

# Green Tara Rising



It's 2001. Retreat time at Osel Ling Centro de Retiros in Granada, Spain. Lama Zopa Rinpoche asks artist Bertrand Cayla to create a large statue of Green Tara for one of the hillsides at the center. Little does he know what lies in store.

Bertrand began the creation process in October 2001 in his workshop at Nalanda Monastery in Lavaur, France [where he was a monk at the time]. Under Rinpoche's guidance, the statue underwent many changes; and at the end of 2006, it had reached its fourth incarnation and finalized aspect. Bertrand tells the story ...

**W**hen Lama Zopa suggested this project, I was surprised to say the least, because I had no real experience of building such a large statue (more than three meters in height), but at the same time, I was really curious to see what the result might be. I felt that if Lama Zopa was asking for it, there must be a good reason. I didn't know, though, that it would be such a task ... and today, although the statue herself is ready, until it is cast and delivered, it's still not finished.

Even though there were many modifications to be made, by trying to follow the recommendations of Lama Zopa I saw the statue starting to become really nice. At one stage, I really didn't want to make the changes: I even said 'no,' although later I did as Lama Zopa asked – and didn't touch the statue again for nine months!

It was hard on the ego, and I can say that one thing I've really learned in this process is the need to let go, especially of what my expectations were.



Finally, in the process of transformation, the statue reached a level of refinement which I had believed at the start was possible, but in actual fact it only came about by removing mistakes that were due to my own limitations. The five years that passed in the making of the statue were a complete necessity,

as there were many inner obstacles to overcome. Tara was always there, I just had to let her appear.

At the outset, during a visit to Nalanda Monastery, Lama Zopa Rinpoche was heard to say that there would be 'many' of these statues, and that it would be 'historical.' I thought it would take about a year to build the statue, that I could make molds, make a plaster cast, and paint the finished statue. Based on that, I asked Osel Ling for a donation of €15,000 to cover the cost of materials. I had no idea it would take so long, and that there would be so many changes along the way, for myself and for Osel Ling.

Initially Tara was to be housed in a pagoda, but because Osel Ling is in a protected area, planning restrictions would prevent the center from building one. We had to look for a

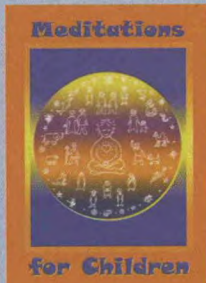
material from which to make the statue that could safely go outside, cope with all weather conditions, and be able to last many centuries. We decided that it should be made in bronze. A reliable foundry in France has quoted around €120,000 for all of the work, including making the molds and the bronze cast. From the original budget there is less than €2000 left. Possibly we can get a cheaper cast elsewhere; we're still looking for contacts.

Last November, Lama Zopa Rinpoche saw the latest photos and gave his OK to the 'finished' statue. Relieved that I wouldn't need to make any more modifications, I decided to create an organization (Tara Projects) dedicated to getting the Tara statue out of the Nalanda workshop and into the outside world. She's very beautiful and it's a real shame she's not yet where she was destined to be.

I will stay with the project until the statue is on site, and all the finishing touches are complete. But, for the moment, I've done as much as I can on my own. ☸

*Lama Zopa is encouraging other centers to consider ordering a Tara statue as he is very happy with the art. To find out more about Bertrand's extraordinary volunteer work and how you can help, or if your center envisages having such a statue yourselves, or simply to share in the merit, go to [www.taraprojects.org](http://www.taraprojects.org)*

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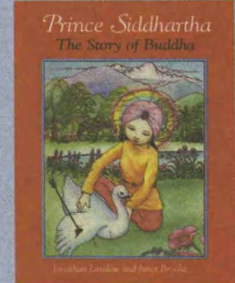
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