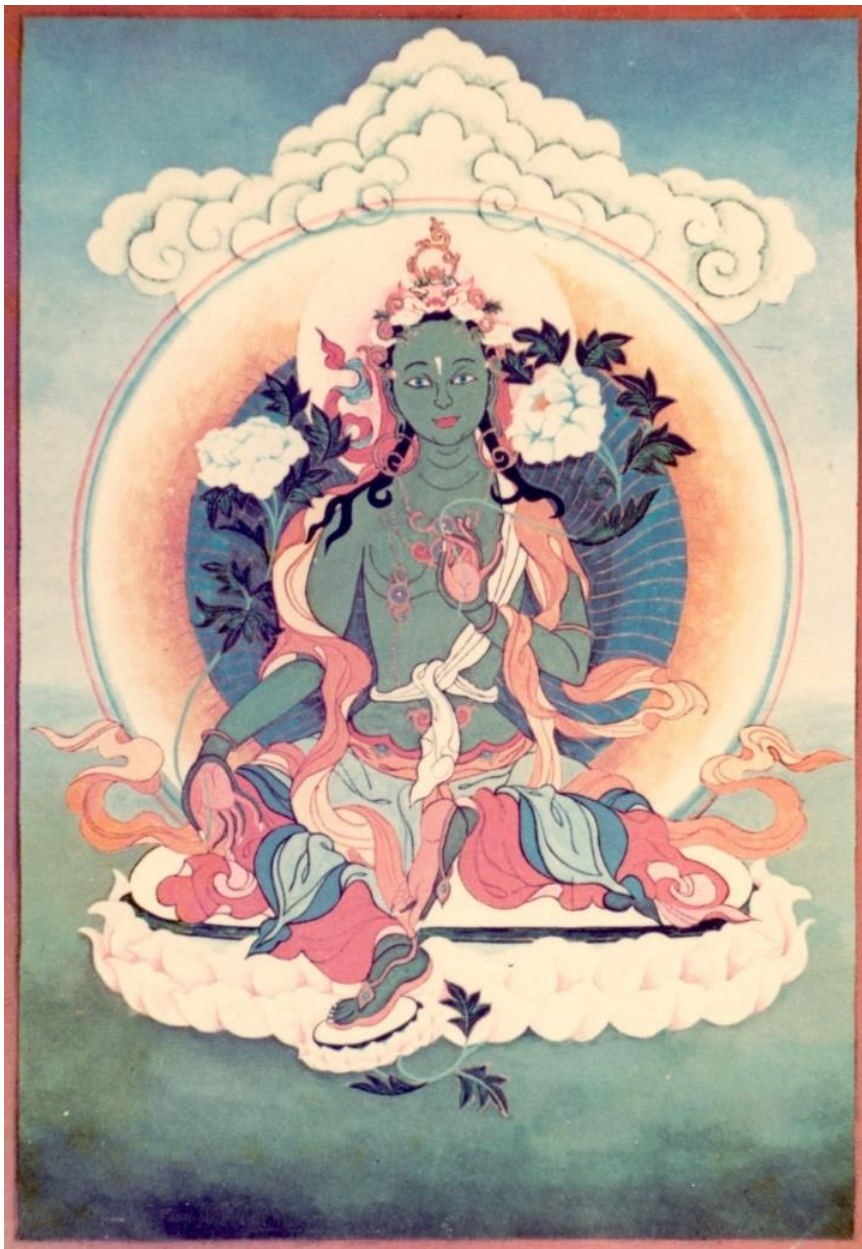


The 21 Praises to Tārā

(Tibetan phonetics and English)

Images from two traditions

Commentary



Edited by Hermes Brandt, April 2023

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Preface

This document has grown organically. After many years of reciting the praises, often while looking at a particular image of the Twenty-One Tārās, I realized that it represented the Twenty-One Tārās according to Lama Atisha's tradition, while the empowerments of the Twenty-One Tārās I had received came from Sūryagupta's tradition.

I received the empowerments twice from Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche (1946-2023), on February 17 and 18, 1982 (Bodhgaya, India) and on May 28, 1987 (Kathmandu, Nepal). On both occasions, Rinpoche identified the lineage by mentioning the Tibetan version of Sūryagupta's name: "Nyima Bā" (nyi ma sbas pa, 'Hidden Sun'), according to the notes I took during the initiations and which I only understood more than four decades later.

With data from the internet, I quickly created *A brief commentary on the images of the Twenty-One Tārās*, with images of the Twenty-One Tārās according to Sūryagupta's tradition, now a part of chapter 3.b of this text.

Soon, the idea came to make a version better suited for daily use, with only the painted images and the Praises: *The Twenty-One Praises to Tārā* (1.a). This part is separately available in English, French and Tibetan editions.

While working so intensively on the text of these praises, I felt the need arise to create another document, explaining the differences found in the various editions of the Tibetan text: *A critical edition of the Tibetan translation of the Twenty-One Praises to Tārā*, the editing of which took much time and energy. I used research done in the early eighties by Martin Willson, as part of a wonderful study about Tārā that has unfortunately been out of print for many years now, *In Praise of Tārā, Songs to the Saviouress*, by Martin Willson (Wisdom Publications, Somerville MA, USA, 1996). (2.c)

It seems that my work on these Praises created enough positive karma for me to receive, at last, the initiation of the Twenty-One Tārās from the Nāgārjuna-Atisha tradition. I received it from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on December 31, 2022. Subsequently, I made a text combining the praises with images according to that tradition. (1.b)

Since the Tibetan translation was based on Sanskrit texts, I have added the Sanskrit original version of the praises (2.a), as well as a literal English translation from the Sanskrit by Martin Willson (2.b). This translation is different from the one in chapters 1.a and 1.b, which was translated by Martin Willson from the Tibetan, in metered verses, making it possible to recite them in the same way as the Tibetans recite their version.

For a better understanding of the Praises, one would need to receive or read a commentary. I recommend *A Commentary on Praises to Tara* by Khensur Rinpoche Lama Lhundrub Rigsel (Amitabha Buddhist Center, Singapore, 2012), available in PDF format. In the late seventies, this very kind lama taught me how to recite the Praises in Tibetan.

As I am now combining the images of both traditions in a single document, I thought it might be interesting to add a comparison of the ways the Twenty-One Tārās are described in the two traditions. (3)

More information is available in the colophon.

Hermes Brandt, Vendôme, France, April 24, 2023.

1.a The twenty-one praises to Tārā with images according to the Sūryagupta tradition (Tibetan phonetics and English)

Invocation

PO TA LA YI NÄ CH'OG NÄ

From your sublime abode of the Potala,

TĀṂ YIG JANG GU LÄ Tr'UNG SHING

You who are born from the green syllable TĀṂ,

Ö PAG ME KYI U LA GYÄN

Your crown adorned with Amitābha,

D'Ü SUM SANG GYÄ Tr'IN LÄ MA

Action-mother of the buddhas of the three times,

DrÖL MA K'OR CHÄ SHEG SU SÖL

Tārā, together with your retinue, please come here.

Prostration

LHA DANG LHA MIN CHÖ PÄN GY'I

The gods and demigods bow

ZHAp KYI PÄ MO LA TÛ DE

Their crowns to your lotus feet.

P'ONG PA KÜN LÄ DrÖL DZÄ MA

Liberator of all who are destitute,

DrÖL MA YUM LA CH'ak TS'ÄL LO

To you, Mother Tārā, I prostrate.



The Twenty-One Praises

OM! JE-TSÜN-MA P'AK-MA DrÖL-MA-LA CH'ak TS'ÄL-LO //
OM I prostrate to the noble transcendent Liberator.



1. Tārā the heroine

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DrÖL-MA NYUR-MA PA-MO

Homage! Tārā, swift, heroic!

CHÄN-NI KÄ-CHIK LOK-D'ANG DrA-MA

Eyes like lightning instantaneous!

JIK-TEN SUM-GÖN CH'U-KYE ZHÄL-GY'I

Sprung from op'ning stamens of the

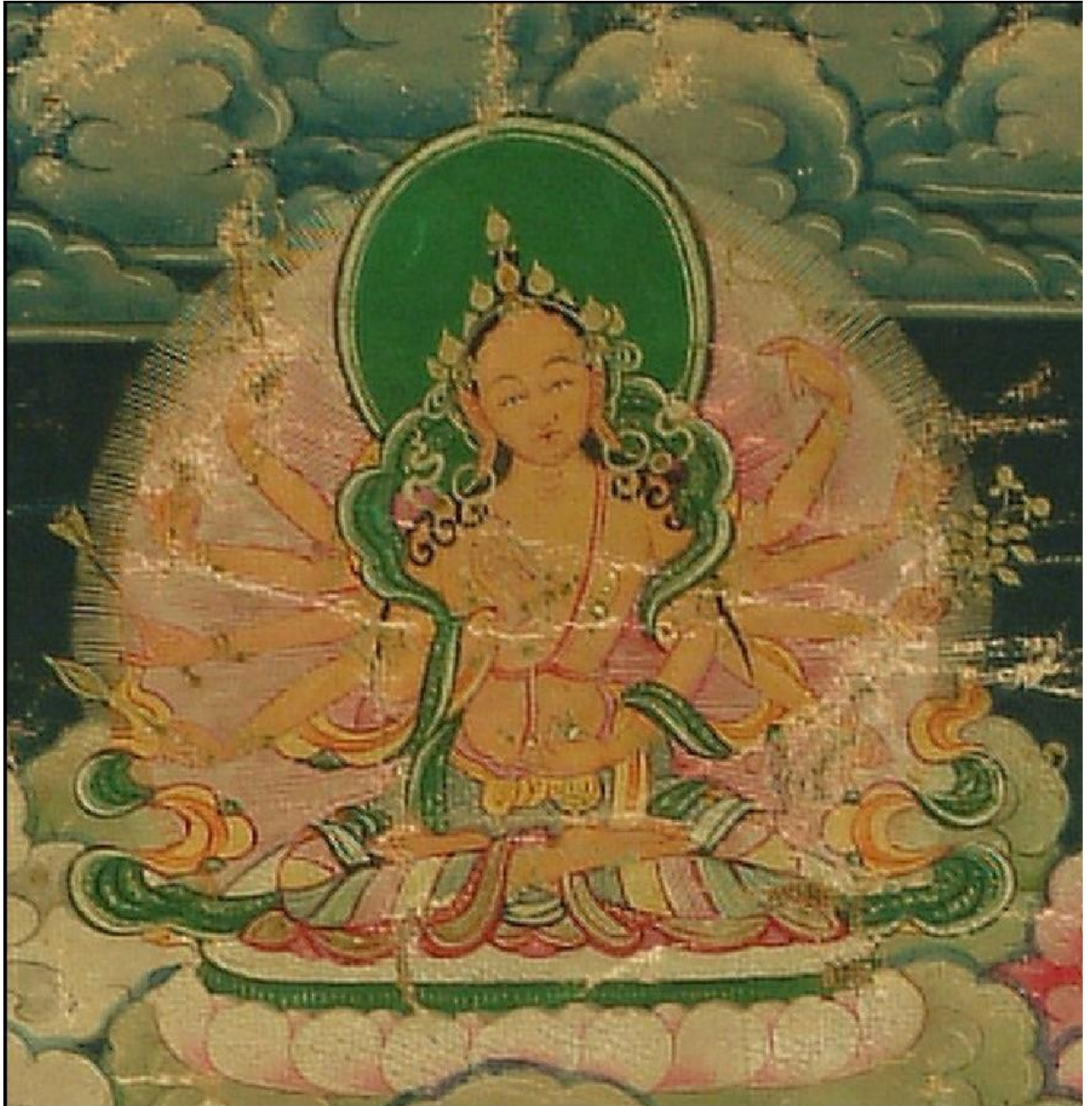
G'E-SAR J'E-WA-LÄ-NI J'UNG-MA

Lord of three world's tear-born lotus!



2. Tārā white as the autumn moon

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TÖN-KÄi DA-WA KÜN-TU
Homage! She whose face combines a
G'ANG-WA GYA-NI TSEK-PÄi ZHÄL-MA
Hundred autumn moons at fullest!
KAR-MA TONG-TrAK TS'Ok-PA-NAM-KYI
Blazing with light rays resplendent
RAP-TU CH'E-WÄi Ö RAB-BAR-MA
As a thousand star collection!



3. Golden-coloured Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SER-NGO CH'U-NÄ KYE-KYI

Homage! Golden-blue one, lotus

PÄ-MÄ CH'AK-NI NAM-PAR GYÄN-MA

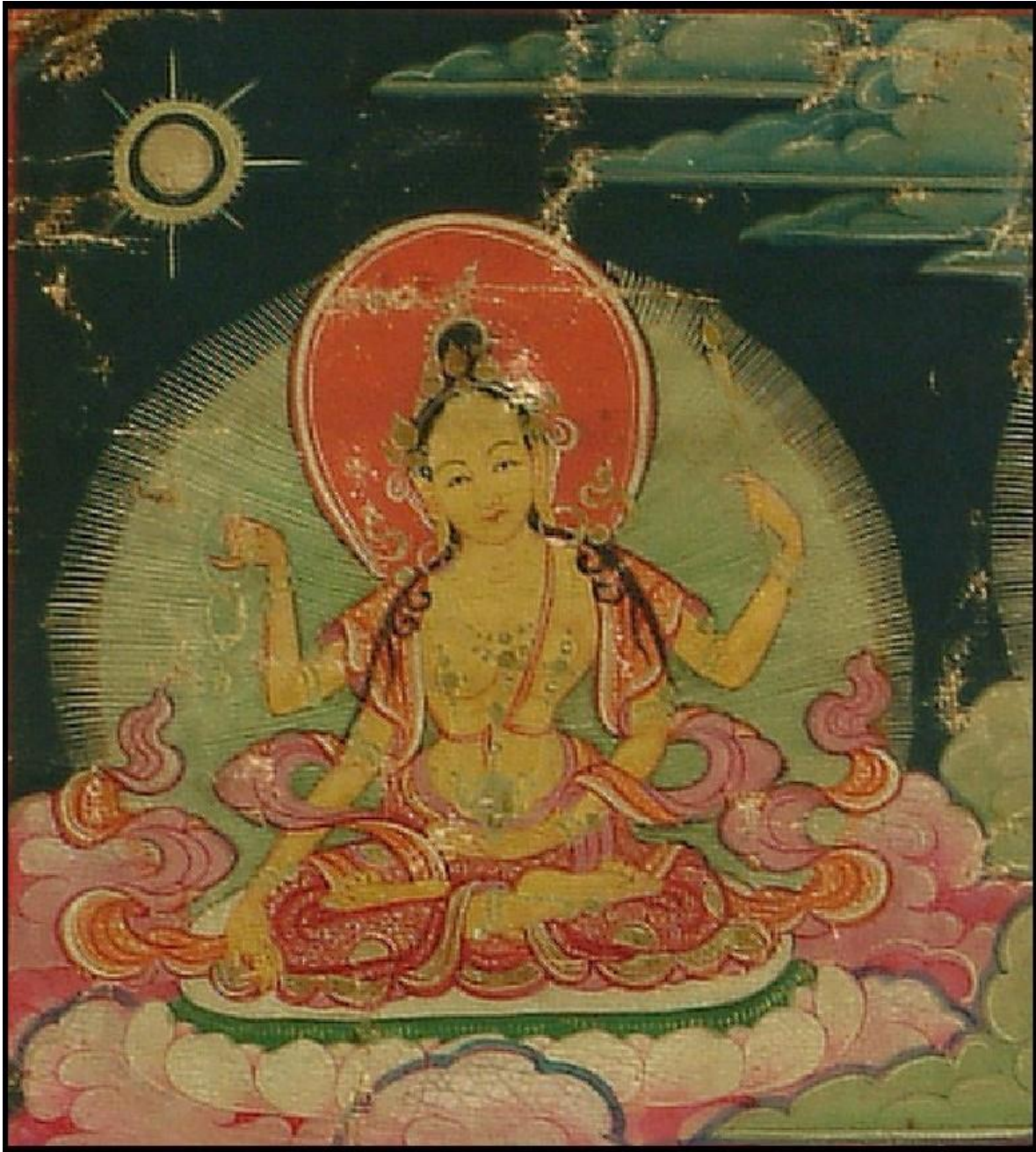
Water born, in hand adorned!

JIN-PA TSÖN-DrÜ KA-T'UP ZHI-WA

Giving, effort, calm, austerities,

ZÖ-PA SAM-TÄN CHÖ-YÜL-NYI-MA

Patience, meditation her sphere!



4. Tārā with the victorious crown protuberance of the Tathagatas

CH'AK-TS'ÄL D'E-ZHIN-SHEK-PÄi TSUK-TOR

Homage! Crown of tathagatas,

T'A-YÄ NAM-PAR GYÄL-WAR CHÖ-MA

Actions triumph without limit,

MA-LÜ P'A-RÖL-CH'IN-PA T'OP-PÄi

Relied on by conquerors' children

GYÄL-WÄi SÄ-KYI SHIN-TU TEN-MA

Having reached ev'ry perfection!



5. Tārā proclaiming the sound of hūṃ

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TUTTÄRÄ HÜM YI-G'E

**Homage! Filling with TUTTARE,
DÖ-D'ANG CH'OK-D'ANG NAM-K'A G'ANG-MA
HUM, desire, direction, and space!**

JIK-TEN DÜN-PO ZHAP-KYI NÄN-TE

**Trampling with her feet the seven worlds,
LÜ-PA ME-PAR GUK-PAR NÜ-MA
Able to draw forth all beings!**



6. Tārā victorious over the three worlds

CH'AK-TS'ÄL GYA-J'IN ME-LHA TS'ANG-PA

**Homage! Worshipped by the all-lords,
LUNG-LHA NA-TS'OK WANG-CH'UK CH'Ö-MA**

**Shakra, Agni, Brahma, Marut!
JUNG-PO RO-LANG Dr'I-ZA-NAM-D'ANG**

**Honored by the hosts of spirits,
NÖ-JIN TS'OK-KYI DÜN-NÄ TÖ-MA**

Corpse-raisers, gandharvas, yakshas!



7. Tārā who crushes all adversaries

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TrÄT-CHE-J'A-D'ANG PHÄT-KYI
Homage! With her TRAD and PHAT sounds
P'A-RÖL TrÜL-K'OR RAP-TU JOM-MA
Destroying foes' magic diagrams!
YÄ-KUM YÖN-KYANG ZHAP-KYI NÄN-TE
Her feet pressing, left out, right in,
ME-BAR TrUK-PA SHIN-TU BAR-MA
Blazing in a raging fire-blaze!



8. Tārā who bestows supreme powers / Tārā who crushes all maras

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TURE JIK-PA CH'EN-MO

Homage! TURE, very dreadful!

DÜ-KYI PA-WO NAM-PAR JOM-MA

Destroyer of Mara's champion(s)!

CH'U-KYE ZHÄL-NI Tr'O-NYER DÄN-DZÄ

She with frowning lotus visage,

DrA-WO T'AM-CHÄ MA-LÜ SÖ-MA

Who is slayer of all enemies!



9. Tārā who grants boons

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÖN-CH'OK SUM-TS'ÖN CHAK-GYÄi

Homage! At the heart her fingers,
SOR-MÖ T'UK-KAR NAM-PAR GYÄN-MA

Adorn her with Three Jewel mudra!
MA-LÜ CH'OK-KYI K'OR-LÖ GYÄN-PÄi

Light-ray masses all excited!
RANG-G'I Ö-KYI TS'OK-NAM Tr'UK-MA

All directions' wheels adorn her!



10. Tārā who dispels all sorrows

CH'AK-TS'ÄL RAP-TU GA-WA JI-PÄi

Homage! She so joyous, radiant,

U-GYÄN Ö-KYI Tr'ENG-WA PEL-MA

Crown emitting garlands of light!

ZHÄ-PA RAP-ZHÄ TUTTÄRÄ-YI

Mirthful, laughing with TUTTARE,

DÜ-D'ANG JIK-TEN WANG-D'U DZÄ-MA

Subjugating maras, devas!



11. Tārā who summons all beings / Dispeller of misfortune

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SA-ZHI KYONG-WÄi TS'Ok-NAM

Homage! She able to summon

T'AM-CHÄ GUK-PAR NÜ-PA-NYI-MA

All earth-guardians' assembly!

Tr'O-NYER YO-WÄi YI-G'E HÜM-G'I

Shaking, frowning, with her HUM sign

P'ONG-PA T'AM-CHÄ NAM-PAR DrÖL-MA

Saving from every misfortune!



12. Tārā of auspicious light

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DA-WÄi D'UM-B'Ü U-GYÄN
Homage! Crown adorned with crescent
GYÄN-PA T'AM-CHÄ SHIN-TU BAR-MA
Moon, all ornaments most shining!
RÄL-PÄi TrÖ-NA Ö-PAK-ME-LÄ
Amitabha in her hair-knot
TAK-PAR SHIN-TU WÖ-RAB DZÄ-MA
Sending out much light eternal!



13. Tārā the ripener

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÄL-PÄi T'A-MÄi ME-TAR
Homage! She 'mid wreath ablaze like
 BAR-WÄi Tr'ENG-WÄi Ü-NA NÄ-MA
Eon-ending fire abiding!
 YÄ-KYANG YÖN-KUM KUN-NÄ-KOR GA
Right stretched, left bent, joy surrounds you,
 DrA-YI PUNG-NI NAM-PAR JOM-MA
Troops of enemies destroying!



14. Frowning Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SA-ZHIi NGÖ-LA CH'AK-G'I
Homage! She who strikes the ground with
T'IL-GY'I NÜN-CHING ZHAP-KYI DUNG-MA
Her palm, and with her foot beats it!
Tr'O-NYER CHÄN-DZÄ YI-G'E HŪM-G'I
Scowling, with the letter HUM the
RIM-PA DÜN-PO-NAM-NI GEM-MA
Seven levels she does conquer!



15. Great peaceful Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DE-MA GE-MA ZHI-MA
Homage! Happy, virtuous, peaceful!
NYA-NGÄN-DÄ-ZHI CHÖ-YÜL-NYI-MA
She whose field is peace, nirvana!
SVÄHÄ OM-D'ANG YANG-D'AK DÄN-PÄ
She endowed with OM and SVAHA,
DIK-PA CH'EN-PO JOM-PA-NYI-MA
Destroyer of the great evil!



16. Tārā, destroyer of all attachment

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÜN-NÄ-KOR RAB-GA-WÄi

Homage! She with joy surrounded,
DrA-YI LÜ-NI RAP-TU GEM-MA

Tearing foes' bodies asunder,
YI-G'E CHU-PÄi NGAK-NI KÖ-Päi

Frees with HUM and knowledge mantra,
RIG-PA HÜM-LÄ DrÖL-MA-NYI-MA

Arrangement of the ten letters!



17. Tārā, accomplisher of bliss

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TURE ZHAP-NI DAP-PÄ

Homage! TURE! With seed letter

HŪṂ-G'I NAM-PÄi SA-B'ÖN-NYI-MA

Of the shape of syllable HUM!

RI-RAB MÄNDARA-D'ANG Bik-J'E

By foot stamping shakes the three worlds,

JIK-TEN SUM-NAM YO-WA NYI-MA

Meru, Mandara, and Vindhya!



18. Victorious Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL LHA-YI TS'O-YI NAM-PÄi
Homage! Holding in her hand the
RI-D'AK TAK-CHÄN CH'AK-NA NAM-MA
Hare-marked moon of deva-lake form!
TÄRÄ NYI-JÖ PHÄṬ-KYI YI-G'E
With twice spoken TÄRÄ and PHAT,
D'UK-NAM MA-LÜ-PAR-NI SEL-MA
Totally dispelling poison!



19.

19. Tārā, consumer of suffering

CH'AK-TS'ÄL LHA-YI TS'OK-NAM GYÄL-PO
Homage! She whom gods and their kings,
LHA-D'ANG MI-AM-CHI-YI TEN-MA
And the kinnaras do honor!
KÜN-NÄ G'O-CH'A GA-WÄi JI-KYI
Armored in all joyful splendor,
TSÖ-D'ANG MI-LAM NGÄN-PA SEL-MA
She dispels bad dreams and conflicts!



20. Tārā, source of attainments

CH'AK-TS'ÄL NYI-MA DA-WA GYÄ-PÄi

Homage! She whose two eyes bright with

CHÄN-NYI-PO-LA WÖ RAP-SÄL-MA

Radiance of sun and full moon!

HARA NYI-JÖ TUTTÄRÄ-YI

With twice HARA and TUTTARE,

SHIN-TU Dr'AK-PÖi RIM-NÄ SEL-MA

She dispels severe contagion!



21. Tārā, the perfecter

CH'AK-TS'ÄL D'E-NYI SUM-NAM KÖ-PÄ

Homage! Full of liberating

ZHI-WÄI T'U-D'ANG YANG-D'AK-DÄN-MA

Pow'r by the set of three natures!

DÖN-D'ANG RO-LANG NÖ-JIN TS'OK-NAM

Destroys hosts of spirits, yakshas,

JOM-PA TURE RAP-CH'OG-NYI-MA

And raised corpses! Supreme! TURE!

The benefits

TSA-WÄi NGAK-KYI TÖ-PA DI-D'ANG

These praises with the root mantras

CH'AK-TS'ÄL-WA-NI NYI-SHU-TSA-CHIK

And twenty-one prostrations,

LHA-MO-LA G'Ü YANG-D'AK DÄN-PÄi

Whoever is endowed with devotion for the goddess

LO-DÄN G'ANG-G'I RAP-D'Ä JÖ-D'E

And recites them with supreme faith,

- 22 -

SÖ-D'ANG T'O-RANG LANG-PAR J'Ä-NÄ

Remembering them at dawn upon waking and in the evenings,

Dr'ÄN-PÄ MI-JIK T'AM-CHÄ RAP-TER

Will be granted all fearlessness,

DIK-PA T'AM-CHÄ RAP-TU ZHI-WA

Will perfectly pacify all negativities,

NGÄN-DrO T'AM-CHÄ JOM-PA-NYI-D'O

And will eliminate all unfortunate migrations.

-23-

GYÄL-WA J'E-WA-Tr'AK-DÜN-NAM-KYI

The multitudes of conquerors

NYUR-D'U WANG-NI KUR-WAR GYUR-LA

Will quickly grant initiation:

DI-LÄ CH'E-WA-NYI-NI T'OP-CHING

Thus, endowed with this greatness,

SANG-GYÄ G'O-P'ANG T'AR-T'UK D'ER-DrO

One will eventually reach the state of a buddha.

-24-

D'E-YI D'UK-NI DrAK-PO CH'EN-PO

If affected by the most terrible poison,

TÄN-NÄ-PA-AM ZHÄN-YANG DrO-WA

Whether ingested, drunk, or from a living being,

ZÖ-PA D'ANG-NI T'UNG-PA-NYI KYANG

Just by remembering

DrÄN-PÄ RAP-TU SEL-WA-NYI T'OP

Will one be thoroughly cleansed.

-25-

DÖN-D'ANG RIM-D'ANG D'UK-G'I ZIR-WÄI

If this prayer is recited two, three, or seven times,
DUK-NGÄL TS'OK-NI NAM-PAR PONG-TE

It will pacify all the sufferings of torments
SEM-CHÄN ZHÄN-PA-NAM-LA YANG-NGO

Caused by spirits, fevers, and poisons,
NYI-SUM-DÜN-D'U NGÖN-PAR JÖ-NA

And by other beings as well.

-26-

B'U-DÖ-PÄ-NI B'U T'OP-GYUR-ZHING

If you wish for a child, you will get a child;
NOR-DÖ-PÄ-NI NOR-NAM-NYI T'OP

If you wish for wealth, you will receive wealth.
DÖ-PA T'AM-CHÄ T'OP-PAR GYUR-TE

All your wishes will be fulfilled
GEK-NAM ME-CHING SO-SOR JOM-GYUR

And all obstacles pacified.

-27-



1.b The twenty-one praises to Tārā with images according to the Nāgārjuna-Atisha tradition (Tibetan phonetics and English)

Invocation

PO TA LA YI NÄ CH'OG NÄ

From your sublime abode of the Potala,

TĀṂ YIG JANG GU LÄ Tr'UNG SHING

You who are born from the green syllable tām,

Ö PAG ME KYI U LA GYÄN

Your crown adorned with Amitābha,

D'Ü SUM SANG GYÄ Tr'IN LÄ MA

Action-mother of the buddhas of the three times,

DrÖL MA K'OR CHÄ SHEG SU SÖL

Tārā, together with your retinue, please come here.

Prostration

LHA DANG LHA MIN CHÖ PÄN GY'I

The gods and demigods bow

ZHAp KYI PÄ MO LA TÛ DE

Their crowns to your lotus feet.

P'ONG PA KÜN LÄ DrÖL DZÄ MA

Liberator of all who are destitute,

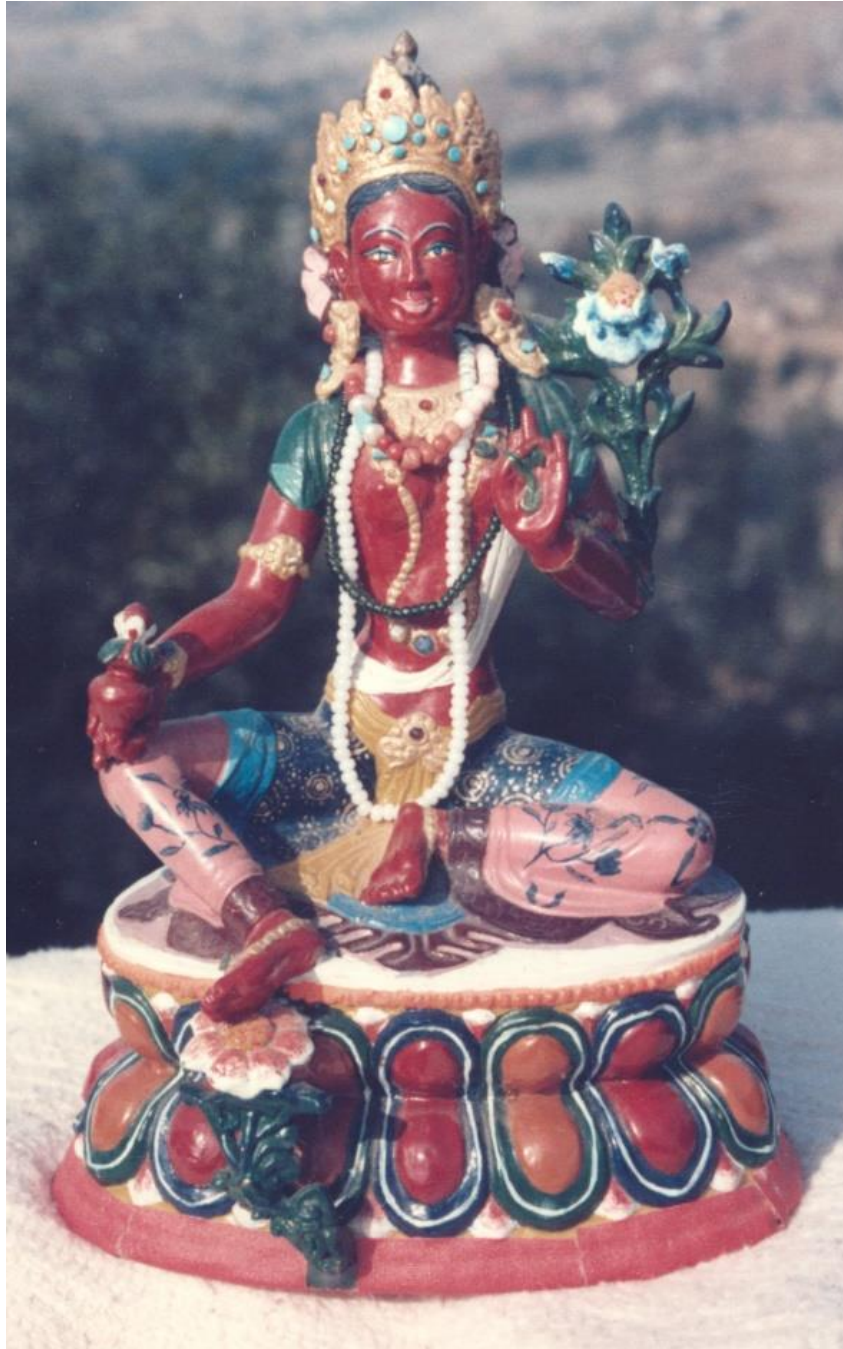
DrÖL MA YUM LA CH'AK TS'ÄL LO

To you, Mother Tārā, I prostrate.

The Twenty-One Praises

OM! JE-TSÜN-MA P'AK-MA DrÖL-MA-LA CH'AK TS'ÄL-LO

OM I prostrate to the noble transcendent Liberator.



1. Tārā the heroine

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DrÖL-MA NYUR-MA PA-MO

Homage! Tārā, swift, heroic!

CHÄN-NI KÄ-CHIK LOK-D'ANG DrA-MA

Eyes like lightning instantaneous!

JIK-TEN SUM-GÖN CH'U-KYE ZHÄL-GY'I

Sprung from op'ning stamens of the

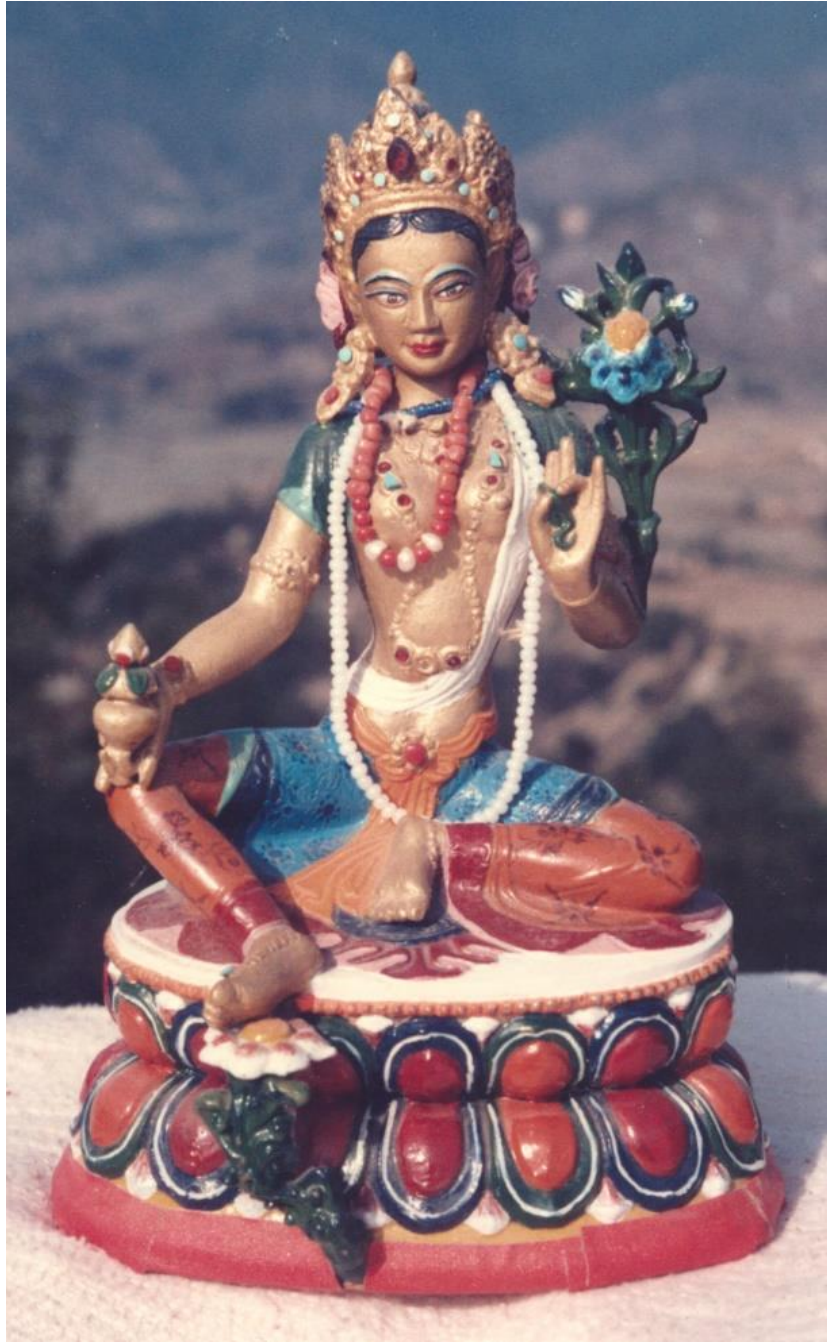
G'E-SAR J'E-WA-LÄ-NI J'UNG-MA

Lord of three world's tear-born lotus!



2. Tārā white as the autumn moon

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TÖN-KÄi DA-WA KÜN-TU
Homage! She whose face combines a
 G'ANG-WA GYA-NI TSEK-PÄi ZHÄL-MA
Hundred autumn moons at fullest!
 KAR-MA TONG-TrAK TS'Ok-PA-NAM-KYI
Blazing with light rays resplendent
 RAP-TU CH'E-WÄi Ö RAB-BAR-MA
As a thousand star collection!



3. Golden-coloured Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SER-NGO CH'U-NÄ KYE-KYI

Homage! Golden-blue one, lotus

PÄ-MÄ CH'AK-NI NAM-PAR GYÄN-MA

Water born, in hand adorned!

JIN-PA TSÖN-DrÜ KA-T'UP ZHI-WA

Giving, effort, calm, austerities,

ZÖ-PA SAM-TÄN CHÖ-YÜL-NYI-MA

Patience, meditation her sphere!



4. Tārā with the victorious crown protuberance of the Tathagatas

CH'AK-TS'ÄL D'E-ZHIN-SHEK-PÄi TSUK-TOR

Homage! Crown of tathagatas,

T'A-YÄ NAM-PAR GYÄL-WAR CHÖ-MA

Actions triumph without limit,

MA-LÜ P'A-RÖL-CH'IN-PA T'OP-PÄi

Relied on by conquerors' children

GYÄL-WÄi SÄ-KYI SHIN-TU TEN-MA

Having reached ev'ry perfection!



5. Tārā proclaiming the sound of hūṃ

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TUTTĀRĀ HŪṂ YI-G'E

Homage! Filling with TUTTARE,

DÖ-D'ANG CH'OK-D'ANG NAM-K'A G'ANG-MA

HUM, desire, direction, and space!

JIK-TEN DÜN-PO ZHAP-KYI NÄN-TE

Trampling with her feet the seven worlds,

LÜ-PA ME-PAR GUK-PAR NÜ-MA

Able to draw forth all beings!



6. Tārā victorious over the three worlds

CH'AK-TS'ÄL GYA-J'IN ME-LHA TS'ANG-PA

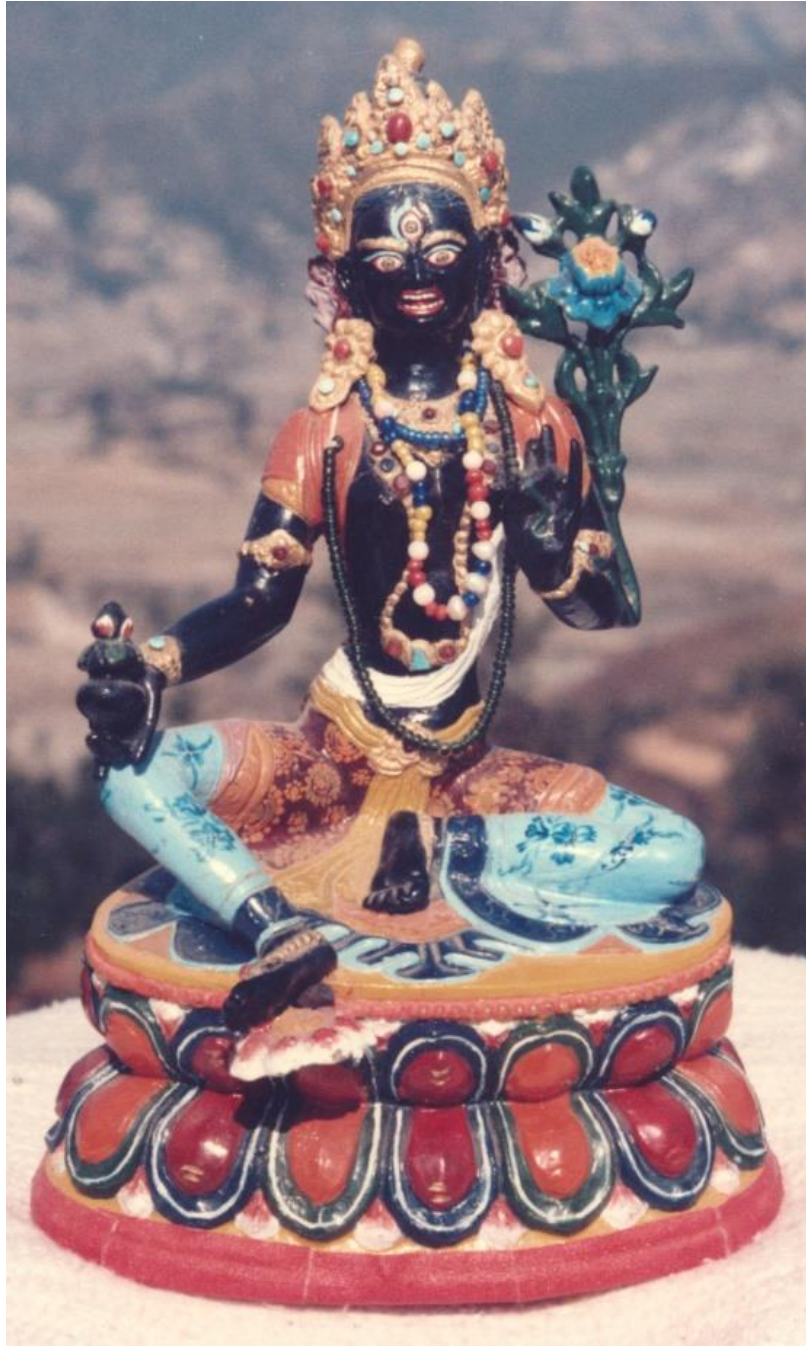
**Homage! Worshipped by the all-lords,
LUNG-LHA NA-TS'OK WANG-CH'UK CH'Ö-MA**

Shakra, Agni, Brahma, Marut!

JUNG-PO RO-LANG DR'I-ZA-NAM-D'ANG

**Honored by the hosts of spirits,
NÖ-JIN TS'OK-KYI DÜN-NÄ TÖ-MA**

Corpse-raisers, gandharvas, yakshas!



7. Tārā who crushes all adversaries

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TrÄṬ-CHE-J'A-D'ANG PHÄṬ-KYI
Homage! With her TRAD and PHAT sounds
 P'A-RÖL TrÜL-K'OR RAP-TU JOM-MA
Destroying foes' magic diagrams!
 YÄ-KUM YÖN-KYANG ZHAP-KYI NÄN-TE
Her feet pressing, left out, right in,
 ME-BAR TrUK-PA SHIN-TU BAR-MA
Blazing in a raging fire-blaze!



8. Tārā who bestows supreme powers / Tārā who crushes all maras

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TURE JIK-PA CH'EN-MO

Homage! TURE, very dreadful!

DÜ-KYI PA-WO NAM-PAR JOM-MA

Destroyer of Mara's champion(s)!

CH'U-KYE ZHÄL-NI Tr'O-NYER DÄN-DZÄ

She with frowning lotus visage,

DrA-WO T'AM-CHÄ MA-LÜ SÖ-MA

Who is slayer of all enemies!



9. Tārā who grants boons

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÖN-CH'OK SUM-TS'ÖN CHAK-GYÄi

Homage! At the heart her fingers,
SOR-MÖ T'UK-KAR NAM-PAR GYÄN-MA

Adorn her with Three Jewel mudra!
MA-LÜ CH'OK-KYI K'OR-LÖ GYÄN-PÄi

Light-ray masses all excited!
RANG-G'I Ö-KYI TS'OK-NAM Tr'UK-MA

All directions' wheels adorn her!



10. Tārā who dispels all sorrows

CH'AK-TS'ÄL RAP-TU GA-WA JI-PÄi

Homage! She so joyous, radiant,

U-GYÄN Ö-KYI TR'ENG-WA PEL-MA

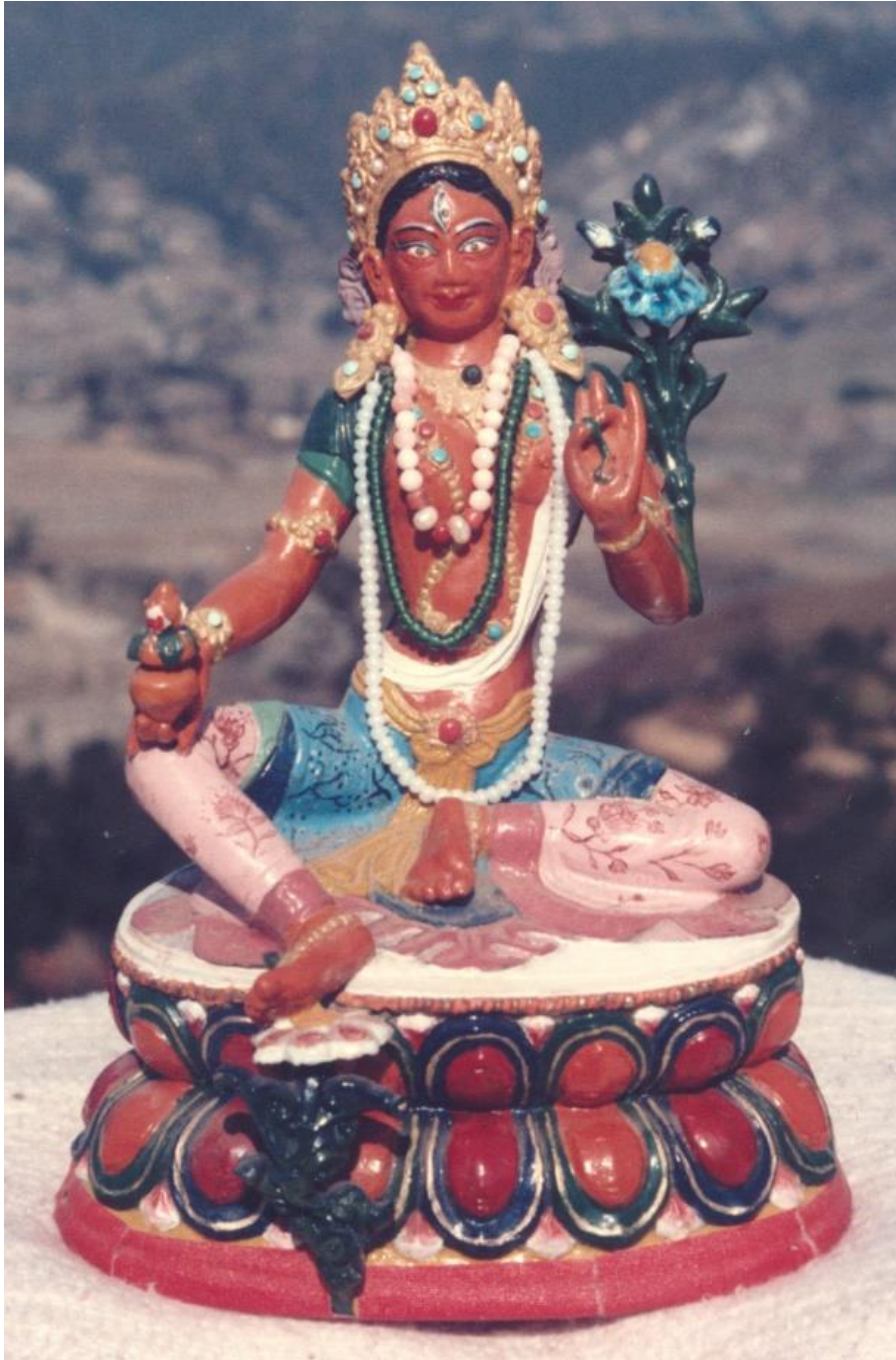
Crown emitting garlands of light!

ZHÄ-PA RAP-ZHÄ TUTTÄRÄ-YI

Mirthful, laughing with TUTTARE,

DÜ-D'ANG JIK-TEN WANG-D'U DZÄ-MA

Subjugating maras, devas!



11. Tārā who summons all beings / Dispeller of misfortune

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SA-ZHI KYONG-WÄi TS'OK-NAM

Homage! She able to summon

T'AM-CHÄ GUK-PAR NÜ-PA-NYI-MA

All earth-guardians' assembly!

Tr'O-NYER YO-WÄi YI-G'E HÜM-G'I

Shaking, frowning, with her HUM sign

P'ONG-PA T'AM-CHÄ NAM-PAR DrÖL-MA

Saving from every misfortune!



12. Tārā of auspicious light

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DA-WÄi D'UM-B'Ü U-GYÄN
Homage! Crown adorned with crescent
GYÄN-PA T'AM-CHÄ SHIN-TU BAR-MA
Moon, all ornaments most shining!
RÄL-PÄi TrÖ-NA Ö-PAK-ME-LÄ
Amitabha in her hair-knot
TAK-PAR SHIN-TU WÖ-RAB DZÄ-MA
Sending out much light eternal!



13. Tārā the ripener

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÄL-PÄi T'A-MÄi ME-TAR

Homage! She 'mid wreath ablaze like

BAR-WÄi Tr'ENG-WÄi Ü-NA NÄ-MA

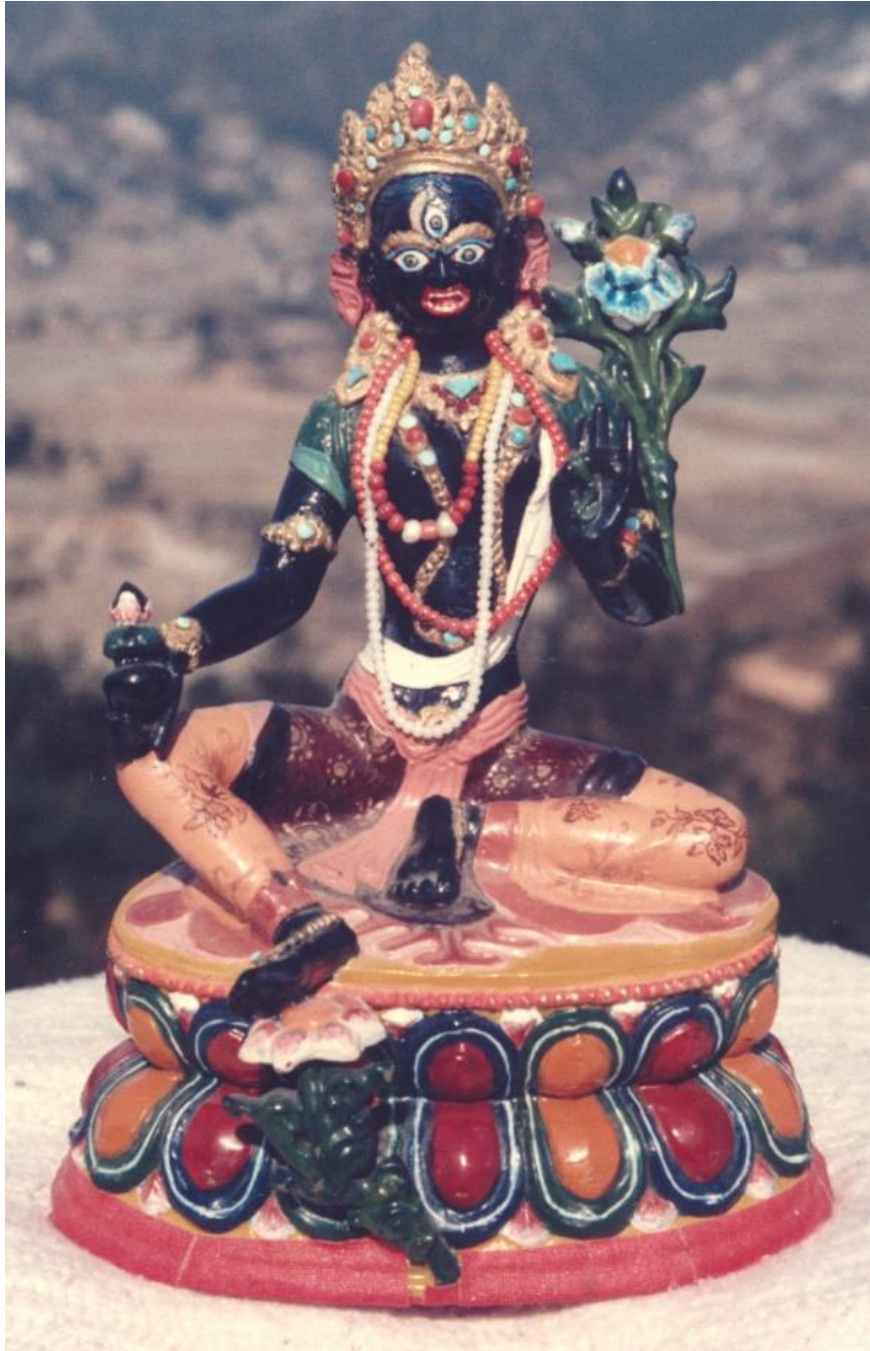
Eon-ending fire abiding!

YÄ-KYANG YÖN-KUM KUN-NÄ-KOR GA

Right stretched, left bent, joy surrounds you,

DrA-YI PUNG-NI NAM-PAR JOM-MA

Troops of enemies destroying!



14. Frowning Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SA-ZHIi NGÖ-LA CH'AK-G'I
Homage! She who strikes the ground with
T'IL-GY'I NÜN-CHING ZHAP-KYI DUNG-MA
Her palm, and with her foot beats it!
Tr'O-NYER CHÄN-DZÄ YI-G'E HŪM-G'I
Scowling, with the letter HUM the
RIM-PA DÜN-PO-NAM-NI GEM-MA
Seven levels she does conquer!



15. Great peaceful Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DE-MA GE-MA ZHI-MA

Homage! Happy, virtuous, peaceful!

NYA-NGÄN-DÄ-ZHI CHÖ-YÜL-NYI-MA

She whose field is peace, nirvana!

SVĀHĀ OM-D'ANG YANG-D'AK DÄN-PÄ

She endowed with OM and SVAHA,

DIK-PA CH'EN-PO JOM-PA-NYI-MA

Destroyer of the great evil!



16. Tārā, destroyer of all attachment

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÜN-NÄ-KOR RAB-GA-WÄi

Homage! She with joy surrounded,
DrA-YI LÜ-NI RAP-TU GEM-MA

Tearing foes' bodies asunder,
YI-G'E CHU-PÄi NGAK-NI KÖ-Päi

Frees with HUM and knowledge mantra,
RIG-PA HÜM-LÄ DrÖL-MA-NYI-MA

Arrangement of the ten letters!



17. Tārā, accomplisher of bliss

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TURE ZHAP-NI DAP-PÄ

Homage! TURE! With seed letter

HŪṂ-G'I NAM-PÄi SA-B'ÖN-NYI-MA

Of the shape of syllable HUM!

RI-RAB MÄNDARA-D'ANG Bik-J'E

By foot stamping shakes the three worlds,

JIK-TEN SUM-NAM YO-WA NYI-MA

Meru, Mandara, and Vindhya!



18. Victorious Tārā

CH'AK-TS'ÄL LHA-YI TS'O-YI NAM-PÄi
Homage! Holding in her hand the
 RI-D'ak TAK-CHÄN CH'AK-NA NAM-MA
Hare-marked moon of deva-lake form!
 TÄRÄ NYI-JÖ PHÄṬ-KYI YI-G'E
With twice spoken TÄRÄ and PHAT,
 D'UK-NAM MA-LÜ-PAR-NI SEL-MA
Totally dispelling poison!



19. Tārā, consumer of suffering

CH'AK-TS'ÄL LHA-YI TS'OK-NAM GYÄL-PO

Homage! She whom gods and their kings,
LHA-D'ANG MI-AM-CHI-YI TEN-MA

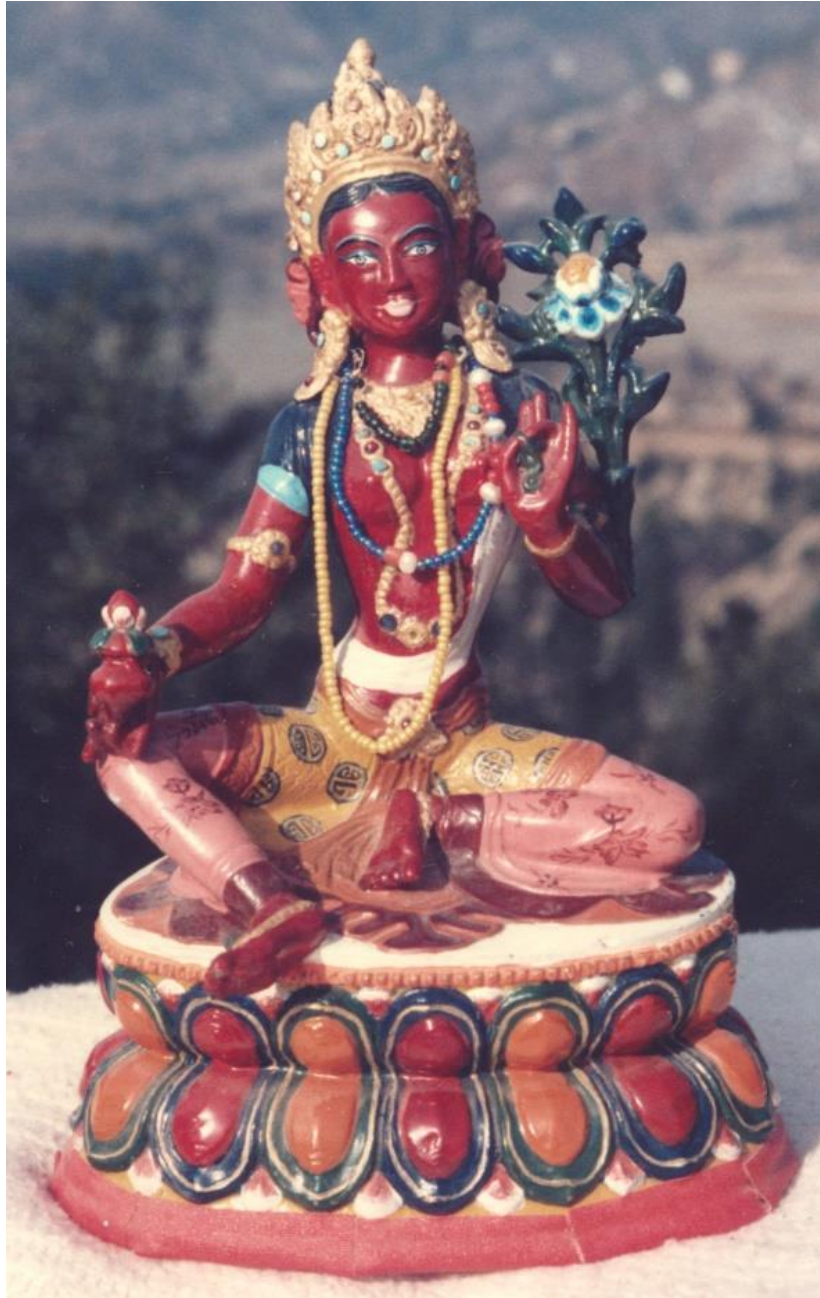
And the kinnaras do honor!

KÜN-NÄ G'O-CH'A GA-WÄi JI-KYI

Armored in all joyful splendor,

TSÖ-D'ANG MI-LAM NGÄN-PA SEL-MA

She dispels bad dreams and conflicts!



20. Tārā, source of attainments

CH'AK-TS'ÄL NYI-MA DA-WA GYÄ-PÄi
Homage! She whose two eyes bright with
CHÄN-NYI-PO-LA WÖ RAP-SÄL-MA
Radiance of sun and full moon!
HARA NYI-JÖ TUTTÄRÄ-YI
With twice HARA and TUTTARE,
SHIN-TU DR'AK-PÖi RIM-NÄ SEL-MA
She dispels severe contagion!



21. Tārā, the perfecter

CH'AK-TS'ÄL D'E-NYI SUM-NAM KÖ-PÄ
Homage! Full of liberating
ZHI-WÄI T'U-D'ANG YANG-D'AK-DÄN-MA
Pow'r by the set of three natures!
DÖN-D'ANG RO-LANG NÖ-JIN TS'OK-NAM
Destroys hosts of spirits, yakshas,
JOM-PA TURE RAP-CH'OG-NYI-MA
And raised corpses! Supreme! TURE!

The benefits

TSA-WÄi NGAk-KYI TÖ-PA DI-D'ANG

These praises with the root mantras

CH'AK-TS'ÄL-WA-NI NYI-SHU-TSA-CHIK

And twenty-one prostrations,

LHA-MO-LA G'Ü YANG-D'AK DÄN-PÄi

Whoever is endowed with devotion for the goddess

LO-DÄN G'ANG-G'I RAP-D'Ä JÖ-D'E

And recites them with supreme faith,

- 22 -

SÖ-D'ANG T'O-RANG LANG-PAR J'Ä-NÄ

Remembering them at dawn upon waking and in the evenings,

Dr'ÄN-PÄ MI-JIK T'AM-CHÄ RAP-TER

Will be granted all fearlessness,

DIK-PA T'AM-CHÄ RAP-TU ZHI-WA

Will perfectly pacify all negativities,

NGÄN-DrO T'AM-CHÄ JOM-PA-NYI-D'O

And will eliminate all unfortunate migrations.

-23-

GYÄL-WA J'E-WA-Tr'AK-DÜN-NAM-KYI

The multitudes of conquerors

NYUR-D'U WANG-NI KUR-WAR GYUR-LA

Will quickly grant initiation:

DI-LÄ CH'E-WA-NYI-NI T'OP-CHING

Thus, endowed with this greatness,

SANG-GYÄ G'O-P'ANG T'AR-T'UK D'ER-DrO

One will eventually reach the state of a buddha.

-24-

D'E-YI D'UK-NI DrAK-PO CH'EN-PO

If affected by the most terrible poison,

TÄN-NÄ-PA-AM ZHÄN-YANG DrO-WA

Whether ingested, drunk, or from a living being,

ZÖ-PA D'ANG-NI T'UNG-PA-NYI KYANG

Just by remembering

DrÄN-PÄ RAP-TU SEL-WA-NYI T'OP

Will one be thoroughly cleansed.

-25-

DÖN-D'ANG RIM-D'ANG D'UK-G'I ZIR-WÄi

If this prayer is recited two, three, or seven times,
DUK-NGÄL TS'OK-NI NAM-PAR PONG-TE

It will pacify all the sufferings of torments
SEM-CHÄN ZHÄN-PA-NAM-LA YANG-NGO

Caused by spirits, fevers, and poisons,
NYI-SUM-DÜN-D'U NGÖN-PAR JÖ-NA

And by other beings as well.

-26-

B'U-DÖ-PÄ-NI B'U T'OP-GYUR-ZHING

If you wish for a child, you will get a child;
NOR-DÖ-PÄ-NI NOR-NAM-NYI T'OP

If you wish for wealth, you will receive wealth.
DÖ-PA T'AM-CHÄ T'OP-PAR GYUR-TE

All your wishes will be fulfilled
GEK-NAM ME-CHING SO-SOR JOM-GYUR

And all obstacles pacified.

-27-



2.a The twenty-one praises in Sanskrit (Romanized and Devanagari)

Romanized Sanskrit version (by Digital Sanskrit Buddhist Canon¹)

(ārya) tārānamaskāraikaviṃśatistotram

om namo bhagavatyai āryaśrī-ekaviṃśatitārāyai

namastāre ture vīre kṣaṇadyutinibhekṣaṇe|
trailokyanāthavaktrābjavikasatkamalodbhave|| 1||

namaḥ śataśaraccandrasaṃpūrṇeva varānane|
tārāsahasrakiraṇaiḥ prahasatkiraṇojjvale|| 2||

namaḥ kanakanīlābja-pāṇipadmavibhūṣite|
dānavīryatapaḥśā(kṣā)ntititikṣādhyānagocare|| 3||

namastathāgatoṣṇīṣavijayānantacāriṇi|
śeṣapāramitāprāptajinaputranīṣevite|| 4||

namastutārahumkārapūritāsādigantare|
saptalokakramākṛā[nṭe] aśeṣakarūṇā(ṇe)kṣaṇe|| 5||

namaḥ śakrānalabrahmamarudviśveśvarārcite|
bhūtavetālagandharvagaṇayakṣapuraskṛte || 6||

namaḥ straditi phaṭkāra parajatra(yantra)pramardini|
pratyālīḍhapadanyāse śikhī(khi)jvālākulojjvale|| 7||

namasture mahāghore mālavīravīnāśini|
bhṛkuṭīkṛtavaktrābjasarvaśatrunisundanī(śūdini)|| 8||

namaḥ strīratnamudrāṅkahṛdayāṅgulibhūṣite|
bhūṣitāśeṣadikcakranikarasvakarākule|| 9||

namaḥ pramuditāśeṣamuktākṣīraprasāriṇi|
hasatprahasatuttāre mārālolavaśāṅkari|| 10||

namaḥ samantabhūpālapata(ṭa)lākarṣaṇa(ṇe)kṣaṇe|
carabhṛkuṭihūṃkārasarvāpadavimocanī(cini) || 11||

¹ <http://www.dsbcproject.org/>

namaḥ śrīkhaṇḍakhaṇḍendu[su]muktābharāṇa(ṇo)jjvale|
amitābhajitābhārabhāsure kiraṇoddhruve(ddhure) || 12||

namaḥ kalpāntahutabhugajvālāmālāntare(ra)sthite|
ālīḍhamudi(dri)tābaddharipucakravināśinī(ni)|| 13||

namaḥ karatarā(lā)ghāṭa(ta)carāṇāhatabhūtale|
bhṛkuṭīkṛtahumkārasaptapātālabhedinī(ni)|| 14||

namaḥ śive śubhe śānte śāntanirvāṇagocare|
svāhāpraṇavasamyukte mahāpātakanāśanī(śini)|| 15||

namaḥ pramuditābaddharigātraprabhedini|
daśākṣarapadanyāse vidyāhumkārādīpīte|| 16||

nama[stāre] ture pādaghātahumkāravījite|
merumaṇḍalakailāśabhuvanatrāyacāriṇī(ṇi) || 17||

namaḥ sure sa(śa)rākārahariṇāṅkakare(ra)sthite|
haridviruktaphaṭkāra(re) aśeṣaviṣanāśinī(ni)|| 18||

namaḥ surāsuragaṇayakṣakinnarasevite |
abuddhamuditābhogakarī(ri) duḥsvapnanāśinī(ni) || 19 ||

namaścandrārkasampūrṇanayanadyutibhāsvare|
tārādviruktatuttāre viṣamajvala(ra)nāśini|| 20||

namaḥ strītattvavinyāse śivaśaktisamanvite|
grahavetāra(la)yakṣoṣmanāśini pravare ture|| 21||

mantramūlamidaṃ stotraṃ namaskāraikaviṃśatiḥ(ti)|
yaḥ paṭhetprātaḥ (paṭhet prayataḥ) dhīmān devyābhaktisamanvite(taḥ)||22||

sāyaṃ vā prātarutthāya smaret sarvābhayapradam|
sarvapāpaprāśamaṃ sarvadurgatināśanam|| 23||

abhiṣikto bhavet tūrṇaṃ saptabhirjinakoṭibhiḥ|
māsamātreṇa caivāsau sukhaṃ bauddhapadaṃ vrajet|| 24||

viṣaṃ tasya mahāghoraṃ sthāvaram cātha jaṅgamam|
smaṇāṇna padaṃ yāti khāditaṃ pi(pī)tameva vā|| 25||

grahajo(jā)laviṣārtānāṃ parastrīviṣanāśanam|
anyeṣāṃ caiva sattvānāṃ dvisaptamabhivartitam|| 26||

putrakāmo labhet putraṃ ghanakāmo labheddhanam|
sarvakāmānavāpnoti na vighnaiḥ pratihanyate|| 27||

iti śrīsamyaḥ sambuddhāvai(ro)canabhāṣitaṃ bhagavatyaṛyatārādevyā
namaskāraikaviṃśatināmāṣṭottaraśatakaṃ buddhabhāṣitaṃ parisamāptam



Devanagari Sanskrit version (by Digital Sanskrit Buddhist Canon)

(आर्य) तारानमस्कारैकविंशतिस्तोत्रम्

ॐ नमो भगवत्यै आर्यश्री-एकविंशतितारायै

नमस्तारे तुरे वीरे क्षणद्युतिनिभेक्षणे।
त्रैलोक्यनाथवक्त्राब्जविकसत्कमलोद्भवे ॥ १ ॥

नमः शतशरच्चन्द्रसंपूर्णव वरानने।
तारासहस्रकिरणैः प्रहसत्किरणोज्ज्वले ॥ २ ॥

नमः कनकनीलाब्ज-पाणिपद्मविभूषिते।
दानवीर्यतपःशा(क्षा)न्तितितिक्षाध्यानगोचरे ॥ ३ ॥

नमस्तथागतोष्णीषविजयानन्तचारिणि।
शेषपारमिताप्राप्तजिनपुत्रनिषेविते ॥ ४ ॥

नमस्तुतारहंकारपूरिताशादिगन्तरे।
सप्तलोकक्रमाक्रान्ते अशेषकरुणा(णे)क्षणे ॥ ५ ॥

नमः शक्रानलब्रह्ममरुद्विश्वेश्वरार्चिते।
भूतवेतालगन्धर्वगणयक्षपुरस्कृते ॥ ६ ॥

नमः स्त्रदिति फट्कार परजत्र(यन्त्र)प्रमर्दिनि ।
प्रत्यालीढपदन्यासे शिखी(खि)ज्वालाकुलोज्ज्वले ॥ ७ ॥

नमस्तुरे महाघोरे मालवीरविनाशिनि ।
भृकुटीकृतवक्त्राब्जसर्वशत्रुनिसुन्दनी(षूदिनि) ॥ ८ ॥

नमः स्त्रीरत्नमुद्राङ्कहृदयाङ्गुलिभूषिते ।
भूषिताशेषदिव्चक्रनिकरस्वकराकुले ॥ ९ ॥

नमः प्रमुदिताशेषमुक्ताक्षीरप्रसारिणि ।
हसत्प्रहसतुत्तारे मारलोलवशङ्करि ॥ १० ॥

नमः समन्तभूपालपत(ट)लाकर्षण(णे)क्षणे ।
चरभृकुटिहंकारसर्वापदविमोचनी(चिनि) ॥ ११ ॥

नमः श्रीखण्डखण्डेन्दु[सु]मुक्ताभरण(णो)ज्ज्वले ।
अमिताभजिताभारभासुरे किरणोद्ध्रुवे(द्धुरे) ॥ १२ ॥

नमः कल्पान्तहुतभुगज्वालामालान्तरे(र)स्थिते ।
आलीढमुदि(द्रि)ताबद्धरिपुचक्रविनाशिनी(नि) ॥ १३ ॥

नमः करतरा(ला)घाट(त)चरणाहतभूतले ।
भृकुटीकृतहुँकारसप्तपातालभेदिनी(नि) ॥ १४ ॥

नमः शिवे शुभे शान्ते शान्तनिर्वाणगोचरे ।
स्वाहाप्रणवसंयुक्ते महापातकनाशनी(शिनि) ॥ १५ ॥

नमः प्रमुदिताबद्धरिगात्रप्रभेदिनि ।
दशाक्षरपदन्यासे विद्याहुँकारदीपिते ॥ १६ ॥

नम[स्तारे] तुरे पादघातहुँकारवीजिते ।
मेरुमण्डलकैलाशभुवनत्रयचारिणी(णि) ॥ १७ ॥

नमः सुरे स(श)राकारहरिणाङ्ककरे(र)स्थिते।
हरिद्विरुक्तफट्कार(रे) अशेषविषनाशिणी(नि) ॥ १८ ॥

नमः सुरासुरगणयक्षकिन्नरसेविते।
अबुद्धमुदिताभोगकरी(रि) दुःस्वप्ननाशिनी(नि) ॥ १९ ॥

नमश्चन्द्रार्कसम्पूर्णनयनद्युतिभास्वरे।
ताराद्विरुक्ततुत्तारे विषमज्वल(र)नाशिनि ॥ २० ॥

नमः स्त्रीतत्त्वविन्यासे शिवशक्तिसमन्विते।
ग्रहवेतार(ल)यक्षोष्मनाशिनि प्रवरे तुरे ॥ २१ ॥
मन्त्रमूलमिदं स्तोत्रं नमस्कारैकविंशतिः(ति)।
यः पठेत्प्रातः (पठेत् प्रयतः) धीमान् देव्याभक्तिसमन्विते(तः) ॥ २२ ॥

सायं वा प्रातरुत्थाय स्मरेत् सर्वाभयप्रदम्।
सर्वपापप्रशमनं सर्वदुर्गतिनाशनम् ॥ २३ ॥

अभिषिक्तो भवेत् तूर्णं सप्तभिर्जिनकोटिभिः।
मासमात्रेण चैवासौ सुखं बौद्धपदं व्रजेत् ॥ २४ ॥

विषं तस्य महाघोरं स्थावरं चाथ जङ्गमम्।
स्मरणान्न पदं याति खादितं पि(पी)तमेव वा ॥ २५ ॥

ग्रहजो(जा)लविषार्तानां परस्त्रीविषनाशनम्।
अन्येषां चैव सत्त्वानां द्विसप्तमभिवर्तितम् ॥ २६ ॥

पुत्रकामो लभेत् पुत्रं घनकामो लभेद्धनम्।
सर्वकामानवाप्नोति न विघ्नैः प्रतिहन्यते ॥ २७ ॥

इति श्रीसम्यक्संबुद्धवैलो(रो)चनभाषितं भगवत्यार्यतारादेव्या
नमस्कारैकविंशतिनामाष्टोत्तरशतकं बुद्धभाषितं परिसमाप्तम्।



2.b - The twenty-one praises to Tārā, a literal translation from the Sanskrit

THE PRAISE IN TWENTY-ONE HOMAGES TO OUR LADY,
THE GODDESS ĀRYA-TĀRĀ, WITH ITS BENEFITS
(*Bhagavaty-ārya-tārā-devyā namaskārâikaviṃśati-stotraṃ
guṇa-hita-sahitam*)

- 1 **Homage! Tārā, swift, heroic!**
With regard like instant lightning!
Sprung from op'ning stamens from the
Lord of Three Worlds' facial lotus!
- 2 **Homage! She whose face combines a**
hundred autumn moons at fullest!
Blazing with light-rays resplendent
as a thousand-star collection!
- 3 **Homage! Golden One, blue lotus,**
water-born, in hand adorned!
Giving, Effort, Calm, Austerities,
Patience, Meditation Her field!
- 4 **Homage! Crown of *Tathāgatas*,**
She who goes in endless triumph!
Honoured much by Conqu'rors' Offspring!
having reached ev'ry Perfection!
- 5 **Homage! Filling with TUTTĀRA,**
HŪM the regions and space-quarters!
Trampling with Her feet the sev'n worlds,
able to draw forth all [beings]!

- 6 Homage! Worshipped by the All-Lord,
 Śakra, Agni, Brahmā, Marut!
 Honoured by the hosts of spirits,
 corpse-raisers, *gandharvas*, *yakṣas*!
- 7 Homage! With Her TRAṬ and PHAṬ sounds
 crusher of foes' magic diagrams!
 Putting Her feet left out, right back,
 eyes all full of blazing fire!
- 8 Homage! TURE, very dreadful!
 Destroyer of Māra's champion!
 She with frowning lotus visage
 who is slayer of all enemies!
- 9 Homage! She adorned with fingers,
 at Her heart, in Three-Jewel *mudrā*!
 Wheel of all quarters adorned,
 filled with masses of Her own light!
- 10 Homage! She of swelling Great Joy,
 diadem emitting garlands!
 Mirthful, laughing with TUTTĀRE,
 subjugating *māras*, *devas*!
- 11 Homage! She able to summon
 all earth-guardians and their trains!
 Shaking, frowning, with Her HŪM-sign
 saving from ev'ry misfortune!

- 12 **Homage! Crowning locks adorned with
crescent diadem, most shining!
In Her hair-mass, Amitābha
shining, with [much] light eternal!**
- 13 **Homage! She 'mid wreath of flames like
eon-ending fire abiding!
Right leg outstretched, joy-producing,
destroying the troops of enemies!**
- 14 **Homage! She who smites the ground with
Her palm, and with Her foot beats it!
Frowning, with the letter HŪṂ the
seven underworlds She shatters!**
- 15 **Homage! Happy, Virtuous, Peaceful!
She whose field is Peace, *Nirvāṇa*!
She endowed with OM and SVĀHĀ!
Of the great downfall destroyer!**
- 16 **Homage! She bound round with joy, and
tearing foes' bodies asunder!
Luminous with the HŪṂ-mantra,
word-array of the ten syllables!**
- 17 **Homage! Swift One! The foot-stamper
with for seed the letter HŪṂ's shape!
She who shakes the triple world and
Meru, Mandara and Kailās!**
- 18 **Homage! She in whose hand rests the
deer-marked moon, of *deva*-lake form!
With twice-spoken TĀRĀ and PHAṬ
totally dispelling poison!**

- 19 **Homage! She whom god-host rulers,
gods and *kinnaras* do honour!
Joy-producing one, Her fullness
conflict and bad dreams dispelling!**
- 20 **Homage! She whose eyes are bright with
radiance of sun or full moon!
With twice HARA and TUTTĀRE
Driver-out of chronic fever!**
- 21 **Homage! Full of liberating
power by set of three Realities!
Crushing crowds of spirits, *yakṣas*
and corpse-raisers! Supreme! TURE!**
- 22 **This praise, rooted in mantras, a
twenty-one-fold homage – for one
Who recites it, wise and pious,
full of faith towards the Goddess,**
- 23 **And remembers it at even
or at dawn on rising, it grants
Ev'ry fearlessness, quells all sins,
and destroys all bad migrations.**
- 24 **Quickly he'll be consecrated
by sev'n times ten million Conqu'rors.
Gaining greatness herein, he will
reach at last the rank of Buddha.**
- 25 **The most dreadful poison, whether
animal, or plant or min'ral,
Whether he's devoured or drunk it,
meets its end through his rememb'ring.**

- 26 It completely stops the pain of
those whom spirits, fevers, poisons
Afflict – other beings' also:
On performing twice three sevens,
- 27 One who wants a child will get one,
one desiring wealth will find wealth,
One obtains all one's desires; by
hindrances one's not frustrated.

The Praise in Twenty-one Homages to the Venerable Lady,
the Goddess Ārya-Tārā, spoken by the glorious Complete and
Perfect Buddha Vairocana, is complete and concluded.¹⁴

ŚUBHAM!

Translated from the Sanskrit.



2.c A critical edition of the Tibetan translation of the twenty-one praises to Tārā

Preface

When chanting the “Praises of the Twenty-One Tārās”² in varying groups, or when seeing different versions of the text, you may sometimes notice different terms being used. Although only one Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit original appears to have survived, the different blockprints of the Tibetan version do not always have exactly the same text. This critical edition of the Tibetan translation was made by Martin Willson in his *In Praise of Tārā, Songs to the Saviouress*³, an excellent source of much information on Tārā, which has been out of print for many years now. Martin compared these ten editions, preceded by the identifying letters used in the footnotes:

- A Small lithographed pe-cha, entitled *rJe bsun sgrol ma la bstod pa phyag 'tshal nyer gcig pa zhes bya ba*. Last pages absent in Martin’s copy, so no publication details.
- D Quoted in the commentary of Ngül-ch’u Dharmabhadra in his *Collected Works*, Vol. 2.
- G Quoted in the commentary of Gedün Drup-pa, his *Collected Works*, Vol. 6).
- J Quoted in the commentary of Je-tsün Dr’ag-pa Gyäl-tśän (*Sa skya pa’i bka’ ‘bum*, Vol. 4, 92-94).
- K Typeset pe-cha, 10 leaves, *sGrol ma dkar sngon gyi bstod pa dang gzungs bcas*. Mani Printing Works, Kalimpong.
- L Lhasa Kangyur, rGyud ‘bum, NGA (ལ).
- Q Tibetan text in the Quadrilingual blockprint, *In Praise of Tārā*, p. 109.
- S₁, S₄ Quoted in the commentaries of Sūryagupta, Peking Tängyur, P2557 and P2560.
- T Tog Palace Kangyur, rGyud ‘bum, NGA (ལ).

² According to the commentaries, two interpretations are possible: twenty-one qualities of a single Āryā Tārā or twenty-one different manifestations of this female Buddha. (Ed.)

³ *In Praise of Tārā, Songs to the Saviouress* by Martin Willson (Wisdom Publications, Somerville MA, USA, 1996). Further referred to as *In Praise of Tārā*.

Three sources (Q, S₁, S₄) give only verses 1 to 21; the other seven are complete apart from a few words in G. Many of the variants are simply different spellings or different tenses of verbs (“at 26b, past, present and future are all found, and all make sense”). Martin omitted around forty “evident misprints of no interest”.

In the list of variants, ‘6d **kyis** (**kyi** L S₁)’ implies that in the fourth line of verse 6, L and S₁ erroneously read **kyi** while all the other texts are consistent with the correct reading, **kyis**.

‘+Skt’ indicates that that is the literal Tibetan translation of the established Sanskrit text. The words in the transliterated version that are coloured **green**⁴ have variants that in Martin’s opinion are worth considering.

The praises are presented six times: in Tibetan script, Tibetan transliteration (Wylie system), Tibetan phonetics (sometimes using different variants), chantable English, romanized Sanskrit (p. 54) and Devanagari (p. 56).

The Tibetan text was edited by Martin Willson, who made reasoned choices among the variants found in the above-mentioned texts - texts that show a certain number of disagreements, sometimes significant.

As to the number of verses, Martin comments “... the Tibetan practice of cutting short the recitation in mid-sentence, half-way through verse 22, should not mislead anyone into supposing that the remainder of the ‘benefit verses’ is not part of the basic text. It is included in both Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, in the Kangyur and elsewhere, and is required so that the total length of the text should be twenty-seven verses, which is exactly 108 *pādas*⁵, a number we have already found in connection with Tārā in *The Hundred and Eight Names*.”

After reading these comments by Martin, who gave me a copy of the first edition of *In Praise of Tārā* in 1983 when we were both studying with Geshe Rabten in Switzerland, I have included the last five and a half verses in my daily recitation. I respectfully request practitioners to consider reciting the full text of the Praises.

Hermes Brandt

⁴ E.g. **bskums** in 7c (verse 7, third line).

⁵ In Sanskrit meter, a *pāda* is a metrical foot – here, a line of text.

The title

ཨྲ། །བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་མ་འཕགས་མ་ལྷ་མོ་
སྒྲོལ་མ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་བ་
ཉི་ཤུ་རྩ་གཅིག་གིས་
སྟོང་པ་
ནི།

bcom ldan 'das ma 'phags ma lha mo sgrol ma la phyag 'tshal ba nyi
shu rtsa gcig gis stod pa ni

CHOM DÄN DÄ MA PHAG MA LHA MO DRÖL MA LA CH'AK TS'ÄL WA NYI SHU
TSA CHIG GI TÖ PA NI

The Praise in Twenty-One Homages of the Noble Transcendent Divine
Liberator⁶

⁶ The Sanskrit *tārā* (“planet” or “star”) is translated in Tibetan as *sgrol ma* (“she who saves”). This is quite a bold move for a translator. Literal translations in Tibetan would be *kar-ma* (skar ma), Tibetan for ‘star’, or *za* (gza'), Tibetan for ‘planet’. The Tibetan translators probably wanted to avoid the term “kar-ma”, a Tibetan word that sounds exactly like the Sanskrit word for *cause and effect*, ‘karma’. Had they translated Tārā’s name literally, the line introducing the twenty-one praises would have been “OM! JE-TSÜN-MA P'AK-MA **KAR-MA**-LA CH'AK TS'ÄL-LO / OM I prostrate to the noble transcendent **Star**.” (Ed.)

Homage by the Tibetan translator⁷

། ཨོཾ་རྗེ་བཙུན་མ་འཕགས་མ་སྐྱོལ་མ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།

om⁸ rje btsun ma 'phags ma sgröl ma la phyag 'tshal lo

OM! JE-TSÜN-MA P'AK-MA DRÖL-MA-LA CH'AK TS'ÄL-LO

OM I prostrate to the noble transcendent Liberator.

⁷ This homage is not included in the Sanskrit text, but appears in the Tibetan translation in the Kangyur, without the *om*, as the translator's homage, which traditionally precedes any Tibetan translation of a sacred text. In recitation, it is made into a mantra by the addition of the *om*. The Kangyur does not mention the translator's name, but according to Jetsün Dragpa Gyälts'än's commentary on the Praises, he was called Nyän and was from the late eleventh century.

⁸ So ADGK, omitted JLT.

The praise in twenty-one homages

1. རབ་ཏུ་དཔའ་བའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā Swift and Heroic

| རྒྱག་འཚལ་སྐྱོལ་མ་སྐྱུར་མ་དཔའ་མོ།
| སྐྱུན་ནི་སྐད་ཅིག་སྐྱོག་དང་འདྲ་མ།
| འཇིག་རྟེན་གསུམ་མགོན་ཚུ་སྐྱེས་ལལ་གྱི།
| གེ་སར་བྱེ་བ་ལས་ནི་བྱུང་མ། །། །

phyag 'tshal sgrol ma myur ma dpa' mo⁹

spyan ni skad cig glog dang 'dra ma

'jig rten gsum mgon chu skyes zhal gyi

ge sar bye¹⁰ ba las ni byung ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DrÖL-MA NYUR-MA PA-MO
CHÄN-NI KÄ-CHik LOK-D'ANG DrA-MA
Jik-TEN SUM-GÖN CH'U-KYE ZHÄL-GY'I
GE-SAR J'E-WA-LÄ-NI J'UNG-MA

Homage! Tāra, swift, heroic!
Eyes like lightning instantaneous!
Sprung from op'ning stamens of the
Lord of three world's tear-born lotus!

⁹ *dpa' mo* (*dpal mo* AD).

¹⁰ *bye* (*phye* T).

2. དཀར་མོ་ཟླ་མདངས་ཀྱི་སྒྲོལ་མ་ / Tārā White as the Autumn Moon

| ཕྱག་འཚལ་སྟོན་ཀའི་ཟླ་བ་ཀུན་དུ།
| གང་བ་བརྒྱ་ནི་བརྟེན་པའི་ཞལ་མ།
| སྐར་མ་སྟོང་ཕྱག་ཚེགས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས།
| རབ་དུ་སྤེ་བའི་འོད་རབ་འབར་མ། །༢། །

phyag 'tshal ston ka'i zla ba kun tu
gang ba¹¹ brgya ni brtsegs pa'i zhal ma
skar ma stong phrag tshogs pa rnam kyis
rab tu phye ba'i 'od rab 'bar ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TÖN-KÄi DA-WA KÜN-TU
G'ANG-WA GYA-NI TSEK-PÄi ZHÄL-MA
KAR-MA TONG-TrAK TS'Ok-PA-NAM-KYI
RAP-TU CH'E-WÄi Ö RAB-BAR-MA

Homage! She whose face combines a
Hundred autumn moons at fullest!
Blazing with light rays resplendent
As a thousand star collection!

¹¹ *gang ba* (*gang ma A*).

3. གསེར་མདོག་ཅན་གྱི་སྒྲོལ་མ་ / Golden-coloured Tārā

| ཕྱག་འཚལ་གསེར་སྒྲོ་ལྷ་ནས་སྐྱེས་ཀྱི།
| པདྨས་ཕྱག་ནི་རྣམ་པར་བརྒྱན་མ།
| སྦྱིན་པ་བཙེན་འགྲུས་དཀའ་ཕྱབ་ཞི་བ།
| བཟོད་པ་བསམ་གཏན་སྦྱོང་ཡུལ་ཉིད་མ། །༩།

phyag 'tshal gser¹² sngo chu nas skyes kyi
padmas phyag ni rnam par brgyan ma
sbyin pa brtson 'grus dka' thub zhi ba
bzod pa bsam gtan spyod yul nyid ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SER-NGO CH'U-NÄ KYE-KYI
PÄ-MÄ CH'AK-NI NAM-PAR GYÄN-MA
JIN-PA TSÖN-DrÜ KA-T'UP ZHI-WA
ZÖ-PA SAM-TÄN CHÖ-YÜL-NYI-MA

Homage! Golden-blue one, lotus
Water born, in hand adorned!
Giving, effort, calm, austerities,
Patience, meditation her sphere!

¹² *gser* – 'gold' (*ser* - 'yellow' GK).

4. གཞུག་ཏོར་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་བའི་སྒྲོལ་མ་ / Tārā the Victorious Uṣṇīṣa of the
Tathāgatas

| རྒྱག་འཚལ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་གཞུག་ཏོར།
| མཐའ་ཡས་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་བར་སྦྱོང་མ།
| མ་ལུས་པ་རོལ་སྤྱོད་བ་ཐོབ་པའི།
| རྒྱལ་བའི་སྒྲས་ཀྱིས་ཤིན་ཏུ་བསྐྱེན་མ། །༥།

phyag 'tshal de bzhin gshegs pa'i gtsug tor
mtha' yas nam par rgyal bar spyod ma
ma lus pha rol phyin pa thob pa'i
rgyal ba'i sras kyis shin tu bsten ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL D'E-ZHIN-SHEK-PÄi TSUK-TOR
T'A-YÄ NAM-PAR GYÄL-WAR CHÖ-MA
MA-LÜ P'A-RÖL-CH'IN-PA T'OP-PÄi
GYÄL-WÄi SÄ-KYI SHIN-TU TEN-MA

Homage! Crown of tathagatas,
Actions triumph without limit,
Relied on by conquerors' children
Having reached ev'ry perfection!

5. ལྷོ་སྐྱོ་སྐྱོག་པའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā Proclaiming the Sound of HŪṀ

| ལྷོག་འཚལ་ཏུ་རྩུ་ར་ལྷོ་ཡི་གེས།
| འདོད་དང་ཕྱོགས་དང་ནམ་མཁའ་གང་མ།
| འཇིག་རྟེན་བདུན་པོ་ཞབས་གྱིས་མནན་ཏེ།
| ལྷུས་པ་མེད་པར་འགྲུགས་པར་རྣམས་མ། །༥།

phyag 'tshal tuttā ra¹³ hūṃ yi ges¹⁴
'dod dang phyogs dang nam mkha' gang ma
'jig rten bdun¹⁵ po zhabs kyis mnan te
lus pa med par 'gugs par nus ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TUTTĀRA HŪṀ YI-G'E
DÖ-D'ANG CH'OK-D'ANG NAM-K'A G'ANG-MA
JIK-TEN DÜN-PO ZHAP-KYI NÄN-TE
LÜ-PA ME-PAR GUK-PAR NÜ-MA

Homage! Filling with TUTTARE,
HUM, desire, direction, and space!
Trampling with her feet the seven worlds,
Able to draw forth all beings!

¹³ *tuttā ra* (*tuttā re* AJ).

¹⁴ *yi ges* (*yi ge* JL).

¹⁵ *bdun* (*gsum* S₄).

6. འཇིག་རྟེན་གསུམ་ལས་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་བའི་སྐྱེལ་མ་ / Tārā Victorious over the
Three Worlds

| ཡུག་འཚལ་བརྒྱ་བྱེན་མེ་ལྷ་ཚངས་པ།
| རླུང་ལྷ་སྣ་ཚོགས་དབང་ཡུག་མཚོད་མ།
| འབྲུང་པོ་རོ་ལངས་དྲི་བ་རྣམས་དང་།
| གཞོན་སྐྱེན་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་མདུན་ནས་བསྟོད་མ། །༥།

phyag 'tshal brgya byin me lha tshangs pa
rlung lha sna tshogs dbang phyug mchod ma
'byung po ro langs dri za rnam dang
gnod sbyin tshogs kyis¹⁶ mdun nas bstod ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL GYA-J'IN ME-LHA TS'ANG-PA
LUNG-LHA NA-TS'Ok WANG-CH'Uk CH'Ö-MA
JUNG-PO RO-LANG Dr'I-ZA-NAM-D'ANG
NÖ-JIN TS'Ok-KYI DÜN-NÄ TÖ-MA

Homage! Worshipped by the all-lords,
Shakra, Agni, Brahma, Marut!
Honored by the hosts of spirits,
Corpse-raisers, gandharvas, yakshas!

¹⁶ *kyis* (*kyi* L S₁).

7. རྩོལ་བ་འཇོམས་པའི་རྩོལ་མ་ / Tārā Crushing Adversaries

| རྩུག་འཚལ་རྟེན་ཅེས་བྱ་དང་ཕན་གྱིས།
| བ་རོལ་འཇུལ་འཁོར་རབ་རྟེན་འཇོམས་མ།
| གཡས་བསྐྱམ་གཡོན་བརྒྱུད་ཞབས་གྱིས་མནན་ཏེ།
| མེ་འབར་འཇུག་བ་ཤིན་རྟེན་འབར་མ། །ཡ། །

phyag 'tshal traṭ¹⁷ ces bya dang phaṭ kyis
pha rol 'khrul 'khor rab tu 'joms ma
g.yas **bskum**¹⁸ g.yon **brkyang**¹⁹ zhabs kyis mnan te
me 'bar **khrug**²⁰ **pa**²¹ shin tu 'bar ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TrÄṬ-CHE-J'A-D'ANG PHÄṬ-KYI
P'A-RÖL TrÜL-K'OR RAP-TU JOM-MA
YÄ-KUM YÖN-KYANG ZHAP-KYI NÄN-TE
ME-BAR TrUK-PA SHIN-TU BAR-MA

Homage! With her TRAD and PHAT sounds
Destroying foes' magic diagrams!
Her feet pressing, left out, right in,
Blazing in a raging fire-blaze!

¹⁷ **traṭ** AD S₁ S₄+Skt; **trad** GKLTQ (ṭat J).
¹⁸ **bskum** AJLQ S₁ S₄T; **bskums** DGK.
¹⁹ **brkyang** AJLQ S₁ S₄T; **brkyangs** DGK.
²⁰ **'khrug** ADGJK S₁; **'khrugs** LQ S₄T.
²¹ **pa** ADGJKLQ; **ma** S₁ S₄.

8.²² དབང་མཚོག་ལྷེར་བའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā Who Bestows Supreme Powers

| རྒྱག་འཚོལ་ཏུ་རེ་འཇིགས་པ་ཆེན་མོ།
| བདུད་གྱི་དཔའ་བོ་རྣམ་པར་འཇོམས་མ།
| ལུ་སྐྱེས་ཞལ་ནི་ཁྲོ་གཉེར་ལྡན་མཛད།
| དག་བོ་ཐམས་ཅད་མ་ལུས་གསོད་མ། །༥།

phyag 'tshal tu re²³ 'jigs pa chen mo²⁴
bdud kyi dpa' bo rnam par 'joms ma
chu skyes zhal ni khro gnyer ldan mdzad
dgra bo thams cad ma lus²⁵ gsod ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TURE JIK-PA CH'EN-MO
DÜ-KYI PA-WO NAM-PAR JOM-MA
CH'U-KYE ZHÄL-NI Tr'O-NYER DÄN-DZÄ
DrA-WO T'AM-CHÄ MA-LÜ SÖ-MA

Homage! TURE, very dreadful!
Destroyer of Mara's champion(s)!
She with frowning lotus visage,
Who is slayer of all enemies!

²² 8 and 9 interchanged S₄.

²³ *tu re* (*tu res* S₁).

²⁴ *chen mo* (*chen po* K S₁).

²⁵ *ma lus* (*rab tu* S₄).

9. མཚོག་སྐྱེལ་བའི་སྐྱེལ་མ་ / Tārā Granter of Sublime [Realizations]

| ཕྱག་འཚལ་དགོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་མཚོན་ཕྱག་རྒྱའི།
| སོར་མོས་ཐུགས་ཀར་རྣམ་པར་བརྒྱན་མ།
| མ་ལུས་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོས་བརྒྱན་པའི།
| རང་གི་འོད་ཀྱི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་འབྲུག་མ། །།། །

phyag 'tshal dkon mchog gsum mtshon phyag rgya'i²⁶
sor mos thugs kar rnam par brgyan ma
ma lus phyogs kyi²⁷ 'khor los brgyan pa'i
rang gi 'od kyi tshogs rnam **'khrug**²⁸ ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÖN-CH'OK SUM-TS'ÖN CHAK-GYÄi
SOR-MÖ T'UK-KAR NAM-PAR GYÄN-MA
MA-LÜ CH'OK-KYI K'OR-LÖ GYÄN-PÄi
RANG-G'I Ö-KYI TS'OK-NAM Tr'UK-MA

Homage! At the heart her fingers,
Adorn her with Three Jewel mudra!
Light-ray masses all excited!
All directions' wheels adorn her!

²⁶ *rgya'i* (*rgya* S₄).

²⁷ *kyis* T.

²⁸ *'khrug* ADGJKLS₄T; *'khrugs* QS₁.

10. ལྷ་ངན་སེལ་བའི་སྒྲོལ་མ་ / Tārā Dispelling All Sorrow

| ལྷ་ག་འཚལ་རབ་དུ་དགའ་བ་བརྗིད་པའི།
| དབུ་རྒྱན་འོད་གྱི་སྤང་བ་སྤེལ་མ།
| བཞད་པ་རབ་བཞད་དུ་རྩ་ར་ཡིས།
| བདུད་དང་འཇིག་རྟེན་དབང་དུ་མཛོད་མ། །།།

phyag 'tshal rab tu dga' ba²⁹ brjid pa'i
dbu rgyan 'od kyi **phreng**³⁰ ba spel ma
bzhad pa rab bzhad tuttā ra³¹ yis
bdud dang 'jig rten dbang du mdzad ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL RAP-TU GA-WA JI-PÄi
U-GYÄN Ö-KYI Tr'ENG-WA PEL-MA
ZHÄ-PA RAP-ZHÄ TUTTÄRA-YI
DÜ-D'ANG JIK-TEN WANG-D'U DZÄ-MA

Homage! She so joyous, radiant,
Crown emitting garlands of light!
Mirthful, laughing with TUTTARE,
Subjugating maras, devas³²!

²⁹ **dga' ba** (*dga' bas* S₁; *dga' bar* S₄).

³⁰ **phreng** AGJKLQ S₁S₄; *'phreng* DT.

³¹ **tuttā ra** ADKLS₄T (*tuttā re* S₁; *tāre* G).

³² **'jig ten** literally means 'world(s)' or 'worldly'. According to Gedün drup's commentary, the term here refers to worldly gods ('devas').

11. འགྲོ་བ་འགྲུགས་པའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā Summoner of All Beings

| རྒྱག་འཚལ་ས་གཞི་སྐྱོང་བའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས།
| ཐམས་ཅད་འགྲུགས་པར་རུས་པ་ཉིད་མ།
| ཁྲོ་གཉེར་གཡོ་བའི་ཡི་གེ་རྩྭ་གིས།
| རོངས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་རྣམ་པར་སྐྱོལ་མ། །།།

phyag 'tshal sa gzhi skyong ba'i tshogs rnam
thams cad 'gugs par nus **pa**³³ nyid ma
khro gnyer g.yo **ba'i**³⁴ yi ge hūṃ gi
phongs³⁵ pa thams cad rnam par³⁶ sgröl ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SA-ZHI KYONG-WÄi TS'OK-NAM
T'AM-CHÄ GUK-PAR NÜ-PA-NYI-MA
Tr'O-NYER YO-WÄi YI-G'E HÜM-G'I
P'ONG-PA T'AM-CHÄ NAM-PAR DrÖL-MA

Homage! She able to summon
All earth-guardians' assembly!
Shaking, frowning, with her HUM sign
Saving from every misfortune!

³³ *nus pa* ADJQS₁S₄; *nus ma* KLT.

³⁴ *g.yo ba'i* ADKLS₁T; *g.yo ba* JS₄.

³⁵ *phongs* ADJKLS₄; *'phongs* GS₁T.

³⁶ *rnam par (rab tu S₄)*.

12. བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྒྲུང་བའི་སྒྲོལ་མ་ / Tārā of Auspicious Light

| རྒྱལ་འཚལ་ལྷ་བའི་དུམ་བུས་དབུ་བརྒྱན།
| བརྒྱན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཤིན་ཏུ་འབར་མ།
| རལ་བའི་སྐར་ན་འོད་དཔག་མེད་ལས།
| རྟག་པར་ཤིན་ཏུ་འོད་ནི་མཛད་མ། །།།། |

phyag 'tshal zla ba'i **dum bus**³⁷ dbu **brgyan**³⁸

brgyan pa thams cad shin tu 'bar ma

ral pa'i **khur na**³⁹ 'od dpag med las

rtag par shin tu 'od **ni**⁴⁰ mdzad ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DA-WÄi D'UM-B'Ü U-GYÄN
GYÄN-PA T'AM-CHÄ SHIN-TU BAR-MA
RÄL-PÄi **TrÖ-NA** Ö-PAK-ME-LÄ
TAK-PAR SHIN-TU WÖ-RAB DZÄ-MA

Homage! Crown adorned with crescent

Moon, all ornaments most shining!

Amitābha in her hair-knot

Sending out much light eternal!

³⁷ **dum bus** AJKLS₁S₄T+Skt; **rtse mos** DGQ.

³⁸ **brgyan** AGJKLS₄T; **rgyan** DQS₁+Skt.

³⁹ **khur na** GS₄T+Skt; **khrod na** DJKL; **khrod nas** AQ S₁.

⁴⁰ **ni** ADGLS₁ (i.e. Skt. kiraṇadhruve); **rab** JKQS₄ (i.e. Skt. kiraṇoddhruve).

13. ཡོངས་སུ་སློན་པར་མཛད་པའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā the Ripener

| རྒྱལ་འཚལ་བསྐལ་པའི་ཐ་མའི་མེ་ལྷར།
| འབར་བའི་ཕྱིང་བའི་དབུས་ན་གནས་མ།
| གཡས་བརྐང་གཡོན་བསྐྱམ་ཀུན་ནས་བསྐྱོར་དགའ།
| དབྲ་ཡི་དབུང་ནི་རྣམ་པར་འཛོམས་མ། །།།།

phyag 'tshal bskal **pa'i**⁴¹ **tha**⁴² ma'i me ltar
'bar ba'i **phreng**⁴³ ba'i dbus na gnas⁴⁴ ma
g.yas **brkyang**⁴⁵ g.yon **bskum**⁴⁶ kun nas bskor **dga'**⁴⁷
dgra yi dpung ni rnam par 'joms ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÄL-PÄi T'A-MÄi ME-TAR
BAR-WÄi Tr'ENG-WÄi Ü-NA NÄ-MA
YÄ-KYANG YÖN-KUM KUN-NÄ-KOR GA
DrA-YI PUNG-NI NAM-PAR JOM-MA

Homage! She 'mid wreath ablaze like
Eon-ending fire abiding!
Right stretched, left bent, joy surrounds you,
Troops of enemies destroying!

⁴¹ *bskal pa'i* KS₁; *bskal ba'i* A; *skal ba'i* Q; *bskal pa* JLS₄T; *bskal ba* DG.

⁴² *tha* ADJKQ S₁S₄; *mtha'* GLT.

⁴³ *phreng* AGJKLQS₁S₄; *'phreng* DT.

⁴⁴ *gnas* (*bzhugs* J)

⁴⁵ *brkyang* AJLS₁S₄T; (*brgyad* Q); *brkyangs* DGK.

⁴⁶ *bskum* AJLS₄T; *bskums* DGK.

⁴⁷ *dga'* DGJ S₁; *dga'i* KQ (*kun ' khor dga' ba'i* S₄); *dgas* LT.

14. ཁྲོ་གཉེར་ཅན་མའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Frowning Tārā

| རྒྱལ་འཚལ་ས་གཞིའི་ངོས་ལ་རྒྱལ་གོ།
| མཐིལ་གྱིས་བསྐྱུན་ཅིང་ཞབས་གྱིས་བརྟུང་མ།
| ཁྲོ་གཉེར་ཅན་མཇོང་ཡི་གོ་རྩྱུ་གིས།
| རིམ་པ་བདུན་པོ་རྣམས་ནི་འགོམས་མ། །༡༥།

phyag 'tshal sa gzhi'i ngos la phyag gi
mthil gyis bsnun cing zhabs kyis **brdung**⁴⁸ ma
khro gnyer can⁴⁹ mdzad yi ge hūṃ gi
rim pa bdun po rnam ni 'gems⁵⁰ ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL SA-ZHI-i NGÖ-LA CH'AK-G'I
T'IL-GY'I NÜN-CHING ZHAP-KYI DUNG-MA
Tr'O-NYER CHÄN-DZÄ YI-G'E HÜṂ-G'I
RIM-PA DÜN-PO-NAM-NI GEM-MA

Homage! She who strikes the ground with
Her palm, and with her foot beats it!
Scowling, with the letter HUM the
Seven levels she does conquer!

⁴⁸ **brdung** ADGKLS₁; **brdungs** S₄; **rdung** JQT..

⁴⁹ **can mdzad** (*spyan mdzad* K; *dun mdzad* Q; *g.yo ba'i* S₄).

⁵⁰ **'gems** (*'gegs* S₄, *'gengs* J).

15. འཇིག་ཆེན་ཆེན་མོའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā the Great Peaceful One

| རྒྱག་འཚལ་བདེ་མ་དགེ་མ་འཇིག་མ།
| རྒྱ་ངན་འདས་འཇིག་སྐྱོད་ཡུལ་ཉིད་མ།
| ལྷ་རྣམས་ཚཱི་དང་ཡང་དག་ལྷན་མ།
| སྤྲིག་པ་ཆེན་པོ་འཇོམས་པ་ཉིད་མ། །།༥། །

phyag 'tshal bde ma dge ma zhi ma
mya ngan 'das zhi⁵¹ spyod yul nyid ma
svā hā oṃ dang yang dag ldan ma⁵²
sdig pa chen po 'joms pa nyid ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL DE-MA GE-MA ZHI-MA
NYA-NGÄN-DÄ-ZHI CHÖ-YÜL-NYI-MA
SVĀHĀ OṂ-D'ANG YANG-D'AK DÄN-PÄ
DIK-PA CH'EN-PO JOM-PA-NYI-MA

Homage! Happy, virtuous, peaceful!
She whose field is peace, nirvana!
She endowed with OM and SVAHA,
Destroyer of the great evil!

⁵¹ **zhi** (*shing* S₄).

⁵² **ma** JQS₁S₄+Skt, **mas** A; **pas** DGKLT.

16. ཚགས་པ་འཇོམས་པའི་སྒྲོལ་མ་ / Tārā Destroyer of All Attachment

| རྒྱག་འཚལ་ཀུན་ནས་བསྐྱར་རབ་དགའ་བའི།
| དབྲ་ཡི་ལུས་ནི་རབ་ཏུ་འགོམས་མ།
| ཡི་གེ་བཅུ་པའི་དག་ནི་བཀོད་པའི།
| རིག་པ་རྩྭ་ལས་སྒྲོལ་མ་ཉིད་མ། །།༥། །

phyag 'tshal kun nas bskor rab⁵³ dga' **ba'i**⁵⁴

dgra yi lus⁵⁵ ni **rab tu**⁵⁶ 'gems ma

yi ge bcu pa'i⁵⁷ ngag ni bkod pa'i⁵⁸

rig pa⁵⁹ hūṃ las sgrol ma⁶⁰ nyid ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL KÜN-NÄ-KOR RAB-GA-WÄi
DrA-YI LÜ-NI RAP-TU GEM-MA
YI-G'E CHU-PÄi NGAk-NI KÖ-PÄi
RIG-PA HÜṀ-LÄ DrÖL-MA-NYI-MA

Homage! She with joy surrounded,
Tearing foes' bodies asunder,
Frees with HUM and knowledge mantra,
Arrangement of the ten letters!

⁵³ **rab** (*bar* S₁).

⁵⁴ **ba'i** ADGKLQS₁S₄; **bas** JT.

⁵⁵ **lus** (*dpung* S₄).

⁵⁶ **rab tu** ADGLQS₁S₄T+Skt; **rnam par** JK.

⁵⁷ **bcu pa'i** (*bcu po'i* T).

⁵⁸ **bkod pa'i** ADGJKLQT; **bkod pas** S₁S₄.

⁵⁹ **rig pa** (*rig pa'i* S₁).

⁶⁰ **sgrol ma** ADGJKQS₁S₄T; **sgron ma** L (= dīpa).

17. བདེ་བ་སྐྱབ་པའི་སྣོལ་མ་ / Tārā Accomplisher of All Bliss

| ཕྱག་འཚལ་ཏུ་རེ་ཞབས་ནི་བརྟམས་པས།
| ལྷོ་གི་རྣམ་པའི་ས་བོན་ཉིད་མ།
| རི་རབ་མཚུར་དང་འབྲིགས་བྱེད།
| འཇིག་རྟེན་གསུམ་རྣམས་གཡོ་བ་ཉིད་མ། །།

phyag 'tshal tu **re**⁶¹ zhabs ni⁶² brdabs pas
hūṃ gi⁶³ rnam pa'i sa bon nyid ma
ri rab **man da** ra⁶⁴ dang 'bigs byed
'jig rten gsum rnams⁶⁵ g.yo ba nyid ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL TURE ZHAP-NI DAP-PÄ
HÜM-G'I NAM-PÄi SA-B'ÖN-NYI-MA /
RI-RAB MÄNDARA-D'ANG Bik-J'E
JIK-TEN SUM-NAM YO-WA NYI-MA

Homage! TURE! With seed letter
Of the shape of syllable HUM!
By foot stamping shakes the three worlds,
Meru, Mandara, and Vindhya!

⁶¹ *tu re* JKQS₄; *tu re'i* ADGLS₁T.

⁶² *ni* (*kyis* S₄).

⁶³ *gi* ADGJKLQT; *yig* S₁+Skt.

⁶⁴ *manda ra* JQS₁; *man da ra* DT; *man dā ra* AL; *mandha ra* GKS₄.

⁶⁵ *gsum rnams* (*gsum po* J).

18. རྩམ་རྒྱལ་མའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā the Victorious

| རྩལ་འཚལ་ལྷ་ཡི་མཚོ་ཡི་རྩམ་པའི།
| རི་དྲགས་རྟགས་ཅན་རྩལ་ན་བསྐྱམས་མ།
| ཏཱ་ར་གཉིས་བརྗོད་པར་གྱི་ཡི་གེས།
| དུག་རྩམས་མ་ལུས་པར་ནི་སེལ་མ། །།

phyag 'tshal lha yi mtsho yi rnam pa'i
ri dwags rtags can phyag na **bsnams**⁶⁶ ma
tā ra⁶⁷ gnyis brjod phaṭ kyi yi ges
dug rnams ma lus par⁶⁸ ni sel ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL LHA-YI TS'O-YI NAM-PÄi
RI-D'AK TAK-CHÄN CH'AK-NA NAM-MA
TÄRA NYI-JÖ PHÄṬ-KYI YI-G'E
D'UK-NAM MA-LÜ-PAR-NI SEL-MA

Homage! Holding in her hand the
Hare-marked moon of deva-lake form!
With twice spoken TÄRA and PHAT,
Totally dispelling poison!

⁶⁶ **bsnams** ADGJKLS₄T; **gnas** QS₁+Skt.

⁶⁷ **tā ra** (**tā re** QT).

⁶⁸ **par** ADGJLQS₁T; **pa** KS₄.

19. ལྷ་བཟུང་བསྐྱེད་པའི་སྐྱོལ་མ་ / Tārā Consumer of All Suffering

| ལྷ་འཚལ་ལྷ་ཡི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་རྒྱལ་པོ།
| ལྷ་དང་མིའམ་ཅི་ཡིས་བསྐྱེན་མ།
| ཀུན་ནས་གོ་ཆ་དགའ་བའི་བརྗེད་གྱིས།
| ཚེད་དང་མི་ལམ་ངན་པ་སེལ་མ། །།།།

phyag 'tshal lha yi tshogs **rnams**⁶⁹ **rgyal po**

lha dang mi 'am ci yis bsten ma

kun nas go cha dga' ba'i brjid kyis

rtsod dang rmi lam ngan pa sel ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL LHA-YI TS'OK-NAM GYÄL-PO
LHA-D'ANG MI-AM-CHI-YI TEN-MA
KÜN-NÄ G'O-CH'A GA-WÄi JI-KYI
TSÖ-D'ANG MI-LAM NGÄN-PA SEL-MA

Homage! She whom gods and their kings,
And the kinnaras do honor!
Armored in all joyful splendor,
She dispels bad dreams and conflicts!

⁶⁹ **rnams rgyal po** AKLQT; **kyi rgyal po** JS₁; **rgyal po dang** DGS₄.

20. དངོས་གྲུབ་འབྱུང་བའི་སྣོལ་མ་ / Tārā Source of All Attainments

| རྒྱལ་འཚལ་ཉི་མ་ལྷ་བ་རྒྱས་པའི།
| ལྷུན་གཉིས་པོ་ལ་འོད་རབ་གསལ་མ།
| ཏྲ་ར་གཉིས་བརྗོད་ཏུ་རྩུ་ར་ཡིས།
| ཤིན་ཏུ་དྲག་པོའི་རིམས་ནད་སེལ་མ། །༢༠། །

phyag 'tshal nyi ma zla ba rgyas pa'i
sryan gnyis po la 'od rab gsal ma
ha ra⁷⁰ gnyis brjod tuttā ra⁷¹ yis
shin tu drag po'i rims **nad**⁷² sel ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL NYI-MA DA-WA GYÄ-PÄi
CHÄN-NYI-PO-LA WÖ RAP-SÄL-MA
HARA NYI-JÖ TUTTÄRA-YI
SHIN-TU Dr'AK-PÖi RIM-NÄ SEL-MA

Homage! She whose two eyes bright with
Radiance of sun and full moon!
With twice HARA and TUTTARE,
She dispels severe contagion!

⁷⁰ *ha ra* (*hā ra* D; *tā ra* S₄).
⁷¹ *tuttā ra* (*tuttā rā* J, *tuttā re* S₁).
⁷² *nad* ADGJKL; *ni* QS₁S₄T.

21. ཡོངས་རྫོགས་བྱེད་པའི་སྣོན་མ་ / Tārā the Perfecter

ལྷུག་འཚལ་དེ་ཉིད་གསུམ་རྣམས་བཀོད་པས།
ཞི་བའི་མཐུ་དང་ཡང་དག་ལྡན་མ།
གདོན་དང་རོ་ལངས་གཞོན་སྦྱོན་ཚོགས་རྣམས།
འཛོམས་པ་ཏུ་རེ་རབ་མཚོག་ཉིད་མ། །༢༧། །

phyag 'tshal de nyid gsum rnam bkod **pas**⁷³
zhi ba'i mthu dang yang dag ldan ma
gdon dang ro lang gnod sbyin tshogs rnam
'joms pa tu re⁷⁴ rab mchog nyid ma

CH'AK-TS'ÄL D'E-NYI SUM-NAM KÖ-PÄ
ZHI-WÄi T'U-D'ANG YANG-D'AK-DÄN-MA
DÖN-D'ANG RO-LANG NÖ-JIN TS'Ok-NAM
JOM-PA TURE RAP-CH'OG-NYI-MA

Homage! Full of liberating
Pow'r by the set of three natures!
Destroys hosts of spirits, yakshas,
And raised corpses! Supreme! TURE!

⁷³ **pas** ADLS₁S₄T; **pa'i** GJQ.
⁷⁴ **tu re** (**tu re'i** S₁).

The benefits of the praise in twenty-one homages

(22)

| ཚ་བའི་སྒྲགས་ཀྱི་བསྟོན་པ་འདི་དང་།
| ལྷག་འཚལ་བ་ནི་ཉི་ཤུ་ཚ་གཅིག་།
| ལྷ་མོ་ལ་གུས་ཡང་དག་ལྡན་པའི།
| ལྷོ་ལྡན་གང་གིས་རབ་དད་བརྗོད་དེ། །༢༡། །

rtsa ba'i sngags **kyi**⁷⁵ bstod pa 'di dang
phyag 'tshal ba ni nyi shu rtsa gcig
lha mo la gus yang dag ldan **pa'i**⁷⁶
blo ldan gang gis rab **dad**⁷⁷ brjod **de**⁷⁸

TSA-WÄi NGAk-KYI TÖ-PA DI-D'ANG
CH'AK-TS'ÄL-WA-NI NYI-SHU-TSA-CHIK
LHA-MO-LA G'Ü YANG-D'AK DÄN-PÄi
LO-DÄN G'ANG-G'I RAP-D'Ä JÖ-D'E

These praises with the root mantras
And twenty-one prostrations,
Whoever is endowed with devotion for the goddess
And recites them with supreme faith,

⁷⁵ **kyi** AGLT; **kyis** DGJK (G quotes the line twice).

⁷⁶ **pa'i** ADLT; **pas** GJK.

⁷⁷ **dad** GJLT; **dang** ADK.

⁷⁸ **de** AK; **pas** DGJL; **pa** T.

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སྣོད་དང་ཐོ་རངས་ལངས་པར་བྱས་ནས།
དྲན་པས་མི་འཇིགས་ཐམས་ཅད་རབ་སྟེར།
སྟོན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་རབ་ཏུ་ཞི་བ།
ངན་འགོ་ཐམས་ཅད་འཇོམས་པ་ཉིད་དོ། །༢༩། །

srod dang tho rangs langs par byas nas
dran pas mi 'jigs thams cad rab ster
sdig pa thams cad rab tu zhi **ba**⁷⁹
ngan 'gro thams cad 'joms pa nyid do⁸⁰

SÖ-D'ANG T'O-RANG LANG-PAR J'Ä-NÄ
Dr'ÄN-PÄ MI-JIK T'AM-CHÄ RAP-TER
DIK-PA T'AM-CHÄ RAP-TU ZHI-WA
NGÄN-DrO T'AM-CHÄ JOM-PA-NYI-D'O

Remembering them at dawn upon waking and in the evenings,
Will be granted all fearlessness,
Will perfectly pacify all negativities,
And will eliminate all unfortunate migrations.

⁷⁹ **zhi ba** ADJLT; **zhi bas** GK.

⁸⁰ **do** ADGJLT (**thob** K).

(24)

རྒྱལ་བ་བྱེ་བ་ཕྱག་བདུན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས།
ལྷུང་དུ་དབང་ནི་བསྐྱར་བར་འགྱུར་ལ།
འདི་ལས་ཆེ་བ་ཉིད་ནི་ཐོབ་ཅིང་།
སངས་རྒྱས་གོ་འཕང་མཐར་ཐུག་དེར་འགྲོ། །༢༥།

rgyal ba bye ba phrag bdun rnam kyis
myur du dbang ni bskur bar 'gyur la
'di **las**⁸¹ che ba nyid ni thob⁸² cing
sangsg rgyas go 'phang mthar thug der 'gro

GYÄL-WA J'E-WA-Tr'AK-DÜN-NAM-KYI
NYUR-D'U WANG-NI KUR-WAR GYUR-LA
DI-LÄ CH'E-WA-NYI-NI T'OP-CHING
SANG-GYÄ G'O-P'ANG T'AR-T'UK D'ER-DrO

The multitudes of conquerors
Will quickly grant initiation:
Thus, endowed with this greatness,
One will eventually reach the state of a buddha.

⁸¹ **las** ADKLT; **la** GJ+Skt.

⁸² **thob** ADGKLT; **'thob** J.

(25)

དེ་ཡི་དུག་ནི་དྲག་པོ་ཆེན་པོ།
བརྟན་གནས་པའམ་གཞན་ཡང་འགྲོ་བ།
ཚོས་པ་དང་ནི་འཕྲངས་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱང་།
དྲན་པས་རབ་ཏུ་སེལ་བ་ཉིད་ཐོབ། །༢༥།

de yi⁸³ dug ni drag po chen po
brtan gnas pa 'am gzhan yang 'gro ba
zos pa dang ni 'thungs pa nyid kyang
dran pas rab tu sel ba nyid thob⁸⁴

D'E-YI D'Uk-NI DrAK-PO CH'EN-PO
TÄN-NÄ-PA-AM ZHÄN-YANG DrO-WA
ZÖ-PA D'ANG-NI T'UNG-PA-NYI KYANG
DrÄN-PÄ RAP-TU SEL-WA-NYI T'OP

If affected by the most terrible poison,
Whether ingested, drunk, or from a living being,
Just by remembering
Will one be thoroughly cleansed.

⁸³ *de yi* (*de yis* J).

⁸⁴ *thob* ADGJLT; *'thob* K.

(26)

།གདོན་དང་རིམས་དང་དུག་གིས་གཟེར་བའི།
།སྤྱུག་བསྐྱལ་ཚོགས་ནི་རྣམ་པར་སྤོང་སྟེ།
།སེམས་ཅན་གཞན་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཡང་ངོ།
།གཉིས་གསུམ་བདུན་དུ་མངོན་པར་བརྗོད་ན། །༢༦། །

gdon dang rims dang dug gis gzir ba'i
sdug bsngal tshogs ni rnam par **spong**⁸⁵ ste
sems can gzhan pa rnam la yang ngo
gnyis gsum bdun du mngon par brjod na

DÖN-D'ANG RIM-D'ANG D'UK-G'I ZIR-WÄi
DUK-NGÄL TS'OK-NI NAM-PAR PONG-TE
SEM-CHÄN ZHÄN-PA-NAM-LA YANG-NGO
NYI-SUM-DÜN-D'U NGÖN-PAR JÖ-NA

If this prayer is recited two, three, or seven times,
It will pacify all the sufferings of torments
Caused by spirits, fevers, and poisons,
And by other beings as well.

⁸⁵ *spong* ADGT; *spang* L; *spangs* JK.

(27)

ལུ་འདོད་པས་ནི་ལུ་ཐོབ་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།
ལོར་འདོད་པས་ནི་ལོར་རྣམས་ཉིད་ཐོབ།
འདོད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ།
བགོགས་རྣམས་མེད་ཅིང་སོ་སོར་འཇོམས་འགྱུར། །༢༧། ། ཱ

bu 'dod pas ni bu thob 'gyur zhing
nor 'dod pas ni nor rnam nyid **thob**⁸⁶
'dod pa thams cad thob par 'gyur te⁸⁷
bgegs rnam med cing so sor 'joms 'gyur⁸⁸

B'U-DÖ-PÄ-NI B'U T'OP-GYUR-ZHING
NOR-DÖ-PÄ-NI NOR-NAM-NYI T'OP
DÖ-PA T'AM-CHÄ T'OP-PAR GYUR-TE
GEK-NAM ME-CHING SO-SOR JOM-GYUR

If you wish for a child, you will get a child;
If you wish for wealth, you will receive wealth.
All your wishes will be fulfilled
And all obstacles pacified.

Colophon compiled from several Tibetan texts

The speech of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the praise of the Lady Ārya-Tārā by the Complete and Perfect Buddha (Mahāvairocana⁸⁹), the Praise in Twenty-one Homages, from the Tantra teaching all the rites of Tārā, is complete.⁹⁰ It was translated [into Tibetan (ed.)] by the translator Nyän, of the lineage of Master Ārya-Nāgārjuna, and revised by the great Jetsün Dr'ak-pa Gyäl-tš'an.⁹¹

⁸⁶ **thob** ADGT; **'thob** JKL.

⁸⁷ **te** ADGJLT; **la** K.

⁸⁸ In communal recitation, ཅིག / cig / CHik is often added to the last line.

⁸⁹ JK

⁹⁰ L(T)

⁹¹ J

3. Comparing the descriptions of the Twenty-One Tārās from the traditions of Sūryagupta and of Nāgārjuna-Atisha

Preface

The section on the page 97, *The thangka and the tradition*, and the descriptions of the Twenty-One Tārās were written by Robert Beer. The thangka was painted by Dorje Tamang. I copied these descriptions and images from the site tibetanart.com. I replaced the image of the twenty-first Tārā by one painted by Angeli Lhadripa Shkonda, because of the colours not matching the description. I retouched digitally pictures 1, 8, 10, 12 and 16, as distortions had been introduced during the process of photographing, digitalizing, posting on the web and downloading. An example of before and after the retouching:



The Sanskrit names of the twenty-one Tārās and the line drawings were copied from *In Praise of Tārā, Songs to the Saviouress* (Martin Willson, Wisdom Publications, Somerville MA, USA, 1996), an excellent source of much information on Tārā, unfortunately out of print since a long time.

The section *Identifying The Twenty-Three Deities Of This Thangka*, the Tibetan phonetics of the praises and a quote about the ninth Tārā, page 96 and this preface were written, or added (the quote), by me.

3.a – Globally comparing the images of the Twenty-One Tārās of the Sūryagupta and the Nāgārjuna-Atisha traditions

The shapes of the twenty-one Tārās according to the two traditions

In the **Sūryagupta** tradition, the twenty-one Tārās have a variety of shapes and colours. See below.

In the **Nāgārjuna-Atisha** tradition, all Tārās have the same posture: one face and two hands, the left of which is in the gesture of giving refuge and holds the stem of an utpala (a blue lotus) flower. Each Tārā's right hand holds a vase that has the same colour as the Tārā holding it. However, there is one sub-tradition where the seventh Tārā has her left leg extended and the right leg bent inward.

The Tārās are mostly peaceful and smile enchantingly. They have various colours, wear silken garments and are adorned with a variety of jewels. Most of them are seated on moon disc seats. They meditate with their legs in the bodhisattva position, which is to say, the right leg slightly extended and the left bent inward.

The colours of the twenty-one Tārās according to the traditions

When the twenty-one Tārās surround a central Tārā, the central Tārā is always green. Within the **Sūryagupta** tradition, there is a sub-tradition where the ninth Tārā is green Khadiravaṇī Tārā. In another sub-tradition, the ninth Tārā is red Varada Tārā.

In the **Nāgārjuna-Atisha** tradition, there are five different colours.

The colours of both traditions are shown in this table:

	Sūryagupta	Nāgārjuna-Atisha
red	6 (or 5) (# 1,6,9,10,13,16)	7 (# 1,2,6,10,11,13,16)
white	5 (# 2,15,18,19,21)	5 (# 9,15,18,19,21)
yellow	5 (# 3,4,5,8,12)	3 (# 3,4,8)
black	3 (# 7,11,14)	2 (# 7,14,)
orange	2 (# 17,20)	4 (# 5,12,17,20)
green	0 (or 1: # 9)	0

3.b - The names and descriptions of the Twenty-One Tārās according to the tradition of Sūryagupta

The thangka and the tradition

This rare thangka depicts the complete assembly of the twenty-one Tārās according to the tradition of the early Indian Buddhist master, Sūryagupta.

There are essentially three main traditions that depict the twenty-one Tārās, the first and most common being the Nāgārjuna or Atisha tradition, where the Twenty-One Tārās are virtually identical in their postures and appearance, except for their body colours and the colours of the vases they each holds in their lowered right hands. The second is the Longchenpa tradition, where all the Tārās are likewise similar in their postures and appearance, except for their body colours, their facial expressions, and the specific attributes they bear upon the lotus flowers that each Tārā holds in her left hand. And the third is the Sūryagupta tradition, as represented here.

In the Sūryagupta tradition each of the Twenty-One Tārās appears in her own unique iconographic form, colour and posture, and because of this each of the Sūryagupta Tārā's were often painted separately as single-deity thangkas. So it is rare to find these twenty-one Tārās assembled together in a composition such as this. Precise textual descriptions are given for each Tārā in the Sūryagupta tradition, and these details are accurately depicted in this composition. These details include the various colours of each goddess's lotus-throne, their facial expressions, and their specific and often obscure hand-gestures or mudras.

According to the great Jonangpa master Tārānatha (1575-1634), Sūryagupta (Tib. Nyi-ma sbas) was a scholar and Tārā-siddha from Kashmir, and a contemporary of the two great 7th and 8th century Indian masters Candrakīrti and Candragomin. Sūryagupta upheld the philosophical doctrines of Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, and was renowned for having been a great Tārā practitioner in seven of his previous lifetimes. In Kashmir and Magadha he established twelve Buddhist viharas, employing yaksha-spirits to supply the building materials, and protecting practitioners from the eight great fears. From Nāgamitra he received the empowerment of Tārā, and later became renowned as one fully skilled in the Hundred and Eight Tantras of Tārā. He is said to have composed thirteen texts, such as the Tārā mandala ritual and other Tārā sādhanas that are now in

the Tibetan Tengyur. Sūryagupta's principal disciple was Sarvajñamitra, who was likewise a great Tārā practitioner and lineage holder.



Identifying The Twenty-Three Deities Of The Thangka

The central Green Tārā

Tārā of the Acacia Forest; Skt. Khadiravaṇī-Tārā; Tib. seng-Iden-nags-kyi sgrol-ma.

The surrounding twenty-one Tārās

1. Tārā the heroine; Skt. Pravīra-Tārā; Tib. rab-tu dpa'-ba'i sgrol-ma.
2. Tārā white as the autumn moon; Skt. Candra-kānti-Tārā; Tib. dkar-mo zla-mdangs-kyi sgrol-ma.
3. Golden-coloured Tārā; Skt. Kanaka-varṇa-Tārā; Tib. gser-mdog-can-gyi sgrol-ma.
4. Tārā with the victorious crown protuberance; Skt. Uṣṇīṣa-vijaya-Tārā; Tib. gtsug-tor rnam-par-rgyal-ba'i sgrol-ma.
5. Tārā proclaiming the sound of hūṃ; Skt. Hūṃ-svara-nādinī-Tārā; Tib. hūṃ-sgra sgrog-pa'i sgrol-ma.
6. Tārā victorious over the three worlds; Skt. Trailokya-vijaya-Tārā; Tib. 'jig-rten gsum-las rnam-par-rgyal-ba'i sgrol-ma.
7. Tārā who crushes all adversaries; Skt. Vādi-pramardaka-Tārā; Tib. rgol-ba 'joms-pa'i sgrol-ma.
8. Tārā who bestows supreme powers / Tārā who crushes all maras; Skt. Māra-sūdana vaśitōttama-da-Tārā; Tib. dbang-mchog ster-ba'i sgrol-ma.
9. Tārā who grants boons; Skt. Vara-da-Tārā; Tib. mchog-stsol-ba'i sgrol-ma.
10. Tārā who dispels all sorrows; Skt. Śoka-vinodana-Tārā; Tib. mya-ngan sel-ba'i sgrol-ma.
11. Tārā who summons all beings / Dispeller of misfortune; Skt. Jagad-vaśī vipan-nirbarhaṇa-Tārā; Tib. 'gro-ba 'gugs-pa'i sgrol-ma.
12. Tārā of auspicious light; Skt. Maṅgalāloka-Tārā; Tib. bkra-shis snang-ba'i sgrol-ma.
13. Tārā the ripener; Skt. Paripācaka-Tārā; Tib. yongs-su-smin-par mdzad-pa'i sgrol-ma.
14. Frowning Tārā; Skt. Bhṛkuṭī-Tārā; Tib. khro-gnyer can-ma'i sgrol-ma.
15. Great peaceful Tārā; Skt. Mahā-śānti-Tārā; Tib. zhi-ba chen-mo'i sgrol-ma.
16. Tārā, destroyer of all attachment; Skt. Rāga-niṣūdana-Tārā; Tib. chags-pa 'joms-pa'i sgrol-ma.
17. Tārā, accomplisher of bliss; Skt. Sukha-sādhana-Tārā; Tib. bde-ba sgrub-pa'i sgrol-ma.
18. Victorious Tārā; Skt. Vijaya-Tārā; Tib. rnam-rgyal-ma'i sgrol-ma.
19. Tārā, consumer of suffering; Skt. Duḥkha-dahana-Tārā; Tib. sdug-bsngal bsreg-pa'i sgrol-ma.
20. Tārā, source of attainments; Skt. Siddhi-saṃbhava-Tārā; Tib. dngos-grub 'byung-ba'i sgrol-ma.
21. Tārā, the perfecter; Skt. Paripūraṇa-Tārā; Tib. yongs-rdzogs byed-pa'i sgrol-ma.

The protecting deity

PL – Glorious Goddess; Skt. Shri Devi (śrī devī); Tib. Palden Lhamo (dpal lhan lha mo).



21 praises to Tara, 6 texts combined v. 1.2 -100-

The twenty-one Tārās, descriptions, images and praises

-1- Pravīra-Tārā, or "Tārā the Heroine", is the first of the twenty-one Tārās, and in this thangka she is depicted just to the left of Green Tārā's lotus seat. Pravīra Tārā is described as 'emanating like a blazing mass of fire' as she sits upon her lotus within a fiery triangular dharmodaya. She may also be described as 'seated in the midst of space' upon a white moon disc and a yellow lotus, which is how she is represented here.



Tārā Swift and Heroic



Homage! Tāra, swift, heroic! / Eyes like lightning instantaneous!
Sprung from op'ning stamens of the / Lord of three world's tear-born lotus!

Pravīra Tārā is peaceful and red in colour, with one face, two eyes, and eight arms. She sits in vajra-posture upon a moon disc and a yellow lotus, with the full moon as her backrest. With her first pair of right and left hands raised or crossed above her head she 'proclaims the dharma' by making the two-handed 'Great Bliss Gesture' (Skt. mahasukha-mudra) as she holds a golden vajra and a bell. With her second pair of right and left hands she holds the drawn string of a bow in front of her heart, with its arrow aimed at the heart of an enemy. With her third right hand she holds aloft a golden wheel, and with her third left hand a white conch shell at the level of her navel. With her fourth right hand she wields a fiery wisdom sword, and with her fourth left hand a rope-noose. She is adorned with divine silk and jewel ornaments; crowned by white Vairocana Buddha, and her function is to swiftly overcome all hostile forces and accomplish various enlightened activities.

-2- Chandrakanti Tārā, or "Tārā white like the Autumn Moon", is the second of the twenty-one Tārās, and she is depicted directly above Pravira Tārā (1). Her name is derived from the moonstone (Skt. chandrakanta), the radiant gemstone that represents the moon (chanda) as one of the nine planets (navagraha). Chandrakanti is often represented standing upright in samapada posture, but here she is shown seated in vajra-posture upon a white moon disc and a pink lotus.



Tārā White as the Autumn Moon



Homage! She whose face combines a / Hundred autumn moons at fullest!
Blazing with light rays resplendent / As a thousand star collection!

Chandrakanti is peaceful and white in colour, with three two-eyed faces, and twelve arms. Her central face is white, her right face is blue, and her left face is golden-yellow like the gold from the Jambu River. Her three faces represent the three kayas or 'Divine bodies of a Buddha', and her twelve arms represent the 'twelve links' in the chain of dependent arising.

With her first pair of right and left hands joined at the level of her hips, she makes the dhyana-mudra of contemplation or meditation. With her lowered second pair of hands she holds a garland of flowers (right), and a dharma text (left). With her third pair of hands a golden vajra (right), and a golden treasure vase (left). With her fourth pair of hands a blazing jewel (right), and a bell (left). With her fifth pair of hands a golden wheel (right), and a blue utpala lotus flower (left). With her sixth pair of hands she holds aloft a khatvanga staff (right), and a golden flask of consecrated water (left). She is adorned with divine silks and jewel ornaments; crowned by red Amitābha Buddha, and her function is to pacify contagious diseases, bad dreams or nightmares, and the causes of untimely death.

-3- Kanaka-varṇa-Tārā, or "Golden-coloured Tārā", is the third of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears upon a twisting rainbow directly above Chandrakanti Tārā (2). She is golden-yellow in colour, with one face, two eyes, and ten arms – which symbolize the ten paramitas or perfections. She sits in vajra-posture upon a golden sun disc and a multicolored lotus, and is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments.



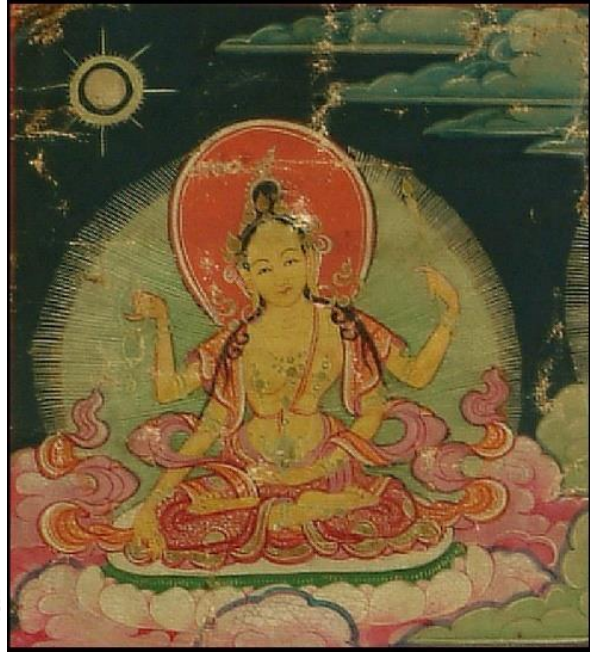
Golden-coloured Tārā



Homage! Golden-blue one, lotus
Water born, in hand adorned!
Giving, effort, calm, austerities,
Patience, meditation her sphere!

With her first pair of right and left hands she holds a rosary (right), and a white silk ribbon (left), at the level of her heart. With her second pair she wields aloft a wisdom sword (right), and a rope-noose (left). With her third pair she holds an arrow that pierces all defilements (right), and a blue utpala lotus (left). With her fourth pair she holds a vajra (right), and a bell (left). With her fifth and lower pair of hands she holds a jewel-topped club (right), and a bow (left). She is crowned by red Amitābha Buddha, and her function is for prolonging life, enhancing enlightened attributes, and increasing prosperity.

-4- Ushnishavijaya Tārā, or "Tārā with the Victorious (vijaya) Crown Protuberance (ushnisha) of the Tathagatas", is the fourth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears upon a billowing cloud directly above Kanakavarna Tārā (3) in the top right corner.



Tārā the Victorious Uṣṇīṣa of Tathāgatas

Homage! Crown of tathagatas,
 Actions triumph without limit,
 Relied on by conquerors' children
 Having reached ev'ry perfection!

She is golden-yellow in colour, with one face, two eyes, four arms, and she sits with her legs loosely crossed in sattva-paryanka posture upon a white moon disc and a yellow lotus. Her first right hand is held at the level of her knee in the boon-granting varada-mudra of supreme generosity, whilst her second right hand holds aloft a rosary. With her first left hand she holds aloft a golden flask of consecrated water, and with her second left hand a golden club with a blazing jewel at its top. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, and her four arms symbolize her victory over the four maras. She is crowned by green Amoghasiddhi Buddha, and her main functions are to neutralize all poisons, overcome the lord of death, and to confer health and longevity.

-5- Humsvaranadini Tārā, or "Tārā Proclaiming the Sound of HUM", is the fifth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears upon a billowing cloud directly to the right of Ushnishavijaya Tārā (4).



Tārā Proclaiming the Sound of HŪM



Homage! Filling with TUTTARE
HUM, desire, direction, and space!
Trampling with her feet the seven worlds,
Able to draw forth all beings!

She is golden-yellow in colour, with one face, two eyes, and two arms. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, and sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a golden sun disc and a pink lotus. Her right hand is held at the level of her knee in the abhaya-mudra of protection or dispelling fear. Her left hand is held before her heart in the gesture of giving refuge, and with her thumb and second finger she holds the stem of a golden lotus that blossoms at the level of her left ear. She is crowned by red Amitābha, and her main functions are subjugation and to liberate from all fears.

-6- Trailokyavijaya Tārā, or "Tārā Victorious over the Three Worlds", is the sixth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears upon a billowing cloud directly to the right of Humsvaranadini Tārā (5).



Tārā Victorious over the Three Worlds



Homage! Worshipped by the all-lords, / Shakra, Agni, Brahma, Marut!
Honored by the hosts of spirits, / Corpse-raisers, gandharvas, yakshas!

She is ruby-red in colour, with one face, two eyes, and four arms. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, and she sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a golden sun disc and either a red or yellow lotus. Her golden sun seat indicates that she free from all illusions regarding the destinies of all sentient beings. With her first right hand she holds aloft a golden vajra, and with her second right hand a blazing wisdom sword. With her first left hand held aloft she makes the threatening tarjani gesture with her raised index finger, although in this painting she is shown making the abhaya-mudra of fearlessness. With her second left hand she holds a rope-snare in front of her heart, with her index finger raised in the threatening tarjani gesture. She is crowned by red Amitābha, and her main function is to purify the negativities of all elemental forces throughout the ten directions.

-7- Vadipramardani Tārā, or "Tārā Who Crushes All adversaries", is the seventh of the twenty-one Tārās, and she is depicted upon a billowing cloud directly to the right of Trailokyavijaya Tārā (6) in the top right corner. She is wrathful in appearance with upward-streaming hair, and is often shown standing in pratyahidha posture and wearing a tiger-skin loincloth. But here she is depicted sitting in sattva-paryanka posture, like the three other cloud-borne Tārās that appear in the top row of this painting.



Tārā Crushing Adversaries



Homage! With her TRAD and PHAT sounds / Destroying foes' magic diagrams!
Her feet pressing, left out, right in, / Blazing in a raging fire-blaze!

Vadipramardani Tārā is fierce and black in colour, with a wrathful expression, two piercing eyes, four arms, and she sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a golden sun disc and either a yellow or red lotus. Her body is adorned with divine silk and jewel ornaments, and her tawny hair-locks are adorned with snakes and blaze upward like fire. With her first right hand she holds a golden wheel, and with her second right hand she wields a blazing iron sword. With her first left hand she holds a rope-noose at the level of her navel, and with her second left hand she makes the threatening tarjani gesture with her raised index finger, although in this painting she is shown making the abhaya-mudra of protection. She is crowned by yellow Ratnasambhava Buddha, and her main functions are to triumph over all hostilities, and to transfer the consciousness of her devotees to the Pure Land of Akanistha at the time of their death.

-8- Vashitottamada Tārā, the "Tārā who Bestows Supreme Powers", is also known as Marasudhana Tārā, or the 'Tārā who Crushes all maras', and she is depicted upon a twisting rainbow directly below Vadipramardani Tārā (7). She sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a makara or 'water-monster' above a golden sun disc (or a white moon disc) and a red lotus. The makara, with its ferocious features and scrolling golden tail, symbolizes her ability to subdue all evil or demonic forces.



*Tārā Who Crushes All Māras
and Bestows Supreme Powers*



Homage! TURE, very dreadful! / Destroyer of Mara's champion(s)!
She with frowning lotus visage, / Who is slayer of all enemies!

Vashitottamada Tārā is golden-yellow in colour, with one face, two eyes, four arms, and a wrathful frown. With her first right hand she holds a branch of an ashoka tree in front of her heart, and with her second right hand (in boon-granting gesture) she holds a radiant jewel. With her first left hand she holds a blue utpala lotus, which symbolizes her purity or freedom from all defilements. With her second left hand she holds a golden flask, with which she bestows supreme powers and blessings upon all beings. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, and crowned by green Amoghasiddhi Buddha. Her main function is to destroy the obstructions (maras) to enlightenment and overcome wrong views. Her rites also pertain to the 'completion stage' (Tib. rdzogs-rim) of tantric meditation practice.

-9- In the Sūryagupta tradition **Khadiravani Tārā** frequently occurs as the ninth of the twenty-one Tārās, although **Varada Tārā** (described below) may also occupy this ninth position. In this particular thangka the main central figure of Green Tārā as Khadiravani Tārā appears as the ninth of the twenty-one Tārās.

[Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, at the Himalayan Yogic Institute, Nepal, during an initiation of the 21 Tārās according to the Sūryagupta tradition on May 28, 1987: *“The ninth Tārā has two traditions. Here Tārā Granting the Sublime Realization is given. The other one is Tārā from the [Acacia] Forest.”* (Ed.)]

The Sanskrit term khadiravani refers to a grove (vana) of fragrant acacia (khadira) trees, and this form of Green Tārā is usually depicted with her two attendant deities, peaceful yellow Marici to her right, and fierce blue-black Ekajata to her left. Here, Khadiravani Tārā is depicted in the traditional form and posture of Green Tārā, with the golden disc of the sun forming her backrest and with her two hands holding the stems of blue utpala lotuses.



Khadiravani Tārā



Her companions, Mārīcī and Ekajaṭā



Varada Tārā

Khadiravani-Tārā

Homage! At the heart her fingers, / Adorn her with Three Jewel mudra!
Light-ray masses all excited! / All directions' wheels adorn her!

Varada Tārā, the "Tārā Who Grants Boons", is the ninth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she is described as follows:

Varada Tārā sits in vajra-paryanka or sattva-paryanka posture upon a white moon disc and a red lotus. She is peaceful and red in colour, with one face, two

eyes, and four arms, and adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments. Like Pravira Tārā, the first of the twenty-one Tārās, she holds a vajra and bell with her first pair of right and left hands joined above her crown in the gesture of 'Great Bliss'. With her extended second right hand she makes the mudra known as 'Snapping the fingers in the gesture of dance'. With her second left hand she holds a fruit-bearing branch of an ashoka tree, from the leaves of which fall a 'rain of jewels' that satisfy the desires of all beings. She is crowned with green Amoghasiddhi Buddha, and her main function concerns rituals of consecration.

-10- Shokavinodana Tārā, the "Tārā who Dispels all Sorrows", is the tenth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears on the horizon directly below Vashitottamada Tārā (8). She sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a white moon disc and a red lotus, and is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments. She is beautiful, peaceful, and red like ruby or coral, with one face, two eyes, and four arms.



Tārā Dispelling All Sorrow



Homage! She so joyous, radiant, / Crown emitting garlands of light!
Mirthful, laughing with TUTTARE, / Subjugating maras, devas!

With her first pair of right and left hands joined together at her crown, she makes the palms-folded gesture of 'Great Joy' (Skt. mahamudita-mudra). With her second right hand she wields aloft a blazing sword, and with her second left hand she holds a branch of an ashoka tree that bears red flowers. She is crowned by green Amoghasiddhi, her function is to dispel sorrow, and her rites are for entering the mandala.

-11- Jagadvasi Tārā, the "Tārā who Summons all Beings", is also known as Apadanasini, the 'Dispeller of misfortune', or as Vipannirbarhana. As the eleventh of the twenty-one Tārās, she appears directly below Shokavinodana Tārā (10).



*Tārā Summoner of All Beings,
Dispeller of All Misfortune*



Homage! She able to summon / All earth-guardians' assembly!
Shaking, frowning, with her HUM sign / Saving from every misfortune!

Jagadvasi Tārā sits in alidha posture upon a golden sun disc and a red lotus, with her right foot slightly extended. She is fierce and black 'like the colour of darkness', with one face, two piercing eyes, and two arms. With her raised right hand she holds an iron hook, with which she 'summons the eight great planets from the eight directions'. With her left hand she may either hold another iron hook that 'dispels misfortune', or a 'magical noose', or both a hook and a noose as twin attributes of subjugation. But in this painting she is shown holding only a magical rope-snare in front of her heart, with her index finger raised in the threatening tarjani gesture. She is crowned by yellow Ratnasambhava, and adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments. Her main function is to liberate from hunger, thirst and poverty, and to increase the enjoyment of all being.

-12- Mangalaloka or Mangalavabhasa Tārā, the "Tārā of Auspicious Light", is also known as the 'Grantor of Prosperity', and as the twelfth of the twenty-one Tārās she appears directly below Jagadvasi Tārā (11).



Tārā Giver of All Prosperity



Homage! Crown adorned with crescent / Moon, all ornaments most shining!
Amitabha in her hair-knot / Sending out much light eternal!

Mangalavabhasa Tārā sits in vajra-posture upon a white moon disc and a multicolored lotus. She is peaceful and golden-yellow in colour, with one face, two eyes, and eight arms. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, and a white crescent moon (not shown) adorns her crown. With her first right hand she holds an iron trident before her breast, and with her first left hand she presses a radiant jewel to her heart. With each of her second right and left hands she wields aloft two identical iron hooks. With her third pair of right and left hands she holds a vajra and a club; and with her fourth pair a sword and a golden flask. She is crowned by red Amitābha, and her main function is to grant auspicious aspirations throughout all space and time, and her rites pertain to the sacrificial fire-offering or homa ritual.

-13- Paripacaka Tārā, or "Tārā the Ripener", is the thirteenth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears directly below Mangalavabhasa Tārā (12). In this thangka Paripachaka Tārā appears as one of the two extremely wrathful aspects of Tārā that occupy the bottom corners of this painting, both of whom abide within a blazing mass of awareness fire.



Tārā the Ripener



Homage! She 'mid wreath ablaze like / Eon-ending fire abiding!
Right stretched, left bent, joy surrounds you, / Troops of enemies destroying!

Above a landscape of dark clouds and sharp rock peaks, Paripacaka Tārā stands upon a golden sun disc and a red lotus in striding alidha posture, with her left leg bent and her right leg extended. She is extremely fierce and wrathful, ruby-red in colour, with four arms, one face, and two round and bloodshot eyes. The tawny locks of her matted hair stream upwards, and the intense radiance of her powerful body emanates as the blazing mass of fire within which she abides. Her face bears a terrible frowning expression, with trembling eyebrows and cruel lips, which are bared to reveal her four sharp canine teeth and twisting tongue. Her naked body is adorned with ornaments of gold and human bone, and she wears a billowing scarf of green silk. With her first right hand she wields aloft an iron sword, and with her first left hand she holds a golden wheel.

With her second pair of right and left hands she holds the drawn string of a bow in front of her heart, with its arrow aimed at the heart an enemy. She is crowned by red Amitābha, and her main function is to subdue all hindrances and impediments.

Paripacaka Tārā may also be represented in a less ferocious or 'semi-wrathful' form, where she is not naked, wears no bone ornaments, and is adorned with

the traditional divine silks and jewel ornaments. She may also occasionally be represented with three eyes, with her hair bound up into a topknot, and with her arrow and bow held separately in her extended right and left hands.

-14- Bhrikuti Tārā, or "Frowning Tārā", is also known as Calad-Bhrikuti Tārā, or "Shaking Frowning Tārā", and as the second extremely wrathful aspect of Tārā depicted in this thangka, she appears amidst a blazing mass of wisdom-awareness fire in the bottom left corner.



Tārā the Wrathful Summoner



Homage! She who strikes the ground with / Her palm, and with her foot beats it! / Scowling, with the letter HUM the / Seven levels she does conquer!

Bhrikuti Tārā stands in striding alidha posture with her right leg extended, and with each of her feet trampling upon a human corpse that crouches upon the golden sun disc of her orange lotus throne. Her body is black and terrible, with six arms, and three wrathful faces - each of which has three round, angry and piercing eyes. Her tawny and matted hair-locks stream upwards against the blazing mass of fire within which she abides, with the jagged rocks of the lower landscape appearing behind her. Her principal face is black, her right face white, and her left face red. Each of her faces has an angry frowning expression, with trembling eyebrows and contracted lips, which are bared to reveal her four white canine teeth and twisting red tongue. Each of her faces is adorned with a five-skull crown, and human entrails hang from the mouth of her principal face.

Bhrikuti Tārā's powerful body is adorned with ornaments of gold and bone, a garland of fifty severed heads, a tiger-skin loincloth, and a long serpent that forms her sacred thread. As an upper garment she wears a shawl of flayed human skin, the arms of which are knotted across her shoulders, with the head and legs hanging behind her back. With her first pair of right and left hands she holds an iron sword and a skull-cup filled with human blood. With her second pair an iron hook and a rope-noose, and with her third pair a skull-topped club and the yellow four-faced head of Brahma. She is crowned by Amoghasiddhi, her function is to destroy all harmful thoughts with her frown, and her rites pertain to the protection circle.

-15- Mahashanti Tārā, the "Great Peaceful Tārā", is also known as Kalyanada Tārā, the "Giver of Good", and as the fifteenth of the twenty-one Tārās she appears directly above Bhrikuti Tārā (14) and below Pravita Tārā (1).



Tārā the Great Peaceful One



Homage! Happy, virtuous, peaceful! / She whose field is peace, nirvana!
She endowed with OM and SVAHA, / Destroyer of the great evil!

Mahashanti Tārā is peaceful and white in colour, with one face, two eyes, and six arms. She sits in vajra-posture upon a white moon disc and a white or pink lotus, and is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments. With her first right hand she holds a rosary in front of her heart; with her second right hand she makes the boon-granting varada-mudra, and with her third right hand she holds a vajra-topped golden club. With her first left hand, which rests upon her lap in the dhyana-mudra of meditation, she holds the open blossom of a blue utpala lotus. With her second left hand she holds a golden flask of consecrated

water, and with her third left hand she holds the stem of a blue utpala lotus that bears a text upon its open petals. She is crowned by red Amitābha, her main function is to purify all mental and emotional defilements that propel beings towards the lower realms, and her rites pertain to external cleansing or purification.

-16- **Raganisudana Tārā**, the "Destroyer of All Attachments", is the sixteenth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears directly to the right of Mahashanti Tārā (# 15).



Tārā Destroyer of All Attachment



Homage! She with joy surrounded,
Tearing foes' bodies asunder,
Frees with HUM and knowledge mantra,
Arrangement of the ten letters!

Raganisudana Tārā is beautiful but slightly wrathful in appearance, with a coral-red complexion, one face, three piercing eyes, and two arms. With her right knee raised she sits in sattva-paryanka upon a golden sun disc and an orange lotus, and is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments. With her right hand she holds an iron trident in front of her heart, which is described as piercing the body of an enemy. With her left hand she holds aloft a tree that bears both fruit and flowers, with her raised index finger making the threatening tarjani gesture. She is crowned by blue Akshobya Buddha, and her main function is to increase and cultivation discriminating awareness.

-17- **Sukhasadhana Tārā**, the "Accomplisher of Bliss", is the seventeenth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears directly to the right of Raganisudana Tārā (# 16).



Tārā Accomplisher of All Bliss



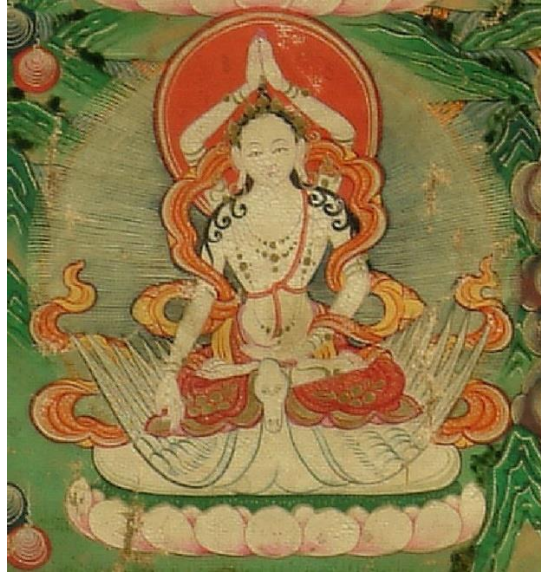
Homage! TURE! With seed letter
Of the shape of syllable HUM!
By foot stamping shakes the three worlds,
Meru, Mandara, and Vindhya!

Sukhasadhana Tārā is peaceful and orange in complexion, with one face, two eyes, and two arms. With her right knee slightly raised she sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a golden sun disc and a white lotus. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, and with her two hands she holds the white disk of a full moon in front of her heart. She is crowned by green Amoghasiddhi Buddha, and her function is for ensnaring thieves, enemies and hostile forces.

-18- **Vijaya Tārā**, or "Victorious Tārā", is the eighteenth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears directly below Sukhasadhana Tārā (17).



Tārā the Victorious



Homage! Holding in her hand the
Hare-marked moon of deva-lake form!
With twice spoken TĀRA and PHAT,
Totally dispelling poison!

Vijaya Tārā is peaceful and white in colour, with one face, two eyes, and four arms. She sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a goose with 'fine wings', a white moon disc and a white lotus. With her first pair of right and left hands joined together on the crown of her head in the 'gesture of joy' (mudita-mudra), she holds aloft two identical iron hooks. With her second right hand resting upon her knee she makes the boon-granting varada-mudra, and with her second left hand she holds the stem of a blue utpala lotus that supports a book on its open petals. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, crowned by Amitābha, and her main function is to cure snakebites and naga-related diseases such as leprosy.

-19- Duhkhadahana Tārā, the "Consumer of Suffering", is the nineteenth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears directly to the left of Vijaya Tārā (18).



Tārā Consumer of All Suffering



Homage! She whom gods and their kings,
And the kinnaras do honor!
Armored in all joyful splendor,
She dispels bad dreams and conflicts!

Duhkhadahana Tārā is peaceful and white in colour, with one face, two eyes, and two arms. With her left foot slightly lowered she sits in ardha-paryanka posture upon a golden sun disc and a white lotus. With her two hands she holds a triangular brazier in front of her heart. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, crowned by white Vairocana Buddha, and her main function is for pacifying dreams and liberating beings from imprisonment or captivity.

-20- **Siddhisambhava Tārā**, the "Source of Attainments", is the twentieth of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears in the sky directly below Humsvaranadini Tārā (5).



Tārā Source of All Attainments



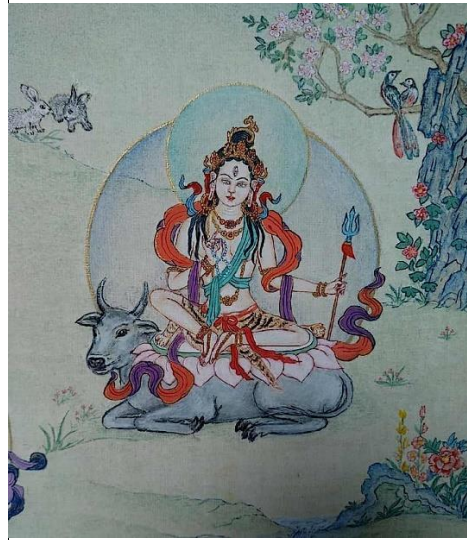
Homage! She whose two eyes bright with
Radiance of sun and full moon!
With twice HARA and TUTTARE,
She dispels severe contagion!

Siddhisambhava Tārā is peaceful and orange in colour, with one face, two eyes, and two arms. She sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a white moon disc and a white or red lotus. She is described as holding a golden vase in front of her heart with both of her hands, which grants all attainments and pacifies all diseases. But here she is shown holding a jewel-topped golden vase in her right hand, while with her left hand resting upon her knee in varada-mudra she holds a radiant gem. She is adorned with the divine silk and jewel ornaments, and crowned by green Amoghasiddhi. Her function is to alleviate all infectious diseases and bodily afflictions, and her rites pertain to the attainment of invisibility.

-21- Paripurana Tārā, the "Perfecter", is the last of the twenty-one Tārās, and she appears in the sky directly below Trailokyavijaya Tārā (6).



Tārā the Perfecter



Homage! Full of liberating
Pow'r by the set of three natures!
Destroys hosts of spirits, yakshas,
And raised corpses! Supreme! TURE!

Paripurana Tārā is beautiful, semi-wrathful and white in colour, with two arms, one face, and three piercing eyes that represent the 'three doors of liberation'. With her left knee raised she sits in sattva-paryanka posture upon a white moon disc and a red lotus, which rests upon the back of a 'miraculously born' bull. She is adorned with gold ornaments, a tiger-skin loincloth, and she wears a flayed human skin as an upper garment or shawl. With her raised right hand she holds a trident-spear, the three points of which pierce the 'three poisons' (ignorance, craving, and aversion) of cyclic existence. With her left hand, she holds a pearl rosary in front of her heart, symbolizing her inexhaustible compassion. She is crowned by Ratnasambhava, and her function is to overcome the fears caused by demonic possession, zombies and yaksha spirits. Her rites pertain to 'sky-going', or reaching the Pure Land of Akanistha in this very lifetime.

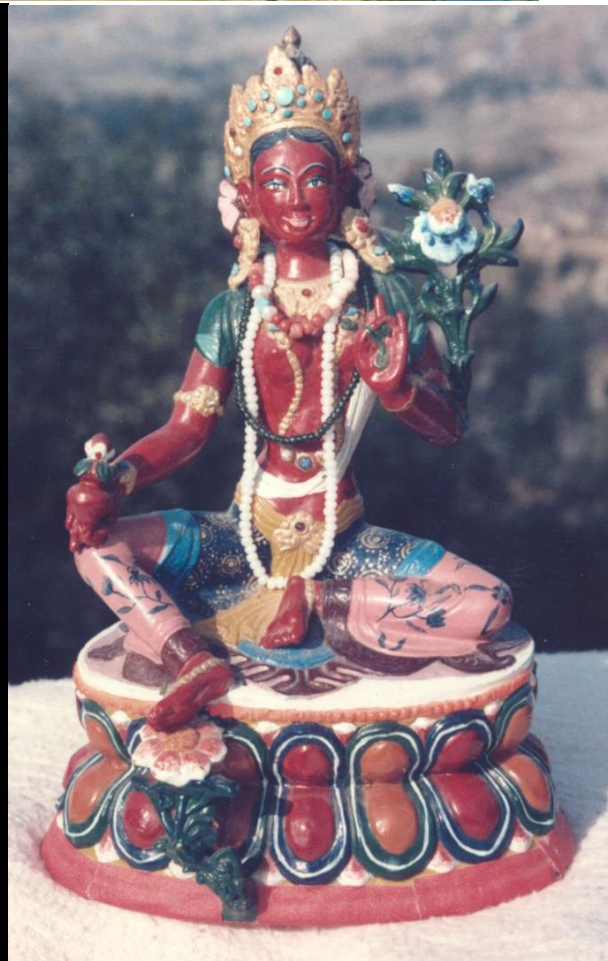
Paripurana Tārā may also be depicted sitting in ardha-paryanka posture with either her left or right foot lowered. She may also wear an upper garment of silk rather than a flayed human-skin, a five-skull crown instead of a jeweled-tiara, and her trident and pearl rosary may be depicted in her left and right hands instead.

3.c - The descriptions of the Twenty-One Tārās according to the tradition of Nāgārjuna and Atisha

The descriptions below the following images of the twenty-one Tārās were posted on the website of His Holiness the Dalai Lama following the initiation according to the Nāgārjuna - Atisha lineage that was given by H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama on December 31, 2022.



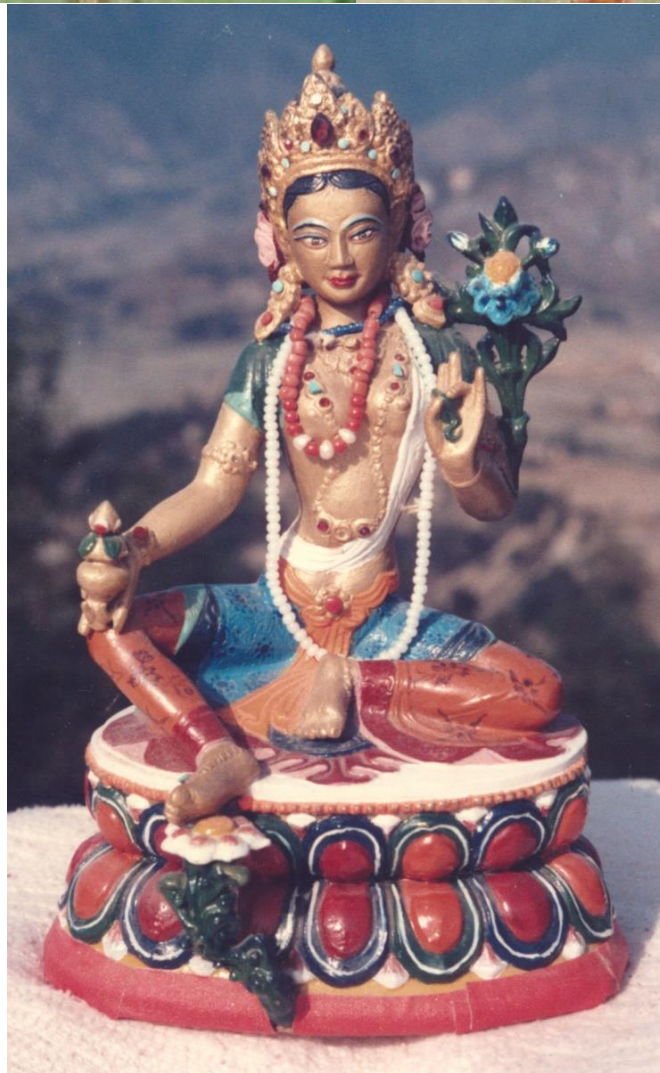
A depiction of the 21 Tārās in accord with the textual description. It starts at the bottom, with the red Tārā, and proceeds clockwise.



(1) Tara who is swift and heroic—red in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a red vase of subjugation.



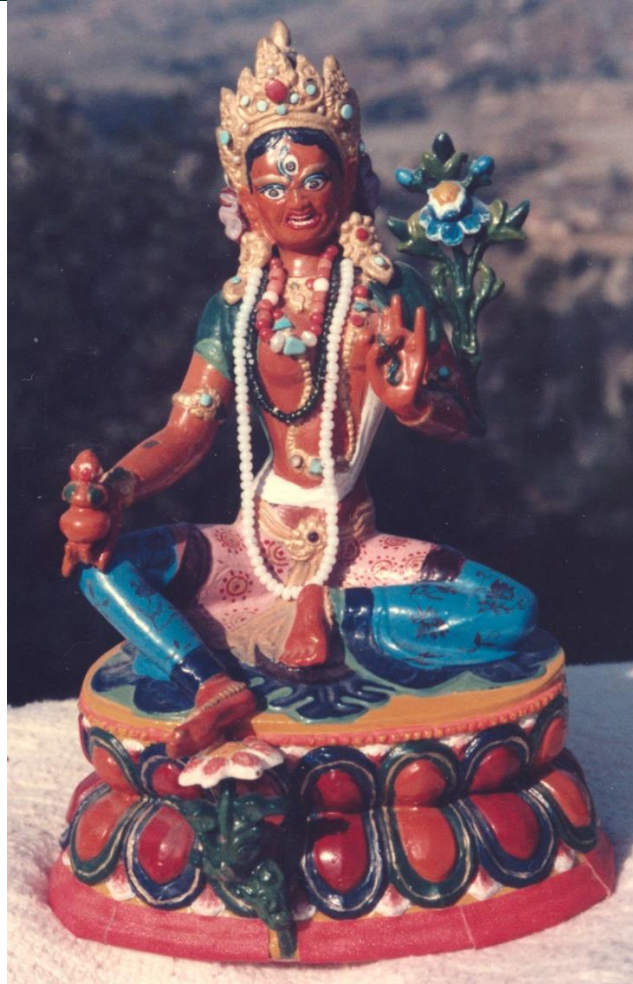
(2) Tara of immense peace—white in colour like the moon in autumn—right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a white vase that pacifies disease and negative forces.



(3) Tara of a golden colour—right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a yellow vase that increases lifespan and merit.



(4) Tara (of life) who is golden in colour—right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a yellow vase that extends life.



(5) On a sun disc sits Tara who utters the sound [HUM]—orange in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding an enchanting (orange) vase.



(6) On a sun disc sits Tara who is victorious over the three worlds—dark red in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (dark red) vase that befuddles evil spirits.



(7) On a sun disc sits Tara who averts the spells of others—black in colour and slightly wrathful, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (black) vase that counters the spells of mantras.



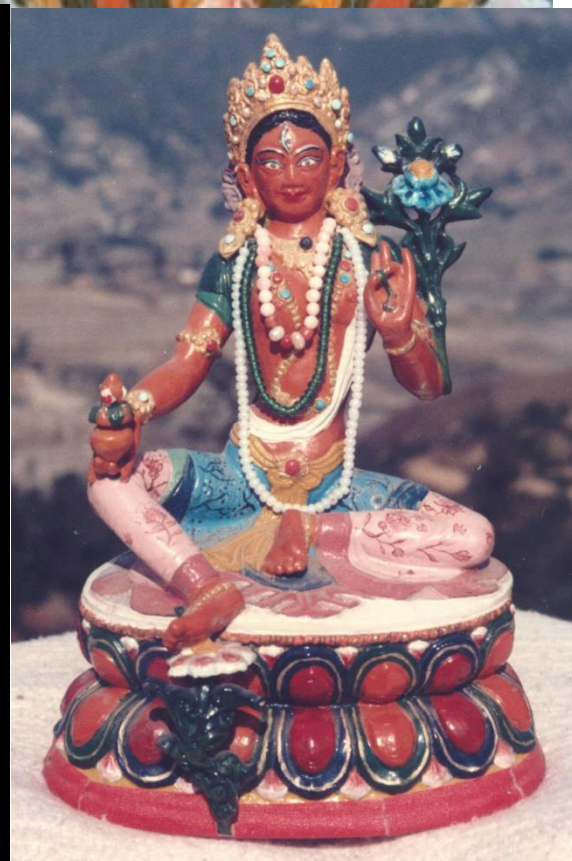
(8) On a sun disc sits Tara who conquers evil forces—dark red in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (dark red) vase that overcomes enemies.



(9) Tara who symbolizes the Three Jewels—white in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (white) vase that protects from fears.



- (10) Tara who conquers maras and subjugates the world—red in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding in her outstretched palm a (red) vase that conquers maras and subjugates.



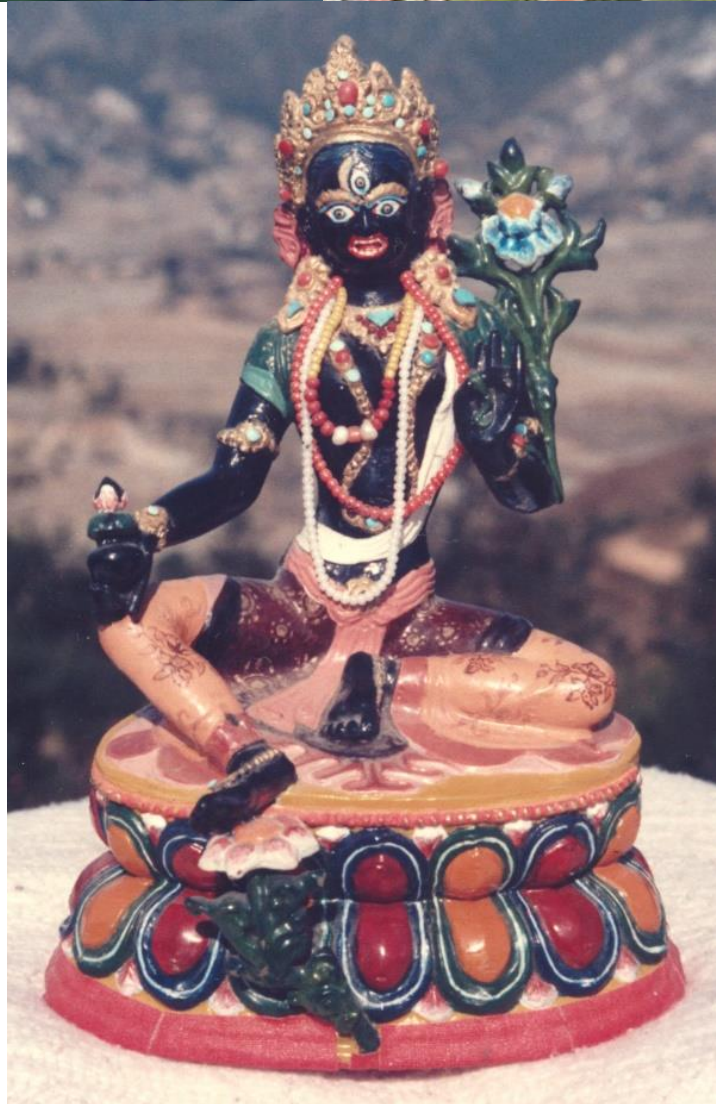
- (11) Tara who invokes (the guardians of the ten directions and so forth) and rescues from poverty—orange in colour, resembling refined gold, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding in her outstretched palm a (red) vase that protects from poverty.



(12) Tara who brings good fortune—orange in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding an (orange) vase that brings good fortune.



(13) Tara of blazing fire—red in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (red) vase that overcomes enemies.



(14) On a sun disc sits frowning Tara—black in colour and frowning slightly, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (black) vase that pierces obstructers.



(15) Tara of great peace—white in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (white) vase that pacifies negative actions.



(16) Tara who liberates through the HUM of knowledge—red in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (red) vase that spreads knowledge mantras.



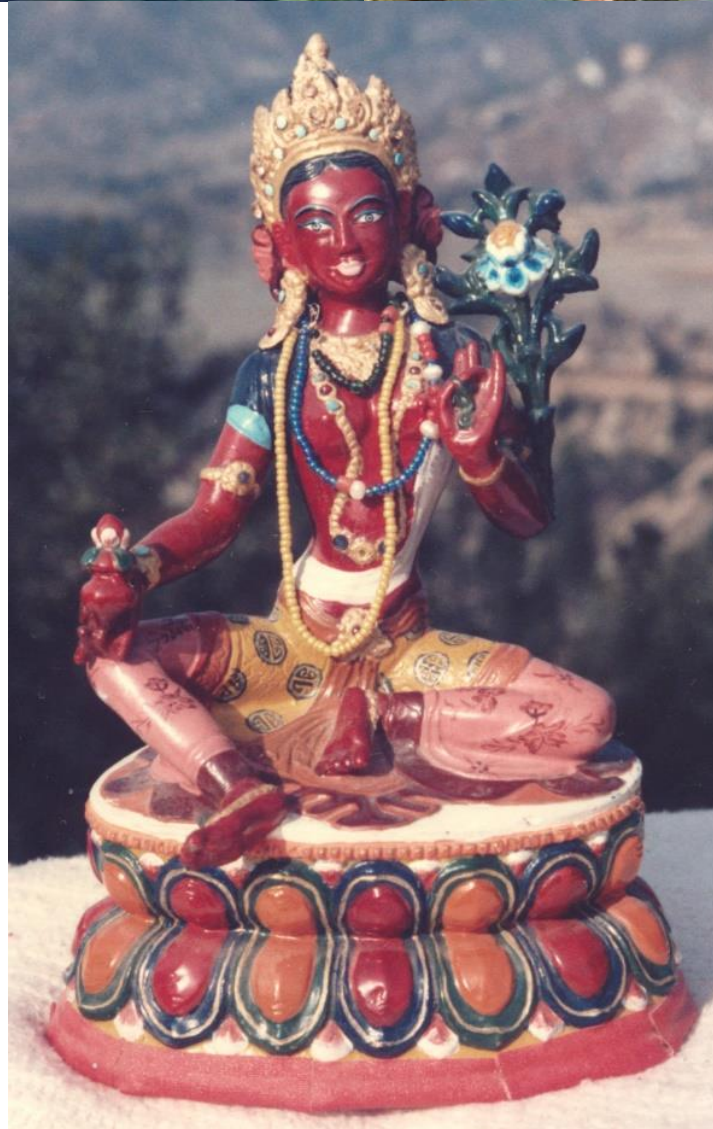
(17) Tara who moves the world—orange in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding an (orange) vase that subdues knowledge mantras.



(18) Tara who pacifies and removes sicknesses due to poison—white in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (white) vase that removes sicknesses due to poison.



(19) Tara who eliminates disputes and bad dreams—white in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (white) vase that removes disputes and bad dreams.



(20) Tara who eliminates epidemics—orange in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding an (orange) vase that eliminates epidemics.



(21) Tara of enlightened activities—white in colour, right hand in the gesture of bestowing sublime attainments, holding a (white) vase that accomplishes different enlightened activities.

All these Taras have one face and two hands, the left of which is in the gesture of giving refuge and holds the stem of an utpala (a blue lotus) flower. They are (mostly) peaceful and smile enchantingly. They wear silken garments, are

adorned with a variety of jewels, and (most of them) are seated on moon disc seats. They meditate with their legs in the bodhisattva position (which is to say, right leg slightly extended and left bent inward).



Painting by Andy Weber, 1980. Numbers added by the editor.



The thangka displayed during the initiation, the second thangka to the left of the large thangka behind His Holiness – see the next page.



Scene of the jenang of the Twenty-One Taras on December 31, 2022, a screenshot taken from a YouTube broadcast.



Colophons

Colophon 1.a, The twenty-one praises to Tārā with images according to the Sūryagupta tradition

The thangka on page 6 and the images of the first twenty Tāras were painted by Dorje Tamang. The image of the twenty-first Tāra was painted by Angeli Lhadripa Shkonda.

The Tibetan text of the praises, here in phonetics, and the English translation are the versions found in *In Praise of Tārā, Songs to the Saviouress*, by Martin Willson (Wisdom Publications, Somerville MA, USA, 1996).

Text and images have been arranged for use as a prayer book.

Colophon 1.b, The twenty-one praises to Tārā with images according to the Nāgārjuna-Atisha tradition

These statues of the Twenty-One Tārās were made in Nepal around 1980 and offered to Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. I saw them at the time and bought their photographs in Kopan Monastery's shop. See also colophon 3.

The vases held in each Tārā's right hand and the colours of the Tārās correspond to the Nāgārjuna-Atisha tradition.

The Tibetan text of the praises, here in phonetics, and the English translation are the versions found in *In Praise of Tārā, Songs to the Saviouress*, by Martin Willson (Wisdom Publications, Somerville MA, USA, 1996).

Text and images have been arranged for use as a prayer book.

Colophon 2.b, The twenty-one praises to Tārā, a literal translation from the Sanskrit

The text was copied from *In Praise of Tārā, Songs to the Saviouress* by Martin Willson (Wisdom Publications, Somerville MA, USA, 1996, pages 112-116)

Colophon 3.c, Images and descriptions of the Twenty-One Tārās from the Nāgārjuna-Atisha tradition

The descriptions of the twenty-one Tārās and part of the images were published on the site <https://www.dalailama.com>, following a jenang of the Twenty-One Tārās that was given by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on December 31, 2022, on the third day of teachings by His Holiness on the text *Commentary on Bodhicitta*, by Āryā Nāgārjuna (December 29-31, 2022, in Bodhgaya, India).

The images come from four sources. The picture showing all of the Twenty-One Tārās on page 122 was published on the above-mentioned website of His Holiness. That thangka is different from the one displayed during the initiation, seen on page 145.

As to the images of the individual Tārās, on the upper level are always two images. The ones on the left come from the thangka of page 122. The ones on the right come from a thangka painted in 1980 by the English artist Andy Weber. This thangka is shown on page 144. Andy painted the seventh Tārā with her left leg extended, instead of her right. Both traditions exist.

On the lower level, there is a photograph of a statue of each of the twenty-one Tārās. See also colophon 1.b.

For eight of the Tārās, there are, on the lower level, painted images coming from Himalayanart.com. This site does not show images of the other thirteen Tārās.



Compiled and edited by Hermes Brandt, for the benefit of Tārā practitioners and as an offering to his precious teacher Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, who gave him his first Tārā initiation on December 15, 1979. Rinpoche passed into the clear light state eleven days ago and ended that final meditation 10 days ago. With prayers to Tārā for his swift return.

Vendôme (41), France, April 24, 2023.

