



Meme Helay Helay

The story of Meme Helay Helay, a tale from Bhutan,  
Was shared by Yeshe Tshering, then gently passed on.  
With words and with pictures, ChatGPT drew,  
And R. Teal Witter made it shine for readers like you!

To those who wander



In a quiet green valley where prayer flags fly high,  
Beneath snowy peaks and a wide mountain sky,  
Lived Meme Helay Helay, cheerful and spry,  
Who greeted the world with a glint in his eye.

He had no gold coins, not a cow to his name,  
No silks and no jewels, no fortune or fame.  
But Meme never frowned, nor worried, not he—  
He was happy with red rice and warm suja tea.





One morning while digging in dry, rocky ground,  
He struck something hard with a sharp, ringing sound.  
He brushed off the dirt with a laugh and a shout—  
A turquoise! So dazzling, it shimmered throughout.

It gleamed like the sky, a bright blue-green delight,  
It sparkled and danced in the soft mountain light.  
He tucked it with care in a basket of cane,  
And strolled down the trail through the soft, falling rain.





Then along came a traveler, his horse old and gray,  
Plodding alone on the long mountain way.

Meme held up the gem with a grin ear to ear—

“Will you trade me your horse for this turquoise here?”

The man took the gem and walked off with delight,  
While Meme led the horse, feeling perfectly right.  
He chuckled and said, "What a fine trade, you bet!"  
But he wasn't done—no, not just yet.





He traded the horse for an ox, strong and bold,  
Then swapped the big ox for a sheep in the fold.  
The sheep for a goat with a beard hanging low,  
The goat for a rooster with a proud, fiery crow.

The villagers muttered, "He's lost his mind!  
Giving up riches for creatures he finds?"  
But Meme just smiled as he strolled on ahead,  
With a heart full of peace and a lightness of tread.





Then a song floated down on the whispering breeze,  
From a hill lined with prayer flags and fluttering trees.  
Meme followed the sound with a smile full of cheer,  
And found a sweet voice that rang bright and clear.

There stood a young singer whose voice rang so sweet,  
Even yaks turned their heads, their stillness complete.  
Meme's eyes filled with tears just from hearing the sound—  
It lifted his heart and it spun him around.





Meme bowed and said, "I have only this bird,  
But I'd trade him for just one song that I've heard."  
The singer just smiled and nodded her head,  
And taught him a tune full of joy where it led.

They sang it together, his voice soft and true,  
Their laughter flew high through the mountains of blue.  
No rooster, no ox, no treasure to see—  
Just a song in his heart and a soul soaring free.





"He gave it all up!" the villagers cried,  
But Meme only laughed with joy in his stride.  
For the secret he knew, simple and true,  
Is that joy comes from being exactly you.

So if others don't quite see things your way,  
Stay true to your heart and smile anyway.  
Like prayer flags that flutter and brighten the skies—  
Find joy in your journey, let that be your prize.

