

White Tara Teachings

March 28, 2020

Sangye Khandro:

Welcome to our practice session together, under very dire circumstances. However, it is very auspicious that we have the precious dharma to use as our tool to help benefit the entire world, including ourselves.

Today, we are going to begin with the reading transmission. For those of you who have not been with us before, we are learning this White Tara practice, *The Wish-Fulfilling Chakra, Noble White Tara*, which is a terma revelation of Rigdzin Duddul Dorje, who is also known as Duddul Rolpa Tsal. He was a predecessor of Dudjom Lingpa. He lived from 1615 to 1672 and was a prolific treasure revealer in the line of the Dudjom incarnations. Also, this terma was very precious to Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, and it is, in fact, Jigdral Yeshe Dorje who revealed it in these modern times and supplemented it with the different necessary prayers that one needs to include in order to do a proper sadhana that has a beginning, middle, and conclusion.

Today, we are not doing a ganachakra ceremony; we are just simply doing the sadhana practice in a simple, unelaborate way, so that you can learn how to do this on your own at home as a daily practice. We will begin with the reading transmission that Lama Chonam will be offering. All you need to do is listen.

Lama Chönam:

Hello everyone, welcome. When I am reading, you just have to hear the sound and that is the characteristic of the transmission. When you are receiving commentary, of course, you have to understand the meaning. When you receive empowerment, you have to recognize the nature of mind. Those are the characteristics of receiving empowerment, receiving commentary, and receiving transmission. So here, I am going to give the transmission, and you just have to hear the sound, even though you may not understand the meaning.

[Reading Transmission]

Sangye Khandro:

For those of you who want to order the more concise version of this practice from Vimala Treasures, now that you have this reading transmission, you are also authorized to do the concise version. It is, basically, the same liturgy, just condensing a few of the sections.

You just received the *lung*, the reading transmission, for the *sādhana*; but the text also includes a way to offer tormas if you wish to do that. Perhaps you are in retreat, or it is an auspicious day and you wish to offer tormas. It also includes in the conclusion how you can achieve spiritual attainment at the end of your retreat. In order to accumulate, let's say, one hundred thousand

recitations of the mantra, you may decide to do a one-week or a ten-day retreat. If you are doing four sessions a day, you could easily accomplish that accumulation. The text tells you how to set up your shrine, how to offer tormas, and how to receive the siddhi, or spiritual attainment, at the end. Otherwise, what we are going to do here today is just what you would do on a daily basis or a semi-regular basis in order to do the White Tara sadhana.

Lama Chönam:

Today when we chant the tune, it is according to the Mindroling tradition called the *tsa dhang*, the basic tune or melody to do sadhanas. In Tibet, when we do Tara sadhanas and rituals, we use these tune, which is why I am using them. But when you do the practice, whatever way you feel comfortable and can say it, that is also fine. Not only that, you may feel more comfortable saying English and then completely connecting with the practice. The most important aspect is to connect with the practice, what you are saying and what you are practicing.

Sangye Khandro:

We will be reading aloud the English, too. For the main parts of the sādhanā, we will read English. We will pause and then I will start reading the English. Everyone please read aloud the English in your respective places, and then we will go back and read the Tibetan for that section. We will begin with the Seven Line Prayer to Guru Rinpoche.

[Practice]

Sangye Khandro:

Of course, when you are practicing on your own, you can include whatever other dedication of merit prayers or longevity prayers that you want to include according to the time you have set aside for your session. In terms understanding a fuller meaning of the sadhana we just did, I gave those teachings on two occasions; and they are being transcribed and will be made available very soon in the near future for those of you who want to have that to help implement and augment your knowledge of how to do the practice and what it really means.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Can you please demonstrate the mudras on page 19?

A: [Lama Chonam demonstrates the mudras.]

Sangye Khandro: When you say OM ĀRYA TARE BENZAR SAMAYA DZA DZA [pg 19], that mantra invokes the wisdom deities to emerge and become nondual. At that time, you may be playing the bell and the damaru; but if you are not, there is really no particular mudra. Sometimes, we go DZA DZA, with your right forefinger on the ring finger of your left hand. Otherwise, that is an invocation. Then, PADMA KA MA LA YA STOM means “please be seated,” so you put your hands out, like an invitation. ARYA TARE NAMO PURU SHAYA HO

is prostration, paying homage. It is a request for stability now that the wisdom deities have merged with your meditation and then prostration to their presence.

Q: Is it okay to record and share this practice?

SK: It is fine to record. This can spread as far and wide as it possibly can.

Q: What is the meaning of the syllables TAM, AH, and NRI?

SK: TAM is Tara's heart essence syllable, the syllable of the essence of her life. AH is the syllable of the dharmakaya mother, and NRI is the syllable that corresponds to the human realm. These three syllables represent the three kayas, the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmāṇakāya, as well as the essence of life, life force, and expectancy

Q: Would we be allowed to use a longer mantra for eliminating evil spirits?

LC: Yes, I think any of Tara's mantras are excellent and effective. The longer one is the main mantra to practice or recite. The Mahayana teachings mention that if you have five children, for example, and one of them is really sick, the mother's whole focus is on that child's well-being. Just like that, at this time, all human beings are suffering equally; and if we really pray to Tara, just like a mother is concerned for their children, definitely there will be a response and swift blessings. This is the time to really practice. Our minds are ready for this kind of practice, egoless and helpless. There is hope. There is prayer. Everything is ready to be received. Then, buddhas and bodhisattvas are always there. I am not saying this in a fanatical way. But that is the way the teachings work. This is the time. Really, we should pray to Tara and, in general, the buddhas and bodhisattvas, but especially Tara, and you can recite this longer mantra.

Q: Should we practice every day? How many mantra accumulations?

SK: That is really up to you. I think, of course, if you can practice every day right now, this is very important. Right now we just accumulated one thousand of the mantras, and so that is quite significant. We were only doing mantra for about forty minutes. If you did a simple session in the morning or in the evening, you could accumulate one thousand mantras every day.

Of course, it is not just all about the numbers, but that gives you time to really focus on the visualization and receive the blessings, and also you are sending those blessings out to the entire world, to all living beings. All of them are receiving the five-colored light of the nectar of immortality. As they lay there suffering with illness and disease or dying, you especially think about those beings who are helpless at this time and that Mother Tara is blessing them with the nectar of immortality, which, of course, means realizing the deathless state of dharmakāya. You pray that all of them may awaken to the wisdom nature of who they really are. So the more that you practice in these days when the world is suffering this collective karma, the more that we all pray and practice, it is a very powerful and important time. There has never been any time quite like this for us, actually.

LC: Also, I think doing sessions is good, but you can recite not just during sessions. If you memorize the mantra of Tara or any mantra, even the MANI mantra, always recite. When you wake up, when you are going to bed, when you are driving, when are doing anything, even cooking, going to the bathroom. All the time. That is the best thing to do at this time. Of course, we have to know the information about what is happening in the world by reading the news maybe one or two times a day, morning and evening. But we should not focus on that news all the time. It is harmful to take in all of this information. It is better to just focus on dharma and send blessings to all those who are really suffering.

SK: When we practice dharma as Vajrayana Buddhists, which, of course, includes the Mahayana aspiration, we are not just practicing only for this life. We practice for the liberation of self and all others. So our motivation is always meant to be on that level. But now especially, we are also praying for the pacification of suffering for beings in general in this life. This is part of our prayer in a usual sense, but particularly now, we must focus in this way. For them to be relieved from the suffering of this disease temporarily, of course, is what most people are wishing for. But, ultimately, all beings, whether they know it or not, are wishing for permanent happiness; and according to Buddhist teachings, permanent happiness is only known when one knows the nature of the mind, recognizes the inherent wisdom buddha nature, and attains awakening for oneself. All of these aspects that benefit, not just only temporarily, but ultimately, are included in a practice such as this, which is why it is so important at this time in particular to strengthen one's commitment to attain awakening to benefit all beings, ultimately, but also to benefit them temporarily.