# A Long Song of Sadness on the 49th Day

## Gangzhun

(Translated from Tibetan by Françoise Robin)

Gratitude to the sun
Gratitude to the moon
Gratitude to the brilliant constellations
Gratitude to the garlands of glaciers and mighty mountains

#### Gratitude also

To every river that gushes and churns
To every lake that are brimming and bright
And to every wave on the shores of the lakes

#### Gratitude also

To the meadow grass that grow when pressed down To each head of livestock—horses, yaks, and sheep To every flower that blooms brightly And to every dewdrop on their petals

#### Gratitude also

To every community located by their god of birth To every field encircling the communities To the grains arranged at the ends of the fields And to every honest community member who works hard to reap the harvest of grains

Indeed We keep expressing our gratitude for having such a homeland

This land is the playground where we play

This land is where our joyful laughter echoes

This land is suffused with our happy childhood memories

It is from this land that we travel the Land of snow and we circle the globe

And more: with our ancestors' footprints clearly imprinted on this land, so

I wish to step across every part of our homeland

I wish to touch every land and river of our homeland

When I am in our homeland

And the green sprouts suddenly bud

I know that spring—the first season—has come

When the ears of grain sway

I know that summer has filled the world with vigor

When hail falls on hills and valleys alike

I can feel that autumn—the auspicious time of harvest—is here

When the snowflakes fly and flutter

I can also feel that winter—a chance for rest—has arrived

When blue, overwhelmingly blue

When colourful, overwhelmingly colourful

When cold, overwhelmingly cold

When hot, overwhelmingly hot

The clear difference between the four seasons

Is indeed the beauty of our homeland

And in the midst of this beauty
While vividly chanting the Tibetan alphabet
We try our best to learn actively what needs to be learnt
We study diligently all that is to be studied
And incorporating the six virtuosities
We muster the courage to live in the world of men

When our youth was still with us
Our aim was to serve our homeland
And, without fear, without hesitation
We fully jumped into the competition of this world
Rising high our swords of wisdom
We hacked in half our enemies, our challenges,
When we were about to shout a *Ki So* of victory
You, suddenly,
Left us and departed far away

You are not in the steps of the cattle
That we herded as children
You are not in the grain fields
That we would cross as youth
You are not in the courtyard of the university
Where we got education as we grew
You are not in the battlefield of samsara
Where we bravely fought together

Your parents say
"You are not here"—and cannot believe it
Your wife says

"You are gone"—and she cannot accept it
Your son says
"You are not coming back"—and he shakes his head

We are helpless
And are left motionless, bewildered
We want to cry, but our tears have dried up
We want to scream, our throat is blocked
Really: when will you return to us?

In the middle of summer The turquoise dragon returns Booming with a thunderous roar The young cuckoo returns Singing to me a lovely Ki ki A tiny nightingale returns too Singing beautifully tweet tweet Despite this You have not returned Flowers of all colors have returned Exhibiting their unrivalled beauty The bumble bees have returned Humming with buzzing songs The seductive butterflies have returned Performing their enchanting movements But You still have not returned

In the depths of winter this year

As the white snows returns

Showing their pure pristine nature,

Will you be able to return?

As the cold winds returns,

Whispering its secrets,

Will you be able to return?

As the New Year return,

Showing a small auspicious smile,

Will you be able to return?

#### Alas

Each and every hero of the snowy land
When they thus collapse right before my eyes
Each and every talented person of the snow mountains
When they thus are defeated around me
Can I bear to still remain indifferent?

### Kayé!

My birth-mountain in Tsongkha, to the east

Mountain Gangkar Riwo, to the south

Mount Magyel Pomra, to the west

The thirteen Gurlha Gods, to the north

Be kind to his beloved children left behind

Provide relief to those who move forward

Grant courage to fighters, should they win or should they lose

Grant your protection to those who rush to help others

Gods and humans united in their might

Are unstoppable. That I have known for a long time.

Note: The translator wishes to thank Rinchen Dorje for recommending the poem and Lowell Cook for his insightful suggestions.



Gangzhun's phayul (homeland), August 2023 ©Françoise Robin

# बे.ट्यीटु.झू.घी.स्ट.सू। बे.ट्यीटु.झू.घी.स्ट.सू।

हैं संस्थानमाय देव ह हैं संस्थानमाय देव ह ब्रान्य न्या निर्मा स्त्रत्यं त्रायवेषायिः हुः चरः न्र हः दिनः खुना नाशुस्रा द्यो नात्रना द्युना सः नेरे खुस्रा सेनः नत्न न्या देशो हिना नेरेने से हिना सेनः नी विषानाने नेनः समापाना देता लु

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