

‘One Day’ Meditation on the Mind of Awakening

by 8th Karmapa, Mikyo Dorje



Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin

INTRODUCTION

On this full moon day, I offer a new translation of a short ‘instruction’ by 8th Karmapa, Mikyo Dorje (1507-1544), *One Day Meditation on the Mind of Awakening*¹ taken from his *Oral Instructions: The Excellent Tree of Immortal Nectar*² (in Volume 19 of his *Collected Works*) also referred to as the *100 Short Instructions*. For more about the life and times of 8th Karmapa, Mikyo Dorje, the most extensive and thorough account of it in the English language can be found in [*The Eighth Karmapa’s Life and His Interpretation of the Great Seal*](#), by Jim Rheingans (2017). For a shorter bio, see [here](#).

The 17th Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje, has over the last few years, been giving detailed teachings on these instructions. In 2014, he gave a teaching on the instruction on the two kinds of Bodhicitta (mind of awakening) which can be seen [here](#). I am currently translating this text for publication as part of a general research and translation project to make more texts by and about 8th Karmapa available to the general public. A few scholars, have already written articles (that include excerpted translations from some texts and biographies) about the 8th Karmapa’s life (Jim Rheingans) and his views on emptiness and Buddha Nature (Klaus-Dieter Mathes and David Higgins). However, very few, if any of his texts, supplications and sadhanas, have been translated or published in their entirety. Karl Brunnholzl translated and published the 8th Karmapa’s text on Empty-of Other view (*dbu ma gzhan stong smra ba’i srol*) available to read in his book *When The Clouds Part*. I recently translated and published the 8th Karmapa’s *White Tārā Sadhana* and his *Supplication to the 1st Sangye Nyenpa*.

Twenty-Four hour meditation

The ‘one day’ meditation begins with an homage to the 1st Sangye Nyenpa who was one of the 8th Karmapa’s four main teachers. In 2014, while teaching these oral instructions, HH Karmapa explained more about Mikyo Dorje’s devotion to his root lama, the ‘black and blue Nyenpa’:

In some of the texts, it does say that some people said that 8th Karmapa could not teach the texts well and this does happen sometimes. Sangye Nyenpa was the man who led the horse of the 7th Karmapa, Chodrag Gyatso. He was very humble and devoid of retinue and would only drink the leftover tea and not eat much food and for that reason, he had become almost blue in colour. So, everyone called him ‘black and blue Nyenpa’ and he was the root lama of Mikyo Dorje. Most of the treatises he wrote and sadhanas, almost all begin with ‘I prostrate to the Mahasiddha Sangye Nyenpa’. He only followed or served him for three years but in terms of the blessings he had, these came from Sangye Nyenpa. But otherwise there were four great masters. Sometimes he would make refutations of these other masters, like my lama Karma Trinley said this but it is untenable and it is said he made a refutation of Dulmo

¹ *Byang chub kyi sems sgom tshul zhag gcig ma/* Vol. 19: 331-334, TBRC W8039, (pp. 327-330).

² *rgyal ba’i dbang po karma pa brgyad pa mi bskyod rdo rje’i gdams khrid man ngag gi rim pa ‘chi med bdud rtsi’i ljon bzang/* Vol. 19: TBRC W8039. There is also a computer input edition of this text produced by the Vajra Vidya Institute, 2 volumes, TBRC W4CZ294923.

Choje in one text, but for the mahasiddha Nyenpa, he held his words as authoritative as the words of a Buddha, There were no refutations of him and whether or not they were tenable or not tenable. So, he had really extraordinary devotion for him.

The text describes eight sessions within 24 hours, four sessions for the first half of the day from night-time onwards, and four sessions for the second half of the day until night falls again. Mikyo Dorje continually refers to sentient beings as ‘old mothers’ (ma rgan) not meaning their physical age, rather their beginningless wandering in samsara, and having been our kind mothers infinite numbers of times.

May it be of benefit and may all ‘old mother’ wanderers, like me, generate the vast mind of awakening!

Adele Tomlin, 3rd August 2020. Copyright.

THE TEXT

One Day Meditation on the Mind of Awakening

by 8th Karmapa, Mikyo Dorje

I supplicate the Mahasiddha Sangye Nyenpa, who is profound and without hypocrisy. May the blessings descend!

Here are the oral instructions for meditation on the mind of awakening (byangs chub sems) in one day [24 hours].

[First half of session]

- 1) From the dawn of the first ‘nightwatch’ until getting up, think: ‘like infinite space, deluded mother beings are infinite. Within these infinite deluded appearances, suffering gives them various types of pain. Such as the way the body lacks protection or refuge. Or not having sharp thinking abilities and being unable to speak.’ Intensely meditate on this.
- 2) After getting up until the sun rises, think: ‘all mother beings desire happiness but they do not know the methods for getting happiness. Since beginningless time, they experience immeasurable suffering. Without any support to clean it away, what a pity!’
- 3) After the sun has arisen, until noon, think: ‘wandering around perpetual samsara not understanding suffering, what to do about the huge stupidity (*blun chen*) of old mother sentient beings, going around without any method?! Inside a fiery whirlwind, they only experience scorching burns, so now, so I must extinguish the cause of this scolding heat.
- 4) From noon onwards for half a day [afternoon], think: ‘old mother beings are completely powerless to stop suffering. These old mothers bring it on themselves, such as the pain that is brought by attachment and lust for a handsome man. What they do to themselves they are helpless to stop from ripening.’

Second half of session

- 1) At the end of the afternoon until evening, think: ‘even in a deep relation with a man, real love for each other does not arise, it is so awful that whomever one meets, there is never a thought of the method to become free from samsara. How will it arise in the narrow-minds of old mothers?’
- 2) From evening-time until the sun sets, think: ‘like Hearers and Solitary Realizers, who are merely not born again in samsara, how can I tolerate not considering this suffering of old mothers? Does this suffering happen to myself alone or to all sentient beings? Do I alone wander in infinite samsara? If only one sentient being is liberated from samsara, even if one

thinks that has repaid the debt of one's own portion of samsara, it does not repay the kindness of old mother beings.'

- 3) From the sun disappearing until the pitch dark of night, think: 'What is of benefit for old mothers? Other than [realising] the primordial-awareness omniscience of all-aspects [*rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes*] there is no other method to benefit them. I have no power to give this to them myself. Therefore, in order to be of use to sentient beings, I myself will attain the complete Buddhahood.'
- 4) From night until twilight [*srod ma*] think: Firstly, I will benefit sentient beings, by endlessly generating compassion for infinite beings. Then, having attained the unsurpassable mind of awakening, at that time I will be able to effortlessly benefit sentient beings and thus give all sentient beings, the primordial awareness omniscience of all-aspects.'

Perform these eight sessions for the whole day. By this merit, may all sentient beings attain the state of Mahasiddha Sangye Nyenpa ---Gelong Mikyo Dorje. *Shabha mastu sarva dzaga tām*.

FURTHER READING

Rheingans, Jim, 2017. [*The Eighth Karmapa's Life and His Interpretation of the Great Seal \(Numata Buddhist Studies, Hamburg\)*](#).