

White Tara Daily Practice and Commentary

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Root Text by HE Lobten Tenga Rinpoche

Commentary by HE 10th Kyabje Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche

White Tara Daily Practice and Commentary

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Translator's Introduction

This translation was completed in April 2019. The Tibetan text was published by Benchen Dharma Institute Publications in 2012. On request, I received the oral transmission on it from HE 10th Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche, who also kindly provided responses to my questions during its translation and read the final draft.

HE Tenga Rinpoche is considered to be a highly accomplished practitioner of White Tara. According to biographical accounts, at around 18 years old, he went into the presence of 9th Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche in order to request a yidam meditation practice from him. Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche replied that the yidam deity of Rinpoche's previous lives had always been White Tara, and bestowed the empowerment of White Tara upon him one day. From his teacher and spiritual friend Khenpo Söpa Tharchin, Rinpoche received the oral transmission and full instructions on White Tara. He was then advised to enter into a twelve week retreat of continuous White Tara recitation. In accordance with that, Rinpoche's relic stupa at Benchen monastery, Pharping, Nepal is dedicated to White Tara and contains her image and her palace and mandala.

The 10th Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche is also an accomplished practitioner of White Tara. The commentary he gave on Tenga Rinpoche's root text here, incorporates the Preliminary Practices (the Ngondro) into the daily practice of White Tara.

May it be of benefit!

Adele Tomlin, May 2019.

White Tara Practice and Commentary

Root Text by HE Tenga Rinpoche

Namo Buddha, Dharma and Sangha!

Devotedly with the three doors I go for refuge.

In order that all sentient beings as vast as space

Attain Buddhahood, I generate bodhicitta.

om shunyata jnana vajra svabhava atma ko ham

From within emptiness, the sound HUM transforms into a white protection fence.

In the centre of that, a BRHUM becomes a crystal palace.

At the centre, from a PAM a lotus, from an AH a moon,

A white TAM, one's mind, then transforms into an uptala flower

adorned with TAM, emanates light rays accomplishing the two purposes.

Oneself transforms into the wish-fulfilling wheel [Tara],

White, like moonstone, one face and two hands;

The right hand in the supreme giving mudra, the left holds an uptala.

Two crossed-legs and adorned with precious ornaments,

Silk lower garments, a moon drape behind.

Three syllables at the three places, at the heart centre a lotus, moon and TAM.

Light radiates from them, inviting the wisdom beings, who then dissolve.

Again, light radiates out inviting the empowerment deities.

At the centre of the heart, on lotus and moon, an eight-spoked wheel;

Above an OM, below HA, in the middle, a white TAM,

Surrounded by a white garland of

The eight syllable mantra, on the wheel-spokes.

From that, rays of light draw together all the life-forces of the five elements.

Again, the light rays draw forth the deities,

Gathering together the long-life accomplishment of the Vidyadharas.

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Again, light radiates out, gathering together the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

and long-life accomplishment, these dissolve into the TAM.

One attains the deathless, long-life accomplishment.

OM TARE TUTTARE TU RE SVA HA

OM TARE TUTTARE MAMA AHYU PUNYE JNANA PUSHTIM KURU SVA HA

The outer vessel and inner contents, vajra fence and palace melt into light,

Dissolve into you and you dissolve into the TAM.

The TAM also dissolves into light within the unfabricated, ultimate nature.

One rests in the meditative equipoise of the flow of the genuine, natural state.

Again, rise in the form of Jetsun Tara.

By this virtue, may all beings attain Buddhahood.

The stages of the general preliminaries

The stages of the general preliminaries are:

- 1) Refuge and bodhicitta
- 2) Vajrasattva recitation
- 3) Mandala accumulations
- 4) Guru yoga

Although the normally stages come like that, here in this context, in order to purify the mindstream, first, one does the meditation and recitation on Vajrasattva. Second, to protect one from lower and mistaken paths, one takes refuge; the stage of taking refuge and bodhicitta. Third, in order to complete the accumulation of merit, one offers the Mandala. Fourth, in order to quickly have the lama's blessing enter you, there is guru yoga. Thus, the stages are in that order.

1) Vajrasattva

In terms of the practice of Vajrasattva, at the beginning, after getting up early in the morning, and having washed, sit in the Vajra posture¹. Then, thinking to completely purify one's three doors [body, speech and mind] of the negativities, obscurations and harmful obstacles, breathe out impure air three times through both nostrils and purify it.

Then, meditate that at the top of one's head, is a moon on top of a lotus flower. On top of that, indivisible from the essence of one's root lama is Vajrasattva. At the heart centre of Vajrasattva are the one hundred syllables. Visualise that the mantra is arranged like a string of pearls around it. At one's heart centre is a lotus flower and on top of that a moon. On top of that, is Jetsun Arya Tara and at her heart centre is a white TAM. Meditate that Arya Tara is also inseparable from one's root lama. Having confessed all the negativities and obscurations of oneself and others' body, speech and mind, then it is necessary to apply the method of purification.

Vajrasattva, seated above one's head, melts into light. This dissolves from the top of the head down into the Tara at the heart. Through the power of reciting the one hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva and one's devotion and faith, white nectar flows from the white TAM at the heart of Bhavagan Jetsun Tara, which fills up her entire body.

From the right hand, in the mudra of supreme giving, the nectar flows down from the tips of the fingertips, like milk. This overflows filling up one's entire body. Think that all the physical ailments, sorrows, depression, untimely death, negative conditions and obstacles, degenerated commitments, negativities and obscurations and so on are all completely expelled from the pores of the body. One's body, externally and internally, becomes totally without obscurations, like a brilliant shining, white crystal. Then, the ten syllable mantra and the mantra of Vajrasattva merge together and one recites the mantra. That is how one offers the confession.

By the power of that supplication, Jetsun Tara at one's heart melts into light, which then melts into you and imagine that you have directly become Arya Tara. Rest in the equipoise

within the non-conceptuality of the three spheresⁱⁱ. After that one dedicates the merit. That is the recitation meditation of Vajrasattva.

2) Going for refuge and generating bodhicitta

At the beginning one goes for refuge. In the space in front, in the centre of a lotus flower, is a tree with trunk, branches, leaves and abundant fruits, and a four-petalled lotus flower on that. At the centre of that four-petalled lotus flower is the Protector Amitabha Buddha, inseparable from the essence of one's root lama and Jetsun Tara. On top of the front facing petal, one meditates oneself, as the embodiment of all deities, Jetsun Tara. On the right petal, is the Teacher Shakya, Victorious One, the embodiment of all the Buddhas of the three times. At the petal at the back of Amitabha, is the complete embodiment of the Great Motherⁱⁱⁱ, the sacred Dharma. On the left petal, is the complete embodiment of the sangha, Avalokiteśvara. Then, meditate that surrounding them, and in the spaces in between, are the dakinis and dharma protectors, heros and so on, like masses of clouds. One should imagine that they are actually present and manifest praise and offerings with one's mind.

In front of the tree, with oneself as the leader, are the six types of sentient beings, enemies, relatives, neutral, all of whom have been one's mother. They remain there like a group of people at a market in a town. Meditate not only that they are like a gathering at a market, but also contemplate that all these mother and father sentient beings, are tormented by inconceivable suffering due to the result of causes, karma and afflictions. Thus, they supplicate Buddha Amithaba, and the four directions of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, 'please protect and give us refuge from the causes of suffering of all sentient beings who are experiencing tremendous suffering'. When reciting the refuge, one must imagine at the same time, all sentient beings also loudly recite refuge. This recitation of going for refuge of oneself and all sentient beings as vast as space is also in the preliminaries of Mahāmudrā.

3) Generating the mind of awakening (bodhicitta)

With the three minds of love, compassion and the wish for enlightenment, one thinks 'may infinite sentient beings attain the causes of happiness' and so on, that is love. 'May they be separated from the causes of suffering' and so on, that is compassion. Then similarly, there is the mind of awakening, bodhicitta. One thinks, 'may all the six classes of sentient beings, temporarily have long lives, no sicknesses, obstacles pacified and accomplish their Dharma aspirations'. Ultimately, 'may they be established in the state of the deathless, Arya Tara'. That is the *aspiring* mind of awakening. Then in order to do that, think, 'I, myself, will strenuously practise Arya Tara' and then, actually making that effort, is the *applying* mind of awakening. Think and make the commitment that 'until I directly accomplish Jetsun Tara and meet her face, I will not give up'. The prayer is like that from the *Bodhisattva's Way of Life* by Shantideva.

At the end, the objects of refuge melt into light and dissolve into Amitabha at the centre. Then, Amitabha melts into light and dissolves into oneself. Think that the blessings of the lama and the three jewels have become completely one within your mindstream. That is going for refuge and generating the mind of awakening.

4) Mandala Offering

It is necessary to clean the place where one will make the mandala offering. Then, mentally one not only does a smoke purification but also sprinkles water. Imagine that the sound HUM protects from all obstacles. In the centre of the mandala plate, one puts a tiny grain. *OM VAJRA BHUMI AH HUM*. While saying that, meditate on it being endowed with the golden ground, Mount Meru, the four continents, eight minor continents and the offering objects and so on. Meditate these are all on top of a lotus and moon seat. On top of that, apply perfumed water.

OM VAJRA REKHE AH HUM. While saying that, visualise that all the space in between is filled with perfumed water endowed with the eight qualities^{iv}. The edge of the mandala is surrounded by an iron mountain range circumference. At the central seat is a white TAM. Visualise that TAM becomes oneself as Tara, the wish-fulfilling wheel, at whose heart, on top of a moon is a white TAM. Light rays stream out from that drawing together at the space in front, one's root lama Amitabha, surrounded by masses of lineage lamas. Below that, one visualises Jetsun Tara, surrounded by masses of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In the Indian tradition, even though they use fresh flowers on top of the mandala, in Tibet, they place perfumed water and grains. It is necessary to place them in the centre and the four directions.

PEMA KAMALAYA SATVAM. While reciting that, all the wisdom beings are invited and, as was explained before, one thinks that they dissolve into the five seed syllables. The wisdom beings dissolving become the five root syllables. How do they transform into those? On top of the central seat, the white TAM becomes Amitabha crowning the head of Tara, surrounded by lineage lamas. The yellow TAM at the eastern Lhuphagpo, transforms into hundreds of Ayra Taras surrounded by deities of the four classes. The blue MUM at the southern Dzambuling, transforms into Shakyamuni Buddha surrounded by all the fully awakened Buddhas of the three times. The red AH at the western Balangcho, transforms into the dharmakāya Great Mother surrounded by volumes of precious Dharma texts. The green HRIH at the northern Draminyen, transforms into Avalokiteśvara surrounded by the noble sangha of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. Then one meditates that in the spaces in between are clouds and clouds of dakinis and dharma protectors.

First, after having clearly focused on those objects and having generated the deity, one then lifts up the mandala plate and places the outer offerings in front. If there are no outer offerings, it is permissible not to offer them. Then, meditate that oneself and numberless sentient beings appear. From that, one offers with the mudras *argam*, *padyam* and so on^v.

Then, the light emanating from one's heart manifests infinite goddesses that are invited and one offers to the offering goddesses. Generally, there are eight offering goddesses and they each have an individual colour. However, it is also permissible to meditate on manifesting various offering goddesses. Then, focus on the seven-branch offering and recite the ten syllable mantra (*om ta ra tu ta re tu re sva ha*) a little. Sometimes, during the break, one should recite the long mantra. That is the setting up of the mandala.

As for the offering of the mandala. At the beginning, after have cleaned the mandala plate well, one applies perfumed water. The way of offering the mandala, is the same as during the preliminaries. At the time of dissolution at the end, imagine that the heaps on top of the mandala plate, melt into light that come to remain at the top of one's head. Dissolving into you, one perfects the two accumulations of primordial awareness and merit. Then, think and imagine that you become one with all the blessings of body, speech and mind. That is a brief summary of the mandala.

5) Guru Yoga

At the top of one's head, on top of a precious throne held up by eight lions, is an eight-petalled lotus, at the centre of which is the essence of and indivisible from the lama, Jetsun Tara, the wish-fulfilling wheel. Her body is white, with the customary ornaments and OM AH HUNG in the three places. At the heart, on top of a moon, is clearly arranged the wheel and seed syllables of the mantra. Light radiates out from these seed syllables inviting the lineage lamas and the three rare, supreme ones.

Imagine that the lamas in front of you then dissolve into Jetsun Tara as the singular embodiment and essence of all the sources of refuge. Then, out of untiring devotion, intensely supplicate, make offerings and praises and recite pleasant words. At that time, there are the four supplications of all mother sentient beings^{vi}. Furthermore, one should recite the seven refuges of Tara^{vii} from the White Tara sadhana called 'Bestowing All the Accomplishments'^{viii}. When one is supplicating, recite it until strong feelings arrive. This supplication is extremely important.

At the time of the path, in order for the blessings of Jetsun Tara to enter your mindstream, it is necessary to take the four empowerments. The way of taking the empowerments is as follows. From Jetsun Tara, indivisible from one's root lama, white light rays of nectar stream from her body. Red light rays of speech nectar radiate from her throat. From her heart, blue lights rays emanate the mind nectar. From the navel, yellow light rays stream out the primordial awareness nectar. These dissolve into one's four places, completely purifying the four obscurations and one attains the four empowerments. All the blessings of the body, speech, mind and primordial awareness enter into one's mindstream. The three kāyas, dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, nirmanakāya and the fourth kāya, svabhavikakāya, all the four kāyas are actualised.

Then, the lama melts into light, dissolves into you and meditate that the lama's body, speech and mind and one's own body, speech and mind become inseparable. With devotion, one rests in the equipoise of the clear light Mahāmūdra.

Gathering Accumulations

There are two gatherings: there is the conventional gathering of accumulation of merit and the ultimate gathering of accumulation of primordial awareness. As explained in the

offering of the mandala, these are included within that. There is the method of giving rise in one's mindstream to the precious mind of bodhicitta. In order to attain the precious state of Buddha, it is necessary to have the cause of the precious mind of bodhicitta. The method to do that is the conventional mind of bodhicitta of gathering the accumulation of merit. For the ultimate gathering of the accumulation of primordial awareness, it is particularly necessary to have the ultimate bodhicitta.

As for the gathering of the accumulation of merit, in order to generate the precious mind of awakening, it is sufficient to think about the seven-point cause and effect oral instructions^{ix} from the lineage of Atisha. If one cannot meditate on all those, then the meditation on the four immeasurables^x is fine too. The meaning of 'immeasurable' is without any bias for any sentient beings, one thinks with courage and strength 'may I place infinite, innumerable sentient beings in the state of the omniscient victor'. Since they are immeasurable, it is termed such. That is the conventional mind of awakening.

In terms of the ultimate bodhicitta, mind of awakening, in the *Ornament of Sutras*, Maitreya says:

*Having investigated that there is nothing other than mind
Then, one realises even the mind does not exist.
The intellect logically realises those two do not exist
Thus abide in the expanse of phenomena that are not truly existent.*

At the beginning, by analysing the outer objects, one realises that all outer phenomena are not truly established. If external objects are not truly established, yet isn't the inner mind truly established? First, where does the mind arise? Then, where does the mind stay? Finally, where does the mind cease? By that analysis, one realises there is no truly established essence of mind. Then, in dependence on the realisation that objects are not truly established and mind is not truly established, that both mind and objects have no true establishment, the nature of mind is empty. It's nature is clarity. Like that, one rests in the equipoise of the mahāmudrā, ultimate reality of inseparable clarity-emptiness. That is the ultimate bodhicitta. Having contemplated like that previously, one joins that with the refuge and bodhicitta.

Practice of the Root Text

First, going for refuge.

*Namo Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,
devotedly with the three doors we go for refuge.*

The meaning of these words is as follows. The three supreme rare objects of refuge are inseparable from Jetsun Tara. The body of Arya Tara is the Arya Sangha. Her speech is the Dharma. Her mind is the actual Buddha. Thus, one goes for refuge,

Second, generating bodhicitta, the mind of awakening.

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*In order that all sentient beings as vast as space
Attain Buddhahood, I generate Bodhicitta.
om shunyata jnana vajra svabhava atma ko ham*

One generates the mind of awakening thinking that for oneself and sentient beings as vast as space may all the temporary obstacles be pacified and ultimately become inseparable from Jetsun Tara.

The main practice is as follows. Within the *om śūnyatā jñāna vajra svabhāvātmako 'ham'*^{xi} the way of ultimate gathering accumulation of primordial awareness is included. The meaning of *śūnyatā* is that since no phenomena of samsara or nirvana is truly established apart from the mind, it is emptiness. If it is *śūnyatā*, does that mean all the phenomena included within samsara and nirvana are completely empty? No, it does not. Although the essential nature is emptiness, in terms of the aspect of its inseparability from its nature of luminosity, there is the recitation, *jñāna*. Like that the emptiness and primordial awareness, first they are unarising, second they do not remain and finally, they do not cease. Due to that essence, that is not arising, not remaining and not ceasing, those three, it has the nature of being permanent and unchanging, thus it says 'vajra' like a thunderbolt.

The meaning of *svabhāvā* is natural, or unfabricated. What is unfabricated? Like the vajra whose essence is emptiness and nature is clarity. That is the abiding reality or nature of all phenomena.

ātma means the understanding 'suchness itself', as was explained before, the abiding reality of the union of clarity-emptiness, is said to be the ultimate abiding reality and the ultimate suchness itself.

Ko 'ham' means 'maintaining pride'. The way of holding pride is oneself having the pride of the deity, or the ultimate nature of mind, one must keep the pride that thinks 'I have that mind of the ultimate state'. That is the meaning of the mantra. All of that is the ultimate mind of Bodhi (awakening).

Having done the preliminaries, then there is the main practice. There are two parts, the generation stage and the completion stage. First, in the generation stage, there are two, the deity yoga and the recitation yoga. First, through the meditation of four stages/branches is the practice of deity yoga. After that, one makes offerings and praises. After that, there is stable and clear recollection.

1) Deity Yoga

From within emptiness the sound HUM transforms into a white protection fence.

In the centre of that, a BRHUM becomes a crystal palace.

The meaning of this is all phenomena transform into emptiness. One meditates that from within emptiness the sound of the letter HUM resounds forcefully filling the entire space. The HUM represents the aspect of the appearance of the ultimate abiding nature of the mind, or the aspect of the clarity of the abiding state of mind. It is called the appearance

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aspect of 'mind itself'. The mind that internally apprehends external objects, is not polluted by thoughts of duality. This is the clarity aspect of the pure mind.

The words '*a white protection fence*'; the way of meditating on that is as follows. Below this sound HUM is the vajra ground base. The whole surface is a net of vajras. On the upper part is a vajra tent. Above that, is a vajra top. Inside the vajra tent there is a canopy of vajras on the outer surface completely covered by a lattice of vajras and arrows on the outside as ornaments. These are all white in colour. Also, it is not narrow but extremely vast. Harms-doers and obstacles, whatever they are, cannot come within it. Even a kalpa-destroying wind does not have the power to destroy it.

Then, meditate that in the centre of that tent, a BRHUM emanates a magnificent palace. The appearing syllable BHRUM is white. The BHRUM transforms into a precious white moonstone palace with four corners, four doors and four pillars.

At the centre, from a PAM a lotus, from an AH a moon

One's mind a white TAM transforms into an uptala flower

Adorned with TAM that emanates light rays accomplishing the two purposes.

The meaning of this is as follows. In the centre of the palace is a white letter, PAM. From that white letter PAM arises a lotus flower with a stalk that is not short but long. Its colour is white and petals have completely blossomed. On top of that, a white AH transforms into a full moon mandala disc. On top of that seat, as in the aspiration before, in dependence on the aspiration prayer, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the essence of one's mind are represented by a white letter TAM. This letter transforms into a white uptala flower with stalk, petals and so on. Above the symbol of the white letter TAM, rays of light appear and emanate in all directions. They pervade all the worlds of the ten directions, making offerings to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Liberating all beings contained within the six classes conquering untimely death, and so on and liberating them from the eight and sixteen dangers. The two obscurations and their habitual tendencies are completely purified.

After that there are two ways to meditate. One way, is to think that all beings transform into the body of Jetsun Tara. The other is to meditate that all sentient beings are established into the state of Jetsun Tara by placing the seed of potential for that within them. That is also admissible to meditate on. So there are two ways.

Oneself transforms into the wish-fulfilling wheel

White, like moonstone, one face and two arms

The right hand in the supreme giving mudra, the left holds an uptala

Two crossed-legs and adorned with precious ornaments

Silk lower garments, a moon drape behind

Three syllables at the three places, at the heart centre a lotus, moon and TAM

Light radiates from them, inviting the wisdom beings, who then dissolve .

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There are seven lines from 'Oneself transforms.....until 'who then dissolve'. For the line 'Oneself transforms.....' there are two stages. All the light returns and condenses into the uptala, which then dissolves into the TAM. Then, one meditates on that being oneself as Jetsun Tara.

Then the second line, *white, like moonstone....*, the body radiates light rays that are very beautiful and brilliant. She has a smiling face, three eyes on the head, an eye of primordial awareness on each of the palms and soles of the hands and feet, seven in total. The right hand is in the mudra of supreme giving, the left is holding a white stem at the heart. Adorned with various precious ornaments, head crown, earrings, short and long necklace, pearl necklace, armlets, hand and foot bracelets, belt ornamented with bells. Wearing upper garments of divine silks, lower rainbow-coloured silk garments. Hair tied up, feet seated in a cross-legged position. Behind her is a moon drape. This is the stage of approaching the perfectly complete form.

Then meditate that at the forehead is a white OM; the throat a red AH and at the heart centre, on top of a white moon seat, is the white syllable TAM. At the lower part of the heart is a blue HUM. As was explained before, from the three syllables at the three places and the white TAM, light radiates out inviting all the wisdom beings. That is the *branch of approaching the deity*.

From the Mountain Potala^{xii} the wisdom beings are invited and come to abide in the space before oneself. One makes the seven outer offerings to the emanated goddesses in front. They become inseparable and dissolve into you. One then thinks, 'until I attain enlightenment they will not become separated from myself'. Inviting them and then their dissolution is the branch of *accomplishing the deity*.

Again light radiates out inviting the empowerment deities.

Again, from one's heart centre light radiates out from the syllable HUM inviting the empowerment deities of the five families and all the wrathful deities, father and mother consorts. First, one makes offerings up to them, supplicating them to bestow the empowerment. When making the supplication, one requests the five families to think of you, the male and female bodhisttavas to make prayers for good fortune and all the wrathful female and males to dispel obstructing forces. The five mother consorts hold a vase filled with the nectar of primordial awareness. During the empowerment, the vase receptacle fills up, like water pouring into it; purifying all the stains of one's three doors [body, speech and mind] without exception, with the remainder of the water that overflows from it.

At the top of the head, appears the master of the family, Buddha Amitabha, with two hands in the meditative equipoise holding an alms bowl. His legs and feet in a crossed-legged posture; body red in colour. Then visualise that the empowerment deities also dissolve into the 'suchness itself'. That is the *branch of great accomplishment*.

2) Offerings and Praise

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Again, the offering goddesses manifest from oneself and make offerings to you as well as praise the great qualities of your body, speech and mind. After that, the goddesses gather together into oneself and that is the *completion of the deity yoga*.

Mantra Recitation

There are three parts:

- a) The clear appearance of the deity
- b) Support of divine pride
- c) Pure recollection

At the centre of the heart, on lotus and moon, an eight-spoked wheel

Above an OM, below HA, in the middle, a white TAM

Surrounded by a white garland of

the eight syllable mantra, on the wheel-spokes

First, meditation on the chakra wheel. Visualise oneself as Jetsun White Tara at whose heart centre is a white, eight-petalled lotus. On top of that, is a moon mandala disc. On top of that a white, eight-spoked Dharmachakra, at the hub of the wheel, a white TAM. Surrounding that is the main practice ten-syllable mantra OM TA RE TUTTARE TURE SVA HA that one recites. Above the TAM is the OM, like a bird soaring in space it is said. Below the TAM, inside an empty tunnel/hole at the hub of the wheel is HA. The other eight syllables, TA RE TU TA RE TU RE SVA face inwards and outwards.

The syllables are all like the colour of white pearls, brightly shining and vibrating with great light. One-pointedly remain on that. That is the yoga of meditation on the wheel.

Generation Stage

From that, rays of light draw together all the life-forces of the five elements

Again, the light rays draw forth the deities

Gathering together the long-life accomplishment of the Vidyadharas

Again, light radiates out, gathering together the blessing of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

and the long-life accomplishment, these dissolve into the TAM.

One attains the deathless, long-life accomplishment.

OM TARE TUTTARE TU RE SVA HA

OM TARE TUTTARE MA MA AH YU PUNYE JNANA PUSHTIM KU RU SVA HA

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Now is the explanation from the top line ‘*rays of light draw together...*’ until ‘*the deathless, long-life accomplishment*’. Generally, in terms of the main recitation practice there are three: ‘silent recitation’, ‘vajra recitation’ and ‘the emanating and absorbing of light rays recitation’.

At the beginning one brings the breath to rest there, and one-pointedly focus on the wheel and syllable at the heart. That movement of stopping the mind is called the ‘silent recitation’. First, one expels the stale breath three times . During that time, one thinks that untimely death, disease and all harm-doers are cleared away. Then, breathe gently or normally. When the light radiates outwards, light radiates from the syllable TAM at the heart and then is re-absorbed back. One should habitually meditate many times that when the mind is remaining at the heart syllable TAM the mind remains there.

The best mala beads to use is a Bodhi seed one, a bone mandala is not counted as permissible. If one does not have like that then, a crystal mala is permissible. Light rays emanate from the object of meditation, the white wheel and syllables, filling up the entire inner body. This light purifies all the negativities, obscurations such as untimely death, due to being killed or conditions harmful to life from karmic obscurations.

Again light rays emanate out and the life force energies of the five elements of earth, water, fire and air, collect together as five coloured light rays and dissolve into the wheel at one’s heart centre. Think that one’s life has become unchanging like a vajra. Then, light rays emanate out again and all the long-life, merit and resources and wealth of Vidyadhāras, deities, Mahāsiddhas and Wheel-turning Kings and so on are all collected together and re-absorbed into the wheel at one’s heart. Think that it has transformed into long-life power. Light emanates out again. Then, one visualises that the omniscience, love and power of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, in particular the accomplishment of deathless long-life is collected together and re-absorbed back into the wheel at one’s heart. Meditate that one’s body becomes majestic, brilliant and radiant and one’s mind becomes strong. After that, recite the mantra.

In the latter part of the recitation, the master of the family at one’s head, Buddha Amitabha, out of strong devotion, light rays stream from his heart bringing together all the animate life force energies, which enter into the alms bowl in his hands. This nectar overflows from the bowl, descends and enters through ones aperture at the top of the head. One’s entire inner body is filled up, becoming like a crystal vase full of milk. That is the generation stage.

Completion Stage

The outer vessel and inner contents, vajra fence and palace melt into light

They dissolve into you and you dissolve into the TAM

The TAM also dissolves into light within the unfabricated ultimate nature

One rests in the meditative equipoise of the flow of the genuine, natural state.

Here the meaning of the verse *'The outer vessel and inner contents.....untilgenuine, natural state'* is as follows. Generally, there are two completion stages: one *with characteristics* and one *without characteristics*. This here is a completion stage without characteristics.

Light radiates out from the seed syllable at one's heart centre and all the appearances are gathered together and melt into light, dissolving into Jetsun Tara's mandala. They are then gathered together and absorbed into the protection fence. The protection fence also then melts into light and dissolves into the palace. The palace also then melts into light and dissolves into oneself. Oneself and one's seat and so on, melt into light from top downwards. From bottom upwards, that light then dissolves into the wheel at the heart. The wheel then dissolves into the syllables. Those syllables then dissolve into the TAM. The TAM dissolves into the small A, then that dissolves into the TA, then that into the crescent above, then that dissolves into the bindu drop, that drop then dissolves into the nada which is like a thin hair, getting subtler and subtler until finally naturally coming to rest in the equipoise of the genuine, natural state, the ultimate nature that is the inseparable clarity-emptiness, that has thoroughly pacified all the fabrications of subjective perceptions. The meaning of that is as follows: it is the essence that has transcended the final limits, not welcoming concerns not yet come, not giving rise to thoughts about what one perceives now. Whether it is samsara or nirvana, being free from the meditator and object of meditation; resting in the unfabricated, natural ultimate state of mind, so it is taught. Both calm-abiding and superior analytical meditation are included within that.

Concluding Activities

Again, rise as the form of Jetsun Tara.

By this virtue, may all beings attain Buddhahood.

From the luminous clarity, in a single instant, like a fish jumping out of water, one appears as the completely perfect form of Jetsun Tara, the wish-fulfilling wheel. Like a moon reflected in water, it is merely an appearance and not truly established. Visualise at the top of the head is OM; the throat an AH and the heart centre a white HUM, representing the three vajras. Afterwards, one dedicates the virtue to all sentient beings, without bias for friends or enemies, in a vast way.

Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin, April 2019. With special thanks to HE 10th Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche for the oral transmission and generous responses to my questions about the translation.

The Seven Refuge Supplications to Mother Tara

by Lord Jigten Gonpo

མ་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པའི་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་ན། །

ཡུམ་རྗེ་བཙུན་ལྷ་མོ་སྐྱོལ་མ་བཞུགས། །

དེ་སེམས་ཅན་ཀུན་ལ་བདེ་སྤྱིར་མ། །

བདག་འཇིགས་པ་ཀུན་ལས་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་གསོལ། །

In the realm of the unborn Dharmadhatu
Abides the Mother Jetsun Tara
She who bestows bliss on all sentient beings
I supplicate you to protect us from all kinds of dangers!

རང་ཚོས་སྐྱེ་ཡིན་པ་མ་ཤེས་པས། །

སེམས་ཉོན་མོངས་དབང་དུ་གྱུར་བ་ཡི། །

མ་འཁོར་བ་འབྱམས་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་ལ། །

ཡུམ་ལྷ་མོ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་གསོལ། །

Not realizing oneself as Dharmakāya
Mind is dominated by afflictions
Mother sentient beings wandering in Samsara
Oh Mother Goddess, please protect us!

ཚོས་སྐྱིང་ནས་རྒྱུད་ལ་མ་སྐྱེས་པར། །

ཐ་སྙད་ཚིག་གི་རྗེས་འབྲངས་ནས། །

གྲུབ་མཐའ་དན་པས་བསྐྱས་པ་ལ། །

ཡུམ་ཡང་དག་གི་ལྷ་མོས་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་གསོལ། །

Not having generated Dharma from the depths of the heart
And chasing after conventionally labelled words

White Tara Practice and Commentary

Deceived by negative dogmas and views
Oh Perfect Mother, please protect us!

རྟོགས་པར་དཀའ་བ་རང་གི་སེམས། །

མཐོང་ནས་བསྐྱོམ་པར་མི་བྱེད་པར། །

བྱ་བ་ངན་བས་ཡེངས་པ་ལ། །

ཡུམ་དྲན་པའི་སྣ་མོས་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་གསོལ། །

One's own mind is difficult to realise
After seeing we don't meditate on it
Distracted by negative worldly activities
Oh Mother, Goddess of Mindfulness, please protect us!

སེམས་རང་བྱུང་གཉིས་མེད་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལ། །

གཉིས་སུ་འཛིན་པའི་བག་ཆགས་ཀྱིས།

ཁྲི་སྒར་བྱས་ཀྱང་བཅིངས་པ་རྣམས།

ལྷུགས་གཉིས་མེད་ཀྱི་སྣ་མོས་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་གསོལ། །

Mind is naturally arisen, non-dual primordial awareness
Yet, habitual grasping at dualistic conceptions
imprisons us, whatever what one does
Oh Goddess of Non-Dual Mind, please protect us!

ཡང་དག་གི་དོན་ལ་གནས་བྱས་ཀྱང་། །

རྒྱ་འབྲས་ཀྱི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་མི་ཤེས་པས། །

ཤེས་བྱའི་དོན་ལ་ཚོངས་པ་ལ། །

ཡུམ་ཀུན་མཁྱེན་གྱི་སྣ་མོས་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་གསོལ། །

Resting on the perfect meaning
Yet not realising interdependent cause and effect

White Tara Practice and Commentary

Ignorant of the meaning of what is to be realised

Oh Omniscient Mother, please protect us!

སྤོས་བྲལ་ནམ་མཁའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན། །

ཐམས་ཅད་དེ་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་གྱིས། །

ད་དུང་སྤོས་པའི་གང་ཟག་ལ། །

ཡུམ་རྗེ་གསལ་སངས་རྒྱས་གྱིས་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་གསོལ།།

The one like the nature of space beyond all conceptions

Inseparable from all there is

For beings who are still learning

Oh Perfectly Enlightened Mother, please protect us!

This *Seven Refuge Prayer to Tara* composed by Lord Jigten Gonpo was translated and edited by Adele Tomlin, May 2019.

ⁱ The Vajra posture is also referred to as the seven-point posture of Vairochana (saptadharmavairocana; *nam sang chos bdun*): Legs crossed, hands in the lap or on the knees, back (spine straight), shoulders spread like a vulture's wings, head and neck (chin slightly lowered), mouth (tip of the tongue touching the palate), eyes (gazing past the tip of the nose).

ⁱⁱ The three spheres (*'khor gsum gmigs med*) here is referring to viewing the agent, the action and the object of the action all as without any inherent existence whatsoever.

ⁱⁱⁱ The 'Great Mother' (*mar yum chen mo*) here is referring to the Prajñāpāramitā texts and realisation. Dharma consists of both the words and the realisations.

^{iv} The 8 qualities [of pure water]. These qualities are said to be crystal clarity, coolness, sweetness, lightness, softness; it is soothing to the stomach, free of impurities, and clears the throat.

White Tara Practice and Commentary

^v This is referring to making the eight auspicious offerings of water for drinking (argham), water for washing (padyam), flowers (phupe), incense (dhupe), light (aloke), perfumed water (gendhe), food (newide), and music (shabta).

^{vi} These four supplications are as follows:

‘All mother sentient beings as vast as space, supplicate the lama, the precious Buddha;

All mother sentient beings as vast as space, supplicate the lama, the embodiment of all refuge, the Dharmakaya;

All mother sentient beings as vast as space, supplicate the lama, the great bliss Sambhogakaya;

All mother sentient beings as vast as space, supplicate the lama, the great compassionate Nirmanakaya.’

^{vii} This seven refuges of Tara (*sgrol ma skyabs bdun ma*) is a prayer written by Lord Jigten Gonpo. The Tibetan with English translation is included in this book.

^{viii} This text is called ‘Ngodrub Kuntsol’ (*sgrol dkar dngos grub kun stsol*) by the Sixth Shamar Chokyi Wangchuk.

^{ix} Seven point pith instruction for generating bodhicitta (*rgyu 'bras man ngag bdun*) has the following seven points:

1. recognizing beings as our past mothers
2. remembering the kindness of beings
3. a sense of gratitude for the kindness
4. love, wishing beings have happiness
5. compassion
6. altruistic attitude (*lhaksam*)
7. bodhicitta

The first six points relate to the causes of bodhicitta, and the last one is the result, bodhicitta itself.

^x The four immeasurables are generating love, compassion, joy and equanimity for infinite sentient beings.

^{xi} In *The Cult of Tārā* Stephan Beyer renders it: Om. I am the very self whose essence is the diamond knowledge of emptiness.

^{xii} Tara’s pure realm in Mount Potala is described as ‘Covered with manifold trees and creepers, resounding with the sound of many birds, And with murmur of waterfalls, thronged with wild beasts of many kinds; Many species of flowers grow everywhere.’