

**The Short Commentary on the
Tantra of Twenty-one Homages to Tara called
The Treasure Vase of Benefit and Happiness**

*Namo Guru Lokeshvaraya!
The Lord of Three Kayas^{1[1]},
Treasury of activities of all the Victorious ones.
Ultimately, you are unelaborated great bliss: Samantabhadri.
I bow to you, the fearless swift mother of the Victorious ones,
As I briefly explain the verses of praise with devotion.*

Venerable noble mother Tara is Kuntuzangmo,^{Tib} Samantabhadri,^{Skt} in the sphere of the dharmakaya^{2[2]}, Dorje Phagmo,^{Tib} or Vajravarahi,^{Skt} in the sphere of the sambhogakaya^{3[3]}, and Arya Tara in her nirmanakaya^{4[4]} form. Dorje Yangchenma,^{Tib} and Lhamo Palchenmo,^{Tib} are among her many other manifestations; each has a different name and form. In the Land of Snow, (Tibet) in particular, beings are benefited by her other inconceivable manifestations, specifically, Yeshe Tsogyal,^{Tib} or Jhana Dakini^{5[5]}.^{Skt} Just by praying to her, with the help of her swift action, we can spontaneously accomplish the two purposes^{6[6]}. Therefore, it is of great benefit to persevere in this practice.

There are many different Indian and Tibetan traditions explaining this “tantra^{7[7]} of praise”. Motivated by devotion, I will explain this tantra in accordance with “The Treasure Vase of Essential Great Bliss of Inner Practice”, which is the profound mind-treasure^{8[8]} teaching of the omniscient Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa. Each of the twenty-one verses is praise to twenty-one manifestations.

*Homage to mother Tara, swift and fearless,
Your eyes are like flashing lightning.
Born from the blossoming stamens
Of the lotus face of the Lord of Three Worlds.*

The first praise is to Nyurma Palmo,^{Tib} the “Fearless Swift Lady”. Here we pay homage to the lady of activity who liberates beings from the temporal and perennial sufferings of samsara^{9[9]}. She is called “Swift Lady” because her impartial compassion^{10[10]} benefits beings without even an instant’s delay. She is the “Fearless

Lady”, because she has the unhindered power to subdue demons, as well as the afflictions of beings. She protects beings from all fears. Her wisdom eyes move like the flash of lightning as she fully cognizes all phenomena. The lady endowed with omniscience, compassion, power, and activity was born from “the teardrops of the stamen-like eyes of the fully blossomed lotus-like face of Avalokiteshvara^{11[11]}, the Savior of Three Worlds”. The three worlds are the sub-terrestrial, terrestrial and celestial realms, (the worlds of nagas^{12[12]}, humans, and gods, respectively).

Tara is seductive, and has the youthfulness of the rising sun, and a semi-wrathful smile. Her right hand is in the boon-giving mudra^{13[13]}, and her left hand holds a blue lotus upon which is a right-turning conch. This symbolizes her mastery of the two truths^{14[14]} and bodhicitta^{15[15]}: in this world, and in the god realm^{16[16]}. The outer meaning of the praise literally praises the nirmanakaya aspect of the Noble Lady. In the inner aspect of the praise, if not taken literally, her sambhogakaya and dharmakaya aspects are praised. The “Savior of the Three Worlds” is the dharmakaya, and its manifestation is the rupakaya, or “form body,” (which is composed of the sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya).

*Homage to you whose face is like
The gathering of a hundred full moons in autumn,
Shining resplendent light
In the perfect, spacious constellation of a thousand stars.*

The second verse is homage to Yangchenma,^{Tib} the “Treasure of Wisdom”. The “Lady with a shining face like an array of hundred autumn full moons,” means her face is a hundred times fairer and more beautiful than the moon. Her right hand holds a mirror, which is like a full moon engraved with an HRI^{17[17]} syllable. The “perfect spacious constellation of a thousand stars,” refers to the field of her wisdom, which is abundantly spacious, and vast, like the countless, resplendent rays of the full moon. This light clears the darkness of the ignorance of practitioners, which is the cause of dullness, disease and possession by evils. It opens the door to the treasury of knowledge by illuminating the light of the four specific perfect understandings. These are the perfect understanding of the Dharma^{18[18]}, (teachings) the perfect understanding of the definitive meaning, perfect confidence (in the doctrine) and the perfect knowledge of the Victorious Ones, (brilliance). According to a tantra, the inner meaning is “to serve the mother of the sphere” which means emptiness or the nature of mind. In order to look at our innate self, the face of the

ultimate Vajravarahi, we must accumulate merit^{19[19]} and purify our mind-streams^{20[20]}, so that they are like an “array of a hundred pure white moons.” Because of these practices, the door to her blessing will be opened by our true inclination. In that way, we can see ultimate luminosity and ignite our dynamic wisdom.

*Homage to you, the golden lady
Whose hand is adorned with a blue lotus,
You are the lord of the domain of the activities of generosity,
Diligence, austerity, tranquility, patience and meditation.*

The third praise is to Sonam Thobkyedma,^{Tib} the “Yellow Lady of Good Fortune”. She is beautiful; her skin is the color of pure gold glittering in the early morning sun. Her left hand is adorned with a blue lotus, upon which sits a gem that bestows all wishes. She is the lord of the Bodhisattvas^{21[21]} sphere of activity, which encompasses the transcendent perfections of generosity, patience, diligence, ethics, tranquility, wisdom, and meditation. Austerity, (in this context) is ethics, and tranquility is wisdom and meditation. We pay homage to the unchallengeable lady who has the ten powers: the power over life, the power over mind, the power over wealth, the power over action, the power over birth, the power over inclination, the power over aspiration, the power over miracles, the power over primordial wisdom, and the power over dharma. The outer meaning is that she has attained the completion of the six perfections, in just one meditation. The inner meaning is that her singular meditation is like a lotus, free from the flaw of adherence to subject and object, and is endowed with the completion of the six perfections.

*Homage to you born from the Tathagata’s crown
Who enjoys boundless total victory,
Relied upon by the Sons of Conquerors
Who have achieved perfection.*

The forth praise is to Namgyalma,^{Tib} the “Victorious Lady”, the “One Who Has Accomplished Immortality.” The “Wisdom Goddess” of wisdom mantra, who emanates from the crowns of the Tathagatas^{22[22]}, enjoys total victory over the boundless disruptive forces. Her complexion is golden, and she holds a vase of longevity. Bodhisattvas who have achieved the ten bhumis^{23[23]}, the essence of the ten transcendent perfections, without exception, rely on her guidance as their

spiritual mother. She enriches practitioners by dissolving the fourteen subtle essences of the animate, inanimate, and other subtle essences of samsara and nirvana^{24[24]}. In reality, she has achieved the sacred, unchanging body of eternity through the intention of Atiyoga^{25[25]}, the crown of nine yanas^{26[26]}.

*Homage to you who fills all of the realms of Desire,
Its Aspect and Space with TUTTARA and HUNG syllables,
You trample the seven worlds with your feet,
You have the power to command all forces.*

The fifth is the praise to Rigyed Lhamo,^{Tib} the “All-Knowing Lady” who has the quality of magnetizing^{27[27]}. This red Tara sits on blue lotus and holds a bow and an arrow. She fills the desire realm, its aspect, which is the form realm, and space, which is the formless realm, with the brightly radiating TUTTARA mantra^{28[28]}, and the sound of HUNG. (Phyogs in Tibetan is an ambiguous word. In this instance, the author of the commentary interprets it as “the aspect” of the desire realm.) This is because beings in both the desire realm and the form realm share the same aspect of having form. Likewise, “space” is interpreted as the formless realm. The radiance of the TUTTARA mantra and the sound of HUNG symbolize her realization of emptiness^{29[29]} and compassion. She conquers the seven worlds by just trampling them with her feet. If she is able to summon all of these forces without exception just by the power of the mantra, there can be no doubt of her power over the lesser forces, for example: sangha, kings, ministers, and landlords.

There are a number of different identifications of the seven worlds. Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen points out they are the five goers, and the two upper realms, which makes seven. Drolgon Zhab says the seven worlds are the realms of the nagas, pretas, asuras, humans, vidyadharas^{30[30]}, kinaras and gods; the seven realms with power. In the commentary by Gedun Gyatso, the seven realms are comprised of the six realms: (the realms of the gods, jealous gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell-beings), and the realm of the bardo, (which is also known as the intermediate state).

Others write that the seven worlds are: the sky, the form and formless realms, and the worlds of ten directions. Rigyed Lhamo magnetizes and leads beings to the path of the three yanas. The ultimate meaning is that through practice, when non-conceptual neutral alaya’s clarity is cognized, the formless realms dissolve. When

the simple pure luminosity of the indiscriminating clarity of alaya-vijnana^{31[31]}, or “base of consciousness” is cognized, the form realms dissolve. When mental consciousness is free from delusion and the five sensory cognitions, the desire realm ceases. These cessations are the abiding purity, or the fruition of purification. At this stage of awareness, the seven worlds are the seven cognitions, where all the concepts of desire and the other three realms without exception dissolve into dharmadatu^{32[32]}.

*Homage to you, who is worshipped by Indra,
Agni, Brahma, Vayudeva, Visvakarman and Ishvara,
And praised in your presence,
By a host of spirits, zombies, gandharvas and yakshas.*

The sixth homage is to Jigyed Chenmo,^{Tib} the dark red “Great Terrifying Lady”, who holds a phurba^{33[33]} sparkling with HUNG syllables that destroy all evils. Indra, the king of gods; Agni, the sage; Brahma, the creator; Vayudeva, the wind god; the great Ishvara and all the great ones of the world, and the main guardians of the directions worship her. In front of her kneel a host of evil spirits who harm beings by their misguidance. There are spirits who cause insanity and memory loss, and spirits who turn corpses into zombies. There are gandharvas^{34[34]} of the bardo and the realm of Yama; yakshas like Semo, who deceive by seducing; king spirits who makes beings crazy and angry; and pishaca demons that eat flesh. All these evildoers await her orders with humility and respect. Homage is paid to Tara who crushes the heads of those difficult to tame, and makes them faint into the state of dharmadhatu. The inner meaning of this is that Indra and the other gods are the personification of five elements^{35[35]}, and the spirits are the personification of the five aggregates^{36[36]}. Their reverence symbolizes the purity of the elements and aggregates, which are the base of the male and female Buddhas^{37[37]}.

*Homage to you, who destroys malefic magical wheels,
With the sounds of TRAT and PHAT
And tramples with right leg outstretched and left leg drawn in
Dazzling amidst whirling flames.*

The seventh homage is to Tumo Zhenge Methubma,^{Tib} the “Unchallenged Furious Lady”, who averts wars, lightning and hailstorms by intoning TRAT and PHAT, which in Sanskrit means to tear and cut. These syllables thwart the magical

wheels of the intentional evil deeds of the eight classes of spirits. They avert lightning strikes and hailstorms, and destroy cannons and other weapons of war. To depict that she has gone beyond of the extremes of samsara and nirvana by her compassion and realization of emptiness, her right leg is outstretched and her left leg is drawn in, and tramples on malignant beings. She conquers all fears of nirvana and samsara with her power of realization of emptiness and compassion. She is black, and sits amidst flames. Her wrathful wrinkles whirl like ocean waves. Homage is paid to the lady who wields a mystically blazing sword held atop a blue lotus that burns all foes to ashes. The inner meaning of her outstretched and drawn in legs is the sensory cognitions; when the sensory cognitions perceive and harmonize the sensory objects, the samsaric wars arise. By saying tear and cut, she severs attachment to sensory objects and purifies them. This is the base of the male and female Bodhisattvas.

*Homage to TURE, the great terrifying lady,
Who defeats the champions of demons.
Your frowning lotus face
Slays all foes without exception.*

The eighth homage is to the dark red frowning lady, Zhen Megyalvai Palmo,^{Tib} the “Invincible Fearless Lady”. We praise the lady who averts criticism and other harms, which are the source of humiliation caused by our afflictive emotion of pride. Her hand implement is a vajra^{38[38]}. By reciting the mantra TURE, which means “Swift Lady”, another of her names declaiming her swift compassionate action, she arises in wrathful form from the tranquil dharmadhatu, and subjugates the demons difficult to tame: the afflictions, the aggregates, the lord of death, and the maras^{39[39]}.

She transforms her blossoming lotus-like peaceful face into a wrathful, scowling face, and destroys the evil mind of outer enemies. She eliminates those who hate and abuse the dharma and its upholders, those who cause obstacles for practitioners, and those who harm sentient beings. In reality, she executes all foes without a trace: the afflictive obscurations that are the foes of liberation, and the knowable obscurations that are the foes of omniscience. The definitive meaning is that the base of the wrathful male and female deities, (the serving faculties) are the pure abiding nature of the four attributes of body, and the four classes of illusory conceptions. They eliminate the foes of omniscience: the knowable obscurations, and the foes of liberation: the obscuration of afflictive emotions.

*Homage to you, who holds your fingers marvelously
In the mudra symbolizing the Triple Gem at your heart.
Swirling masses of light adorn you,
Permeating every direction in beautiful circles.*

The ninth praise is homage to Sengdeng Nagi Drolma,^{Tib} the “Tara of the Rosewood Forest” who protects from all kinds of fears. Her color is dark green, with the dazzling radiance of emeralds. Her right hand is in the boon-giving mudra, and the thumb and ring finger of her left hand holds a blue lotus engraved with a wheel. Her remaining fingers are held gracefully upright at her heart in the mudra symbolizing the Triple Gem ^{40[40]}. The swirling wheel of light, (a metaphor for protection) adorns her like the finest of garments, and it protects like a shield against all torments. Likewise, all beings of the world in ten directions are protected from all kinds of fears by the all-pervasive light that beams from her body, clearing their fears in a display of extraordinary radiance.

The eight kinds of fears are:

1. The fear of elephants represents the power of ignorance. When ignorance grows strong, one ignores the law of cause and effect, indulges in alcohol, (here the use of alcohol is a symbolic of wrong view) and becomes crazy.
2. The fear of iron chains symbolizes habituation to lust and desire that bind together the senses and their objects.
3. The fear of pishaca demons signifies the doubt that steals the life force of nirvana, as it moves in the sky of ignorance, and the doubt that harms the understanding of ultimate meanings.
4. The fear of rivers (floods) is a symbol of desire, acting savagely. By the possession of spirits, the current of desire carries beings towards samsara in its tumultuous waves of birth, sick, aging and death caused by karmic wind.
5. The fear of fire represents the power of anger that burns the forest of virtue. Anger is the cause of anxiety, which in turn causes quarrels, disputes, and partialities.

6. The fear of robbery corresponds to the wrong views that steal the treasure of the supreme goal. This causes one to wander aimlessly in the barren ground of wrong view, (and to) believe in extremes and low ascetic practices.
7. The fear of reptiles represents jealousy, the poison of intolerance of another person's prosperity. Jealousy results in everything becoming a cause for agitation.
8. The fear of lions. Signifies pride, the conceit of holding high ones own views and conduct. Pride causes one to (metaphorically) develop claws as sharp as a lion's to belittle others.

These and their casual factors are the eight fears.

Another set of eight fears, which are the fruition of secondary afflictions are:

1. The fear of punishment by kings caused by self-infatuation and harming others.
2. The fear of foes is caused by hypocrisy, gloom, sloth and excitement.
3. The fear of evil spirits is caused by dishonesty and deceit.
4. The fear of leprosy is caused by lack of shame and dread of blame.
5. The fear of being lonely is caused by disbelief.
6. The fear of poverty is caused by stinginess.
7. The fear of thunder is caused by anger and enmity.
8. The fear of failure is caused by indolence and carelessness.

Homage is paid to the lady who protects us from these two sets of fears. The inner meaning is that her wheel of the three primordial wisdom-minds, (the wisdom-minds of emptiness, clarity and compassion, illustrated by the mudra symbolizing the Triple Gem) eliminates the nine bonds and other afflictions, which is a cause for accomplishing the fearless vajra of self-cognized luminosity.

*Homage to you, lady who unfurls
Garlands of joyous majestic light from your crown.
By your piercing laughter of TUTTARE,
You subjugate the world and maras.*

The tenth homage is to Jigten Sumgyal,^{Tib} “Victorious Over Three Worlds”, who subjugates worldly beings. She is red and holds a victory banner. Multi-colored lights radiate from her crown, giving perfect joy and fulfilling the temporal and ultimate wishes according to the desires of beings. By saying the TUTTARE mantra melodiously with the eight attributes of laughter, (of the wrathful deity) she confuses and subjugates the demonic lords of the (sensory god realm), who are known as the “Controllers of Other’s Emanation”. She also subjugates kings, ministers, sorcerers, and wealthy householders and leads them to the path of liberation. In the root text, “the outer phenomena change only when self-appearances transform.” Therefore, subjugation is possible if the intention of the spiritual mother (non-dual emptiness-compassion) is attained, and there is no alternate method. The inner meaning is the four joys subjugate demons and afflictions. The subjugation of the three doors by blissful primordial wisdom is subjugation of the three worlds.

*Homage to you,
Who can summon hosts of the protectors of earth.
By your frowning movements and HUNG syllable,
You bring freedom from all poverties.*

The eleventh homage is to Thronyer Chenma,^{Tib} the “Frowning Lady” who bestows wealth and dispels poverty. She summons the goddess of earth, the nagas, the god of wealth, yakshas and other lords of ten directions and their retinues to serve her activities. She holds a treasure vase, and is orange in color. She is majestic, with a scowling face and a furrowed brow. Light radiates from the HUNG syllable at her heart, drawing in the wealth and prosperity of gods, nagas and humans. She showers the poor and needy with wealth, satisfying all their needs and freeing them from their sufferings. The inner meaning is that by purifying the earth-like ignorance that supports the world, the primordially perfect great merit is revealed, clearing samsara and nirvana of all poverty. This also indicates the Secret and Wisdom path.

*Homage to you, whose diadem is a crescent moon,
All your adornments dazzle brightly.
Excellent perpetual light shines
From Amitabha at your topknot.*

The twelfth homage is to Tara, Tashi Dongyed Dolma,^{Tib} the “One Who Bestows Auspiciousness” who brings timely rain, helps with childbirth, and makes places auspicious. This golden Tara sits on blue lotus and holds an auspicious knot. From the rays of her crescent moon diadem, showers of nectar fall, improving crops and vegetation. Clear and brilliant white light radiates from all of her precious jewels and silken attire. Amitabha, the lord of her Buddha family sits on her black hair knot. From him too, boundless unceasing compassionate rays shine for the benefit of sentient beings. These rays bring a shower of auspicious signs and articles. They cleanse the poisonous bad omens of animate and inanimate existence, causing all beings and their environments to enjoy perfect, glorious, auspiciousness. The ultimate meaning of the first line is ‘direct perception,’ the second line means the ‘enhancing experience’ and the last two of the lines mean ‘the completion stage of the expansion of primordial wisdom and kayas of the fourth empowerment^{41[41]},’ (Word).

*Homage to you, who dwells amidst garlands
Blazing like the fire at the end of an eon.
With your right leg outstretched and left leg drawn in
Your joyful turning destroys enemy forces.*

The thirteenth homage is to Drapung Jomma,^{Tib} the “Tara Who Averts War”. She averts wars and obstacles, and leads beings to victory in the war with form and formless enemies. She is red in color and dwells amidst garlands of wisdom fire swirling like the fire at the end of an eon. Her right leg is stretched out and left leg is drawn in. Sparks of fire fly from the prongs of the vajra she brandishes, subduing all harmful enemies. She comforts them by gathering them under the vajra-tent that protects them from their own evil. With every skillful means^{42[42]}, she turns the wheel of dharma, according to the disposition of the beings to be tamed. She makes them content and joyous, and subdues the malefic forces of the two obscurations. The inner meaning is that this indicates the realization that “exhausts all phenomena”. Just as the fire at the end of the eon consumes the world, when the primordial wisdom swirls in dharmadhatu, the outer earth and stones, the inner animate body, and the secret conceptions are also exhausted. So the foes of the two obscurations^{43[43]} are subjugated, and the joy of the great tranquility of the core of inner clarity of primordial wisdom^{44[44]} that does not dwell in the extremes of samsara and nirvana is experienced.

*Homage to you, who strikes the earth with your palms,
And stamps upon it with your feet.
With wrathful grimaces and HUNG syllable,
You scatter the seven underworlds.*

The fourteenth homage is to Thronyer Chenzed,^{Tib} the “Wrathful Wrinkled (Frowning) Tara” who subdues the eight classes of harmful spirits and nine malignant spirit brothers. She is black like a dark night, and holds a wooden pestle upon a blue lotus. She makes the world tremble and quake by striking the mountains and islands with the palms of her hands and stamping upon them with her feet. By the power of her regal frowning, the resounding vibration of HUNG, and the glare from her radiant vajra light, which is like a fire-shower, she shatters the hearts and heads of all malignant spirits: samaya^{45[45]} breakers, demons and others from the seven underworlds and above, and makes them faint into the state of dharmata^{46[46]}. The seven underworlds, which are like layers of seven roofs, are: the abodes of demons, the general base, the higher base, the baseless, the specific base, the base of essence, the perfect base, and the pure base. In reality, the two soles striking symbolize striking the crucial point of the path of the non-duality of pristine wisdom and the basic sphere, which uproots the seven latencies or seven cognitions with their objects.

*Homage to you, who is blissful, virtuous and tranquil,
And enjoys the domain of peaceful nirvana
With (mantra) endowed perfectly with SVAHA and OM
You destroy all awful non-virtuous karma.*

The fifteenth homage is to Rabtu Zhima,^{Tib} the “Perfect Pacifier”, who pacifies the obscuration of negative karma^{47[47]}. She sits on blue lotus, and is peaceful. Her color is white like a crystal moon and she holds an anointing vase. She is free from the fruition of suffering, and as a result, she is blissful. She has eliminated non-virtue, and as a result, she is virtuous. Her afflictions have ended, and as a result, she is tranquil. She has gone beyond the sufferings of the two obscurations and she enjoys and abides in the sphere of sublime tranquility. By her power of compassion, and power of reciting perfectly in accordance with the sadhana^{48[48]} her twenty-three or eighteen syllable mantras, the five heinous negative karmas^{49[49]} that make beings fall into the lower realms, and other karma that generates great sufferings are uprooted and purified. The mantra includes the additional syllables, OM at the

beginning and SVAHA at the end. The ultimate meaning is that her blissfulness and other qualities are connected to the five wisdom minds: the wisdom of absolute space, mirror-like wisdom, the wisdom of equality, discriminating wisdom, and all-accomplishing wisdom.

*Homage to you, who is surrounded by joyous ones
Who completely scatter the bodies of enemies.
You liberate all with your speech, adorned with ten syllables
And HUNG: your pristine awareness.*

The sixteenth homage is to Drolma Barvai Odcan,^{Tib} the “Tara Who Averts the Enemies and Mantra’s Spell,” who is red like the fire at the end of eon, sits on blue lotus, and holds a crossed vajra. She is surrounded by a host of vidyadhara and mendicants who have accomplished the practice of mantra and power of truthful speech and are endowed with perfect joy of samadhi. Their radiance scatters the bodies of the foes and overcomes the power of magical spells and the power of sorcery, destroying them without a trace. By reciting her mantra arrangement of the ten syllables, OM TARE and so on, she At the heart of the wrathful lady, awareness rests in the form of a HUNG radiating light that clears the outer, inner, and secret obscurations of the beings to be tamed. The ultimate meaning is that by subduing the foe of the impure appearance of our body, the awareness body of the Mother of the Victorious Ones is accomplished: the unchanging great blissful body endowed with the ten powers.

*Homage to you whose seed syllable is HUNG
Who utters TURE and stamps your feet.
Causing Meru, Mandhara and Vindhya mountains
And the three worlds to tremble.*

The seventeenth homage is to Dolma Pagmed Nonma,^{Tib} the “Unfathomable Suppressor”, who averts harm from hunters, thieves, robbers and enemies. She is orange like saffron, sits on a blue lotus and holds a stupa^{50[50]}. By saying TURE, stamping on the ground, and the radiating seed syllables from the HUNG at her heart, she shakes all the abodes of the great gods, including Mount Meru, Mandhara and Vindhya. The effect of her actions extends beyond the three thousand worlds. Her stamping causes the three realms: desire, form and formless, on the subterranean, terrestrial and celestial worlds, to quake and quiver. By the power of

her frightening forces, she crushes butchers, thieves, and other enemies under her feet and gives peace to all beings. The ultimate meaning is that the quavering of the three worlds is purification of the three doors, (body, speech and mind).

*Homage to you, holding a hare-marked full moon,
Shaped like the god's ocean of nectar
By uttering TARE twice and PHAT
You dispel all poison without exception.*

The eighteenth homage is to Maja Chenmo,^{Tib} the “Great Peahen”, who averts and pacifies poison. She is as white as the moon, and sits on a blue lotus. In her left hand, she holds a full moon marked with a rabbit, which is the shape of the ocean of nectar of the god realm. With her radiance and her chanting of the mantra, OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SARVA VETRA TARA PHAT SVA HA, which has two TARES and a PHAT syllable, she clears all poisons, both animate and inanimate, without a trace. Generally, all obstacles arise from poisons, and the base of all the animate and inanimate poisons is our afflictions. She clears all the poisons of sentient beings without a trace with the medicine of the truth of reality.

*Homage to you, on whom kings, congregations of gods,
Minor gods, and kinaras rely.
Your armor of magnificent joy
Dispels all disputes and bad dreams.*

The nineteenth is homage to Mipham Gyalmo,^{Tib} the “Undeclared Queen”, who averts conflicts and bad dreams. She is white and holds a white umbrella. Indra, Brahma, gods of the desire and form realms, demons and local gods who harm beings, and the gods of mountains, lakes and trees who help beings, honor her without exception. In general, by the mantra that is blessed by her and the visualization of her body as armor, all conflicts and bad dreams can be averted. In particular, the multi-colored vajras and the sparkles they emit avert religious and political critics, and make their statements powerless. She wears a crown to symbolize honoring lamas as deities, actualization of primordial wisdom, and stabilization of bodhicitta. She wears earrings as a sign of refraining from the humiliation of lamas. Her armlets, bracelets, and anklets, six in number, signify that she refrains from killing insects. Her necklaces represent her perfect recitation of mantra. Her belt, lower garments and ornaments indicate that her body is endowed

with bodhicitta. All of her ornaments are like fine armor, whose splendor can avert criticism and the bad dreams caused by the imbalance of the winds, channels and seminal essence^{51[51]}. The inner meaning is that by having the karmic wind^{52[52]} flow into the uma, the central channel, the experience of the armor of emptiness is actualized, averting the delusions that cause conflict and bad dreams.

*Homage to you, whose two eyes, the sun and the moon
Radiate sublime luminous light.
Uttering HARA twice and TUTTARA
You dispel all horrifying epidemics.*

The twentieth homage is to Lhamo Rithrodma,^{Tib} the “Mendicant Tara”, who averts all diseases. She is orange and her hand holds a vase of nectar on a blue lotus. Her left eye is like the full moon and her right eye is like the sun. Her right eye emits blazing rays that burn all the lords of diseases, (those who command the evil spirits that bring disease) like haystacks. Clear nectar flows from the moon, (her left eye) curing the causes and effects of diseases and epidemics. Her mantra, OM TARE TUTTARE TURE NAMA TARE NAMO HARA HUNG HARA SVA HA has two HARA sounds and a TUTTARA. The mantra can cure even the most dangerous incurable epidemics. The ultimate meaning is that if the mother-sphere of transcendent wisdom is realized, the most dangerous epidemics of afflictions, their causes and fruitions, can be cured.

*Homage to you, who is adorned by three Suchnesses.
Perfectly endowed with the power of serenity.
Destroyer of demons, zombies and yakshas.
O TURE! Sublime excellent lady.*

The twenty-first praise is the homage to Lhamo Odser Chenma,^{Tib} the “Goddess with Brilliance”, who can restore the life force. She is white, her left hand is in the boon-giving mudra, and her right hand is in the refuge-giving mudra, holding a blue lotus on which sit the auspicious golden fishes. At her three places: crown, throat, and heart, are OM, AH, and HUNG, respectively, which form the sublime protection against all obstacles. The light rays from these letters protect the three doors of beings from the harm of all outer obstacles caused by evil forces, both form and formless. They also protect beings from the inner obstacles of ill health, and the secret obstacles of dualistic affliction. The rays have the power to pacify

them without a trace. Particularly, the rays from the three letters can restore the life force stolen by spirits, zombies, and yakshas, and eliminate their harmful intentions and actions. The homage is to TURE, the great compassionate lady who acts swiftly for the benefit of sentient beings. The true meaning is that Tara has the power to guide the minds of beings to be tamed in the “three approaches to liberation”. These are: emptiness, attributelessness and aspirationlessness, or, the suchness of an entity, its nature and compassion, and the clearing of all its obscurations. Ultimately the vajra body, speech and mind are the primordially pure nature of all phenomena. By meditating on the sphere of the indivisibility of the three vajras, the demons, sufferings, zombies, and yakshas are transformed by the great bliss of primordial wisdom.

*This is the praise to Her root mantra,
And the Twenty-One Homages.*

The Benefits of Reciting the Praise

*The wise one endowed with pure respect for the goddess,
Who recites these praises with perfect devotion
Remembering her in the evening and upon waking at dawn,
Will be endowed with complete freedom from fear.*

A practitioner who recites the praise in the evening and at dawn, recalling Tara's qualities with pure devotion, and has the wisdom to discriminate between good and bad will be protected from the sixteen fears. Others will be endowed with complete freedom from all fears. It is also said that we must meditate on her wrathful form in the evening to pacify the harms of this life, and visualize her peaceful form at dawn and recite the praises to save ourselves from rebirth in the lower realms.

*All their sins will be pacified,
Causing destruction to all lower realms.
And the seven million Victorious Ones*

*Will quickly grant them empowerment.
Thus, they will attain greatness, and progress
To the stage of Buddhahood.*

The daily practice of the Twenty-One Praises to Tara will cause all of the practitioner's sins to be pacified and purified. Those who recite the praise will not experience the sufferings of the lower realms. The seven million Victorious Ones who abide with the Noble Lady will swiftly bless and empower the practitioners. In this life, the practitioners of this praise will achieve the great bliss of place, body, retinue, and the qualities of the dharma of transmitted precepts and realization. They will swiftly attain the paths and bhumis, and reach the ultimate state of enlightenment.

*By remembering Her, the most violent poisons
Abiding in the earth or in beings
Whether eaten or drunk
Will be completely removed.*

At the conventional level, practitioners will be protected from terrible diseases, and the pain caused by aconite and other inanimate poisons. They will be protected from the poisonous fangs, horns, stings and bites of animals. The practice will also provide protection from the poisonous effect of the evil intentions of malignant spirits, protection from their touch, and the evil eye. By remembering the goddess and her mantra, the harmful effect of poisons whether they have been eaten or drunk will be nullified.

*This can eliminate various sufferings
Inflicted by the spirits, epidemics, and poisons
Even if done for the sake of other beings.*

The practice can easily eliminate the suffering inflicted by outer and inner poisons, by dangerous epidemics and possession by evil spirits. The same benefit can be achieved if the praise is recited for the sake other beings.

*On sincerely reciting twice, three times, and seven times
The wish to have child will be fulfilled
And the desire for wealth can be achieved.*

*All the wishes will be fulfilled
Every hindrance destroyed in its turn*

We must recite the praise twice, three and seven times in one session. We can do the practice either two sessions a day: once during the day, and once during the night, or three sessions during the day and three sessions at night. The Vajra holders of India and Tibet teach that if one practices the sadhana of “The Four Mandala Offerings^{53[53]}” in this way, the desire to have children to continue one’s family line, or to provide students to uphold the dharma lineage will be fulfilled. In the same way, if one wishes to have wealth for the happiness of this life and the next, excellent prosperity can easily be achieved. Likewise, any other activities: siddhis^{54[54]}, temporal desires and ultimate wishes will be fulfilled. By the compassion of the Venerable Mother, unfavorable obstacles in the future will not manifest, and harm will not arise from obstacles that have already occurred. Since all purposes can be fully achieved, the wise must practice this sadhana with enthusiasm.

*By explaining the Twenty-One Praises with devotion,
May all access the ocean of siddhis, clear all obstacles
And have the auspiciousness of complete enlightenment,
By swiftly having a vision of Her face, embraced
By the unchanging bliss, endowed with all supreme attributes.*

To summarize the text, the meaning of the root mantra is shown in the form of praise. The twenty-one verses of homage show the twenty-one manifestations of the goddess.

Thupten Shedrub Gyatso, who was a Tulku^{55[55]} in one of the Palyul Monasteries, wrote this commentary. His current incarnation, Rago Chogtrul lives in Tibet.

Translation by Khenpo Tenzin Norgay ~ Spring, 2004, NY Palyul Retreat Center

- ^{1[1]} three kayas ^{skt} ~ Dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya, the differing dimensions (bodies) in which the embodiment of fully enlightened attributes occurs.
- ^{2[2]} dharmakaya ^{skt} ~ Buddha body of reality.
- ^{3[3]} sambhogakaya ^{skt} ~ Buddha body of enjoyment.
- ^{4[4]} nirmanakaya ^{skt} ~ Buddha body of emanation.
- ^{5[5]} dakini ^{skt} (khandro) ~ Literally, sky goer. A yogini who has attained mundane or supramundane accomplishments, specifically, enlightenment.
- ^{6[6]} two purposes ~ To benefit self, and other.
- ^{7[7]} tantra ^{skt} ~ Buddhist texts that outline the practices of the Vajra vehicle
- ^{8[8]} mind treasure ~ An inspired teaching (terma) revealed directly from the Buddha-mind, by a treasure revealer, (terton) .
- ^{9[9]} samsara ^{skt} ~ Cyclic existence, the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth characterized by suffering and dominated by the three poisons: ignorance, desire and hatred.
- ^{10[10]} compassion ~ Sensitivity to the sufferings experienced by sentient beings, coupled with a desire to help them overcome suffering and its causes.
- ^{11[11]} Avalokiteshvara ^{skt} (Chenrezig) ~The Buddha of compassion.
- ^{12[12]} naga ~ A snake-like being living in the depths of water or underground. Although they have miraculous powers, they are classified as belonging to the lower realm.
- ^{13[13]} mudra ^{skt} ~ A gesture that has specific meaning used in Tantric practice as a support.
- ^{14[14]} two truths ~ The absolute and relative truth.
- ^{15[15]} bodhicitta ^{skt} ~ The mind of enlightenment. The altruistic intention to become enlightened in order to benefit others
- ^{16[16]} god realm ~ One of the six realms of cyclic existence, characterized by seemingly unending pleasure and leisure.
- ^{17[17]} HRI syllable ~ Seed syllable of Avalokiteshvara.
- ^{18[18]} dharma ^{skt} ~ It is an ambiguous Sanskrit term, here we can take it as spiritual path.
- ^{19[19]} merit ~ Good karma, the energy generated by positive actions of body, speech and mind.
- ^{20[20]} mind-stream ~ The continuation of consciousness, Buddhist way of expressing our mind.
- ^{21[21]} Bodhisattva ^{skt} ~ One who has generated bodhicitta and seeks enlightenment for the benefit of others.
- ^{22[22]} Tathagatas ^{skt} ~“Thus Gone One”, an epithet of Buddhas.
- ^{23[23]} ten bhumis ^{skt} ~ The progressive levels of realization through which practitioners pass as they journey toward complete enlightenment.
- ^{24[24]} nirvana ^{skt} ~ The state of liberation from the sufferings of cyclic existence.
- ^{25[25]} atiyoga ^{skt} ~ The highest of the three inner yogas, the summit of the nine vehicles (yanas), according to the classification of the Nyingmapa.
- ^{26[26]} nine yanas ^{skt} ~ The nine vehicles or levels of accomplishment of the Nyingmapa tradition that represent progressive stages of attainment.
- ^{27[27]} magnetizing ~ One of the four powers used by a practitioner to remove obscurations and obstacles to practice.
- ^{28[28]} mantra ^{skt} ~ A ritual formula used in Tantric practice, literally means “protection of the mind”.
- ^{29[29]} emptiness ~ The absence of true existence of all phenomena.

- ³⁰[³⁰] Vidyadhara ^{skt} ~ An “awareness holder”, one who has realized through profound skillful means awareness of the Buddha-body, speech and mind.
- ³¹[³¹] alaya-vijnana ^{skt} ~ The foundational consciousness, one of the eight types of consciousnesses.
- ³²[³²] dharmadatu ^{skt} ~ The sphere of reality, the ultimate truth.
- ³³[³³] phurba ^{skt} (kilaya) ~ A ritual dagger, usually having three sides, used in wrathful diety practices.
- ³⁴[³⁴] gandharva ^{skt} ~ A smell eater, a category of beings who sustain themselves on smell like the odor of the smoke of burnt eatables.
- ³⁵[³⁵] five elements ~ Earth, water, fire, air, and space.
- ³⁶[³⁶] five aggregates ~ The components of the psychophysical personality, on the basis of which beings commonly impute the false notion of self. They five aggregates are form, feeling, perception, compositional factors and consciousness.
- ³⁷[³⁷] Buddha ^{skt} ~ One who has perfected compassion and wisdom though following the bodhisattva path. Characterized by the development of omniscience, and actualization of the three bodies: complete enjoyment body, truth body and emanation bodies
- ³⁸[³⁸] vajra ^{skt} (dorje) ~ A Tantric symbol that represents the indestructible union of method and wisdom that is the goal of the Tantric practitioner.
- ³⁹[³⁹] mara ^{skt} ~ A demon embodying terrifying or malevolent energies.
- ⁴⁰[⁴⁰] Triple Gem ~ Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Buddha as the teacher of refuge, the doctrine as actual refuge, and the spiritual community as support for practice.
- ⁴¹[⁴¹] empowerment ~ A ritual transfer of power, an initiation. The authorization to hear, study and practice the teachings of the Vajrayana. This takes place in a ceremony that may be extremely elaborate or utterly simple, conducted by a Vajra master.
- ⁴²[⁴²] skillful means ~ The Mahayana practice of adapting the doctrine to the capacities of one’s audience.
- ⁴³[⁴³] two obscurations ~ There are two types of obscurations: those preventing liberation from the cycle of samsaric suffering, called afflictive obscurations, and those preventing omniscience, called the obscurations to the objects of knowledge.
- ⁴⁴[⁴⁴] primordial wisdom ~ The wisdom that has realized the primordial nature of all phenomena.
- ⁴⁵[⁴⁵] samaya ^{skt} ~ A vow or word of honor, a promise, commitment, usually in the context of a Tantric vow or empowerment.
- ⁴⁶[⁴⁶] dharmata ^{skt} ~ The void nature the emptiness aspect of Buddhahood. It can be translated as the true nature of reality.
- ⁴⁷[⁴⁷] karma ^{skt} ~ The doctrine of actions and there causal consequences, the law of cause and effect.
- ⁴⁸[⁴⁸] sadhana ^{skt} ~ Translated as “means of accomplishment” Usually is a complete set of tantric liturgies on the practice of a deity, starting from the lineage prayers to dedication of the merit to all the sentient beings.
- ⁴⁹[⁴⁹] five heinous negative karmas ~ Patricide, matricide, killing an arhat, drawing blood from the body of a Buddha with evil intent, and causing a schism in the sangha.
- ⁵⁰[⁵⁰] stupa ^{skt} ~ Buddhist sacred monument and reliquary, built to represent the enlightened mind.
- ⁵¹[⁵¹] winds, channels and seminal essence ~ Our vital energy or wind, moves the essential fluid of consciousness or seminal essence, also called tige or drop, through the channels, or in Sanskrit, nadis.
- ⁵²[⁵²] karmic wind ~ The vital energy generated by our karma.
- ⁵³[⁵³] mandala ^{skt} offering ~ A Tantric practice in which all precious things are offered to the deities, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in order to develop generosity, the first of the six perfections.

^{54[54]} **siddhi** ^{skt} ~ Spiritual accomplishments which may be mundane or supramundane. Buddhahood is the ultimate siddhi, mundane siddhis include clairvoyance, clairaudience, flying, etc.

^{55[55]} **tulku** ^{Tib} ~ A reincarnate lama. The Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit “nirmanakaya”, used as an honorific term for recognized incarnations of lamas, who are found, usually in childhood, and are brought up to inherit the lineage and often the monastic foundations of their predecessors.