

Addiction

DUDUL DORJE



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ཀོ་ལོ་ཤེ།

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༄༅། །ཆང་གི་ཉེས་དམིགས་བཞུགས།

ADDICTION¹

By Rigzin Dudul Dorje

གུ་ཅུ་པདྨ་སིདྲི་སྤྱི་²

GURU PADMA SIDDHI HŪM!

ཨེ་མ་དགོན་མཚན་འགྲོ་མགོན་པདྨ་འབྲུང་།

འཁོར་བའི་ཞེན་ཆགས་བྲལ་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས།

Eh ma! supreme jewel, protector of beings—Lotus-Born One,
Please bless me to sever my fixed attachment to saṃsāra!

གཉུག་མར་རང་གསལ་ཆང་འདི་མ་འབྲུང་ན།

བྲམ་ཟེ་ཆང་ཕྱོས་འདི་ལ་མཐོང་ཚེ་ཡི་རེ་སྤྲུག།

གཤེས་ལུགས་ཀ་དག་གི་ཚོར་མཚན་མ་མཐོང་ནས།

བསྐྱུས་ཚོར་ཞེན་འཛིན་འདི་མཐོང་ཚེ་ཞེ་རེ་ལོག།

How sad it is to see a brahmin³ dissipated on drink,
Having failed to imbibe the innate nature’s self-luminosity.
When you don’t appreciate the supreme jewel of your primordially pure makeup,
When you hang on to the counterfeit jewel of consuming fixation—this pains my soul.⁴

མར་དམུལ་བ་ཚ་བྲང་གི་སྤྲུག་བསྐྱུས་ཐར་མེད་དེ།

བྱ་རང་རྒྱུད་ཞེ་སྤང་གི་ཚ་དེར་འདུག།



ཡི་དྲགས་བགེས་སྐོམ་གྱི་སྤྱད་བསྐྱེལ་བཟོད་མིང་དེ།

བྱ་རང་རྒྱུད་སེར་སྤྲི་ཙུ་དེར་འདུག།

The inescapable, harrowing heat and cold of hell below,⁵
My dear,⁶ are rooted in your mind's hostility.
The ghost's overwhelming, burning hunger and thirst,
My dear, are rooted in your mind's rapacity.

བྱོལ་སོང་སྤྱན་མོངས་སྤྱད་བསྐྱེལ་བཟོད་མིང་དེ།

བྱ་རང་རྒྱུད་གཏི་སྤྱད་གི་ཙུ་དེར་འདུག།

སྤྱ་མིན་འཐབ་ཚོད་གྱི་སྤྱད་བསྐྱེལ་བཟོད་མིང་དེ།

བྱ་རང་རྒྱུད་སྤྱད་དོག་གི་ཙུ་དེར་འདུག།

The benighted brainlessness of a beast,
My dear, is rooted in your mind's vacuity.
The asuras' acidic quarrels,⁷
My dear, are rooted in your mind's envy.

འཆི་འཕོ་ལྷུང་བའི་སྤྱད་བསྐྱེལ་དོང་རིང་དེ།

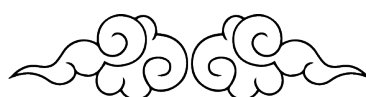
བྱ་རང་རྒྱུད་འདོད་ཆགས་གྱི་ཙུ་དེར་འདུག།

དེ་ལྟར་དབུལ་ཕོངས་གྱི་སྤྱད་བསྐྱེལ་དེ།

བྱ་སྤྱིན་གཏོང་གཉིས་པའི་ཙུ་དེར་འདུག།

The nightmarish chute of your fall from grace,⁸
My dear, [241/242] is rooted in your mind's indulgences.
Likewise, my dear, the pauper's pain
Shares its root with the two kinds of giving.⁹

འཁོར་འདས་ཤེས་བྱའི་ཐ་སྤྱད་དེ།



བྱ་རེ་དོགས་གཉིས་གྱི་ཚ་དེར་འདུག།

བྱ་ཚོགས་སངས་རྒྱས་པ་ཞེས་བྱའི་སྣ་ཆེ་དེ།

བྱ་རང་རིག་སྣེ་མེད་གྱི་སྣོད་དེར་འདུག།

The conventions known as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,
My dear, are rooted in your hopes and fears.
My dear, what’s called “exalted, perfect awakening,”
Is there, my dear, in the unborn expanse of your self-knowing awareness.

ཡིན་མིན་འབྲུང་བའི་སྣ་རྒྱུང་འདི།

རང་འདྲའི་ཞེན་ཆགས་རྟག་འཛིན་མཁུན་རྣམས་ལ།

མཚོགས་སྣེ་རྒྱུ་དབེན་ཁྲོད་དུ།

འབྲུང་བའི་སྣ་རྒྱུང་སྣས་པ་ཟེར་རོ།

This little song about the struggles of dignity—¹⁰
For those like me who are hooked and think things last forever—
Was sung with sincerity
In isolated retreat where sublime Healing Waters flow.¹¹

ཧྲ་ཧྲ།

དགོ་བས་འགོ་ཀུན་བྱུ་སྣུ་འགྲུབ་ཤོག།

རིག་འཛིན་བདུད་འདུལ་དོ་རྗེ་ཡིས།

སྣེ་རྒྱུ་ཡང་དབེན་དུ་སྣས་པ་ཟེར་རོ།

མཛྲ་ལམ།

*Ha ha! By the good of this, may all beings quickly attain buddhahood.
This little poem was written in the Healing Waters of total solitude.¹²
By Rigzin Dudul Dorje.
Maṅgalam*



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McKay, Alex, Alex. “Indifference, Cultural Difference, and a Porous Frontier: Some Remarks on the History of Recreational Drugs in the Tibetan Cultural World.” *The Tibet Journal* 39, no. 1, Special Issue: Trade, Travel and the Tibetan Border Worlds: Essays in Honour of Wim van Spengen (1943–2013) (Spring–Summer 2014): 57–73.

¹ The title is literally “The Drawbacks of Alcohol.” In classical Tibetan literature, and even today, alcohol (*chang*) is used as a catch-all term for addictive substances. This is no doubt largely because, until recently, there was little access to other addictive substances on the Tibetan plateau, with the exception of tobacco and occasional opioid abuse among the economic elite (See McKay, “Indifference, Cultural Difference, and a Porous Frontier: Some Remarks on the History of Recreational Drugs in the Tibetan Cultural World”). We choose to render the title more openly as “addiction” since it does not focus on alcohol but on the mind afflicted by addictions to its own poisons.

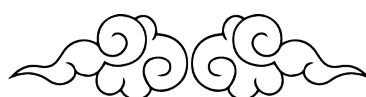
² The only edition we find of this text has rather curious punctuation. Each line ends with Sanskrit *visarga* marks (ᳵ), which are very commonly conflated with Tibetan *terma* marks (ཧྲི) that indicate a text is a revealed treasure. Since Dudul Dorje was a treasure revealer, his works are full of *terma* marks, however, the present poem shows virtually none of the characteristics of a treasure text and seems to be a personal composition intended for his student. Thus, the use of the *visarga/terma* marks may just be an editorial quirk.

³ Brahmin (*bram ze*): the highest caste in traditional Indian social strata. Brahmins are distinguished by their access to the sacred Vedic scriptures, which are the source of all knowledge. As a seventeenth-century Tibetan, Dudul Dorje likely uses the term figuratively as something like the English “gentleman,” as in someone whose nature is essentially good. Thus, the line might be read in contemporary English as “One hates to see a good man in the throes of addiction.”

⁴ “Soul” here is in the figurative sense of one’s innermost being (*zhe*), not, of course, in the non-Buddhist metaphysical sense of a permanent self. There are synonymic resonances in this stanza between “soul” (*zhe*), “innate nature” (*gnyug ma*), and “makeup” (*gshis lugs*), which is more commonly translated as “disposition,” “character,” or the extremely long “fundamentally unconditioned nature.”

⁵ This and the following stanzas have a repeating structure in which lines 1 and 3 repeat the word “suffering” (*sdug bsnjal*) + an intensifier like “inescapable” (*thar med*) or “unbearable” (*bzod med*). Since the meaning of the lines is unambiguous, rather than render a stiff word-for-word translation of the repeated phrases, we prefer to use evocative synonyms for each in accord with English stylistic conventions.

⁶ The word here is literally “son,” which is a common term of affection that a lama uses to address a close male student. We believe that in the present context, the term’s affectionateness is more important than its gender, and that using “son” might create needless confusion about whether he’s referring to his literal son or not. A good alternative is sometimes “dear student,” but we reluctantly choose “my dear” because it is slightly lighter in the meter.



⁷ Asuras (*lha min*) can be translated as “demi-gods”—powerful and privileged beings tormented by competitiveness with the gods who are even more powerful and privileged.

⁸ This line uses a phrase associated with the experience of gods when their positive karma runs out, and they traumatically descend back into lower realms.

⁹ Two kinds of giving (*sbyin gtong gnyis po*) is synonymous with two kinds of generosity (*sbyin pa gnyis*), which are the giving of things (*zang zing gi sbyin pa*) and the giving of Dharma (*chos kyi sbyin pa*). This line seems to emphasize that suffering and wholesome categories like generosity both have their root in the mind.

¹⁰ This interesting line deserves unpacking. It is literally “is and is not” (*yin min*) + “making effort” (*'bung ba*) + of + “little song” (*glu chung*). The phrase “is and is not” usually concerns moral questions of what is and is not good or right, so the line could be read as “this little poem about right and wrong.” Here, we prefer to handle it slightly more delicately since Dudul Dorje does not emphasize ethics in the poem but rather the epistemology of a mind addicted to its poisons. This is how we arrived at “the struggles of dignity (i.e., self-respect).”

¹¹ *smān chu dben khrod*. This is almost certainly a place name, as in the sublime “Healing Waters Hermitage.” However, since we cannot confirm its location, we prefer to translate the terms, which have some poetic value.

¹² Again, here “Healing Waters” (*smān chu*) is likely the name of the hermitage where he stayed. Dudul Dorje spent many years in retreat and revealing treasures in remote places, especially in the southern Tibetan regions of Powo (*spo bo*), Kongpo (*kong po*), and Pemakö (*pad+ma bkod*).



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