

WHITE TARA PROTECTION SHIELDS MEDITATION

You can call on Tara for protection. In the beautiful meditation that follows, you learn to surround yourself with egg-shaped shields of colored light. Each shield protects you from external harm, strengthens an important internal quality, and helps you develop the ability to help and shield others, as Tara and the other enlightened beings do. Though the colors of the shields are the same as those you worked with in the meditation on balancing the elements, here their meaning is slightly different. As you will see, each color represents a wisdom quality of enlightened mind – peace, abundance, power, precision, and activity – and helps you develop these qualities for yourself and to aid others. After generating the lights shields, you check the clarity and stability of your visualization by ‘visiting’ each of the shields. Doing so helps build your concentration.

THE CRYSTAL WHITE SHIELD FOR CLARITY AND PEACE

Sit comfortably with your back upright. Pay attention to your breathing in and out, following the natural rhythm. Now visualize Tara in front of you with her wonderful attributes and take refuge: *I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and Tara
May I reach enlightenment for the benefit of all.*

Continue Tara’s prayer up to the point of the mantra recitation.

As you recite her mantra, you will visualize that from Tara’s heart, crystal white light starts to radiate. The light enters you and fills your body completely. As it does, it clears all physical illnesses and energy blockages and drives away all negative states of mind and troubling emotions. All of your internal difficulties and problems disappear, as the rising sun dispels the darkness. You become clear and peaceful.

Then the white light that is still streaming from Tara’s body starts to pour from your body as well. With you and Tara at the center, this white light begins to form an enormous egg-shaped white shield that surrounds you both completely at a distance of six body lengths. Though the shield is shaped like an egg, it is not at all fragile. It is very strong and very stable. By creating this shield, you begin to develop the capability to bring clarity and peace to others.

Now recite the mantra OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA. You may wish to pause the recording and resume listening.

THE GOLDEN YELLOW SHIELD FOR INCREASE AND ABUNDANCE

Now, when you continue to say Tara's mantra, you will see that the white light streaming from her into you takes on a buttery glow, until it becomes a yellow-orange color, almost like liquid gold. The crystal white light has cleared and pacified you. Now the golden yellow light can do its work of rejuvenating you.

As the golden light fills your body, it brings with it increase and abundance. It rejuvenates your strength and your life energy and builds the vitality you need to accomplish your goals, both material and spiritual. It helps you to appreciate the richness of your life and to understand the way things really are. And it helps you to apply these insights to the choices you make every day.

The golden light now streams from you and from Tara. It passes through the crystal white shield, and six body lengths further out from that, it forms a completely new golden yellow shield. Creating this shield helps you to be more open-handed and more generous with what you have.

Now recite the mantra OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA. You may wish to pause the recording and resume listening.

THE CORAL RED SHIELD FOR POWER AND CAPABILITY

Now, in your mind's eye, you see both you and Tara surrounded by a crystalline white shield and, outside of that, a golden yellow shield. Both of these shields are sturdy and resilient. Even a hurricane could not destroy them. As you continue to say Tara's mantra, you see that the golden light streaming from Tara to you has started to pick up a reddish-orange color, like the color of radiant coral.

This red-orange light carries the energy of power – not power over others, such as political power or military power, but rather power in the sense of passion and capability. Whether what you want to do is resolve a thorny life problem, complete a project, or overcome some setback or obstacle, the red-orange light fills your body with the feeling “I can do that!” It makes you capable of helping yourself in whatever way you need – to end an addiction, take steps to improve a troubled relationship, or carve out more time in your busy day to relax or to meditate.

Now the red-orange light of power starts to stream from your body as well. In your visualization, you see the light pass through the white shield and the yellow shield, and

six body lengths further out, form an egg-shaped reddish-orange shield. Creating this shield gives you the capability of using your passion and your power to help others.

Now recite the mantra OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA while holding the visualization. You may wish to pause the recording and resume listening.

THE SAPPHIRE BLUE SHIELD FOR SHARPNESS AND PRECISION

You generate the blue shield using the same method. As Tara's mantra continues under your breath, you visualize yourself and Tara in the center of the three concentric shields – the white shield of peace and clarity, the yellow shield of increase and abundance, and the red shield of power and capability.

Now you see that the fiery red light coming from Tara has blue tips, as flames sometimes do. Soon, the light changes to a jewel-like sapphire blue. The energy of this light is very sharp and precise. As it fills your body, it disciplines your mind and gives you a clear perspective, so that you know exactly what's OK for you and what isn't.

If someone asks you to do something and you don't want to do it, the blue light helps you say "no" clearly and make that "no" stick.

Now the sapphire blue light starts to pour from you as well. Traveling out from your body and from Tara's, it passes through the white shield, the yellow shield, and the red shield, and six body lengths further out, creates a blue shield, made of light, but strong and stable like the others. Visualizing this shield gives you the ability to use your sharp mind to help others see alternatives and resolve conflicts.

Now recite the mantra OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA while holding the visualization. You may wish to pause the recording and resume listening.

THE EMERALD SHIELD FOR MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES

Take a moment to see yourself in your mind's eye. You and the beautiful Tara are sitting in the midst of four jewel-like spheres of protection. Not only that, but you are filled with peace and clarity, increase and abundance, power and passion, and sharpness and wrathful precision.

Perhaps you are questioning whether any of this is real. You may be saying to yourself, "I've just imagined all of this. Nothing has really changed." If so, remind

yourself that everything you think and everything you do has consequences. Buddhists call this cause and effect system *karma*. Every time you imagine yourself having Tara's great qualities, you create the karmic causes to have them for real. Someday you will. As you'll see if you practice this meditation faithfully, positive changes will happen, and you'll become more like Tara every day.

Now see that the light coming from Tara starts to turn from blue to emerald green. As it fills your body, you gain the power of activity – the ability to accomplish anything you want. If your life is like most, you're probably juggling too many activities: a job or school, a relationship or partner, friends and interests, meals to cook and a home to take care of, kids or pets or both, and trying in the midst of that to have a spiritual life and time to relax. The emerald green light gives you the ability to multitask – to do the million things that make up your life. As the light pours from your body and passes through the white, yellow, red, and blue shields to create a green shield, you gain the wisdom of accomplishment, so that you are able to do things to help others as well.

Now recite the mantra OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA while holding the visualization. You may wish to pause the recording and resume listening.

THE RUSTY SHIELD FOR STABILITY

As a final step, you visualize a rust-colored shield. Its job is to make the entire set of concentric shields stable. First, review what you are stabilizing. You are sitting as you see yourself. In front of you is Tara, with all her wonderful qualities. Surrounding you both at a distance of six body lengths is an enormous crystal white shield, made light but strong and stable. Six body lengths further out is an even larger golden yellow shield. The shields are egg-shaped, so that you are completely encircled by them. Six body lengths outside the yellow shield is a coral red shield. At the same distance outside that is a sapphire blue shield, and outside of that, an emerald green shield. The measure of six body lengths between the shields is to give you the sense that the set of concentric shields is enormous.

Now, let's add one more detail. The spaces between the light shields are completely filled with utpala flowers – the same kind of flower that Tara holds in her left hand. As you recall, the utpala symbolizes your quest for enlightenment – permanent freedom from suffering. Though these look like ordinary flowers, the utpalas between the shields are actually powerful weapons. If something dangerous tries to approach you, it will be cut to bits by the flowers' deadly thorns.

You generate the rust colored shield using the same method. As you look at Tara and say her mantra, you see that the green light coming from her begins to pick up some yellow, until it becomes a rusty color. As the light fills your body, any insights and spiritual accomplishments you have gained by doing this meditation become completely stable. The light streams from you and passes through each of the shields – the white, the yellow, the red, the blue, and the green – and at a distance of six body lengths further, forms a rust colored shield that gives you the ability to bring stability to others.

Now recite the mantra OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA while holding the visualization. You may wish to pause the recording and resume listening.

You also stabilize your spiritual accomplishments by dedicating them to an important goal. The last verse of the Prayer to the Noble Tara serves this purpose. As you say the words, you are guaranteeing that the positive energy – the “virtue” or good karma – of having engaged in this meditation will create the causes for you to become more like Tara and for everyone else in the world, without a single exception, to attain a similar state of permanent happiness.