



Tara Protecting from the Eight Fears

Date

19th century

Medium

Pigments on cloth

Description

Tara is one of the most popular female deities in Tibetan culture. She is particularly associated with protecting from a group of calamities known as the Eight Fears, depicted here as scenes surrounding her: ghosts/sickness (bottom center), drowning (center), fire (mid-left), false imprisonment (bottom right), bandits (top right), wild elephants (top), snakes (bottom left), and lions (top left). Although these dangers center on the worries of secular life, they also have a more esoteric meaning, namely associations with inner obstacles that prevent spiritual progress. This painting exemplifies the "Khamri," style of

southeastern Tibet. Khamri paintings feature deep blues and greens in the landscape with thicker applications of pigment than other local styles. Some elements, such as the bluegreen crags to the main figure's right and the flowers and leaves beneath her lotus seat, derive from the parent New Menri style in central Tibet out of which this tradition grew. However, other elements, such as the sky fading into blank canvas and the depiction of the clouds back-shaded with indigo are not found in central Tibet, but rather are regional characteristics borrowed from the other major local painting style. One hallmark of this Khamri style is the dramatic twisting rainbow lights seen in the scene at the upper right.

Dimensions

26 3/8 × 18 in. (estimated)