

A SONG OF MILAREPA

MILAREPA AND THE GESHE IN DRIN

LOTSAWA TONY DUFF

PADMA KARPO TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

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First edition March 2009

Palatino typeface with diacritical marks and
Tibetan Classic Chogyal typeface
Designed and created by Tony Duff
Tibetan Computer Company
<http://www.tibet.dk/tcc>

Produced, Printed, and Published by
Padma Karpo Translation Committee
P.O. Box 4957
Kathmandu
NEPAL

Web-site and e-mail contact through:
<http://www.tibet.dk/pkct>
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INTRODUCTION

Here is one of the many songs contained in the *Life and Songs of Milarepa*. It is a song about the approach of the Kadampa geshe who is stuck at the level of words and the approach of the yogi who has practised at and attained to the meaning beyond words.

FURTHER STUDY

It has been a project of ours to make tools that non-Tibetans and Tibetans alike could use for the study and translation of Tibetan texts. As part of that project, an electronic edition of the entire text of Milarepa's life story and songs was input in the Tibetan Text input office of the Padma Karpo Translation Committee and made available on our web site. The electronic text is free and can be read, searched, and so on, using our Tibetan software which is also available through the Padma Karpo Translation Committee web-site. Those who are learning Tibetan or who would like to compare the translation here with the

Tibetan text can avail themselves of the text and Reader to help their study of dharma and the Tibetan language.

A key feature of our electronic edition of the text is that you can highlight Tibetan terms and look them up immediately in any of our electronic dictionaries; we suggest the *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* as the best for the purpose. The software involved is also designed to be the centre of a reference library and can be used successfully to facilitate translation of this and other texts. You will find all of these things and many other items of interest on our web-site, mentioned on the copyright page.

The text of the song in Tibetan script has been included for those wishing to study it.

This e-book has a binding offset built in so that you can print and bind it for your own library if you wish.

You will find a variety of other books and translations on our web-site, both for purchase and free.

Lotsawa Tony Duff
Padma Karpo Translation Committee
Swayambunath,
Nepal
February, 2009

A SONG OF MILAREPA: MILAREPA AND THE GESHE IN DRIN

In the centre of Drin there was a teacher Geshe Tsagphupa who was demanding of wealth and possessions. He was seated at the head of a large group of the people of Drin. The geshe left his place and came over to the Jetsun where he made a display of being respectful even though he was inwardly consumed with jealousy. With the idea of bringing the Jetsun down in front of the Jetsun's many patrons assembled there, the geshe asked many questions in a show of clearing up doubtful points.

In the wood male tiger year, at the time of the harvest moon, there was a grand wedding in Drin. The Jetsun was invited up to the front of the guests ahead of Geshe Tsagphupa who was there too. The geshe prostrated to the Jetsun, with the expectation of being given a return prostration in front of the large assembly. Now, the Jetsun did not prostrate to or return a prostration from anyone, not just this geshe so, following his custom, he did not return the prostration. The geshe considered himself to

be an fine teacher who had a certain set of good qualities and thought to himself, “If a stupid fool like him who doesn’t know anything at all does not return the prostration that I give, I should in turn bring him down to size”. So, the geshe produced a text on valid cognition and said to the Jetsun, “Go carefully through the words here, giving me their exact meaning, and then discuss them at length for me!”

The Jetsun said, “You know how to go carefully through the words of written texts already. Doing the same but in terms of the actual meaning involves casting aside and ironing out the eight worldly dharmas, taming the grasping at a personal self, and taming the grasping at a self in dharmas through bringing samsara and nirvana into one taste; this is exactly what meditating in the mountains is about. If you don’t do that, you are just replying to such and such words with so and so words, none of which is based in practice, and then after that just having the idea that you don’t want these solidly existent things. So, leave aside my giving you advice or not, leave aside my having knowledge or not, and listen here to this song about the reasons for just forgetting all about the knowledge of learning.

Then he sang this doha:

I bow down at the feet of Marpa the translator;
Please bless me to be free of conventions¹!

¹ Conventions here meaning the names and words and concepts
(continued...)

The blessings of the lord guru have entered my mind;
My mind never gets lost to the dharmas of distraction.

I've meditated over and again on loving kindness and
compassion,
So I've forgotten all about grasping at self and other.

I've meditated over and again on the guru at my
crown,
So I've forgotten all about being an important man of
authority.

I've meditated over and again on being inseparable
with the yidam,
So I've forgotten all about inferior aggregates and
elements.

I've meditated over and again on the hearing lineage
instructions,
So I've forgotten all about the literature of books.

¹(...continued)

that we use to communicate. This is the theme of this song. It is a theme that comes about because of this geshe who is stuck at the level of the conventions of words. The geshe has tried to show him up as a fool who knows nothing, who has no skill with the words found in books. Milarepa bypasses his efforts to get involved with words and shows why you should forget all about things connected with fixation on conventions. At the very end of the doha, Milarepa prods the geshe hard with, "Well, I have found the real meaning beyond going carefully through words, now you toddle along and continue to teach the way you have been through your method of going carefully through the words found in books.

I've preserved over and again ordinary awareness²,
 So I've forgotten all about being confused in
 ignorance.

I've meditated over and again on the inherent three
 kayas,
 So I've forgotten all about the meditation of hope and
 fear³.

I've meditated over and again while remembering
 what comes after this life,
 So I've forgotten all about the fears of birth and death.

I've preserved again and again only the experiences of
 meditation,
 So I've forgotten all about gratifying the whims of
 dear ones.

I've connected my mind with practice over and again,
 So I've forgotten all about the sides in tenet systems.

I've meditated over and again on lack of birth,
 cessation, and dwelling,

² Tib. *tha mal gyi shes pa*. One of several special terms for the innate enlightened style of awareness that we all have but which is usually covered over with ignorance. When there is ignorance there is the fundamental confusion of seeing what is as what is not and what is not as what is.

³ The meditation of hope and fear is the meditation that all sentient beings do of seeing themselves with the impure five aggregates and the hope, fear, and all other states of samsaric mind that go with it.

So I've forgotten all about asserted views.

I've kept in mind over and again that appearances are
dharmakaya,
So I've forgotten about meditations that have
reference points.

I've put myself over and again into an uncontrived
relaxation,
So've forgotten about contrived ways of behaviour.

I've maintained over and again a low profile in body
and speech,
So I've forgotten all about the puffed-up presence of
being a big man.

I've turned this illusory body over and again into a
hermitage,
So I've forgotten all about its use as a house for
pleasure.

Having gained experience of what is beyond words,
I've forgotten all about going carefully through them;
But it's all right, you go ahead and teach by going
carefully through the words of treatises!

*Translated by Tony Duff with his students on the 25th of March
2009, at Swayambunath, Kathmandu, Nepal.*

TIBETAN TEXT

....དེ་ལྟར་བྱུང་བའི་མཛད་པ་མཐའ་དག་ཚོ་གསལ་པའི་མཐའ་། འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་སྤོངས་མ་ན་
དགོ་བཤེས་རྩལ་ལུ་པ་བྱུ་བའི་སྟོན་པ་ནོར་ལྷུག་ལ་ཁ་བྲག་པ། འཇིག་པ་
རྣམས་ཚོ་གསལ་པའི་གྲལ་མགོར་འདུག་པ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེས། རྗེ་བཙུན་ལ་
འབྲལ་གྲུས་གྲུས་ལྟར་བྱེད་ཅིང་། སྤུགས་ཕྲག་དོག་གིས་བརྒྱལ་བས་རྗེ་
བཙུན་ལ་ཡོན་བདག་མང་པོ་འཛོམས་སར་དམའ་དབབ་པའི་བསམ་པས་
དོགས་པ་ལྷུང་ལྟར་བྱས་ནས་དེ་བམང་པོ་བྱེད་པ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་ལ། ཤིང་པོ་
སྟག་གི་ལོ་སྟོན་རྒྱ་ར་བར་སོང་བའི་ཚོ། འཇིག་རྟེན་ཆང་ས་ཚེན་པོ་ཞིག་གི་
སར་རྗེ་བཙུན་གྲལ་དབྱུ་ལ་གདན་དྲངས། དེའོག་དགོ་བཤེས་རྩལ་ལུ་པ་
ཡང་བྱུང་སྟེ། རྗེ་བཙུན་ལ་སྤུག་ལུལ་ནས་མི་མང་པོ་ཚོ་གསལ་སར་སྤུག་
ལན་ཞིག་གནང་དུ་རེ་བ་ལས། རྗེ་བཙུན་སྲར་ནས་སློམ་མ་མ་གཏོགས།
སྤུག་ལའང་སྤུག་དང་སྤུག་ལན་མི་མཛད་པས། སྲར་སྤུགས་ལྟར་སྤུག་
ལན་མ་མཛད་པས། ཁོའི་བསམ་པ་ལ་ང་ཡོན་ཏན་འདི་ཀ་ཙམ་གཤེས་པའི་
སྟོན་པ་བཟང་པོ་ཞིག་གིས་ཁོ་ཅི་ཡང་མི་གཤེས་པའི་སྟོན་པོ་ཞིག་ལ་སྤུག་འཚལ་
བས་ལན་མི་བྱེད་ན། དམའ་ཕབ་རེས་ཤིག་བྱུང་སྟེ་སྟོམ་ནས། ཚང་མའི་

གཞུང་ཞིག་བཏོན་ནས། རྗེ་བཙུན་འདི་ལ་བདག་གི་དོགས་པ་སེལ་བའི་
 འབྲུ་གཞོན་དང་། འཕྲོས་ལུགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱོང་མོ་ཞིག་མཛོད་དང་ཟེར་བྱུང་
 བས། རྗེ་བཙུན་གྱི་ཞལ་ནས། གཞུང་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཚིག་རིགས་ཀྱི་འབྲུ་
 གཞོན་ཁྱེད་རང་གིས་ཤེས་འོང་། དོན་གྱི་འབྲུ་གཞོན་ལ་འཛིག་རྟེན་ཚོས་
 བརྒྱད་སློམ་བཏང་ཞིང་མགོ་སློམ་ས། གང་ཟེག་གི་བདག་འཛིན་འདུལ།
 འཁོར་འདས་རྗེ་སློམ་ས་ནས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་བདག་འཛིན་འདུལ་ཞིང་རི་ལ་སློམ་པ་
 འདི་ཀ་ཡིན། དེ་མིན་ཉམས་སུ་མི་ལེན་པའི་ཚིག་འདིའི་ལན་དུ་འདི་ཟེར་
 དང་། འདིའི་རྗེས་སུ་འདི་ཡོད་རྣམས་ལ་དགོས་པ་མི་འདུག་པས།
 དས་བསྐྱབས་ཀྱང་མ་བསྐྱབས། ཤེས་ཀྱང་མི་ཤེས། ཤེས་རུང་བརྗེད་
 དེ་ཐལ་བའི་རྩུ་མཚན་གྱི་སྐྱུ་འདི་ཉོན་ཅིག་གསུང་མགུར་འདི་གསུངས་
 མོ། །སྐྱུ་སྐྱུར་མར་པའི་ཞབས་ལ་འདུད། །ཐ་སྐྱད་བལ་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་
 རློབས། །རྗེ་སྐྱུ་མའི་བྱིན་རྒྱབས་སེམས་ལ་ལུགས། །སེམས་རྣམ་
 གཡེང་ཚོས་ལ་འཚོར་མ་སྲོང་། །ང་བྱམས་དང་སླིང་རྗེ་བསྐྱོམས་
 བསྐྱོམས་ནས། །རང་གཞན་འཛིན་པ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །སྐྱུ་མ་སྐྱུ་པོར་
 བསྐྱོམས་བསྐྱོམས་ནས། །ཁ་དྲག་དཔོན་པོ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །ཡི་དམ་
 འབལ་མེད་དུ་བསྐྱོམས་བསྐྱོམས་ནས། །དམན་པའི་སྲུང་ཁམས་བརྗེད་དེ་
 ཐལ། །སྐྱུ་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་གདམས་པ་བསྐྱོམས་བསྐྱོམས་ནས། །ཡིག་
 རིགས་ཀྱི་དཔེ་ཆ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །ཐ་མལ་གྱི་ཤེས་པ་བསྐྱུངས་བསྐྱུངས་
 བས། །མ་རིག་འབྲུལ་བ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །སྐྱུ་གསུམ་རང་ཆས་
 བསྐྱོམས་བསྐྱོམས་ནས། །རེ་དོགས་ཀྱི་སློམ་པ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །ཚོ་
 འདི་སྤི་མཉམ་དུ་བསྐྱོམས་བསྐྱོམས་ནས། །སྐྱེ་འཚིའི་འཛིགས་པ་བརྗེད་
 དེ་ཐལ། །གཅིག་ལུར་ཉམས་སྲོང་བསྐྱུངས་བསྐྱུངས་ནས། །མཚེད་

གོགས་ཀྱི་དོ་སྤྱད་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །ཉམས་ལེན་རྒྱུད་ལ་སྤྱར་སྤྱར་
 བས། །བྱབ་མཐའི་ཁ་འཛིན་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །སྐྱེ་འགག་གནས་མེད་
 བསྐྱོམས་བསྐྱོམས་ནས། །ཁས་ལེན་གྱི་ལྷ་བ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །སྤྱང་བ་
 ཚོས་སྤྱར་སེམས་སེམས་ནས། །དམིགས་བཅས་ཀྱི་སྐྱོམ་པ་བརྗེད་དེ་
 ཐལ། །མ་བཅོས་ལྷུག་པར་བཞག་བཞག་ནས། །ཚུལ་འཚོས་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་
 པ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །ལུས་དག་དམན་ས་བཟུང་བཟུང་ནས། །མི་ཚེན་གྱི་
 དྲིགས་འགྱིང་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །སྐྱུ་ལུས་ལ་དགོན་པ་བྱས་བྱས་ནས། །
 བདེ་འཚམས་ཀྱི་དགོན་པ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །ཚིག་བྲལ་ཉམས་སུ་སྤངས་
 བས། །ཚིག་གི་འབྲུ་གོམ་བརྗེད་དེ་ཐལ། །གཞུང་གི་འབྲུ་གོམ་སྟོན་
 པས་མཛོད།



Tony Duff has spent a lifetime pursuing the Buddha's teaching and transmitting it to others. In the early 1970's, during his post-graduate studies in molecular biology, he went to Asia and met the Buddhist teachings of various South-east Asian countries. He met Tibetan Buddhism in Nepal and has followed it since. After his trip he abandoned worldly life and was the first monk ordained in his home country of Australia. Together with several others, he founded the monastery called Chenrezig Institute for Wisdom Culture where he studied and practised the Gelugpa teachings for several years under the guidance of Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa, Geshe Lodan, and Zasep Tulku. After that, he offered back his ordination and left for the USA to study the Kagyu teachings with the incomparable Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Tony was very active in the community and went through all possible levels of training that were available during his twelve year stay. He was also a core member of the Nalanda Translation Committee. After Chogyam Trungpa died, Tony went to live in Nepal where he worked as the personal translator for Tsoknyi Rinpoche and also translated for several other well-known teachers. He also founded and directed the largest Tibetan text preservation project in Asia, the Drukpa Kagyu Heritage Project, which he oversaw for eight years. He also established the Padma Karpo Translation Committee which has produced many fine translations and made many resources for translators such as the highly acclaimed *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary*. After the year 2000, Tony focussed primarily on obtaining Dzogchen teachings from the best teachers available, especially within Tibet, and translating and teaching them. He has received much approval from many teachers and has been given the titles "lotsawa" and "lama" and been strongly encouraged by them to teach Westerners. One way he does that is by producing these fine translations.

PADMA KARPO TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 4957

Kathmandu

Nepal

<http://www.tibet.dk/pkctc>