TIBET'S GREAT YOGI
MILAREPA
A BIOGRAPHY FROM THE TIBETAN
being the
JETSÜN-KAHBUM
OR BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF JETSÜN-MILAREPA, ACCORDING TO THE LATE LAMA KAZI DAWA-SAMDUP'S ENGLISH RENDERING
Edited with Introduction and Annotations
By W. Y. EVANS-WENTZ

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
The late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup had in view, in making this translation, the wish, as he expressed it to the editor, 'to show to cultured Western eyes one of our Great Teachers, as he actually lived, in a biography of him, much of which is couched in the words of his own mouth, and the remainder in the words of his disciple Rechung, who knew him in the flesh.'

Despite the many sectarian differences between the numerous sects of Tibetan Buddhism, all Tibetans alike unite in holding Jetsün-Milarepa in the highest reverence and esteem; and they consider him the very prototype of everything that a great saint should be.

In Milarepa, the teachings of all the great Yogi of India, including the greatest of them known to history, Gautama the Buddha, when put to the test of scientific experiment, did not fail. Many parallels, too, may be drawn between Milarepa's precepts recorded in this biography and those of another Great Master of Life, as will be seen by making comparison with the Sermon on the Mount.

As a member of the Mongolian race, Milarepa, like Confucius, is but one more instance of the fact that genius recognizes no barriers in racial stock or nationality or creed, being as universally human as humanity itself.

'It is a valuable contribution of original research to the literature from which Western readers can derive trustworthy first-hand information about the ethical and religious aspirations of the Eastern races...'

The Scotsman reviewing the first edition
THE GREAT KARGYÜTPA GURUS

Described on pages xxiii-xxvi
The Editor here gratefully acknowledges indebtedness to Mr. E. T. Sturdy, translator of The Nārada Sūtra, for having encouraged and supported the publication of this, the second, edition of Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION .............................................................. vii
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION .............................................................. xv
DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................................. xxiii
INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................. 1

I. The Importance of the Jetsün-Kahbum ................................................... 1
II. Historical Value of the Narrative ............................................................ 2
III. Tibetan Schools of Buddhist Philosophy ............................................... 4
IV. The Kargyüpa Apostolic Succession ...................................................... 6
V. The Modern Successors of Milarepa ...................................................... 8
VI. Kargyüpas Compared with Christian Gnostics ..................................... 10
VII. Dissenting Sects .................................................................................... 12
VIII. Genealogical Tree of Lamaist Sects .................................................... 14
IX. The Defence of the Hermit Ideal ........................................................... 15
X. The Arhat Problem .................................................................................. 20
XI. The Text and its Translation ................................................................. 24
XII. The Place of the Jetsün-Kahbum in the Literature of Tibet ................. 27
XIII. Milarepa as one of Humanity's Heroes ............................................... 28

RECHUNG'S TIBETAN INTRODUCTION ..................................................... 31

PART I

THE PATH OF DARKNESS

CHAPTER I: THE LINEAGE AND BIRTH
Telling of Rechung's Dreams, which led to the Writing of this Biography; and of Milarepa's Ancestry and Birth ................................................................. 41

CHAPTER II: THE TASTING OF SORROW
Telling of the Death and Last Will of Milarepa's Father; the Misappropriation of the Estate by the Paternal Uncle and Aunt; and the Resulting Sorrows which Milarepa and his Mother and Sister endured ................................................................. 54

CHAPTER III: THE PRACTISING OF THE BLACK ART
Telling of Jetsün's Guru and Mastery of the Black Art; and of how Jetsün destroyed Thirty-Five of his Enemies and the Rich Barley Harvest of the Others, by Magic ................................................................. 61
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PART II

**THE PATH OF LIGHT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER IV: THE SEEKING OF THE HOLY DHARMA</strong></td>
<td>Telling of how Jetsun departed from his Guru of the Black Art; and of how Jetsun found his Guru of the True Doctrine, Marpa the Translator</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER V: THE PROBATION AND Penance</strong></td>
<td>Telling of how Jetsun Obeyed the Commands of his Guru Marpa, thereby Suffering Strange Trials and Great Tribulations; and of how, in Despondency, he Thrice Deserted Marpa and Sought another Guru, and then returned to Marpa</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER VI: THE INITIATION</strong></td>
<td>Telling of the Completion of Jetsun's Probation; of Jetsun's Initiation; and of Marpa's Predictions concerning Jetsun</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER VII: THE PERSONAL GUIDANCE BY THE GURU</strong></td>
<td>Telling of the Fruits of Jetsun's Meditation and Study; of Marpa's Last Journey to India; of Jetsun's Prophetic Dream and its Interpretation by Marpa; and of Marpa's special charge to each of his Four Chief Disciples</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER VIII: THE PARTING FROM THE GURU</strong></td>
<td>Telling of how Jetsun, led by a Dream, left his Hermitage, and, going to his Guru, secured permission to visit Tsa, Jetsun's Birthplace; of the Guru's Final Instructions and Admonitions; of the Sorrowful Parting; and of how Jetsun reached Tsa</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER IX: THE RENUNCIATION</strong></td>
<td>Telling of the Disillusionment which Jetsun met when he had reached his Home; and of his Vows to Live the Ascetic Life and Practise Meditation in Solitude</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER X: THE MEDITATION IN SOLITUDE</strong></td>
<td>Telling of how Jetsun entered into Solitary Meditation in the Mountain Solitudes; of the Outer Experiences, and of the Psycho-Physical Results which Ensuéd; and of his Songs Recording each Event</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER XI: THE HERMITAGES AND SERVICE RENDERED TO SENTIENT BEINGS

Telling of Jetsün’s Disciples and Places of Meditation; and of the Recorded Writings concerning Jetsün 235

## CHAPTER XII: THE *NIRVĀṆA*

Telling of how Jetsün came to take Poisoned Curds from Tsaphuwa’s Concubine; of the Last Assembly of Jetsün’s Followers, and the Attendant Marvels; of Jetsün’s Discourse on Illness and Death; of His Final Testamentary Teachings; of the Conversion of Tsaphuwa; of the Last Will; of the Passing Away in *Samādhi*, and the Resultant Super-normal Phenomena; of Rechung’s Late Arrival and Prayer to Jetsün, and the Answer; of the Marvellous Events Connected with the Cremation and the Reliques; of the Execution of Jetsün’s Last Will; and concerning his Disciples 244

APPENDIX 305

COLOPHON 308

INDEX 310