

THE LIFE OF MILAREPA Part 10 – Precious Lineage

Marpa made the difficult journey to India for the last time in his life, and after a long time of searching, he finally found his lama Naropa, as we heard in the earlier story about Marpa's life. Marpa asked him for the teaching of Transferring Consciousness to Dead Bodies, and Naropa asked,

“Did you think of this or did you receive a sign?”

Marpa said “One of my students, Good News, received a message from a dakini in a dream and asked me for the teaching.”

Naropa said, “What a miracle! In the dark land of Tibet, this student is like a sun rising over the snow!”

He put his palms together over his head and bowed to Milarepa. Since that time, the treetops and mountains of that area lean toward Tibet. Naropa gave Marpa the secret teaching that Naropa had received from the dakinis. And then Marpa returned on the long journey to Tibet.

Meanwhile, Marpa's son Darma Doday had died. Marpa's students were glad to see their lama return, but sadly said to him,

“Lama Rinpoche, your son was like a Buddha. And you are no longer young. How will the precious Kagyu teaching be transmitted for the future?”



Marpa told them to remember their dreams to find a sign.

But none of them found a sign in their dreams, except Milarepa, who told Marpa his special dream.

In his dream he saw a mountain with rivers flowing from it in all four directions.



And then he saw a snow lion, a tiger, a giant eagle (called a garuda), and a vulture in his dream.

Marpa joyfully responded, "That dream is a happy dream!" and asked Dakmema to prepare a feast to celebrate. He told the meaning of the dream to his students. The mountain was Marpa, with the rivers quenching the thirst of all beings for liberation. The lion, tiger and eagle were symbols of three of his four greatest students, and the vulture was a symbol of Milarepa, his other greatest student. The dream meant that the four students would become liberated from the cycle of birth and death, that Milarepa would have a hard life like a vulture, and that the Kagyu teaching will spread far and wide in the future.

Marpa gave each of them special teachings to master and then to teach to others. A special teaching for Milarepa was Tummo - how to make the body heat up to stay warm. Marpa told them that since his son died, he is giving each of the four students the Kagyu teaching and his energy, for the benefit of all beings. The three other students then left Marpa to go out and practice and teach in their own regions.

Marpa told Milarepa to stay near him, meditating in a cave, alone, for a few years. So Milarepa went to a cave to meditate.

But he didn't stay for many years. One morning he had a dream of his village. He saw his house cracked and leaking rain into the rooms, his mother and relatives dead, and his sister begging. Milarepa awoke with deep pain and sadness, his pillow wet with tears. He thought,

"I must do whatever is necessary to see my mother again." He broke down the entrance to his cave and went to see his lama. When he arrived and bowed, Marpa awoke from his sleep and said,

"My son, why have you so suddenly stopped your meditation retreat? It might cause trouble. Go back and remain alone in meditation."

Milarepa said he wished to see if his house is still standing, if his sister is a beggar, or if his mother is alive or not. He begged to go just once to his village, and then quickly return.

Marpa said, "What are you saying, my son? When you first came to me you said you were no longer attached to your village. If you go there, it is not certain that you will see your mother. You have spent quite a few years away from your village and then here with me. If you wish to leave, I shall let you go. But if you expect to return, we shall not see each other again in this life." He added, "But I must let you go."



Then Marpa gave Milarepa an initiation according to the most secret teachings kept by the dakinis, and the complete instruction of the path for becoming fully enlightened.

These teachings are so special and so secret that they can be given from a teacher only to one student. No other students can receive it.

Marpa told him that Naropa had given those teachings to him and commanded that they be given only to Milarepa. Then Milarepa must give them only to one student. And in the future, the lineage must be passed down from the teacher to only one student.

Marpa placed his hands on Milarepa's head and said,

“Son, you leaving me breaks my heart. But all things of the world are impermanent. We can do nothing about it. Yet, stay here for a few days. Think about the instructions I have given you and if you have some questions, I can answer them.”

So Milarepa stayed for several days and asked his lama questions about his instructions. Then Marpa asked Dakmema to make a feast to say goodbye to Milarepa. Dakmema made offerings and a special feast for all the students.



Then Marpa, by his yogic power, made the forms of the deities Hevajra, Chakrasamvara, and Guhyasamaja magically appear in the air in front of the gathering of students.

Also, he made a ritual bell, dharma wheel, sword, lotus and the letters “Om Ah Hum” magically appear in the air.

Marpa said, “These are miraculous powers of the mind. They are not to be shown to others for no reason. I have shown them on this

special occasion of Milarepa leaving us.”

Milarepa was filled with joy seeing his lama show these miracles. He thought of his lama as a living Buddha. Milarepa said to Marpa, “I am so overwhelmed. I think that I should also try to be able to do the same miracles through meditation.”

Marpa replied, "Well, if that is so, son, you may now leave, and practice meditation. Take refuge in the silence of the mountains, the snows, or the forests, and meditate in the holy places. In the future your spiritual descendants – the lineage of students of your students – will also meditate there. If you meditate, you will be serving your lama, showing gratitude to your father and mother, and you will reach the goals of all sentient beings. If you cannot meditate, there will only be an increase in evil actions during a long life. For this reason, devote yourself to meditation, give up worldly desires, and don't associate with people who run after their desires and pleasures."



As he said these words, his eyes overflowed with tears. He said,

"We, father and son, will not see each other again in this life. I will not forget you. Neither will you forget me. But rejoice that after passing away from this life, we will meet in the Pure Land, the Realm of the Dakinis, in the Dharmakaya.

"One day, in your practice of a certain exercise, you will face a problem. When that time comes, look at this which I now give you. Do not look at it before that time." And Marpa gave Milarepa a scroll of paper sealed with wax.

Milarepa kept these words of his lama in his heart.

Marpa said to Dakmema, "Prepare for the departure of Mila Vajra Banner-of-Victory tomorrow morning. Even though the occasion will be sad, I wish to accompany him."

To Milarepa, he said, "Come and sleep near me this evening. Father and son will have one more talk." So Milarepa slept near the lama.

In the morning, Dakmema came in weeping. Marpa asked,

"Dakmema, why do you weep? Because Mila has gotten the teachings from his lama and is going to meditate in the mountains? Is that any reason for tears? A real reason for tears is the thought that all sentient beings who could be Buddhas are still not aware of it, and so they die in misery. And it is especially sad that once beings are born as humans, they die without the Dharma. If this is what makes you cry, you should cry without stopping."



Dakmema replied, “All that is very true. But it is difficult to feel such compassion for all beings all the time.

“My own son, who developed wisdom and who would have reached the goal of liberation, has been separated from us by death. Now this son, full of faith, energy, wisdom, and compassion, who obeyed everything that was required of him, absolutely without fault, will leave us while still living. That is why I don’t have the strength to bear my grief.”

And she cried even more.

Milarepa also was choked with sobs. The lama too shed tears. Their tears stopped all words.

The next day at dawn, the Master, with about 13 students, accompanied Milarepa for a half day, walking along in sadness, speaking affectionate words. Then at a mountain, they sat down to eat. The lama took Milarepa’s hand in his and said,

“My son, where you are going, there is a strong chance of meeting robbers along the way. I had thought of giving you a good companion for your journey, but the time has come when you must go alone. Now I ask my lama and yidam deity and the dakinis to keep you free from harm on the way. It is important that you be careful during your journey. Go to Lama Ngokpa, and then after that, go quickly. Don’t stay any more than 7 days in your village. And then go immediately into meditation alone. It is for your own good and the good of all sentient beings.”

They each sang blessing songs to each other. Marpa also said a blessing for all future students of Milarepa, including all students in the distant future. Dakmema gave her blessings to Milarepa, along with gifts of new clothing, boots, food and other supplies he would need.

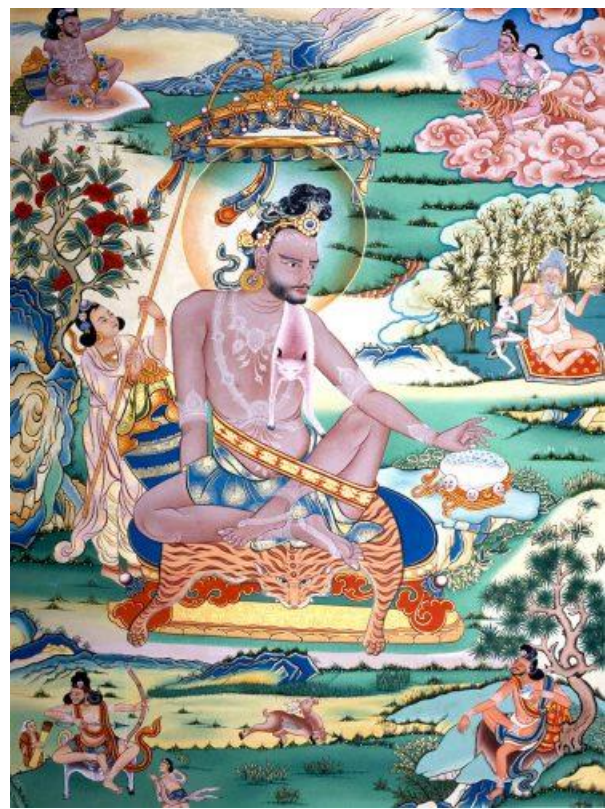
Milarepa bowed to his lama and Dakmema, touching his head to their feet. Then he walked away from them, walking backward and facing them until he could no longer see the lama’s face. He didn’t want to leave them. He wondered if he would ever return. Then he thought,

“I need never be separated from my lama, as long as I can visualize him in meditation above the crown of my head. I even have his promise that we will meet in the Pure Land of the Buddha. Once I have seen my mother, I may still return to my lama.”

These thoughts ended his sadness. Finally he arrived at the home of Lama Ngokpa. After discussing the instructions they had received from Marpa, Milarepa left for his village. The

journey should have taken several months. But by his yogic power, Milarepa arrived in three days. He was very happy that he had yogic powers that made it possible.

He knew that he was the only one who carried the most secret and precious teachings from Tilopa, who gave them to Naropa, who gave them to his lama, Marpa the Great Translator, and that he must carry these teachings of this lineage to a very special student in the future, after he practices the teachings intensely, alone in meditation.



QUESTIONS:

1. When Marpa made his last trip to India, who did he go to see? (his lama Naropa)
2. What happened to the trees and mountains in the area where Naropa bowed to Milarepa? (they leaned toward Tibet)
3. In Milarepa's dream, what animal represented Milarepa? (a vulture)
4. Why was he represented as a vulture? (he would have a hard life)
5. After the other three best students left Marpa, why didn't Milarepa stay in the cave near Marpa to meditate for many years? (he had a dream that his mother died and he wanted to go back to his village)
6. What did Marpa give Milarepa that he didn't give to any other student? (the most special secret teachings from Naropa, complete instructions to become fully enlightened)
7. What miracle did Marpa show his students? (he made forms of deities, bell, lotus flower, dharma wheel, sword, and "Om Ah Hum" magically appear in the air)
8. How did Milarepa arrive at Lama Nogkpa's house so fast, in only three days? (by his yogic powers)

DHARMA DISCUSSION – PRECIOUS LINEAGE:

We learned about the first 4 masters of the Kagyu Tibetan Buddhist lineage. Can you name them? Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, and Milarepa.

What does "lineage" mean? It means a line of gurus - great spiritual masters – who give their special teachings to their students to practice and teach to their own students.

Who has the secret teachings of the lineage today? Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche.

What are the teachings about? To reach enlightenment, liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

What kinds of practices do the teachings include? Mantras, ways to practice meditation, things to focus on in meditation, and deep understanding of reality, that normal people cannot see.

Why are the teachings so precious? They are not given to everyone, and they lead to enlightenment, which is the most important goal in life.

Why aren't they given to everyone? It may be dangerous for people to practice them if they are not properly prepared first.

ACTIVITY – WORD SEARCH

Find these words. Some are upside down or backwards!

Naropa	Milarepa	Dakmema	Secret	Kagyu
Tilopa	Vulture	Cave	Powers	Teaching
Marpa	Meditate	Dream	Tummo	Lotus

W	S	A	T	U	M	M	O	Y	T
S	A	L	I	S	E	C	A	V	E
E	P	P	L	U	D	I	P	U	A
C	O	I	O	T	I	K	R	L	C
R	R	N	P	O	T	I	A	T	H
E	A	E	A	L	A	O	M	U	I
T	N	A	R	P	T	E	G	R	N
U	D	A	K	M	E	M	A	E	G
F	K	A	G	Y	U	G	A	R	G
D	A	P	E	R	A	L	I	M	A
S	R	E	W	O	P	U	L	A	B