

## **The Pointing-the-Staff Instruction** revealed by Nyangral Nyima Özer

It was at a time when the great master Padmasambhava was staying in Samyé. There was a man by the name of Ngok Sherab Gyalpo, sixty-one years old, who had not studied much, but was someone with exceptional faith and a deep devotion towards the master. Ngok was by Padmasambhava's side for a whole year at the isolated hermitage of Drakpoche, but never once did he request a teaching, and nor did the master ever grant him one. When the year was up and the master was intending to leave, Ngok placed a 'flower' of one ounce of gold on a maṇḍala dish, and offered it to him with these words:

“Great master, I beg of you, think of me with all of your compassion. First, my learning is very meagre. Second, my intelligence is poor. Third, I have grown old; my body is failing. Great master, please, give me a teaching for an old person nearing death, a teaching that is easy to grasp, that answers every kind of question inner and outer, that is not difficult to experience directly, that has a view that is all-embracing, that is simple to put into practice, and that will really help me in the next life.”

The master carried a staff for walking.  
He lifted it and held it pointed at the old man's heart while he gave the following instruction.

“Old man, listen. Look into this awareness of yours, the buddha mind.

Look and see:

It has no form or shape. It has no color.

There is no center; there is no edge.

To begin with, it doesn't come from anywhere—it's empty.

In the meantime, it doesn't stay anywhere—it's empty.

In the end, it doesn't go anywhere—it's empty.

Being empty, it does not exist in any way at all,

Yet there is a clarity, a knowing,

And when you see this and you recognize it,

What you're recognizing is your own true nature.

You're getting just how everything is.

You're seeing the very nature itself of mind.

You're grasping, once and for all, why things are as they are.

And you are answering questions—about anything that's possible to know.

Now since this rigpa awareness, the buddha mind, doesn't exist as some thing,

it's just naturally present and it's there, inside you.

You're never going to find it somewhere else.

And so the ultimate truth of things is easy to experience directly.

This nature of mind has nothing to do with subject and object,

It transcends theories like eternity or nothingness.

There isn't anything to get enlightened—

Even a buddha is just our own awareness, naturally awake.  
And there is nothing that goes to the hell realms,

Because awareness is immaculate in itself.  
Not that there is any practice to do,  
Because rigpa's very nature is to illuminate itself.

This view of great perfection, you have it within you,  
So be absolutely certain about it, and don't look anywhere else.

Once you realize the view like this, and you want to put it into practice,  
It doesn't matter where you are, your body becomes your retreat hut.  
Then outwardly, whatever experiences come up, it's fine.  
It's only appearances appearing,

Emptiness being empty.  
So leave them be, without adding complications.  
That way, appearances are freed to become your helpers,  
And you practice by turning them into the path.

Then, Inwardly, the thoughts and tiny stirrings in your mind,  
Whatever they may be, have no essence at all—they're empty.  
They arise, are noticed and just evaporate quite naturally.  
By coming back to the clear, stable nature of mind,  
Thoughts and stirrings turn into your path:  
Then it is easy to practice.

Secretly, whatever troubling emotions and reactions crop up,  
Just look right into them, and they'll fall away, leaving no trace.  
The emotion is immediately freed, by itself.  
Practicing this is easy as well.

If you able to practice just like this,  
When you meditate, you're not bound to formal sessions.  
By seeing everything as an ally, a support,  
Your practice experiences won't chop and change,  
The natural way of being becomes an uninterrupted flow,  
And your actions are unlimited in scope.  
In fact, whatever you're doing, you are always dwelling in that ultimate natural state.

Then you'll realize that your body may be old,  
But the buddha mind never ages:  
It doesn't differentiate between young and old.  
The true nature of things is free of distinctions, so  
Once you see you have rigpa's wisdom naturally within you,  
Notions like 'sharp' or 'dim-witted' become irrelevant.

When you understand that you actually possess this true nature  
Which is beyond all categories and prejudice,

Labels like 'learned' and 'ignorant' are meaningless.  
This body, home to your mind, is only borrowed and will fall apart,  
But the wisdom of your awareness is the dharmakāya that never ceases.  
So, when you have attained an unwavering stability,  
Whether your life is long or short makes no difference.

So old man,  
Practice this, the real truth of everything,  
And take the practice deep into your heart.  
Don't mix up the words and what they mean.  
Never be without your best friend, diligence.  
Embrace everything with the sheen of mindfulness.  
Don't go for senseless chatter and troublesome gossip.  
Don't get entangled in unwholesome thinking.  
Don't get too tied up in family problems.  
Don't overdo craving for food and drink.  
Set your mind on a plain and simple death.  
You've not long left now, so focus and apply yourself!  
That is my instruction for an old person, getting close to death.  
So, this is what to do!

While he was giving this advice, the great master kept pointing his staff at the old man's heart, and so it became known as 'The Pointing-the-Staff-at-the-Old-Man Instruction'. In fact, Ngok Sherab Gyalpo was liberated; he attained siddhis. For the benefit of future generations, the Lady of Kharchen committed this teaching to writing, and it is also known as 'The Pointing the Staff Instruction'.

[https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyangrel-Nyima-Ozer/TBRC\\_P364](https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyangrel-Nyima-Ozer/TBRC_P364)

Guided meditation - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_oPtD2Eckg&t=9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_oPtD2Eckg&t=9s)