

*This talk was given by the Venerable Bokar Rinpoche, successor and heart son of the Lord of Refuge Kalu Rinpoche in November 1991. He and Khenpo Donyo, his primary disciple, had just been welcomed to Maui, Hawaii with an offering of sacred dance by Prema Dasara and some of her Maui students. Rinpoche's talk was translated from the Tibetan by Ngudrup Tsering and has been lightly edited.*

This is Bokar Rinpoche's first tour of America. All of you receiving him in this way brings such a sense of joy. Rinpoche would like to express his appreciation for welcoming him in this way.

The dances led by Prema: the Offering Goddess Dance, the Supplication to Guru Padmasambhava and particularly the Praises to the 21 Taras are very significant. From the point of view of spirituality and the Dharma, it is a very healthy, a very special way of expressing artistic talents. It creates auspicious conditions to have this evening's teaching preceded by such an auspicious way of creating the environment, a sense of healthy outlook for all of us. Rinpoche feels it is very clarifying and auspicious. He would like to thank Prema and all for graciously offering these dances.

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas express their enlightened activities in manifold ways. Incomparable of all the deities, Tara is the embodiment of the enlightened activities of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Tara, as an enlightened being, vowed to experience the awakened state of mind in the feminine form. She vowed to continually manifest in the feminine form, inspiring, benefiting and liberating beings. The importance and benefit of the practice of Tara, the integration, the inspiration of bringing her into one's life as practice is emphasized in many of the Buddhist treatises, texts and teachings.

Many enlightened practitioners both in India and later in Tibet practiced Tara as their principal deity of practice. As the embodiment of enlightened activity she is very immediate and very swift in clarifying, in subjugating various obstacles in our lives including natural calamities, epidemics, war and all kinds of danger, harm and fear. This is particularly valuable in the world situation in the times we live in. Any way we can communicate the inspiration and qualities of Tara is certainly a source of benefit.

Bokar Rinpoche and Khenpo do Tara practice as their main and daily practice. Thus this evening to witness these sincere aspirations of the dancers encouraging all of us to aspire to the activity of Tara is of ultimate significance. Rinpoche thoroughly appreciates such significant display.

Rinpoche personally feels that because of the very essential nature of Tara those with a genuine heart who express the enlightened qualities and activities of Tara through dance can be so inspired that obstacles, hindrances in their own personal lives can be clarified, giving rise to longevity as well as from an ultimate point of view becoming endowed with the unconditioned wisdom inspiration of Tara.

This is not just a regular common performance. Those of us who are witnessing such activity are thus inspired by the manifold qualities of Tara. We allow our own rampant upheaval of conflicting emotions to subside. There is at least temporary and momentary clarification from confused preoccupations. At the same time there is the possibility of clarifying hindrances particularly in the path of pursuing spirituality in one's own life.

Essentially we need to develop experience of the unconditioned stability and harmony of mind, the source of well being and wisdom. The activities of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas manifest in varieties of inconceivable ways in accordance with the relative propensity and capabilities of beings. They fulfill the various mental modes and needs of beings.

In the traditions of the Buddha dharma the inspiration of the enlightened activities of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have become manifest through various ritual dances and performances. But in our present Tibetan tradition there isn't ritual dance in connection with the praises of the 21 Taras.

Prema has a very rich background in Indian ritual and temple dances as well as Nepalese Buddhist ritual dance. She has received guidance and instructions from many teachers and lamas about the symbols and meaning of vajrayana rituals. Thus she has created a vehicle in a very whole hearted way, in a complete way, communicating the inspiration and enlightened activities of such an important deity as Tara. This is a very healthy contribution.