

THE HUNDRED THOUSAND SONGS

SELECTIONS FROM MILAREPA
POET-SAINT OF TIBET

translated by

ANTOINETTE K. GORDON



ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

ANTOINETTE K. GORDON is one of the few Western scholars who have a thorough knowledge of Tibetan art, religion, and language. The present translation, her fourth published book, was preceded by *Tibetan Tales: Stories from the Dsangs Blun* (1952), *Tibetan Religious Art* (1952), and *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*

(1939; 2nd edition, 1959). Mrs. Gordon's position as assistant curator of Tibetan arts at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and her deep and sympathetic understanding of Tibetan culture make her an ideal translator of these religious poems by Tibet's greatest poet.

THE HUNDRED THOUSAND SONGS

BOOKS BY ANTOINETTE K. GORDON

TIBETAN RELIGIOUS ART

TIBETAN TALES: STORIES FROM THE DSANGS BLUN

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF TIBETAN LAMAISM



**THE
HUNDRED
THOUSAND
SONGS**

SELECTIONS FROM
MILAREPA, POET-
SAINT OF TIBET

translated from
the Tibetan by
ANTOINETTE K. GORDON

with an
introduction by
PETER FINGESTEN

CHARLES E. TUTTLE COMPANY
Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan

European Representatives
Continent: OSWALD & JOHN H. BOXER, Zurich
British Isles: MARK PATERSON & CO. LTD., London

Published by the Charles E. Tuttle
Company of Rutland, Vermont and
Tokyo, Japan, with editorial offices
at Osaki Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141-0032

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Library of Congress Catalog
Card No. 60-15251
ISBN: 978-1-4629-1318-3 (ebook)

First printing, 1961

Printed in Japan

In Memoriam
MILTON GORDON

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PREFACE

Tibet, always known as the inaccessible, is even more isolated now because of recent political events. As a result of this situation, there is a greater interest in the country, its religion, and its customs. We are fortunate in America that we have much material in our museums and in private collections which gives us information on the religion and culture of Tibet. Images, ritual objects, and manuscripts, both in the original Tibetan and in translations, are available for study.

It is unnecessary at this point to go into detail in regard to the Tibetan religion. Briefly, it is a form of Buddhism which was brought into Tibet in the seventh century by the two wives of King Srong-sar Gampo. About a century later, Padmasambhava, a teacher from India, brought the Mahayana form of Buddhism into Tibet. It is known as Lamaism by Occidentals. Padmasambhava is worshipped as the founder of this orthodox sect, called rNin-ma-pa (the Old Ones) and more familiarly known as the Red Cap sect. Subsequently, other teachers added new doctrines, and other sects were formed in which the ritual and discipline differed in greater or lesser degree. An important phase of Tibetan Buddhism was the practice of yoga, which is a form of physical and mental discipline characterized by meditation and various kinds of austerities. Many pupils, after studying with a teacher (*guru*), retired to caves on the high mountains and, after months or years in solitude, came back to the villages to make known the results of their meditations and to guide the faithful believer on the "Path." Such a one was Milarepa (sometimes spelled Milaraspa), the best known and most remarkable figure in Tibetan history and legend.

Milarepa, or Mila the Cotton-clad, is known as the poet-saint of Tibet. There are some biographies of Mila; the best known are those written by two of his disciples, Gtsan smyon-Heruka, "the Mad Yogi of Tibet," and Chung. *The Hundred Thousand Songs* is a collection of Milarepa's poems, quoted and loved by all Tibetans.

Mala was born of a wealthy family in the eleventh century (1039). At his father's death, the inheritance was entrusted to Mela's uncle and aunt, who deprived the family of its property and reduced his mother and sister to servitude. In order that the family might achieve vengeance for this misfortune, Mala was sent to study with a famous lama in the hope of his learning the arts of black magic. He went to several teachers who were adepts in the use of spells and charms. Legend says that he learned to create hailstorms and that, as a result of this, crop damage and misfortune came to many of his relations and to the villagers through his powers. But he was not happy. After working with various teachers, he finally apprenticed himself to Marpa, called the Translator. Here his real work began. After years of study and almost unendurable hardships, he was initiated through the efforts and help of Damenma, the wife of Marpa. He retired then to caves in the mountains to meditate in solitude. His friends were the glaciers, the winds, and the snows. He conversed with the Dakinis, the "sky-goers" and with the demons and beasts. Periodically, he came down to the villages and preached by way of song to the lamas and their disciples. He called himself "Old Man, Storehouse of Songs." These songs were collected, and they comprise the *mGur-Bum* or *The Hundred Thousand Songs*. The Tibetans quote or recite them at every opportunity.

The songs describe his life in the solitude of the mountains, his yogic achievements in self-discipline, and his attainment of freedom and enlightenment. Mila practised *tum-mo* (psychic heat),

form of yoga which made him impervious to extreme heat or cold; therefore, he speaks of his "single cotton garment burning like fire." His followers were called "the Cotton-clad Ones."

In Tibetan paintings, as well as in the images, he is usually shown seated on a leopard skin, his right hand cupped behind his ear, as if listening to the voices of solitude. Incidents from his life and preaching are depicted in these paintings. The frontispiece illustration, a bronze image of Mila, is a charming representation of the poet-saint, robed in the single cotton garment, smiling serenely, sitting on a leopard skin in a typical yoga pose. His right hand is cupped behind his ear, and on his forehead is the *urna*, the sign of wisdom and of yogic illumination.

Mila died in 1122 at the ripe old age of eighty-three. His body was cremated and the relics distributed. Some were taken by the Dakinis, the sky-goers, to the celestial regions, and others by his disciple Rechung, who gave them to various temples.

Mila belonged to the Kargyupa sect. The members of this sect regard the Adi-Buddha (First Buddha), Vajradhara, as the prime inspirer of their order. Tilopa, an Indian teacher born about the middle of the tenth century, claimed to have received the doctrine from Vajradhara. Tilopa is regarded as the founder of this sect. Its principal tenet, the Mahamudra (Great Symbol) philosophy, emphasizes the theory of *Shunyata* (the Void), which holds that the phenomenal world or world of form and the noumenal world or world of ideas are not dual, but one. Next in succession to Tilopa came Naropa, also of India. After him came the Tibetan Marpa, called the Translator, whose works are greatly esteemed in Tibet. Mila studied with Marpa and became fourth in the apostolic line of succession. Gampopa became the successor of Mila.

Some of Mila's songs are vivid descriptions of the snow mountains and glaciers; some tell of his conversations and discussions with various demonesses who try to put obstacles in the way of his meditations. There are philosophical poems on the Six Ways to Liberation, the Six Kernels of the Doctrine, the Void, and other metaphysical themes. His method of song was equally understandable to the intellectual and to the simple villager. For this reason, his appeal is universal. His poems are also much appreciated in China and Mongolia, where translations exist.

Before the time of Mila, the literature of Tibet consisted mostly of religious and historical works. The *Kesar Saga*, an epic of pre-Buddhist Tibet, tells of the exploits of the hero, King Kesar of Lina. The *Blue Annals* or *Blue Treasury*, as it is sometimes called, is a record of Tibetan history and religion. The history by Pu-ton is also well known.

The manuscript which we have used for the present translation is one presented to Columbia University by the Tibetan Trade Commission on its visit to New York in 1946. This copy contains both the *Nam rtar* and the *mGur-Bum*. The *Nam rear* is that part of the manuscript which contains, in the main, stories of incidents in Mila's life with some interspersed poems. The other part, the *mGur-Bum*, contains the so-called Hundred Thousand Songs. The Columbia University manuscript has red edges: usually an indication that the printing has been done in the Holy City of Lhasa. Many of the larger monasteries in Tibet have their own printing establishments. The famous ones are those of Lhasa, Earthing, Dirge, and Coin.

Buddhist terminology often makes these manuscripts very difficult to render into English. Since the poems are primarily of a religious nature aimed at teaching Buddhist concepts, we have tried to remain as faithful as possible to their message. However, we have tried to give explanations of the important esoteric concepts in a series of notes. In order to demonstrate the process of translation, we have also appended a short poem showing the methods employed in achieving the English interpretations.

We have given here a brief summary of Mila's life and have chosen about twenty-four of his

poems for their intrinsic beauty and philosophical concepts. They show the many facets of the versatile poet's extraordinary genius. The translations have followed as closely as possible the religious ideas of the songs. There is no special written music for them, but we have heard some chanted by Chang Chen-chi, a Chinese scholar who lived in Tibet for eight years. These chants were noted and transcribed by Alva Coil Venison into Western musical notation. The text for the songs has been adapted from our translations. When they are chanted in Tibetan, the songs exert a fascinating and powerful charm which the printed word alone does not convey.

The author wishes to thank Professor Peter Binge-Stan of Pace College, New York City, for editorial suggestions and for the introduction that he has contributed. Chang Chen-chi, formerly of Nanking University, China, and of Kong-Kan Monastery, Tibet, has given valuable assistance in the more obscure philosophical interpretations of certain of Mela's poems. He is especially qualified to do this, since he is a well-known translator of sacred texts. Alva Coil Venison, composer, contributed the transcriptions of the two Tibetan chants.

The purpose of this book is to make known the genius of the greatest saint and poet in the history of Tibet.

Antoinette I. Gordon

INTRODUCTION

by Peter Ingested

MALA AS POET: The title of Mela's poems, *The Hundred Thousand Songs*, indicates in its poet exaggeration that, to the Tibetans, the songs contain all earthly and celestial wisdom. Actually Mela's known poems are about two hundred to two hundred and fifty. In the Lhasa edition which we are using, the poems are printed as three hundred and nineteen folios each divided into two sections, A and B. In the Chinese and Mongolian recensions the number of folios varies. This collection of poems has been a source of learning and delight for hundreds of years to all Tibetans, children and adults alike.

Mala raised the Tibetan vernacular to a literary level as Dante raised the Florentine dialect, and Martin Luther the Saxon, to vehicles of highest literary expression. As a matter of fact, he has a position in Tibet similar to those which Dante and Luther have in their own cultures. Mala not only refined the Tibetan vernacular but became saint, scholar, and national hero at the same time. He is the Tibetans' ideal type. He is said to have achieved what every Tibetan longs to achieve: Buddhahood in one lifetime. It is fortunate that this great yogin was gifted with a genius for formulating his experiences and expressing his innermost thoughts in poetry. In this manner, learning, philosophy, and beauty were made accessible to many generations of Tibetans who did not study in the monasteries but absorbed their culture through oral tradition. The poems of Mala were recited or sung by traveling singers, much in the manner of the songs of the traveling balladeers of medieval Europe.

Since Milarepa was primarily a mystic, he did not write for purely aesthetic pleasure. That is the reason he exclaims:

"If you will listen to me, the Old One, then the doctrine will spread to your descendants." (Chapter II, Song 1)

"If this song is not repeated again and again, its sense does not enter the heart." (Chapter II, Song 3)

"I, the Yogin, give advice whatever arises." (Chapter IV, Song 6)

His poems are of a didactic order, teaching and telling of his experiences or chanting the basic tenets of Tibetan Buddhism. Occasionally he will sing of the beauty of nature which he watches from his solitary hermitage:

"On the shores of the ponds and pools,
The water birds turn their necks to see.
On the wide branches of the wish-granting trees,
Assemblages of beautiful birds are singing.
The cool breezes carry fragrances,
And dancing gestures are made by the branches of the trees." (Chapter IV, Song 1)

In contrast to his feeling of aesthetic pleasure, he quickly returns in the same poem to

philosophical consideration of these natural beauties:

"When I, the Yogin, look at all this,
Visible from all sides from the top of this precious rock,
I consider the parable of transitory appearance.
I think of those desired gifts as a mirage in the water.
I see this life as a dream of illusion.
I contemplate the unknowing ones with compassion."

It seems as if the poet who loves and understands nature gives way to the philosopher. His contemplating mental eyes see deeper than the recording physical ones.

Mila wrote not only to teach others but as is evident from Chapter IV, Song 6, also in order to gain merit:

"On the summit of the glacier, I make verses.
I hope to attain the rewards of the fruit."

"Fruit" in this context alludes to the Tibetan philosophical metaphor; that is, the sowing of the seed, the growth, the ripening, and the fruition. The fruition may also be said to be liberation from the Wheel of Life and the attainment of Buddhahood.

The pursuits of art, painting, sculpture, and poetry are not contrary to Buddhist philosophy. The painting monks of Tibet follow careful meditation before and during the painting of religious subjects. In the *mandalas* (geometrical diagrams for meditation practices, consisting of a sacred circle and square: the dwelling place of deities), symbolism, magic, and art are perfectly welded into one inseparable unit. Similarly, the writing and copying of the sacred books of Tibet are accompanied by chanting and are considered meritorious acts.

The poems of Mila, insofar as they express yogic practices and moral concepts, are as much religious acts as they are artistic creations. In their quality as religious poems they help others and gain merit for those who follow their precepts, as well as for the poet who created them.

Mila's poems abound in strong poetic images but, far from being mere collections of felicitous phrases, they are powerful expressions of one of the most disciplined and profound minds in the history of Tibet—the mind of a man who found peace and truth in the pursuit of Buddhism.

YOGA AND ITS APPLICATIONS: Mila was a yogin, one of the greatest that Tibet has produced. His poems are full of allusions to his yogic powers. In Chapter II, Song 3, for example, he says:

"In me, the Yogin Mila, in six months
The experience of meditation arose."

Mila was highly trained in yogic practices before he returned to the various hermitages among the glaciers. The above quotation indicates that in the short period of six months he had reached the peak of meditation. In other words, he achieved the highest degree of meditation, which is complete absorption or *samadhi*; that is, complete identification of the meditator with the object of his meditation. In Chapter IV, Song 6, he states unequivocally:

"I am the Yogin, completed in the three aspects of the *bodhi* heart."

Tibetan yoga has its roots in Hindu religious speculations. Yoga practice is an ancient Indian system of seeking "union with the divine." The term yoga itself derives from the Sanskrit root *yuk* or *yug*, meaning "to join," whence come our words "yoke," "join," etc. This method or system of "union" seems to be extremely ancient, antedating even the Indo-Aryan conquest of India between 1800 and

1200 B.C. Yoga, as we know it today, is considered one of the six *darshanas* or philosophical systems based on the Upanishads, which represent the highest philosophical attainment of the genius of the Indian peoples. The Katha Upanishad, VI: 10-11, states:

"When cease the five (Sense) knowledges, together with the mind (*manas*)
And the intellect (*buddhi*) stirs not—
That, they say, is the highest course.
This they consider as Yoga—
The firm holding back of the senses.
Then one becomes undistracted.
Yoga, truly, is the origin and the end."¹

There is certain evidence that yoga is pre-Aryan in origin. However that may be, it is as old as India and has been closely identified with its whole religious tradition. Buddha himself practiced the austerities of yoga before his illumination, and practically all sects of Hinduism have absorbed elements of the system.

It is practiced by countless people and has separated into various schools. These schools are differentiated according to their special ritual and methods. The best known Indian schools of yoga are: Hatha Yoga, which employs the method of developing the physical body by means of postures and *mudras* (symbolic hand gestures signifying charity, teaching, preaching, etc.); Raja Yoga, the supreme school, which uses basic postures with emphasis on mental realizations; Mantra Yoga, which relies on magic formulas—that is, the power of mantric spells and charms; Jnana Yoga, which stresses the method of pure knowledge; Kundalini Yoga, which emphasizes the awakening of the *kundalini* power at the base of the spine and of the various psycho-physical centers² throughout the body. Karma Yoga, which calls for action and deeds, and Bhakti Yoga, which centers on love and devotion, are later developments and do not stress the arduous disciplines and controls required by the earlier schools.

The practicing yogin conquers himself physically and mentally. Even though the successful application of the discipline is supposed to lead to *siddhis* or supernatural attainments, the ultimate aim of all yoga is identification and complete absorption into the Absolute. This is reached when the yogin has entered the highest stage, *samadhi*. Not all yogins, however, are able to attain, or are interested in attaining, the ultimate perfection and union with the Absolute. Some strive for the attainment of supernatural powers alone.

The yoga system was codified by the great scholar Patanjali in four small books which are known as *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*.³ The authorship of Patanjali, however, is still disputed. Actually, there were two Patanjalis, one the author of the yoga aphorisms or sutras, the other the author of a commentary upon the grammatical work of the famous Panini. Traditionally, the aphorisms are assigned to about the second century B.C., but Professor James H. Woods, on sound historical inference, dates them about the fourth to the fifth century of our era.⁴ There is, however, considerable evidence that yoga may be much older as a technique. Here we do not intend to prove or disprove the theories of yoga. Buddhist yoga differs from Hindu yoga in its philosophical and religious applications, although their techniques of disciplining the body and mind are often similar. Because of their different philosophical tenets, the aims and results are not the same. For example, the Buddhist view of *Shunyata*, the Void, is an important point of Buddhist doctrine and plays an important role in the Buddhist type of meditation.

In Tibet, yoga has been a time-honored practice since the country became Buddhist in the seventh century A.D. Tibetan tradition knows of many lamas who practiced it successfully. There are also

available several accounts by Western travelers and soldiers who have witnessed Tibetan yoga practices and even undertaken to study them.

The form of yoga now known as Tibetan was introduced there by the famous teacher Padmasambhava. It is based upon the idealistic Yogachara school founded by Asanga about the third century A.D. This form of yoga teaches that the absolute truth or *bodhi* manifested in the Buddhas is attainable only by those who practice yoga. Tibetan yoga is a yoga of knowledge, in practice similar to that of the Hindu Jnana school. Yogachara asserts that all outward things—objects, stars, etc.—are really mental experiences and that we read into external nature what exists in our own mind (*vijnana*),⁵ This concept, incidentally, we encounter in many of Mila's poems.

Yoga disciplines are stressed in Tibet because they help in the acquisition of intuitive insight. Some Tibetan yogins believe that they can create form by thought. In other words, by projecting a mental image they create a magic appearance which they can summon up or dissolve at will.⁶ This is based, of course, on the assumption that all appearances in reality are mind, as formulated by the Yogachara and Shunyata doctrines. The claim that it is possible to communicate with, to know, or to identify with lower animals, demons, or inanimate objects is also a result of this doctrine. As W. Y. Evans-Wentz puts it: "When we know mind, we also know matter, for matter is mind; and there is naught else conceivable save mind, as this yoga postulates. In the One Mind is the summation of the whole of consciousness, the ineffable at-one-ment of all the One Mind's microscopic aspects. Transcending the microscopic mind of the human ego, man transcends himself; he becomes a conscious participator in the all-embracing Universal Mind, the Over-Mind, the Cosmic Consciousness."⁷

Some aphorisms from Padmasambhava's book, *The Yoga of Self-realization*, will illustrate that Tibetan yoga is a system of subjective knowledge and that certain of its mental realizations, in spite of their verbal contradictions, constitute the Tibetan form of yoga:

"The *Dharma* being nowhere save in the mind, there is no other place of meditation than the mind."

"There being nothing upon which to meditate, no meditation is there whatsoever."

"Without meditating, without going astray, look into the true state, wherein self-recognition, self-knowledge, self-illusion shine resplendently. These, so shining, are called 'the Bodhisattvic Mind.'"

"There being no two such things as meditation and object of meditation, there is no need to fall under the sway of deeply obscuring Ignorance; for, as the result of meditation upon the unmodified quiescence of the mind, the non-created wisdom instantaneously shines forth clearly."

"Although there is an innumerable variety of profound practices, to one's mind in its true state they are non-existent; for there are no two such things as existence and non-existence."

"Inasmuch as from eternity there is nothing whatsoever to be practised, there is no need to fall under the sway of errant propensities."

"By controlling and understanding the thought-process in one's mind, emancipation is attained automatically."

"Without mastery of the mental processes there can be no realization."⁸

Theoretically all the feats of yoga are plausible. It may seem surprising to Westerners to hear of Tibetan yogins who can meditate nude in the snow or who can run incredible distances at great speed while hardly touching the ground. Others can transmit messages from room to room or across miles

arid, windswept mountains.

This is "magical" only to those who do not understand either the Tibetan way of life or the religious ideals of the Tibetan people. Asceticism and the arduous practice necessary to maintain surely train the body and the mind, for in proportion as the body is controlled, will-power will increase. The more advanced religious meditations are extremely difficult and time-consuming. They demand the most severe dedication on the part of the disciple or the monk.

MILA AS METAPHYSICIAN: In Mila's songs we find simple expositions of yoga (as in Chapter I, Song 1) along with the most profound metaphysical perfections (as in Chapter II, Song 2). Their full comprehension requires considerable background in Buddhist philosophy and yoga. The Void to which he refers several times is the essence of Mahayana metaphysics and is perhaps the most difficult for Western minds to understand. The only reality which exists is the spiritual reality. Only the spiritual is real; all else is illusion. As Mila sings in Chapter III, Song 9:

"The Yogin sees the clear light, neither comes nor goes.
The appearance of the external world is an illusion."

Even the visions the yogin experiences in some of his higher meditations must be recognized as illusions. The yogin is taught to visualize the deities of the pantheon, but ultimately those forms dissolve, and he identifies with the Absolute, which is the realm of non-form, non-activity—in other words, *Shunyata*, the Void. In the same song from Chapter III, Mila sings:

"Since demons are the phantoms of the mind,
If it is not understood by the Yogin that they are empty appearances,
And even if he thinks they are real, meditation is confused.
But the root of the delusion is in his own mind."

Mila becomes so deeply engaged in his doctrine that he recites in Chapter IV, Song 6:

"At times, I ate the Void for food."

He had the ability to transcend the world of appearance and phenomena. He absorbed the Void totally, and for the time being he ceased to exist as a separate physical entity but became one with the highest spiritual reality:

"The cause of all errors is to look upon the two things as different." (Chapter III, Song 9)

With the exception of his early years, before he became Marpa's disciple, his whole life exemplified his teachings. He did not expect the same kind of austerities from his pupils but asked only that they be sincere in their faith and live in that faith according to their limitations. The way to Buddhahood was open to all, but only a very few could endure the hardships and renunciation obligatory to the Way of Attainment. His attitude towards all sentient beings was so human and understanding that it is no wonder that he is so loved and venerated by the Tibetan people.



1

**MILAREPA IN RED ROCK JEWEL
VALLEY IN THE CAVE OF THE SUB-
DUEDED DEMONS: SONGS OF LON-
GING FOR HIS GURU: COMMENTARIES
AND FOUR SONGS**

Folios IB to 6A, line 6

Half-title design

LOTUS CHARM. This charm takes the form of an eight-petaled lotus with an auspicious syllab in the center.

THE HISTORY of the Revered Master Milarepa and the so-called Hundred Thousand Songs explained here.

Namo Guru! The Revered Master of Yoga, Milarepa himself. It was during the time of staying in meditation in the place called the Great Symbol of the Pure Light. At a time when he needed materials to prepare food—like flour, salt, water, and so on—there was no wood in front of the door, no water and no fire in the fireplace. He thought: "I will pay no attention. I should go to collect wood, about as harmful." Suddenly, when he was holding the wood, a great wind arose, and the rags he was wearing blew away. "Even though I stayed so long in the hermitage, still I cling to my ego," he thought. "What is the use of practicing the doctrine if I do not give up clinging to my ego? If you like the rags, take them away. If you like the wood, take it away," he said to the wind. "Here I stay, and I give up both."

Because of bad food and cold weather he fainted. When he awoke, the wind was mild, and the rags were fluttering on the tip of a tree branch. Feeling heart-weary, he saw in front of him a rock looking like the body of a sheep. At the end of meditation in the easterly direction of Gro Valley, a white cloud was floating below the hermitage. He thought: "There abides my Lama Marpa, the Translator." He thought of his Lama and the Lama's wife and the offering-people [patrons] and friends and the associates—all brothers of the secret doctrine [the teaching and the baptism].¹

He was thinking of his Lama in this manner: "No matter how, I would like to go and see him." He thought strongly of his Lama with a sorrow which was immeasurable. He sang a song of his Lama who could relieve all suffering.

I am thinking of my Father Marpa, who can relieve suffering.

At his feet, I, poor man who tries to relieve suffering,

Make obeisance.

In the east is the Red Rock of Chong Valley,

Rain clouds and river floating slowly by,

White clouds beneath.

The back of the mountain looks like a big powerful elephant,

The front of the mountain like a powerful lion.

On the great stone seat is the leopard-skin decoration.²

Now, in the valley, in the great monastery,

Marpa, the translator, dwells.

If my Lama is sitting there, I'll be happy.

Even if my reverence be not great enough,

I still have the heart-wish to see you.

Even if my "hurt heart" is not big enough,

I still wish to see you.

I think, I think of my perfect Lama.



MARPA. Known as the Translator, Marpa was the first Tibetan in the apostolic succession of the Kargyupa sect. His works, like those of his disciple Milarepa, are highly esteemed in Tibet.

The more I practice, the more I think of my Lama.
Damenma, Marpa's wife, is even above a mother.
At the time, staying there, I was happy.
Even though the distance is great, I desire to see him.
Even though the way is difficult, I desire to see her.
I think, I think of my perfect Lama.
The more I practice, the more I think of my Lama.
To hear the transmitted teaching of the fourth baptism would make me happy.
Though my wisdom may be small, still my heart desires it.
Though my understanding is inferior still my heart desires it.
Thinking of my perfect Lama,
The more I meditate, the more I think of him.
Although, I, poor man, never depart from you in reverence,
I think of my Lama very deeply.
Because my suffering is intense,
I cannot speak, I am breathless.
Relieve your son's suffering!

Thus he sang.

On the top of the mountain, in the clouds, like a deity with legs stretched out, Lord Marpa himself, brighter than before, riding a white lion, decorated with ornaments, came and said: "Son, Tu Chen, why do you call me in your great suffering? Don't you believe in the Lama, the *yidam*,⁴ and the Three Precious Ones?⁵ Are you following disturbing thoughts leading you into distracted thinking? Do the obstacles, the eight worldly desires,⁶ enter into your hermitage? Do hope and worry disturb your mind and heart? Furthermore, haven't you rendered your offerings to the Guru and the Three Precious Ones? Also, haven't you sent forth your gifts to the sentient mother-like beings of the six *lokas*?⁷ Haven't you successfully cleared your sins and obstacles? Also, haven't you increased your merits? Whatever the case may be, you and I will never separate. Practice your meditations! For the sake of sentient beings and Buddhist religion, do practice your meditation."

Mila had this vision.

In extremely joyous mood he sang a song in answer to his Guru. Having heard the instruction from his Guru, from Mila's heart projected a vision.

By thinking of the story of my Guru,
Reverence and faith grow from the bottom of my heart.
Compassion and waves of grace enter into me.
All the wrong views and thoughts completely disappear.
This emotional song of thinking of my Guru,
Whether you, rJe-bstun,⁸ have heard it or not,
I, the poor man, do not have the vision
Of knowing whether it has been heard.
Therefore, please, from now on
Still protect me by your mercy.
The practice of diligence and endurance
Is the best offering to make the Lama happy.
To stay alone in this hermitage
Is the best offering to make the Dakini happy.
To disregard oneself, this is the best *dharma*.
This is the best service to Buddha's religion.
Practicing meditation for life is the best gift
To those sentient beings without protection.
Diligent indifference to sickness and death
Is the broom by which one can purify his sins.
Perseverance in abstaining from sinful food
Helps to produce understanding.
Repay the kindness of the Lama by performance,
And pray protect your disciple with compassion,
And help the poor man to be able to remain in his hermitage.

Thus he said.

In a mood of great joy, he took the cotton garment and, carrying a handful of wood, he proceeded to the hermitage. Five demons of iron color with big eyes were sitting there. One of them was sitting on the bed of the Revered One, preaching the doctrine. The second two were the hearers. Another one of the fourth, was serving them. The fifth was looking over the books. At first Mila thought: "Am I dizzy?" Later the local deities, not being happy, transformed themselves.

"Although I stay in this place I have no sacrificial food to offer. I have not even done any worship to the deities," Mila thought. "I should give praise to them in this place."

He sang a song of praise.

O! this quiet place
Which Buddhas love,
Stayed in by many completed Yogins.
I myself remain here alone
By the Red Rock in the Valley where the eagle plays.
On top of the mountains, the clouds float by.
Below, the river gently flows.
In the air the vultures wheel around.
Bushes of many kinds are flourishing.
Big trees are waving as in a dance.

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