

**'ACTUALLY REALISING' WHITE TARA DAILY PRACTICE**  
by 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, Dudul Dorje



Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin

## INTRODUCTION

Today for Tārā day, I offer the first translation and publication of a very concise White Tārā daily practice composed by the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, Dudul Dorje (1733-1797). Although the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa was not as prolific in terms of his compositions, he certainly led a life of performing miracles including saving the famous Buddha statue in the Jokhang temple from flooding, Tibet and undertaking a restoration project of the sacred site, Swayambunath Stupa in Nepal. This post pulls together some of the information about his life and miracles as well provide details as the source and origin of his compositions on White Tārā .

### ***13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa - birth and recognition***

Karmapa Dudul Dorje was born at Chawa Drongsar, south Tibet. He was recognized at the age of four and enthroned by 7th Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche and Nyingma master, Kathog Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu. The then ruler of Tibet, the seventh Dalai Lama, Kalzang Gyatso, with his prime minister, Sonam Topgyal, instituted a rule that all government officials must be Gelugpa. As a consequence of this, the Dalai Lama's approval of the new Karmapa incarnation was required. At the age of eight, he met his main guru, the great Eight Situpa, Chökyi Jungne, whose life spanned all of the twelfth Karmapa's and was to span most of the thirteenth's. Dudul Dorje received the Kagyu transmissions from him and also studied the Nyingma teachings very extensively. He appears to have been like a spiritual Dr. Doolittle, who was very fond of animals and famous for communicating with them<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Jokhang Temple. Letter to the King of the Nagas and Statue's Arms Moving***

The story about the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa's miracles at the Jokhang Temple, Tibet can be found in various biographical sources. At one point, the famous Jokhang temple, home of the Jowo Buddha Statue, was threatened by rising flood waters. A prophecy from Guru Rinpoche, said to be in a Nyingma terma (*sPyi lung 'od kyi lta ba*) had foreseen this and predicted that only the Karmapa could do something to stop it, as it was caused by a powerful serpentine spirit (naga). The Lhasa authorities requested him to come. Unable to leave immediately, he resolved the problem by writing a special letter to the naga and invoking the compassion of Avalokiteshvara. When the letter was placed on the statue it is said to have stopped the water flooding. Then, when the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa later visited the statue, the arms moved into a different position to receive the white katag scarf he offered to it. The 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, Jampel Gyatso received him and thanked him for his actions:

### ***Restoration of the Swayambu Stupa, Nepal in 1750***

Swayambhu, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, goes back to ancient times. The earliest written record of the Great Stupa of Swayambhu is a 5th century stone inscription. Honoured by kings, monks, and pilgrims alike, the stupa has been restored and repaired on numerous occasions. Around 1750, the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa also made a pilgrimage to Nepal and visited the Nepali King there and arranged for restoration to be undertaken on it. This reparation is engraved in stone there and there is said to be a copy of it in the Cambridge University library (although I was unable to find this online). Keith Dowman explains that:

The 6th Zhamarpa had the four gilt shrines placed at the cardinal directions in 1614. Rang-rig-ras-pa had a new pinnacle (*ganjira*) erected during the reign of Parthivendra Malla, the consecration taking place in 1694. The next major restoration was consecrated in 1750, probably in the wake of an earthquake, as the extensive restoration included the environs of the Stupa. Ka-thog Rig-'dzin-chen-po, the 13th Karmapa and Situ Pan-chen were the patrons of this restoration. The Tibetan inscription on the pillar on the S.E. side of the Stupa commemorates this event.

### **The Text - *Daily Practice of Actually Realising White Tārā***

The 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa's *Collected Works* are contained in two volumes, and an English translation of the outline of the works can be seen [here](#). It is certainly a treasury of interesting texts, advice and songs, (including those of humming bees). I plan to do more translations of these works in the near future. The text itself, *Actually Realising White Tārā Daily Practice* can be found in his *Collected Works* but also in *Collection of Works by the Karmapas*<sup>ii</sup> published in Lhasa, Tibet in 2013. The title uses the Tibetan term *mngon rtogs*, which can mean 'practice' or 'visualisation' in terms of a sadhana, but its literal meaning is the 'actual realization' of that visualization, not just the act of visualizing. Thus I have translated it with that meaning in mind. The colophon states that, it was 'Written by the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa as desired by Mipham Sherab.'<sup>iii</sup> The *Supplication to Noble Tārā*<sup>iv</sup> (which is also White Tārā ) is found in the same collection.

### **Cover Image of White Tārā**

The cover image used is an 18<sup>th</sup> Century White Tārā thangka in the Karma Kagyu tradition: "At the middle right, is the 13th Karmapa surrounded by attendants and students. At the middle left sits a red hat lama (likely to be Situ Panchen Chokyi Jungne) surrounded by attendants and students. Above the central figure standing on ribbons of rainbow light are Vajravarahi surrounded by flames, to the left Jinasagara Avalokiteshvara, red, with four hands and on the right side a solitary Chakrasamvara, dark blue in colour. At the top center is the primordial Buddha Vajradhara with Vajrasattva below and the Buddha Amitabha below that. Surrounding those are the lineage teachers of the Karma Kagyu tradition; Tilopa, Naropa,

Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa, Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa and the like, continuing down to the 12th Karmapa. At the top left is the Buddha Shakyamuni and at the right is Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava.” More details about the image and its source can be seen here: <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/90401>

May this new translation of a White Tārā text be of benefit in preserving the Tārā practice, promoting the activities of the Karmapas and the Dharma, and bringing all beings to the state of Noble Tārā!

Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.



*yishyin khorlo kudok kar/*

*zhal chik chak nyi yepa yi/*

The wish-fulfilling wheel, white in colour. One face and two hands, the right

སྐྱབས་སྐྱོན་གཡོན་པས་ལྷུང་ལ།།

མཐེབ་སྲིན་གྱིས་འཛིན་ཐུགས་ཀར་བསྐྱམས།།

*kyab jin yönpé utpa(?) la/*

*theb sin gyü dzin thug kar nam/*

in the mudra of generosity, the left holding an Utpala [flower]. The thumb and ring finger holding its stem at the heart.

འབས་གཉིས་དོ་རྗེའ་སྐྱེལ་ཀྱང་མཛད།།

བུ་འབུར་རུང་མཛེས་དབུ་སྐྱ་ནག།།

*zhab nyi do jé kyiltrung dzé/*

*nu bur zung dzé utra nak/*

Two legs in Vajra cross-legged posture. Beautiful bosom and black hair.

སྐྱུ་འལ་འཇུམ་པའི་མདངས་དང་ལྗན།།

རིན་ཆེན་སྣ་ཚོགས་དབུ་རྒྱ་སོགས།།

*chen zhal dzumpé dang dangden/*

*rinchen natsok ugyen sok/*

Smiling and glowing eyes and face. Adorned with various jewels on the head.

རྒྱན་ཀྱན་གྱིས་ནི་རྣམ་པར་སྤྲས།།

དར་ཟབ་དབང་པོའི་གཞུ་ཉླ་བྱས།།

*gyen kün kyi ni nampar tré/*

*darzab wangpö zhu tabü/*

Laden with all adornments, and exquisite silks like ‘Indra’s Bow’ [rainbow ].

ཀྱང་དུ་ལྷུབས་ཤིང་རྣམས་པར་གཡོ།།

སྐྱེལ་གཞུ་གནས་གསུམ་ཨོ་ཨུ་ཱུ།།

*kün du lub shing nampar yo/*

*ku yi né sum om ah hum/*

All the form is immersed in shimmering. At the three places are OM AH HUM.

ལྷ་པར་ཏྲི་ལས་འོད་འཕྲོས་པས།།

བསྐྱོམས་པ་དང་འདྲའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་པ།།

*khyepar tam lé ö trope/*

*gompa dang dré yeshepa/*

In particular, light rays streaming from the TAM, meditating like that, invites the wisdom beings.

ལྷོན་དངས་བཟླ་ས་ལྷ་ཚེ།

མཚོན་ཅིང་བསྟོན་པ་ཅི་འོས་བྱ།།

*chendrang vajra samadza/*

*chö ching töpa chi öja/*

VAJRA SAMADZA. Make offering and praises [to the beings], whatever is suitable.

ཇོ་མཉུ་བེ་ཉེ་དབྱེར་མེད་གྱུར།།

*dza hung bam ho yermé gyur/*

DZA HUM BAM HO, becoming inseparable[from you].

དབང་ལྷ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་དབང་བསྐྱར་རྟེ།།

འོད་དཔག་མེད་ཀྱི་དབུ་རྒྱན་གྱུར།།

*wanglha nam kyi wangkur té/*

*öpakmé kyi ugyen gyur/*

The empowering deities empower and Amitabha crowns the head.

དེ་ནས་སྟེང་ཁར་ཟླ་ཉེང་དུ།།

འཁོར་ལོ་རྩེབས་བརྒྱད་ལྷ་བྱུང་བཅས།།

*dené nyingkhar da tengdu/*

*khorlo tsib gyé mu khyü ché/*

Then, on a moon in the heart, is an eight-spoked wheel,

ཞེ་བར་ཏུ་ལ་གཡས་བསྐོར་དུ།།

སྤེལ་ཚོག་གྱིས་བསྐོར་རྩེབས་བརྒྱད་ལ།།

*tewar tam la ye kor du/*

*pel tsik gyi kor tsib gyé la/*

At whose hub is a TAM around which, circling clockwise, are the eight syllables on the spokes.

ཡི་གོ་བརྒྱད་གྱིས་རབ་ཏུ་བརྒྱན།།

དེ་ལས་འོད་འཕྲོས་དོན་གཉིས་བྱས།།

*yigé gyé kyi rabtu gyen/*

*dé lé ö trö dön nyi jé/*

From the perfectly adorned eight syllables, light rays stream out, performing the two purposes.

བྱིན་ལྷབས་ཚེ་བསོད་མ་ལུས་པ།།

དངོས་གྲུབ་རྣམ་པར་རང་ལ་བྲིམ།།





*lar yang lha ku gyumé ku/*

*sal dang nyokpa dralwé ngang/*

Again, the illusory form of the deity [arises]. Radiantly sparkling, devoid of muckiness.

རིམ་པར་སྐྱོང་ས།། དགོ་བ་འདི་ཡིས་སོགས་བརྗོད་དོ།།

Gradually maintain [the visualization]. Then recite the dedication of the merit and so on.

ཅེས་བ་འདི་མི་ཕམ་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་འདྲོད་དོན་བཞིན་ཀམ་ཨ་བརྩ་གསུམ་པས་བྲིས་པ་དགོ་ལེགས་འཕེལ།།

Written by the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, as wished for by Mipham Sherab. May virtue increase!

Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin, November 2020.

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<sup>i</sup> During the time of the 13<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, the 8<sup>th</sup> Shamarpa only lived for eight years, precipitating another controversy. Subsequently, Karmapa Dudul Dorje and Situ Chokyi Jungnay, once again helped by Katog Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu, recognised Shamarpa's reincarnation as a younger brother of the fourth Panchen Lama, Palden Yeshe. The seventh Gyaltsab Rinpoche (1699-1765), however, had already installed a son of the wealthy Ger Namsayling family as the reincarnation, with the approval of Shamarpa's monks at Yangpachen monastery, his principal seat in Tibet. The dispute eventually reached the courts, where it was decided that the Karmapa had indeed located the true incarnation, Shamarpa Mipam Chodrub Gyamtso, who became the principal disciple of both Karmapa Dudul Dorje and Situ Chokyi Jungnay, and the next lineage holder.

<sup>ii</sup> "sgrol dkar mngon rtogs rgyun khyer/." In karma pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs/. TBRC W3PD1288. 92: 145 - 147. lha sa/: dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang /, 2013?.

<sup>iii</sup> It is not known who Mipham Sherab is here.

<sup>iv</sup> rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma'i gsol 'debs/ karma pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs/ Volume 92 Pages 147 – 149

### ***Further Reading/Biography***

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