

White Tara Teachings

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Sangye Khandro:

There are a lot of options now for practicing and praying in these difficult times. I just wanted to mention that, generally, when engaging with a yidam, the Tibetan word for meditation deity, this usually means your chosen deity or tutelary deity, which is either given to the practitioner directly from his or her master or you decide that this is where you feel the strongest connection personally and so decide to practice with this deity. It is very important because through the power of the connection that the practitioner has with the deity, then that means that the deity will be swiftly accomplished. So, you must feel that strong connection, that bond. Also, of course, you would have the permission or the authorization from the master, who personally said that that was the deity that you should accomplish, or at least have the empowerment, transmission, and hopefully the teachings about that deity practice.

Here, we are practicing White Tara. Most of us, through the course of our time as Buddhists, have had an opportunity to receive Tara empowerment and to practice Tara, and we know how important Tara is. The source of all manifestations of Tara is Green Tara, and it is from Green Tara that the twenty-one Taras have manifested. So the famous praise to the twenty-one Taras, which I would say probably every single Tibetan has memorized from the time of being very young, was actually revealed and taught by Buddha Shakyamuni. In each shloka of that praise, the special feature of each of the twenty one emanations is mentioned, which is why we have the praise to the twenty-one Taras. The blessings are very great, in that each manifestation is mentioned and transmitted through that prayer.

I am going to paraphrase what Amitabha taught, where he said that if you pray to any of these twenty-one emanations of Tara, or to all twenty-one, then those who wish to have a child through this practice will achieve their wish; if wealth, they will achieve their wish. In brief, whatever one wishes for and all wishes will come to pass through this practice, and all suffering will naturally subside as well.

For example, in Tibet, the twenty-one Tara practice was used continuously for all these reasons: to extend life, remove obstacles, remove demonic-force possession, and reverse calamities, such as war, famine, poverty, upheavals with the elements. In order to accumulate merit, Tara is also practiced in conjunction with mandala offerings with the famous mandala offering Tara prayer.

In addition, just like King Gesar bestows the blessings of increasing wind horse, vitality, and so forth, so does Tara. Tara is well known for accomplishing the increase of wind horse, the increase of vitality. Magnetizing activities are accomplished through Red Tara. There are many different enlightened activity practices associated with the different emanations of Tara.

Here, we are emphasizing the longevity Tara. As I mentioned before, what this really means is immortality. We can assume that in practicing White Tara, definitely all illness, all disease, all

famine, all strife, all calamities, all these things just mentioned are going to be pacified; but in particular, what is the main blessing that White Tara bestows? The main blessing is that of immortality or deathlessness. So, this is a very profound practice to do at this time, because in a sense it lifts us up from the quagmire of the struggle that is going on in existence. While doing this Tara practice, we imagine the blessing of the five-colored lights entering the entire world, the universe, and the inhabitants, and relieving all beings from the suffering of this horrible Coronavirus disease that is spreading so rapidly.

We also simultaneously imagine that self and all others are receiving the blessings of wisdom immortality, awakening to our light bodies, awakening to our buddha nature, to transcend birth, old age, sickness, and death. We are able to accomplish common benefits, we might say, on a worldly plane, and then supreme or sublime benefits by benefiting beings in an ultimate way.

Finally, I'll mention in brief how we can think about the syllables of the mantra. OM usually indicates all the enlightened bodies of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, but it also indicates enlightened body, speech, and mind. TARE means freedom from suffering and worldly fear. TUTARE means swift protection from suffering and worldly fear. TURE means the fulfillment of the path and the development of all positive qualities. All the Tara mantras begin with OM TARE TUTARE TURE. In this case, PUNYE PUTRING AHYU PUTRING is the special insert for White Tara. PUNYE means merit, PUTRING means increasing, AHYU also means life, PUTRING, and KURU YE SO HA means so be it, may it be so.

Consequently, this mantra brings the purification and cleansing of all negativity and the increase of all qualities on the path, particularly of the blessing of immortality or deathlessness and the realization of dharmakāya, within which, of course, the three kaya wisdom nature is complete. So, please keep that in mind as we recite the mantra. We will start today with Thinley Norbu Rinpoche chanting the praise to the guru's enlightened body, speech, and mind, and then we will go right into the sadhana.

Lama Chönam:

Good morning. Thank you for joining with us as we practice together. I think in this kind of situation, it is not necessary to do too much to educate ourselves. Whatever time we have should be put into practice; that is why we are leading this short and synthesized sadhana and practice together. Everyone, of course, knows what to do, how to meditate, and how to cultivate devotion toward the buddhas in general, especially Tara. Thank you.

Sangye Khandro:

Also, I just want to encourage all of you. Hopefully, in having done this practice together a few times now, you are feeling more and more familiar and can do this on a daily basis during these times. It does not need to take nearly so long. You can just simply read the English if you wish and spend more time doing the mantra. Go back and review the visualizations and so forth. Or you can chant Tibetan, too, for the blessing. It is a terma revelation, so you can recite English

and Tibetan or just Tibetan, going back and reading English to yourself, and then accumulating the mantra.

As you can see in the colophon at the end, by accumulating only a minimum amount of mantras, there are great profound benefits. Soon, we will go through and show you how to do the tormā offering. We will make the tormā and set up the maṇḍala, so that you can see how you might do this if you wanted to have your own personal shrine and also do a little retreat for the White Tara accomplishment. Bear in mind that this is not an elaborate practice; and although it may seem that the visualization is elaborate, once you learn, it is very natural, very flowing. The things that you do, the implementations and so forth, are unelaborate, but Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche emphasized that even if you cannot do any of these things, such as playing instruments and so forth, then it is still fine to simply sit and establish the visualization with faith and devotion, recite the mantra, and dedicate the merit.

Lama Chonam:

This is the time. Those who have dharma, those who believe dharma, those who have received teachings, it is time to concentrate the teachings, watch our minds, and look inside at what we really have, meditation or view or recite mantras. This is the really, really important time to do it, not just always using the screen, television, or cell phone. Constantly, there is different news and information that we have to know, but also it is not necessary to watch it twenty-four hours a day. In my own experience, it is really harmful. I am just trying to share this feeling to all my friends, that at this time we really have to watch inside. Thank you.