
Title of Object

Green Tara

Photo of Object (optional)



Object Information

Artist: Unknown

Culture: Tibetan

Date of Object: 14th-15th century

Country: Tibet

Accession Number: 99.124.2

File Created: 5/2/2016

Material/Medium: Bronze with turquoise and gold

Author of File: Kay Quinn

Department: Chinese, South and Southeast Asian Art

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Last Updated/Reviewed: 6/7/2016

Tour Topics

Group 3 tour, ancient culture, beauty, fashion/dress, fertility, gods/goddesses, power/status, ritual/ceremony, spirituality/sacred, symbolism, women, Buddhism

Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

1. Take a moment to look at her. What do you most notice or wonder about the Green Tara?

2. The Green Tara has a mantra which is the second most common mantra heard in Tibet.

"Om Tare Tuttare Ture Svaha" - iPad IMAGE [pronunciation: om ta-ray too-ta-ray too-ray sva-ha]

There are numerous interpretations, such as

- Figuratively: Hail Tara! ... but with a play on her name three times...the first for worldly protection Tare, then individual liberation/nirvana Tuttare, then for universal salvation Ture

- Literally: Om Tare [Tara] Tuttare [I beg you] Ture [Oh swift one] Svaha [Hail].

It may be said or sung.

If you'd like, think of an obstacle you are trying to overcome and say the mantra with me... or just listen:

"Om Tare Tuttare Ture Svaha". (3 times)

May all your obstacles be overcome.

Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)

Subject Matter

Green Tara is one of the most revered female bodhisattvas, and is worshipped for the ability to overcome obstacles. She is associated with the cosmic Buddha Amoghasiddhi, and transmits his wisdom to the worshipper.

Although the lower legs are missing, the bejeweled goddess sits in the posture of relaxation, wherein the left leg would have rested parallel to the base while the right leg was pendant. Her right hand, opened in the "gift bestowing" gesture, originally rested on her right knee. The deity's left hand once held the stem of a lotus which blossomed at her shoulder.

Medium and Technique

Remarkable for its size and age, most of this statue is made from separate pieces of hammered sheet copper (repoussé technique: hammered into relief from the reverse side) fastened together with rivets. Certain features like the crown, hands, and earrings are cast bronze.

Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)

Tibet practiced Tantric Buddhism (also called Vajrayana or Esoteric Buddhism), a combination of Hinduism (India) and Buddhism (China).

Over the following centuries there emerged a new form of Buddhism, which involved an expanding pantheon and more elaborate rituals. This later Buddhism introduced the concept of heavenly bodhisattvas as well as goddesses, of whom the most popular was Tara. In Nepal and Tibet, where exquisite metal images and paintings were produced, an entire set of new divinities were created and portrayed in both sculpture and painted scrolls. Ferocious deities were introduced in the role of protectors of Buddhism and its believers. Images of a more esoteric nature, depicting god and goddess in embrace, were produced to demonstrate the metaphysical concept that salvation resulted from the union of wisdom (female) and compassion (male). Buddhism had traveled a long way from its simple beginnings.

From the collections of the Met Museum: Tara, the supreme Buddhist saviouress, grants boons to devotees with her outstretched lower hand delicately clasping a flower bud. A lotus in full bloom adorns her shoulder. She is richly bejeweled, her openwork diadem inset with turquoise and semiprecious stones. In Vajrayana Buddhism, Tara is often presented as the spiritual counterpart to Avalokiteshvara and shares with him a premier role in Tibet as a compassionate protectress. Tara appears in many forms, of which Sitatara, the White Tara, who displays a lotus (padma), was the most popular. It is likely Sitatara who is represented here, the embodiment of perfected wisdom and wish-fulfilling granter of boons.

- <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/50799>

From the Met Museum: The goddess Tara epitomizes the amalgamation of older mother-goddess cults and Buddhism. Her concept evolved in India and by the Gupta period, she had become the most important goddess in Buddhism. Tara is understood primarily as a savior and is, therefore, the female counterpart of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, with whom she is often portrayed. Tara is dressed in a long, floral-printed dhoti, and a shawl is draped over her left shoulder. She is richly adorned and wears a crown, earrings, necklaces, armbands, wide cuffs, a belt, and anklets. A lotus stalk is attached to her left arm in a manner first found in Nepal after the twelfth century. The elongated proportions of the figure and elaboration of the jewelry date the sculpture to the fourteenth century. The fact that the face has been painted with gold indicates that the bronze was once worshipped in Tibet.

- <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/66.179/>

What is Tara?

Within Tibetan Buddhism Tārā is regarded as a Bodhisattva of compassion and action. She is the female aspect of Avalokiteśvara and in some origin stories she comes from his tears:

Then at last Avalokiteshvara arrived at the summit of Marpori, the 'Red Hill', in Lhasa. Gazing out, he perceived that the lake on Otang, the 'Plain of Milk', resembled the Hell of Ceaseless Torment. Myriads of beings were undergoing the agonies of boiling, burning, hunger, thirst, yet they never perished, but let forth hideous cries of anguish all the while. When Avalokiteshvara saw this, tears sprang to his eyes. A teardrop from his right eye fell to the plain and became the reverend Bhrikuti, who declared: "Son of your race! As you are striving for the sake of sentient beings in the Land of Snows, intercede in their suffering, and I shall be your companion in this endeavour!" Bhrikuti was then reabsorbed into Avalokiteshvara's right eye, and was reborn in a later life as the Nepalese princess Tritsun. A teardrop from his left eye fell upon the plain and became the reverend Tara. She also declared, "Son of your race! As you are striving for the sake of sentient beings in the Land of Snows, intercede in their suffering, and I shall be your companion in this endeavour!" Tara was also reabsorbed into Avalokiteshvara's left eye, and was reborn in a later life as the Chinese princess Kongjo (Princess Wencheng).[2]

Tārā is also known as a saviouress, as a heavenly deity who hears the cries of beings experiencing misery in saṃsāra.

Whether the Tārā figure originated as a Buddhist or Hindu goddess is unclear and remains a source of inquiry among scholars. Mallar Ghosh believes her to have originated as a form of the goddess Durga in the Hindu Puranas.[3] Today, she is worshipped both in Buddhism and in Shaktism as one of the ten Mahavidyas. It may be true that goddesses entered Buddhism from Shaktism (i.e. the worship of local or folk goddesses prior to the more institutionalized Hinduism which had developed by the early medieval period (i.e. Middle kingdoms of India). Possibly the oldest text to mention a Buddhist goddess is the Prajnaparamita Sutra (translated into Chinese from the original Sanskrit c. 2nd century CE), around the time that Mahayana was becoming the dominant school of thought in Indian and Chinese Buddhism.[dubious – discuss] Thus, it would seem that the feminine principle makes its first appearance in Buddhism as the goddess who personified prajnaparamita.[4]

The Mantra of Tārā

OM TĀRE TUTTĀRE TURE SVAHĀ

in the Lañja variant of Ranjana and Tibetan alphabets.

Tārā came to be seen as an expression of the compassion of perfected wisdom only later, with her earliest textual reference being the Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa (c. 5th–8th centuries CE).[5] The earliest, solidly identifiable image of Tārā is most likely that which is still found today at cave 6 within the rock-cut Buddhist monastic complex of the Ellora Caves in Maharashtra (c. 7th century CE), with her worship being well established by the onset of the Pala Empire in Eastern India (8th century CE).[6]

Tārā became a very popular Vajrayana deity with the rise of Tantra in 8th-century Pala and, with the movement of Indian Buddhism into Tibet through Padmasambhava, the worship and practices of Tārā became incorporated into Tibetan Buddhism as well.[4][7] She eventually came to be considered the "Mother of all Buddhas," which usually refers to the enlightened wisdom of the Buddhas, while simultaneously echoing the ancient concept of the Mother Goddess in India.

Independent of whether she is classified as a deity, a Buddha, or a bodhisattva, Tārā remains very popular in Tibet (and Tibetan communities in exile in Northern India), Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan, and is worshiped in a majority of Buddhist communities throughout the world (see also Guanyin, the female aspect of Avalokitesvara in Chinese Buddhism).

Today, Green Tara and White Tara are probably the most popular representations of Tara. Green Tara (Khadiravani) is usually associated with protection from fear and the following eight obscurations: lions (= pride), wild elephants (= delusion/ignorance), fires (= hatred and anger), snakes (= jealousy), bandits and thieves (= wrong views, including fanatical views), bondage (= avarice and miserliness), floods (= desire and attachment), and evil spirits and demons (= deluded doubts). As one of the three deities of long life, White Tara (Sarasvati) is associated with longevity. White Tara counteracts illness and thereby helps to bring about a long life. She embodies the motivation that is compassion and is said to be as white and radiant as the moon.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tara_\(Buddhism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tara_(Buddhism))

In Buddhism, Tara (Sanskrit, "star") is a Buddhist savior-goddess especially popular in Tibet, Nepal and Mongolia. In Tibet, where Tara is the most important deity, her name is Sgrol-ma, meaning "she who saves." The mantra of Tara (om tare tuttare ture svaha) is the second most common mantra heard in Tibet, after the mantra of Chenrezi (also Avalokiteshvara), which is "om mani padme hum". It is not clearly translated but implies purifications to achieve samsara/nirvana:

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Om_mani_padme_hum

Tibetan Buddhist deities may often assume different roles and be drawn, sculpted and visualised differently according to these roles, for example, Green Tara and White Tara which are but two of many different aspects of Tara.

The position of the feet/legs may also have a specific meaning such as in Green Tara who is typically depicted as seated partly cross-legged but with one leg down symbolising "immersion within in the absolute, in meditation" and readiness to step forth and help sentient beings by "engagement without in the world through compassion".[1]

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_symbolism

One of the most beloved deities in Himalayan and Inner Asian Buddhist traditions, Tara, known as the “saviouress,” is often appealed to through the recitation of her invocation (mantra), known to lay and religious persons alike. It is said that reciting this mantra with devotion many times strengthens one’s connection to this female deity, solicits her protection, and accumulates merit.

Source: <http://rubinmuseum.org/collection/artwork/green-tara-2005-16-30>

Current Mia Label Information (optional)

Green Tara is one of the most revered female bodhisattvas, and is worshipped for the ability to overcome obstacles. She is associated with the cosmic Buddha Amoghasiddhi, and transmits his wisdom to the worshipper. Remarkable for its size and age, most of this statue is made from separate pieces of hammered sheet copper (repoussé technique) fastened together with rivets. Certain features like the crown, hands, and earrings are cast bronze. Although the lower legs are missing, the bejeweled goddess sits in the posture of relaxation, wherein the left leg would have rested parallel to the base while the right leg was pendant. Her right hand, opened in the "gift bestowing" gesture, originally rested on her right knee. The deity's left hand once held the stem of a lotus which blossomed at her shoulder.

Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

See above for sources of information. For additional prop ideas/photos:

1) iPad Image: Green Tara with legs and lotus flower from Rubin Museum of Art in NYC

<http://rubinmuseum.org/collection/artwork/green-tara-2005-16-30>



2) iPad Image: Avalokiteśvara from Mia Collection (currently G200)

<http://collections.artsmia.org/art/5808/the-bodhisattva-avalokitesvara-china>



3) iPad Image: Green Tara Mantra



**Om Täre
Tüttäre Türe
Svähä**