

Tara Meditation (Front Generation)

Taking Refuge and Generating the Altruistic Intention

I take refuge until I am enlightened in the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Sangha. By the positive potential I create by practicing generosity and the other far-reaching attitudes, may I attain Buddhahood in order to benefit all sentient beings.

The Four Immeasurables

May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes.

May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes.

May all sentient beings not be separated from sorrowless bliss.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger.

Visualization

You are in your ordinary form. At your heart appears a white AH, made of light. This transforms into a white moon disc. At its center appears a green syllable TAM, the essence of Tara's blissful omniscient mind of wisdom and compassion. Standing clockwise around the edge of the moon appear the letters of the mantra *om tare tuttare ture soha*, made of green light.

From the TAM, rainbow-colored light radiates in all directions and invokes Tara to appear in the space in front of you. She is seated on a lotus and moon disc. Her body is made of emerald-green light, youthful and exquisitely beautiful. Her right hand on her right knee is in the gesture of giving; her left hand at her heart is the gesture of refuge and holds the stem of a blue utpala flower that blooms by her ear.

Her left leg is drawn up and her right leg is slightly extended. Her face is very beautiful and she smiles with loving-kindness at all sentient beings. She has the appearance of a smiling, sixteen year-old girl.

Tara is the omniscient mind, great compassion, and power of all Buddhas manifested in the female aspect of Buddha Tara. Through her power she liberates sentient beings from suffering and leads them to the peerless happiness of enlightenment.

Surrounding her in space are the twenty-one Taras, as well as all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Surrounding you are all sentient beings. Imagine leading them in reciting the prayers and requests to Tara.

Seven-limb Prayer

Reverently I prostrate with my body, speech and mind

And present clouds of every type of offering, actual and mentally transformed.

I confess all my negative actions accumulated since beginningless time

And rejoice in the virtues of all holy and ordinary beings.

Please remain until cyclic existence ends,

And turn the wheel of Dharma for sentient beings.

I dedicate the virtues created by myself and others to the great enlightenment.

Homage to the Twenty-one Taras

OM I prostrate to the noble transcendent liberator.

1. Homage to Tara swift and fearless
With eyes like a flash of lightning
Lotus-born in an ocean of tears
Of Chenrezig, three worlds' protector.
2. Homage to you whose face is like
One hundred autumn moons gathered
And blazes with the dazzling light
Of a thousand constellations.
3. Homage to you born from a gold-blue lotus
Hands adorned with lotus flowers
Essence of giving, effort and ethics,
Patience, concentration and wisdom.
4. Homage to you who crown all Buddhas
Whose action subdues without limit
Attained to every perfection
On you the bodhisattvas rely.
5. Homage to you whose TUTTARA and HUM
Fill the realms of desire, form and space
You crush seven worlds beneath your feet
And have power to call all forces.
6. Homage to you adored by Indra,
Agni, Brahma, Vayu and Ishvara,
Praised in song by hosts of spirits,
Zombies, scent-eaters and yakshas.
7. Homage to you whose TREY and PEY
Destroy external wheels of magic
Right leg drawn in and left extended
You blaze within a raging fire.
8. Homage to you whose TURE destroys
The great fears, the mighty demons.
With a wrathful frown on your lotus face
You slay all foes without exception.
9. Homage to you beautifully adorned
By the Three Jewels' gesture at your heart
Your wheel shines in all directions
With a whirling mass of light.

10. Homage to you, radiant and joyful
Whose crown emits a garland of light
You, by the laughter of TUTTARA
Conquer demons and lords of the world.
11. Homage to you with power to invoke
The assembly of local protectors
With your fierce frown and vibrating HUM
You bring freedom from all poverty.
12. Homage to you with crescent moon crown
All your adornments dazzling bright
From your hair-knot Amitabha
Shines eternal with great beams of light.
13. Homage to you who dwells in a blazing wreath
Like the fire at the end of this age
Your right leg outstretched and left drawn in
Joy surrounds you who defeats hosts of foes.
14. Homage to you whose foot stamps the earth
And whose palm strikes the ground by your side
With a wrathful glance and the letter HUM
You subdue all in the seven stages.
15. Homage to the blissful, virtuous, peaceful one
Object of practice, nirvana's peace
Perfectly endowed with SOHA and OM
Overcoming all the great evils.
16. Homage to you with joyous retinue
You subdue fully all enemies' forms
The ten-letter mantra adorns your heart
And your knowledge-HUM gives liberation.
17. Homage to TURE with stamping feet
Whose essence is the seed-letter HUM
You cause Meru, Mandara and Vindya
And all three worlds to tremble and shake.
18. Homage to you who holds in your hand
A moon like a celestial lake
Saying TARA twice and the letter PEY
You dispel all poisons without exception.

19. Homage to you on whom the kings of gods
The gods themselves and all spirits rely
Your armor radiates joy to all
You soothe conflicts and nightmares as well.
20. Homage to you whose eyes, the sun and moon,
Radiate with pure brilliant light
Uttering HARA twice an TUTTARA
Dispels extremely fearful plagues.
21. Homage to you, adorned with three natures
Perfectly endowed with peaceful strength
You destroy demons, zombies and yakshas
O TURE, most exalted and sublime!

Thus the root mantra is praised
And twenty-one homages offered.

The Condensed Praise (optional)

OM to the transcendent subduer, Arya Tara, I prostrate.
Homage to the glorious one who frees with TARE;
With TUTTARA you calm all fears;
You bestow all success with TURE;
To the sound SOHA I pay great homage.

Request, Visualization, and Mantra Recitation

Make the following request to Tara: “May every living being who merely hears, sees, remembers, touches, or talks to me, immediately be purified of all his or her problems and their causes – the three poisonous attitudes rooted in the ignorance that does not realize the nature of the self or of phenomena and the ignorance that does not understand the cause of happiness or of suffering. May they attain temporal happiness as well as ultimate happiness. May I be able to lead them to the peerless happiness of enlightenment by showing them the various means that are suitable for them, just as you Mother Tara guide sentient beings.”

Breathe in slowly. As you breathe out, think that you exhale all the obstacles to sentient beings’ peace and happiness. Among these obstacles are the true origins of suffering – the three poisonous attitudes and the actions (karma) motivated by them. These actions harm you and do not allow you to have temporal happiness or the peerless happiness of enlightenment. They also harm others, interfering with their temporal and ultimate happiness and peace. These obstacles also include true sufferings – all the problems, sicknesses, and unsatisfactory situations that you and others experience. As you exhale, imagine that all of these come out through your nostrils in the form of filthy, foul-smelling pollution. The pollution goes beyond this earth, disappears, and ceases to exist. Do this several times. Feel purified and empty of all the negativities within you.

Visualize that streams of radiant and blissful green light from the TAM and mantra letters at Tara’s heart flow into you and into the sentient beings surrounding you through the crown of your head and through the pores of your body. It completely fills your body and mind. This light purifies the imprints of all destructive actions and dispels all sickness and

interferences. In addition, it brings inspiration and blessings from Tara, thus enabling you to realize the entire gradual path to enlightenment quickly. While doing the visualization, recite as much as possible Tara's peaceful mantra: *om tare tuttare ture soha*

While reciting the mantra, you may do the following contemplations. (You can do one or more contemplation each session.)

The first contemplation

Think that the essence of the nectar is Tara's wisdom. As the nectar flows into you, think that you receive all of her wisdom. Your mind becomes the nature of every wisdom possessed by Tara. Concentrate on this.

The second contemplation

Think the essence of the nectar is Tara's great compassion. Single-pointedly concentrate on your mind being the nature of Tara's great compassion for every suffering being. Feel that their suffering is unbearable and that you want to liberate them from it as soon as possible.

The third contemplation

The essence of the nectar is Tara's great power to perfectly guide sentient beings. Place your mind single-pointedly on having the power to guide all sentient beings in the most effective way.

The fourth contemplation

While reciting the mantra, think the nectar purifies and transforms your body, speech and mind. Feel incredible bliss. The nectar completely fills your body and mind. Every atom of your body from your head to your feet is filled with unceasing bliss that cannot be compared with ordinary pleasures. Single-pointedly concentrate on the sensation of bliss.

Lamrim Meditation

Meditate on the Lamrim, the gradual path to enlightenment. You may do this according to meditation outlines. Or you may recite "The Three Principal Aspects of the Path" by Je Tsongkhapa (found in *Pearl of Wisdom, Book I*), meditating deeply on one verse each session.

Aspiration and Absorption

Think: "The most important thing in my life is to not harm others and to benefit them. Just as I do not wish harm from them, all beings do not wish to receive harm from me. Just as I wish every sentient being to help me, to benefit me by giving me temporal and ultimate happiness, all sentient beings wish me to benefit them and to give them temporal and ultimate happiness. This is the purpose of my life. My responsibility is not only to not harm them, it is also to benefit them in every way I am able."

Because you have the attitude to not harm and to benefit others, Buddha Mother Tara is extremely pleased and happy. She comes on top of your head, melts into green radiating light, and dissolves into you. Your body, speech, and mind become inseparable from Mother Tara's holy body, speech and mind. Concentrate on this for as long as you can.

Dedication and Auspicious Verses

Due to this merit may I soon/ Attain the enlightened state of Guru Tara.

That I may be able to liberate/ All sentient beings from their suffering.

Through this merit, may the Venerable Lady Tara take care of me and all sentient beings. May we see the face of Amitabha Buddha and be born in Sukhavati. May we enjoy the Mahayana teachings.

O compassionate and venerable subduer, may the infinite beings, including myself soon purify the two obscurations and complete both collections so that we may attain full enlightenment.

For all of my lives, until I reach this stage, may I know the sublime happiness of humans and gods. So that I may become fully omniscient, please pacify quickly all obstacles, spirits, obstructions, epidemics, diseases and so forth, the various causes of untimely death, bad dreams and omens, the eight fears and other afflictions, and make it so that they no longer exist.

May the mundane and supramundane collections of all excellent auspicious qualities and happiness increase and develop, and may all wishes be fulfilled naturally and effortlessly, without an exception.

May I strive to realize and increase the sacred Dharma, accomplishing your stage and beholding your sublime face. May my understanding of emptiness and the precious bodhicitta increase like the moon waxing full.

May I be reborn from an extremely beautiful and holy lotus in the joyous and noble mandala of the conqueror. May I attain whatever prophecy I receive in the presence of Amitabha Buddha.

O deity whom I have practiced in previous lives, the enlightening influence of the three-time Buddhas, blue-green with one face and two arms, the swift pacifier, O mother holding an utpala flower, may you be auspicious!

Whatever your body, O Mother of Conquerors, whatever your retinue, lifespan and pure land, whatever your name, most noble and holy, may I and all others attain only these.

By the force of these praises and requests made to you, may all disease, poverty, fighting and quarrels be calmed. May the precious Dharma and everything auspicious increase throughout the world and directions where I and all others dwell.

You who have abandoned all bodily defects and possess the signs and marks of a Buddha; You who have abandoned all defects of speech and possess a beautiful, sparrow-like voice; You who have abandoned all defects of mind and see all the infinite objects of knowledge; O brilliant mother of auspicious glory, please bring your auspicious presence to us!

(In the break time, see all forms as Tara, all sounds as her mantra, and regard all thoughts Tara's thoughts, i.e. as empty of inherent existence.)

This text is a combination of two Tara practices by Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche.