

The Songs of Milarepa - Session 5

Song 1 - Milarepa's Song of Realisation and Instruction in the second part of the Cycle of Sahle Ö

Qualified guru with great compassion,
Three precious jewels, excellent sources of refuge,
The dakinis and dharmapalas, with your great power,
All of these I've described, to you I bow.

I don't know how to sing songs with poetic words,
But these words have the blessings of the lineage.
Their meaning is the intention of the Victorious Ones.

O faithful meditator Sahle Ö,
Wipe the dirt from the mirror of mind
And look into the space of the stainless sky.
With the blessings of all the previous siddhas,
Go meditate in the mountains, in solitary places.
The reason for wandering in mountain retreats
Is to gain mastery; look at mind's nature.
Now I'll explain the way to look:
Listen without distraction, Sahle Ö!

Taking the mountain up there as an example,
You should meditate free of any movement.
To give rise to the Buddha's good qualities,
Do this with determination that forbears pleasure and pain.

Taking the river down there as an example,
Meditate without breaking the flow.
To receive the blessings of the guru,
You must have continuous respect and devotion.

Taking the sky here as an example,
Meditate without center or edge.
Look at the reality of the true nature;
Do so with means and wisdom in union.

Taking the sun and moon as an example,
Meditate without clarity becoming obscured.
Know the six types of beings to have been your parents;
Have compassion that fully encompasses them all.

Taking the ocean down there as an example,
Meditate without any dullness and torpor.
Look directly at your own mind;
Practice according to the guru's speech.

Taking the earth as an example,
Meditate completely free of change.
To be an appropriate vessel for the instructions,
Make faith stable within the all-base.

Looking inwardly at your own mind,
Meditate without any labels or terms.
To make appearances dawn as your texts,
Make your very own mind what you study.
At all times and in every way,
Procure the provisions of inexhaustible generosity.
Beautify yourself with the ornament of discipline.
Shake off and wear the animal hide of patience.
Ride the magical horse of diligence.
Seek out the noble city of meditation.
Become wealthy with the riches of prajña.
Not forgetting the kindness of the guru,
Make many offerings of your experience and realisation.
Do you understand this meaning, you woman of faith?

Song 2 - Milarepa's Second Song of Realisation to Awaken Sahle Ö's Experience

Sahle Ö, who has taken into your mind-stream
The dharma of relying on solitary mountain retreats:
First, with devotion you relied on the guru,
And through the power of blessing, your mind-stream was ripened.
You relied on the supreme taste of the path of means' nectar,
And have developed certainty in the genuine dharma.
Your meditation hasn't been too tight or too loose,
So the signs of experience of those previously on the path have dawned within.
Since you've had no obstacles or adverse conditions,
You have no questions now and that is also excellent.

Even if you practice with effort in the dharma,
That is like filling up on poisonous food:
It's not possible to have liberation.
The musk-deer stays for a long time in caves.
The black raven's vajra recitations are many,
The white-bellied fish with her breath control is excellent.
The white-cored stalk is skilled in extracting nutrients.
Marmots meditate on the absorption of cessation.
Brahmans practice austerities for a long time.
Parrots know how to intone empty rhetoric.
If the factor of liberation doesn't dawn in your mind,
Though you search with longing, you won't find the freedom path.
Merely blocking the proliferation of thoughts
That swirl in your mind like a pool of water
Will not liberate you from the ocean of samsara.

With the chandali of meditating on attributes,
Unbiased prajna will burst forth.
With the chandali of resting the mind,
You will recognize the bardo's pristine awareness.
With the chandali of innate reality,
You'll realise reality free of birth and cessation.
With the chandali of bindu and nadi.
You'll be free of clinging to things as real.
The central channel, the avadhuti, that is free of effort
Is uncontrived, self-arisen, and primordially pure:
There the knot of duality is untied in its own place.
Its essence is the key point of Mahamudra.
Do you realise this, dear Sahle Ö?

Song 3 - Sahle Ö's Song of Realisation (In response to Milarepa)

There is one who holds the lineage of Vajradhara
Who received the prophecy of the four classes of dakinis.
Through the compassion of Tilo and Naro,
Holders of the teachings of the practice lineage,
The intention of the tantras dawned in his heart.
The harvest of compassion of the translator Marpa Lotsawa
Expands in all the ten directions,
And pure fruit ripens for every one of his students.
Because of this fruit, I take to my crown
Your lotus feet that liberate my own mind-stream.

Great Repa of Gungtang, with such compassion,
Your banner of renown flies in the ten directions.
Precious jewel upon my crown,
With faith and respect, I supplicate you,
Father, guru, who has been so kind
To myself and all of those to be tamed.

You steer our analysis to the dharma
And establish us upon the unerring path.
Through abhisheka you ripen mind-streams that are unripe.
Through means you liberate those without freedom.

These appearances that dawn as a variety outside,
Through your pointing-out are like an illusion.
Awareness meets dharmata, the mother.
The magical displays of the wavering mind
Dissolve in their own place, like waves of the ocean.
Through the great strength and force of my practice,
I directly cut through every conceptual imputation,
All the deviations of the mundane path.

The unmistakable path has taken birth in my mind.
I understand the Secret Mantra's path of means.
I don't mistake higher paths for those that are lower.
I wanted buddhahood, but I couldn't realise it,
So in the guru's presence I fervently requested
The excellent support of the Secret Mantra.
Together, with my special dharma brother Ngendzongpa,
We compare our experiences and realisation.

I'm a clever lady, grounded and smart.
Those who try to deceive me, I make them my meal!
I make short my time in ignorant sleep
And prolong my mind-stream in the state of shamatha.
I turn down all men to their face.
Many years have gone by since I gave up my soft pillow.

Mahamudra's reality descends upon my head;
I rest within it one-pointedly, undistracted.
In my striving for the state of nirvana,
I am not separate from emptiness and compassion,
Thus I have no pride or disregard for others.
I'm never unhappy with discussing the dharma.
The guru who is endowed with kindness,
I've always seen him as the Buddha.
I offer this song in deep gratitude to him.
May the dakinis revel in this feast of sound!