

Sadhana of Jetsun Dolma Ariya Tara of the Acacia Forest

Jetsun Dolma Ariya Tara, in green form, represents the union of wisdom and compassionate activity. In the deepest sense, Tara is the matrix of all life, the womb of becoming, the symbiotic communing of all living beings and life processes. She is the mystery of community-in-action. To realize her essence, is to realize the profound interdependency of all forms of life, and to enter a way of living that embodies great fearlessness, courage, deepening understanding and respect along with a vast array of capabilities for nourishing community in all its forms and manifestations.

Acacia Forest: There are about 1300 species of acacia, growing mostly around the tropics and subtropics. They thrive in a vast range of conditions from the extreme dampness of rainforests through to harsh desert environments. They do well in soils that are poor and disturbed and so make excellent pioneer plants, thus supporting the healing and restoration of damaged land. In his book, *"The Secret Life of Trees"*, Colin Tudge writes; "Acacias are wonderfully integrated socially. Below ground, many, though not all, house nitrogen-fixing bacteria to aid with nourishment. Typically, too, they also form mycorrhizae in association with fungi, which further increases their nutritional efficiency. Many harbor ants, for housekeeping. They employ a variety of insects – flies and beetles but mostly bees – and sometimes birds, to pollinate their flowers; and (one type in Africa) may be pollinated, at least in part, by giraffes. In some species, a variety of animals help to spread their seeds: some have brightly colored arils (fleshy exteriors around their seeds) to attract birds; others increase the attraction by suspending their seeds beneath the pods – in some, the seeds are dispersed by antelopes and elephants, passing through their guts." In addition to the seeds, acacia leaves are food for many animals. Their flowers are sources of pollen and nectar. Their nitrogen fixing enriches the soil environment thus benefitting other creatures. The wood from their trunks and branches is used by humans as timber and fuel. "Thus an acacia tree is a veritable hotel; or perhaps it should be seen as the ultimate networker, with a host of mutually beneficial associations with representatives from just about every other class of organism."

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Preparation

If you wish to cultivate this sadhana of Ariya Tara arrange yourself in a comfortable posture. Then, making friends with your breathing, allow your whole being, your entire body/brain/mind/community, to settle into a place of stillness and vibrant presence.

In this settled space of contemplation reflect on refuge – your deepest sense of groundedness and belonging, then, aspire to awaken for the sake of all beings.

You could enhance these contemplations with the following words, but you should also feel free to express these aspirations and understandings in any other way that feels meaningful.

Reflecting on Refuge

I take refuge in the Buddha;

the natural state of complete authenticity and presence.

I take refuge in the Dharma;

the immeasurable flow of awakening.

I take refuge in the Sangha;

the unfolding community of all life.

May I actively cultivate generosity, wholesome relating, patience,

skilled effort, a continuity of caring and enquiry,
and profound understanding.

May I and all beings awaken speedily

for the sake of everything and everyone.

(3xs)

Reflecting on Bodhicitta

In the timeless presence of Buddha/Mind,

Actively cultivating wisdom and compassion,

For the sake of all living beings,

I am determined to realize the complete enlightenment of
Jetsun Dolma Arya Tara of the Acacia Forest.

Bodhisattva Vow

However innumerable beings are,

I vow to meet them with kindness and interest

However inexhaustible the states of suffering are,

I vow to touch them with patience and love.

However immeasurable the Dharmas are,

I vow to explore them deeply.
However incomparable the mystery of interbeing
I vow to surrender to it freely

From this day forth, with Wisdom and Compassion
as my lamp and staff, I dedicate all my life energies
to the welfare of all beings.

Main Practice

With awareness of your breathing as a support, gradually settle into a place of simplicity, openness, clarity, connection and caring.

OM SVABHAVA SUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SUDDHO HAM (3x)
(In their true nature, all phenomena are intrinsically pure)

As you repeat this mantra, everything within and around you reveals itself as a play of luminosity and spacious openness.

Now, visualize as follows:

In the midst of this spacious openness appears a green-yellow letter PAM. From the PAM emerges a beautiful many petalled lotus of innumerable colors and tones. In the centre of the lotus is an AH, from which materializes a radiant moon cushion, on which you realize the very nature of your mind in the form of a emerald green TAM syllable.

The TAM radiates light of profound understanding, suffusing the entire world, purifying all manifestation. Oneself and all beings realize the attainment of the Holy Mother, Arya Tara.

Again light radiates, this time as an offering to all Buddhas throughout space and time. In return, rays of blessing come back from them and are absorbed into the TAM which blazes like the sun.

From this, you emerge as Arya Tara, with one face and two arms, green in colour, shining like a pile of emeralds. Your right hand is open in the gesture of giving. Your left hand holds to your heart the stem of a blue lotus with a bud that opens near your left ear.

You are smiling. Your eyes are open and soft, like lotus petals. Round your hips is a lower robe made of silk, fine enough for the gods, and veils encircle your shoulders. Your hair is piled on the top of your head and a crest ornament of jewels adorns it. You wear earrings, a necklace, a girdle, beautiful long garlands, and bangles, all made of gold. Captivating, lovely to the heart, and radiating light, you sit with your right leg extended and your left drawn in.

In front is Khandro Hozer Chenpa, the Dakini Brilliant One. She is yellow in colour, holding a Vajra and a twig of the Ashoka Tree.

To your right is Mother Ekanzati. She is red in color, slightly angry, holding a curved blade and a skull cup.

Behind is Maja Chenmo, the Great Peacock Dakini. She is blue in color, carrying a Chawru whisk and peacock feathers.

To your left is the Mother Purifying Poisons, Dukselma. She is white in color, with one hand open, generous, and one holding a snake.

All four are clothed with precious silks and jewels.

Inner Yoga

In your forehead, (*which is Tara's forehead,*) is a sparkling snow white OM letter. In your throat is a ruby red AH. Below your heart is a sapphire blue colored HUM. Within your heart chakra is a moon cushion on which a green TAM syllable is standing. Light from these syllables, illumines the Acacia Forest and the Mountain Potala and then streams forth, illumining uncountable numbers of Dolmas imagined in space before you.

(All the Dolmas look like Tara.)

Now call these Yeshepas (*Wisdom Beings*) to you:

VAJRA SAMAJA

DZA HUM BAM HOH

They descend in a rain of bliss and are absorbed into you.

Again, from the TAM in your heart, light radiates out, invoking the Buddhas of the Five Races and their mandalas and you make the eight offerings to them.

OM VAJRA ARGHAM AH HUM	Water for drinking
OM VAJRA PADYAM AH HUM	Water for washing
OM VAJRA PUSPE AH HUM	Flowers
OM VAJRA DHUPE AH HUM	Incense
OM VAJRA ALOKE AH HUM	Lights
OM VAJRA GHANDE AH HUM	Perfumed water
OM VAJRA NAVIDYE AH HUM	Food
OM VAJRA SHABDHA AH HUM	Sounds

Requesting Empowerment

All beings moving in the realization of thusness, pray grace my life, and the lives of all beings, with deep and meaningful empowerment.

OM SARVA TATHAGATA ABHIKENZA TO MAM

(recite this many times)

Empowerment

As you make this fervent prayer, the Five Buddhas draw near, placing the vase of nectar upon your head.

OM SARVA TATHAGATA ABHISEKATA SAMAYA SHRI YE HUM

As this mantra resounds, the sacred waters of initiation flow down, filling your body, purifying stains. All the inner channels overflow, and from a fountain on the crest of your head, emerges the Buddha Amitabha in Nirmanakaya form, complete with the robes of a mendicant and all the signs of realization.

Mantra Yoga

In your heart (*which is the Holy Mother's*) on a moon cushion is the green TAM letter and round it, the mantra is spinning clockwise.

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SVAHA

From this mantra, light is radiating in all directions, revealing countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout space and time and making offerings to each and every one of them. Their blessings pour forth in a great effusion of light, which gathers back into your heart, bringing long-life, energy, merit, and the enjoyment and wealth of radiant beings and humans.

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SVAHA *(Repeat the mantra many hundreds of times.)*

As Arya Tara, luminosity and love continue to radiate from the mantra garland in your heart, showering blessings on countless beings who, in turn, reveal themselves to be unique and wondrous forms of the Noble Lady. In each of their hearts, mantra garlands circle, radiating light and making offerings to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, who in turn, pour forth blessings, and so continues the great cycling of radiant community, the enlightening activity of Arya Tara.

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SVAHA

Completion Yoga

Finally, the world of Samsara and all beings within it dissolve into luminosity. This radiance coalesces into the form of Arya Tara. Tara dissolves into the TAM in the heart. The TAM dissolves into a bindu. And, like clear water settling into clear water, the bindu resolves into luminous presence, the unimaginable clear light of Mahamudra.

(Rest in this realization for a while)

Finally, you reappear in the form of Jetsun Dolma Arya Tara,
adorned with the bijas: OM, AH, HUM.

Filled with faith and devotion, all the Devas delight in the Jnana Mantra
OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SVAHA

"With TARE you liberate from suffering.
With TUTTARE you liberate from the Eight Fears
With TURE you liberate from sickness,
To you O Mother, I bow down and sing praises."

"In the state of illumination of the Acacia Forest, awe-inspiring is that supremely holy place,
eternally merciful, of the color of emeralds, in woman's form, alluring to the heart,
bejeweled always, Ma! O Dolma, Mother of the Victorious Ones, I bow in devotion before
you and sing your praises."

Sharing the Merit

May my mind and the mind of the Divine Being become inseparable.
May the real Dharmadhatu reveal itself within me.
By this virtue, having realized Arya Tara,
May all living beings reach her Blessed Buddha Field.

SARVA MANGALAM

The sadhana of Jetsun Dolma Ariya Tara was initially written down by the First Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa in the tradition of Acarya Nagarjuna (4th Century). This particular text is essentially derived from the Chigshes Kuntrol collection of the ninth Karmapa, Wanchuk Dorje. Translated from Tibetan into English by Karma Khechop Palmo Gelongma, it was given in Rumtek by H.H. the 16th Karmapa on Aug 15, 1975 to the Ven. Namgyal Rinpoche. Since then, various grammatical and stylistic alterations have been made by Cecilie Kwiat, Bonni Ross, Lama Mark Webber and Tarchin Hearn. This current version was prepared by Tarchin midst autumn leaves falling to the earth through clear Ottawa skies, in September 2010. May it inspire people to realize the blessings of Arya Tara and to benefit the unfolding of true community everywhere.

Notes:

Jewels

Earrings symbolize dana, generosity
Necklace symbolizes sila, wholesome moral conduct
Girdle symbolizes viriya, energy
Long garlands symbolize ksanti, patience
Bangles symbolize samadhi, concentration
The overall beauty represents prajna, wisdom

Offerings:

Water for drinking - spiritual nourishment and cleansing the sense doors
Water for washing the feet – thus revealing the foundation of bodhicitta
Flowers - beauty, the attainment of Buddhahood
Incense - pure moral conduct
Lights - Wisdom
Perfumed water - devotion
Food - abundance
Sounds - the teaching of Dharma
(for more on the eight offerings, download "The Yoga of Eight Offerings"
www.green dharmat reasury.org)

The Five Buddhas:

(The transformations of the five skandhas)
Akshobya, rupa, => mirror-like wisdom
Ratnasambhava, vedana, => wisdom of equality
Amitabha, sanna, => discriminating wisdom
Amoghasiddhi, sankhara, => all accomplishing wisdom
Vairocana, vinnana, => dharmadhatu wisdom

The Eight Fears:

Outwardly, these are traditionally listed as fear of: lions, elephants, fire, snakes, robbers, imprisonment, water and man-eating demons (pisacas).

Inwardly they are as follows:

lion - pride	robbers - wrong views
elephant - delusion	prison - avarice
fire - anger	water (floods) - attachment
snake - envy	demons – skepticism and doubt