

## *Message to the Ensenada Sangha Regarding the Tara Statue*

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

January 19, 2018

*Rinpoche recently received wonderful reports from Ignacio, Loreto, and Susy that the Ensenada Tara Statue is well cared for and is used and appreciated by both Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. Rinpoche is extremely pleased and sends this message to all the Buddhists of Ensenada and all surrounding regions of Mexico:*

I hear that everyone is enjoying the Tara statue and helping to care for it. Thank you! This is wonderful. A statue like this is nothing small, simple, or limited. This statue represents the enlightened body, speech, and mind of all the buddhas. That means it embodies limitless compassion, limitless wisdom, limitless generosity, limitless patience, limitless discipline, and so forth. Even just to see the statue creates a connection so that one will be liberated from samsara. This is what is meant by "liberation through seeing." The statue is liberation through seeing, touching, and all the five senses. It benefits not only a few people in Ensenada, but the entire country of Mexico! It blesses the land, the wind that moves across it, and all beings who connect to it in any way, even the tiniest insects.

Every attribute of the statue has a symbolic meaning, to remind us of enlightened qualities. For example, Tara's right hand is in the gesture of generosity. Her left hand is in the gesture of giving protection from fear. Her one face symbolizes the single nature of phenomena, and her two arms symbolize skillful means and wisdom. Her white color symbolizes purity. It is very important to learn more about Tara's qualities. You can read books or ask the teachers who come. Then, every time you see the statue, you will connect with those qualities until slowly, slowly they will awaken your own qualities too.

As you can see, this statue is extremely special and not ordinary in any way. It benefits countless beings. Therefore, to care for this statue is to care for the benefit of countless beings. To paint or repair the statue, to make the environment around it beautiful and pleasing, to protect the statue from the elements or other causes of harm, or to make donations to support the statue, all of these actions create vast merit and benefit for yourself and others. Obviously, you understand this, because everyone is working so hard to support the statue. It sounds like there is a worker living there now in order to protect the statue and to do maintenance. I also hear that there are many efforts to create a garden and make the surroundings beautiful. This is all wonderful! The surroundings don't have to be particularly Buddhist. They can be secular, but the main thing is that they are clean, tidy, and well cared for, so that they help to inspire faith, happiness, and a sense of ease in those who see them.

It sounds like there are yoga and meditation classes happening at the statue, and that the sangha soon plans to establish a monthly Riwo Sangchod practice there. As much as we can use the statue as a support for prostration, circumambulation, offering, meditation, and all virtuous actions, that much we are taking advantage of our opportunity. Also, the Riwo Sangchod practice is quite high and powerful; it's not just okey dokey. It is about making limitless

offerings to the buddhas and all sentient beings. In fact, there are countless buddhas everywhere who can receive the offering of the blessed smoke. Even filling your body, there are countless, countless buddhas who receive the smoke offering and are joyful, pleased, and inspired. When they are pleased, this clears away the sickness, negative energy, and impurities from your body and makes your mind clear and happy. In the same way, the environment is filled with buddhas who receive the offering, are pleased, and generate strong blessings and positive energy, while clearing away pollution, impurities, and bad energies. In fact, there are buddhas everywhere, receiving the offering! The smoke is wisdom incense, compassion incense, generosity incense, and it can heal the sufferings of all beings. What do we need beyond that?

For the future, I encourage everybody to work together to maintain the statue, just as it is now, and also to increase its ornaments, the beauty of its surroundings, and ease of use, access, and security, so that it can be well protected. We say we are protecting the statue but actually we are protecting other beings from harming the statue, because it is such heavy negative karma to perform even a small action to harm this symbol of enlightened body, speech, and mind.

I have not been able to visit the statue for many years because I am a weak old man, so you know what it needs better than I do. Please use all of your smarts and creative energy to take care of it! I think it might be very beneficial to put up a fence around the statue. This is something I have mentioned to Susy, so she may already have a plan for this. Everyone can help her. Also, I hear that a yearly budget is being created which will cover operating expenses such as maintenance, care, and projects. I just wanted to encourage all of you Buddhists to learn about the budget and make a commitment to raise the needed money, not just for this year but on an annual basis, so that the statue will be secure and well cared for on into the future.

You should relate to the statue like your own house, your own child, or your own body. You don't forget to feed your body, do you? Just accidentally forget to have lunch or dinner? Of course not. You don't think, "Oh, feeding my body, that's someone else's job, not mine!" In the same way, we Buddhists should always be careful to watch over all statues, stupas, temples, books, dharma centers, and other supports, and always provide everything that is needed. If the Buddhists don't do it, who will? And with our enthusiasm and openness, we can encourage the entire community of Ensenada to help and support as well, no matter their religion. Tara doesn't care what your religion is! Tara cares about the temporary and ultimate happiness of beings!

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatrul*

*This material is being made available as a free download by Vimala Treasures. ©2018 Vimala*