provides him with provisions from the yield of the fields. She agrees, but eventually stops bringing provisions and tells Milarepa he must leave, falsely claiming that his former townspeople would kill her and Milarepa if he stayed. Milarepa uses his aunt's false behavior as an opportunity to practice patience and with great sadness leaves, resolved to remain in mountain retreats. After much austere hardship he has the urge to leave retreat to refresh himself and procure provisions, but stops, remembering his solemn commitment to stay in retreat.

When his provisions entirely run out, Milarepa resorts to sustaining himself only upon nettles. Because of this, his skin and body hairs turn pale green. A number of episodes tell of visitors, bandits, and so forth coming across Milarepa while looking for things to eat or steal. But all of these individuals leave empty handed, or only having been offered the very nettles that Milarepa eats.

At a festival, Milarepa's sister Peta catches word of her brother staying in retreat, and together with Dzesé goes to find him. When she arrives at Milarepa's cave, his body is completely emaciated and still green in color from eating nettles. Peta is distraught to see him in such a state. Milarepa is both happy and sad to see her, and is refreshed by the provisions she brings. Both Peta and Dzesé encourage him to go begging, but he refuses, steadfastly keeping to his commitment to stay in retreat, and claiming that his own misery in practice cannot compare to those who suffer in the three lower realms. Still distraught over his state, Peta and Dzesé continue to bring him provisions, but he finds that when he eats the good food brought by them, he is unable to meditate. Seeing this as a great obstacle, he breaks open the scroll that Marpa had given him. It contains instructions for when obstacles arise in his practice, and based on those instructions, Milarepa comes to the realization that his subtle constituents require sustenance to allow them to "ascend" in accord with yogic practice. At this point, due to his eating good food, his practice flourishes and he gains realization and mastery over his subtle body. He is then able to perform many different miracles, such as transforming his body and being able to levitate.

Milarepa encounters more individuals to whom he professes his commitment to strict dharma practice. Later, Peta again encourages him to leave his retreat, this time to become a servant of Bari Lotsawa, a famed lama. Milarepa claims

this would only be a distraction from his practice of abandoning the eight worldly concerns. Peta, embarrassed by his naked body, gives him some cloth to make proper clothing. She leaves him and upon his return, he has made the cloth into a hood for his head, gloves for his hands, boots for his feet, and a sheath to cover his penis. Peta is appalled and Milarepa says there is no need for him to be embarrassed about anything, that if she is embarrassed, she should get rid of those “embarrassing parts” from her own body.

Some time later, Milarepa’s aunt, with genuine remorse, comes to see Milarepa while Peta is also present. Peta does not wish to let their aunt come near him, but Milarepa, knowing it is the proper thing for a dharma practitioner to do, sees to it that she confesses her wrongdoing and grants her an audience. He teaches her extensively on karma, cause and effect, and she turns her mind to dharma, eventually attaining liberation.

The last part of the chapter departs from Milarepa’s life narrative. Repa Shiwa Ö expresses amazement at his master’s endurance in hardship, saying that neither he nor any of Milarepa’s disciples could practice in this way, and so therefore Milarepa must be some kind of emanation of a buddha. Milarepa tells him that if they consider the law of cause and effect fully, what he undertook would not seem so difficult; and further, that while even if he were emanated from a hell being, through seeing him as a buddha, the disciples would obtain the blessing of a buddha. Milarepa says that suggesting he is an emanation of a previous buddha or bodhisattva is a sign of not having confidence in the efficacy of the dharma of Secret Mantra. He says that if any common person has heartfelt conviction regarding cause and effect, they will have fear of the lower realms and attain buddhahood.

### *Teaching and Benefiting Sentient Beings*

This chapter outlines each of the places Milarepa practices and the most important students he encounters, each of which is recounted fully in the *Collected Songs*.

### *The Dissolution of His Form Kaya into the Dharmadhatu*

The final chapter of Tsangnyön’s *Life of Milarepa* moves away from the format of Milarepa telling his life story to his disciples, and is told by a third-person narrator.

The chapter begins telling of Geshe Tsakpuwa who is very learned in intellectual dharma, but in no way embodies the teachings. He has great jealousy

toward Milarepa and compels his lover, by offering payment with a valuable piece of turquoise, to give Milarepa poisoned curds to eat. Milarepa knows of the scheme and knows the geshe did not intend to give the turquoise, so he tells the woman to bring the curds later in order for her to actually receive the turquoise from the geshe. She does so, receives the turquoise, and confesses the scheme before giving the poisoned food to Milarepa. Milarepa says that he already knew about the poison and that even if he ate it, it would not harm him; but since his life of practice and guiding disciples was fulfilled, it is time for him to die. He eats the curds so that the geshe's intentions will be accomplished. Knowing his death is imminent, he summons his many lay students and disciples and teaches the dharma for many days.

Many wondrous signs and miracles manifest, with devas appearing to some present. When asked why these signs appeared, Milarepa explains that the devas came to hear the dharma, and that those who had gathered enough of the two accumulations were able to see them. He encourages them all to gather the accumulations. The students of Nyanang, Dingri, and other regions intuit that he will not live much longer and beg him to come to their lands one last time. Milarepa expresses his intention to go to await his death at Drin and Chuwar, and tells the students to make aspirations that they meet a pure celestial realm.

The disciples eventually come to realize Milarepa will soon die and offer fervently to perform long-life ceremonies for him. Milarepa says that they will be of no avail. Milarepa proceeds to give a number of explicit dharma teachings and pieces of advice. Geshe Tsakpuwa hears of Milarepa's worsening condition and goes to falsely offer respects. Thinking Milarepa is incapable of doing so, he requests that the illness be transferred to him. Milarepa refuses, saying that though he is capable, the geshe would not be able to take even a moment of it. The geshe openly doubts him, then to prove he is capable, Milarepa transfers the sickness to the door of the chamber, which breaks and crashes down. The geshe is still doubtful and Milarepa transfers a small portion of the illness from the door to the geshe, who collapses, writhing in pain. Then Milarepa again transfers the illness back into himself. The geshe experiences genuine regret, confesses, and offers all his belongings to Milarepa, who forgives him without taking the offerings. The geshe eventually renounces this life and becomes an excellent dharma practitioner. Saying that he only stayed to give the geshe an opportunity to confess his negative deed, Milarepa then goes to Chuwar to "display the appearance of illness and death."

He gives teachings in Chuwar and proceeds to give various belongings to his

disciples to make a good connection and tells them not to move his body until Rechungpa arrives. He then gives some more dharma advice, and at the age of eighty-four, his “body dissolves into the dharmadhatu.”

Many miraculous signs appeared with devas and dakinis present until the end of the funeral rites. Then conflict arises over who should take charge of the body and where it should be cremated. A ‘divine youth’ appears and in the sky and in Milarepa’s voice sings a song declaring how foolish it is to quarrel over a body that has dissolved into the dharmakaya. Subsequently, the quarreling stops and everyone is overjoyed, thinking they have seen Milarepa. The disciples and people of Drin are relieved that they will not lose purview over the body, and the people of Nyanang believe they have obtained it and proceed with the cremation in Lachi. Meanwhile, in Drin the students there pray over the body, which has taken the form of an eight-year-old youth. Thinking that Rechungpa will not come, they proceed to cremate the body, but it will not burn. After the dakinis sing a song to them, Ngendzong Repa notes that Rechungpa will likely come since the body did not burn.

Rechungpa is staying in Lorodol when he has a dream of meeting Milarepa and later a vision of dakinis urging him to go to meet Milarepa lest he never meet him again. Rechungpa sets off and along the path encounters Milarepa in person, making Rechungpa question if he had really died. When Rechungpa arrives in Chuwar, he is stopped from approaching the body by some younger disciples who do not know him. Rechungpa sings a song of sorrow and longing. At that point the body regains its radiance and bursts into a blaze. Rechungpa eventually approaches the body, and Milarepa speaks to him, telling everyone to listen to his final song, his last testament, which he sings from within the cremation chamber. At that, his body again dissolves into luminosity and the cremation chamber transforms into a great celestial palace. Many miraculous visions appear with devas and dakinis singing and making offerings. When the blaze dies down, the students and disciples enter the chamber hoping to recover the sacred relics. Rechungpa discovers that the dakinis have swept away the physical relics and sings a song of heartfelt longing. When the song is sung, a relic the size of an egg descends and all of the disciples reach out to it, saying, “It’s mine!” The relic then ascends and transforms into different parts, one becoming a crystal stupa. The dakinis sing a song explaining that it was an object of devotion for everyone, not to be acquired by saying it belongs to any one individual. They explain that its compassion would always be present for all who offer prayers. Repa Shiwa Ö then sings a song of supplication asking the dakinis to allow the stupa to remain



as an object of devotion for the human disciples there. Milarepa's form appears within the stupa and he sings a song dispelling the mistaken notion that the disciples need a physical object toward which to have devotion. The stupa is then taken up by the dakinis.

Distraught, the disciples offer prayers, and the voice of Milarepa speaks to them, saying there is an object worthy of their devotion under a stone upon which four letters have appeared. They find the stone and place it at Chuwar, where it remains. They then decide that they should look for the gold that Milarepa had previously said he left for them. At the place that Milarepa had foretold, they find a cloth, a small knife, and a piece of sugar. Upon the blade of the knife is a message telling them to cut the cloth and sugar into pieces and distribute them, that the cloth and sugar will never be exhausted, and whoever tastes or touches it will be liberated from the lower realms for seven lifetimes. The message concludes with: "Whoever said that Milarepa had gold, fill his mouth with shit." Though they were sad, this made all the senior disciples laugh. More miraculous signs appear with a rain of flowers falling that serve to bless the land, relieving all sickness and strife. The chapter ends with a concluding statement about Milarepa's perfect example and how he benefited beings.

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\*<sup>1</sup> From this point on in the summary, the name "Milarepa" is used in place of Töpa-ga.

## APPENDIX 2:

### Tibetan Equivalents for Place Names and Personal Names

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|                                    |                                                |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Arya Amoghapasha                   | <i>'phags pa don yod<br/>zhags pa</i>          |
| Auspicious Goddess Cave            | <i>bkra shis lha mo<br/>phug</i>               |
| Betse Döyön Fortress               | <i>be rtse 'dod yon<br/>rdzong</i>             |
| Bharima                            | <i>bha ri ma</i>                               |
| Cham-Mé                            | <i>lcam me</i>                                 |
| Champoche                          | <i>phyam po che</i>                            |
| Chim Valley                        | <i>lcim lung</i>                               |
| Chok-kyi Gocha                     | <i>phyogs kyi go cha</i>                       |
| Chonglung                          | <i>mchong lung</i>                             |
| Chonglung Red Rock Garuda Fortress | <i>mchong lung brag<br/>dmar khyung rdzong</i> |
| Choro                              | <i>lco ro</i>                                  |
| Chung                              | <i>gcung</i>                                   |
| Chuwar                             | <i>chu dbar</i>                                |
| Chuwo Sang River                   | <i>chu bo bzang</i>                            |
| Crystal Cave Water-Wood Fortress   | <i>shel phug chu shing<br/>rdzong</i>          |
| Cuckoo Solitary Fortress           | <i>khu byug dben pa<br/>rdzong</i>             |
| Daklha Gampo                       | <i>dvag lha sgam po</i>                        |
| Dampa Gyakpupa                     | <i>dam pa rgyags phu<br/>pa</i>                |
| Dampa Sangye of Dingri             | <i>lding ri na dam pa<br/>sangs rgyas</i>      |
| Darlo                              | <i>dar blo</i>                                 |
| Dawa Norbu                         |                                                |

|                        |                                            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|                        | <i>zla ba nor bu</i>                       |
| Demon Pond             | <i>dmu rdzing</i>                          |
| Depé Cham-mé           | <i>dad pa'i lcam me</i>                    |
| Dewakyong              | <i>bde ba skyong</i>                       |
| Dharmabodhi            | <i>dharma bo dhi</i>                       |
| Dingma                 | <i>ding ma</i>                             |
| Dingma Drin            | <i>ding ma brin</i>                        |
| Dingri Khokna          | <i>ding ri khog sna</i>                    |
| Do                     | <i>rdo</i>                                 |
| Drakya Vajra Fortress  | <i>brag skya rdo rje<br/>rdzong</i>        |
| Drangso Trawa Pass     | <i>grang so khra bo la</i>                 |
| Dretön                 | <i>'bre ston</i>                           |
| Drigom Lingkhawa       | <i>bri sgom gling kha<br/>pa</i>           |
| Drigom Repa            | <i>bri sgom ras pa</i>                     |
| Drik                   | <i>'brig</i>                               |
| Drin                   | <i>drin</i>                                |
| Dritse Snow Mountain   | <i>'bri rtse'i gangs</i>                   |
| Drotang                | <i>gro thang</i>                           |
| Dungdra                | <i>dung sgra</i>                           |
| Dütsi Ngödrup River    | <i>bdud rtsi dngos grub<br/>kyi chu bo</i> |
| Dzesé                  | <i>mdzed se</i>                            |
| Dzesé Bum              | <i>mdzed se 'bum</i>                       |
| Dziwo Repa             | <i>rdzi bo ras pa</i>                      |
| Enlightenment Fortress | <i>byang chub rdzong</i>                   |
| Five Small Lakes       | <i>mtsho lnga de'u<br/>chung</i>           |
| Gampo Dar Mountain     | <i>sgam po gdar gyi ri<br/>bo</i>          |
| Gampopa                | <i>sgam po pa</i>                          |
| Garakache Inn          | <i>gar a kha che'i</i>                     |

|                             |                                              |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
|                             | <i>mgron khang</i>                           |
| Gekhö                       | <i>ge khod</i>                               |
| Gepa Lesum                  | <i>gad pa gle gsum</i>                       |
| Goat Pass                   | <i>ra la</i>                                 |
| Golung Menchu Cave          | <i>go lung sman chu'i<br/>phug</i>           |
| Gön Dzong                   | <i>dgon rdzong</i>                           |
| Great Cave of Taming Demons | <i>bdud 'dul phug mo<br/>che</i>             |
| Gungtang                    | <i>gung thang</i>                            |
| Guru Bari Lotsawa           | <i>bla ma ba ri lo tsA<br/>ba</i>            |
| Guru Tsemchen of Latö       | <i>la stod na gu ru<br/>tshems chen</i>      |
| Gyachag Ri                  | <i>rgya lcags ri</i>                         |
| Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain      | <i>rgyal gyi shrI ri</i>                     |
| Gyaltrom                    | <i>rgyal khrom</i>                           |
| Gyetön Ngokme               | <i>dgyes ston rngog me</i>                   |
| Gyiling                     | <i>gyi ling</i>                              |
| Hidden Cave Sheep Fortress  | <i>sbas phug ma mo<br/>rdzong</i>            |
| Horse Saddle Rock Cave      | <i>brag rta sga'i phug</i>                   |
| Immaculate Rock             | <i>gtsang ba brag</i>                        |
| Invincible Turquoise Lake   | <i>ma pham g.yu mtsho</i>                    |
| Jang Tago Snow Mountain     | <i>byang rta sgo'i<br/>gangs</i>             |
| Jangchup Bar                | <i>byang chub 'bar</i>                       |
| Jarpo Forest                | <i>byar po'i nags</i>                        |
| Jayul                       | <i>bya yul</i>                               |
| Jo-gom Repa Darma Wangchuk  | <i>jo sgom ras pa dar<br/>ma dbang phyug</i> |
| Jomo Urmo                   | <i>jo mo 'ur mo</i>                          |
| Kagyu                       | <i>bka' brgyud</i>                           |
| Katya Cave                  | <i>ka ta ya phug</i>                         |

|                                        |                                                |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Katya Crystal Cave Water-Wood Fortress | <i>ka tya'i shel phug<br/>chu shing rdzong</i> |
| Khala Rong-go                          | <i>kha la rong sgo</i>                         |
| Kharchung Repa                         | <i>mkhar chung ras pa</i>                      |
| Khokhom                                | <i>kho khom</i>                                |
| Khokhom King                           | <i>kho khom rgyal</i>                          |
| Khyira Repa                            | <i>khyi ra ras pa</i>                          |
| Khyirawa Gönpo Dorje                   | <i>khyi ra ba dgon po<br/>rdo rje</i>          |
| Khyitön                                | <i>khyi ston</i>                               |
| Khyung-go Tashi Snow Mountain          | <i>gangs khyung mgo<br/>bkra shis</i>          |
| Kora Pass                              | <i>skor ra la</i>                              |
| Kutang                                 | <i>ku thang</i>                                |
| Kyangpen Sky Fortress                  | <i>skyang phan nam<br/>mkha' rdzong</i>        |
| Kyidrong                               | <i>skyid grong</i>                             |
| Kyipuk Nyima Fortress                  | <i>skyid phug nyi ma<br/>rdzong</i>            |
| Kyitang                                | <i>skyid thang</i>                             |
| Lachi                                  | <i>la phyi</i>                                 |
| Lachi Chuzang                          | <i>la phyi chu bzang</i>                       |
| Lachi Nayön Chudo                      | <i>la phyi rna g.yon<br/>chu mdo</i>           |
| Lachi Snow Mountain                    | <i>la phyi gangs</i>                           |
| Lake Manasarovar                       | <i>ma pham mtsho</i>                           |
| Lang-go Ludü Fortress                  | <i>glang sgo klu bdud<br/>rdzong</i>           |
| Lapuk                                  | <i>la phug</i>                                 |
| Lapuk Pema Fortress                    | <i>la phug padma<br/>rdzong</i>                |
| Lasé Monastery                         | <i>la ze dgon pa</i>                           |
| Lashing                                | <i>la zhing</i>                                |
| Latö                                   |                                                |

|                        |                                            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| -----                  | <i>la stod</i>                             |
| Leksé Bum              | <i>legs se 'bum</i>                        |
| Len (clan)             | <i>glen</i>                                |
| Lengom Repa            | <i>glen sgom ras pa</i>                    |
| Lhadro                 | <i>lha bro</i>                             |
| Lhajé Nupchung         | <i>lha rje gnubs chung</i>                 |
| Lhajé Yangé            | <i>lha rje g.yang nge</i>                  |
| Lhamen Tashi Tseringma | <i>lha sman bkra shis<br/>tshe ring ma</i> |
| Likor Charuwa          | <i>lo skor phya ru ba</i>                  |
| Lingpa Rock Cave       | <i>ling pa'i brag phug</i>                 |
| Lohit River            | <i>chu bo lo hi ta</i>                     |
| Lokchang Marmo         | <i>glong spyang dmar<br/>mo</i>            |
| Lotön Gendun           | <i>blo ston dge 'dun</i>                   |
| Lotön Gendunbum        | <i>blo ston dge 'dun<br/>'bum</i>          |
| Lotus Cave             | <i>padma phug</i>                          |
| Lower Bong             | <i>bong shod</i>                           |
| Lower Gyaltrom         | <i>rgyal khrom smad</i>                    |
| Lower Khumbu           | <i>sma shod khum bu</i>                    |
| Lowo Lake              | <i>glo bo mtsho</i>                        |
| Lukdzi Repa            | <i>lug rdzi ras pa</i>                     |
| Luminosity Cave        | <i>'od gsal phug</i>                       |
| Machik Drupé Gyalmo    | <i>ma gcig grub pa'i<br/>rgyal mo</i>      |
| Mangyul                | <i>mang yul</i>                            |
| Mayang                 | <i>rma g.yang</i>                          |
| Marpa from Lhodrak     | <i>lho brag mar pa</i>                     |
| Mé (clan)              | <i>mes</i>                                 |
| Mégom Repa             | <i>mes sgom ras pa</i>                     |
| Men-tsun-mo Palace     | <i>sman btsun gyi pho<br/>brang</i>        |

|                                        |                                                    |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Menlha Mountain                        | <i>smān lha ri</i>                                 |
| Menlung Chuwar                         | <i>smān lung chu dbar</i>                          |
| Menlung Valley                         | <i>smān lung</i>                                   |
| Menmo Tashi Tseringma                  | <i>smān mo bkra shis<br/>tshe ring ma</i>          |
| Meru Singha                            | <i>me ru singha</i>                                |
| Mila Sherap Gyaltzen                   | <i>mi la shes rab rgyal<br/>mtshan</i>             |
| Mila Töpa-ga                           | <i>mi la thos pa dga'</i>                          |
| Milarepa of Nyanang                    | <i>gnya' nang na mi la<br/>ras pa</i>              |
| Miraculous Light Path of Samanta Tsari | <i>sa manta tsa ri rdzu<br/>'phrul 'od kyi lam</i> |
| Mönri Mountain                         | <i>mon ri spo tho</i>                              |
| Mönyul                                 | <i>mon yul</i>                                     |
| Mönyul Tiger Cave Lion Fortress        | <i>mon yul stag phuk<br/>seng ge rdzong</i>        |
| Munpa Dradrok                          | <i>mun pa sgra grogs</i>                           |
| Naga King Nga-dra                      | <i>klu'i rgal po rnga<br/>sgra</i>                 |
| Nairatmya Devi                         | <i>bdag med ma (lha<br/>mo)</i>                    |
| Naktra                                 | <i>snag phra</i>                                   |
| Nam Lo King                            | <i>gnam lo rgyal po</i>                            |
| Namar                                  | <i>sna dmar</i>                                    |
| Nangsal Drönmé                         | <i>snang gsal sgron me</i>                         |
| Nangyul Mountain                       | <i>snang yul gyi ri</i>                            |
| Naro Bönchung                          | <i>na ro bon chung</i>                             |
| Nepal Fortress                         | <i>bal po rdzong</i>                               |
| Ngendzong                              | <i>ngan rdzong</i>                                 |
| Ngendzong Tönpa                        | <i>ngan rdzong ston pa</i>                         |
| Ngendzong Tönpa Bodhiraja              | <i>ngan rdzong ston pa<br/>bod hi rA dza</i>       |
| Ngendzong Tönpa Jangchup Gyalpo        | <i>ngan rdzong ston pa</i>                         |

|                            |                                                |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                            | <i>byang chub rgyal po</i>                     |
| Ngok Chöku Dorje           | <i>rngog chos sku rdo<br/>rje</i>              |
| Ngokang                    | <i>sngo skang</i>                              |
| Nirmanakaya Palace         | <i>sprul sku'i pho brang</i>                   |
| Nyal                       | <i>gnyal</i>                                   |
| Nyanang                    | <i>gnya' nang</i>                              |
| Nyanang Belly Cave         | <i>gnya' nang grod<br/>phug</i>                |
| Nyangtsha Kargyen          | <i>myang tsha dkar<br/>rgyan</i>               |
| Nyen-yön Cave              | <i>snyan g.yon phug</i>                        |
| Nyip (clan)                | <i>snyib</i>                                   |
| Nyishang Gurta             | <i>gnyi shang 'gur rta</i>                     |
| Nyithong                   | <i>nyi mthongs</i>                             |
| Omchung Pal Forest         | <i>'om chung dpal gyi<br/>nags 'dabs</i>       |
| Padruk                     | <i>pha drug</i>                                |
| Paldarbum                  | <i>dpal dar 'bum</i>                           |
| Palkhü Fortress            | <i>dpal khud kyi<br/>rdzong</i>                |
| Palkhü Plain               | <i>dpal khud kyi thang</i>                     |
| Paltang                    | <i>dpal thang</i>                              |
| Pee-Ling Surkha            | <i>pi ling zur kha</i>                         |
| Penyul                     | <i>'phan yul</i>                               |
| Peta                       | <i>pe ta</i>                                   |
| Peta Gönkyi                | <i>pe ta mgon skyid</i>                        |
| Phu Yak Za                 | <i>phu yag za</i>                              |
| Poto                       | <i>spo mtho</i>                                |
| Poto Red Rock Sky Fortress | <i>brag dmar spo mtho<br/>nam mkha' rdzong</i> |
| Precious Sky Lake          | <i>gnam mtsho phyug<br/>mo</i>                 |
| Pura Pass                  | <i>phu ra la</i>                               |



|                                       |                                                |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Purang                                | <i>pu rangs</i>                                |
| Puto Monastery                        | <i>dgon pa pu to</i>                           |
| Rakma Enlightenment Practice Fortress | <i>rag ma byang chub<br/>sgrub pa'i rdzong</i> |
| Ralung                                | <i>ra lung</i>                                 |
| Ramding Sky Cave                      | <i>ram sdings gnam<br/>phug</i>                |
| Ramizin                               | <i>ra mi zin</i>                               |
| Rana                                  | <i>ra sna</i>                                  |
| Rangjung Yeshe                        | <i>rang byung ye shes</i>                      |
| Rangtön Lhaga                         | <i>rang stong lha dga'</i>                     |
| Ratön Darma Lodrö                     | <i>ra ston dar ma blo<br/>gros</i>             |
| Rechen Practice Cave                  | <i>sgrub phug ras chen</i>                     |
| Rechungma                             | <i>ras chung ma</i>                            |
| Rechungpa Dorje Drakpa                | <i>ras chung pa rdo rje<br/>grags pa</i>       |
| Rekpa Dukchen Boulder                 | <i>pha bong reg pa dug<br/>can</i>             |
| Repa Darma Wangchuk                   | <i>ras pa dar ma<br/>dbang phyug</i>           |
| Repa Dorje Wangchuk                   | <i>ras pa rdo rje dbang<br/>phyug</i>          |
| Repa Shiwa Ö                          | <i>ras pa zhi ba 'od</i>                       |
| Rikpé Kye'u-chung                     | <i>rig pa'i khye'u chung</i>                   |
| Riwo Palbar                           | <i>ri bo dpal 'bar</i>                         |
| Rongchung Repa                        | <i>rong chung ras pa</i>                       |
| Rönphu                                | <i>ron phu</i>                                 |
| Sahle Ö                               | <i>sa le 'od</i>                               |
| Sangye Kyap                           | <i>sangs rgyas skyabs</i>                      |
| Se'i Lhamo of Mangyul                 | <i>mang yul gyi bse'i<br/>lha mo</i>           |
| Seben Repa                            | <i>se ban ras pa</i>                           |
| Seben Repa of Dotra                   | <i>mdo bkra'i se ben</i>                       |

|                            |                                                 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                            | <i>ras pa</i>                                   |
| Semodo                     | <i>se mo do</i>                                 |
| Sewa Valley                | <i>se ba lung</i>                               |
| Shakya Guna                | <i>shA kya gu na</i>                            |
| Shampo Snow Mountain       | <i>sham po'i gangs</i>                          |
| Shendormo                  | <i>gshen rdor mo</i>                            |
| Shengom Repa               | <i>gshen sgom ras pa</i>                        |
| Shila Bharo of Nepal       | <i>bal po na shi la bha<br/>ro</i>              |
| Shravasti                  | <i>gnyan yod</i>                                |
| Shri Mountain              | <i>shrI'i ri</i>                                |
| Shuyé (clan)               | <i>zhu yas</i>                                  |
| Shuyé Darma Wangchuk       | <i>zhu yas dar ma<br/>dbang phyug</i>           |
| Sigyalma                   | <i>srid rgyal ma</i>                            |
| Silk Cave                  | <i>za 'og phuk</i>                              |
| Silver Spring Stupa        | <i>chu mig dngul 'bum</i>                       |
| Singa Ling                 | <i>sing ga gling</i>                            |
| Sonam Rinchen              | <i>bsod nams rin chen</i>                       |
| Svastika-Bön               | <i>g.yung drung bon</i>                         |
| Tak (clan)                 | <i>stag</i>                                     |
| Takgom Repa Dorje Wangchuk | <i>stag sgom ras pa rdo<br/>rje dbang phyug</i> |
| Takla Peak                 | <i>stag la'i rtse</i>                           |
| Tashi Gang                 | <i>bkra shis sgang</i>                          |
| Tashi Oma River            | <i>bkra shis 'o ma'i chu<br/>bo</i>             |
| Tashi Tsek                 | <i>bkra shis brtsegs</i>                        |
| Tashi Tseringma            | <i>bkra shis tshe ring<br/>ma</i>               |
| Teacher Shakya Guna        | <i>ston pa shAkya guna</i>                      |
| Tiger Cave Lion Fortress   | <i>stag phug seng ge<br/>rdzong</i>             |

|                                                    |                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Tilopa Sherap Sangpo                               | <i>ti lo shes rab bzang<br/>po</i>        |
| Tipupa                                             | <i>ti pu pa</i>                           |
| Tisé Snow Mountain                                 | <i>gangs ti se</i>                        |
| Tongla Ngonmo                                      | <i>thong la sngon mo</i>                  |
| Töpé Gyalpo                                        | <i>thos pa'i rgyal po</i>                 |
| Traktung Kha-gyingwa                               | <i>khrag 'thung mkha<br/>'gying ba</i>    |
| Tsang                                              | <i>gtsang</i>                             |
| Tsaphu                                             | <i>rtsa phu</i>                           |
| Tsaphu Repa                                        | <i>rtsa phu ras pa</i>                    |
| Tsarma                                             | <i>rtsar ma</i>                           |
| Tsen Döshö                                         | <i>btsan sdod shod</i>                    |
| Tseringma                                          | <i>tshe ring ma</i>                       |
| Tsikpa Kangthil Fortress                           | <i>rtsig pa rkang thil<br/>rdzong</i>     |
| Tsinesar                                           | <i>rtsis gnas gsar</i>                    |
| Uddiyana                                           | <i>o rgyan</i>                            |
| Upper Koktang                                      | <i>lkog thang stod</i>                    |
| Upper Nyang                                        | <i>myang stod</i>                         |
| Ushnishavijaya                                     | <i>gtsug tor rnam par<br/>rgyal ma</i>    |
| Vajragarbha                                        | <i>rdo rje snying po</i>                  |
| Varachandra                                        | <i>wa la tsandra</i>                      |
| White Rock Horse Tooth Central Channel<br>Fortress | <i>brag dkar rta so dbu<br/>ma rdzong</i> |
| Yakdé Valley                                       | <i>rong g.yag sde</i>                     |
| Yakru Tangpa                                       | <i>g.yag ru thang pa</i>                  |
| Yangé                                              | <i>g.yang nge</i>                         |
| Yerang                                             | <i>ye rang</i>                            |
| Yeru                                               | <i>g.yas ru</i>                           |
| Yeshen                                             | <i>ye gshan</i>                           |
| Yolmo                                              | <i>yol mo</i>                             |

Yönten Gyatso  
Zadong Marnak

*yon tan rgya mtsho*  
*gza' gdong dmar*  
*nag*

## APPENDIX 3:

### Tibetan-English Glossary

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|                                        |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>ka pA la</i>                        | kapala                                                |
| <i>kun tu bde</i>                      | prosperity                                            |
| <i>kun gzhi</i>                        | all-base                                              |
| <i>kun gzhi rnam shes</i>              | all-base consciousness                                |
| <i>klu</i>                             | naga                                                  |
| <i>klong gyur</i>                      | mastery                                               |
| <i>dkar ba'i chos</i>                  | pure dharma                                           |
| <i>bka' 'drin gsum</i>                 | three kindnesses                                      |
| <i>bka' 'bangs</i>                     | subject                                               |
| <i>bkod pa</i>                         | display (of miraculous body)                          |
| <i>skal ldan</i>                       | suitable ones,<br>fortunate ones                      |
| <i>skal ba</i>                         | fortune, lot, qualified,<br>merit                     |
| <i>sku bzhi</i>                        | four kayas                                            |
| <i>skyi ser</i>                        | wind                                                  |
| <i>skye mched</i>                      | ayatana                                               |
| <i>skyel ma</i>                        | guide                                                 |
| <i>skyo shas</i>                       | disillusionment                                       |
| <i>skyon</i>                           | fault                                                 |
| <i>bskyed pa</i>                       | rouse, generate,<br>develop, give rise to             |
| <i>bskyes rim</i>                      | creation stage                                        |
| <i>kha ta skam po/ kha lta skam po</i> | empty speech                                          |
| <i>kha zhe med</i>                     | without hypocrisy<br>("mouth in accord with<br>mind") |

|                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>khams</i>                        | elements, dhatus                     |
| <i>khams kyi lus</i>                | elemental body                       |
| <i>khams gsum</i>                   | three realms                         |
| <i>khams 'dus</i>                   | gathering of the dhatus              |
| <i>khyim thab</i>                   | householder life;<br>spouse and home |
| <i>khye'u chung</i>                 | small child, young man               |
| <i>khram pa</i>                     | cunning                              |
| <i>khrel yod</i>                    | heedfulness                          |
| <i>mkha' 'gro</i>                   | dakini                               |
| <i>mkhas btsun</i>                  | learned and pure                     |
| <i>'khor lo sgyur ba'i rgyal po</i> | chakravartin king                    |
| <i>'khor lo bde mchog</i>           | Chakrasamvara                        |
| <i>'khyams pa</i>                   | vagabond                             |
| <i>'khrul 'khor</i>                 | <i>trulkhor</i>                      |
| <i>'khrul snang</i>                 | confused appearances                 |
| <i>'khrul ba</i>                    | delusion                             |
| <i>gangs</i>                        | snow, snow mountain,<br>snowy range  |
| <i>gegs</i>                         | hindrance                            |
| <i>gol sa</i>                       | deviation                            |
| <i>grub thob</i>                    | siddha                               |
| <i>grub thob chen po</i>            | mahasiddha                           |
| <i>grul bum</i>                     | kumbanda                             |
| <i>grnng 'jug</i>                   | “entering the<br>deceased”           |
| <i>dga' ldan</i>                    | Tushita                              |
| <i>dge sbyor</i>                    | virtuous activity                    |
| <i>dge bshes</i>                    | geshe                                |
| <i>dgra lha</i>                     | <i>dralha</i>                        |
| <i>bgegs</i>                        | obstructing spirit                   |
| <i>'gegs</i>                        | obstructions,<br>obstructing spirits |

|                            |                                                               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | obstructing spirits                                           |
| <i>'gyings ba</i>          | majestically poised,<br>majestic stance                       |
| <i>sgo gsum</i>            | three gates                                                   |
| <i>sgrub mchod</i>         | ritual practice                                               |
| <i>sgro 'dogs</i>          | imputations, doubts,<br>mistaken perceptions                  |
| <i>ngan pa</i>             | bad, unwholesome                                              |
| <i>nges don</i>            | definitive meaning                                            |
| <i>ngo sprod</i>           | pointing out                                                  |
| <i>ngo bo nyid kyi sku</i> | svabhavikakaya                                                |
| <i>dngos grub</i>          | siddhi                                                        |
| <i>mngon shes</i>          | higher perceptions                                            |
| <i>sngags gyi theg pa</i>  | Mantrayana                                                    |
| <i>sngags pa</i>           | mantrika                                                      |
| <i>sngo sangs</i>          | dark skinned                                                  |
| <i>gcod</i>                | Chö                                                           |
| <i>bcud len</i>            | <i>rasayana</i>                                               |
| <i>cho 'phrul</i>          | magical display,<br>magical appearance,<br>magic              |
| <i>chos sku</i>            | dharmakaya                                                    |
| <i>chos nyid</i>           | dharmata                                                      |
| <i>mchod rten</i>          | stupa                                                         |
| <i>mchod gnas</i>          | object of veneration                                          |
| <i>'char sgo</i>           | Negative<br>manifestations;<br>manifestations;<br>experiences |
| <i>rje grub thob</i>       | siddha lord                                                   |
| <i>rje btsun</i>           | Jetsun                                                        |
| <i>rje ras pa</i>          | Repa Lord                                                     |
| <i>nya ma</i>              | students                                                      |
| <i>nyag gcig</i>           | unique                                                        |

|                            |                                                         |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>nyams su len</i>        | bring to experience,<br>practice                        |
| <i>nyon mongs</i>          | affliction                                              |
| <i>gnyugs ma</i>           | innate                                                  |
| <i>mnyam bzhaḡ</i>         | meditative equipoise,<br>rest evenly                    |
| <i>snying stobs</i>        | bravery, confidence                                     |
| <i>snying rus</i>          | perseverance                                            |
| <i>snyan brgyud</i>        | whispered lineage                                       |
| <i>snyoms 'jug</i>         | absorption                                              |
| <i>bsnyen bkur</i>         | service, service and<br>respect                         |
| <i>ti se gangs</i>         | Tisé Snow Mountain                                      |
| <i>ting dzin sems dpa'</i> | samadhisattva                                           |
| <i>tog ge ba</i>           | logician                                                |
| <i>gtang rag</i>           | feast, thanksgiving<br>feast                            |
| <i>gti mug</i>             | stupidity, delusion                                     |
| <i>gtum mo</i>             | chandali                                                |
| <i>rten 'brel</i>          | <i>tendrel</i>                                          |
| <i>ltas</i>                | omen                                                    |
| <i>lto 'phye</i>           | mahoraga                                                |
| <i>ston mo</i>             | banquet                                                 |
| <i>thang ka</i>            | thangka                                                 |
| <i>thar pa</i>             | freedom, liberation                                     |
| <i>thig le</i>             | bindu                                                   |
| <i>thigs tshags</i>        | prepare                                                 |
| <i>thugs rje 'dzin</i>     | please accept me with<br>compassion                     |
| <i>thugs rje gzigs</i>     | please look upon me<br>with compassion                  |
| <i>thugs dam</i>           | practice, sacred bond,<br>experience and<br>realization |



|                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>thun mtshams</i>                  | sessions and breaks      |
| <i>thun bzhi rnal 'byor</i>          | four-session yoga        |
| <i>thub pa</i>                       | muni                     |
| <i>the tshom</i>                     | doubt, apprehension      |
| <i>theg pa</i>                       | yana                     |
| <i>thod phor</i>                     | skull-cup                |
| <i>mtshu</i>                         | black magic, magic       |
| <i>dag snang</i>                     | pure vision              |
| <i>dad pa skyo med</i>               | untiring faith           |
| <i>dad pa 'gyur med</i>              | unwavering faith         |
| <i>dad pa dungs pa</i>               | heartfelt faith          |
| <i>du ma ro gcig</i>                 | many in single taste     |
| <i>dUti</i>                          | avadhuti                 |
| <i>dus snyigs ma</i>                 | polluted age             |
| <i>dog sa</i>                        | valley, alcove           |
| <i>dogs pa</i>                       | trepidation, worry       |
| <i>drang don</i>                     | provisional              |
| meaning                              | <i>drang srong</i>       |
| sage, rishi                          | <i>dri za</i>            |
| gandharva, disembodied consciousness | <i>gdams ngag</i>        |
| key instructions                     | <i>gdug pa</i>           |
| malevolence                          | <i>gdon bgegs</i>        |
| obstructing spirits and demons       | <i>gdung ba</i>          |
| torment                              | <i>bdud</i>              |
| mara                                 | <i>bdud rtsi</i>         |
| amrita                               | <i>bdud kyi bar chad</i> |
| demonic                              | obstructions             |
| <i>bdun tshigs</i>                   | weekly rites             |
| <i>bde ba</i>                        | feel good, bliss, happy  |
| <i>bde ba can</i>                    | Sukhavati                |
| <i>mdo</i>                           | essential point,         |

|                            |                                                  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                            | confluence, crossroads                           |
| <i>'dun pa</i>             | intention,<br>determination                      |
| <i>'dre</i>                | ghost                                            |
| <i>rdo rje 'chang</i>      | Vajradhara                                       |
| <i>sdig pa</i>             | negativity, negative<br>action                   |
| <i>sdug 'dre</i>           | malevolent demons                                |
| <i>sde gnod</i>            | pitaka                                           |
| <i>na ro chos drug</i>     | Six Dharmas of<br>Naropa                         |
| <i>nam 'chi cha med</i>    | uncertainty of the time<br>of death              |
| <i>gnad</i>                | key point, vital point                           |
| <i>gnas</i>                | site (for places where<br>Mila stayed)           |
| <i>gnas lugs</i>           | abiding nature                                   |
| <i>gnod sbyin</i>          | yaksha                                           |
| <i>rnal 'byor spyod pa</i> | conduct of yogic<br>discipline; yogic<br>conduct |
| <i>rnal ma</i>             | naturalness                                      |
| <i>sna tshogs</i>          | variety, myriad,<br>variety of appearances       |
| <i>snang ba</i>            | appearance,<br>experience, outlook               |
| <i>snang ba 'gyur</i>      | outlook changed                                  |
| <i>snang srid</i>          | all phenomenal<br>existence, all<br>phenomena    |
| <i>snang srid lha 'dre</i> | ghosts and devas of all<br>phenomenal existence  |
| <i>dpa' tshul</i>          | heroic pride                                     |
| <i>spangs pa</i>           | abandoned, free of                               |
| <i>spyod yul</i>           | domain                                           |
|                            | nirmanakava                                      |

|                            |                                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>sprul sku</i>           | transformations                       |
| <i>sprul bsgyur</i>        | transformations                       |
| <i>spros pa</i>            | elaborations                          |
| <i>pha rol tu phyin pa</i> | paramita                              |
| <i>phan sems</i>           | altruism                              |
| <i>phangs</i>              | regrettable loss,<br>regrettable      |
| <i>phangs med</i>          | without hesitation                    |
| <i>phung 'dre</i>          | destructive demon                     |
| <i>phung po</i>            | skandhas                              |
| <i>phungs sri</i>          | ruinous demon                         |
| <i>phun sum tshogs</i>     | abundance, abundant                   |
| <i>pho lha</i>             | male deity                            |
| <i>phrin las</i>           | activity, dharma<br>activity          |
| <i>phyag rgya chen po</i>  | Mahamudra                             |
| <i>phyogs med</i>          | free of bias, without<br>taking sides |
| <i>phyogs ris med</i>      | with no fixed direction               |
| <i>phyogs lhung</i>        | bias, fall into bias                  |
| <i>'phags nor bdun</i>     | seven noble riches                    |
| <i>'pho ba</i>             | transference,<br>movement             |
| <i>'pho 'gyur</i>          | movement and change                   |
| <i>'phrang</i>             | treacherous, obstacles                |
| <i>'phrang lam</i>         | treacherous path                      |
| <i>bar chad</i>            | Obstacles                             |
| <i>bar chad bdud</i>       | Demonic obstructions                  |
| <i>bar do</i>              | bardo                                 |
| <i>bon can</i>             | Bön phenomenon                        |
| <i>bon chog</i>            | Bön ritual                            |
| <i>bu yug</i>              | blizzard                              |
|                            | disciple-sons                         |

|                                         |                                               |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <i>bu slob</i>                          | disciple-sons                                 |
| <i>byang chub sems</i>                  | bodhicitta                                    |
| <i>byang chub sems dpa'</i>             | bodhisattva                                   |
| <i>bla mchod</i>                        | resident lama                                 |
| <i>bla na med pa'i rnal 'byor rgyud</i> | anuttarayoga tantra                           |
| <i>dbang</i>                            | abhisheka                                     |
| <i>dbang 'dus</i>                       | bring under control;<br>perfect mastery       |
| <i>dbang yon</i>                        | initiation gift                               |
| <i>dben pa</i>                          | solitary place                                |
| <i>dbyangs</i>                          | melody                                        |
| <i>dbyings</i>                          | expanse (of sky);<br>space (of dharmata)      |
| <i>'byung po</i>                        | bhūta (spirit)                                |
| <i>'byung ba bzhi'i skye mched</i>      | constituents of the<br>four elements          |
| <i>sba'i ber ma lcag</i>                | bamboo walking stick,<br>walking stick        |
| <i>sba 'khar</i>                        | bamboo walking stick                          |
| <i>sba lcag</i>                         | bamboo walking stick,<br>walking stick        |
| <i>ma dang mkha' 'gro</i>               | mamos and ḍākinīs                             |
| <i>ma bdud</i>                          | low demon                                     |
| <i>ma mo</i>                            | <i>mamo</i>                                   |
| <i>mi khom</i>                          | freedomless state                             |
| <i>mi phyed pa'i dad pa</i>             | unwavering faith                              |
| <i>mi 'am ci</i>                        | <i>kinnara</i>                                |
| <i>mig sgyur ma</i>                     | dakini                                        |
| <i>mig 'phrul</i>                       | trick                                         |
| <i>mu steg pa</i>                       | <i>tirthika</i>                               |
| <i>mu bzhi</i>                          | four possibilities                            |
| <i>mo rtsis byed</i>                    | cast a divination                             |
| <i>mos pa</i>                           | devotion, devoted<br>interest, faith, longing |

|                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                 | interest, raiu, longing   |
| <i>dmar khrid</i>               | naked instruction         |
| <i>sman mo</i>                  | <i>menmo</i>              |
| <i>sman btsun</i>               | <i>menmo</i> goddess      |
| <i>sman lha</i>                 | Menlha                    |
| <i>tsa tsa</i>                  | <i>tsa-tsa</i>            |
| <i>gtsug gtor rnam rgyal ma</i> | Ushnishavijaya            |
| <i>btsan</i>                    | <i>tsen</i>               |
| <i>btsan sa bzung</i>           | seize the fortress        |
| <i>rtsa</i>                     | nadi                      |
| <i>rtsa dbu ma</i>              | central channel           |
| <i>rtsal</i>                    | power, skill, energy      |
| <i>rtsal sbyong</i>             | train one's skill         |
| <i>tshad ma</i>                 | valid, pramana            |
| <i>tshad med bzhi</i>           | four immeasurables        |
| <i>tshig gsum</i>               | a few words               |
| <i>tshul 'chos</i>              | pretense                  |
| <i>tshogs</i>                   | feast;                    |
| accumulation; gathering, tsok   | <i>tshogs gi 'khor lo</i> |
| ganacakra                       | <i>tshogs drug</i>        |
| sixfold collection              | <i>tshogs lam gnyis</i>   |
| two accumulations               | <i>mtshan nyid pa</i>     |
| qualified, genuine, logician    | <i>mtshan ldan</i>        |
| qualified                       | <i>'tshé ba</i>           |
| ill, detriment, harm, torment   | <i>'tshengs pa</i>        |
| satisfied                       | <i>dzam bu gling</i>      |
| Jambudvipa                      | <i>mdzangs</i>            |
| skillful, wise                  | <i>rdzogs chen</i>        |
| Great Perfection; Dzogchen      | <i>rdzogs rim</i>         |
| completion stage                | <i>zhal gdams</i>         |
| advice                          | <i>zhi gnas</i>           |

|                                         |                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| shamatha                                | <i>zhing skyong</i>                     |
| kshetrapala                             | <i>zhen log</i>                         |
| revulsion                               | <i>gzhan snang</i>                      |
| external                                | appearances                             |
| <i>gzhi bdag</i>                        | <i>shidak</i>                           |
| <i>zag bcas</i>                         | defiled                                 |
| <i>zas nor</i>                          | food and wealth,<br>material provisions |
| <i>zil gyis gnon</i>                    | overcome                                |
| <i>gzugs kyi sku</i>                    | rupakaya                                |
| <i>gzugs khams</i>                      | form realm                              |
| <i>gzugs med khams</i>                  | formless realm                          |
| <i>'og min</i>                          | Akanishta                               |
| <i>'od gsal</i>                         | luminosity                              |
| <i>yan lag bdun</i>                     | seven branches                          |
| <i>yi dvags</i>                         | preta                                   |
| <i>yi mug</i>                           | dejected, truly<br>unfortunate          |
| <i>yid dam</i>                          | yidam                                   |
| <i>yid 'byung</i>                       | revulsion                               |
| <i>yid la mi byed pa</i>                | mental                                  |
| nonengagement                           | <i>ye 'brog</i>                         |
| obstructing demon                       | <i>ye shes sems dpa'</i>                |
| jñanasattva                             | <i>yon bdag</i>                         |
| benefactor                              | <i>yul lha</i>                          |
| local deities                           | <i>g.yang</i>                           |
| rich, prosperity; cliff, abyss          | <i>g.yang chags</i>                     |
| prosperous, enriching presence          | <i>g.yu mi pham mtsho</i>               |
| Lake Manosarovar                        | <i>g.yo sgyu</i>                        |
| hypocrisy, deceit, hypocrisy and deceit | <i>'od gsal</i>                         |
| luminosity                              | <i>rang mgo thon</i>                    |
| self-sufficient                         |                                         |

|                                                  |                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
|                                                  | <i>rang snang</i>   |
| own perception                                   | <i>rang rtsal</i>   |
| natural expression                               | <i>rang sa zin</i>  |
| seize one's own place                            | <i>rang gsal</i>    |
| self-luminous                                    | <i>rab byung</i>    |
| renunciant                                       | <i>ri dvags</i>     |
| animal, grazing animal, wild animal              | <i>ri rab</i>       |
| Mount Meru                                       | <i>rig byed glu</i> |
| instructive songs                                | <i>rig 'dzin</i>    |
| vidhyadhara                                      | <i>rigs</i>         |
| class, family                                    | <i>rim gro</i>      |
| rites                                            | <i>ro snyoms</i>    |
| equal taste, practice of equal taste             | <i>ro lang</i>      |
| vetala                                           | <i>rlung</i>        |
| prana                                            | <i>rlung sems</i>   |
| prana and mind                                   | <i>rlung bzung</i>  |
| bind the prana                                   | <i>lag len</i>      |
| apply, bring to your experience                  | <i>lam mkhan</i>    |
| guide on the path, guide                         | <i>lam sna zin</i>  |
| take hold of the path                            | <i>las can</i>      |
| destined                                         | <i>las 'phro</i>    |
| karma, karmic propensity, karmic connection      | <i>long ba</i>      |
| leisure, free                                    | <i>longs sku</i>    |
| sambhogakaya                                     | <i>longs spyod</i>  |
| enjoyments, material enjoyments, material wealth | <i>sha 'bren</i>    |
| leather strap                                    | <i>sha za</i>       |
| pischacha                                        | <i>shes rab</i>     |
| prajña                                           | <i>gshin rje</i>    |
| Lord of Death, Yama                              | <i>sa skor</i>      |
| journey                                          | <i>sa bdag</i>      |

|                              |                                                         |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| earth-lord spirit            | <i>sel</i>                                              |
| dispel                       | <i>sems bskyed</i>                                      |
| altruistic                   | commitment, generate                                    |
| bodhichitta, bodhichitta     | <i>sems ngan</i>                                        |
| malicious mind               | <i>sems nyid</i>                                        |
| mind itself                  | <i>sems 'dzin</i>                                       |
| concentrate                  | <i>so mtshams</i>                                       |
| threshold, border            | <i>so so thar pa</i>                                    |
| pratimoksha                  | <i>so so rang rig</i>                                   |
| discriminating               | self-awareness                                          |
| <i>som nyi</i>               | doubt                                                   |
| <i>srid pa</i>               | samsaric existence                                      |
| <i>srid pa gsum</i>          | samsara's three levels                                  |
| <i>srid pa'i lha 'dre</i>    | all the devas and<br>ghosts of samsaric<br>existence    |
| <i>srun po</i>               | rakshasa                                                |
| <i>srul po</i>               | <i>putana</i>                                           |
| <i>srog cha</i>              | life-force                                              |
| <i>srog cha ngan</i>         | weak life-force                                         |
| <i>srog cha log pa</i>       | compromised                                             |
| life-force                   | <i>srog snying</i>                                      |
| life-essence                 | <i>srog rtsol</i>                                       |
| prana-control, prana-control | practice                                                |
| <i>slob 'bangs</i>           | students                                                |
| <i>slob ma snod ldan</i>     | disciple who is a<br>worthy vessel                      |
| <i>gsal</i>                  | clarity, brilliance,<br>clear, clarified,<br>illuminate |
| <i>gsal stong</i>            | clarity-emptiness                                       |
| <i>gsog 'jog</i>             | hoarding and<br>maintaining                             |



|                           |                                                          |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>bsam ngan</i>          | malevolent intention,<br>malevolence,<br>malevolent mind |
| <i>bsam gtan</i>          | meditation, dhyana,<br>meditative<br>concentration       |
| <i>bsung ngag bden pa</i> | words of truth                                           |
| <i>bslu bslu 'dra</i>     | only deceive                                             |
| <i>lha</i>                | deva; deity                                              |
| <i>lha chos</i>           | sublime dharma                                           |
| <i>lha rje</i>            | Lhajé; physician                                         |
| <i>lha ma yin</i>         | asura                                                    |
| <i>lha sman btsun mo</i>  | Lhamen Queen                                             |
| <i>lhag mthong</i>        | vipashyana                                               |
| <i>lhan cig skyes pa</i>  | coemergent                                               |
| <i>lhug pa</i>            | relaxed, loose                                           |
| <i>a shad</i>             | ashé                                                     |

## APPENDIX 4:

Songs and Stories Translated under the Guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche is one of the foremost living teachers of Milarepa's Kagyu tradition. He is a great master of meditation and scholar who has taught extensively throughout the world, and he is the primary teacher of another great meditation master and scholar, Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, who guided the translation of this volume. Throughout his life, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche has worked closely with many Western students to train them as translators, and as a result, a number of translations of Milarepa's stories and songs of realization have been made under his guidance. This list of those works here is to serve first as an homage to this great master and to the lineage he represents, and second, to provide alternate translations for the interested reader to compare and study. While the full stories translated under Rinpoche's guidance have not been made available to the public, nearly all of the translations of the individual songs of realization are available on the internet and are easily searchable by title. Additionally, a number of original songs by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, spontaneously composed in the style of Milarepa, can be found at the following website, which also provides extensive information on Rinpoche's teaching and activity: [www.ktgrinpoche.org](http://www.ktgrinpoche.org).

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### SONGS TRANSLATED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF KHENPO TSULTRIM GYAMTSO RINPOCHE, LISTED BY SONG TITLE

A number of the KTGR translations are excerpts from longer songs; the page numbers provided below correlate to where the related text of the alternate translation begins, not necessarily where the song begins in the original work.

| <b>SONG TITLE</b>                                                              | <b>CHAPTER</b>                                                | <b>PAGE</b>          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| A Teaching to Flying Hungry Ghosts                                             | 5. The Prior Visit to Rakma                                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Aging, Illness, and Samsara                                                    | 48. Shendormo and Leksé Bum                                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| An Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way                                        | 29. Garland of the Light of Amrita                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Appearance and Sound, Like Reflection and Echo                                 | 44. Likor Charuwa                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Distinguishing the Provisional from the Definitive in the Context of Mahamudra | 28. Garland of an Array of Pearls                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Eight Authentic Things                                                         | 51. Ramding Sky Cave                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Eight Kinds of Mastery                                                         | 23. The Later Visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress                  | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Eight Ornaments of the Profound Meaning                                        | 51. Ramding Sky Cave                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Eight Things to Remember                                                       | 15. Meeting Seben Repa                                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Eight Wonderful Forms of Happiness                                             | 43. Dretön Repa                                               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Eighteen Kinds of Yogic Joy                                                    | 7. The Yolmo Snowy Range                                      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Equality and Seven Things to Forget                                            | 44. Likor Charuwa                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Five Authentic Remedies to Practice Right                                      | 15. Meeting Seben Repa                                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Five Perfections of the Definitive Meaning                                     | 15. Meeting Seben Repa                                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Four Supreme Things and Eleven Supreme Things                                  | 34. Winning the Debate Arisen through Jealousy with Power and | <a href="#">here</a> |

|                                                                       |                                             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                                                       | Magic                                       |                      |
| Happiness and Misery, Drawing the Line                                | 40. Lengom Repa                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| How To Remove Hindrances and Enhance the Practice                     | 14. Meeting Paldarbum                       | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Identifying a Capable Student                                         | 12. The Later Visit to Rakma                | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Internalizing Fearlessness and Realization That Has Become Confidence | 28. Garland of an Array of Pearls           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Let Consciousness Ride                                                | 42. Lotön Gendun                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Looking Nakedly Resting Still                                         | 36. Mégom Repa                              | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Meditation Advice to Chirawa                                          | 26. Meeting Khyira Repa                     | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Milarepa's Six Bardos                                                 | 30. Golden Garland of Stupas                | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Milarepa's Vows                                                       | 44. Likor Charuwa                           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Nine Hurdles                                                          | 11. Meeting Tsaphu Repa                     | <a href="#">here</a> |
| No Birth, No Base, and Union                                          | 13. Accepting the Teacher Shakya Guna       | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Practice Instructions to Sangye Kyap                                  | 12. The Later Visit to Rakma                | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Seven Practice Advices                                                | 51. Ramding Sky Cave                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Seven Ways Things Shine Inside and Out                                | 13. Accepting the Teacher Shakya Guna       | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Six Examples of Illusion That Teach Impermanence                      | 38. The Story of the Yak Horn               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Six Questions                                                         | 9. The Prior Visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Six Words That Sum It All Up                                          | 42. Lotön Gendun                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Song of Mahamudra                                                     | 34. Winning the Debate Arisen               |                      |

|                                                                                                  |                                                                     |                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                                                                                  | through Jealousy with Power and Magic                               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Song of the Meeting Between Milarepa and the Hunter Chirawa Gönpo Dorje                          | 26. Meeting Khyira Repa                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Song to a Pigeon Goddess Girl                                                                    | 8. The Offering of the Pigeon Goddess Girl                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Songs of Miracles that Milarepa Displayed to Rechungpa: Song of the Appearance-Emptiness Boulder | 39. Song of the Wild Asses                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Songs of Miracles that Milarepa Displayed to Rechungpa: The Song of the Wild Asses               | 39. Song of the Wild Asses                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Space-like Yogi and Yoginis                                                                      | 2. Journey to Lachi Chuzang                                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Taking Appearances to the Path                                                                   | 21. Meeting Repa Darma Wangchuk                                     | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Ten Important Points                                                                             | 45. Replies to the Questions of Students                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Ten Things It's Like                                                                             | 38. The Story of the Yak Horn                                       | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Anger Cooling Song                                                                           | 34. Winning the Debate Arisen through Jealousy with Power and Magic | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Authentic Way to Approach Dharma                                                             | 13. Accepting the Teacher Shakyas Guna                              | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Characteristics of a Worldly Monastic Tradition                                              | 15. Meeting Seben Repa                                              | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Dharma That Is Not Learned                                                                   | 44. Likor Charuwa                                                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Eight Certainties You Need to Practice Dharma                                                | 51. Ramding Sky Cave                                                | <a href="#">here</a> |

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| The Great Open Wilderness                               | 45. Replies to the Questions of Students                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Lion's Walk                                         | 45. Replies to the Questions of Students                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Places Where I Stay and the Friends I Keep          | 26. Meeting Khyira Repa                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range | 3. The Song of the Snow                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Sacred Place of Jang-Chub Dzong and the Yogi        | 5. The Prior Visit to Rakma                                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Sampannakrama Song                                  | 34. Winning the Debate Arisen through Jealousy with Power and Magic | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Six Bardos (sung by Rechungpa)                      | 23. The Later Visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Six Confident Ways I Am Delighted to Die            | 53. Tongla                                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Six Guides to Enlightenment's Fortress              | 5. The Prior Visit to Rakma                                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Six Happy Ways I Am Sure                            | 53. Tongla                                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Song of Everlasting Happiness                       | 26. Meeting Khyira Repa                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Song of Open Compassion                             | 26. Meeting Khyira Repa                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Song of the Fortress of Enlightenment               | 5. The Prior Visit to Rakma                                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Sources of Power                                    | 22. Taming Naro Bönchung                                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Three Ways Are Fine—Ari Goldfield                   | 43. Dretön Repa                                                     | <a href="#">here</a> |

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|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| The Utpattikrama Song                            | 34. Winning the Debate Arisen through Jealousy with Power and Magic | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Way I Am Crazy                               | 53. Tongla                                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| The Yogi's Beer Drinking Song                    | 50. Going for Refreshment, and the Beer-Drinking Song               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Thirty-Three Kinds of Yogic Joy                  | 10. Meeting Rechungpa                                               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Three Kinds of Confidence in Genuine Reality     | 13. Accepting the Teacher Shakya Guna                               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Three Nails                                      | 7. The Yolmo Snowy Range                                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Three Things That Are All Right —Jim Scott       | 43. Dretön Repa                                                     | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Turning Daily Behavior into a Practice           | 52. Rechungpa's Departure for Central Tibet                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Twelve Kinds of Yogic Joy                        | 23. The Later Visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Twelve Things That Tend to Be Misleading         | 23. The Later Visit to Drakya Vajra Fortress                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Twelve Things to Forget                          | 51. Ramding Sky Cave                                                | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Twenty-Seven Cases of Dissolution                | 4. The Rakshasa Demoness of Lingpa Rock                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Two Songs of Displaying Miracles                 | 44. Likor Charuwa                                                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition | 39. Song of the Wild Asses                                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| What I Have Time For and What I Do Not           | 45. Replies the Questions of Students                               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| What Mind Is                                     | 12. The Later Visit to Rakma                                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Why I Wander Around                              | 26. Meeting Khvira Repa                                             |                      |

|                                    |                                                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unpredictably                      |                                                                    | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Why Turning towards Genuine Dharma | 26. Meeting Khyira Repa                                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Why We Sing                        | 27. The Offering of the Khokhom King and the Scrutiny of Tseringma | <a href="#">here</a> |
| Yogi's Life                        | 5. The Prior Visit to Rakma                                        | <a href="#">here</a> |

SONGS TRANSLATED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF KHENPO TSULTRIM GYAMTSO  
RINPOCHE, LISTED BY CHAPTER

Most of Milarepa's songs in the *Collected Songs* do not appear with discrete titles in the original. To assist the reader in locating the songs in the text, short descriptors of the songs appear in the left column below. As above, the page numbers correlate to where the related text of the alternate translation begins; when the alternate translation does not begin with the first line of the original text, the correlating first line of this translation is listed in the left column.

| Song Description                                                                                    | KTGR Translation Title                            | Page                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>2. JOURNEY TO LACHI CHUZANG</b>                                                                  |                                                   |                      |
| [song about the dharma of the truth of cause and effect]<br>"This repa yogi who's free of concepts" | The Lion's Walk                                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| "Having Authentic Confidence" "In the lineage of the great Brahmin"                                 | Space-Like Yogi and Yoginis                       | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>3. THE SONG OF THE SNOW</b>                                                                      |                                                   |                      |
| [untitled song of realization]                                                                      | The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy | <a href="#">here</a> |



|                                                                           |                                                  |                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                                                           | Range                                            |                      |
| <b>4. THE RAKSHASA DEMONESS OF LINGPA ROCK</b>                            |                                                  |                      |
| [song on the definitive meaning of the twenty-seven cases of dissolution] | Twenty-Seven Cases of Dissolution                | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>5. THE PRIOR VISIT TO RAKMA</b>                                        |                                                  |                      |
| [song about the guide]                                                    | The Six Guides to Enlightenment's Fortress       | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song for the yaksha spirits]                                             | A Teaching to Flying Hungry Ghosts               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song of the solitary place, Enlightenment Fortress]                      | The Song of the Fortress of Enlightenment        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [Song for Lhabar]                                                         | Yogi's Life                                      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [Praise of Enlightenment Fortress]                                        | The Sacred Place of Jang-Chub Dzong and the Yogi | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>7. The Yolmo Snowy Range</b>                                           |                                                  |                      |
| [How his experience and realization arose]                                | Eighteen Kinds of Yogic Joy                      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| “The Nails of View, Meditation, and Conduct”                              | Three Nails                                      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>8. THE OFFERING OF THE PIGEON GODDESS GIRL</b>                         |                                                  |                      |
| [response to the pigeon's offering]                                       | Song to a Pigeon Goddess Girl                    | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>9. THE PRIOR VISIT TO DRAKYA VAJRA FORTRESS</b>                        |                                                  |                      |
| [song of realization on the six questions]                                | Six Questions                                    | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>10. MEETING RECHUNGPA</b>                                              |                                                  |                      |
| [song at Silk Cave]                                                       | Thirty-Three Kinds of Yogic                      | <a href="#">here</a> |

|                                                                            |                                                      |                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                                                            | Joy                                                  |                      |
| <b>11. MEETING TSAPHU REPA</b>                                             |                                                      |                      |
| [exhortation to practice]                                                  | Nine Hurdles                                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>12. THE LATER VISIT TO RAKMA</b>                                        |                                                      |                      |
| [first song for the herder]<br>“The wonderful taste of candy,<br>so sweet” | What Mind Is                                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [third song for the herder]                                                | Identifying a Capable Student                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [final song for the herder,<br>Sangye Kyap]                                | Practice Instructions to Sangye<br>Kyap              | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>13. ACCEPTING THE TEACHER SHAKYA GUNA</b>                               |                                                      |                      |
| [song of how confidence arose]                                             | Three Kinds of Confidence in<br>Genuine Reality      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song of how virtuous activity<br>arose]                                   | Seven Ways Things Shine<br>Inside and Out            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song of definitions and<br>pointing out mind]                             | No Birth, No Base, and Union                         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [how to practice dharma]                                                   | The Authentic Way to<br>Approach Dharma              | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>14. MEETING PALDARBUM</b>                                               |                                                      |                      |
| [on clearing obstacles and<br>enhancing the practice]                      | How To Remove Hindrances<br>and Enhance the Practice | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>15. MEETING SEBEN REPA</b>                                              |                                                      |                      |
| [song about eight things to<br>remember]                                   | Eight Things to Remember                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [advice for Dawa Norbu]                                                    |                                                      |                      |
| “When the mind runs wild,                                                  | Five Authentic Remedies to                           | <a href="#">here</a> |

|                                                                                                                   |                                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| apply the view that subjugates it”                                                                                | Practice Right                                      |                      |
| [reply to the monks]                                                                                              | Five Perfections of the Definitive Meaning          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [reply to Geshe Yakru Tangpa]                                                                                     | The Characteristics of a Worldly Monastic Tradition | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>21. MEETING REPA DARMA WANGCHUK</b>                                                                            |                                                     |                      |
| [song on how to practice during every activity]<br>“When going, take appearances onto the path”                   | Taking Appearances to the Path                      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>22. TAMING NARO BÖNCHUNG</b>                                                                                   |                                                     |                      |
| [song of the Jetsun’s power]<br>“The power of this view, which is/Beyond the mind and free from extremes, arose.” | The Sources of Power                                | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>23. THE LATER VISIT TO DRAKYA VAJRA FORTRESS</b>                                                               |                                                     |                      |
| [song on the twelve kinds of yogic happiness]                                                                     | Twelve Kinds of Yogic Joy                           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [twelve things that tend to be misleading]                                                                        | Twelve Things That Tend to Be Misleading            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song on the eight kinds of mastery]                                                                              | Eight Kinds of Mastery                              | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song on the six bardos sung by Rechungpa]                                                                        | The Six Bardos                                      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>26. MEETING KHYIRA REPA</b>                                                                                    |                                                     |                      |
| [song for the deer]                                                                                               | The Song of Everlasting Happiness                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
|                                                                                                                   |                                                     |                      |

|                                                                                                                          |                                                                                |                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| [song for the hunter's dog]                                                                                              | The Song of Open Compassion                                                    | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song for Khyirawa Gönpö Dorje]                                                                                          | Song of the Meeting between Milarepa and the Hunter Chirawa Gönpö Dorje        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [invitation to Khyirawa]                                                                                                 | The Places Where I Stay and the Friends I Keep                                 | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [why I wander]                                                                                                           | Why I Wander Around Unpredictably                                              | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [advising the hunter not to return to his family]<br>"The thunder's sound is great, but it is empty sound"               | Why Turning towards Genuine Dharma                                             | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [practice instructions for Khyira Repa]                                                                                  | Meditation Advice to Chirawa                                                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>27. THE OFFERING OF THE KHOKHOM KING AND THE SCRUTINY OF TSERINGMA</b>                                                |                                                                                |                      |
| [last verse of song on heroic pride of yogis]<br>"I've sung this song of key instructions"                               | Why We Sing                                                                    | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>28. GARLAND OF AN ARRAY OF PEARLS</b>                                                                                 |                                                                                |                      |
| [song about confidence in realization through complete mastery of fearlessness]<br>"Having great fear only toward death" | Internalizing Fearlessness and Realization That Has Become Confidence          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [teaching on bringing obstacles to the path]                                                                             | Distinguishing the Provisional from the Definitive in the Context of Mahamudra | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>29. GARLAND OF THE LIGHT OF AMRITA</b>                                                                                |                                                                                |                      |

|                                                                                                              |                                                 |                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| [song on the view of the pinnacle of realization]<br>“According to the ultimate truth,”                      | An Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way         | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>30. GOLDEN GARLAND OF STUPAS</b>                                                                          |                                                 |                      |
| [on the way of traveling to the pure realm of Sukhavati]<br>“Right now, in the bardo of samsara and nirvana” | Milarepa’s Six Bardos                           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>34. WINNING THE DEBATE ARISEN THROUGH JEALOUSY, WITH POWER AND MAGIC</b>                                  |                                                 |                      |
| [song on the creation stage]                                                                                 | The Utpattikrama Song                           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [meditating on nadi, prana, and bindu]                                                                       | The Sampannakrama Song                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [meditating on Mahamudra]                                                                                    | Song of Mahamudra                               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on cracking the whip of awareness]                                                                          | The Anger Cooling Song                          | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [reply to Lotön]                                                                                             | Four Supreme Things and Eleven Supreme Things   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>36. MÉGOM REPA</b>                                                                                        |                                                 |                      |
| [instructions for Mégom]                                                                                     | Looking Nakedly Resting Still                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>38. THE STORY OF THE YAK HORN</b>                                                                         |                                                 |                      |
| [on the six examples of illusion and impermanence]<br>“Looking there at objects appearing outside:”          | Six Example of Illusion That Teach Impermanence | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song to diminish Rechungpa’s pride]                                                                         | Ten Things It’s Like                            | <a href="#">here</a> |

### 39. SONG OF THE WILD ASSES

|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                  |                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| [song after throwing the boulder] “At this place with a tight and narrow path”                    | Songs of Miracles that Milarepa Displayed to Rechungpa: Song of the Appearance-Emptiness Boulder | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song while soaring in the sky]                                                                   | Songs of Miracles that Milarepa Displayed to Rechungpa: The Song of the Wild Asses               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [key points of view and meditation]                                                               | Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition                                                 | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>40. LENGOM REPA</b>                                                                            |                                                                                                  |                      |
| [on the dividing line between happiness and misery]                                               | Happiness and Misery, Drawing the Line                                                           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>42. LOTÖN GENDUN</b>                                                                           |                                                                                                  |                      |
| [instruction for Lotön]                                                                           | Six Words That Sum It All Up                                                                     | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [song of realization of pointing out]<br>“This luminous mind itself, free of arising and ceasing” | Let Consciousness Ride                                                                           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>43. DRETÖN REPA</b>                                                                            |                                                                                                  |                      |
| [on joy at the time of death]<br>“In my body, the mandala of the Victorious Ones,”                | The Three Ways Are Fine—Ari Goldfield                                                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on joy at the time of death]                                                                     | Three Things That Are All Right—Jim Scott                                                        | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on the eight wondrous kinds of happiness]                                                        | Eight Wonderful Forms of Happiness                                                               | <a href="#">here</a> |

#### 44. LIKOR CHARUWA

|                                |                                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| [reply to the monks]           | Two Songs of Displaying Miracles               | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on study]                     | Equality and Seven Things to Forget            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on the dharma that's learned] | The Dharma That Is Not Learned                 | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on yogic conduct]             | Appearance and Sound, Like Reflection and Echo | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on his vow]                   | Milarepa's Vows                                | <a href="#">here</a> |

#### 45. REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONS OF STUDENTS

|                                                    |                                        |                      |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|
| [key points of the Six Dharmas and Mahamudra]      | Ten Important Points                   | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [reply to the female benefactor]                   | What I Have Time For and What I Do Not | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [reply to the youth who asked about his monastery] | The Great Open Wilderness              | <a href="#">here</a> |

#### 48. SHENDORMO AND LEKSÉ BUM

|                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                              |                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| [sung in reply to questions about old age and sickness] verse 1: "If you don't realize the reality that is beyond 'old age'" verse 2 "If you don't realize the reality that is beyond 'sickness'" | Aging, Illness, and Samsara (Verses 1 and 2) | <a href="#">here</a> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|

#### 49. PREPARING TO HAVE JOY AT DEATH

|                                                                               |                                       |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| [song to Rechungpa on how giving up the eight worldly concerns is not enough] | Aging, Illness, and Samsara (verse 3) | <a href="#">here</a> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|

|                                                                                                      |                                                   |                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| “The true reality of samsara that is free of any base”                                               |                                                   |                      |
| <b>50. GOING FOR REFRESHMENT, AND THE BEER-DRINKING SONG</b>                                         |                                                   |                      |
| [song on how beer is drunk in the tradition of Marpa]                                                | The Yogi’s Beer Drinking Song                     | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>51. RAMDING SKY CAVE</b>                                                                          |                                                   |                      |
| [response to the disciples’ discussion about the view of meditation of Naropa and Maitripa]          | Eight Ornaments of the Profound Meaning           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [practice requisites, addressed to Rechungpa]<br>“The embodiment of the buddhas of the three times,” | The Eight Certainties You Need to Practice Dharma | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on his nakedness]                                                                                   | Twelve Things to Forget                           | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [sung from atop the cave entrance]                                                                   | Eight Authentic Things                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [advice to abandon the eight worldly concerns]                                                       | Seven Practice Advices                            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>52. RECHUNGPA’S DEPARTURE FOR CENTRAL TIBET</b>                                                   |                                                   |                      |
| [on the four modes of conduct]                                                                       | Turning Daily Behavior into a Practice            | <a href="#">here</a> |
| <b>53. TONGLA</b>                                                                                    |                                                   |                      |
| [six kinds of confidence in facing death joyfully]                                                   | The Six Confident Ways I Am Delighted to Die      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [six happy ways of being resolved]                                                                   | The Six Happy Ways I Am Sure                      | <a href="#">here</a> |
| [on the way of a crazy man]                                                                          | The Way I Am Crazy                                | <a href="#">here</a> |



CHAPTERS TRANSLATED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF KHENPO TSULTRIM GYAMTSO  
RINPOCHE

The following list correlates chapters with alternate translations that appear in *Stories and Songs of Milarepa*, translated under the guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche (Marpa Foundation: 2006).

| CHAPTER                                                                       | ALTERNATE TRANSLATION PRODUCED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF KTGR                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Mila Gathers Wood                                                          | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 17                                      |
| 5. The Prior Visit to Rakma                                                   | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 23                                      |
| 6. Kyangpen Sky Fortress                                                      | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 30                                      |
| 8. The Offering of the Pigeon Goddess Girl                                    | Jim Scott, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 34                                          |
| 12. The Later Visit to Rakma (excerpt)                                        | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 39                                      |
| 13. Accepting the Teacher Shakya Guna                                         | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 46                                      |
| 14. Meeting Paldarbum                                                         | Jim Scott, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 50                                          |
| 15. Meeting Seben Repa                                                        | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 59                                      |
| 25. Meeting Rechungma                                                         | Palmo (Willa Baker), Ani Jamdron, and Sukhi Barber, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 65 |
| 26. Meeting Khyira Repa                                                       | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 78                                      |
| 34. Winning the Debate Arisen through Jealousy with Power and Magic (excerpt) | Scott Wellenbach, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 89                                   |

|                      |                                               |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 43. Dretön Repa      | Jim Scott, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 95      |
| 44. Likor Charuwa    | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 99  |
| 51. Ramding Sky Cave | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 104 |
| 53. Tongla           | Ari Goldfield, <i>Stories and Songs</i> : 111 |

## Notes

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Folio numbers are given for citations of *The Twelve Great Sons* and *The Black Treasury*. However, for citations of Tsangnyön Heruka's work (*TNH*), due to the different pagination of the most recent printings of the mTsho sngon mi rigs edition, no page numbers are given to avoid frustration. For those interested, passages may be found in any number of searchable digital files that are available to download online, and then correlated to the preferred edition. See [www.dharmadownload.net](http://www.dharmadownload.net).

1. Literally, “eyes as big as the rim of a cup” (*TNH*: *mig phor khog tsam*). *The Black Treasury* says their bodies were “the size of thumbs, with eyes as big as cups” (*DN 73*: *gzugs mthe bong tsam mig phor pa tsam yod pa*).
2. T: *dmu rdzing*.
3. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, *DN 78*: *don go bar mdzod la nyams su longs*. *TNH* reads *don go bar gyis la phyir la nyon*. *BCC 30b* reads *don de bzhin nyams su len gal che*.
4. This line reads the same in *BCC 30b* as in *TNH*: *klu byang chub sems kyi rdzu 'phrul gyis*; however, *DN 80*: reads *klu byang chub sems dpa'i rdzu 'phrul gyis*. The translation is an interpretation of *The Black Treasury*.
5. T: *lam 'gag med kyi rtsal kha*.
6. The translation follows *The Twelve Great Sons*, *BCC 35a*: *sbud skyi 'dings g.yos pa'i tha ma la*, reading *skyi 'dings* as an alternate spelling of *skyin thang*. *TNH*: *bud kyi mdangs g.yogs tha ma la*.
7. Reading *skyi 'dong* as *skyin thang* in *de 'dra'i skyi 'dong skal ba la*.
8. Literally, “Were measured up on the scale.” This seems to be a colloquial expression; T: *srang tu gzhal*.
9. T: *phyis nang 'khrug med par gtan khrigs bgyis*.
10. T: *phyis ci zer nyan par kha yis blangs*.
11. T: *sdang dgra la ru zur 'chor ma smyong*. The exact meaning of *ru zur*

- (literally, “side of the bone”) remains obscure.
12. This line is obscure in both Tsangnyön (*TNH: sho mas kyang bre mo bgyis pa lags*) and *The Black Treasury* (*DN 92: shor lar yang bre mo bgyis pa lags*).
  13. Literally, “little stars” (T: *skar phran*). In contrast to larger, brighter stars, the faint stars that fill the background of the sky cannot be counted.
  14. T: *dad zas kha lan bsam ngan 'khrug*.
  15. The translation is based on *The Twelve Great Sons*, BCC 50a: *khyod sngon chad bzlas pa rdzun du zad*. *TNH: ngas sngon chad smras pa rdzun du zad*.
  16. T: *ban de*. This term is borrowed from Sanskrit, where it means “honor”; it is usually used to refer to monks.
  17. T: *rang mgo thon*. Literally, “make one’s own head emerge.”
  18. See also Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche’s commentary on this song, “The Essence of Clear Light Sunshine: A Commentary on the Meaning of the Three Nails,” translated by Ari Goldfield. Available at [ktgrinpoche.org](http://ktgrinpoche.org).
  19. The original reads “disciple-sons” (T: *bu slob*); the inconsistency between the nuns (earlier in the story) and disciple-sons here is likely due to Tsangnyön’s personal re-editing of previous versions. See Quintman 2014b.
  20. This line is not in either of the most recent printings of Tsangnyön Heruka’s work by Tso Mirig but is found in *The Black Treasury* (*DN 455: ro gcig mtha’ ru phyin pa yin*).
  21. This line is missing in the Tsangnyön Heruka version but is in *The Black Treasury* (*DN 461: 'di sgom pa'i 'dings tshad lags*).
  22. The term in Tibetan here (*bad ka*) actually refers to support beam ornaments that jut out from the side of the structure near the top; they are a feature of traditional Tibetan architecture.
  23. The Tibetan here (*mkhar spe*) indicates a stone structure or house that is built upon the side of a rocky mountain slope. The Tibetan word (*mkhar*) is often translated as “castle,” but the connotation here is different as the structure is not necessarily intended for nobility or designed for warfare.
  24. T: *dge bcu'i khol spyad bde dang gsum*.
  25. T: *zhal ngo rags*.
  26. The disease Rechungpa contracted is not definitely leprosy, but for the sake of simplicity, I chose the name of this commonly known illness for this translation. According to Peter Alan Roberts, “*citi-jvala*” is a legitimate

possible reconstruction of the Sanskrit transliteration of the Tibetan written here (*tsi tsi rdva la*). *The Medical Tantra* by Palpung Öñ Karma Tendzin Trinley Rabge states that *citi-jvala* is the Sanskrit term for the Tibetan *mdze*, a large class of diseases which includes leprosy. See Roberts 2007: 99, 103.

27. Peter Alan Roberts states: “The only accounts of Varacandra [*wa la tsandra*] available to us are those that appear in Rechungpa’s biographies, and they only concern Varacandra’s relationship with Rechungpa. Nevertheless, Varacandra’s historical existence is attested to by the colophons of fourteen canonical texts that he helped to translate into Tibetan, and he may have been involved in the translation of at least another eight texts” (Roberts 2007: 100).
28. T: *gtum po khyung gshog can gyi gdams ngag rnams*.
29. T: *nor gang dmar ’khyer ba’i dbang mo che*.
30. T: *phu g.yo mda’ dkrug*.
31. T: *mi’i bu mo’i ngo ’dzin dang gcig*.
32. Here, the Tibetan “nyama” (*nya ma*) is being read specifically as a female disciple.
33. To facilitate better reading English, one “as it is said” (T: *skad*) was omitted at this point.
34. *The Black Treasury* says, “The four gatherings of illness are mixed into one” (DN 379: *nad ’du ba rnam bzhi gcig tu ’dres*). TNH: *nang ’du ba rnam bzhi yongs su ’dres*.
35. Translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 379: *mi khyod la nyams tshad byas pa tsam*. TNH: *mi khyod la nyams sad byas pa tsam*.
36. These two lines are obscure. T: *gro tshems ’phrul gyi srab mgo la/ stag gzar ’dzum gyi smin ’khyugs can*); DN 380: *grod tshem ’phrul gyi srab mgo la/ stag ras ’dzum gyis smin khyug btang*. According to DPR, it could also possibly refer to some kind of decorative tiger-stripe patterned cloth worn as an ornament around the bridle.
37. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 380: *nged btsad po’i pha shig byed tsa na*. TNH reads *khong rtsad po pha ching byed pa’i tshe*.
38. “Finely drawn” here translates the obscure word *smin ’khyugs can*. The full line reads *dus sna rtse gsum gyi smin ’khyugs can*
39. T: *sen thabs can*.
40. The translation follows *The Twelve Great Sons*, BCC 123b: *yul ’dod yon sna*

*tshogs lham sgrog byas; TNH reads yul 'dod yon sna tshogs kyi sngo bran la.*

41. T: *nang sprin dkar te'u sna'i khong tshangs can.* This line is obscure.
42. T: *thong kha za 'og gzong dras ma.* This line is obscure.
43. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 385: *khyod pha drin can la tshur nyon dang*, as TNH seems to contain a misprint: *khyod ma drin can de tshur nyon dang*. This line is missing in *The Twelve Great Sons*.
44. This line is missing in TNH. *The Black Treasury* reads *des yal 'bor nga yi byang thod yin* (DN 387).
45. Literally, “I don’t know the shame that is contrived” (*bcos ma'i ngo tsha ngas mi shes*).
46. The translation follows *The Twelve Great Sons*, BCC 130b: *lam yang mi shes 'tham ma 'thom*. TNH: *lam yang mi shes phyi ma nang*.
47. The translation is based on *The Twelve Great Sons*, BCC 146b: *khyod skyo mo 'dren ne ma lags pa'i*. TNH: *khyod cang mo 'dren ne ma lags pa*.
48. Literally, “I’m the meeting point of all meditators” (*sgom chen kun gyi thus sa yin*).
49. T: *gzong*. This tool, according to TDC, is more like an awl or metal-working instrument. The translation was adjusted to fit the context.
50. DN 319: *chos dang 'khon pa'i chos pa la// dngos grub 'byung ba dka' bar gda'//khyod dang mgon pa'i bu med la// khyim thabs rnyed pa dka' bar gda'//*.
51. The translation is based on *The Twelve Great Sons*. BCC 136b: *bar du snang ba 'brid mkhas po*. TNH: *bar du snang ba khrid mkhas po*.
52. More literally, “It’s just water cutting water.” T: *chu nyid chu yis gshags pa gcig*.
53. This line appears the same in both Tsangnyön’s version and *The Black Treasury* (*mi byed rdzu 'phrul nga che bas*); however, we are reading *mi byed* as *ma bcos* (DPR). In its original form, the line could also possibly be read, “Of the miracles performed by men, mine are great.”
54. This word suggests a rock that is used to do strength training (*gyad rdo*).
55. T: *ngas lta stangs ma byas rung gshogs pa yang gang zag gzhan pa la bltos na dga' rab yin*. (TN)
56. T: *rkyen med du bslu bslu 'dra bcu gnyis 'di mgur du gsungs so*.
57. T: *mi gsal bgyis kyang gsal bar gda'*.

58. T: *mchog du mos pa*.
59. The translation follows the Sichuan edition of *The Black Treasury*; this episode was not found in the Rangjung Dorje Collected Works edition. TNH: *snang tsam dus kyi dang po la*. DN-S 579: *gna' tsam dus kyi dang po la*.
60. T: *yon tan rlom pa byi ltar 'tshub*.
61. T: *phung sri*.
62. T: *yus kha*.
63. T: *bzlog gi sel*.
64. T: *srog lha*.
65. This line is obscure. T: *gzung 'dzin pho bdag gi tshor mig drongs*. Alternate reading in *The Black Treasury*, DN-S 584: *gzung 'dzin pho bdag gi 'tsher mig drong*.
66. This follows *The Black Treasury* reading, DN-S 584: *phyi thar nang stong gi rtsib khog drong*. TNH: *phyi ther nang gog gi rtseng gog drongs*.
67. The components of the term, *gnya' chu*, literally mean “neck water,” so “spinal fluid” was chosen as the best translation.
68. Reading yan as *gyeng*s in *dga' yan lto phyir ldom pa la*. (DPR)
69. T: *phu mda' thug pa'i long kha drongs*.
70. T: *phyi khung nang khung gi mthsul khung drongs*.
71. T: *tha mar rang la rang mdo che chung gis// dgos don gtam gyis gtan la phab*.
72. T: *thod rgal*.
73. T: *lha gcig dkon mchog gsum po la*. Literally, “To the single deity, the three precious jewels.”
74. T: *phyis gang sdod kyi sar yong rung bsam pa thog tu khel ba dka'*.
75. Reading *'bru tsam* as *'bru rtsam* according to *The Black Treasury*, DN 332.
76. T: *mi yin na tshod blta ba yin 'dra mang du zer ba la*. Literally, “You must be testing us.” (ATW)
77. T: *dzo ki zer na san tsa dzo ki zer ba yin*.
78. T: *'jig rten chos brgyad kyi phyir mi 'byon par sgrub pa rang mdzad pa thugs rjes bzung*. (DPR)
79. T: *yang gnam lo rgyal por mtshan gsol ba// g.yu 'brug gser gyi gshog pa can*.
80. T: *dog sa bkra shis nags ma ljongs*. (DPR)

81. The Tibetan in this line may reference an obscure name of the date in the lunar calendar, but it is unclear (DPR). *TNH: zla mtshan blon po yar gyi ngo. DN 500: zla mtshan dbang po yar gyi ngo.*
82. T: *lkug pa'i klu.*
83. This line is in the Sichuan edition of *The Black Treasury* but does not appear in the Collected Works edition or in Tsangnyön's version. *DN-S 773: dus gsum sangs rgyas kyi gzigs ma myong.*
84. T: *nang 'gro drug bcud kyi sems can la.* Literally, "The inner contents, the six classes of beings." Here, a traditional metaphorical construction is used in which sentient beings are referred to as contents, and the outer environment that they inhabit is the "vessel" or "container."
85. The translation is based on *The Black Treasury* reading, *DN 508: de 'dra rmongs pa'i sems can gis. TNH: de 'dra rmongs pa'i gsang tshig gis.*
86. T: *khri sgo.* This word is obscure. *Khri* means throne, and *sgo* means gate, so literally, "prosperous throne-gate." It is also possible that this refers to the seats on which the weavers sit. (DPR)
87. T: *srid zhi bas skyongs shig mdzangs kyi 'phrul.* (DPR)
88. *TNH: spa rtags sha dung gi sgo mo la. DN 509: dpa' stag sha dung gi sgo mo la.*
89. This phrase is missing from Tsangnyön's version. It appears in the Collected Works edition of *The Black Treasury* (*DN 510*) and *The Twelve Great Sons* (*BCC 161a*) as *ltas ngan g.yang du len pa'i gdams ngag gis*, literally, "the nail of taking bad omens as good fortune." The Sichuan edition of *The Black Treasury* reads *ltas ngan g.yang du len pa'i gdams ngag gis* (*DN-S 778*), which is rendered in the English translation here.
90. *The Black Treasury* and *The Twelve Great Sons* readings say, "He holds the victory banner of the teachings that do not set/ He's the jewel at my crown." *DN 511, BCC 161b: mi nub bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan 'dzin. TNH: mi nub bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi.*
91. T: *a ba.* We are reading this as a contraction of *a ba le ba*, which can mean intense or strong; here we interpret this to mean thick. (DPR)
92. T: *phyag zung du thim pa brgyad btsal nas.* Here *zung* is being read as "pair." With this interpretation, the sisters did sixteen prostrations. (DPR)
93. T: *'gro rgyud.*
94. T: *sder chags.* This term is being read as "a type of clawed creature." The



goddesses are chameleon-like in the sense that their image is ethereal and shifting (DPR). *The Black Treasury* and *The Twelve Great Sons* both offer different readings of this line: *TNH: bud med sder chags khrom du tshog. DN 518: bud med sde tshogs 'khor du tshogs. BCC 164b: bud med sde chags khrom du 'tshogs.*

95. The translation follows the Sichuan edition of *The Black Treasury*, DN-S 785: *du mar 'gyed cing sdud lugs kyi. TNH: du mar 'gyed cing sdug lugs kyis. DN 518: du mar 'gyed cing sdod lugs gyi.*
96. T: *phyag babs skyes pa'i lugs su byas.*
97. *The Black Treasury* states *bdud bzhi'i dmag gi ru* (DN 524) instead of *dpung bzhi'i dmag gi ru*" (TNH).
98. *TNH: yul sa sman gyi dor; DN 541: yul sa sman gyi dong ra.* Triangulates between *The Black Treasury* and *TNH*, reading *dor* and *dong ra* as *do ra*.
99. T: *pho long ris su btab pa.* (DPR)
100. This reference is unclear (*TNH: sa manta tsa ri*); it appears differently in *The Black Treasury* (DN 542: *sa manta rA dza*) and *The Twelve Great Sons* (BCC 176a: *sa san ta tsa ri*).
101. T: *snga mun 'od kyi lam 'phrang der.*
102. T: *lung ston bdud kyi pho nya gsum.* Literally, "three messenger demons that are prophesied."
103. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 564: *gzhi kham gsum na mi khom pa brgyad kyi 'du byed kyi thang chad cing/ lam srid pa gsum na yun ring du bshar bas. TNH: gzhi gsum du mi khom pa brgyad kyi 'du byed kyi thang chad cing lam srid pa gsum nas yun ring bshad pas.*
104. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 566: *dus phyis bsam bzhin skye ba len pa de ka skye ba sna tshogs su sprul pa'i sku yin. TNH: dun phyin chad bsams nas skye ba sna tshogs sprul pa'i sku yin.*
105. T: *thod rgal nyams.*
106. T: *me mo bya'i zla ba'i tshes brgyad kyi nam srod yol ba na/*
107. More literally, "Trulchor, the method for preparing the body, is bliss" (T: *'phrul 'khor lus kyi bca' thabs bde*).
108. T: *rag ma byang chub sgrub pa'i rdzong// brag dmar mchong lung khyung gi rdzong// brags dmar spo mtho nam mkha' rdzong// mon yul stag phug senge rdzong// ka tya'i shel phug chu shing rdzong// brag dkar rta so dbu ma rdzong//*

109. T: *khyod kyis sems can la lus ngag yid gsum gyi sgo nas phan gang thogs gyis/ than a 'brel gtam dang gleng mo sogs kyis kyang sems can la phan 'dogs gyis gsungs yod pas/ nang du thongs shog gsungs pa ltar nang du bos.* Translation based on Scott Wellenbach in *Stories and Songs* (90).
110. T: *chos skad kyi lan tshul bzhin 'debs rgyu yod na thob/ de min dkor kho na rang za zhing chal glu len pa'i kha der dkor zas rung bas.* (TN)
111. T: *sdig pa stobs che khyad du tshe stod slob gnyer la sdug thag spyod nus pa ngo mtshar che.* (TN)
112. Reading *ga dar as gad dar*, which means to clean up or sweep clean.
113. T: *dmar chung byad.*
114. T: *tho tsam.* (TN)
115. T: *ston pa cis kyang mi nyan na/ rang re kun gyis mig gis mthong/ rna bas thos/rgyun du 'grog pas cha rgyus yod la/ 'dri che chung med pa'i chos.*
116. T: *nam mkha' sra zhing 'thas pa rdo rje.*
117. T: *mig 'phrul shes pa dang byed pa rung yang mi rung/ khyod rang mi nag pa rnams mgo skor thabs su gyis zer bas.* (TN)
118. T: *kha lan sbyin pas ci la phan.*
119. T: *'khor los sgyur rgyal rin chen 'dzin// rigs lnga bya 'phur chos nyid klong//*
120. T: *lan chags bu la byi dor gyis.* Literally, “Scrub your children to whom you are karmically indebted.”
121. Reading *rdo rjes bzlad pa as rdo rje'i bzlad pa.*
122. T: *gyur mo lto dkar.*
123. T: *gdams ngag ma thob dgu thob bam.*
124. This line actually reads “Great Bliss: The Lamp of Speech” (T: *bde chen gsung gi sgron me dang/*); however, the other mentions of this teaching of the Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis in the text read as translated here; thus, the name was adjusted for consistency. It is possible that the original reading is an alternate name for the teaching.
125. T: *spyod pa chu yi ral gri dang.* Literally, “Conduct, the Water Sword”; adjusted for consistency.
126. T: *bsam gtan thun 'jog gdams ngag.*
127. T: *rnal 'byor pa nangs nub med par sprang nus de las la bzang ste/ nges rnams kyis skyel yang mi zin par 'dug/ kyed rnams za 'dod pa rang gis chog pa min/ mi la yod dgos.* (TN)

128. Literally, “the small tiger bee” (*stag chung bung ba*).
129. Literally, “Everywhere, one needs to have an enclosure for [their] shame” (*ngo tsha'i rib ma gar yang dgos*).
130. Literally, “cloud bridge” (*sprin zam*).
131. T: *snying thon 'gro ba lta bu*.
132. T: *Ali dang kAli*.
133. Literally, “children of animals” (*dud 'gro'i bu*).
134. T: *khel le*.
135. T: *shes bzhin sdig mi gsog pa ltad mo rkyang che bar gda' rje btsun grub rtags de tsam ston pa sdig mi mdzad pas/ bdag gi dpe cha rnams gngang bar zhu zer/*
136. T: *mi thar pa'i lus*. (ATW)
137. T: *khong yus shod*. Reading *yus* as “truth” (*DSD*).
138. Literally, “Have not wanted to be carried to...” (*skyer ma 'dod*).
139. T: *'jug thal*.
140. T: *nyin par klog pa thos bsam gyi bya ba la nan tan che bar mdzad cing/ mtshan mo spong ba bsam gtan dang skor ba la sogs*.
141. T: *nub gyur mo nya*.
142. Literally, “body hair” (*spu*).
143. T: *'phrul 'khor btsan thabs kyi brdeg 'tshog*.
144. T: *steng gi gegs sel*.
145. T: *mtshal dmar 'obs kyi bad kyis brgyan*. (TN)
146. T: *gong mtshan dngul gyi pho long btab*. (TN)
147. T: *don thogs pa med pa*.
148. T: *phangs rungs*.
149. T: *phyi yul lung gsum gyi che rgu yis*.
150. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 710: *theg pa'i khyad par ma rtogs par// rang sems ming la zhen pa yi// lta ba nga yir bzung nas ni// gzhan la skur pa mi gdab 'tshal//*. TNH: *theg pa'i khyad par ma rtogs pa'i// rang sems ming la zhen pa yis// lta ba yir bzung nas ni// gzhan la skur ba mi gdab 'tshal//*).
151. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 711: *zag bcas bde ba'i rba klong du// rnam rtog rag par lus pa yin// bde ba'i ro myong med par bya//*.

TNH: *zag bcas bde ba'i rba klong du// rnam rtog rags pa nub pa yi// bde ba'i rom yang mi bgyid 'tshal//*

152. T: *tha mal thug phrad ma rtogs na.*
153. Reading *gdod chung* as *'dod chung*.
154. T: *yang 'dre mos ka phung la gtong ngam zer byung bas.*
155. Using the definition of *sme bar byas pa* in *DSM*, to “make dirty” (*sme ba can*).
156. T: *chab dang cho lo gzhi 'ding 'di// 'byung bo gtor ma rtsod pa 'dra//.*
157. T: *de la kha rtogs 'jal ba rnam// lag mgo me la sprug pa 'dra.*
158. T: *lha zhugs*, literally, “deity entering,” can refer to the trance state induced by a deity “entering” into the body of an individual.
159. T: *bshos*.
160. T: *'bangs rlung gis khyer ba gung dang mnyam*. (DPR)
161. Literally, “to mind his words is king” (*mi kha la nyan na rgyal po yin*).
162. T: *shal ma ri la 'degs nyen gda*. Translation is based on reading *shal ma ri as shal ma li*.
163. T: *ming yang spro ba skye ba'i phyir*. (DPR)
164. Literally, “the ocean of blood in the rosy cheeks dries up” (*mkhur tshos khrag gi rga mtsho bskams*).
165. Literally, “the face’s protrusion, the nose, also shrivels” (*byad kyī rgyang shing sna yang zhom*).
166. T: *sdug bsngal yi chad spangs shing 'khor*.
167. T: *chos par thugs rje chen po dgos pas bu dang re'u lug mi sdug tsam dang/ dge las rnams mdzad pas skyon dogs med lags zer ba*. (TN)
168. T: *ka ba 'brenḡ bas brabs pa 'dra*.
169. T: *'ud gog rbad gtam byed pa 'dra*. (TN)
170. T: *yod lo byed pa ya re che*. (TN)
171. T: *ya nga med pa'i zhe dogs can*.
172. Literally, “There is still a little that will not be benefited by that” (*des cung mi phan*).
173. T: *cug re drag*. This is probably a colloquial expression the exact meaning of which is unknown.
174. T: *gang nas bsams snang ba'i 'khrul lugs la*.

175. T: *mo go 'gyur 'gugs dbyangs su gda'i*. More literally, “If you didn’t understand, it was a summoning song.”
176. T: *phag chod*.
177. T: *rnam rtog mgo lo rgod pa yis*. (DPR)
178. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 616: *ngos lkog gi khyim sgo che ba ste*. TNH: *ngo lkog bri sgyogs che ba yis*.
179. T: *'ur ding*.
180. T: *'phyo ba*.
181. T: *las ngan ltag tshan ched pa 'am*.
182. T: *srang rdo mgo*.
183. Preceding the line that begins “May you...” in each verse, Tsangnyön’s version (TNH) gives the very obscure line: *sho mas kyang ku re zhus pa lags*. Since it does not appear in *The Black Treasury* or in *The Twelve Great Sons*, the line was omitted in this translation.
184. T: *snying rje'i mgron khang*.
185. T: *zhi ba 'od kyis phyin pas/ khos rje btsun gyi thugs rje'i zil ma bzod par zhi ba 'od chas pa tsam la nga 'gro nga bon po'i bla 'khyer mkhan snang yul gyi bdud nga ra mi zan bya ba yin/ bon po'i chos la gtad so mi 'dug pas rngan chan byed 'ongs pa yin zer/srang bar na mar sngo thul zhol le song ba ded pas ri logs la spyang kyir byas song skad/*. (DPR)
186. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 228: *ngo lkog mkhan cig gtsang gtsang mang*. TNH: *ngo log mkhan zhig gtsang sbra mang*.
187. Reading *nog* as *nongs*.
188. T: *mthun 'gyur byung ngo*.
189. T: *the'u rang sris la rku ba yin*.
190. T: *dgra bu tsha lus las chad dang gnyis// bskyangs shing 'khang ba'i 'khor g.yog gsum//*
191. These four lines in *The Black Treasury* read (DN 232): *'jig rten lha yi bde ba yang// g.yer ni lha zhes che zhing 'dug// skad ni g.yu 'brug bzhin du cher grags kyang// de la snying po mi 'dug ste//*. TNH: *'jig rten lha dang mi yi bde ba yang// g.yeng ni lha g.yag bzhin du che zhing 'dug// skad ni g.yu 'brug bzhin du cher bsgrags kyang// de la snying po mi 'dug ste//*
192. T: *yin pa min te bya thabs dka'*.
193. T: *dbugs dbyung dbang po ma skyes pa*.

194. The translation follows *The Black Treasury*, DN 454: *rang rgyud yan pa 'di ma re mdzod*. TNH: *rang rgyud yal bar ma btang mdzod*.

## Glossary of Key Terms

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This glossary contains general explanations for terms as they appear in the text. It is intended to give immediate aid to the reader, not to be exhaustive. Interested readers are encouraged to seek out more detailed explanations among the many available Buddhist resources both in print and easily searchable on the Internet. Note the following abbreviations:

S: Sanskrit

T: Tibetan

**abhisheka** (S: *abhiṣeka*; T: *dbang*). A ceremony in which a guru empowers the disciple to enter into the mandala of a particular deity. In the highest yoga tantra, there are four principal abhishekas: (1) vase abhisheka, (2) secret abhisheka, (3) prajña-jñāna abhisheka, and (4) fourth, or word, abhisheka.

**afflictions** (S: *kleśa*; T: *nyon mongs*). Disturbing states of mind that are also referred to as “poisons.” Included in these mind states are the negative emotions. The three root afflictions are attachment, aggression, and ignorance.

**Akanishta** (S: *Akaniṣṭha*; T: *'Og min*). Literally, “Not Below.” Akanishta is the highest heaven of the form realms. In the Vajrayana tradition, it refers to the sambhogakaya realm from which all pure nirmanakaya realms come.

**all-base** (S: *ālaya*; T: *kun gzhi*). The basic nature of mind, mind itself, or buddha nature. See *mind itself*.

**all-base consciousness** (S: *ālayavijñāna*; T: *kun gzhi rnam shes*). The eighth, or storehouse, consciousness. All latent tendencies of mind are said to be stored within the eighth consciousness; this is not to be confused with the “all-base,” which in the *Collected Songs* refers to mind itself.

**amrita** (S: *amṛta*; T: *bdud rtsi*). Generally, nectar or a precious or healing liquid. In the context of Vajrayana it is a sacred substance used in some rituals to symbolize prajña, or wisdom.

**anuttarayoga tantra** (S; T: *bla na med pa'i rnal 'byor rgyud*). Highest yoga

tantra; the highest of the four classes of tantra, which is principally emphasized in Milarepa's tradition. The three lower classes are the kriya, carya or upa, and yoga tantras.

**ashé** (T: *a shad*). The right-most stroke of the Tibetan letter A (ཨ). This is the shape that one visualizes below the navel during chandali practice in order to generate yogic heat. *A-thung* (T: *a thung*), literally "short A," is a synonym.

**asura** (S; T: *lha ma yin*). The lesser gods, one of the six classes of beings of the desire realm. Afflicted with great jealousy, they are always engaged in warfare.

**avadhuti** (S: *avadhūti*; T: *dūti*). The central channel, or nadi, of the subtle body. In yogic practice, one of the aims is to "bind" the prana by having it enter the central channel.

**ayatana** (S: *āyatana*; T: *skye mched*). (1) A category of the abhidharma that includes the six sense faculties and their objects. (2) A state of meditative absorption that can correspond to one of the four formless realms (also called the four ayatanas).

**bardo** (T: *bar do*). Intermediate state; this most commonly refers to the state between the death of one life and birth in the next, but can also refer to the "bardo," or intermediate, states of dreaming, deep meditation, waking, and deep sleep.

**bhuta** (S: *bhūta*; T: *'byung po*). A formless demon that causes harm to others.

**bindu** (S; T: *thig le*). Subtle essences. Bindu is one of the three key components of yogic subtle body practice along with nadi and prana. "Simply put, bindu corresponds to mind and the dharmakāya" (Callahan 2014: xxvi).

**bodhichitta** (S: *bodhicitta*; T: *byang chub sems*). Literally, "mind of awakening or enlightenment." Absolute bodhichitta is emptiness indivisible with compassion, beyond all words and concepts. Relative bodhichitta is the wish to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

**bodhisattva** (S; T: *byang chub sems dpa'*). One who engages in the path to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. The bodhisattva path is said to require great bravery and genuine compassion.

**central channel** (T: *rtsa dbu ma*). See *avadhuti*.

**chakra** (S: *cakra*; T: *'khor lo*). Literally, "wheel." Chakras are concentrated clusters of nadis that branch off the avadhuti like petals. In the *Collected Songs*, four chakras are discussed, located below the navel, at the heart, at the throat, and at the head.



**Chakrasamvara** (S: Cakrasaṃvara; T: 'Khor lo bde mchog). A yidam deity of the mother class of anuttarayoga tantra, and one of the principal yidam deities of Milarepa's tradition from the lineage of Tilopa.

**chakravartin king** (S: *cakravartin*; T: *'khor lo sgyur ba'i rgyal po*). Literally, "king that turns the wheel," meaning "universal monarch." A king who, due to having abundant merit, is particularly powerful and effective in his rule. Also used as an epithet for a buddha.

**chandali** (S: *caṇḍālī*; T: *gtum mo*). Literally, "fierce lady." The practice of yogic heat that is generated through working with the subtle body elements of nadi, prana, and bindu.

**Chö** (T: *gcod*). Literally, "cutting." Generally, a system of practice transmitted by the master Machik Lapdrön where one "cuts" through four types of "demons" that relegate one to samsara: material demons, immaterial demons, the demon of exaltation, and the demon of inflation. The last of these is the conceptual inflation of clinging to a self (Kongtrul 2007: 256).

**completion stage** (S: *sampannakrama*; T: *rdzogs rim*). One of the two main components of Vajrayana practice, along with the creation stage. The completion stage is connected primarily with the illusory body and the subtle body practices of nadi, prana, and bindu.

**conduct of yogic discipline** (T: *rnal 'byor spyod pa*). Spontaneous conduct performed by those accomplished in yogic practice to perform benefit for others and further enhance their own practice. When engaging in such conduct, yogis often perform very unconventional actions.

**creation stage** (S: *utpattikrama*; T: *bskye rim*). One of the two main components of Vajrayana practice, along with the completion stage, in which one uses visualization of yidam deities as a method to purify one's mundane perception.

**creation and completion.** See *creation stage* and *completion stage*.

**dakini** (S: *ḍākinī*; T: *mkha'gro*). Generally understood as messengers or protectors of the dharma (though there are also worldly dakinis), they are seen as having a wrathful or semiwrathful temperament. Dakinis can also be yidam deities such as Vajrayogini.

**definitive meaning** (S: *nitārtha*; T: *nges don*). In contrast to the provisional meaning, these teachings of the Buddha concern the absolute nature of reality, transcending the law of karma, cause and effect.

**deva** (S; T: *lha*). Gods, one of the six classes of the desire realm.

**Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis** (*lus med mkha'gro chos skor dgu*).

These teachings were said to have been received by Tilopa directly from the dakinis. Marpa received some of them from his guru Naropa, and as prophesied, later Rechungpa went to receive the remaining ones from Tipupa and Machik Drupé Gyälmo. In written form they consist of nine lines of verse:

For ripening and liberation, sever the knots of mind.

For samaya, look at the mirror of mind.

For nadi and prana, turn the network of chakras.

For great bliss, seize the jewel of speech.

For self-liberation,

look at the lamp of wisdom.

For sacred substance, bask in the sun of realization.

For conduct, strike the water with the sword.

For equal taste, look into the outer mirror. (Marpa 1995: 44)

**dharmakaya** (S: *dharmakāya*; T: *chos sku*). Dharma-body or reality-body; the actual enlightened mind that is without any form.

**dharmata** (S: *dharmatā*; T: *chos nyid*). The true nature of phenomena; the very suchness of reality that is beyond thought.

**dhyana** (S: *dhyāna*; T: *bsam gtan*). Meditative concentration; the four form realms are also known as the four dhyanas.

**dralha** (T: *dgra lha*). A type of warrior deity from the Bön tradition.

**dré** (T: *bre*). A Tibetan measurement roughly equal to a quart.

**Dzogchen**. See *Great Perfection*.

**eight freedomless states**. See *freedomless states*.

**form realm** (S: *rūpadhātu*; T: *gzugs kham*s). One of the three realms of samsara, corresponding to subtle states of meditative absorption. Generally there are four form realms, each of which is divided, for a total of seventeen levels. Beings born within these states are considered a type of deva or god in Buddhist cosmology.

**formless realm** (S: *ārūpyadhātu*; T: *gzugs med kham*s). One of the three realms of samsara, corresponding to extremely subtle states of meditative absorption. These mind states are so subtle that beings dwelling there have no physical form. There are four different levels within the formless realm.

**four ayatanas.** See *ayatanas*; *formless realm*.

**four immeasurables** (T: *tshad med bzhi*). Immeasurable love, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity.

**four kayas** (T: *sku bzhi*). See *dharmakaya*; *sambhogakaya*; *nirmanakaya*; and *svabhavikakaya*.

**four lineage transmissions** (T: *rgyud bka' bab bzhi*). Said to be collected by Tilopa, one presentation states that they are the transmissions of chandali received from Charyapa, illusory body and luminosity received from Nagarjuna, dream yoga received from Lavapa, and bardo and transference from Subhagini.

**four maras** (S: *māra*; T: *bdud bzhi*). The mara of the skandhas, the mara of the Lord of Death, the mara of the afflictions, and the mara of the godly son (or worldly pleasures).

**four possibilities** (*mu bzhi*). Also referred to as the four extremes, which are the extreme of existence, nonexistence, both of these, and neither.

**four-session yoga** (*thun bzhi rnal 'byor*). The four sessions of yogic practice in formal retreat: early morning before sunrise, mid-morning, afternoon, and evening or midnight.

**freedomless states** (T: *mi khom brgyad*). Conditions in which one is unable to practice dharma. Traditionally enumerated as eight, they are: being born as a hell being, a preta, animal, a long-life deva, a barbarian (in a place where there is no view of dharma), being born with wrong views, in a time without buddhas, or as a dumb person.

**ganachakra** (S: *gaṇacakra*; T: *tshogs kyi 'khor lo*). Literally, “wheel of accumulation.” A feast offering of Vajrayana practitioners in which participants usually practice on the basis of a yidam deity sadhana; “...desire and sense perceptions are made part of the path. By celebrating the phenomenal world, the practitioner simultaneously extends his understanding of sacredness and further surrenders ego” (Trungpa 1999: 349).

**gandharva** (S; T: *dri za*). Literally, “scent-eater”; a lower-ranking deva.

**geshe** (S: *kalyāṇamitra*; T: *dge bshes*). Literally, “spiritual friend.” In Milarepa’s time, it was used as a title particularly in the Kadampa tradition to indicate one thoroughly learned in the Buddhist scriptures.

**Great Perfection** (S: *mahāsāndhi*; T: *rdzogs chen*). Also known as Dzogchen. A lineage of meditation practice primarily practiced in the Nyingma school of

Tibet that is in many ways similar to Mahamudra. Great Perfection, while generally referring to a particular lineage of practices, also refers to the ultimate, primordially pure nature of mind or mind itself.

**higher perceptions** (S: *abhijñā*; T: *mngon shes*). Clairvoyance and supernormal powers that manifest through accomplishment in meditation.

**Jambudvīpa** (S: Jambudvīpa; T: Dzam bu gling). Literally, “Land of Jambu.” One of the four continents as described in traditional Buddhist cosmology; it is equivalent to our world.

**jñanasattva** (S: *jñānasattva*; T: *ye shes sems dpa*). In sadhana practices of the creation stage, this refers to the essence of the yidam deity, often visualized as bestowing blessing by descending and entering the samayasattva.

**kapala** (S: *kapāla*; T: *thod*). Skull-cup; a ritual object used in some Vajrayana practices.

**kaya** (S: *kāya* T: *sku*). Literally, “body.” The “kayas” represent different aspects of enlightenment. They may be enumerated as two, three, four, or five. See also *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, *nirmanakaya*, and *svabhavikakaya*.

**kinvara** (S: *kiṃnara*; T: *mi'am ci*). Literally, “human, or what?” A type of deva with the head of a horse and the body of a human.

**krishnasara deer** (T: *khri snyan sa le*). Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, is traditionally depicted wearing a *krishnasara* deer skin over his left shoulder and heart to symbolize love and compassion. Deer skins, generally, also serve as meditation seats for Buddhist yogis: “As an *asana* [or seat], the deer-skin is believed to enhance the solitary tranquility and awareness required by an ascetic, with the pure *sattvic* energy of the deer being absorbed by the practitioner” (Beer 2003: 62).

**kshetrapala** (S: *kṣetrapāla*; T: *zhing skyong*). A worldly local protector deity.

**kumbanda** (S: *kumbhāṇḍa*; T: *grul bum*). A type of yaksha demon that lives in the ocean. They have the body of a human but have the head of various different creatures and have ripped flesh on their ears and on the joints of their limbs.

**Lake Manasarovar** (T: *g.yu mi pham mtsho*). The Tibetan means “Invincible Turquoise Lake.” A lake near Mount Kailash (Tisé) considered sacred by Buddhists, Hindus, and Bönpos.

**latent tendencies** (T: *bag chags*). Also sometimes translated as “habitual tendencies” or “imprints.”

**Lhajé** (T: *lha rje*). A Tibetan word for physician. Gampopa is often referred to

Dakpo Lhajé, the Physician from Dakpo.

**logicians** (T: *tog ge ba*). This term is usually used pejoratively for those who put conceptual reasoning and understanding above direct experience in meditation practice.

**luminosity** (T: *'od gsal*). Also sometimes translated as “clear light” or “clarity,” the term is used to describe the clearly appearing and knowing aspect of the mind, in contrast with its empty essence. The true nature of mind, or mind itself, is taught to be luminosity and emptiness in union.

**Machik Drupé Gyalmo** (S: Ekajatisiddhirajni; T: *Ma gcig grub pa'i rgyal mo*). Literally, “Sole Mother Queen of Siddhas.” One of the teachers of Rechungpa who gave him the Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis that Milarepa sent him to India to receive.

**Mahamudra** (S: *mahāmudrā*; T: *phyag rgya chen po*). Literally, “Great Seal.” The name for the ultimate state especially within the Kagyu lineage; according to one explanation, *mudra*, or “seal,” refers to the direct experience of emptiness that is inherently present within the nature of mind; *maha*, or “great,” means this inherent nature completely pervades everything that is experienced. *Mahamudra* can also refer to the meditation and methods that bring about this realization.

**mahasiddha** (S: *mahāsiddha* T: *grub thob chen po*) Literally, “great accomplisher.” One who has attained high realization through yogic practice. Though the term can refer to any realized master, the term most commonly refers to the eighty-four mahasiddhas of India.

**mahoraga** (S: *mahorāga*; T: *lto 'phye*). Literally, “belly crawler.” A type of local deity that has the form of a serpent and lives underground.

**Maitripa** (S: Maitrīpa, ca. 1007–1085). One of the Indian forefathers of the Mahamudra lineage, and one of Marpa’s main teachers.

**mamo** (T: *ma mo*). A type of wrathful dakini.

**mantrika** (S; T: *sngag pa*). A practitioner of the Secret Mantra, Vajrayana.

**Mantrayana** (S: *mantrayāna*; T: *snags kyi theg pa*). “Mantra vehicle.” A synonym for Vajrayana, Secret Mantra, and tantrayana.

**menmo** (T: *sman mo*). Minor deities from the Bön tradition that reside in lakes and sometimes in the mountains. They are usually associated with medicine and healing.

**mental nonengagement** (S: *amanasikara*; T: *yid la mi byed pa*). A term used in

the Mahamudra tradition to describe the lack of mind's conceptual engagement with objects; while phenomena appear to the mind in this state, the awareness of these appearances is direct and not impeded by the conceptual mind.

**mind itself** (T: *sems nyid*). The basic nature of mind that is unfabricated and free of any elaborations. By realizing this true nature of mind fully, one attains awakening. Mind itself has many other names, such as ordinary mind, pristine awareness, rigpa, and buddha nature.

**Mount Meru** (S; T: *ri rab*). The great central mountain of Buddhist cosmology, which is surrounded by the four continents.

**muni** (S: *mūni*; T: *thub pa*). Sage; usually refers to the Buddha Shakyamuni, but can refer to buddhas in general.

**nadi** (S: *nāḍi*; T: *rtsa*). Energy channels of the subtle body; these are given detailed consideration in the yogic subtle body practices of the Vajrayana completion stage.

**naga** (S: *nāga*; T: *klu*). Powerful beings in Indo-Tibetan mythology. They are typically depicted as having the heads of humans and the bodies of serpents. Nagas are said to live underground or in water, and are associated with great wealth. Gawo, Jokpo, and Ngadra are three among the famed naga kings.

**naked instructions** (T: *dmar khrid*). Instructions that are given, usually only orally, based on the practical and direct experience of the master.

**nirmanakaya** (S: *nirmāṇakāya*; T: *sprul sku*). Emanation body; the physical (often human) form of enlightened beings that is manifested to directly benefit sentient beings. The Tibetan word is pronounced “tülku” and is often used to refer to reincarnate lamas.

**paramita** (S: *pāramitā*; T: *pha rol tu phyin pa*). In Sanskrit the meaning is “perfection”; the Tibetan term literally means, “gone to the other side.” Generally refers to the main practices of the bodhisattva path, which are generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditation, and prajña. In some enumerations there are an additional four paramitas, which are skillful means, strength, aspiration, and wisdom.

**pishacha** (S: *piśāca*; T: *sha za*). Literally, “flesh-eater.” A type of preta similar to rakshasas and yakshas who eat human flesh.

**pitaka** (S: *piṭaka*; T: *sde snod*). The pitakas, or baskets, are the three main categories of Buddhist scriptures: the sutras (containing the words of the Buddha), the vinaya (containing the vows and guidelines for the ordained

sangha), and the abhidharma (canonical scriptures that elucidate the meaning of the Buddha's words).

**pointing out** (T: *ngo sprod*). Also “introduction.” Instructions or teachings given by a master to directly show or demonstrate essential points of dharma, particularly the nature of mind, mind itself.

**prajña** (S: *prajñā*; T: *shes rab*). Literally, “supreme knowing.” Intellectual or discerning wisdom.

**pramana** (S: *pramāṇa*; T: *tshad ma*). Valid cognition, or validity; a term generally associated with the body of Buddhist teachings that address epistemology and logic. It can also refer to the “valid teacher,” the Buddha.

**prana** (S: *prāṇa*; T: *rlung*). Wind, or subtle energy; one of the three main components of subtle body in the Vajrayana tradition. The movement of mind is said to be intimately connected with prana, so working directly with prana in the body becomes a skillful method for working with the mind.

**pratimoksha** (S: *prātimokṣa*; T: *so so thar pa*). The vows of individual liberation, which include monastic and lay (upasaka) vows; the main focus is to refrain from nonvirtuous activity.

**preta** (S; T: *yi dvags*). Also called hungry ghosts; one of the six classes of beings in the desire realm. Pretas are said to be afflicted by strong miserliness and suffer intensely due to never being able to satisfy their hunger and thirst.

**provisional meaning** (S: *neyārtha*; T: *drang don*). The body of Buddhist teachings connected mostly with the law of karma, cause and effect, and the workings of relative reality.

**pure vision** (T: *dag snang*). The Vajrayana practice of seeing the world as a sacred place, and in particular seeing one's guru as a buddha.

**putana** (S; T: *srul po*). Literally, “putrefaction”; a type of preta demon.

**rakshasa** (S: *rākṣasa*; T: *srin po*). A flesh-eating demon, a type of pishacha.

**rakta** (S). Literally, “blood.” A sacred substance used in certain Vajrayana practices; it symbolizes skillful means, or upaya.

**rasayana** (S: *rasāyana*; T: *bcud len*). Literally, “extracting the essence.” This “is the practice of forsaking ordinary food and drink, and subsisting only on the essences one extracts either from flowers and other substances or from space” (*Stories and Songs*: 110).

**rishi** (S: *ṛṣi*; T: *drang srong*). Literally, “honest and straight.” A mendicant or sage who engages in the yogic path.

**rupa** (S: *rūpa*; T: *gzugs*). Form, or body.

**rupakaya** (S: *rūpakāya*; *gzugs kyi sku*). Form body; can refer to the sambhogakaya or nirmanakaya, or both.

**samadhivattva** (S: *samādhivattva*; T: *ting 'dzin sems dpa'*). In yidam deity practice, the seed syllable of the yidam deity, usually visualized in the heart center surrounded by the letters of the deity's mantra.

**samayasattva** (S; T: *dam tshig sems dpa'*). In yidam deity practice, this refers to the self-visualization of the yidam deity.

**sambhogakaya** (S: *sambhogakāya*; T: *longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku*). Literally, “enjoyment body.” The “energetic” form of the buddha that only appears to bodhisattvas with realization, and the basis for the emanations of nirmanakayas. The luminosity that radiates from the empty essence of the nature of mind is the nature of the sambhogakaya.

**seven branches** (T: *yan lag bdun*). A primary group of methods for the accumulation of merit that consist of prostrating, offering, confessing, rejoicing, requesting to teach, admonishing not to pass into parinirvana but to remain, and dedicating.

**seven noble riches** (T: *'phags pa'i nor bdun*). Faith, generosity, discipline, study, modesty, sense of shame, and prajña.

**shamatha** (S: *śamatha*; T: *zhi gnas*). Calm abiding. The aspect of meditation in which the mind rests single-pointedly without distraction.

**shidak** (T: *gzhi bdag*). A protector similar to an earth-lord spirit.

**shravaka** (S: *śrāvaka*; T: *nyan thos*). Literally, “hearer.” A follower of the Hinayana who strives to attain the level of an arhat; they do not engage in the practices of the Mahayana.

**siddha** (S; T: *grub thob*). One who has attained accomplishment; a great master of meditation.

**siddhi** (S; T: *dngos grub*). Accomplishment; these can be either ordinary (such as the siddhis that the Tseringma sisters bestow upon Milarepa), or supreme (the ultimate attainment of enlightenment).

**Six Dharmas of Naropa** (T: *na ro chos drug*). Said to contain the essential practices of all the tantras, the Six Dharmas are chandali, illusory body, dream yoga, luminosity yoga, bardo, and transference, or phowa.

**sixfold collection** (T: *tshogs drug*). The sixfold collection of consciousnesses: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind sense consciousnesses.



**skandha** (S; T: *phung po*). The five aggregates upon which the self is imputed: form (or body), feelings, discriminations, mental formations, and primary consciousnesses.

**skull-cup** (T: *thod phor*). See *kapala*.

**stupa** (S: *stūpa*; T: *mchod rten*). A Buddhist monument or reliquary which serves as an object of veneration for practitioners. Stupas are of all different sizes; they can be small enough to fit on a table, or be up to many miles across.

**Sukhavati** (S: Sukhāvātī; T: bDe ba can). “Land of Bliss”; the western pure realm of Amitabha Buddha.

**svabhavikakaya** (S: *svabhāvikakāya*; T: *ngo bo nyid kyi sku*). Literally, “entity body.” The totality of buddhahood: the inseparability of the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya.

**tendrel** (S: *pratīyasamutpāda*; T: *rten 'brel*). Sometimes translated as auspicious coincidence, this is a Tibetan short form for “ten ching drel wa” (*rten cing 'brel ba*). The Sanskrit equivalent literally means interdependent origination. The word takes on a special meaning in the context of the Vajrayana, where connections through symbols and signs play an important role.

**thangka** (T: *thang ka*). Traditional Tibetan sacred painting.

**three gates** (T: *sgo gsum*). Body, speech, and mind.

**three kindnesses** (T: *bka' drin gsum*). The kindnesses of the guru giving abhisheka, transmission, and guiding instructions to the disciple.

**three pitakas**. See *pitaka*.

**three realms** (S: *trailoka*; T: *kham s gsum*). A presentation of Buddhist cosmology consisting of the desire realm (which contains the six classes of beings), the form realm, and the formless realm.

**Three Vital Points of Mixing** (T: *gnad bsre ba gsum*). A teaching that came from Marpa (DPR); in the *Dungkar Tshig Dzö Chenmo*, it is described in the entry titled “The Cycle of the Three Points of Mixing or the Nine Points of Mixing and Transference of Lord Rechungpa.” The explanation reads: “The mixing of desire and great bliss is chandali; the mixing of aggression and lack of true existence is illusory body; the mixing of ignorance and nonconceptuality is luminosity [practice]. The mixing of chandali and illusory body are practiced during the daytime, the mixing practices of dream yoga and illusory body are practiced at night; and the mixing of bardo practice and transference are done at the time of death. Chandali is for persons with

diligence, dream yoga is for those who are lazy, and mixing and transference is for those with short lives.” (908)

**Tipupa** (S: Pāravātapāda; T: Ti phu pa). Rechungpa received the Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis from Tipupa. Tipupa is said to be the rebirth of Marpa Lotsawa’s son, Darma Dodé. When Darma Dodé died, he performed transference and ejected his consciousness into a pigeon, “tipu” in Sanskrit. With the pigeon’s body, he flew to India and again transferred his consciousness into the body of a sixteen-year-old boy, and continued to practice the teachings he received from Marpa.

**tirthika** (S: tīrthika; T: mu stegs pa). A non-Buddhist, used pejoratively.

**Tisé Snow Mountain** (T: ti se gangs). Tisé is the name used by Tibetans for Mount Kailash, considered to be sacred in the Buddhist, Hindu, and Bön traditions.

**transference** (T: ’pho ba). Generally, a yogic practice in which one’s consciousness is ejected to a buddhfield at the time of death. By doing so, one may bypass the bardo experiences that are typically taught to occur after death.

**treacherous path** (T: ’phrang lam). A narrow and dangerous path that goes along the side of a cliff; used metaphorically to refer to the bardo, the intermediate state between death and rebirth.

**trulchor** (T: ’khrul ’khor). Yogic exercises practiced as a preliminary to the subtle body practices connected with nadi, prana, and bindu.

**tsa-tsa** (T: tsa tsa). Small molded sacred images that often serve as reliquaries containing the ashes of someone who has died. After they are formed, tsa-tsas are often placed inside of stupas.

**tsen** (T: btsan). A type of fierce spirit that is associated with mountains.

**tsok** (S: gaṇa; T: tshog). Literally, “accumulation,” or “gathering.” Tsok refers to a ritual in which many different materials and substances are gathered together for offering; this term can also refer to a ganachakra.

**Tushita** (S: Tuṣita; T: dGa’ ldan). Tushita heaven is one of the six deva locales of the desire realm. It is where the bodhisattva Shvetaketu resided before descending to become Buddha Shakyamuni.

**Ushnishavijaya** (S: Uṣṇīsavijāya; T: gTsub gtor rnam rgyal ma). A female long-life deity.

**Vajradhara** (S: Vajradhāra; T: rDo rje ’chang). Literally, “Holder of the Vajra.” The dharmakāya buddha who in the Kagyu lineage is said to have given

teachings to Tilopa, the first human holder of the lineage.

**Vajrayana** (S; T: *rdo rje theg pa*). Generally equivalent to tantra and Mantrayana. The Vajrayana teachings hold the same view of emptiness and intention to bring all sentient beings to enlightenment as the Mahayana, with the addition of many different methods employed. The Vajrayana methods are the primary practice of Milarepa and his disciples.

**vetala** (S: *vetāla*; T: *ro lang*s). Literally, “risen corpse”; spirits that inhabit corpses in charnel grounds.

**vidyadhara** (S: *vidyadhāra*; T: *rig ’dzin*). Literally, “awareness-holder”; someone who constantly abides in the state of awakening.

**vipashyana** (S: *vipaśyanā*; T: *lhag mthong*). Clear, or special, insight; the aspect of meditation in which one gains insight into the true nature of reality, in particular the true nature of selflessness or emptiness.

**yaksha** (S: *yakṣa*; T: *gnod sbyin*). A type of nonhuman spirit that inflicts harm upon other beings.

**yana** (S: *yāna*; T: *theg pa*). Vehicle; a set of teachings and practices that bring one along the spiritual path.

**yidam** (S: *iṣṭādevatā*; T: *yid dam*). The tutelary or chosen deity, taught to be the root of spiritual accomplishment. In the practices of highest yoga tantra, one visualizes oneself as the yidam deity and develops vajra pride that one has its enlightened qualities. These practices are only done with the blessing of a qualified guru.

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    given to Gampopa  
    heat of  
    Milarepa receiving  
    Rechungpa's development of and Tashi Tseringma  
    types of  
    and wisdom  
charnel ground  
Chatupitha  
Chonglung  
Chonglung Garuda Fortress  
Chonglung Red Rock. See Chonglung Garuda Fortress



Chöpen Drin Sangma

Chuwar

Chuwo Sang River

Chuzang, Lachi

clarity

clarity-emptiness

of creation stage

experience of

three kinds of

*see also* luminosity coemergence

coemergent

compassion

dharma devoid of

and emptiness

and freedom from foes

as friend for accomplishment of guru

and mantra practice

for sentient beings

taming through

unbiased

command. *See* guru's command completion stage

in union with creation

no need to practice path of

concepts

collapse of

cutting through

as demons and ghosts

as *dharmakaya*

freedom from

as luminous display of mind and meditation

as obscuring and deceiving as perceiver and perceived subtle

conductive conditions

conduct. *See* view, meditation, and conduct (songs of); yogic discipline

consciousness

and death

eightfold

of Milarepa's parents

and mind

and *prana*

roaming in samsara

and wisdom

*see also* all-base consciousness; six fold collection

consort

contentment

Cool Grove

creation stage

meditating on

path of

Crystal Cave Water-Wood Fortress Cuckoo Solitary Fortress

Dakmema

Dampa Gyakpupa

Dampa Sangye of Dingri

*dakas*

*dakinis*

bestowing *siddhi*

blessings of

control over

and creation stage

*ganachakra* and

gathering of

heat as garment of

Lion-Faced

Milarepa and

as nature of mind

prophecy and messages of pure land of  
*samaya* substance of as support  
teachings and instructions upset and punishment of  
worldly

Dakpo Lhaje. *See also* Gampopa Dakpo Rinpoche. *See* Gampopa Darlo

Darma Dodé

Darma Wangchuk, Repa

Darma Wangchuk, Shuyé. *See*

*also* Shiwa Ö, Repa Dampa Sangye

death

buddhahood at time of  
certainty of  
facing joyfully (song)  
and fear  
as imputation  
and leaving behind this life luminosity at  
reflecting on  
as teaching time of  
uncertainty of time

dedication

deities

form of  
and illusory body  
local and worldly  
and *shamatha*  
song of summoning  
wisdom  
within body  
see also *yidam* deity Demon Pond

demons

at Chonglung  
at Chuwar

concepts as

as *dharmapalas*

at Lachi

at Lingpa Rock

see also *devas*; ghosts; spirits dependent arising. *See* interdependence desire.

*See also*

passion

*devas*

eight classes of

and ghosts

*See also* demons; ghosts; spirits deviations

devotion

and gurus

to have higher perceptions lack of

rarity of

as “seed of mind,”

and supplication

Dewakyong. *See* Ngendzong Tönpa Dharmodgata

*dharani*

dharma

perverted

and refuge

teaching without understanding wheel of

of worldly customs

Dharmabodhi

Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis

*dharmadhatu*

*dharmakaya*

all phenomena as

and appearances

as benefit for self

and concepts

and messenger nath

and messenger path  
mind as  
and pointing out  
realization and certainty and sky  
at time of death  
as unchanging

*dharmapalas*

demons as  
description of  
Mahakala and Mahakali  
as support and protection *dharmata*  
as base and ground  
and dharmins  
and emptiness  
free of elaboration  
realization and certainty of as true reality

*dharmata*-emptiness *dhatu*. See also *bindu*  
*dhyana*. See meditative concentration diligence

as armor  
as horse  
and meditation  
and virtue  
whip of  
see also *paramitas*

Dingma

Dingma Drin

Dingri

disciple-daughters, four

Paldarbum

Peta

Rechungma

Sahle Ö

discipline

and monks

see also *paramitas*

disillusionment

divination

Dombi Heruka

Drakya Vajra Fortress

*dralha*

Dretön

Dretön Tashi Bar. *See* Dretön dream

of Gampopa

interpreting and transforming latent tendencies in

of Marpa

of Milarepa

practice/yoga of

of Rechungpa

of Sahle Ö

and waking life

when meditating

Drigom Lingkhawa. *See* Drigom Repa Drigom Repa

Drin

Milarepa's death at

residing in

Tashi Tseringma mountain in travel to

Dritse Snow Mountain

Dütsi Ngödrup River

Dzesé

Dziwo Repa

Dzogchen. *See* Great Perfection Dzogchenpa

earth-lord spirits eight worldly concerns

being rid of

in "Bön" ritual

and conduct  
and conventional terms  
and humility  
illusoriness and self-liberation of of Rechungpa  
and *samaya*

emptiness

and bliss  
and compassion  
and *dharmakaya*  
and *dharmata*  
as food and wealth  
in meditation  
of mind  
and view

*see also* appearance-emptiness; awareness-emptiness; bliss-emptiness  
enhancement

enlightenment.

*See also* buddhahood Enlightenment Fortress, Rakma entering the deceased

equality

of four activities  
of hunger and being full resting in  
state and nature of  
of three times

equal taste

begging for alms  
conduct of

eternalism

EVAM

exhaustion of elements. *See also* *ayatana* of exhaustion faith

as base  
in “Bön” ritual  
in cause and effect  
changing

and guru  
lack of  
little basis for in Tibet seed of  
stable and unwavering  
as support  
fame  
desire for  
of Milarepa  
seeking  
suffering of  
family  
fearlessness  
songs and  
five poisons  
as adversary  
being rid of  
Five Small Lakes  
Flat White Boulder  
focal object  
footprint  
Footprint Rock  
form realms  
Formless Dakinis. *See* Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis  
formless realms  
four gatherings of illness four immeasurables  
in metaphors  
trained in  
four joys  
lord of  
as nature of four *kayas*  
wisdom of  
four lineage transmissions four magnetizing activities four session yoga. *See* yoga



four yogic stages  
freedomless states, eight  
freedoms and resources  
body with  
difficulty of obtaining  
of human birth  
making meaningful  
*See also* human birth friends  
cutting ties with  
difficulty with  
and enemies  
impermanence of  
of Milarepa (song)  
as support  
fruition. *See* view, meditation, and conduct, (songs of)  
Gampo Dar Mountain  
Gampopa  
*ganachakra*  
of *dakinis*  
food and drink and  
Milarepa and offering and  
Rechungpa and  
*gandharvas*  
generosity  
of body  
practice of  
as provision  
repayment and  
without compassion  
see also *paramitas*  
*geshe*  
gods. *See devas*

Golung Menchu Cave

Gönpo Dorje. *See* Khyirawa Gönpo Dorje

great bliss

and body

in “Bön” ritual

chakra

food and

and Formless Dakinis

path of

when anything arises

Great Perfection

Guhyagarbha

Guhyasamaja

Gungtang

guru

abandonment of

and blessings

in “Bön” ritual

as buddha

command of

at crown, instruction

enemies as

following

as guide and support

instructions of

Milarepa’s objects of veneration as mind and awareness

outer, inner, ultimate

pleasing

qualities of

reliance on

repaying kindness of

service to

staying near  
supplication to  
and three kindnesses  
Guru Tsemchen of Latö  
Gyachak Ri  
Gyak, Nyanang  
*gyalgong*  
Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain  
Gyaltrom, Lower  
Gyetön Ngokme

habits. *See* latent tendencies harsh speech

heedfulness

Heights of Loving-Kindness hell realm

karma and

Heruka

Hevajra

and Milarepa

Hidden Cave Sheep Fortress High Road of the Dakinis

higher perceptions

Milarepa's

secrecy of

higher realms homeland

abandonment of

as prison of

hope and fear

cutting through

freedom from

fruition and

wandering in samsara with Horse Saddle Rock Cave

hum

human birth, precious

attaining through merit

obtaining

utilizing

wasting

*see also* freedoms and resources human life. *See* human birth, precious

humility

maintaining

and meditating

of Milarepa

and pride

and seizing the throne

self-benefit and

taking humble position

idle chatter

illusoriness

illusory body

and eight concerns

feeling good and bliss

hunger and fullness

and illness

impermanence of

and interpreting dreams

practice of

and *sambhogakaya*

Immaculate Rock

impermanence

of illusory body

of life

meditation on

as motivator

of phenomena

remembering

sons of

of wealth  
interdependence  
Invincible Turquoise Lake. *See* Lake Manosarovar

Jang Tago Snow Mountain Jangchup Bar

Jarpo Forest

Jayul

jealousy

causes of  
deception of  
of monastic teachers

*jñanasattvas*

Jomo Urmo

Kadampa

Kagyü

Kagyü gurus

*kapala*

karma. *See* cause and effect (karma) *karmamudra*

karmic propensity

*kashika* cloth

Katya Cave

*kayas*

and actualization  
of coemergent wisdom  
and four joys  
and fruition  
inseparability of  
lack of in ultimate truth pointing out  
*rupakaya*  
spontaneously and intrinsically present  
see also *dharmakaya*; *nirmanakaya*; *sambhogakaya*

Kharchung Rena

*khokhom repa*

Khokhom, king of

Khujuk

Khyira Repa. *See also*

    Khyirawa Gönpö Dorje

Khyirawa Gönpö Dorje

Khyitön

*kimnaras*

Koktang, Upper

*kshetrapala*

*kumbanda*

Kutang

Kyangpen Sky Fortress

Kyidrong

Kyipuk Nyima Fortress

Kyitang

Kyogmo Demon Valley

Lachi

    confluence of

    dwelling at

    journey to and from

    meditation and

    Milarepa's cremation at

    in Song of Snow

Lachi Chuzang. *See* Lachi Lachi Snow Mountain. *See* Lachi Lachi Snowy Range.

*See* Lachi Lake Manasarovar

*lalana*

Lama Gyachilwa

Land of Snow. *See* Tibet Lang-go Ludü Fortress

Lapuk

Lapuk Pema Fortress

Lasé Monastery

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Lashing

latent tendencies

as demons and ghosts

and dreams

elimination of

as obscurations

Latö

laziness

and diligence

eliminating

and lack of benefit

Leksé Bum

Len clan

Lengom Repa

Lhabar

Lhadro

Lhajé Nupchung

Lhamen Tashi Tseringma. *See*

Tseringma

Lhasa

Lho Chükhyer

Lhodrak

Lhodrak Chükhyer Phu

liberation

inhibiting

need for factor of

not having

pursuing

Likor Charuwa

Lingpa Rock Cave

Lochang Marmo

logic

and Milarepa

and *nyāyācāra*

and Rechungpa

*see also* scripture, logic, and *upadeshas*

logician

Lohit River

Loro

Lorodol

Lotön Gendunbum

*lotsawa*. *See* Marpa loving-kindness

lower realms

avoiding and blocking

lower realms (cont.) cause

as common

as compulsion to practice and confession

and discipline

disregarding sufferings of and fear

and five poisons

and karma

liberation from

no freedom from

not born in

as result of negativity

suffering of

teaching on faults of

Lukdzi Repa. *See* Dziwo Repa luminosity

abiding in state of

of awareness

of bliss

clarity of

and completion stage

concepts as

at death

experience of



experience of  
as free of coming or going as free of fixation  
and ignorance  
as lamp  
as means and wisdom in union mind as  
and meditation  
path of  
power of  
practice of  
and scripture  
seizing  
and sleep  
as unchanging and nonconceptual and *yidam* deity Luminosity Cave  
luminosity-emptiness  
mind as

Machik Drupé Gyälmo Mahakala and Mahakali  
Mahamaya  
Mahamudra

anything that arises as  
as basic nature  
as dedication  
as demon  
as essence of *avadhuti*  
and Formless Dakinis  
and four yogic stages  
as fruition  
highest view of  
meditation of  
as Milarepa's dharma  
and nothing to block or create pointing-out  
reality of descending  
relying on instructions of samsara as

satisfaction with teaching of stamping Great Seal  
and view

*mahasiddha*

*mahoragas*

Maitripa

and Marpa

*mamos*

mandala

of bliss

and body

of Bönpos

and chakras

of deity

of *dharmata*

and Marpa as chief and Milarepa's monastery offering

offering of Gampopa

and Rechungpa's turquoise *sindhura*

of space

of whispered lineage

Mangyul

Mangyulpa Loden Sherap

mantra

black

recitation

of Red and Black-Faced Rahula and speech

*mantrika*

Mapham Yutso. *See* Lake Manosarovar *mara*

victory over

Marpa

instructions of

in Milarepa's emanation

among Milarepa's gurus

prophecy of  
Marpa Lotsawa. *See* Marpa Marpa of Lhodrak. *See* Marpa Marpa the Translator.  
*See* Marpa Mayang River

Mé clan

means and *prajña*

means and wisdom

inseparability of

union

as wings

*see also* means and *prajña*

meditation

advice on

analytical

dharma without (song)

and distraction

dullness and agitation in “dumb,”

during four modes of conduct forced

of lower vehicle

not different from nonmeditation self-luminous

sessions and breaks of

*see also paramitas*; postmeditation; view, meditation, and conduct, (songs of)  
meditative equipoise

Medri

Mégom Repa

Menlung

Menlung Valley

*menmo*

mental nonengagement

Men-tsun-mo

Menyul

merit

accumulation of

and connection with Milarepa enjoying dharma due to

exhaustion of  
and human birth  
lack of  
for the sake of reward  
and wealth

Meru Singha

messenger path

Middle Way

Mila Sherap Gyaltzen

mind

and appearances

and bliss

as buddha

and buddhahood

carrying to exhaustion

confusion as

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everything as

as face of deity

inseparable from space

looking at

and luminosity

mastery over

methods of resting

movement of

and obstacles

suppleness of

taming

twelve points of (song) unable to abandon

*see also* mind itself; nature of mind; pointing out

mindfulness

as antidote

confidence in  
of death  
described in metaphors  
in meditation  
and *prana*  
sentinel of  
without perceiver and perceived mind itself  
and emptiness  
example of (song)  
identity of  
and luminosity  
without characteristics miracles  
and appropriate times for of body  
defeating jealous teachers through feat of miraculous power Milarepa's

miserliness

mixing

and awareness

dharma with mind-stream mind with guru's

and transference

*see also* Vital Points of Mixing, Three Miyo Lo Sangma

Mönyul

Mount Meru

mountain retreats. *See* retreats Munpa Dradrok

mudra

as forms of Milarepa

of illusory body

in *karmamudra*

relying on as difficult of subjugation

and Tashi Tseringma

*nadis*

*dakinis* abiding within and path

and physical structure

and physical structure  
practice of  
*naga*  
kings  
Nagarjuna, xxxi  
Nairatmya Devi  
naked instructions  
Namar  
Nangyul Mountain  
Naro Bönchung  
Naropa  
blessing of  
and Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis  
instructions of  
as lineage holder  
lineage of  
nature of mind  
character and quality of looking at realization and determining resting in  
*see also* mind itself Nepal  
border of Tibet  
Katya Cave in  
Rechungpa in  
Nepal Fortress  
Ngendzong Tönpa  
meeting of  
and Sahle Ö  
writer of Tseringma cycle Ngok Chöku Dorje. *See* Ngoktön Chödor, Lama  
Ngokang  
Ngoktön Chödor, Lama  
nihilism  
*nirmanakaya*  
performing beings' benefit variety of births as  
Nirmanakaya Palace

Ṛṣiśaṅkara's Palace

nirvana

nature and qualities of *see also* samsara and nirvana noble riches. *See* seven noble riches nonconceptuality

nondistractedness

nonduality

nonmeditation

nonthought

Northeastern Fortress of Tisé Nyal

Nyanang

butchers at

invitation to

people of

return to

Shiwa Ö's disparagement of Tsarma

*see also* Belly Cave, Nyanang Nyang, Upper

Nyangtse Kargyen

*nyen*

Nyenchung Repa. *See* Rechungpa Nyen-nyön Cave

Nyishang

Nyishang Gurta

Nyishang Mountain

Nyithong

obscurations

clearing and cutting of purification of

two

obstacles and obstructions as external

and meditation on emptiness and speaking of practice and teaching

as support

obstructing spirits

Omchung Pal

omen

. . .

bad  
in Gampopa's dream

Padmasambhavan Padruk

Paldarbum

Palkhü Fortress

Palkhü Plain

Palmo Patang

Palsö

Paltang Lake

*paramitas*

passion

path of liberation

path of means

of Naropa

and practice

relying and meditating on and Secret Mantra

and Six Dharmas of Naropa patience

See also *paramitas*

Pee-Ling Surkha

Pema Tötrenq Tsal

Penyul

Peta Gönkyi

phat

phowa. *See* transference Phu Yak Za

pigeon goddess

*pishachas*

*pitakas*

pointing out

of abiding nature and *dharmata*

of *bardo*

*kayas* and

of Mahamudra



mind and awareness  
union of view, meditation, and conduct  
wisdom  
wisdom of four joys

postmeditation

inseparable from meditation Poto Red Rock Fortress  
with Rechungpa at  
renown of  
staying at

power, *paramita* of *prajña*

and analytical meditation and guru  
joined with upaya  
as weapon  
see also *paramitas*

*pramana*

*prana*

consciousness riding  
life-force  
movement and function of and path  
practice of  
qualities attained through as refuge and guide  
vajra recitation of  
see also *prana* and mind *prana* and mind  
as horse  
mastery over

prana-control

penetrating *avadhuti*  
practice

*pratimoksha*

precious human life. *See* human life, precious Precious Sky Lake  
precept. *See* vow *pretas*

jealousy and avarice of suffering of

pride

- causes of
- of deity
- as fetter of *devas*
- of Gampopa
- not having of Rechungpa
- of teachers
- of yogi

prophecy

- of *dakinis*
- of Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis
- about Gampopa
- in Gampopa's dream
- of hindrances (song)
- of sites for practice
- of Tara
- of Vajrayogini

Protector Fortress

provisional meaningn

*puja*

Pura Pass

Purang

pure vision

purification

- of body
- of confusion
- of karmic results
- of obscuration
- ritual

*putana*

Puto Monastery

Putowa Rinchen Sal

Rahu

Rahula, Red and Black-Faced Rakma. *See also* Enlightenment Fortress, Rakma

*rakshasa*

eight classes of

at Lingpa Rock

and Tashi Tseringma

*rakta*

Ralung

Ramding Sky Cave

Ramizin

Rana

Rangtön Lhaga

*rasana*

*rasayana*

Ratön Darma Lodrö. *See* Darlo Rechen Practice Cave

Rechung Dorje Drakpa. *See* Rechungpa Rechungma

Rechungpa

advice for

dream of

eight concerns manifesting for hiding in *samadhi*

imploing to meet Dharmabodhi incitement to revulsion interceding for  
disciples interceding for Lotön

invitation to Milarepa

Milarepa looking upon

no desire for profit

prophecy of

at Ramding Sky Cave

receiving Gampopa

and Rechungma

request for teaching

request to appoint lineage holder request to go to India

return from India

song with Milarepa  
and teachers' request to meet Milarepa  
teaching on essence of dharma and vision of Milarepa

Red Rock of Drin

Red Rock of Mönri Mountain Red Rock of Poto. *See* Poto Red Rock Fortress  
refuge pinnacle realization as sources of

vow

Rekpa Dukchen Boulder

relative truth

remembering. *See also* mindfulness eight examples of (song of) eight things (song  
of)

guru (song of)

renunciation

resident lama

retreats, guide for sustaining experience keeping to

as monastery

and outer Chö

revulsion

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toward mundane things

Rinchen Drak

Riwo Palbar

rock-demoness

Rongchung Repa

Rönphu

*rupakaya*. *See* *kaya*

*sadhana*

Saga Dawa

Sahle Ö

Sakya

*samadhi*

    blessing through  
    and food  
    inseparable from three *kayas*  
    and Milarepa's higher perceptions protection from demons  
    and retreat  
    through seeing Milarepa of *yidam*

Samantabhadra

*samaya*

    and *dakinis*  
    and deceit  
    and demons and ghosts  
    description of  
    and dharma friends  
    fruition as  
    keeping  
    loss and corruption of  
    of Rechungpa  
    teacher and guru  
    unexamined

*samayasattva*

*sambhogakaya*

    in *bardo*  
    within *dharmakaya*  
    messenger as path of

samsara

    abandoning and relinquishing cause of  
    crossing river of  
    faults of  
    liberation and cutting  
    not existing  
    ocean of (song)

phenomena of  
and revulsion and weariness and suffering  
*see also* samsara and nirvana samsara and nirvana  
*bardo* of  
complete within mind  
depending on conditions and *dharmakaya*  
guide for  
inseparability of *kayas* and wisdoms transcending knowledge that sees  
and liberation  
pointed out as Mahamudra rejecting and accepting in relative truth  
sealing of

Samten Drönma

*sangha*

Sangye Kyap, Repa

Sangye Kyap, the wise and foolish Saraha

scripture

scripture, logic, and *upadeshas*

Seben Repa

heart-son

interceding for Lotön

meeting

trying to fly

Seben Tashi Bar. *See* Seben Repa Seben Tönchung. *See* Seben Repa Se'i Lhamo  
of Mangyul

self-awareness

as deities

as fruition

as guru

lack of in ultimate truth of mind

self-clinging

abandonment

as demon

and generosity

and generosity  
as illness  
taming and exhaustion of self-liberation  
of appearances  
of characteristics  
of eight concerns  
of hopes and fears  
of samsara  
self-luminosity  
Semodo  
sense pleasures  
and attachment  
as support and ornament seven noble riches  
Sewa Valley of Nyal  
Shakya Guna  
meeting of  
Shakyamuni  
*shamatha*  
as birthright of the deity instruction given  
lethargic  
and *vipashyana*  
*see also* dullness and agitation Shampo Snow Mountain  
Shang Darma Ö  
Shendormo  
meeting of  
and teaching on death  
Shengom Repa  
Shepa Dorje  
shidakn  
Shila Bharo of Nepal  
Shiwa Ö, Repa  
asking for teachings of six beings asking of Rechungpa's confession attending  
Milarepa

and Bönpos' apparition  
dream of  
prophecy of  
receiving Gampopa  
request to appoint lineage holder singing with Milarepa  
song for disciple-sons  
writer of Tseringma cyclen Shmashana

*shravakas*

Shri Mountain. *See* Gyal-gyi Shri Mountain

Shuyé clan

*siddha*

blessings of  
 few in Tibet  
 meeting of  
 Milarepa as

*siddhi*

bestowed by *yidam*  
 common and supreme  
 of long life  
 and messenger path

Silk Cave

Silver Spring Stupa

Singa Ling

Singala

Singhala

Six Dharmas of Naropa

teaching

sixfold collection

and appearances  
 attachment free  
 emptiness of  
 in own place



relaxed

*see also* consciousness *skandhas*

perpetuating

Sönam Rinchen. *See also*

Gampopa

solitude

as guide

sons of Milarepa, close sons Dampa Gyakpupa

Darma Wangchuk, Repa

Dorje Wangchuk, Repa

Dretön Tashi Bar

Kharchung Repa

Lengom Repa

Likor Charuwa

Lotön Gendun

Mégom Repa

Rongchung Repa

Shengom Repa

Tsaphu Repa

*see also* daughter disciples; teacher disciples

sons of Milarepa, heart-sons bestowing *abhisheka* on Drigom Repa

four heart-like sons

Khyira Repa

Rechungpa

Sangye Kyap, Repa

Seben Repa

*see also* daughter disciples; teacher disciples

spiritual friend. *See geshe*

spontaneous presence

of three *kayas*

study

as negative

no need for  
as positive  
without practice  
words or terminology

suffering

alleviation and liberation of of birth (song)

and bliss

bringing to path

cause and origin of

of death (song)

four rivers of

of having family

inseparability with happiness of old age (song)

and revulsion

of six realms

Sukhavati

supplication to deities

and guru

instruction to make

as practice

to receive blessing and *siddhi*

to the three jewels

when heavy hearted

*svabhavikakaya*

symbols

Takla Peak

Takmo

Tangdrem, King

tantra

*anuttarayoga*

Chakrasamvara

condensed meaning of

condensed meaning of  
father and mother  
four sections of  
Heruka Gyalpo  
Hevajra  
intention of  
knowing extent of  
of Marpa Kagyu

Tara

Tashi Gang

Tashi Oma River

Tashi Tsek

Tashi Tseringma

Azure Queen Snow Mountain Azure Snow Queen

Khyung-go Tashi Snow Mountain Lhamen Queen Mountain

Lhamen Snow Range

Menlha Mountain

mountain

seeing by disciples

song to disciples on

teacher-meditator sons

Lotön Gendun

Shakya Guna

Tekar Dro Sangma

*tendrel*

and Gampopa

power of

song of precious connection thoughts. *See* concepts three jewels

offerings to

as refuge

supplication to

as supports

three *kayas*. See *kayas*

Tibet

birthplace of Gampopa

border at Do

border with Nepal

few *siddhas* in little basis for faith in Tiger Cave Lion Fortress

Tipupa

*tirthika*

Tisé Snow Mountain

journey to

as meditation site

Tenma Goddesses, Twelve

Te'u-rang deity

Three Vital Points of Mixing. See

mixing

Tilopa

as ancestor

as lineage holder

Tingi Shal Sangma

Tongla

Tongla Ngonmo

Tongla Pass

Töpa-ga Tradruk Temple, Yoro

*tramen dakinis*

transference (phowa)n

treacherous path

as *bardo*

*trulchor*

Tsa

Tsang

Tsaphu

Tsaphu Repa

Tsarma

*tša-tšas*

*tšen*

Tseringma. *See* Tashi Tseringma Tsikpa Kangthil Fortress

Tsinesar

*tsok*

Tushita

two accumulations

Ü

four districts

Milarepa sending Rechungpa to Rechungpa's request to go to Uddiyana

union

and bliss

and coemergence

of creation and completion and deity

and emptiness

path of

of view, meditation, and conduct *see also* samsara and nirvana, inseparability

of; means and wisdom

*upadeshas*

on being self-sufficient given to Gampopa

of guru

of six falsehoods

of whispered lineage

*see also* scripture, logic, and *upadeshas*

*upasaka*

Ushnishavijaya

Utso Gabar Gyalpo

vajra body

vajra hell

vajra recitation

\*\*\*

Vajradhara

and *kayas*

lineage of

Marpa as

Vajrasadhu

Vajrasattva

Vajrayogini

prophecy of

valid cognition. See *pramana*

Varachandra

vase breath

vehicle. See *yana*

*vetalas*

*vidyadhara*

view, meditation, and conduct (songs of)

*bardo* of

comparison with ordinary ones and delight in death

for Dretön Repa

expanse of

and faults of

feeling good

for Gampopa

and happy ways of being resolved key points of

at Lachi

for Lingpa Rock demoness mastery of as Milarepa's practice

for Paldarbum

and pigeon goddess

at Ramding Sky Cave

and Rechungpa

and resolve

supreme

taking up with experiences teaching for thoughts arising three nails of

union of

union of

vinaya

*vipashyana*

virtue

encouragement to engage in as food

lacking and disturbing

results of

Vital Points of Mixing, Three vow

*bodhichitta*

of Milarepa (song)

pratimoksha

refuge

of three trainings

upasaka

walking stick, bamboo wealth

abandoning

amassing and hoarding

and avarice

and contentment

as demon and ghost

no desire for

as *dharmakaya*

and generosity

teaching for the sake of whispered lineage instructions and *bardo*

Dharma Cycles of the Formless Dakinis

four streams of

greatness of

and path of means

taught without stinginess *upadeshas* of

versus texts and explanations White Rock Horse Tooth Fortress wisdom

accumulation of

five

of four joys  
as free of dawning and waning inseparable from afflictions inseparable from  
sentient beings lack of in ultimate reality nonconceptual  
recognition of mind as  
self-arisen  
self-aware  
self-display of  
transformation into  
versus conceptuality and consciousness  
see also *paramitas*

women

words of truth

Yakdé Valley

Yakru Tangpa, Geshe

*yakṣhas*

at Chuwar

at Rakma

Yama

Yama's messenger *yana*

lower

nine progressive

supreme

Yangé, Lhajé

Yerang, king of

*yidam* deity

mind as

practice of

prophecy to Milarepa

pride of

recitation of

and refuge

seeing others as



visions of  
yogic discipline  
conduct of  
*repa* with  
*yogini*

Yolmo Snowy Range

Yungtön Trogyal

Zadong Marnak. *See* Rahula, Red and Black-Faced

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