

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

སྲིད་པའི་འཁོར་ལོ།

Pronunciation Sipé Khorlo

Sanskrit *Bhavacakra*

The Wheel of Life depicts samsara, the cycle of suffering, death and rebirth. Its sections are read from the centre outwards.

At the centre, a pig, rooster and snake represent ignorance, craving and aversion. Their linked arrangement shows how these tendencies reinforce one another. The surrounding light and dark paths illustrate karma: how intentional actions shape future experiences.

The six realms show gods absorbed in pleasure, demi-gods struggling with jealousy, humans with opportunities for awakening, and animals constrained by survival. Hungry ghosts' swollen bellies and narrow throats express endless craving, while hell beings surrounded by fire or ice depict intense suffering.

Around the rim, the twelve links of dependent origination explain how the cycle continues. Ignorance conditions actions and consciousness; mind and body, the senses and contact make experience possible. Contact produces pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feelings, which can lead to craving and grasping. These sustain becoming, birth, and ultimately ageing and death.

The scenes make these connections visible: a blind person represents ignorance; a potter, actions; a monkey, consciousness; a boat, mind and body; and a house with six openings, the senses. An embrace represents contact; an arrow, feeling; drinking, craving; gathering fruit, grasping; pregnancy, becoming; childbirth, birth; and a corpse, ageing and death. Their central lesson is that suffering depends on conditions: by weakening ignorance and responding to feelings without craving or grasping, the cycle can be interrupted.

The dark blue figure gripping the wheel represents impermanence. Outside it, the golden Buddha points towards liberation.



WHITE TARA

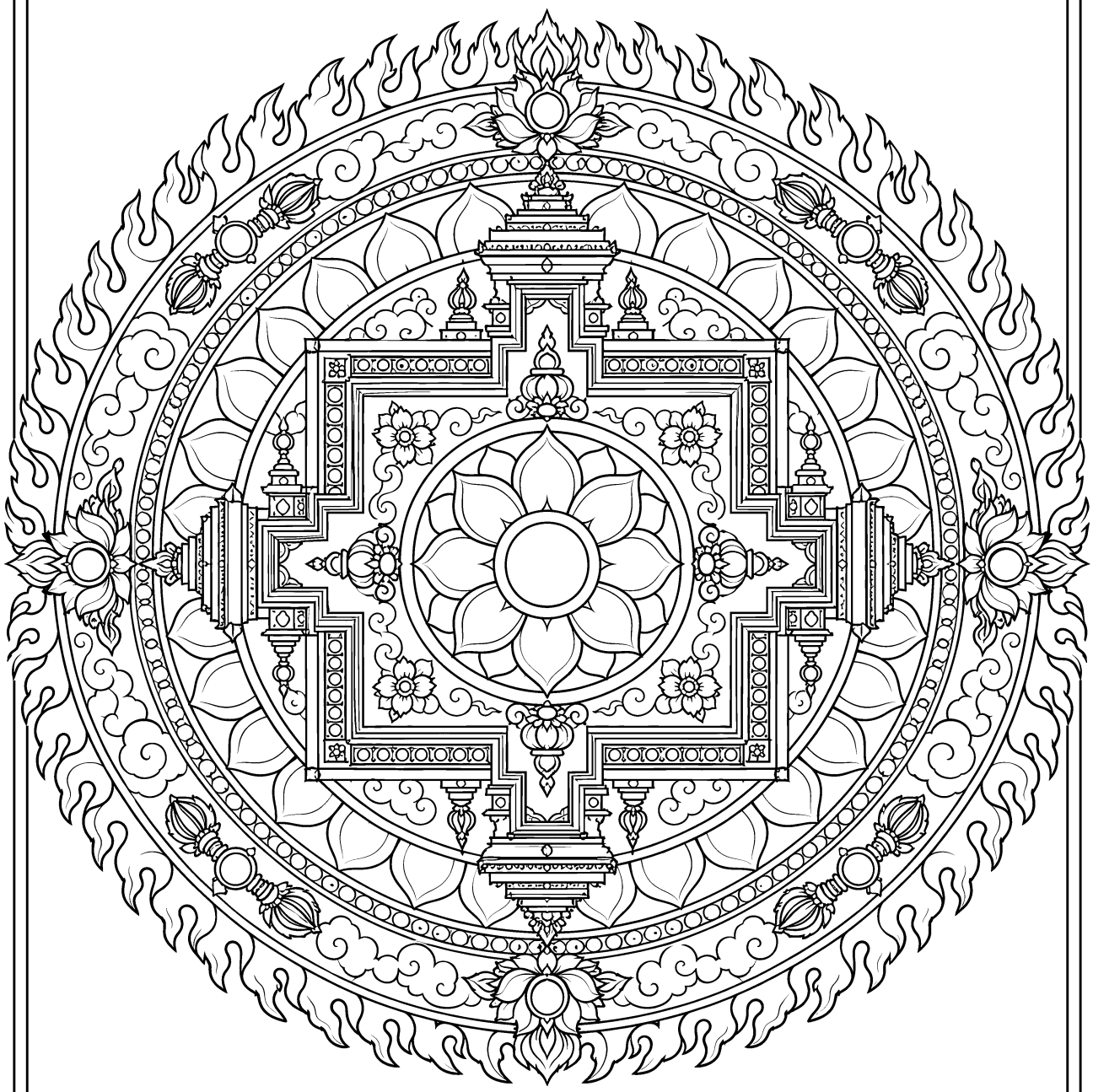
སྒྲོལ་མ་དཀར་མོ།

Pronunciation Drolma Karmo

Sanskrit *Sitatārā*

White Tara is a peaceful form of Tara associated with longevity, healing and the removal of obstacles to life. Her white body conveys purity, and she sits with both legs folded in meditation upon a lotus. Her golden crown, coloured jewels and flowing silks express the richness of awakened qualities rather than worldly luxury.

Her most distinctive feature is her seven eyes: two on her face, one on her forehead, and one on each palm and sole. They symbolise an awareness attentive to suffering in every direction. Her right hand makes the gesture of generosity, while her left holds an utpala flower. The blossoms, lotus seat and garments vary in colour between paintings, allowing blue, pink and other bright accents around her white form.



MANDALA

དཀྱིལ་འཁོར།

Pronunciation Kyilkhor

Sanskrit *Maṇḍala*

A mandala represents an enlightened world arranged around a sacred centre. Many Tibetan mandalas resemble a celestial palace viewed from above, with four gateways, a square enclosure and surrounding circles. Lotus petals, vajras and flames can mark its boundaries, expressing purity, indestructible wisdom and the transformation of ignorance.

In tantric practice, mandalas support meditation and visualisation. Specific traditions prescribe precise deities, arrangements and colours, but this illustration is a general mandala-inspired design rather than the mandala of a named practice. It therefore has no compulsory colour scheme. Red, blue, yellow, green and white offer a palette familiar from Tibetan Buddhist art, with gold accents and orange-red outer flames. Repeating colours symmetrically can emphasise the balanced relationship between the centre and its surrounding spaces.



THE SNOW LION

གངས་སེང་གེ།

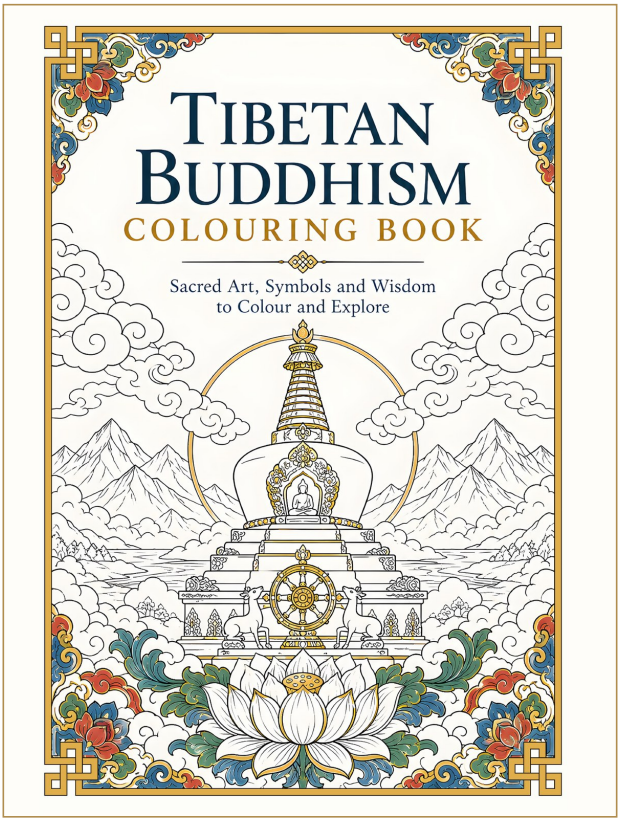
Pronunciation Gang Senggé

The Snow Lion is a mythical animal closely associated with Tibet's high mountains. Its white body contrasts with a flowing turquoise or blue-green mane and tail. A red mouth and tongue often add vivid accents. Its energetic posture conveys strength, joy and fearlessness, rather than the behaviour of an ordinary lion.

In Buddhist symbolism, the lion evokes the fearless proclamation of the Dharma. The Buddha's teaching is compared to a lion's roar because of its confidence and authority. Snow lions also appear as guardians and as supporters beneath the thrones of teachers and awakened figures. Their colouring and lively movement make them distinctive features of Tibetan art. The Snow Lion is a symbolic creature, rather than a Buddha, bodhisattva or meditation deity.

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