



## THE TALE OF RED ROCK JEWEL VALLEY

*Obeisance to all Gurus*

Once the great Yogi Milarepa was staying at the Eagle Castle of (Red Rock) Jewel Valley, absorbing himself in the practice of the Mahāmudrā meditation. Feeling hungry, he decided to prepare some food, but after looking about he found there was nothing left in the cave, neither water nor fuel, let alone salt, oil, or flour. "It seems that I have neglected things too much!" he said, "I must go out and collect some wood."

He went out. But when he had gathered a handful of twigs, a sudden storm arose, and the wind was strong enough to blow away the wood and tear his ragged robe. When he tried to hold the robe together, the wood blew away. When he tried to clutch the wood, the robe blew apart. [Frustrated], Milarepa thought, "Although I have been practicing the Dharma and living in solitude for such a long time, I am still not rid of ego-clinging! What is the use of practicing Dharma if one cannot subdue ego-clinging. Let the wind blow my wood away if it likes. Let the wind blow my robe off if it wishes!" Thinking thus, he ceased resisting. But, due to weakness from lack of food, with the next gust of wind he could no longer withstand the storm, and fell down in a faint.

When he came to, the storm was over. High up on the branch of a tree he saw a shred of his clothing swaying in the gentle breeze. The utter futility of this world and all its affairs struck Milarepa, and a strong feeling of renunciation overwhelmed him. Sitting down upon a rock, he meditated once more.

Soon, a cluster of white clouds rose from Dro Wo Valley far away to the East. "Below this bank of clouds lies the temple of my Guru, the great Translator Marpa," mused Milarepa, "At this very moment He and His wife must be preaching the doctrines of Tantra giving initiation and instruction to my brothers. Yes, my Guru is there. If I could go there now, I should be able to see Him" An immeasurable, unbearable longing for his teacher arose in his heart as he thought despairingly of his Guru. His eyes filled with tears, and he began to sing a song, "Thoughts of My Guru":

*In thoughts of you, Father Marpa, my  
sufferin- is relieved;  
I, the mendicant, now sing you a fervent song.*

*Above Red Rock Jewel Valley, in the East,  
Floats a cluster of white clouds;*

*Beneath them, like a rearing elephant, a  
huge mountain towers;  
Beside it, like a lion leaping, looms another peak.*

*In the temple of Dro Wo Valley rests a great  
seat of stone;  
Who is now enthroned there?  
Is it Marpa the Translator?  
If it were you, I would be joyful and happy.  
Though limited in reverence, I wish to see you;  
Though weak in faith, I wish to join you.  
The more I meditate, the more I long for my Guru.*

*Does your wife, Dagmema, still dwell with you?  
To her I am more grateful than to my mother.  
If she is there I will be joyful and happy.  
Though long the journey, I wish to see her,  
Though perilous the road, I wish to join her.  
The more I contemplate, the more I think of you;  
The more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru.*

*How happy I would be could I join the gathering,  
At which you may be preaching the Hevajra Tantra.  
Though of simple mind, I wish to learn.  
Though ignorant, I long to recite.  
The more I contemplate, the more I think of you;  
The more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru.*

*You may now be giving the Four Symbolic  
Initiations of the Oral Transmission  
If I could join the gathering. I would be joyful and happy.  
Though lacking merit, I wish to be initiated-  
Though too poor to offer much, I desire it.  
The more I contemplate, the more I think of you;  
The more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru.*

*You may now be teaching the Six Yogas of Nāropa  
If I could be there, I would be joyful and happy.  
Though short my diligence, I have need for learning  
Though poor my perseverance, I wish to practice.  
The more I contemplate, the more I think of you;  
The more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru*

*The brothers from Weu and Tsang may be there.  
If so, I would be joyful and happy.  
Though inferior my Experience and Realization,  
I wish to compare mine with theirs.  
Though in my deepest faith and veneration  
I have never been apart from you,*

*I am now tortured by my need to see you.  
This fervent longing agonizes me,  
This great torment suffocates me.  
Pray, my gracious Guru, relieve me from this torment.*

No sooner had Milarepa finished than the Revered One, the Jetsun Marpa, appeared on a cluster of rainbow clouds resembling a robe of five colors. With an ever-increasing [celestial] radiance suffusing his countenance, and riding a lion with rich trappings, he approached Milarepa

"Great Sorcerer, my son, why with such deep emotion," he asked, "did you call to me so desperately? Why do you struggle so? Have you not an abiding faith in your Guru and Patron Buddha? Does the outer world attract you with disturbing thoughts? Do the Eight Worldly Winds howl in your cave? Do fear and longing sap your strength? Have you not continuously offered service to the Guru and to the Three Precious Ones above? Have you not dedicated your merits to sentient beings in the Six Realms? Have not you yourself reached that state of grace in which you can purify your sins and achieve merits? No matter what the cause, you may be certain that we will never part. Thus, for the sake of the Dharma and the welfare of sentient beings, continue your meditation,"

Inspired by this sublimely joyous vision, Milarepa sang in reply.

*When I see my Guru's countenance and hear his words,  
I, the mendicant, am stirred by the Prāṇa in my heart,  
In remembrance of the teachings of my Guru,  
Respect and reverence arise in my heart.  
His compassionate blessings enter me;  
All destructive thoughts are banished.*

*My earnest song, called "Thoughts of my Guru,"  
Must surely have been heard by you, my teacher;  
Yet am I still in darkness.  
Pray, pity me and grant me your protection!*

*Indomitable perseverance  
Is the highest offering to my Guru.  
The best way to please Him  
Is to endure the hardship of meditation!  
Abiding in this cave, alone,  
Is the noblest service to the Dākinīs!  
To devote myself to the Holy Dharma  
Is the best service to Buddhism—  
To devote my life to meditation, thus  
To aid my helpless, sentient fellow beings!  
To love death and sickness is a blessing  
Through which to cleanse one's sins;  
To refuse forbidden food helps one to attain  
Realization and Enlightenment;  
To repay my Father Guru's bounties  
I meditate, and meditate again.*

*Guru mine, pray grant me your protection!  
Help this mendicant to stay ever in his hermitage.*

Exalted, Milarepa adjusted his robe and carried a handful of wood back to his cave. Inside, he was startled to find five Indian demons with eyes as large as saucers. One was sitting on his bed and preaching, two were listening to the sermon, another was preparing and offering food, and the last was studying Milarepa's books.

Following his initial shock, Milarepa thought, "These must be magical apparitions of the local deities who dislike me. Although I have been living here a long time, I have never given them any offering or compliment." He then began to sing a "Complimentary Song to the Deities of Red Rock Jewel Valley":

*This lonely spot where stands my hut  
Is a place pleasing to the Buddhas,  
A place where accomplished beings dwell,  
A refuge where I dwell alone.*

*Above Red Rock Jewel Valley  
White clouds are gliding;  
Below, the Tsang River gently flows;  
Wild vultures wheel between.*

*Bees are humming among the flowers,  
Intoxicated by their fragrance;  
In the trees birds swoop and dart,  
Filling the air with their song.*

*In Red Rock Jewel Valley  
Young sparrows learn to fly,  
Monkeys love to leap and swing,  
And beasts to run and race,  
While I practice the Two Bodhi-Minds  
and love to meditate.*

*Ye local demons, ghosts, and gods,  
Al friends of Milarepa,  
Drink the nectar of kindness and compassion,  
Then return to your abodes.*

But the Indian demons did not vanish, and stared balefully at Milarepa. Two of them advanced, one grimacing and biting his lower lip, and the other grinding his teeth horribly. A third, coming up behind, gave a violent, malicious laugh and shouted loudly, as they all tried to frighten Milarepa with fearful grimaces and gestures.

Milarepa, knowing their evil motives, began the Wrathful Buddha Meditation and recited forcefully a powerful incantation. Still the demons would not leave. Then, with great compassion, he preached the Dharma to them; yet they still remained.

Milarepa finally declared, "Through the mercy of Marpa, I have already fully realized that all beings and all phenomena are of one's own mind. The mind itself is a transparency of Voidness. What, therefore, is the use of all this, and how foolish I am to try to dispel these manifestations physically!

Then Milarepa, in a dauntless mood, sang "The Song of Realization".

*Father Guru, who conquered the Four Demons  
I bow to you, Marpa the Translator.*

*I whom you see, the man with a name,  
Son of Darsen Gharmo,  
Was nurtured in my mother's womb,  
Completing the Three Veins,  
A baby, I slept in my cradle;  
A youth, I watched the door;  
A man, I lived on the high mountain.*

*Though the storm on the snow peak is awesome,  
I have no fear.  
Though the precipice is steep and perilous,  
I am not afraid!*

*I, whom you see, the man with a name,  
Am a son of the Golden Eagle;  
I grew wings and feathers in the egg.  
A child, I slept in my cradle;  
A youth, I watched the door;  
A man, I flew in the sky.  
Though the sky is high and wide, I do not fear:  
Though the way is steep and narrow, I am not afraid.*

*I, whom you see, the man with a name,  
Am a son of Nya Chen Yor Mo, the King of fishes.  
In my mother's womb, I rolled my golden eyes;  
A child, I slept in my cradle;  
A youth, I learned to swim;  
A man, I swam in the great ocean.  
Though thundering waves are frightening,  
I do not fear;  
Though fishing hooks abound, I am not afraid.*

*I, whom you see, the man with a name,  
Am a son of Ghagyu Lamas.  
Faith grew in my mother's womb.  
A baby, I entered the door of Dharma;  
A youth, I studied Buddha's teaching;  
A man, I lived alone in caves.  
Though demons, ghosts, and devils multiply,  
I am not afraid.*

*The snow lion's paws are never frozen,  
Or of what use would it be  
To call the lion "King"  
He who has the Three Perfect Powers.*

*The eagle never falls down from the sky;  
If so, would that not be absurd?  
An iron block cannot be cracked by a stone;  
If so, why refine the iron ore?  
I, Milarepa, fear neither demons nor evils;  
If they frightened Milarepa, to what avail  
Would be his Realization and Enlightenment?*

*Ye ghosts and demons, enemies of the Dharma,  
I welcome you today!  
It is my pleasure to receive you!  
I pray you, stay; do not hasten to leave;  
We will discourse and play together.  
Although you would be gone, stay the night;  
We will pit the Black against the White Dharma,  
And see who plays the best.*

*Before you came, you vowed to afflict me.  
Shame and disgrace would follow  
If you returned with this vow unfulfilled.*

Milarepa arose with confidence and rushed straight at the demons in his cave. Frightened, they shrank back, rolling their eyes in despair and trembling violently. Then, swirling together like a whirlpool, they all merged into one and vanished.

"This was the Demon King, Vināyaka the Obstacle-Maker, who came searching for evil opportunities," thought Milarepa. "The storm, too, was undoubtedly his creation. By the mercy of my Guru he had no chance to harm me."

After this, Milarepa gained immeasurable spiritual progress. This story relates the attack of the Demon King Vināyaka; it has three different meanings, and hence may be called either The Six Ways of Thinking of My Guru," "The Tale of Red Rock Jewel Valley," or "The Story of Milarepa Collecting Wood."