

Where *Silence* Become *Shiva*



“ A JOURNEY
THROUGH FEAR,
FAITH AND
ETERNAL STILLNESS
OF KAILASH. ”



Faith. Adventure. Inner Peace.

The Call of Kailash. 



There are journeys one plans with the mind. And then there are journeys that seem to be written somewhere far beyond human will — perhaps in destiny, perhaps in prayer.

My first permission for the sacred Mount Kailash Yatra had come in June 2025, yet the pilgrimage did not happen. Somewhere deep within, however, the call of Kailash remained alive — silent, patient, waiting.

And then came 2026.

This time, when permission arrived again, it felt less like administrative approval and more like a divine summons. With folded hands and an anxious heart, I landed in Kathmandu, seeking blessings of Shiva before stepping toward the land where myth, silence, and eternity coexist.

For someone with a history of asthma, the thought of high altitude was frightening. Every conversation around the Yatra carried warnings — low oxygen, breathlessness, dizziness, nausea. Diamox suddenly became the most discussed medicine among pilgrims, almost spoken of like an elixir of survival. Yet beneath all preparations, medicines, and precautions, there remained one mantra constantly echoing within me:

Remain calm. Surrender. Trust Shiva.

From Kathmandu we moved toward Lhasa — a city suspended between heaven and earth. Ancient monasteries stood wrapped in prayer flags and incense smoke, while the majestic Potala Palace rose like a vision from another century. But the altitude announced itself immediately. My head spun endlessly. Nausea came in waves. Breathing felt unfamiliar. Even walking slowly demanded effort.

And yet, Tibet teaches you something profound: panic worsens the mountain, calmness befriends it.

Somewhere amidst those vast silent landscapes, I also encountered the ancient wisdom of the Bon tradition — older than Tibetan Buddhism itself. Bon is deeply mystical, rooted in mountains, skies, rivers, unseen energies, and sacred geography. It reveres nature not as scenery, but as spirit.

Its followers believe that every mountain carries consciousness, every river holds memory, and every landscape breathes energy. Before Buddhism entered Tibet in the 7th century, Bon was the dominant spiritual path of the Tibetan plateau. Even today, its influence quietly survives across Tibet, Nepal, and Himalayan India.

For Bon practitioners, Kailash is not merely a mountain. It is the sacred nine-story swastika mountain — the cosmic center of existence. While Buddhists perform the Kailash parikrama clockwise, traditional Bon followers circumambulate it anti-clockwise, symbolizing their ancient lineage and spiritual identity.

Listening to these stories amidst the winds of Tibet made me realize something deeply humbling: civilizations may differ, rituals may vary, but the human longing for the divine remains eternal.

Early one freezing morning, we departed from Lhasa toward Ngari — often called Ali. Endless barren landscapes unfolded before us. Vast stretches of earth without vegetation. No noise. No crowds. Only the cleanest blue sky I had ever seen and mountains standing like ancient guardians of silence.

And then suddenly — Kailash appeared.

Not in photographs.

Not in imagination.

But in living reality.

The east face.

The north face.

Everywhere the eyes turned, there stood Mount Kailash — distant yet overpowering, silent yet commanding.

There was immense excitement among our group because we learned that ours was the first Indian batch to successfully step into Tibet during the Chinese Year of the Horse in 2026 — a year considered especially auspicious for the Kailash Yatra in Tibetan belief systems. In Tibetan astrology, the Horse year carries themes of movement, spiritual merit, pilgrimage, transformation, and divine momentum. Many believe that undertaking the Kailash parikrama during such a year multiplies spiritual blessings manifold.

Soon we proceeded toward the sacred Lake Manasarovar.

No words can prepare the soul for its first sight. The lake did not look real. It seemed like the sky itself had descended upon the earth. The waters reflected silence so perfectly that one almost became afraid to disturb it.

Though a full ritual dip was not permitted, I stepped gently into the freezing waters. At that moment, there was no noise of the outer world left within me. Only stillness.

In Hindu belief, Mansarovar is believed to have first emerged in the mind — “Manas” — of Brahma. Buddhists see it as a lake of purity and enlightenment. In Jain tradition, the region is associated with Rishabhdev. For Bon followers, it remains an ancient cosmic center of energy and balance.

Standing there, I finally understood why pilgrims call Mansarovar a mirror of consciousness. It does not merely reflect your face. It reflects your soul.

As the icy winds touched the water, one verse from the Shiva Mahimna Stotra echoed continuously within me:


**असितगिरिसमं स्यात् कज्जलं सिन्धुपात्रे
सुरतरुवरशाखा लेखनी पत्रमुर्वी ।
लिखति यदि गृहीत्वा शारदा सर्वकालं
तदपि तव गुणानामीश पारं न याति ॥**

Even if the mountains became ink, the oceans an inkpot, the earth paper, and Goddess Saraswati herself wrote for eternity — still the glory of Shiva could never fully be described.

And standing before Kailash and Mansarovar, I realized — some experiences are not meant to be explained.

Only felt.

At 
Lake Mansarovar,

 The Soul Does Not
Merely Witness Divinity,
It Dissolves Into It.





At the shores of Lake Manasarovar, words begin to fail. Language feels too small for a place so infinite. It was exactly 8:36 pm in the evening when I looked at the time in disbelief — the sun was still shining brilliantly across the sacred waters, as though it simply refused to leave. It felt as if the sun itself was reluctant to surrender the sky to the moon, unwilling to depart from the presence of something so divine.

The clouds floated unusually close to the shores, almost touching the lake with tenderness. The sky appeared to descend into the waters, dissolving into an endless mirror of blue and silver. Nothing there felt separate — not the mountains, not the wind, not the lake, not even the self.

Rabbits ran freely across the terrain, looking at pilgrims with innocent curiosity, as though humans were the unfamiliar visitors in a world that truly belonged to nature and the gods. Foxes wandered silently. Yaks stood with ancient calm. Sea birds flocked together near the shore, unwilling to leave even for a few moments, as though every living being wished to remain close to the sacred vibrations of the lake.

Even the pebbles seemed blessed merely by existing beside something so holy. The mighty mountains surrounding Mansarovar did not appear lifeless; they stood like sages in deep meditation — tall, silent, and reverential — offering prayers to Mahadev with their entire existence. Hundreds of prayer flags fluttered continuously in the wind, carrying countless whispered hopes and unanswered prayers into the vastness of the Himalayas.

Meditating there felt unlike any meditation I had ever known.

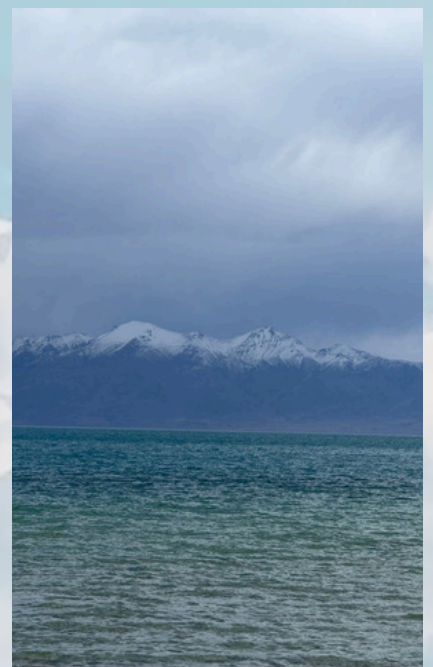
It felt calm.

Anchored.

Rooted.

Welcomed.

There was no effort to silence the mind because the silence already existed outside and within. The breath slowed naturally. Time itself softened. After a while, I opened my eyes and simply kept gazing at the sparkling lake, the luminous mountains, the impossible beauty surrounding me. A thought arose within my heart — aisa nazaara kahaan hai dharti par? Where else on earth can such beauty exist?



Something touched my heart, body, soul, and mind in those moments. Not dramatically. Not loudly. But deeply. Anciently. The mind becomes silent there, and in that silence something timeless awakens within. One begins to understand why even the greatest sages struggled to describe Shiva.

And naturally, the spirit of the Shiva Mahimna Stotra begins to echo within consciousness:

**त्वमर्कस्त्वं सोमस्त्वमसि पवनस्त्वं हुतवहः
त्वमापस्त्वं व्योम त्वमु धरणिरात्मा त्वमिति च ।
परिच्छिन्नामेवं त्वयि परिणता बिभ्रति गिरं
न विद्मस्तत्त्वं वयमिह तु यत्त्वं न भवसि ॥**

The meaning of this verse feels profoundly alive at Mansarovar:

*You are the Sun, the Moon, the Wind, the Fire,
the Water, the Sky, the Earth, and the Self itself.
People describe You through these limited forms,
yet in truth, O Shiva, we do not know what You are not.*

At Mansarovar, this verse ceases to be poetry. It becomes experience.

The water feels like Shiva.

The sky feels like Shiva.

The silence feels like Shiva.

And somewhere within, even your tears feel like Shiva.

Perhaps that is why pilgrims return transformed. Not because they merely saw Mount Kailash, but because for one fleeting moment they felt the Infinite touching them from within.

What makes Mansarovar so divine is not only its breathtaking beauty, but its spiritual presence carried across civilizations and centuries. Ancient traditions believe that many great rivers emerging from the Himalayas are spiritually connected to this sacred region, nourishing lands across India and Tibet. The lake has been revered in Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Bon traditions alike, becoming a timeless bridge of culture, faith, and devotion between India and Tibet since ancient times.



Sacred texts also describe Mansarovar as the beloved abode of swans — symbols of purity, wisdom, and spiritual discrimination. Even today, watching birds glide gracefully upon those waters feels symbolic, as though nature itself is meditating there.



Mansarovar is regarded as one of the highest freshwater lakes in the world, resting silently amidst the grandeur of the Himalayas like a celestial eye upon the earth. Nearby sacred spaces such as Gauri Kund deepen the spiritual aura of the entire region, each carrying legends of Shiva and Parvati whispered through generations.

Yet no scripture, no photograph, no description can truly explain what one feels there. Because the lake does not merely reflect mountains.

It reflects the soul back to itself.

And perhaps that is the true blessing of Mansarovar — not that it shows you God somewhere outside, but that it quietly awakens the divinity sleeping within you.

Long after leaving its shores, the lake continues to exist inside you. In moments of silence. In tears without reason. In prayers without words. In the strange longing to return somewhere your soul recognizes as home.

Some places are beautiful.

Some places are sacred.

But Mansarovar feels eternal.

Ashtapad

Where Silence
Became Liberation

A Jain Soul's Eternal
Journey To The Sacred
Mountain of **Moksha**





Sitting right before the sacred presence of Ashtapad, with the cold Himalayan winds touching my face and an indescribable silence surrounding the soul, I found myself chanting the sacred Namokar Mantra and reciting the divine verses of Bhaktamara Stotra. In that moment, it no longer felt like a pilgrimage. It felt like time itself had stopped. The mountain did not speak, yet it said everything the soul had been searching for across lifetimes.

For followers of Jainism, Ashtapad is not merely a geographical location hidden amidst the mystical terrains of Tibet. It is a moksha-bhumi — a land eternally sanctified because it is believed to be the place where Rishabhanatha, also known as Adinath Bhagwan, attained liberation from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. Jain scriptures describe it not just as a mountain, but as a divine realm vibrating with purity, austerity, and transcendence.

The word “Ashtapad” itself carries deep symbolism. Derived from Sanskrit, Ashta means eight and Pad means steps or levels. Some traditions describe it as a mountain of eight natural terraces, while others interpret it as the eight spiritual steps leading the soul toward liberation. Many Jain thinkers also see it as a metaphor for the inward ascent from ego to enlightenment.

The revered Adi Purana by Acharya Jinasena beautifully glorifies this sacred event. It describes the region as spiritually radiant, inaccessible to ordinary beings, and worshipped by celestial devas. Jain traditions narrate that when Adinath attained nirvana, heavenly beings descended in celebration and the mountain became eternally sacred.

One of the most moving beliefs associated with Ashtapad is the story of Bharata Chakravartin, the son of Rishabhdev. Scriptures say he built an extraordinary celestial shrine there adorned with jewels, crystal stairways, and divine artistry. Some legends believe the temple disappeared with time, while others say it remains hidden from ordinary eyes, visible only to spiritually evolved souls. This mystical aura has made Ashtapad one of the most spiritually charged and mysterious places in Jain consciousness.

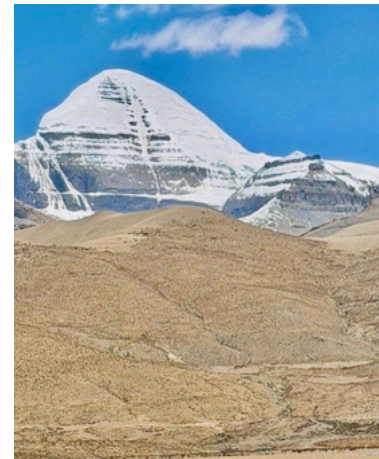
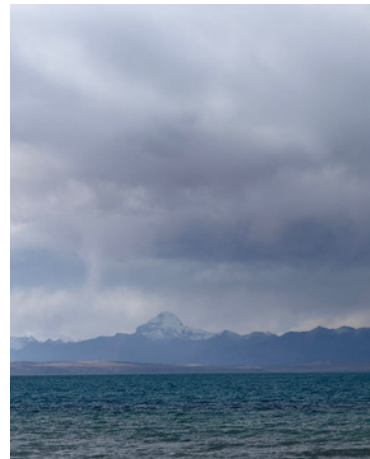
Ancient Jain texts such as the Kalpa Sutra, Trishashti Shalaka Purusha Charitra, cosmological literature, and Digambara and Śvetāmbara traditions continue to preserve the sacred memory of Ashtapad. The mountain is often described as radiant, inaccessible, divine, and eternally worshipped by celestial beings. Jain philosophy believes that while a Tirthankara transcends worldly existence after moksha, the land associated with liberation remains spiritually awakened forever.

A deeply powerful Jain prayer echoed within me while sitting before Ashtapad:

**णमो अरिहंताणं
णमो सिद्धाणं ।**

*“I bow to the enlightened beings.
I bow to the liberated souls.”*

At Ashtapad, the words Namō Siddhanam carry unimaginable depth, because this is the very land where Adinath Bhagwan became a Siddha — free from karma, attachment, suffering, and rebirth forever.





Another profound reflection from Jain philosophy captures the essence of Ashtapad:

कर्मक्षयो मोक्षः ।

“Destruction of karma is liberation.”

Perhaps this is why the landscape around Kailash and Ashtapad feels so different from anywhere else on Earth. The barren mountains, the haunting silence, the absence of worldly distractions — everything there reflects the Jain ideals of aparigraha, austerity, detachment, and inner stillness. One does not merely visit Ashtapad; one confronts oneself there.

Many Jain traditions identify Ashtapad with the region around Mount Kailash, creating a profound spiritual bridge between Jainism, Shaivism, Bon, and Tibetan Buddhism. For Hindus, Kailash is the eternal abode of Shiva and Parvati. For Buddhists, it symbolizes supreme enlightenment. For Jains, it is the sacred moksha-bhumi of Adinath Bhagwan. One mountain, yet countless paths converging toward the same eternal silence.

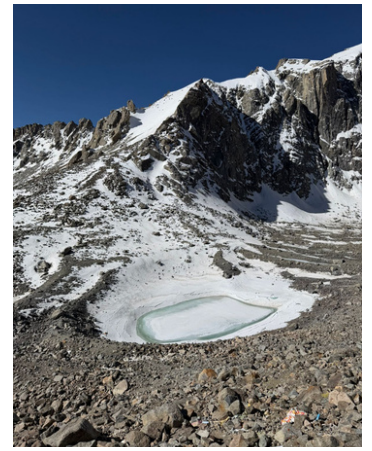
Even today, despite debates around its exact location and the absence of archaeological confirmation, the spiritual power of Ashtapad remains untouched. It continues to live not merely in scriptures, but in the hearts of seekers who feel called toward something beyond words, beyond identity, beyond possession.

As I sat there chanting the Navkar Mantra with tears in my eyes, one truth became deeply clear within me — Ashtapad is not only a mountain in Tibet. It is also the mountain every soul must climb within itself before it finally becomes free.

Through ✈️ Yam Dwar to Derapuk

Entering the Celestial Kingdom
of *Kailash*





There are journeys one undertakes with the body, and then there are journeys that begin dissolving the body itself — stripping away identity, ego, fear, and everything one once believed permanent. The sacred path from Yam Dwar to Dirapuk Monastery felt like such a passage — not merely through mountains, but through dimensions of existence.

The journey had begun amidst warnings of harsh winds, uncertain weather, and inhospitable terrain. It was said that the land tests every pilgrim before allowing entry into the abode of Lord Shiva. The winds here are often described as fierce enough to humble human pride, as though nature itself stands guard at the gates of the divine.

And yet, in a way impossible to explain, we felt welcomed.

The skies opened gently for us. The sun shone with unexpected warmth upon the barren Himalayan wilderness. Soft winds touched our faces as though the mountain itself had accepted our presence. Frozen rivers stretched across the landscape under thick layers of ancient ice, glistening like crystal pathways carved through another realm. Every stream, every stone, every silence carried an unearthly stillness.



It no longer felt like Earth.

Small creatures emerged now and then from the rocks and snow, pausing curiously to observe the arriving pilgrims — as though even nature wished to witness who had come seeking the celestial kingdom of Kailash.

And then came Yam Dwar.

The sacred gateway stood quietly amidst the vast emptiness, yet its spiritual force felt immeasurable. In Hindu tradition, Yam Dwar is believed to be the threshold between mortality and liberation — the doorway where one symbolically leaves behind worldly attachments before entering the sacred domain of Shiva.

The very name carries profound meaning:

** Yam — Yama, the lord of death,*

** Dwar — gateway.*

Crossing Yam Dwar did not feel ceremonial; it felt deeply personal. An inward silence descended almost instantly. There exists an ancient belief that once one crosses the gate, one must not look back — a symbolic surrender of the past, the ego, and the illusions one carries through life.

At that moment, the ancient invocation of Shiva seemed to echo through the valley:

**करचरणकृतं वाक्कायजं कर्मजं वा
श्रवणनयनजं वा मानसं वापराधम् ।
विहितमविहितं वा सर्वमेतत्क्षमस्व
जय जय करुणाब्धे श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥**

“Whatever wrongs have been committed through hands or feet, through speech, body, mind, eyes or ears — knowingly or unknowingly — O ocean of compassion, Mahadev Shambho, forgive them all.”

The parikrama ahead no longer appeared like a trek. It felt like a dialogue between the soul and eternity.

As we moved deeper through the valley, the western face of Mount Kailash slowly revealed itself — austere, commanding, almost impossibly symmetrical. Ancient traditions across Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bon regard Kailash not merely as a mountain, but as the cosmic axis of existence — Meru, the spiritual center around which the universe itself revolves.

Hours later, after crossing rivers, barren stretches, mysterious caves hidden within rocky cliffs, and endless landscapes of silence, we finally arrived at Derapuk.

And there it stood.

The North Face of Kailash.

Not as a mountain alone — but as revelation.



At Dirapuk Monastery, the mountain appears astonishingly alive. The snow formations and layered ridges upon the summit resemble the raised hoods of Sheshnaag — the eternal cosmic serpent upon whom Lord Vishnu reclines. The resemblance was so vivid, so impossibly clear, that it felt less like imagination and more like divine symbolism carved into stone.

The contours of the mountain looked architectural rather than natural. Distinct horizontal elevations appeared like perfectly segmented levels of a celestial palace. Certain sections resembled temple walls. Others appeared like sacred chambers hidden within the mountain itself. On one side, the formations looked strikingly similar to a Samavasarana — the divine preaching hall described in Jain tradition.

It was impossible not to wonder:

Could gods truly reside here?

For the first time in life, a mountain no longer appeared lifeless. Kailash felt inhabited — breathing silently beneath layers of snow, cloud, and eternity. The immense vertical lines etched across its surface looked too precise, too sacred, too deliberate to belong to ordinary geology.

One simply stands there in awe.

No photograph can capture the energy of that sight. No description can hold its silence.



As darkness slowly descended upon Derapuk, the North Face glowed beneath the fading Himalayan light like a cosmic throne suspended between worlds. The mountain seemed to watch over every pilgrim resting beneath it.

And somewhere in that sacred stillness, one realizes:

Kailash does not merely call people to visit. It calls them to transform.

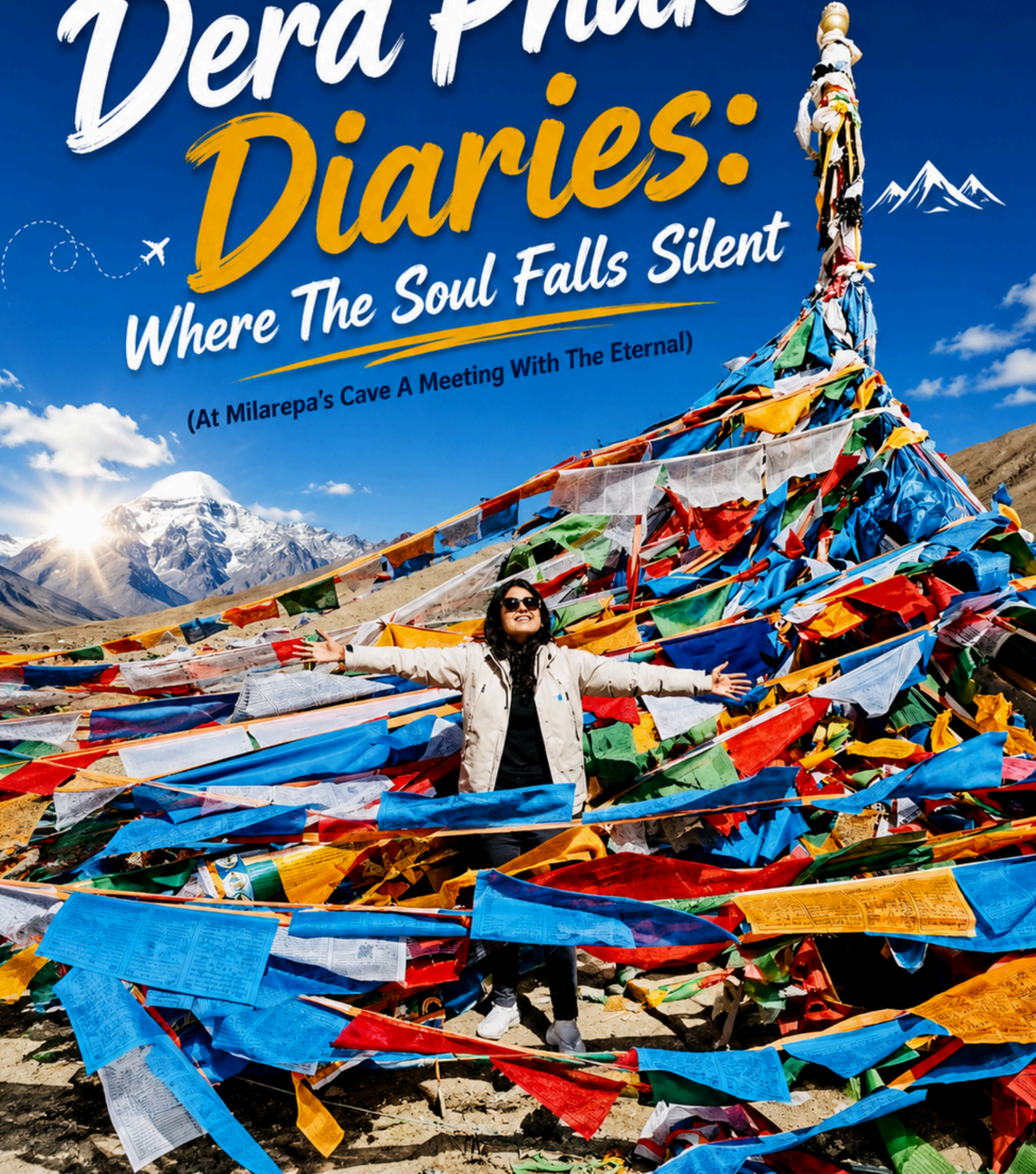
That night at Derapuk was not the end of a journey, but the quiet preparation for an even deeper crossing — onward toward Dolma La Pass, toward surrender, toward transcendence, toward the unknown chambers of the soul itself.

Har Har Mahadev. Jai Kailashpati.

Dera Phuk Diaries:

✈️ *Where The Soul Falls Silent*

(At Milarepa's Cave A Meeting With The Eternal)





Left with little energy after the long and demanding walk toward Dera Phuk, every breath felt heavier than the last. The harsh terrain, the thinning oxygen, the endless winds striking against the body — all seemed determined to test not merely physical endurance, but the sincerity of one’s devotion itself. Yet somewhere deep within, an unknown force kept pulling us forward toward the majestic north face of Mount Kailash.

As we slowly approached Dera Phuk Monastery, a fellow devotee walking beside me softly asked, “Have you heard about Milarepa?”

I replied gently, “No.”

And then, amidst those icy winds beneath the shadow of Kailash, she began narrating the story of the great Tibetan saint Milarepa — the mystic whose tapasya transformed these barren mountains into living centres of spiritual consciousness.

At the foot of the majestic north face of Kailash lies the sacred settlement of Dera Phuk, among the most spiritually intense places on the entire Parikrama route. Here, the mountain no longer appears like stone and snow. It begins to feel alive — conscious, listening, witnessing.

The name itself carries mystery:

*“Dera” meaning hermitage or resting place,
and “Phuk” meaning cave.*

The monastery grew around meditation caves associated with Milarepa, the great yogi of Tibetan Buddhism, who is believed to have performed intense sadhana in this very region centuries ago. Tibetan traditions speak of his mystical contest with the Bon master Naro Bonchung, after which Milarepa became eternally linked with Kailash and its sacred energies.

As she narrated this ancient history, something within me shifted.

It took us a while to enter the monastery. The winds outside were fierce, but inside, time itself seemed to slow down. The moment we stepped toward the ancient structure, she suddenly broke into tears while looking at Kailash. Perhaps it was the realisation that after lifetimes of longing, she had finally arrived here. Watching her weep before Kailash filled my own heart with overwhelming gratitude.





*There are places where people speak loudly.
And then there are places where silence itself becomes
prayer.*

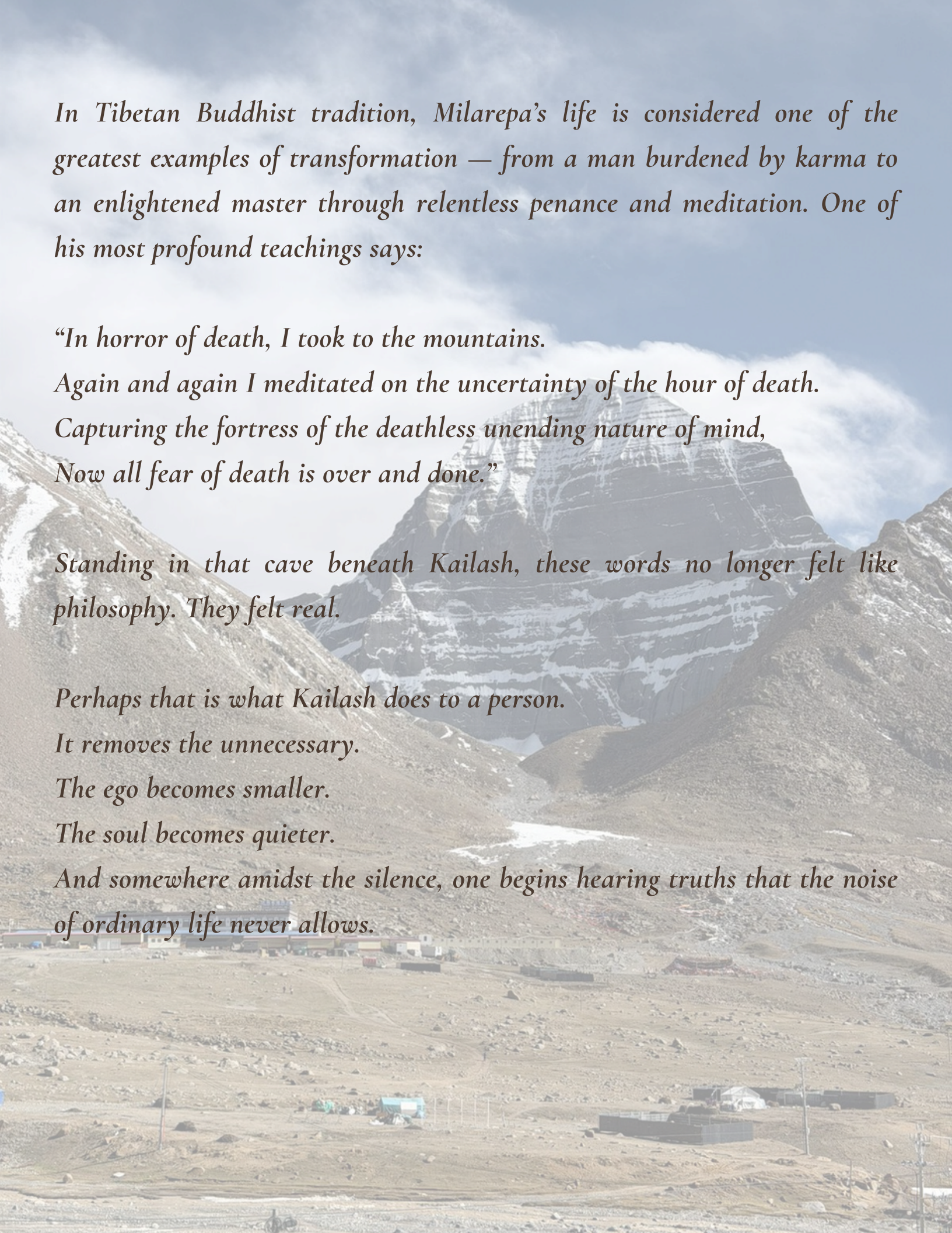
Dera Phuk was the latter.

*Inside the monastery were rows upon rows of ancient
scriptures wrapped carefully in cloth, sacred texts
preserved through generations of monks who chose
isolation over worldly comfort. Hundreds of idols and
images sat quietly in dim light, not demanding
worship, but radiating presence. It felt less like entering
a building and more like crossing into another world —
a world that had existed silently for thousands of years
while civilizations rose and disappeared elsewhere.*

*The air carried something impossible to describe — the
fragrance of butter lamps, old wood, cold stone,
incense, and centuries of uninterrupted prayer.*

Then we were shown a cave.

*A small, ancient meditation cave where sadhana had
been practised since immemorial times. The very sight
of it was unbelievable. There was nothing luxurious
there — only stone walls darkened with age, silence
thick as eternity, and an indescribable stillness that
felt alive. One could almost imagine Milarepa seated
there in deep meditation, detached from hunger, fear,
sleep, and even the body itself.*



In Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Milarepa's life is considered one of the greatest examples of transformation — from a man burdened by karma to an enlightened master through relentless penance and meditation. One of his most profound teachings says:

*“In horror of death, I took to the mountains.
Again and again I meditated on the uncertainty of the hour of death.
Capturing the fortress of the deathless unending nature of mind,
Now all fear of death is over and done.”*

Standing in that cave beneath Kailash, these words no longer felt like philosophy. They felt real.

Perhaps that is what Kailash does to a person.

It removes the unnecessary.

The ego becomes smaller.

The soul becomes quieter.

And somewhere amidst the silence, one begins hearing truths that the noise of ordinary life never allows.




Outside, the north face of Kailash stood glowing in divine stillness — vast, unmoving, eternal. It did not appear like a mountain anymore. It felt like the axis of existence itself.

People often say one visits Kailash.

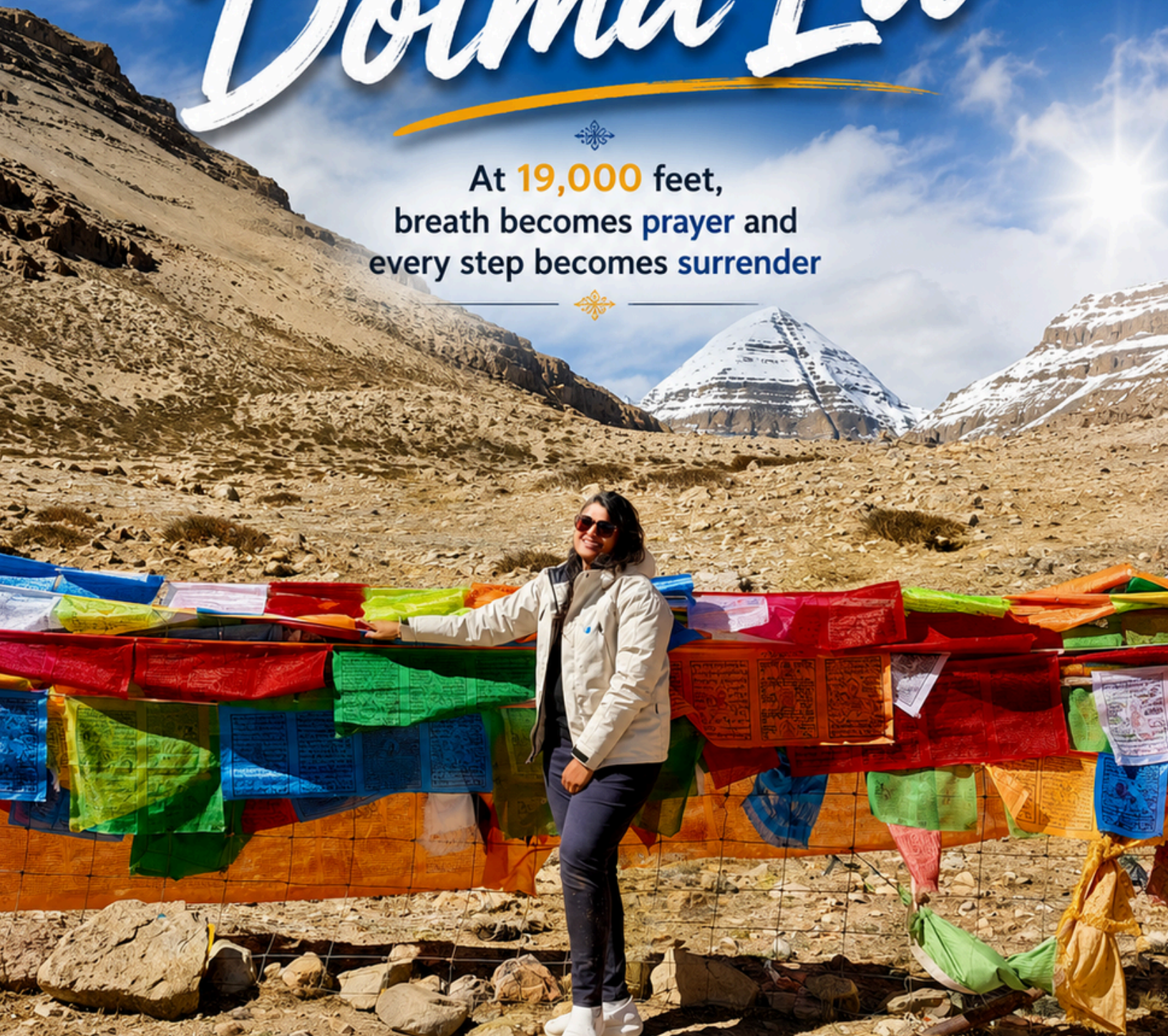
But standing there near the cave of Milarepa, it felt the opposite.

It felt as though Kailash had allowed us to enter its presence for a brief moment.

And perhaps that is why tears come so naturally there — not from sadness, but from the unbearable beauty of finally standing before something the soul had unknowingly searched for across lifetimes.

From  *Dirapuk*
to *Dolma La*

At **19,000** feet,
breath becomes prayer and
every step becomes surrender



At the sacred Dirapuk Monastery, beneath the majestic north face of Mount Kailash, the night felt endless. The mountain stood silent yet overwhelmingly alive, as though Shiva Himself was watching every pilgrim who had arrived at His doorstep carrying faith stronger than fear.

It was bitterly cold. The kind of cold that enters not just the body, but the bones. Sleep had abandoned almost everyone. Oxygen levels were falling rapidly — some had dipped below 60, some below 50. Faces looked pale, lips dry, breaths heavy. Around me were pilgrims battling nausea, headaches, dizziness, exhaustion, and uncertainty. At nearly 15,000 feet, the body no longer behaves normally. Every breath feels borrowed.

That night was not a test of faith. Faith was already there.

It was a test of whether the body could withstand what the soul had long desired.

At 3 a.m., wrapped in layers yet still shivering uncontrollably, I stepped outside the shelter. The winds were fierce, piercing through every barrier humans create for comfort. Yet before me stood Kailash — immovable, divine, luminous even in darkness. I waited for the first ray of sunlight to touch the sacred peak.

And then it happened.




Slowly, the golden light descended upon the north face of Kailash like a heavenly blessing. The mountain transformed from shadow into radiance. No camera could capture it. No language could contain it. For a moment, everything became still — the fear, the fatigue, the noise of the mind. There are places where nature feels beautiful. And then there are places where nature feels divine. Kailash belongs to the latter.



By 8 a.m., we began our onward journey toward Dolma La Pass — the highest and most difficult part of the sacred Parikrama. The climb was harsh, oxygen scarce, winds merciless. Every few steps required pause. Every breath demanded effort. Yet amid this physical struggle, I witnessed something that shook me deeply.



There were devotees lying flat upon the frozen ground, their faces red from the icy wind, performing full-body prostrations on snow and rock. These sacred pilgrims, known as Shashtang Parikrama practitioners or chaktsal korwa in Tibetan tradition, complete the entire Kora through repeated prostrations — stretching their bodies fully on the earth after every few steps. While I struggled simply to walk, they surrendered their entire bodies to devotion.

A woman with long dark hair and sunglasses, wearing a light-colored jacket, stands with her arms outstretched in a field of colorful prayer flags. In the background, a tall, slender prayer pole is visible against a clear blue sky. The scene is set in a high-altitude, mountainous region.

At Lake Manasarovar and around Kailash, such pilgrims are deeply revered. Watching them, one realizes that spirituality is not comfort. It is surrender. It is love so intense that the body becomes secondary.

The higher we climbed, the quieter everyone became.

Dolma La is not merely a mountain pass. It is a spiritual threshold. In Tibetan Buddhism, “Dolma” refers to Green Tara — the compassionate goddess guiding souls toward liberation. Spiritually, the journey from Yam Dwar to Dolma La represents the burdens, karmas, ego, and attachments of human life. Reaching the pass symbolizes death of the old self. Descending from it symbolizes rebirth.

Perhaps that is why pilgrims leave behind pieces of themselves there — old clothes, prayer flags, strands of hair, personal belongings — symbolic acts of releasing grief, pain, ego, and attachment.

There was snow everywhere, prayer flags fluttering violently against the sky, and pilgrims clinging continuously to oxygen masks just to survive the altitude. Yet amidst all this struggle, there was also profound silence — a silence so deep it almost felt eternal.

Then came the descent.

Far below the rocky path appeared the mystical turquoise waters of Gauri Kund, glowing quietly beneath layers of snow and stone like a hidden jewel of the Himalayas.



According to Hindu belief, this is where Goddess Parvati performed tapasya and sacred ablutions while meditating upon Lord Shiva. After the brutality of Dolma La — the harsh winds, exhaustion, thin oxygen, and emotional surrender — the sight of Gauri Kund felt almost maternal, gentle, and deeply healing.

It did not feel like a lake.

It felt like grace.

Many pilgrims describe crossing Dolma La as an inner transformation rather than a physical journey. And perhaps that is true. Because somewhere between Dirapuk and Gauri Kund, amid snowstorms and silence, fear and faith, exhaustion and surrender — something within changes forever.

You do not return from Kailash the same person.

Something heavy is left behind on Dolma La.

And something infinitely quieter is born on the descent toward Gauri Kund.