

Milarepa¹: song of a saint

poem by medon (me sgron / meizhuo)

translation from Chinese to English by Yangdon Dhondup

*I long to go to the eastern holy land
If you pray to me with faithfulness
With tears that are as sincere as your heart
I will prostrate myself before the stupa*

Let us bathe in the water of compassion
Nearing dawn, when the sun rises,
we raise our purified faces
With folded hands we touch our foreheads
And so we come to your homeland
of Nyangyul Gongthang².

The house you lived in during your childhood,
followed your father into emptiness.
From his grave, your father's concerned eyes
helplessly he witnessed his wife and children become beggars.

You offer your body, mind and speech
Calling for wind and rain,
you invoke magic to create hail
overjoyed by revenge yet full of regrets.
Weary of life, you want to escape it
you become the cause for the ultimate unification of faith.

Therefore you are saved and save others
You withdraw from the cycle of life
You eat nettles and drink morning dew
when your whole body shines green,
you seek and attain the ultimate experience

¹ Poet-saint (1040-1123) who was the founder of the Kagyu sect. His poems are renowned for its lyrical beauty and profound spirituality.

² Nyangyul (myang yul) and Gongthang (gung thang) are two ancient districts in south-west Tibet (modern-day Nyalam valley). Gongthang is the birthplace of Milarepa. He spent nine years in Kyirong, the capital of Mangyul in a cave meditating.

Your followers, eyes full of tears, prostrate themselves before you
their eyes, rejoicing, have become your legacy.

I only desire to hear your name,
just to hear your name.

In this way you set yourself alight
You are as magnificent as the rain and rainbow
Your crystal stupa has encompassed
The sacred sound of your golden bell and silver drum
All your wisdom and your sacred vajra

I fail to understand your ascetic life
still, I beg you to absorb me within your compassion.