



Friends:
The Devil Debates An Angel
by the First Panchen Lama

Session 19
Diamond Mountain
Retreat Center, April 2025

The Devil Debates an Angel

*„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.

We are about halfway through this epic poem by His Holiness the First Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen (1567-1662):

Mr. Misunderstanding continued then —

Meditate on nothing at all!

[326]

,CI YANG MED PA’I NGO SPROD BYED,
,YID LA CI YANG MI BSAM PAR,
,BSGOMS PAS TING ‘DZIN ‘PHRAL MANG SKYE,
,’DI NI NGA YI BSGOM SGRUB MKHAN,

Lead people
By the hand
To the nothing at all;

Teach them
Not to think
Of anything.

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Make their concentration
Filled with busyness
Every time they meditate;

Ah, these are
The masters of meditation
Inside my system!

[327]

,’DI PHYI GNYIS KA MED PA YI,
,BSGOM GYIS ‘BRAS BU SANGS RGYAS ‘THOB,
,ZHAG GSUM PHOG NAS ZLA GCIG BSGOMS,
,DE YIS THAMS CAD GROL BAR ‘GYUR,

And they will attain
Results of meditation
That exist in neither
This life or the next;
And they will reach
To Buddhahood.

They can fool around
For three days,
And meditate
For a month;

And with this
Every one of them
Is liberated.

**A moron who
cannot tie their shoe**

[328]

,NGA YI ‘PHRIN LAS ‘DI ‘DRA NA,
,KHYOD [f. 254a] KYI ‘PHRIN LAS GTAN MED PAS,
,KHYOD RANG YI MUG SKYES ZHAN ‘DRA,
,KHYOD NI LAN GCIG YOD PA LA,

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Thus are the mighty deeds
That I am capable of;
Whereas you can do
No holy work at all.

You are like a moron
That cannot tie their shoe;
You appear but once,
And then are gone.

[329]
,BSOD NAMS DPAG MED SOG DGOS NA,
,NGA NI BCAR MAR SDOD PA LA,
,PHRAG DOG KHYOD KYIS BYAS ZHAN ‘DRA,
,YID THANG CHAD PAS MI ‘ONG NGO,,

Those who hope
To accumulate merit
Beyond any measure

Should come and serve
Here at my feet.

You must live
In envy of me,
Too weak to do a thing;

By now you must
Be entirely exhausted;
I suggest that now
You stop coming to me.

The Beautiful Lady reappears—

[330]
,,SHES RAB KYIS NI LAN SMRAS PA,

And Wisdom, she replied:

**A joke of a master,
without a friend**

[331]

,BDEN PA ZER BA'I NGA RGYAL CAN,
,RANG LA YON TAN GCIG MED KYANG,
,KHYOD KYIS KUN LA MKHAS PAR RLOM,
,YON TAN LTA ZHOG GROGS MED PO,

Ah, you arrogant one;
You don't possess even
A single good quality,

And yet you
Grasp to this delusion
Of being a master
For everyone.

Not only do you have
No fine qualities at all;
You lack as well anything
That would bring them.

[332]

,LTOS MED TSIG TSUGS THUB PA CAN,
, 'GYUR MED RTAG BRTAN THER ZUG CAN,
,KHYOD LA CHOS KUN MED PAS NA,
,GROGS GCIG YONG BA'I DON MA MCHIS,

You are the one who champions
The idea that nothing would depend;
For you, things are immutable,
Unchanging, firm, and solid.

In your way of thinking,
Nothing could ever exist;
And so there's no hope that
You'd ever have a single friend.

A friend to everyone, and thing

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[333]

,NGA LA CHOS KUN YOD PAS NA,
,CHOS RNAMS THAMS CAD NGA YI GROGS,
,NGA YANG CHOS RNAMS KUN GYI GROGS,

According to me though,
Everything can exist;

Everything there is
Is my companion;

And I am the companion
Of everything there is.

[334]

,DE YI RGYU MTSAN CI STE NA,
,CHOS RNAMS PHAN TSUN LTOS BZHAG YIN,
,DE YANG NGA YI GROGS SU 'GYUR,

And why is that?
Because all the things there are
Exist in reliance upon each other;

And that in itself
Is my constant companion.

[335]

,CHOS RNAMS THAMS CAD BTAGS PA TZAM,
,DE YANG NGA YI GROGS SU 'GYUR,
,DUS BYAS RGYU RKYEN LAS BYUNG BA,
,DE YANG NGA YI GROGS SU 'GYUR,

Everything that exists
Exists only through labels;
And that in itself
Is my constant companion.

That fact that everything
That was ever produced
Has come from causes & conditions
Is my constant companion as well.

A list of our companions

[336]

,NYI ZLA SHAR NUB BYUNG BA DANG,
,NYIN MTSAN DBYE BA YOD PA DANG,
,DBYAR DGUN STON DPYID YOD PA DANG,
,CHAR CHU 'BAB CING 'BRAS BU SMIN,

Here then is a list
Of all of my companions:

The rising of the sun & moon,
The fact of east, and that of west;

The existence of the division
Between the day & night;

The fact that we have
A summer and winter,
An autumn & a spring;

The fact that rain falls down,
And ripens all the fruits.

[337]

,SO NAM DUS BZHI YOD PA DANG,
,SEMS CAN SKYE 'CHI YOD PA DANG,
,NA DANG SDUG BSNGAL MYONG BA DANG,
,TSA GRANG BKRES SKOM LA SOGS PA,
,'PHRAL DU RKYEN LAS 'BYUNG BA DANG,

The fact that we possess
Four seasons for our crops;

The fact that living beings
Are born, and then can die;

The fact that we experience
Illness and suffering;

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And heat, and cold,
And hunger, and thirst,
And all the rest there is.

All of them come close
Upon their conditions.

**The lives of people—
my friend**

[338]

,ZA NYAL 'GRO 'DUG LA SOGS PA,
,LUS [f. 254b] KYI SGUL SKYOD BRKYANGS BSKUMS DANG,
,NGAG GI SMRA BRJOD NYAN LEN DANG,
,MIG GIS LTA DANG RGOD LA SOGS,

People eat, people sleep,
They go, and stay,
And all the rest.

They move their body
An inch;
They reach out,
They pull back—

They say a single word,
They sing a single song;

They look with their eyes,
And live in distraction,
And all the rest of it.

[339]

, 'DOD CHAGS ZHE SDANG GTI MUG DANG,
, PHRAG DOG SER SNA GA-YO SGYU DANG,
, NYON MONGS BRGYAD KHRI BZHI STONG SOGS,
, 'PHRAL DU RKYEN LA LTOS NAS NI,

They have their desire,
They have their hatred,

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They have their dark ignorance.

All of the 84,000 different types
Of negative emotions,
And everything else

With jealousy,
And refusing to share,
Deceiving people,
Cheating others —

All of it comes
From causes & conditions
Close at hand.

[340]

,DNGOS SU SKYE ‘GAG YOD PA DANG,
,SKAD CIG SNGA PHYI YOD PA DANG,
,RE RE LTAR DU RANG RANG GI
,MING GIS BTAGS PA YOD PA RNAMS,

In front of us we see
Starting, and stopping;

Things that exist
From one moment
To the next.

And each and every
One of them
Exists through its
Separate labels.

[341]

,GZHAN LA RAG NI LAS PA DANG,
,RGYU DANG RKYEN LAS SKYES PA DANG,
,PHAN TSUN RTEN ‘BREL LTOS GRUB PAS,
,DE RNAMS NGA YI GROGS YIN MOD,

They all depend
Upon something else;

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All of them are born
From causes & conditions—

They all come about
Through a process
Of mutual reliance;

And every single
One of them
Is a companion to me.

Friends who help each other

[342]
,NGA YANG DE RNAMS KUN GYI GROGS,
,DE RNAMS MED NA NGA YANG MED,
,NGA MED DE RNAMS KYANG NI MED,
,NGED RNAMS GCIG GROGS GCIG GIS BYED,

I too am a friend
To each and every one;

If they could never be,
Neither then could I.

Neither could they be
If I myself never were.

We are mutual friends,
Each who defines the other.

[343]
,GCIG GCIG YOD NA GNYIS KA YOD,
,GCIG GCIG MED NA GNYIS KA MED,
,GSHOG PA GCIG GIS ‘PHUR MI THUB,
,RKANG PA GCIG GIS ‘GRO MI THUB,

If one of us is there,
Then both of us can be;

If one of us goes missing,

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Then both of us go missing.

You cannot fly
With a single wing;

You cannot walk
On a single leg.

[344]

„DES NA GCIG DRIN GCIG LA CHE,
„KHYOD NI GCIG PU MA GTOGS PA,
„KHYOD LA DE RNAMS MED PA YIN,
„BDEN PAR ‘DZIN PA’I NYES PAS LAN,

And so we can say
That each one of us
Is of greater kindness
Than the other.

But you,
You must remain there
Alone, and lonely.

You have none of them
To be with you—

And it’s all because
You believe that things
Are real.

Appearance, friend to emptiness

[345]

„SNANG BA BR TEN NAS SKYES PA ‘DIS,
„SNANG BA BDEN GRUB MTHA’ NGE DANG,
„SNANG BA GTAN MED MTHA’ GNYIS SEL,
„SNANG BA BDEN PAR MED PA ‘DIS,
„SNANG BA BDEN GRUB MTHA’ DE DANG,
„SNANG BA GTAN MED MTHA’ GNYIS SEL,

The appearance of things
Is the fact

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That things arise in dependence;

The appearance of things
Draws a line
To stop things being real;

The appearance of things
Banishes the two extremes
Where nothing exists at all;

The appearance of things
Proves that nothing is real;

The appearance of things
Destroys the extreme
That anything is real;

The appearance of things
Banishes the two extremes
Where nothing exists at all.

[346]

,GTAN MED MTHA' DE SEL NUS TE,
,SNANG BA BDEN PAR MED PA YI,
,STONG GZHI CHOS CAN SNANG BA DE,
,YOD PA'I PHYIR NA [f. 255a] MED MTHA' SEL,

And it surely is the case
That we can banish
The extreme which says
That nothing exists at all;

The appearance of things,
Which says that nothing
Can ever be real

Is something that appears
With what is empty,
With everything
That can be anything;

As such,
It banishes

The idea that nothing exists.

Most intimate friends

[347]

,RGYU MTSAN 'DI DAG PHYIR NA NI,
,SNANG LAS STONG PA SKYES PA 'DRA,
,STONG LAS SNANG BA SKYES PA 'DRA,
,GROGS SU GYUR PA AA CANG CHE,

For all the reasons
That we've named here,

Emptiness arises
All the same from
The appearance of things;

And the appearance of things
Arises all the same
From emptiness.

Ah, can't you see
What intimate friends they are?

[348]

,SNANG DANG STONG PA'I DRIN GNYIS PO,
,GCIG LA GCIG DRIN CHE BA 'DI,
,DRIN DU BSAMS NA CHE CHUNG MED,
,SRANG LA BCAL NA YANG LCI MED,

The appearance of things
And emptiness
Are twins of equal kindness;

Each one pays more kindness
To the other than the first.

If you think of how much
Kindness they show,
You cannot say
That one is more,

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And one the less.

If you put each
On a separate dish
Of the scale,

It would balance out
Perfectly.

Emptiness makes compassion great

[349]

,SNYING RJE CHEN PO ZER BA GCIG
,THOG MAR GANG LA SKYES TZAM NAS,
,DUS MNYAM SNYING RJE STONG PA DE,
,PHAN TSUN ‘GRAN NAS SKYES PA ‘DRA,

Once we see
The tiniest start
To the birth of that thing

We refer to as
Great Compassion,

In the very same moment
That compassion is born,
So is its emptiness;

It’s almost as if
They are competing
To see which one
Can take birth first.

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[350]

,SNYING RJE STONG PAR RTOGS TZAM LAS,
,DE LAS SNYING RJE CHEN PO DE,
,PHAN TSUN ‘GRAN NAS SKYES PA ‘DRA,

As soon as we realize
That compassion is empty,

Then it’s almost as if
Great Compassion
Competes to raise its head.