



SACRED
CHANTS
TO TARA

MERCEDES BAHLEDA & KLAUS HILLEBRECHT

It is with the utmost love, respect, and deep humility that I wish to thank Klaus Hillebrecht. Without his fierce dedication and limitless generosity this offering would not have been possible.



The Tara practice is perhaps the most prevalent within Tibetan culture, whether reverberating loudly throughout the halls of monasteries or quietly whispered in homes across Tibet, India, and communities across the globe. Bringing to mind the great compassion of Tara it assists in overcoming spiritual and everyday obstacles.



I. TANTRIC TARA MANTRA

The secret sacred name of Tara, the Holy Bride, blossoming tantric lotus of the night sky. An invocation of divine union and bliss.

2. TARA, YOU I BOW TO

(OM TARE TU TARE TURE SOHO)

The Classic Green Tara Mantra with selected translations of the 21 Praises of Tara highlighting the Six Perfections: Giving, Kindness, Joy, Patience, Meditation, and Wisdom. Those attitudes which when practiced perfectly will bring the disciple to live as a Bodhisattva and eventually to the state of total Enlightenment.

This was the first song Klaus and I recorded in the home of a friend who lived along the Rhine River in Germany near the church of Hildegard Von Bingen. I felt this mantra and some of its verses had been waiting (not so patiently) in me for some time to be brought to life musically. Klaus calmly listened to me sing then proceeded to arrange and compose until we had this little mountain of a prayer that climbs and plateaus into a valley of chakstels and bowing down to the Goddess in complete peace.

3. TARA'S HYMN

A modern mantra to Tara inspired by 11th-century poetry to the Virgin Mary

Sometime in the early 2000s, I entered an isolated retreat in the wilderness for 28 days. I brought only prayers and songs to the Virgin Mary from the 11th century and chanted them daily. Later when I met with Klaus we wrote the verses to this Hymn inspired by the poetry I had studied at that time. We send this prayer out in honor of the feminine divine in all faiths.

4. WHITE TARA MANTRA

Mantra for healing and vitality, White Tara, the Goddess of purity and compassion who surrounds the practitioners and those they pray for with protection in the form of white light.

5. THE 21 PRAISES OF TARA

There are 21 powerful manifestations of the Goddess Tara. In 1999 I was sent on solitary Tara retreat by my teacher. I did my retreat at the Holy Trinity Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Saint David, Arizona. I had been instructed to chant the 21 praises of Tara 108 times a day in Tibetan. This ended up taking about 8-9 hours a day. Some days I sat alone in the chapel chanting and some days I sat in meditation and slowly my heart and mind and dreams were lifted by these prayers. At the time I did not understand Tibetan and was not aware of what I was saying, but somehow there was a power in the verses and they left me deeply inspired and clear.

At the end of the retreat, I vowed to one day understand the verses, translate them and put them to music. That was almost 20 years ago and this song is the fruition of that intention. I am deeply grateful to Eric Brinkman aka Lobsang Nyingpo who provided us with a new translation of the 21 verses which Klaus and I adapted and restructured for the musical interpretation of the verses which you hear in this recording.

6. THE TARA GURU CHANT

(OM AH HUNG ARYA MAHA DROLMA)

Om! I bow down to the Great Arya Tara

A Tibetan homage to the ultimate Guru, the enlightened woman. She is often called Drolma, the mighty protector and female Buddha who takes those who follow her beyond suffering by her infinite wisdom. Arya, the seer of The Four Noble Truths; Life is suffering, there is a cause to this suffering, there is an end to this suffering, there is a path to the end of this suffering. Om Ah Hung.

7. GREEN TARA MANTRA

The Green Tara mantra with English verses inspired by both modern translations of Tara's Sadhana and prayers to The Virgin Mary.

Nicknamed "The Happy Tara song" in the recording studio because whenever we played it back everyone started to laugh then dance.

8. TARA SADHANA

You could say Tara is the female Buddha of the Tibetan Buddhist culture or an emanation of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas combined. But the essence of her compassion, the main principle of Tara is fearlessness and courage.

Jetsunma: Praise and honor to the noble Queen. The one who is both wise and ethical. The good and glorious learned woman, whose seat of power fails to rock her steadfast moral compass.

This arrangement features the Tibetan Buddhist nuns of Dolma Ling Nunnery chanting the ritual Tara Sadhana (her long morning prayer) accompanied by tantric instruments. It was recorded in India at their temple by Eva Natanya during her doctoral field research, with special thanks to the Tibetan Nuns Project. tnp.org

VOCALS: Mercedes Bahleda, Klaus Hillebrecht, Emily Waters

TABLA & PERCUSSION: Will Duncan

GUITAR, PIANO, KEYBOARD: Klaus Hillebrecht

TAMBORA & HARMONIUM: Mercedes Bahleda

MUSICAL COMPOSITION: Klaus Hillebrecht

ENGINEERING: Klaus Hillebrecht at Hillebrecht Studios
in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

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Om Tare Tutare Ture So Ha!