



TARA MANDALA[®]
International Buddhist Community

WELCOME TO TARA MANDALA

Here You Are!

A Guide for Your Time at Tara Mandala

This land has been holding practitioners for many years. This guide is a quiet introduction to the place, the Temple, and the people you'll share it with.

[Code of Conduct](#) 



The Path to the Temple

A LITTLE LANGUAGE FOR THE JOURNEY

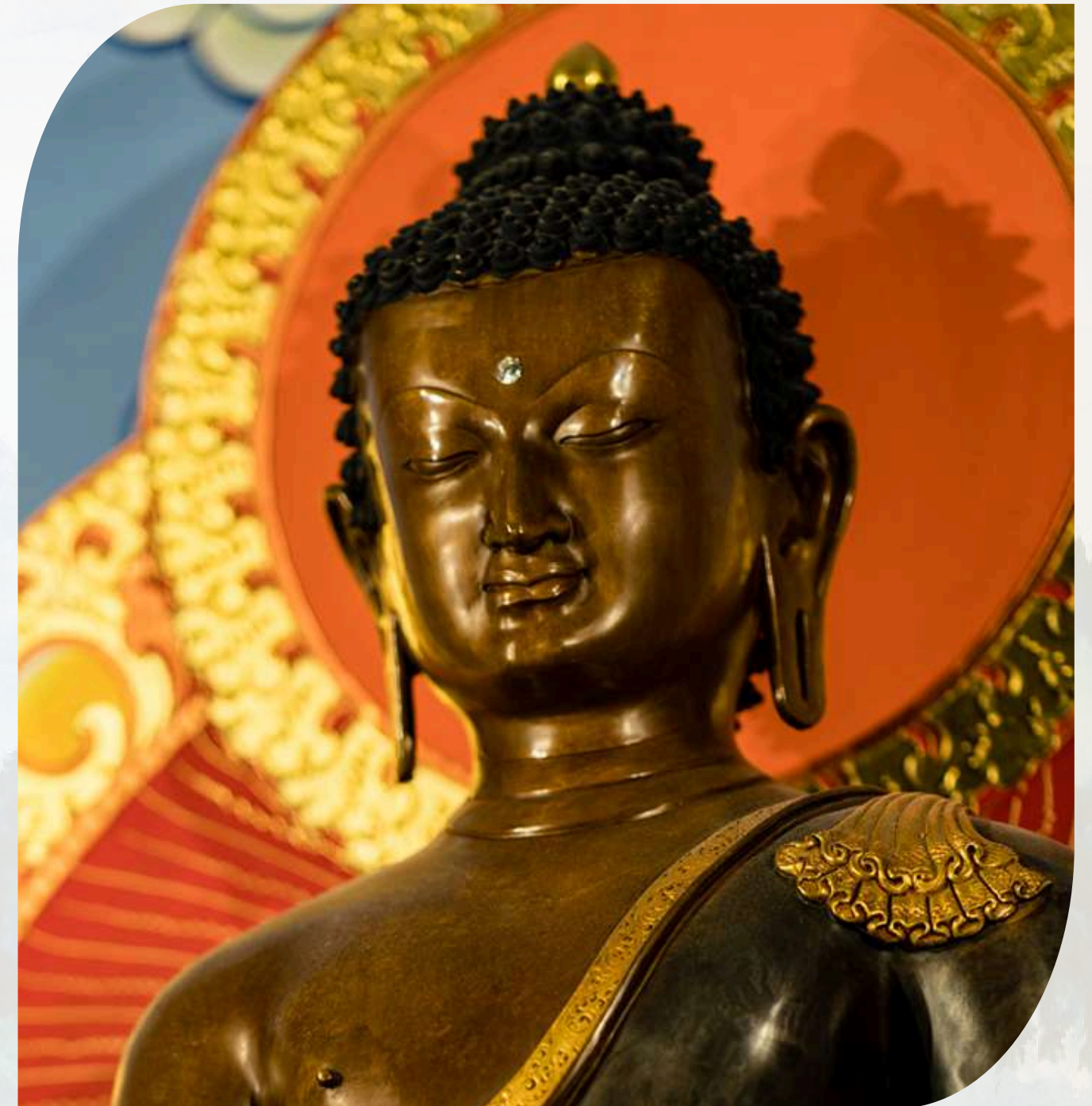
The Three Jewels:

The foundation of the Buddhist path:

Buddha — the one who awakened

Dharma — the path of awakening

Sangha — the community that brings the teachings to life



Statue of the Buddha at Tara Mandala

Bodhichitta: (*boh-dee-CHIT-tah*)

means awakened heart-mind.

At the beginning of each session, we set the intention that our practice benefits all beings—without exception. This may be silent or spoken, often accompanied by a simple hand gesture, a symbol of one-pointed awareness and offering to all beings.



Mudra (hand gesture) offered as we give rise to Bodhichitta

Karma Yoga

is meditation in action.

Through simple tasks—cooking, cleaning, gardening—we practice awareness and care. Each participant will have the opportunity to engage in a Karma Yoga activity during the retreat.



Practicing Karma Yoga in the Kitchen

TARA MANDALA HAS A RICH HISTORY

Blessing of the Land

While in Manali, India in 1972, Lama Tsultrim Allione had a vision. She saw the creation of a western retreat center where meditation could be practiced as it had in Tibet. She also envisioned that this center would explore the interface between Western psychology and Buddhism.

In 1993, following this vision, she and her husband David Petit found the sacred land for the retreat center: 700 acres of rolling hills, flowering meadows and forests in southwest Colorado. What is now Tara Mandala sits on the ancestral lands of the Ute and Pueblo peoples of the San Juan Mountains.

Honoring the land and the people who had lived on it and cared for it for generations, Lama Tsultrim and her community asked permission from the Elders of the Ute Nation to use their land as a refuge of Tibetan Buddhism in the West.

In the snowy days of early December 1993, with eagles soaring overhead, Richard Running Deer and Cheyenne West connected with the spirits of the Earth—an important part of both indigenous and Tibetan Buddhist tradition—in a moving ceremony to bless the land as the new home of Tara Mandala.



Land Blessing

[Watch Video](#) 

TEMPLE ETIQUETTE & MEANING



Shoes: Please leave shoes outside the door.



Phones: Turn off and put away before entering.



Entering: Step in quietly, you can place your hands at your heart or make a small bow in recognition of entering sacred space.



Dharma Materials: Keep texts and images off the floor. Do not step over them or practice tables.



Posture: Sit comfortably, avoiding pointing the soles of your feet toward the teacher or altar. Chairs and cushions are available.



Noble Silence: At certain times, we observe noble silence. This is not simply refraining from speech—it is creating space for the mind and heart to settle.

As Lama reminds us, “silence is not whispering.”



Bowing & Prostrations: Bowing is a small gesture of deep meaning. When we bow, we allow the thinking mind to soften and the heart’s natural kindness to arise. Prostrations are a practice in which one bows fully to the ground as an offering to the Three Jewels, dissolving pride and ego while accumulating merit.

You are welcome to join if moved, though there is no expectation. Even a small bow, offered with presence, is complete.

In these small gestures, we create a shared space of respect, presence, and quiet joy.

At the end of a retreat, it is customary to offer:

Khata (*ceremonial scarf*) – a symbol of gratitude and openness, the white color symbolizes the unstained nature of mind.

Dana (*offering*) – an expression of generosity supporting the teachings.

Traditionally, *dana* offerings are given in the form of money, but they may also be physical gifts, flowers, or something meaningful offered freely from the heart. Both are entirely optional and warmly appreciated. You are welcome to follow your own ideas or ask others for guidance or inspiration.



Traditional Khata Offering

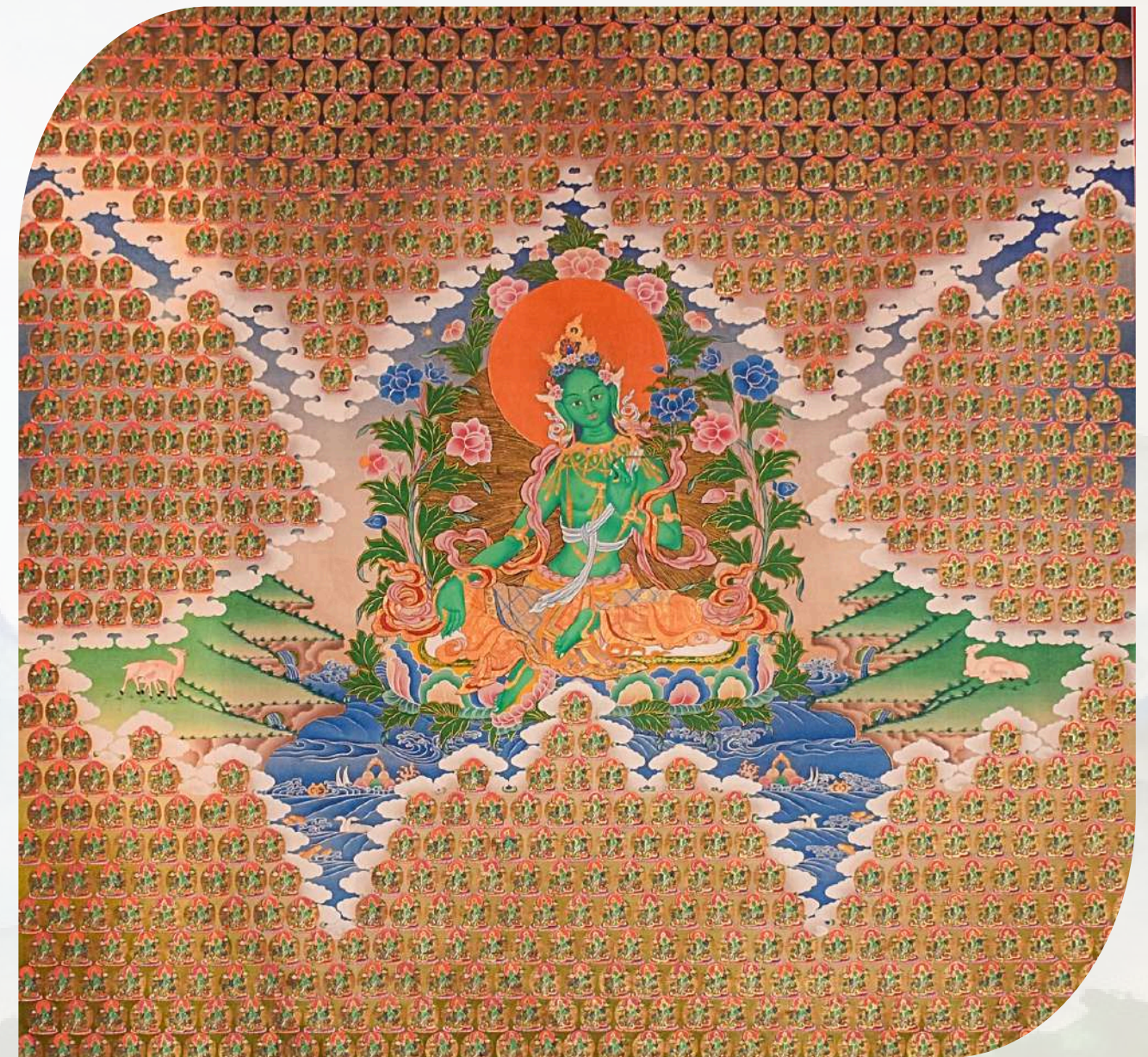
TEMPLE STATUARY & THANGKAS

As you enter the shrine room, you will see statues and colorful fabric paintings called thangkas. These are not decorations, but supports for meditation.

Statues represent enlightened qualities—compassion, wisdom, fearlessness—reminding us these live within us.

Thangkas are sacred images used in visualization practice. Every detail carries meaning.

[Read more about Thangkas](#) 



Sacred 1000 Taras thangka – a visual mandala of compassion, in which each Tara carries an individual intention of a donor. It is located in the Tara Temple at Tara Mandala.

CONTINUING THE PATH



Global Sanghas:

You are invited to stay connected through sangha, both in-person and online.

"The sangha is essential. We need each other on the path." — Lama Tsultrim Allione

Read more about
Global Sanghas [↗](#)



yana

yana is Tara Mandala's online practice space, offering teachings, groups, and connection.

"Practice is something we do together, even when we are apart." — Lama Tsultrim Allione

Read more about
yana [↗](#)



Long-Term Programs

For those wishing to deepen, long-term programs offer ongoing support and guidance.

"Transformation happens through sustained practice." — Lama Tsultrim Allione

Read more about
Programs [↗](#)

FROM THE EDI COUNCIL

Dear Retreatants,

Tara Mandala is committed to creating space for equity, diversity, and inclusion to be evident at our Retreat Center. We trust that participants want to come to Tara Mandala with an open heart and mind, a willingness to treat all with human dignity, and meet different experiences with curiosity and care. One of the goals of the EDI Council is to provide resources for individual and institutional change around privilege, and also to offer opportunities to increase cultural literacy together.

Included here is an article, “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” written in 1990 by Peggy McIntosh. This is one of the earliest essays focusing on White Privilege. In a longer, more academic publication, McIntosh explores the evidence of white privilege and gender privilege in American society. In this shorter article, she uses the metaphor of an “invisible knapsack” to help white folks recognize how white privilege may function on an individual level, providing unearned benefits and a sense of belonging. The 25 instances she cites may be recognized by some, but others may find a challenge. Both are worthy starting points for reflection and important to note that people of color, in general, do not have access to privilege in this way. This essay can help us think differently about how any other privilege we hold is another “invisible knapsack” that moves us more easily through the structures and systems of everyday life.

The article “What does Racial Justice have to do with Dharma?”, written by Dorje Lopön Chandra Easton, with support from the EDI Council, speaks to where justice and Buddhism intersect. It explores how racial justice, in fact, all forms of justice, seek peace and the end of suffering, which is the foundation of dharma practice. Thich Nhat Hanh’s invitation to “engaged Buddhism” brings our practice into direct contact with the injustices of the world, not as a departure from dharma, but as an expression of it.

We hope these offerings warmly invite you to sit with what arises, open toward one another, and let practice and community grow together — may your time at Tara Mandala be filled with auspicious occurrences, joyful connections, and a true sense of belonging.



[Read the Articles](#) 

With gratitude,

*Lopön Karla Jackson-Brewer and Dorje Lopön Chandra Easton
co-Chairs of the Tara Mandala Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council*

We warmly invite you to share your preferred name and pronouns, and we will do our best to honor them throughout your time here. Creating a space where everyone feels seen and respected is important to us, and we are grateful for the opportunity to get it right.

May your time be filled with auspicious occurrences and a feeling of belonging.

Your Whole Being is Welcome Here.

