

# The Devil Debates an Angel

*Ancient wisdom on debating our demons  
from the His Holiness the First Panchen Lama,  
Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen (1567-1662)*



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## *The Devil Debates an Angel*

### Class One: the Great Seal

\*,,GZHI LAM 'BRAS GSUM PHYAG RGYA CHEN PO'I NGO BO NGOS 'DZIN LAS  
BRTZAMS PA'I SHES RAB DANG BDAG 'DZIN GNYIS KYI GSHAGS 'DEBS,,

1

This is an argument which occurred one time between Wisdom and her opponent, whose name was The Tendency to Think that Things are Real. It all started when Wisdom was identifying what the word “Mahamudra” meant, at three different stages in a person’s life: in the way things normally are for them; in the way they are as this person practices the spiritual path; and as they are when the person reaches the fruit of their practice.

#### **Bowing down**

,BLA MA LHAG PA'I LHA LA PHYAG 'TSAL LO,

2

I bow down to my Lama, Angel of Angels.

#### **The Great Seal in three stages of life**

,GZHI LAM 'BRAS GSUM PHYAG CHEN NI,  
,NGO BO NGOS 'DZIN 'DI LTAR RO,

3

Here is how we identify  
What the Mahamudra is—  
The Great Seal—  
At three different stages

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In a person's life:  
As they normally are,  
While they practice the path,  
And as they reach the result.

,KHAM S GSUM SEMS CAN THAMS CAD DANG,  
,KHYAD PAR RANG GI SEMS NYID NI,  
,THOG MED GTAN MED DUS RANG NAS,  
,MA RIG SEMS NI NAM GRUB DUS,  
,SEMS KYI GNAS LUGS LHAN CIG GNAS,  
,DE NI GZHI YI PHYAG CHEN YIN,

4  
What is Mahamudra  
In a person as they normally are?

It is the true nature of their mind—  
The minds of every living creature  
In all three parts of the universe,  
And for each of us especially  
The reality of our own mind.

It is the nature of the mind  
As it has existed  
For time beyond beginning at all,  
For as long as the mind  
Has misunderstood  
The way that all things are.

,MA RTOGS PA RNAMS BDEN PAR 'DZIN,  
,DE YIS DA BAR 'KHOR BAR 'KHYAMS,

5  
Those who have still not understood things  
Believe that these things are real.  
This has forced them to continue wandering

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Here in the cycle of pain.

,DE YI DNGOS GNYEN BDAG MED DE,  
,DNGOS SU RTOGS PA'I SHES RAB YIN,  
,DE LAS GZHAN DU GNYEN PO MED,

6

There is one thing which works  
Directly to stop  
This misunderstanding;  
And that is the wisdom  
Where we are able  
To perceive directly the fact  
That nothing is itself.  
Misunderstanding cannot be stopped  
By anything else at all.

,SA BCU NAS BZUNG GROG SBUR BAR,  
,CHI BA'I DUS SU 'OD GSAL MA,  
,DE YANG GZHI YI PHYAG CHEN YIN,

7

The clear light of the time of death  
In every being from those who have reached  
The tenth of the bodhisattva levels  
On down to ants who crawl the earth  
Is also the Mahamudra  
In a person as they normally are.

,BSGOMS PA'I 'OD GSAL DE BSRES NAS,  
,MNYAM GZHAG NGANG DU NAM 'JOG PA,  
,DE NI LAM GYI PHYAG CHEN DANG,

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This Great Seal at the point

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Where a person is on the spiritual path  
Is where they combine this clear light together  
With one which they bring up in their mind  
Engaged in a state of deep meditation.

,GZHAN YANG MNYAM GZHAG LA GNAS NAS,  
,SPROS MED SHES RAB BSGOM PA NI,  
,LAM GYI PHYAG CHEN LTA BA ZER,

9

We also call it  
“The way of looking at things  
In Mahamudra as it exists  
While we are practicing the path”  
When a person practices meditation  
And contemplates upon wisdom  
Which no longer imagines things.

,DE NYID 'KHRUL MED MNGON GYUR NA,  
,BRAS BU'I PHYAG CHEN MTHONG LAM ZER,

10

When this same way of looking at things  
Is freed from every form of mistake,  
We call it “Mahamudra as it exists  
At the stage of the fruit, the path of seeing.”

,DE NYID BRTAN ZHING SPEL SGOM LAM,  
,BSGOM PA'I LAM DANG SLOB LAM ZER,

11

The period when we are consolidating  
This understanding, and increasing it,  
Is known as the “path of habituation.”

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These then are paths of practice,  
Paths where we are still learning.

,SHES SGRIB DAG PAR GYUR PA NA,  
,MA SLOB 'BRAS BU MNGON DU GYUR,

12  
When we manage to purify our hearts  
Of all the obstacles to omniscience,  
We achieve the fruit, of no more learning.

,SANGS RGYAS YON TAN YONGS RDZOGS SHING,  
,MDZAD PA SNA TSOGS STON PA DANG,  
,CHOS KUN LAG MTHIL SKYU RU BZHIN,  
,MNGON SUM GZIGS KYANG CHOS NYID LAS,  
,MI GA-YO BDE STONG ZUNG 'JUG SKU,  
,MI 'GYUR CHOS NYID GNAS PA LA,  
,CHOS SKU ZHES KYANG BTAGS PA YIN,

13  
Every fine quality of an enlightened being  
Is fulfilled within us;  
We display a rainbow of enlightened deeds,  
And we see all the things that exist  
Plain as a marble in the palm of our hand.

At the same time though we never waver  
From the way that all things are.  
We live in the holy body  
Of the union of bliss and voidness,  
Within the immutable nature of things—  
A state which is also called  
The body of reality.

**The Great Seal at the goal  
cannot be something real**

,THUGS RJE YI NI SMON LAM DANG,  
,GDUL BYA MOS PA'I RGYU TSOGS KYIS,  
,CHOS SKU LONGS SKU SPRUL SKU DANG,  
,SA LAM YON TAN 'PHRIN LAS SOGS,  
,SNANG TZAM DU NI MA GTOGS PA,  
,DON LA YOD PAR MA MTHONG NGO,

14

Now certain conditions gather together:  
The prayer born of their heart's compassion,  
And the wishes of their disciples.

These cause the appearance of the reality body,  
The bodies of enjoyment and emanation,  
And the qualities of the levels and paths.

Remember though that these only appear—  
They could not be seen to exist, in actuality.

,DES NA DON LA BDAG GRUB PA,  
, 'KHRUL BA LAS KYANG CHES 'KHRUL BAS,  
,DA NAS BZUNG STE DUS KUN TU,  
,BDAG 'DZIN 'KHRUL BA KHYOD SPONG BAS,  
,KHYOD RANG MI DGA' MA BYED PAR,  
,GAR 'GRO'I GNAS SU KHYOD RGYUG CIG ,

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Thinking that things could exist  
As themselves in actuality  
Would be a mistake that was far beyond  
Every other mistake there is.

From this moment on then,  
And for all of time,

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I will give you up,  
You great mistake,  
The idea that things could be themselves.

And I ask you not to take offense;  
Leave now this place,  
And go where else you will.

**The entrance of an eternal false friend**

BDAG TU 'DZIN PAS LAN SMRAS PA,

16

The Tendency To Think Things Are Real replied,

,SEMS NI GANG DU GRUB TZAM NAS,  
,SEMS DANG DUS MNYAM 'ONGS NAS NI,  
,KHA 'DZIN GSHAGS 'DEBS NGES BYAS SHING,

17

I have been your mind's companion  
For as long as the mind has existed;  
And so surely now you are arguing  
With someone who has always cared for you.

,PHA MAS BU LA BRTZE BA BZHIN,  
,BRTZE BAS BSKYANGS SHING LTO GOS BYIN,

18

I have loved you like a father,  
I have loved you like a mother;  
I have cared for you with love,  
I have given you food, and clothes.



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,DOD PA LA SOGS DUG GSUM GYI,  
,CHOS SGOR BTZUD CING DGE TSOGS KYI,  
,DGRA 'DUL NGAS NI MA BYAS NA,  
,DGRA DE SU YIS THUL BAR 'GYUR,

19

I was the one  
Who brought you to the Dharma  
Of liking things in the wrong way,  
And the other two poisons as well.

I was the one who defeated the foe  
Of your attempts to do good deeds;  
How could you ever have stopped this enemy  
If it wasn't for my help?

**The home of the eternal mind  
was never there**

,SHES RAB KYIS NI LAN SMRAS PA,

20

And Wisdom said in her turn,

,SEMS NI THOG MAR GRUB TZAM NAS,  
,YE NAS YOD NI MA MYONG NA,  
,KHYOD NI SU DANG LHAN CIG GNAS,

21

The mind itself, since the very moment  
That it ever began has never existed;  
Who then is it that you claim  
To have always accompanied?

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,YANG DAG PAR NI KHYOD RANG YANG,  
,GTAN NAS MED NA KHYOD KYIS NI,  
,KHA 'DZIN GSHAGS 'DEBS GSOS BSKYANGS SOGS,  
,SU YIS SU LA BYED PAR 'GYUR,  
,GAR 'GROR RGYUG LA LOG MA 'ONG,

22

In an absolute sense, you yourself  
Have never even existed;  
Who then was it that cared for whom?  
Who is arguing then, with whom?

Who could have brought up whom,  
And who could shelter whom,  
Or anything else at all?

Leave me, go where you will;  
But be sure that you never return.

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Class Two:

13 Delightfully Ineffective Meditations

## The emptiness of teaching emptiness

,SEMS 'DI STONG PA'I BRAG RI LA,  
,CHOS SGRA MTHON PA'I SGRA ZHIG SHAR,  
,GNAS LUGS SGRO 'DOGS CHOS PA'I SGRA,  
,BRAG CA'I SKAD DU SGROG PA 'DI,

84

The mind perceives the exalted sound,  
The words of these very teachings,  
Within the canyons of emptiness;

But these words themselves, sounds that correct  
Our habit of overestimating how things really are,  
Are actually just an echo  
Sounding back to us.

,STONG PA'I TSIG GI SGRA CHEN DANG,  
,SEMS STONG BRAG CHEN TSOGS PA YI,  
,RGYU RKYEN LAS SKYES STONG SGRA SGROG  
,MA RIG MUN SEL SGRON ME YIN,

85

The mighty roar of the words of emptiness  
Fly to the vast canyon walls  
Of the mind of emptiness;

And then because the causes and conditions  
Are complete, the sound of emptiness

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Is born and sounded back.

,SNANG BA TZAM DU THOS BSAM MDZOD,  
,DPYAD NA YOD PAR NGAS MA MTHONG,  
,BYUNG YANG SEMS NYID RANG LAS BYUNG,  
,THIM YANG SEMS STONG RANG LA THIM,

86

We learn, and we study,  
But only apparently;  
I don't see that there is anything there,  
If one pauses to examine them.

Things do happen, but we understand  
That they happen from the mind itself.  
Things do fade away, but we know  
That they fade from the mind itself.

,DES NA KHYOD DANG NGA GNYIS NI,  
,DZIN STANGS DNGOS 'GAL ZHUGS PA 'DIS,  
,LHAN CIG SDOD PA'I GNAS MA MCHIS,  
,KHYOD RANG 'GRO BA'I GNAS LA RGYUG

87

Thus the way that you and I  
See things is completely incompatible;  
There is no one place in the universe  
Where both of us could reside.

And so it is you who must leave,  
And go wherever you might.

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**The cousin who came for a visit**

,BDEN PAR 'DZIN PAS LAN SMRAS PA,

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The Tendency To Think That Things Are Themselves replied,

,KHYOD KYIS STONG SKAD CI SMRAS KYANG,  
,NGA YIS CHOS BRGYAD BTANG NA MNGON,  
,NGA DANG KHYOD GNYIS 'DZIN STANGS NI,  
,DNGOS 'GAL ZHUGS PA NGA YANG 'DOD,  
,LHAN CIG 'GROGS PA'I GNAS MIN NA,  
,KHYOD RANG GZHAN DU 'GRO BA'I RIGS,

89

You chatter on about emptiness,  
But it's me who actually takes action,  
Sending forth all eight of the thoughts.

I would also agree  
That the way that you see things  
And the way I see them  
Are completely incompatible;

This mind is not a place  
Where you and I could live together—  
If you were the one to leave then,  
That would be best of all.

,NGA NI NANG GI SNYING MI YIN,  
,KHYOD NI GLO BUR YUD TZAM YIN,  
,NGA DANG SEMS NYID 'GROGS PA 'DI,  
,RI YI RGYAL PO RI RAB 'DRA,  
,GA-YO 'GUL MED PAR SDOD PA YIN,

90

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I am part of the inner circle;  
You are fleeting, of a moment.  
The partnership between me and this mind  
Is like Mount Meru, king of mountains:  
I stay here steadfast, I stay immobile.

,KHYOD NI SKAD CIG GLOG DANG 'DRA,  
,NGA NI RGYA MTSO CHEN PO 'DRA,  
,SKYE BRI MED PAR SDOD PA YIN,  
,KHYOD NI RMI LAM YUD TZAM YIN,  
,NGA NI RGYA MTSO'I RGYUN DANG 'DRA,

91  
You come into the mind  
Like a flash of lightning,  
Here but for an instant;

I though am the great salt sea,  
Ever-present, never-beginning,  
Staying and never to dry.

You are a strange moment within a dream,  
I surge on, a mighty ocean current.

,KHYOD NI MIG 'DZUM GCIG GI YUN,  
,NGA NI MA BUR BRTZE BA 'DRA,  
,KHYOD NI SNYING RING MGRON PO YIN,

92  
You are here for the length of time  
It takes to blink an eye;

I am the enduring love  
Of a mother for her child—

You are the distant cousin

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Who arrives for an occasional visit.

,NGA NI 'BUD PAR BYED DO ZER,  
,KHYOD NI BSGOM PAR BYED PA YI,  
,SGOM CHEN RNAMS NI 'DI LTA STE,  
,SEMS NYID BSGOM PAR BYED DO ZER,

93

Oh once in a while someone will come  
Saying they're a great meditator,  
Saying they will contemplate you  
And throw me from the mind,  
"I will contemplate," they say,  
"The mind as it really is."

**Flaccid staying in the present  
(Ineffective meditation #1)**

,SKAD CIG SNGA MA'I RJES MI GCOD,  
,SKAD CIG PHYI MA'I SDUN MI BSU,  
,DA LTAR SHES PA SO MA LA,  
,BCOS SLAD MED PAR BSGOM PA 'DI,

94

They tell us never to revisit  
The moment that came before;

They tell us not to anticipate  
The moment that comes after:

Meditate upon the mind  
As it's been forever more,  
No complications, no additions.

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,SEMS RANG BSGOM LAS MA 'DAS MOD,  
,DE NI NGA RANG BSGOM PA YIN,

95

In the end then we would have to agree  
They are meditating on nothing more  
Than the mind itself—  
They are meditating on me!

,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS MI 'GAL BAS,  
,KHYOD NYID BSGOM PAR MI 'GYUR ZHING,  
,NGA LA GNOD PAR GA LA 'GYUR,  
,DER YANG KHYOD KYIS MA SLEB BO,

96

The way they see things then  
In no way contradicts  
The way in which I see them.

Thus they can't be meditating on you—  
So how could they do any damage to me?

In fact I can't recall that I've met you  
In a mind in this meditation.

**The trap of emptying the mind  
(Ineffective meditation #2)**

,LA LA YID BYED BKAG PA YI,  
,YID LA BYAR MED BSGOM PA YOD,  
,DE DANG NGA GNYIS 'DZIN STANGS NI,  
, 'GAL BA MED PAS NGAR MI GNOD,  
,KHYOD NYID BSGOM PAR GA LA 'GYUR,  
,DER YANG KHYOD KYIS MA SLEB BO,



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Others try to stop the mind  
From thinking about anything;  
Their meditation consists of being careful  
Not to think at all.

The way they think of things then  
Is in no way incompatible  
With the way I think of things,  
And again it does me no damage;

How could this be a contemplation  
On you? And so neither can I recall  
Ever meeting you in a mind  
Engaged in that meditation.

**The ineffective emptiness  
of things that are  
(Ineffective meditation #3)**

,LA LAS SEMS NI GZUGS CAN DU,  
,BTZAL BAS MA RNYED DE BSGOM PA,  
,DE NI NGA YI PHYOGS NA'ANG MED,  
,DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA LTA CI SMOS,  
,KHYOD KYI PHYOGS NA'ANG MI 'DUG PAS,  
,NGA LA CI'I PHYIR GNOD PA BYED,

98

Some go on an exploration  
To see if the mind is a physical thing;  
They discover then that it is not,  
And think this is some meditation.

They're nowhere near me,  
Much less incompatible  
With the way I think things are.

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They're nowhere near you either—  
How then could they hurt me?

**The myth of the naked mind**  
**(Ineffective meditation #4)**

,LA LA SEMS NI MA BCOS PA,  
,LHUG PA RJEN PAR BSGOM PA YOD,  
,DE GA SEMS RANG BSGOM PA YIN,  
,NGA NYID BSGOM LAS MA 'DAS MOD,  
,NGA NYID BSGOM PA NGA YI GROGS,  
,KHYOD NYID BSGOM PAR GA LA 'GYUR,  
,KHYOD KYIS MA SLEB NGAR MI GNOD,

99

Some meditate on the mind  
Left untouched, as it is;  
They let go of the mind,  
They see it naked, raw.

Which of course is nothing more  
Than meditating on the mind itself,  
And takes them then no further  
Than a meditation on me!

And meditating upon me  
Is to be my friend;  
How then could it ever be  
To meditate on you?

Neither have I met you there;  
And never has it harmed me.

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**The meditation  
of mind running loose  
(Ineffective meditation #5)**

,LA LA RIG PA ZANG THAL ZER,  
,SNANG BA YID LA MI BYED CING,  
,BSGOM PA YID LA MI BYED BSGOM,  
,DES KYANG NGA LA GTAN MI GNOD,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA YI,  
,GNYEN PO PHYOGS NA'ANG MI GDA' NA,  
,KHYOD NYID BSGOM PAR GA LA 'GYUR,  
,DER YANG KHYOD KYIS SLEB PA MED,

100

Some do a meditation that they call  
“The unstoppable mind”;  
They bring no image at all to the mind,  
And make no attempt at meditation—  
Which for them then is meditation.

This is another of those meditations  
That does nothing at all to stop me;  
It's nothing even close to an antidote,  
A state of mind that considers things  
In a way that contradicts the way  
That I tend to view them myself.

It has nothing to do with meditating  
Upon yourself, and again I can say  
I've never met you in their minds.

**Uneducated meditation  
(Ineffective meditation #6)**

,THOS MED BSGOM PA PHAL CHER NI,  
,NGO SPROD 'GRIG 'GRIG YOD KHA MO,

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,TSIG NI ZAB ZAB RBAD KHAM CAN,  
,BSGOM GA RANG DU YOD LAGS KYANG,  
,MNYAM PAR BZHAG NAS BSGOM TZA NA,  
,PHAL CHER NGA NYID BSGOM PA MANG,  
,NGA DANG YOD LA KHYAD MA PHYED,

101

The great mass of people who meditate  
Without having had any training  
Go around claiming that they are expert  
At meeting the mind, face to face.

Deep words these are, most profound,  
And baseless boasting too.

They might even be able to go into  
Some state of meditation,  
But deep within this state of mind  
Most of them are meditating  
On nothing else but myself.

They seem incapable of distinguishing  
Me from simple existence.

**A child hiding  
under a blanket  
(Ineffective meditation #7)**

,LA LA NGA MED BSGOM ZER KYANG,  
,NGA MED PA DANG MED PA GNYIS,  
,DBYE BA GCIG KYANG MA PHYED PAR,  
,MED PA KHO NA BSGOM PA MANG,

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There are others who say they meditate  
On the fact that I don't exist;

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But they fail to make the most simple distinction  
Between my not being there  
And non-existence itself.

And so many meditate upon  
Nothing more than nothing there.

,DE RNAMS NGA YI PHRIN LAS YIN,  
,KHYOD NI PHYOGS NA'ANG MI GDA' NA,  
,DE DUS KHYOD KYIS GANG DU PHYIN,  
,YUD TZAM ZHIG KYANG MA SLEB PAR,  
,NGA NI 'BUD PA GAD MO'I GNAS,

103  
All these types of meditation  
Are my holy enlightened deeds,  
And are nothing remotely close to you.

Who knows where you might have gone  
When they are deep in these?  
Goodness knows I never see you  
Even a moment there.

To say you will drive me from the mind  
Is nothing but a joke!

**Flaccid philosophy**  
**(Ineffective meditation #8)**

,THOS PA CAN GYIS KHYOD BSGOM ZER,  
,YA MTHA' MA MTHA' BSGRUB BSGRUB DANG,  
,DPYAD PA MANG PO BYED BYED NAS,  
,SGOM LA SKYON NI 'TSOL 'TSOL ZAD,

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Those who do possess some training  
Say they're meditating on you,  
But spend their time trying to prove  
One thing or another.

They analyze, and then they examine,  
Looking again and again  
For some problem in the way that others  
Try to meditate.

,JOG PA'I DON LA SKYON 'TSOL DANG,  
,BSGOM PA LA YANG DPYOD DPYOD PA,  
,DPYOD PA PO YANG DPYOD PAR BYED,  
,DE YI DPYOD PA PO YANG DPYOD,

105

They try to find some problem  
In conclusions others draw;  
Then they analyze, and analyze,  
The meditations they used to get there;

And then they start to analyze  
The one who's doing the analysis,  
And then move on to the one  
Who's analyzing that.

,DPYOD PA'I GNYEN PO MI ZAD PAS,  
,THUG MED BAR DU DPYOD PA NA,  
,NGAL BA'I RNAM RTOG CHEN PO YI,  
,DRA BAR TSUD NAS BSGOM RGYU MED,  
,DPYOD PA'I DUS SU YONG YONG 'DRA,  
,JOG KAR CI BSGOM 'DI BSGOM MED,

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The antidote of analysis comes then  
To an infinite regression—

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You can analyze on to infinity.

But all you've done is entangle yourself  
In a net of long-winded ideas  
That will leave you completely exhausted—  
There is nothing there to meditate on.

It feels with this kind of analysis  
That the next thing must be something,  
But whatever you bring to mind then isn't  
The next thing anymore.

**A whole list of the useless**

,RES 'GA' NGA NI SGOM PAR BYED,  
,RES 'GA' MED PA KHO NA BSGOM,  
,RES 'GA' YID LA MI BYED BSGOM,  
,YANG DAG DON LA 'JOG TZA NA,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA YI,  
,GNAS LUGS BSGOM PA NYIN SKAR TZAM,

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And so sometimes people are meditating  
On nothing more than me;  
And sometimes they are meditating  
On nothing more than nothing;  
And sometimes they are meditating  
On trying to think of nothing.

A person who is meditating  
On the way that all things really are—  
Who enters a meditation upon  
The object which is absolute,  
And thus attains a state of mind  
Incompatible with how I see things—

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Is as common as a star that shines  
In the middle of the day.

**The undeniable power  
of the Lama**

,DI 'DRA'I TSUL LAS MA 'DAS NA,  
,NGA NI 'BUD DO MA ZER CIG  
,KHYOD NI AU DUMWA RA TZAM,  
,STABS KA LEGS NA LAN CIG YIN,  
,DE LA'ANG BSKAL PA DPAG MED NAS,  
,TSOGS CHEN BLA MED BSAGS PA DGOS,  
,DE YANG BLA MA MNYES LAS 'BYUNG,

108

Until we come to a day when you  
Can change this situation,  
I would ask you never to speak again  
Of driving me from the mind.

You are the cobalt lotus flower—  
A bloom that only appears  
Once in a thousand years.

In the very best of circumstances  
You might come, but only once;  
And even that requires the person  
To spend an inconceivable number  
Of eons amassing an unsurpassable  
Power of virtuous deeds.

And that can only come by pleasing  
The one who is your Lama.



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**The undeniable power  
of worldview**

,NGA LA DE 'DRA MI DGOS SHING,  
,NGA NI GTAN GYI BDAG PO YIN,  
,NGA NYID 'BUD PAR BYED PA LA,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL GYUR PA,  
,GNYEN PO'I SHES RAB 'KHRUL MED CIG  
,NGES PAR YOD NA MA GTOGS PA,

109

For me that's all unnecessary;  
I live in this mansion as resident lord.

And sending me from this mind requires  
The wisdom that acts against me,  
In an unmistakable form:

A way of looking at things  
Which is incompatible  
With how I see them myself—  
There is no other choice.

,GNYEN PO GZHAN DAG YOD GYUR KYANG,  
,KUN GYIS YID CHES MI BYED PAS,  
,KHO BO'I GROGS SU GYUR PA YIN,  
,GROGS SU GYUR LA THAR PA MED,

110

And even if there were  
Some other, different methods,  
Nobody would accept them—

They come and take me as their friend,  
And for those who take me as their friend  
Freedom will never be.

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**The useless meditation  
upon choosing not to choose  
(Ineffective meditation #9)**

,NGA LA THO REG MA BTANG BAR,  
, 'DI YIN 'DI MIN MED PA YI,  
,RTOG MED SHES PA BSGOM PA LA,  
,GNAS LUGS BSGOM PAR 'DOD PA 'DUG  
,NGA NI SNYING NAS GAD MO SHOR,

111

There's another thing that people do  
That they think is a meditation  
Upon the way things really are:

Rather than hammering me on the head,  
They try to reach a state of mind  
Free of any conceptions—  
A state of mind which cannot say  
Anything is this or that.

This idea is one so bad  
I can't stop laughing at it!

**An illusory kind of illusion  
(Ineffective meditation #10)**

,LA LA SNANG BA SEMS SU BYAS,  
,SEMS NI STONG PAR THAG GCOD CING,  
,STONG PA SGYU MAR BYAS NAS SU,  
,SGYU MA RANG BZHIN MED PAR BSGOM,  
,DE NI GNAS LUGS BSGOM PAR 'DOD,  
,DE NI KUN RDZOB KHO NA YIN,  
,LEGS NA SGYU MAR BSGOM PA TZAM,

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The appearance of things around us  
Some count as being the mind,  
Deciding the mind must be empty.

Then they decide that being empty  
Must mean the mind's an illusion.

Meditating on this illusion  
Is then what it means to say the mind  
Possesses no nature of its own;

And this they hold to be meditation  
Upon the way things really are.

But the object here is nothing more  
Than the deceptive nature of things;  
At best they are only meditating  
On what it means to be an illusion.

,NGA MED BSGOM NA NGA LA GNOD,  
,NGA DANG NGA MED DNGOS 'GAL TE,  
,NGA MED BSGOM PA MA BYUNG PHYIN,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS MI 'GAL BAS,  
,NGA LA GNOD PAR GA LA 'GYUR,

113

If one were to find in a meditation  
That I was something that didn't exist,  
Then that would damage me, because  
I can't not be here and be here too.

But until such time as a person reaches  
A meditation where they conclude  
That I'm not here, then their view of things  
And mine are not in contradiction,

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And they could never hurt me at all.

**The infinite, mistaken space  
(Ineffective meditaton #11)**

,LA LAS NAM MKHA' STONG PA LA,  
,MTHA' DBUS MED PAR BSAMS NAS NI,  
,DE DANG SEMS NYID BSRES NAS BSGOM,  
,NAM MKHA' LTA BU'I LTA BA DANG,  
,MNYAM GZHAG NAM MKHA' LTA BUR 'DOD,

114

Some other people reflect upon how  
There are no edges or middle  
To the emptiness of space;  
And then they meditate on this,  
Mixed with the mind itself.

And they think that this is the view  
Where things are just like space;  
They think that this is the meditation  
Where things are just like space.

,NAM MKHA' MTHA' DBUS MED PA DER,  
,DZIN PA NGA DANG CI PHYIR 'GAL,  
,SEMS LA MTHA' DBUS MED PA DE,  
,GZUGS SU MED PAS MTHA' MA MTHONG,

115

I can't imagine why anyone  
Would think that thinking that space  
Has no edges and no middle  
Would somehow be incompatible  
With my continued presence.

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As far as the fact that the mind  
Has no edges and no middle,  
The reason we see no edges there  
Is simply because the mind  
Is not a physical thing!

,NGA NI SEMS KYI STENG DU 'GYING,  
,NGA LA REG PAR MA GYUR NA,  
,NGA YI GNYEN POR 'GYUR BA 'KHRUL,

116  
And so I continue  
My delightful dance,  
Here within the mind.

If you think that something can stop me  
When it cannot even touch me,  
Then quite mistaken you are.

**The coming & going**  
**Of useless clouds in the sky**  
**(Ineffective meditation #12)**

,LA LA RNAM RTOG SKYES PA'I DUS,  
,DRAN PAS SLEB PAR BYAS NAS SU,  
,DE YI NGO LA CER BLTAS TE,

117  
Some people believe in yet another version  
Of what it means to meditate  
Upon the way things really are.

They say that when a thought pops up  
You should simply focus upon it:  
Watch as it makes its arrival,

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Stare at how it looks.

,DE NYID RANG YAL LA SONG BA,  
,DE NYID CHOS SKUR NGO SPRAD NAS,  
,RNAM RTOG MANG BA TZAM GYIS NI,  
,CHOS SKU MANG BA YIN PAS NA,  
,RNAM RTOG DGAG PA MI DGOS SHING,  
,DE NYID CHOS SKUR 'KHYER RO ZER,  
,GNAS LUGS BSGOM PAR 'DOD PA YOD,

118

And when this thought then slips away,  
All of its own accord,  
Understand that this is nothing less  
Than a Buddha's body of reality.

The more random thoughts you have then,  
The more reality bodies you have—  
So why make any effort to stop  
Random thoughts in your meditation!

This they claim is the practice  
Of transforming things into  
The body of reality.

,RNAM RTOG GZUGS SU MA MTHONG DANG,  
,SEMS NI GZUGS SU MA MTHONG BA,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS MI 'GAL BAS,  
,GNAS LUGS BSGOM PAR MI 'GYUR NA,  
,CHOS SKU MTHONG BA SMOS CI DGOS,  
,NGA NYID 'BUD PA GAD MO'I GNAS,

119

Seeing that your random thoughts  
Are not a physical thing,  
Understanding that our mind

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Is not a physical thing,  
Is not a point of view that stands  
In any way opposed  
To the way that I consider things.

To claim then that you could use this  
To drive me from the mind  
Is nothing but a joke,  
Much less saying that it's a way  
To see the reality body.

**The misuse of one or many  
by proving what's already clear  
(Ineffective meditation #13)**

,LA LAS GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYI,  
,DPYAD PA DAG PAR BYAS PA YIS,  
,BTZAL BAS MA RNYED PA DE BSGOM,  
,DE YANG PHYOGS CHOS [f. 239b] BSGOMS PAS NA,  
,BSGRUB BYA NGA MED BSGOM PA MIN,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL MI 'GYUR,  
,DE YANG NGA MED BSGOM PA MIN,

120  
Some do a perfect analysis  
On the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many;  
They use it to seek a thing  
And find that it's not there—  
Then meditate on that.

But this is just a meditation  
Upon the general principle,  
And not upon the proposal  
That there is no I that exists.

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It doesn't contradict  
The way in which I see things,  
And it isn't a meditation  
On why there is no me.



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**Reaching the luminous image  
but not the purple elephant  
(Ineffective meditation #14)**

,LA LAS GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYIS,  
,DPYAD PAS MA RNYED PA YI DUS,  
,MING BTAGS TZAM LA RTOG PA YIS,  
,NGA NI MI 'DUG SNYAM BSAMS NAS,  
,BSGOM PA DE YANG MA YIN DGAG  
,BSGOM KYI MED DGAG MA YIN CING,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS DNGOS MI 'GAL,

121

Some do an analysis  
On the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many,  
And again find nothing's there.

But what they think  
To themselves then  
Is that there is no I,  
Because it is nothing more  
Than something labeled with a name;  
And then they meditate on that.

This though is a meditation  
On what a thing is not;  
It is not a meditation  
Upon its very absence—

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And it's not therefore a thing  
Which directly contradicts  
The way that I see things.

,DZIN STANGS DNGOS 'GAL MA ZHUGS NA,  
,NGA NI 'BUD PAR GA LA NUS,  
,NGA LA GNOD PAR MA GYUR NA,  
,SHES RAB BSGOM PAR GA LA 'GYUR,

122  
How on earth can you imagine  
That you could expel me from this mind  
Unless you found a viewpoint  
Which stood in direct opposition  
To the way that I see things?

How could you ever meditate  
Upon wisdom so long as you  
Had yet to inflict any damage on me?

**Not the absence  
of a misunderstanding that is  
(Ineffective meditation #15)**

,LA LA GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYIS,  
,DPYAD NAS MA RNYED PA YI TSE,  
,NGA NI STONG PA NYID BSGOM ZHES,  
,DE LA ZHUGS PA BZHIN DU BSGOM,

123  
Some again do an analysis  
On the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many,  
And find that nothing's there.

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They say that then they're meditating  
On the fact that the me  
Is simply gone;  
But even in that moment,  
They are living in this me.

,DE NI STONG NYID RGYANG CHAD TSUL,  
,KHO RANG RANG BZHIN STONG PAR NI,  
,SONG BA'I DON DU MA GO BAR,  
,MDUN NAS STONG PA NYID ZHUGS KYANG,  
,STONG PAR SONG TSUL MA GO BAS,  
,NGA YI GNYEN PO SHES RAB DE,  
,DE GA RANG DU GAR SONG MED,  
,GNYEN PO MED NA CI PHYIR GNOD,  
,NGA NI SDOD PA LAS 'OS CI,

124

People like this are wandering  
Further and further from emptiness;  
They fail to grasp that emptiness  
Is the fact that they themselves  
Have no nature of their own.

Emptiness is standing there  
Right in front of their eyes,  
But they can't comprehend  
Why it is it's empty;  
And in that very moment  
The wisdom which could serve  
As my antidote slips from sight.

If the antidote is missing,  
How could I ever be hurt?  
The only choice I'd have then  
Is to remain right where I am!

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**The flaccid lack of an opinion  
(Ineffective meditation #16)**

,LA LA GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYI,  
,DPYAD PAS SHIN TU DAG PA'I TSE,  
,DPYAD PA SNGON DU SONG BAS ZER,  
,SGOM GAR DMIGS GTAD MED DO ZER,  
,YID LA CI YANG MI BSAM PAR,  
,MNYAM PAR BZHAG PA'I GNAS SU 'DOD,

125

Some others do a much more careful  
Analysis of the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many.

First you analyze, they say,  
And then you meditate, they say,  
In a way where you simply suspend  
Your mind from any opinion of things:

Focus your thoughts on nothing at all;  
And then, they claim,  
You have reached some deep meditation.

,YID LA BYED RGYU MED PA DE,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA MTSAR,  
,NGA MED BSGOM PAR MA GRANG NA,  
,ZAB DON MING NI CIR BTAGS KYANG,  
,NGA LA GNOD PA'I PHYOGS NA'ANG MED,  
,SHES [f. 240a] RAB BSGOM PA GAD MO'I GNAS,

126

What a strange idea it is  
To think that if you managed  
To think of nothing at all,  
It could somehow contradict the way

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That I conceive of things.

If a meditation can't be considered  
The kind where you discover  
That there's no I at all,  
Then sure then you can give it  
Some deep and fancy name,  
But the fact is that it doesn't even  
Approach a view that could hurt me;

This thing that you believe  
To be a meditation on wisdom  
Is nothing more than a joke!

**Emptiness is not the flow  
of the mind that figured it out  
(Ineffective meditation #17)**

,LA LA GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYI,  
,DPYAD PAS MA RNYED DE YI PHYIR,  
,NGA NI BDEN PAR MED PA YI,  
,RIGS SHES RJES DPAG DE YI NI,  
,RGYUN LA CI THUB MNYAM PAR 'JOG

127

Still others do an analysis  
Of the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many,  
And manage to come up  
With nothing at all.

They thus conclude that the I  
Is nothing that is real,

And then they stay in meditation  
As long as they possibly can

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On the flow of the logical  
State of mind  
They used to make this conclusion.

,DE LA GNAS LUGS BSGOM PA ZER,  
,SHES PA KUN RDZOB YIN PAR GRAGS,  
,KUN RDZOB BSGOM LA GNAS LUGS 'DOD,  
,HA HA SHES RAB YA MTSAN LA,  
,NGA NYID BSGOM PA NGA YI GROGS,

128  
And this, they claim,  
Is what it is  
To do a meditation  
On the way things really are.

Now everybody knows  
That the mind is something that belongs  
To the deceptive side of reality;

So what they're really saying  
Is that meditating on the deceptive side  
Is meditating on the absolute side.

Ho ho! It's a weird sort of wisdom  
When you're meditating on me,  
And making me your best friend!

**Emptiness is not even the flow  
of the mind that now understands it  
(Ineffective meditation #18)**

,LA LAS GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYIS,  
,DPYAD PA'I RTAGS LAS NGA NYID NI,  
,BDEN PAR MED PAR NGES PA YI,

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,NGES SHES DE YI RGYUN LA NI,  
,MNYAM PAR BZHAG PA'I GNAS LUGS 'DOD,

129

Others do an analysis  
Of the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many,  
And based on this reasoning  
Come to an understanding  
That the I is nothing real.

They believe that staying in meditation  
On the flow of these kinds of thoughts  
Is a meditation upon  
The way things really are.

,DE YANG GONG DANG KHYAD MED CING,  
,DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA AA CANG CHE,  
,NGA RANG BSGOM LAS MA 'DAS MOD,  
,SHES RAB BSGOM PAR GA LA 'GYUR,

130

But there isn't any difference  
Between this and the position  
We just described above;  
And it really is absurd  
To say that it contradicts  
The way that I see things.

In fact it's really nothing else  
Than a meditation on me;  
How on earth could you ever call it  
A meditation on Wisdom?

**"I" am always the first thing gone**

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**in emptiness**

**(Ineffective meditation #19)**

,LA LAS GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYIS,  
,DPYAD PA'I RTAGS LAS NGA NYID NI,  
,BDEN PAR MED PAR NGES PA'I TSE,  
,KHO RANG MED PAR DAG PA DE,  
,MA SHES BSGOM RGYU'I STONG NYID DE,  
,ZUR DU BTZAL NAS SGOM PAR BYED,

131

Now others do an analysis  
Of the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many,  
And based on this reasoning  
Perceive that the I  
Is nothing that is real.

They fail to understand  
The simple absence of things  
Where they themselves are gone,

And for their meditation  
They seek some other emptiness  
That they can focus on.

,GCIG TU STONG NYID RGYANG CHAD YIN,  
,STONG PA BDEN 'DZIN BLO YOD PAS,  
,NGA RANG BSGOM PAR GYUR PA DANG,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA YI,  
,GNYEN PO YOD MED KHYOD RANG SOMS,

132

People like this are uniquely  
Far from emptiness;  
They possess a state of mind  
Which holds emptiness itself



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To be a thing that's real.

Thus their meditation is  
In fact meditating on me.

Now perhaps you can give it some thought  
And decide whether or not this practice  
Is an antidote which contradicts  
The way that I see things!

,DE YI RGYU MTSAN CI STE NA,  
,KHYOD RANG MED PA MA GO BAR,  
,STONG NYID ZUR DU BTZAL BAS SO,  
,KHA PO SU NI CHE YANG RUNG,  
,DON LA NGA MED BSGOM PA NYUNG,

133

The reason why this is the case  
Is that they fail to understand,  
And are seeking some kind of emptiness  
Which exists in some other place  
Than the fact that they don't exist.

There may be lots of people around  
Talking all kinds of big talk,  
But the fact is that they are very few  
Who know how to meditate  
On the fact that the I's not there.

**Even the flow of understanding**  
**there is no "me"**  
**isn't emptiness**  
**(Ineffective meditation #20)**

,LA LAS GCIG DANG DU BRAL GYIS,

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,DPYAD PA'I RTAGS LAS NGA NYID NI,  
,BDEN [f. 240b] BAR MED PAR NGES PA YI,  
,NGES SHES DE YI 'DZIN STANGS KYI,  
,RGYUN LA CI THUB MNYAM PAR 'JOG  
,DE LA GNAS LUGS BSGOM PAR 'DOD,

134

And there are others  
Who do an analysis  
On the fact that things  
Are neither one nor many,  
And based on this reasoning  
Come to an understanding  
That the “me” is nothing real.

Then they meditate  
For as long as they possibly can  
On the flow of how these thoughts  
Consider things to be.

This they claim is to meditate  
On the way things really are.

,GZHAN DE DAG LAS CUNG LEGS SHING,  
,NGA LA'ANG CUNG ZAD GNOD MOD KYANG,  
,RDZOGS PAR GNOD PAR GA LA 'GYUR,

135

These folks are a little bit better  
Than all those other ones.  
They do, I admit, manage to inflict  
Some little damage on me;

But how in the world could they ever  
Smash me totally?

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,DE YI RGYU MTSAN CI STE NA,  
,PHUNG PO TSOGS TZAM LA BRTEN NAS,  
,NGA'O SNYAM PA'I BLO SKYE ZHING,  
,NGA'O SNYAM PA'I BLO DES NI,  
,DMIGS PA NGA LA DMIGS NAS NI,  
,RNAM PA BDEN PAR GRUB PAR 'DZIN,

136

And why is that the case?  
The state of mind which thinks  
“That’s me” comes up in us  
Based on nothing more  
Than the collection of our parts.

And when the mind  
Then looks at this “me,”  
It believes it exists in truth.

,DE LTAR BDEN PA BDEN 'DZIN YIN,  
,DE LTAR ZHEN PA BDEN ZHEN YIN,  
,DE LTAR SNANG BA BDEN SNANG YIN,  
,PHYI MA SA BCU BAR DU 'BRANG,  
,SHES SGRIB ZER BA'I MING YANG BTAGS,

137

This kind of real  
Is to believe things are real;  
This kind of grasping  
Is to grasp things as real;  
This way of appearing  
Is to appear as though real—

And it follows us all the way on up  
To the tenth bodhisattva level.  
It goes as well by the name  
Of an “obstacle to omniscience.”

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,PHAGS PA SLOB PA'I RJES THOB TU,  
,BDEN SNANG YOD DE BDEN ZHEN MED,  
,MNYAM GZHAG NGO NA GNYIS KA MED,  
,SANGS RGYAS SA NA MNYAM RJES MED,  
,SO SKYE RNAMS LA GNYIS KA YOD,

138

In the aftermath,  
Things still appear  
To a realized being still learning  
As though they were real—  
But they don't believe it.

During the actual meditation,  
Neither is there.

At the level of a Buddha,  
There is no distinction  
Of meditation and aftermath.

For normal people,  
Both of them are there.

,PHUNG PO TSOGS TZAM LA BR TEN NAS,  
,NGA'O SNYAM PA'I BLO LA NI,  
,NGA NI BDEN PAR SNANG BA NA,

139

Now think of when the "me"  
Appears as something real  
To the mind that thinks "that's me,"  
When someone looks at nothing more  
Then the sum of the parts  
Of body & mind.

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,DE NYID BDEN PA'I GCIG DANG NI,  
,BDEN PA'I DU MAR MA GRUB PAR,  
,NGES PA'I RTAGS LAS NGA NYID NI,  
,BDEN PAR MED PAR NGES PA YI,  
,NGES SHES DE YI 'DZIN STANGS DE'I,  
,RGYUN NI SKYONG BA YIN ZHES KYANG,  
,NGA LA GNOD PA CHUNG BAR NGES,

140

That me cannot exist as either  
One thing that's real,  
Or things that are real  
And more than one;

We prove this with some reasoning,  
And then we come to understand  
That I myself cannot be real;

And then we focus upon  
The sustained flow of thought  
That holds things in this way.

This is it, they say—  
And certainly this way of thinking  
Does some small damage to me.

**How do "I" relate  
to my body & my mind?**

,DE YI RGYU MTSAN CI STE NA,  
,NGA NI PHUNG PO'I STENG DU NI,  
,BDEN PAR KHEGS PA DGOS PA LA,  
,PHUNG PO LA NI DMIGS PA YI,  
,PHUNG PO'I STENG GI NGA NYID NI,  
,BDEN PAR GRUB PA MA KHEGS PAS,  
,NGA NYID PHUNG PO'I STENG DU 'GYING,

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And why is this the case?  
What you're supposed to be doing  
Is denying that the "me"  
Could apply to body & mind  
In a way that's really real.

If you fail to prove  
That "me" is something  
That could ever apply  
To body & mind,

Then what you end up with  
Is me, dancing atop  
The body and the mind.

,NGA DANG PHUNG [f. 241a] PO KHA PHRAL NAS,  
,BDEN MED CI TZAM BSGOMS KYANG NI,  
,DZIN STANGS DNGOS SU MI 'GAL ZHING,

142

But suppose on the other hand  
That you divorce the "me"  
Completely from mind & body.

You can meditate then  
As much as you like  
On the idea that the me's  
Not real,

But that's not a way  
Of looking at things  
Which directly contradicts  
The way I see them.

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**A genuine meditation  
on emptiness**

,NGA NI PHUNG PO LA DMIGS NAS,  
,BDEN PAR GRUB PAR SNANG BA YI,  
,SNANG BA DE LTAR MA GRUB PAR,  
,TSAD MAS NGES SHES 'DRONGS NA NI,  
,GNOD KYI GZHAN DU MA YIN NO,

143

When you focus on the body & mind,  
The “me” you see appears to be  
Something that really exists.

But if you reach a correct perception  
Which finally realizes that this “me”  
Cannot exist the way it seems,  
Only then have you really hurt me.

And it cannot happen any other way.

,PHUNG PO LA DMIGS NGA'O ZHES,  
,DE YI BDEN GRUB BKAG TZAM GYI,  
,MED DGAG 'DZIN STANGS YUL BYAS NAS,  
,SHUGS MA NYAMS SHING GSAL NGAR LDAN,

144

You take as the object  
Of the way you look at things  
That absence of something there:

The simple lack of anything  
That could really exist  
When you look at body & mind  
And say “me.”

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You keep it up strong,  
Clear and vivid.

,BYING RGOD BRAL ZHING MTSAN 'DZIN ZHIG  
,PHUNG PO LA NI DMIGS NAS NI,  
,NGA MED YUL DU SHAR BA YI,

145  
Stay free of sleepiness,  
Stay free of wandering;  
Destroy this idea  
That things could have  
Any qualities inside them.

And then when you look  
At your body & mind,  
The only thing you think  
Is "There's no me!"

, 'DZIN STANGS SKYONG LA MKHAS NA NI,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA STE,  
,NGA NI 'BUD PAR NUS MOD KYANG,  
,DE 'DRA NYIN MO'I SKAR MA TZAM,

146  
Someone who has mastered  
Maintaining this way  
Of looking at things

Is looking at things  
In a way that works against  
The way I look at them.

And here and now  
I'd have to admit  
That they'd have the strength



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To banish me from the mind—

But people like this  
Are exceedingly rare,  
Like a star shining bright  
In the middle of the day.

**The invisible, constant companion,  
and the invisible thing in his hand**

,RGYUN DU NGA YI GZHAL BYAR NGES,  
,NGA NI MIG GIS MA MTHONG BAR,  
,NGA NI 'BUD ZER MI RNAMS KYIS,  
, 'DRE NI SHAR SGOR GNAS PA LA,  
,GLUD NI NUB SGOR SKYEL DANG MTSUNGS,

147

I'm on everybody's mind,  
Every moment of the day,  
But there isn't a one  
Who can lay their eyes on me.

People who claim  
They will throw me out  
Are putting an offering  
Outside the back door of their house  
To appease a harmful spirit,  
When the spirit is standing  
Right here at the front door.

,RKUN MA NGOS NI MA ZIN PAR,  
,RKUN MA'I NGOS NI 'DZIN PA 'DRA,  
, 'BEM NI MIG GIS MA MTHONG BAR,  
, 'BEM LA BRDEG PA'I MDA' BRGYAG 'DRA,

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They've reported  
A description of a thief  
To the police,  
Without ever seeing him.

They go out for target practice  
With a bow and arrow,  
And wearing a blindfold  
Over their eyes.

,NOR BU NGO NI MA SHES PAR,  
,NOR BU BTZAL NAS RE SKONG 'DRA,  
,SHES RAB KHYOD NI MTHONG YUL MIN,  
,NGA NI KUN GYI BDAG PO'O,

149

They have great hopes  
Of digging up a precious gem  
Without any idea  
Of what it even looks like.

Wisdom,  
You are somebody  
That nobody ever meets.

I though  
Am Master Of The Universe.

**The myth of an ultimate  
deceptive thing  
(Ineffective meditation #21)**

,NGA NI BLO BDE BSAM GRUB YIN,  
,LA LA NGA NI 'BUD DO ZER,

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,RNAM BDUN RIGS PAS DPYAD RTAGS KYIS,  
,PHUNG PO LA DMIGS NGA NYID NI,  
,BDEN PAR MED PAR NGES PA YI,  
,NGES SHES 'DZIN STANGS RGYUN SKYONG ZER,

150

I am in fact the easiest thing  
You could ever have to think about;  
Still, some people make the claim  
That they will drive me from their mind.

They use the analysis  
Of the seven types of logic  
To come to the realization  
That the “me” you see  
When you look at your body & mind  
Was never something real.

And then, they say,  
They will maintain  
This way of thinking,  
And stay in a stream  
Of that realization.

, 'DZIN STANGS DE NI JI [f. 241b] LTA BU,  
, SHES PA'I RGYUN LA ZER NA NI,  
, DE NI NGA NYID BSGOM PAS NA,  
, NGA LA GNOD PAR MI 'GYUR ZHING,

151

But when they speak of  
The “stream of the mind”  
They’ll use to sustain this view,  
They are in fact in meditation  
Upon that very same “me”!

And so of course

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It does me not  
The slightest harm at all.

,BLO NI KUN RDZOB YIN PAR MTHUN,  
,RANG BZHIN MED PA YIN ZHE NA,  
,DE YIS RDZOGS PAR GNOD MI 'GYUR,  
,DES NA NGA LA GNOD PA CHUNG,

152  
They say that because the mind  
Is consistent with things deceptive,  
It has no nature of its own.

This idea doesn't hurt me  
Totally,  
And only does some little harm.

**The mind empty of physical form  
Is not the ultimate space  
(Ineffective meditation #22)**

, 'DZIN STANGS MED DGAG YIN ZER NA,  
,MED DGAG CI 'DRA ZHIG LA ZER,  
,NAM MKHA' MTHA' DBUS MED LA NI,

153  
Some claim that  
How we hold to things  
Is the absence of something.

But what kind of absence  
Of something  
Are you talking about?

Is it like empty space,

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A thing that has no edges,  
And no place we call “center”?

,MTHA' DBUS MED PA'I DON DE NI,  
,GZUGS MA GRUB DANG DON 'DRA BAS,  
,NGA LA DMIGS PAR MI 'GYUR NA,  
, 'DZIN STANGS 'GAL BAR GA LA 'GYUR,  
,NGA LA GNOD PA'I PHYOGS NA MED,

154

It seems that what you mean  
When you say  
It's a thing that has  
No edges and no center,

You are trying to say  
That it cannot exist  
As an object which is physical.

But if a view isn't even  
Focused on what is “me,”  
Then how could the way it sees things  
Be opposed to the way I see?

What you're describing  
Cannot be counted  
Among the things that hurt me.

**Basic errors**

**On the meaning of “empty space”  
(Ineffective meditation #23)**

,SNGON POR MTHONG LA ZER CE NA,  
,SNGON PO RI RAB MDANGS YIN CING,  
,NAM MKHA'I DON LA'ANG MI REG NA,

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,DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA LTA CI SMOS,  
,GNOD PAR 'GYUR BA GAD MO'I GNAS,

155

And suppose you say  
“Space is that blue thing  
That we can see  
When we look straight up.”

The blue of our sky though  
Is just the reflection  
Of color from Mount Supreme,\*

And has nothing to do at all  
With the meaning of “empty space.”

To say that thinking  
In terms of this kind of space  
Would in any way disprove me,  
Much less directly contradict  
The way I look at things,  
Is nothing but a joke.

*\*Translator's note:* Ancient Buddhist cosmology says that the sky over our part of the world is colored blue because it is reflecting an area of the planet's Central Mountain which is composed of sapphire.

**Even empty space  
is not ultimate space  
(Ineffective meditation #24)**

,THOGS BCAS RAGS PA BKAG TZAM LA,  
,BYED DO ZER NA YIN MOD KYI,  
,RGYUN NI GANG LA BYED PAR 'GYUR,  
,NGES SHES DE LA BYED ZER NA,

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And suppose you say,  
“When I speak of empty space,  
What I refer to is the simple cancellation  
Of gross material form.”

That is admittedly  
What empty space really is,  
But how is that sustained here?

Suppose you reply,  
“What’s sustained  
Is the understanding  
Of empty space.”

,DE NI NGES SHES RGYUN YIN PAS,  
,NGA NYID BSGOM PA KHO NAR GNAS,  
,DZIN STANGS 'GAL BA AA CANG CHE,

157

If what you’re describing  
Is sustained thoughts of understanding,  
Then it can be nothing except  
A meditation on me!

Sheesh McGeesh!

How can you say  
It stands opposed  
To the way that I see things?

**The emptiness  
of a single partless flow  
of understanding emptiness  
(Ineffective meditation #25)**

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,RANG BZHIN MED LA ZER CE NA,  
,YIN MOD MED DGAG RGYUN NI GANG,  
,GCIG GAM MI GCIG JI LTAR BYED,

158

And suppose you say,  
“What I’m talking about  
Is where nothing has  
Any nature of its own.”

Yes and that’s certainly true,  
But how is this absence  
Of something sustained?

Is its flow a single thing,  
Or is it nothing single?

,MI GCIG NA NI NGOS 'DZIN DGOS,  
,THOGS BCAS RAGS PA BKAG TZAM LA,  
,NAM MKHA'I MED DGAG TZAM BTAGS BZHIN,

159

If you say it is nothing single,  
Then you will have to identify  
For us exactly what it is.

In the case of empty space,  
We refer to the simple cancellation  
Of gross material form  
As the simple absence of something  
We give the name of “space.”

**Without the quiet of shamatha,  
Even real emptiness meditation collapses**



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(Ineffective meditation #26)

,BDEN PAR GRUB PA BCAD TZAM GYI,  
,MED DGAG DE YI RGYUN DE LA,  
,GONG GI NGES SHES DE YI NI,  
,YUL LAM 'DZIN STANGS MED DGAG GI  
,MING 'DOGS BYED NA YIN MOD KYI,

160

What's happening in actual fact  
Is that the state of understanding  
As we described it above  
Takes as its object,  
Or has a way of looking at things,

As it is sustained towards  
An absence of something  
Consisting of the simple cancellation  
Of anything that could really exist—

And then we give that flow  
Of understanding a nickname of sorts:  
The “absence of a certain thing.”

,[f. 242a] DE NYID DPYOD LA RDUGS PA DANG,  
,MNYAM PAR 'JOG PA'I TSE NA NI,  
,BYING DANG RMUGS DANG MI GSAL DANG,  
,NGAR MED PA DANG SHUGS MI LDAN,  
,NYOG DANG HAD POR LAS PA DANG,  
,RGOD 'PHRO GA-YENG BA RNAMS LA SOGS,  
,DGOS DUS NGA YIS BTANG BAS NA,  
,KHYOD NI CI BYA GTOL MED DO,

161

But as you grind down to the end  
Of your examination of suchness,  
And try to enter into

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A balanced meditation  
On what you've figured out,

Then I know it is the right time  
For me to send forth my troops:

Sleepiness, dullness, lack of clarity;  
An absence of vivid thinking,  
A loss of the mental strength you need;

Cloudiness, or spacing out,  
A mind which is agitated:  
Jumping to the outside,  
Constantly distracted.

And when these armies  
Of mine arrive,  
There's not a single  
Thing you can think to do.

,GSOB DANG GSOG DANG SNYING PO MED,  
,BAN BUN LA SOGS NGA YIS GTONG,  
,KHYOD NI 'KHRUL BAS DE LA ZHEN,  
,NGA YIS BYIN RLABS BYAS 'OG NYAL,  
,DES NA NGA LA GNOD MI 'GYUR,

162  
Next I send you thoughts  
Of things that have no meaning:  
Empty of anything, full of everything,  
The frazzled inability  
To come to any conclusions,  
And others of the like.

And because you can't do  
Anything right,  
You actually start to enjoy them!

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Then after I have given you  
My blessing in these many ways,  
There's not much else you can do  
But take yourself to bed.

You want to know  
Why nothing you do  
Is any danger to me?

That's why!

**Emptiness & focus,**  
**Vipashyana & shamatha:**  
**The invincible combination**

,DPYOD DUS MA ZAD MNYAM GZHAG TU'ANG,  
,PHUNG PO LA DMIGS NGA DE NI,  
,BDEN PAR GRUB PA'I DGAG BYA DE,  
,DMIGS YUL NAR MAR MA BRJED PAR,

163

But suppose instead  
You make an effort—  
Whether it be in your thought explorations,  
Or else in your states of deep meditation—  
To focus in a sustained way  
On the thing it is which we truly deny  
When we speak of emptiness:

On the “me” that comes up  
When you look at your body & mind—  
A “me” which has some real existence;

And suppose you learn  
Never to lose sight of this thought.

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,BCUG NAS BKAG PA'I MED DGAG GI  
,RGYUN LA SHUGS DANG GSAL NGAR NI,  
,YENGS MED MA NYAMS LDAN PAR NI,  
,MNYAM GZHAG BSGOM NA MKHAS PA YIN,

164

Suppose you learn to glue yourself  
In your meditation session  
To this vision of the thing we deny,  
Constantly cancelling it;

Suppose you are able to keep up the strength;  
And the clarity, and the vivid state of mind—  
And focus without wandering off,  
Without your meditation degrading—

Well then we would call you a Master.

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## Class Four: A Survey of Disastrous Ideas

### Asleep in the room in the back

,DE 'DRA SRID MTHA' TZAM YIN PAS,  
,NGA NI SKYID NYAL RING MO BYED,  
,SHES RAB KHYOD NI TZAB TZUB MANG,  
,MANG BA TZAM DU ZAD LAGS KYI,  
,NGA DANG SGOM CHEN KUN MTHUN PAS,  
,KHYOD RANG YI THANG MA CHAD PAR,  
,GNAS LUGS NGANG DU NYAL NA LEGS,

165

But let's be honest.  
The odds of that happening  
Are something close to zero.

I can sit back here in the mind  
And take a long relaxing nap,  
While Wisdom you're inevitably  
Going to have  
A million things to worry about.

Get used to it; that's the way it will be,  
Because me and all those Meditation Experts  
Are on the exact same page.

If I were you I would let it go—  
Stop exhausting yourself!  
Better for you to remain asleep,  
Somewhere deep inside the mind.

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,NGA NI 'BUD ZER MANG LAGS KYANG,  
,NGA LA GNOD PAR MI 'GYUR BA'I,  
,RGYU MTSAN 'DI LTAR YOD PAS NA,  
,SHES RAB RNA BA GZHUNGS LA NYON,

166

Many are those who make the claim  
That they will drive me from the mind;  
But there you have them, all the reasons  
Why they can never hurt me.  
Listen well now to my words, Miss Wisdom.

**Who has a chance?**

,SPYIR DU SEMS CAN THAMS CAD NI,  
,NGA YI MNGA' ZHABS 'BANGS SU MCHI,  
,ON KYANG THAR PA 'DOD RNAMS LA,  
,NGA YI MDA' LNGA 'PHANGS PA'I TSE,  
,THAR LA 'PHAGS PAR [f. 242b] GA LA NUS,

167

Generally speaking, all the beings  
There are are my servants, my people.  
And even when some of them decide  
They will try to reach some freedom,  
I shoot them with all five of my arrows\* —  
How then will they ever be able  
To fly to liberation?

\*The “five arrows” are metaphorical weapons of a powerful worldly god known for his ability to distract people from the spiritual path. The five arrows are called Crazy Maker; Desire Inspirer; Confuser; Agitator; and Prisoner.

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,GRUB MTHAR ZHUGS DANG MA ZHUGS GNYIS,  
,ZHUGS PA AU DUM WA RA TZAM,  
,DE LA'ANG PHYI NANG GNYIS YOD PA'I,  
,PHYI PA CHES NI MANG BAR YOD,

168

There are only two kinds of people:  
Those who are studying spiritual ways,  
And those who have no study.

Those who study are as many as  
The bloom of the fig, exceedingly rare;  
And they can be divided  
Into those on the path, and those who aren't—

Those that are not the path  
Are infinitely more in number.

,PHYI LA'ANG GRUB MTHA' MANG MOD KYANG,  
,BSDU NA RTAG CHAD GNYIS SU 'DUS,  
,DE YANG 'JIG RTEN RGYANG 'PHEN PA,  
,DI GA GCIG PU MA GTOGS PA'I,  
,SKYE BA SNGA PHYI KHAS MI LEN,  
,THAR DANG DKON MCHOG GSUM SOGS MED,

169

There are, admitted, many schools  
Among those who've wandered off;  
But these come down to two:  
Thus who hold that things never change,  
And those who hold that things never were.

Every single one of these groups,  
Except for the ones called "Outcasts,"  
Denies that past or future lives

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Can even be said to exist.

None of them have freedom,  
And none of them Three Jewels,  
Nor anything of the like.

,SPYOD PA PA YIS PHYI MA YI,  
,BDAG YOD TZAM ZHIG KHAS LEN KYANG,  
,THAR DANG THAMS CAD MKHYEN PA MED,  
,GRANGS CAN LA SOGS GZHAN RNAMS KYIS,  
,THAR PA 'DOD KYANG RNAM MKHYEN MED,  
,RTAG PAS 'BRAS BU SKYE BAR 'DOD,

170

The Analyzers do accept only  
A self which does come later;  
But say there is no freedom,  
And no knowing of all things.

The Numerists and others  
Agree there's freedom, but say  
Omniscience is impossible.  
And they believe that something  
Which cannot ever change  
Acts to produce results.

**A list of disastrous views**

,MU STEGS RNAMS KYI BSAM GTAN NI,  
,BZHI THOB MNGON SHES RDZU 'PHRUL SOGS,  
,NUS PA THOB CING LTA BA DE,  
,GOMS PAS BZOD PA MI 'THOB CING,  
,DROD RTZE TZAM DU'ANG BGROD NUS MED,



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These followers of other paths  
Can attain all four  
Of the concentration levels;  
And powers like clairvoyance  
And performing miracles.

But even if they practice well  
The viewpoints that they're taught,  
They will never attain the level  
We know as Mastery;

In fact they have no ability  
Even to journey as far  
As the levels of Warmth and Peak.

,SHES RAB BSGOM PAR MI 'DUG PAS,  
,NGA LA CI YI PHYIR NA GNOD,  
,TSOR 'DU SEMS PA SOGS BKAG PA'I,  
,YID LA BYED PA'ANG BKAG NAS NI,  
,BYAR MED MNYAM GZHAG BSKAL PAR BSGOM,  
,DES KYANG NGA LA GNOD MI 'GYUR,  
,CI YANG MED PA'I LTA BA YIN,

172

They do not meditate on wisdom;  
So how could they ever hurt me?  
They focus on putting a stop to things  
Like feelings and discrimination,  
And thinking and the like.

And when these things are blocked,  
They can stay for even an eon  
In a meditation occupied  
By doing nothing at all.

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This doesn't harm me either;  
It's the view where people say  
That nothing at all exists.

,GANG DU YOD SOGS DPYOD PA YI,  
,DU SHES BKAG PA'I LTA BA DE,  
,GNYEN PO SHES RAB MED PAS NA,  
,BSKAL PAR BSGOM STE NGAR MI GNOD,  
,DU SHES MED PA'I LTA BA YIN,

173

A viewpoint where we put a stop  
To a state of discrimination  
Examining existence and such  
Would never allow for wisdom,  
The fix to all our pain.

You can meditate on something like this  
For millions of years,  
And it would never touch me.

This we call the view  
That discrimination must be stopped.

,DE LTAR BSGOMS PAS 'DU SHES DE'ANG,  
,YOD PA MIN CING MED PA MIN,  
,YOD MED GANG DU'ANG MI RTOG PAR,  
,BSKAL PAR [f. 243a] BSGOM STE NGAR MI GNOD,  
,NGA LA GNOD PA'I GNYEN PO MED,  
,YOD MIN MED MIN LTA BA'O,

174

And when you meditate this way,  
You cannot tell if this discrimination

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Itself is not existent, nor not—  
You can't decide whether things  
Are there or if they're not.

You can do this meditation  
For millions more years,  
And it will never touch me.  
It is not a counteragent  
That ever lays a hand on me.

This then is the view  
That decides to not decide  
Whether things exist, or not.

,DE LTAR BSGOMS PAS GZUGS SOGS KYI,  
,MTSAN MA CI YANG MA MTHONG ZHING,  
,CI YANG YID LA MI BYED PA'I,  
,YID RTOG 'BA' ZHIG GSAL RIG TZAM,  
,DE LA MNYAM GZHAG BSKAL MED {%MANG?} BSGOM,

175

When you meditate like this,  
You no longer see at all  
Any indications of things  
Like physical form.

All the thoughts of the ineffable mind  
Focus on thinking of nothing at all.

You can spend a great many eons  
In this particular meditation.

,DE LTA BU YI SHES PA LA,  
,KHYAB PA 'DU BYED SDUG BSNAL NI,  
,MA GTOGS SDUG BSNAL GZHAN MED MOD,

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,RKYEN DANG MA 'PHRAD YIN PAR ZAD,  
,NGA NI DE GAR SDOD PA LA,  
,GNYEN PO'I GNOD PA PHYOGS NA'ANG MED,  
,SHES RAB BSGOM PA LTA CI SMOS,  
,GZUGS MED KHAMS PA'I LTA BA YIN,

176

We would have to admit  
That in this state of mind,  
The forms of suffering other than  
The pervasive one are gone.

But this is only because the conditions  
Which trigger them, for now, are gone.  
I remain in this mind, in residence;  
And the meditation is not even something  
Remotely close to hurting me—

Much less is it a meditation  
Upon the state of wisdom.  
It is nothing more  
Than the view of the formless realm.

**What makes a real meditation**

,DA LTA'I BSGOM PA PHAL MO CHE,  
,SGOM GYI MING 'DOGS BZANG BZANG DANG,  
,SNYAN SNYAN JI TZAM BTAGS LAGS KYANG,  
,BSGOM PA'I GNAS SKABS RANG LA YANG,  
,DI RNAMS BSGOM LAS MI 'DA' BAR,  
,NGA MED SU YIS RTOGS PA MED,

177

The great majority of meditators  
Here in present days

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Who people say are most amazing,  
Who everybody talks about,

Are doing nothing more wonderful  
When they meditate,  
Than meditating on me.

There is not a one of them who comes  
To a point where they see me gone.

,NGA DANG SHES RAB GNYIS KYI NI,  
,DZIN STANGS DNGOS 'GAL YIN PAS NA,  
,DZIN STANGS DNGOS 'GAL MA ZHUGS PA'I,  
,BSGOM GYIS NGA LA GNOD PA MED,  
,MUN PA'I GNYEN POR SNANG BA BZHIN,  
,DGOS KYI GZHAN GYIS MA YIN NO,

178

They way in which I look at things,  
And the way that wisdom views them,  
Are mutually exclusive;

And unless you are in a meditation  
Where the way you look and mine  
Are mutually exclusive,  
You do me no damage at all.

What we're looking for is a meditation  
On a real antidote that acts  
Like a light turned on in the dark—  
Nothing else will help.

,PHUNG PO ZHIG TSE PHUNG 'DZIN BLO,  
,MI SKYE BA LA LTA BAR 'DOD,  
,GSAL RIG TZAM NI MI 'DOR BAS,

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,SHES PA BSGOM LAS MI 'DA' ZHING,  
,DE 'DRA BYE BRAG SMRA BA 'DOD,  
,NGA LA GNOD PA'I PHYOGS NA'ANG MED,

179

Some people say that the view of wisdom  
Is where the mind that holds  
To parts of us disappears  
When all those parts are gone.

But as they hold this view they're still  
In that ineffable knowing called "mind";  
And the meditation that they do  
Is nothing more than meditating  
Upon the mind itself.

This is a meditation favored  
By the school of the Detailists;  
And doesn't even come close  
To touching me the least.

,RDUL PHRAN PHYOGS KYI CHA MED NI,  
,MA REG MA 'BYAR REG LA KHAD,  
,[f. 243b] SIL BUR GNAS LA RTZE GCIG TU,  
,MNYAM PAR BZHAG PA'I MTHU LAS NI,  
,SNANG BA THAMS CAD BAN BUN DANG,  
,GSOB DANG GSOG DANG SNYING PO MED,  
,RAG MA LUS PAR MTHONG BA NA,

180

There's a meditation that you can do  
Where you put your mind on tiny atoms  
That have no left or right;

You focus on how they never touch,  
How they cannot join together,

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And remain almost in contact,  
But separate to themselves.

You go in and out of different visions,  
Figments of the mind,  
Nothing solid, no essence there;  
You see that nothing depends  
Upon anything else at all.

,RI DANG RA BA KHANG KHYIM DANG,  
,RTZIG PA LA NI THAL BYUNG DANG,  
,THOGS THUG MED PAR 'GRO BA DANG,  
,RDO LA RKANG LAG RJES 'JOG SOGS,  
,YON TAN DPAG MED MNGA' MOD KYANG,  
,NGA DANG 'DZIN STANGS DNGOS 'GAL GYI,  
,GNYEN PO MED PAS NGAR MI GNOD,

181  
With this you can walk directly  
Through the center of a mountain,  
Or a fence, or building, or a home;  
No wall can hold you back,  
What's solid no longer touches you.

And then you can also do things  
Like leaving your footprints  
Or handprints in solid rock.

Oh there are infinite wonders here;  
But in all of them there's nothing  
That acts to counter the way  
In which I look at things—  
They do me no harm at all.

,DA LTA'I SGOM CHEN PHAL CHER NI,

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,DE DAG BYUNG TSE MCHOG 'DZIN PAS,  
,SHES RAB BSGOM PA LTA CI SMOS,  
,NGA YI BSAM PA RDZOGS PA YIN,  
,CI PHYIR NGA YI GNYEN PO MED,

182

The majority of “master meditators”  
In present days believe  
That if they gain some powers like this  
Then nothing could be higher.

Forget thinking that this  
Is a meditation on wisdom;  
Rather, these people are fulfilling  
All the dreams I have for them.

Why? Because their meditations  
Do nothing to correct the way  
That I view things to be.

,’ON KYANG DE DAG SKYES PA NA,  
,STONG PA NYID LA MOS PA YI,  
,RGYU TZAM BYED PAS BSGOMS SHIG GO  
,’ON KYANG NGA YI BDEN GRUB DE,  
,DE DAG RNAMS KYIS 'DOR MI NUS,

183

I’d have to say though that  
If you’re able to master these meditations,  
It can accomplish one good thing for you:  
You start to feel some hope  
That you could see emptiness—

As such, I would say  
You should go ahead and do them.



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Stay aware however  
That they themselves cannot  
Enable you to rid yourself  
Of this idea of mine:  
That things in themselves are real.

,BDEN GRUB DOR BAS DNGOS RNAMS KYI,  
,RGYU 'BRAS BYA BYED 'JOG MI NUS,  
,NGA DANG GRUB MTHA' GCIG PAS NA,  
,NGA LA GNOD PA'I RE THAG CHAD,

184  
Now if you manage to reject  
That things themselves are real,  
  
But this takes you to a place  
Where you cannot see a way  
That things could work—  
Where some things could cause others—  
  
Then you have joined my school,  
And you have lost any hope at all  
Of doing me any damage.

,NYAN THOS MDO SDE PA RNAMS SO,  
,DE YI MNYAM GZHAG CI BSGOMS KYANG,  
,DROD RTZE TZAM DU BGROD NUS MED,  
,BZOD PA SKYE BAR GA LA NUS,

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This puts you among the listeners  
Of the school of the Sutrists;

You can sit there if you like,

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Within their meditations,

But you will never even be able  
To make the trip to the levels  
Of Warmth or Peak,  
Much less ever give birth  
To the stage of Mastery.