



The Wisdom of Manjusri

Teachings by Early Dzogchen Masters on The Tantra,
Professing The Qualities of Manjusri

Translated and Introduced by Tulku Sherdor
Foreword by Khenpo Sonam Topgyal Rinpoche

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The Qualities of Mañjuśrī*

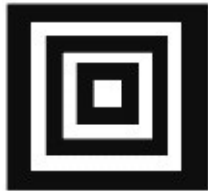
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Blazing Wisdom
INSTITUTE

*THIS WORK
IS DEDICATED TO THE LONGEVITY AND ACTIVITY OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA*



Blazing Wisdom Publications
5468 Fall Clove Road
Delancey, NY 13752 U.S.A.
(845) 676-4034
www.blazingwisdom.org

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Printed in the U.S.A. on acid-free recycled paper

ISBN-13: 978-0-98017-304-8

Library of Congress Control No.: 2012919535

This work was made possible principally by the kind support of the following sponsors:

Luke Poortinga
Ryan Connolly
Norman Wong

Rodney Smith
Sharon Bauer

Cover Design by Light Graphics.

Photo of Mañjuśrī painting is used with permission of Three Rivers Dharma Center, Pittsburgh, PA.

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Khenpo Sonam Tobgyal Rinpoche,
Spiritual Director

The text belonging to the Magical Network Tantra, known as the Perfect Profession of The Qualities of Manjusri, is the ultimate prototype for all classes of tantra in the secret mantra, vajrayana vehicle of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, without regard to school or sect. Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu and Nyingma lamas all observe the practice of reciting this text.

Indeed, there exists a longstanding custom among Tibetan practitioners generally to recite the three, "Jam, Du and Zang" (Recitation of The Qualities of Manjusri;, Doctrinal Summary Sutra, and Excellent Conduct Aspiration Prayer) as a daily practice.

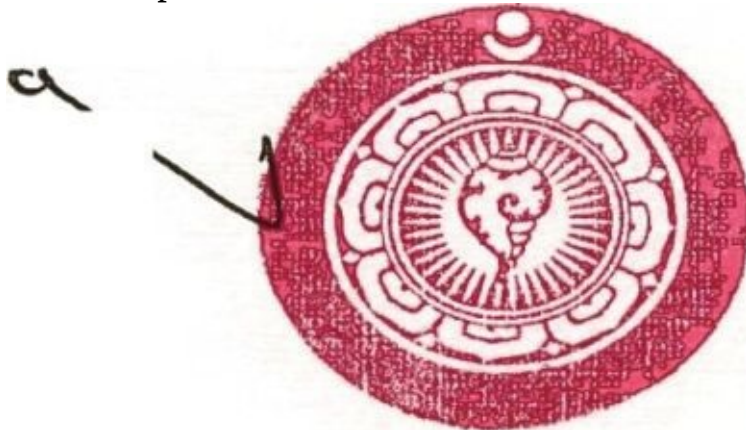
When I was just a young boy, my own father used to recite the Qualities of

Manjusri each and every day without fail, and so I memorized the words of this prayer from listening to him, and still remember them now.

Cognizant of these reasons for its importance, and with superior and entirely pure motivation, the esteemed Lama Sherab Dorje at this time has ably translated the root tantra into English, after carefully researching and closely following the seminal commentaries on it composed by the Indian and Tibetan scholars and siddhas, Garab Dorje, Vimalamitra and Rongzompa.

May this very profound beacon of the teachings find a receptive audience worldwide, and due to outstanding actions, aspirations and auspicious interdependence, may this dharma prove meaningful to all who have the excellent fortune to come into contact with it. This is a cause for truly rejoicing, and so I wish to express my genuine appreciation and offer my heartfelt "thank you" for this work.

Offered by Sonam Topgyal, who has the semblance of a monk and holds the title of a Khenpo from Do Kham Riwoche in Tibet, on June 21, 2012.



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INTRODUCTION

The very first entry in the Tantra (*rgyud*) section of the Kangur (*bka' 'gyur*), the Buddhist canon translated into Tibetan, is the Mañjuśrī Nāmasaṃgītiḥ, or Jampal Tsenjod (*'jam dpal mtshan yang dag par brjod pa*)—The Perfect Profession of The Qualities of Manjusri.¹It is found right before the Kālacakra root tantra.

The Indian Buddhist masters who originally brought their tradition to Tibet treated this text as fundamental to the view and practice of tantra. Over time, a vast body of literature emerged in Tibet, alternately interpreting this tantra as intrinsically related to the Kālacakra tantra itself, or to one or another among the hierarchical levels of tantra and philosophical schools in the Buddhist tradition.

This present work seeks neither to defend a particular thesis, nor to stir up new eddies far downstream in that mighty river of erudite scholarship on the proper assignation of the root text, nor even to reconstruct a critical edition that purports to be free of all latter-day historical accretions upon its translation and meaning.

¹ Later translations of this text into Tibetan list its full title as *'jam dpal ye shes sems dpa'i don dam pa'i mtshan yang dag par brjod pa*, whereas earlier editions omit the syllables in bold above. Those extra syllables qualify the subject matter of the text as concerning the *ultimate* name of the *wisdom being* Mañjuśrī.

Indeed I have sought to minimize diversion from the flow of the texts themselves by avoiding a surfeit of scholarly or didactic notes. For what I truly wish to offer is a glimpse into the understanding of tantra possessed by those early masters, as a context, backdrop and cogent foundation for the practices and studies in which we engage today.

As Rongzom Chokyi Zangpo put it most succinctly: Who or what is the wisdom being Mañjuśrī, really? What are the qualities associated with him? And how are we to evoke and realize them ourselves?²

The root text, notwithstanding its plethora of minor variations in extant Sanskrit and Tibetan editions (of which I have reviewed and compared a great many), is a masterpiece of world literature, of poetic verse; a gift and boon from Śākyamuni Buddha. His instructions, both spoken and sung to Vajrapani, are a key to all that

we now regard as Vajrayāna Buddhism, and, for that matter, the view of Dzogchen.

Translating the root text coherently into English demands fidelity to a single, authoritative viewpoint, which is provided here by Vimalamitra's commentary, *Lamp That Illuminates The Symbolic Meaning*.

It helps enormously that Vimalamitra, although speaking and writing more than a thousand years ago, purposefully presented his exegesis in readily understandable syntax, aided by a well-established relationship with his Tibetan translators.

Of course, trying to reproduce, in English, the beauty of the original verses' poetry, is another matter entirely. Others who have made the attempt may likewise attest to the magnitude of this challenge. You, the reader, are invited to read aloud the root verses, so as to judge my efforts.

² See the Appendix hereto.

Vimalamitra's *Lamp* highlights the jewelled ground of this tantra, to which Garab Dorje's work, composed during roughly the same period, applies the filigree and added textures. Rongzom's treatise, written about two centuries later, then sketches in the full, three dimensions of its palatial architecture. Together, I hope, their works offer us a window of comprehension into this incredible edifice of purity.

The commentary by Garab Dorje, *Clarification of The Meaning of The Perfect Profession of Qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī*, is written as a series of notes on the root text. That style I have sought to preserve by including a great many of his illuminating comments as footnotes to Vimalamitra's more expository composition.³

Rongzom Mahāpandita's work, *An Explanation of Three Points*, is presented in full as an appendix to the main commentary by Vimalamitra. The very elaborate visualization scheme included in the latter sections of Rongzom's work, while rather daunting, is very much representative of a genre that has endured even to this day in treatises on the Mañjuśrī Nāmasaṃgītiḥ.

³ The Nyingma Kama (*rnying ma bka' ma*), the great collection of lineage texts,

identifies the author of this commentary simply as Garab Dorje. The weight of scholarship, however, leans strongly toward him being the Indian scholar Vilāsavajra, *aka* Līlāvajra, which in Tibetan is more properly rendered Gegpa'i Dorje (*sgeg pa'i rdo rje*).

He was an elder contemporary of Vimalamitra (hereinafter, 'Vima') and, like the latter, wrote extensively on the source tantras of what became the Nyingma lineage, including the Mayajala and Guhyagarbha Tantras.

While I have included a number of endnotes to elucidate important points in Vimalamitra's commentary that might otherwise appear obscure, in no way have I sought to provide an exhaustive explanation of all subjects and terms treated in these works. Indeed, as their authors pointedly note, there can be no substitute for oral instruction on the profound views and methods of practice referenced therein.

We are also fortunate, nowadays, to have ready access to online lexicons and other informational sources, obviating the cumbersome need to include glossaries and other indices in this book. And so, while many of the dharma terms (Tibetan or Sanskrit) employed in these works are defined within them, the remainder you can research easily on your own, if you wish.

As a final technical note, it struck me, while working on this set of translations, that although most translations from Tibetan into English have adopted the convention of noting the spellings of Tibetan words through a transliteration scheme (Wylie or another), it is rarer to see Sanskrit terms used in those translations properly represented in the same way.

I have chosen, therefore, to include diacritical marks to properly identify Sanskrit letters and words wherever possible, with very few exceptions (*e.g.*, the word 'dharma,' which arguably has been adopted into the English language in this form). Syllables are not always joined through rules of *saṃdhi*, however, to allow for ease of reading and reference.

**** **** Through the collective efforts and intentions of everyone involved in producing this work, may the real essence of dharma—the fivefold lights of Mañjuśrī's heart—enduringly and indelibly illuminate this world, and guide beings on the journey to rediscover their own nature.

May the inborn deity radiate delight,
and with the Gurus' kindnesses finding purchase in our hearts, and traction in our
words, may we translate perfectly the intentions of the lineage masters, for the
welfare of all.

Sherab Dorje
Blazing Wisdom Institute Catskills, NY
October 2012

Perfect Profession of The Qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī

Homage to youthful Mañjuśrī!

I. Sixteen Stanzasⁱ of The Requestⁱⁱ

And then glorious Vajradhāra,
supreme subduer of those hard to tame,
victorious hero of the three worlds,
Secret Victor, the Vajra Lord,
with eyes like blooming white lotuses
and face like a lotus in full bloom,ⁱⁱⁱ
flourished the supreme vajra in his hand again and again.

With him were limitless Vajrapanis,
Furrowed Brow^{iv} and all the others,
the heroic subduers of those hard to tame, their demeanor fierce and frightening,
and hands brandishing vajras with radiating tips.

With great compassion, prajñā and skill, and a joyous and rapturous state of
mind, they superbly perform the welfare of beings; and in wrathful physical
form,
they masterfully perform enlightened activity.

While bowing in reverence, they offered homage to the Tathāgata Bhagavat, the
Lord Bhagavat Tathāgata, the perfect Buddha, and joining their palms together,
presented themselves and made this request:

"Ubiquitous Lord, for our benefit, for our welfare, out of loving concern for us,
explain to us how to attain manifest, perfect awakening through the magical

network.

"To heal all sentient beings,
whose minds are troubled by disturbances
and who are mired in the mud of ignorance,
so that they might obtain the highest fruition,
Perfect Buddha Bhagavat, Guru of Beings, Teacher, knower of the true nature,
the great samaya,
with your supreme understanding of their ideas and abilities, please teach us
about the wisdom being Mañjuśrī, the Bhagavats' wisdom kāya, the great
uṣṇīṣa,
the master of words, the wisdom kāya that is self-existing—

"Whose name is the supreme expression of perfection, whose meaning is vast,
whose meaning is profound, whose meaning is unrivaled in grandeur,
and utterly tranquil, virtuous at first,
in the middle, and in the end;

"As spoken by the Buddhas of the past,
and as the Buddhas of the future, too, will proclaim, that which Buddhas who
appear at present state over and over again, that which,
in the great magical network tantra,
great Vajradhāra, to the delight of numberless holders of secret mantra, joyfully
sings.

"Lord, so that we might come to hold
the secrets of all perfect Buddhas,
until we reach certainty, our resolve shall remain steady. To remove all
disturbances and dispel all ignorance, please bestow instructions upon sentient
beings that suit their diverse mentalities."

Lord of Secrets Vajrapani thus put his request to the Tathāgata, joining his palms
in respect and remaining before him.

II. Six Stanzas of The Reply

Then the Bhagavat Śākyamuni, the perfect Buddha, supreme among bipeds,
extended his long and broad, fine tongue from his mouth, and exhibiting a smile
that illuminates the three worlds,
subdues the four māra enemies,

and purifies the three inferior migrations of sentient beings, with eloquent speech of Brahma reaching throughout the three worlds, spoke once more to the Mighty One, Vajrapani, Lord of Secrets:

"Very well, glorious Vajradhāra, Vajrapani, listen to me diligently, that would be excellent. Since you possess great compassion and are determined to help beings, for that reason, Lord of Secrets, I will teach you well to speak the names of wisdom-bodied Mañjuśrī, which are highly significant, which purify, which remove wrong actions— so listen with your full attention."

"That is wonderful, Bhagavat," they applauded.

III. Two Stanzas of Surveying The Lineages

Then the Bhagavat Sakyamuni fully surveyed the great lineage of all secret mantra, the lineage of holders of secret mantra and vidyā mantra, and the three lineages.

He surveyed the worldly and trans-worldly lineage, the great lineage which illuminates the world, the supreme mahāmudrā lineage, and the great Mahā-uṣṇīṣa lineage.

IV. Three Stanzas on The Six Sequences of Manifest, Complete Enlightenment Through The Magical Network^V

And then the master of words spoke these verses containing the six sovereigns of secret mantra, concerning that which arises nondually and is unborn:

" A Ā I Ī U Ū E AI O AU AṂ AḤ
sthito hṛdi jñānamūrtir ahaṃ buddho
buddhānāṃ tryadhva vartinām
oṃvajratīkṣṇa duḥkhaçcheda prajñājñāna mūrtaye jñānakāya vāgīśvara
arāpacanāya te namaḥ

V. Fourteen Stanzas on The Wisdom of The Vajradhātu Maṇḍala

"In this way, the Buddha Bhagavat, the perfect Buddha, appears from 'A.' 'A' is supreme among all syllables, highly meaningful, the sacred letter.

Arising from within, it is unborn,
free of linguistic formulation.

It is the supreme cause of all expression, and makes all words utterly clear.

"Great offering and great desire,
he brings joy to all sentient beings.

Great offering and great aggression,

he is the greatest foe of all emotional disturbance. Great offering and great obtuseness,

his wise dullness removes stupidity.

Great offering and great wrath,

he is the greatest foe of intense anger.

Great offering and great passion, he dispels all passion.

"Great wish, great happiness, great joy, great delight. Great form and great figure, too.

Great complexion and great heft.

Great in name, as well, and great in scope— his great maṇḍala is expansive.

"He bears the great weapon of prajñā, the greatest iron hook for mental disturbances. Illustrious and highly renowned,

he is most vivid, and very clear.

The skilled one is master of great magic; great magic accomplishes the goal.

Great magic is joy beyond joy,

great magic employs optical illusion.

"He is the foremost, great patron,

the supreme preserver of ethical discipline. He has the stability of great forbearance, and is unrelenting in great diligence.

Abiding in the samādhi of great mental equipoise, he holds the corpus of great prajñā with great might and superior method, aspirations and an ocean of wisdom. His nature of great love is without bound, his great compassion, the finest sentiment.

"He possesses the great prowess of prajñā, great expertise, and the highest skill.

He bears the power of great miracles, great strength and great alacrity,

great miracles of highest renown,

this powerful one who overwhelms others.

"He crushes the great mountain of existence, unyielding and bearing the great vajra with great ferocity, great wrath, terrifier of the most frightening.

Great protector of superior lineage,
supreme guru of secret mantra

who adheres to the ways of Mahāyāna, the supreme approach of Mahāyāna.

VI. Nearly Twenty-Five Stanzas on The Wisdom of The Immaculately Pure Dharmadhātu

"Buddha Mahāvairocana, the Mahāmuni,
possesses great might.

He arises from the great approach of secret mantra. He embodies the great approach of secret mantra.

"He has gathered the ten pāramitās, abides in the ten pāramitās,
is the purity of the ten pāramitās, the system of the ten pāramitās.

The Lord with mastery of the ten grounds is he who abides on the ten grounds.

"He embodies the totally pure ten discernments,

is the exponent of the totally pure ten discernments, the pursuit of the ten ends of the ten aspects.

The Lord of Munis, ubiquitous master of ten powers, achieves the goals of all, is the great master of tenfold powers.

"He personifies simplicity without origin, personifies the true nature, personifies purity. He speaks the truth and his words are consistent. He does exactly what he says he will do. He teaches nonduality without duality.

"He dwells at the pinnacle of perfection,

and with the lion's roar of 'lack of self,'

strikes terror in the prey, inferior heretics,

and ably accomplishes the aims of beings everywhere as swiftly as the thoughts of Tathāgatas.

"Victor who defeats the enemy, fully victorious, most powerful cakravartin, ācārya of the assembly, leader of the assembly, head of the assembly, master of

the assembly, he is laden with authority, upholds the most precious with great might, his great way beholden to no other.

"Master of words, lord of language, gifted speaker, eloquent and fluent, his words are true and spoken truly; he is the teacher of the four truths.

"Non-returner who will not regress,
conductor and rhino-like solitary victor,
arising through various ways of reaching certainty, sole source of the great elements,
bhikṣu, arhat who has exhausted the defiled,
whose faculties are controlled and divorced from desire, he has found happiness and attained fearlessness.

"He is coolly composed and unperturbed. He has both vision and agility; the Sugata has the world's greatest skills. Not grasping at 'mine' and not clinging to 'me,' he dwells in accord with the two truths. He has reached the very end of saṃsāra, his work is done, he rests on dry land. Only wisdom produces his appearance.

"With the weapon of prajñā, he conquers all. The dharma king has the clarity of sacred dharma— the finest source of illumination in the world. The master of dharma, king of dharma,
is the revealer of the excellent path.

"He accomplishes aims, fulfills wishes, but has disposed of all conceptual thought; the nonconceptual expanse is inexhaustible, the sacred expanse of dharmas knows no end.

"He possesses merit, accumulates merit,
and with wisdom, the most extraordinary wisdom, knows what there is and is not
—

he has gathered the whole of the two accumulations. "His eternal, all-victorious yoga,
mental stability to be conceived, is the highest intelligence, unshakable, precise and intimate knowledge,
first and most exalted, bearing the three kāyas,
embodiment of the five Buddha kāyas,
ubiquitous lord of the five wisdoms,
crowned lord of the five Buddhas,

possessor of the five unhindered eyes,
creator of all Buddhas,
the holy and superior child of Buddhas.

"Through knowledge, risen from existence,
without a place of birth—
what arises from dharma dispels phenomenal existence, the singular, invincible,
vajra entity,
dispatcher at the moment of creation,
appearing just naturally from space, blazing prajñā wisdom, the great light that
makes all things perceptible,
sparkling starlight of wisdom,
wisdom torch, butter lamp for beings.

"Great majesty and luminosity,
sovereign of supreme mantra, king of vidyā mantra, king of secret mantra
producing the great result, great uṣṇīṣa of marvelous honor,
master of space revealed diversely,
paramount kāya of all Buddhas
with an eye for delighting all transient beings in multiple forms of his own
design.

"Remarkable and honored great rishi,
secret mantra holder who comprises the three lineages, whose great samaya of
secret mantra takes charge, principal one who takes on the three jewels,
teacher of the three superior vehicles, all-victorious Amoghapāśa,
vajra lasso of mighty grip,
vajra hook and great lasso.

VII. Just Over Ten Stanzas on Reflective Wisdom

"Vajrabhairava who causes fear, king of the wrathful, with six frightening faces,
six eyes, and six hands, powerful, with skeletons and baring his fangs, with a
hundred ha la ha la faces,
Yamāntaka, ruler of the obstructors,
with vajra strength that generates fear.

"Illustrious vajra, vajra heart, robust, magical vajra, vajra-created vajra master,
vajra heart like space itself, immovable one with hair braid bound in a single

plait, draped in a raw elephant hide, bellowing 'Ha Ha' loudly, striking fear with the shout of 'He He,'
his powerful laughter carries far,
his vajra laughter strongly thunders.

"Vajra being, great heroic being, vajra king, great bliss, fierce vajra, great joy, vajra of 'Hung' proclaiming 'Hung,' wielding a vajra arrow as a weapon,
his vajra sword cuts through anything,
the vajra-bearer who holds all vajras,
the singular vajra that eliminates conflict.

"With unbearable, blazing vajra eyes, even his hairs are blazing vajras,
the great discharge of descending vajras. His one hundred eyes are vajra eyes, all the hairs on his body are vajras,
the vajra hairs of his unique body.
Vajras grow from the tips of his nails,
his skin is a surface of vajra essence;
holding a vajra rosary, he is splendidly bedecked in vajra jewellery.

"He projects his piercing 'Ha Ha' laugh with assurance, his six syllables are vajra sound,
the great sound of Mahā-Mañjugosha,
one sound reaching three realms of existence, a sound that carries to the ends of space,
the very best among all types of sound.

VIII. Fortytwo Stanzas on The Wisdom of Individuation

"Perfect lack of selfidentity, the true nature, final perfection that is not linguistic, discourse on emptiness that heads the ranks, proclamation of the vast and profound with the great sound of the dharma conch and great sound of the dharma gong that transport to non-abiding nirvāṇa, the great dharma drum in the ten directions.

"Formless, holy and excellent form, with manifold, mentally generated forms, glorious among all apparent forms, capturing the image of every form, indomitable and known for his greatness, the great master of the three domains abides far above the Nobles' path, great dispensation, pinnacle of dharma.

"With one youth's body in three worlds,
a sage, an elder, a leader of beings of the nine ranks, bearer of the thirty-two
major marks,
most handsome beauty in the three worlds.

"Teacher of the world's finest arts,
fearless ācārya of the world,
beloved defender of the world,
peerless refuge and protector
whose experience spans the ends of space, the sea of omniscient wisdom
which cracks open the shell of ignorance, destroyer of the web of the
phenomenal world who pacifies each and every afflictive mind state, has gone to
the far shore of samsāra's ocean, wears the diadem of wisdom empowerment and
carries the gems of the perfect Buddhas, and eases the suffering of threefold
suffering.

"Removing three, countless are delivered to threefold liberation.
Certainly freed of all obscurations,
he abides in space-like equanimity,
and has left behind all stains of mental afflictions.

"Comprehending the three times and eternity, he is the great leader of all sentient
beings, crowned among those with lofty qualities. Fully freed of all bodily
guises,
he serenely abides in the byways of space. "Holder of the great wishfulfilling
jewel,
universal lord, master of all that is precious, towering wishfulfilling tree,
capacious excellent vase,
whose actions achieve the aims of all sentient beings, altruistic ally of sentient
beings.

"He knows good from bad and when it is time, universal master who knows
samaya and holds samaya, he knows how to be timely,
knows the faculties and drives of sentient beings; expert in the three modes of
liberation,
he possesses and appreciates good qualities.

"Knowing dharma, the auspicious source of auspiciousness, most auspicious of
all that is auspicious,

famously auspicious with esteemed virtues,
great assurance and great celebration,
great joy and great revelry.

"Spectacular veneration and reverence, supremely joyful, renowned and glorious, supremely endowed, first at bestowing the best, holiest refuge and worthiest source of refuge, ideal (refuge) from the enemy, worldliness, dispeller of all dangers.

"Crown tuft, braided locks and strands,
plaits, munja and crowning ribbons,
he has five faces and five long locks of hair, five jewelled strands and flowered clasp. Shaven-headed with refined comportment, his brahmacharya conduct is the highest discipline. He has completed all austerities, is a great ascetic, holy rishi Gautama, pure brahmin who knows sanctity.

"Transcender of misery who has attained true purity, liberated and freed, he has the body of complete freedom. Totally liberated and pacified, he has true peace. Transcending misery, he has reached nirvāṇa, has approached nirvāṇa in the finest way; clearing away both happiness and suffering, he has reached finality.

"Freed of passion, transcender of the imputed, indomitable, incomparable, nothing manifests, appears, or needs illumination, unchangeable, he is allpervasive and omnipresent, subtle, without the seeds of defilement, free of blemishes; freed of blemishes, he is stainless, has abandoned faults and is devoid of error.

"Wide awake, master of alertness,
he is the holy one who knows, who sees all. He has gone beyond ordinary states of consciousness, epitomizes nondual wisdom that is nonconceptual and spontaneously present.

"The creation of Buddhas past, present and future, Buddha without beginning or end, the original Buddha without a cause, single wisdom eye free from fault, Tathāgata embodiment of wisdom.

"Master of words, great speaker, primary speaker, king of speech, exalted speaker at a superior level, he is the undaunted lion of speech.

"Allseeing and supremely joyful, his majestic figure delightful to behold, blazing with brilliant light and a knot of glory, his hand shines with blazing light. Chief and paramount healer, greatest reliever of pain, fruitful tree of all medicines, great panacea for all disease.

"Most winsome in all three worlds,
he is a glorious maṇḍala among the star constellations. At the farthest reaches of space in the ten directions he firmly plants the victory banner of dharma. Wherever he goes, he bears the broad parasol of the maṇḍalas of love and compassion.
Glorious lotus lord of dance,
great monarch of the precious parasol.

"Great majesty of all Buddhas,
embodiment of all Buddha kāyas,
great yoga of all Buddhas,
sole doctrine of all Buddhas,
glorious, precious, vajra empowerment,
lord and master of all that is precious,
Lokeśvara who reigns over all, leader of all vajra holders, great heart of all Buddhas, abiding in the heart of all Buddhas, great kāya of all Buddhas, he is the speech of all Buddhas, too.

"Great radiance of the vajra sun,
stainless light of the vajra moon,
great passion of freedom from desires, effulgent with multicolored light,
in vajra posture of full enlightenment, propounder of the dharma for transient beings, glorious lotus-born Buddha,
holder of the treasury of omniscient wisdom, monarch with mastery of manifold magic, great holder of secret mantra and vidyā mantra.

"Sharp vajra and large sword, supreme, fully pure letter, great vehicle that cuts off suffering,
great weapon of vajra dharma,
emperor of vajra profundity,
vajra intellect that sees things as they are,
perfection of all pāramitās,
bedecked in the ornaments of all bhūmis,
completely pure dharma of no selfidentity,

finest moonlight of perfect wisdom,
most assiduous magical network,
the supreme master of all tantras.

"In full possession of the vajra seat, commanding all wisdom kāyas,
Samantabhadra of exemplary intellect, Kṣitigarbha who supports all beings,
great heart of all Buddhas.

"Source of manifold emanation cycles,
supreme nature of all entities,
encompassing the nature of all entities,
this unborn dharma exhibits endless variations. Comprising the very essence of
all dharmas, great prajñā, in an instant, comprehends all dharmas, directly
realizes all dharmas.

"Triumphant, with superior prowess, he defeats spirits; personification of sheer
lucidity and stillness, bearing the bodhi of all perfect Buddhas,
directly manifest to all Buddhas,
the most luminous flame of wisdom.

IX. Twenty-four Stanzas on The Wisdom of Equality

"Holy one who fulfills all desired aims and fully purifies all inferior realms,
lord who reigns supreme over sentient beings, emancipates all sentient beings
with singular valor in the conflict with kleśas, and crushes the arrogant enemy,
ignorance.

"Glorious, astute and attractive,
steady and bearing a repulsive form, moving all one hundred of his hands,
dancing in a striding manner,
each of one hundred elegant hands filled, dancing everywhere throughout space.

"The entire span of the earth ma ṇḍala's surface he presses down with the sole of
one foot, while he pins down Brahma's realm
with just the edge of the nail of his big toe.

"One in meaning, nondual, the ultimate dharma, ultimate truth that is
unassailable,
which takes on forms with diverse capacities and a richly diverse continuum of
consciousness delighting in every object and entity,

a passionate intellect that delights in emptiness while devoid of all worldly desires,
taking greatest joy in threefold existence.

"White as a clean white cloud,
like the fine light of autumn moonlight, stunning as the sun's disc at dawn. The lustre of his nails is mostly red. "Above the crest of his azure, lovely diadem, his fine hair is bound like a blue sapphire. He has a strikingly beautiful, great jewel, and wears the Buddha's emanations as ornaments. He moves a hundred worldly realms as one, carries the great powers of the legs of miracle, and retains perfect recollection of reality.

"King of samādhis with fourfold mindfulness, branches of awakening fragrant with flowers, great sea of the Tathāgathas' qualities, seeing the eightfold path unfolding,
understanding the path of perfect Buddhas, lovingly disposed toward all sentient beings, yet free of passion, like space itself.

"Attuned to the minds of all sentient beings, as swift as the thoughts of sentient beings,
knowing the abilities and goals of all sentient beings, he steals away the minds of all sentient beings.

"He knows the five aggregates' truth and reality and possesses the five fully pure aggregates. He abides in the finality of full renunciation, is expert in all aspects of renunciation,
is found on the paths of all renunciates, and teaches all about renunciation.

"He exposes the twelve branches at the root of existence, embodies the twelve aspects of purity,
exemplifies the operation of the four truths,
possesses realization of eightfold consciousness and the twelve features of final truth.

"He sees the sixteen aspects of reality,
has awakened in twenty respects,
is the complete Buddha with supreme omniscience who dispatches countless millions
of nirmanakāyas of all Buddhas.

"He directly comprehends all in an instant, knows all things with a moment's attention. With the approaches of the various vehicles he knows what is to be done for beings. Through three vehicles, he brings deliverance, and through a single vehicle, abides in fruition.

"He purifies all types of mental disturbances and causes all karmas to become exhausted, has traversed all rivers and oceans, and arisen from the yoga of isolation, is permanently rid of primary, secondary and fullfledged mental disturbances, along with all tendentious impressions.

"Skilled in great compassion and understanding, he effectively accomplishes the aims of beings, has abandoned all objects of perception, and put a halt to objects of consciousness.

"Knowing how the minds of sentient beings work, and knowing the minds of all enlightened beings, he resides in the minds of all sentient beings, proceeds in harmony with their way of thinking, and so brings satisfaction to all sentient beings, is the joy of every sentient being.

"He completes his mission free from confusion, is completely rid of all mistakes, and his mind has no doubts about the three meanings— he has mastered the three qualities that serve all.

"He finely discerns the operation of the five aggregates in every instant, past, present and future, and is perfectly enlightened in a single instant. He exemplifies the nature of all Buddhas.

"He has no body, and so his bodies are sublime bodies; realizing what bodies are, in the end, he displays a glorious variety of facets, like a great jewel, or a precious crown.

X. Fifteen Stanzas on Effectual Wisdom

"That which all Buddhas realize, unsurpassed awakening into enlightenment, arises from secret mantra but has no syllables. Great secret mantra, with three lineages, generates the full meaning of secret mantra. The great sphere is beyond words. Great emptiness has five syllables,

and the empty sphere, a hundred letters.

"Replete with all aspects and lacking any aspect, with the bindu of half and half again of sixteen, beyond reckoning or categorization, at the very peak of the four concentrations, knowing all permutations of the concentrations, seeing the range of samādhis and minds of others, with a body of samādhi, the supreme body, the sambhogakāya that towers over all.

"The nirmana kāya that is the supreme kāya, sustaining a flow of enlightened emanations, sending profuse emanations throughout the ten directions that accomplish just what beings need, mightiest god, god of gods, lord of gods, lord of asuras, mightiest immortal, highest celestial, conqueror and ruler of all conquerors.

"He has crossed the wilderness of existence, the singular teacher, guru of transient beings, most renowned throughout the universe for his great philanthropy of dharma, clad in the breastplate of kindness, equipped with the armor of compassion, carrying the sword of prajñā, a bow and arrow to repel the attacks of kleśas and ignorance, heroic enemy of mārās who subdues the mārās, who dispels the dangers of the four mārās, who sends the hordes of mārās to defeat.

"Perfect Buddha, guide of the world, worthy of worship, worthy of praise, object of homage, ever worthy of depiction, deserving respect, most honorable, finest guru to whom homage is owed.

"He strides across the three worlds in a single step; like space, without any limit, he overwhelms all. Seeing the three, he is clean and pure, possesses six paranormal perceptions and six powers of recollection.

"Bodhisattva, Mahāsattva, great transcendent miracle worker, prajñā that secures the final truth, the final pāramitā, knowing all about self, knowing all about other, the supreme individual of benefit to all, beyond compare, consummate master of knowing and the known.

"The principal patron of dharma who reveals the meanings of the four mudrās is the highest object of beings' reverence. He is purity and glory, the final aim of those who journey within all three vehicles, the greatest fortune in the three worlds.

"Glorious one, creator of all goodness, Mañjuśrī, his glorious eminence!

XI. Five Stanzas in Praise of The Wisdom of The Five Tathāgathas

"Homage to you, supreme vajra who grants supremacy, homage to you who have achieved perfection. Homage to you who arises from emptiness, homage to you, enlightenment of Buddhas.

"Homage to you, dwelling of the Buddhas, homage and honor to the wish of Buddhas. Homage to you, the delight of Buddhas, homage and honor to the revelry of Buddhas.

"Homage to you, the smile of the Buddhas, homage and honor to the laughter of Buddhas. Homage to you, the very speech of Buddhas. Homage and honor to the mind of Buddhas. "Homage to you who appears from nothing, homage to you, the appearance of Buddhas. Homage to you who appears from space, homage to you who comes from wisdom.

"Homage to you, tapestry of magical creations, homage to you, the display of Buddha's prowess. Homage to you who has all and does all, homage to you, the true wisdom kāya.

XII Setting Forth The Mantra[s]

"O ṃsarva dharmābhāva svabhava viśuddha vajra cakṣu a ā aṃ aḥ prakṛti pariśuddhāḥ sarvadharmā yaduta sarva tathāgatha jñānakāya mañjuśrī pariśuddhitām upādāyeti a āḥ sarva tathāgatha hṛdayaṃ hara hara oṃhūṃhrīḥ bhagavan jñānamūrti vāgīśvara mahāvaca sarva dharma gaganāmala supariśuddha dharmadhātu jñāna garbha āḥ"

XIII. Five Closing Stanzas of Rejoicing

Then, glorious Vajradhāra joined his palms

with gladness and joy, and prostrated
to the Lord Bhagavat Tathāgatha,
the perfect Buddha; thereafter, the Lord Vajrapani, Guhyapati, king of wrathful
ones, with his august company, offered unreserved praise, and then these words:

"Lord, all of us rejoice! This is wonderful, truly wonderful, well said indeed!
[For] all those helpless beings who yearn for the fruit of total liberation,
and [for] us who pursue the great purpose,
which is to attain complete and perfect awakening, this presentation of the
approach of the magical network is the correct and superior path, profound,
extensive and vast, the great purpose that accomplishes the aims of beings, the
province of the Buddhas,
as described by all perfect Buddhas."

This completes the perfect exposition of the true names of Bhagavat Mañjuśrī
Jñānasattva, as spoken by the Bhagavat Tathāgatha Śākyamuni.
LAMP THAT ILLUMINATES THE SYMBOLIC MEANING:

A COMMENTARY ON THE MAÑJUŚRĪ MAYAJALA

Introduction

In the Indian language: Nāmasaṃgītiḥ britti nama artha prasa kakarana dipa nama.^{vi}

In the Tibetan language: "Lamp that illuminates the symbolic meaning," a commentary on the perfect profession of qualities [of Mañjuśrī].

Homage to the youthful Mañjuśrī!

So that a fortunate yogin with reverence towards Mañjuśrī, possessor of the vast and profound kāya, may understand the profession of his venerable names, I will strive to explain it by relying on explanatory tantras and [the] formal instructions [of previous masters].^{vii}

Its meaning is revealed through five types of explanation, which show that all lineages are included in six, and [show] its benefits as well.

Yogins who wish to realize the qualities of the wisdom being Mañjuśrī may possess superior, average or modest faculties. For the brightest, I shall explain the title of this distillation of the [Buddha's] dictates (both sutra and tantra).

For those who are average, I shall teach the sections of the scripture progressively, from start to finish. For those of lowest capacity, I shall explain each word and syllable in turn.

For that last group, I shall explain [the text] by using the device of question and answer, or in a summary fashion, as best suits the meaning and context.

Explanation for Elite Individuals

First, for those of superior ability, who only need a hint or nod in order to understand all, the defining features of this tantra are captured in its title: "Perfect Profession of The Qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī."

i. Noble

' Noble' is meant in two senses: first, noble in terms of the meaning that is

expressed, and second, noble in terms of the words that express [such meaning]. That is, as the saying goes, "In the manner conveyed, entirely delightful, and when experienced, like delicious medicine; know that dharma likewise exists as two, the words and the meaning."

As regards 'noble in terms of the meaning expressed,' the Venerable One himself is exalted, beyond the extremes of both samsāra and nirvāṇa, and as such, lacks the obscuration of clinging to the two extremes. As this [tantra] puts it, "certainly freed of all obscurations, he abides in space-like equanimity."

' Noble in terms of expressive words' refers to this very vehicle of methods, which is superior due to its multiple methods, its skillful methods, its accessible methods, and its swift methods, these four. As is said, "Being synonymous with multiple methods, skillful methods, and likewise easy and swift methods, the mantra teachings are exceptionally superior."

As regards multiple methods, [mantra] presents innumerable methods for liberation that will interest the minds of trainees, and not be rejected. That is, it "is found on the paths of all renunciates."^{viii} The methods are skillful because one discovers how to achieve liberation even without rejecting mental disturbances. And so, [mantra offers] a "grand method for the highly skillful."

The methods are easy because they show how to achieve liberation even while continuing to experience what is pleasant, without subjecting one's three gates to austerities. And so [the text says], "the sambhogakāya that towers over all."

Since those with the capacity for the vehicle of methods realize the nonduality of all things, and so can attain enlightenment in this very life, its methods are swift.

ii. Mañjuśrī

Next, there are five different types of Mañjuśrī . The natural, causal Mañjuśrī; the Mañjuśrī of the path of meditation practice; the ultimate, fruition Mañjuśrī; Mañjuśrī who appears to trainees with pure karma; and Mañjuśrī who appears to embody specific attributes.

The natural, causal Mañjuśrī is the reality of dharmatā that encompasses all phenomena of samsāra and nirvāṇa. As this [text] says, "unchangeable, he is allpervasive and omnipresent, subtle, without the seeds of defilement." [Dharmatā] is described in those terms because the painfulness of discursive,

conceptual thinking is absent, and realizing it brings the greatest of all glories.

Mañjuśrī of the path of meditation practice is the dharmas of the path, such as development and completion stages. From this text, "he is found on the path of all renunciates." From that stage onwards, the annoyances of concepts are abandoned, and so, in this sense, as one enters abandonment, things smooth out [mañju]. And as one's own and others' purposes result from that, it is glorious [śrī].

The ultimate, fruition Mañjuśrī refers to the embodiment of three kāyas and five primal wisdoms; as this text states, "first of the exalted, bearer of the three kāyas." These three kāyas, in the common context, are the unborn dharmakāya, like space, in which the sambhogakāya Vairocana appears like a cloud, out of which the nirmanakāya Śākyamuni is like rainfall, acting for the welfare of transient beings.

In the special context [of mantra], naturally luminous awareness is sambhogakāya, and the manifold appearances of awareness are nirmanakāya; yet no matter how displayed, these ultimately never depart from the unborn state, which is dharmakāya.

The five primal wisdoms mentioned here are[, first,] dharmatā beyond arising or ceasing, the dharmadhātu wisdom. [Second,] the [dharmadhātu] itself is cognizant and yet nonconceptual, [which is] mirror-like wisdom. [Third], these [two] are an indivisible unity, and free from acceptance and rejection, and so are the wisdom of equality.

[Fourth] is the cognizance of dharmas generally, and of their individual characteristics distinctly, [which is] the wisdom of individuated cognition. Fifth, because the purposes of self and other are effortlessly accomplished, there is the wisdom of accomplished action. And so the text says, "ubiquitous lord, lord of the five wisdoms."⁴

Mañjuśrī who appears to trainees with pure karma is the form of the deity seen by a yogin through the power of welldeveloped samādhi. Mañjuśrī who appears to embody specific attributes is a physical image as such, whether a picture drawn on cotton or wool cloth, or a bas-relief fashioned from copper or iron.

⁴ In his commentary, Garab Dorje (hereinafter "GD") says that 'mañju' means awareness, and 'śrī' means achieving the status of a holder of such awareness,

i.e., a vidyādhara.

'Of' is a connective particle. In other words, it shows the connection between the qualities mentioned and the possessor of those qualities, the venerable Mañjuśrī, like when we say "the lovely cow of Indra."

iii. Perfect Profession of The Qualities.

The qualities are those particular qualities that appear below. These qualities are the ones possessed by the Venerable One, and are expressed strictly in terms of his possession of them.

There are two ways in which they are professed: with profundity, in regard to the meaning, and vastly, through the words utilized. Profession of the [profound] meaning is known to ultimate, nondual, primal wisdom.

Profession through words has three parts: profession in terms of the intrinsic feature, nonduality; profession through the approach of secret mantra; and profession in terms of excellent qualities.

Profession in terms of the intrinsic feature, nonduality, means to profess the qualities through having recognized the intrinsic feature of one's own mind to be nondual, primal wisdom.

Although the sounds of such expression occur, they emerge from within the state free from arising and ceasing, and recede back into that very state. In short, this should be understood as the naturally-occurring sound of dharma. As this text puts it, "He teaches nonduality without duality, dwells at the pinnacle of perfection."

Profession of qualities through the approach of mantra is to meditate upon oneself as the venerable Mañjuśrī, and the profession of qualities causes rays of light to radiate out from the 'MUM' [syllable] in one's heart, making offerings to the Nobles, serving the needs of sentient beings, and dissolving back into one's heart.

Once again, as before, [light] disperses and gathers, and it continues to do so for as long as it takes one to complete the review of qualities. Here too, the text says: "He embodies the great approach of secret mantra."

Profession in terms of excellent qualities is to proclaim the qualities after having invoked the presence, in the space before one, of Venerable Mañjuśrī himself, surrounded by an entourage of countless Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas and Pratyekas. Imagine you are saying to him, "This is yet another one of your excellent qualities!" Here again, the text says, "great sea of the Tathāgatas' qualities."

Most concisely, this text says of the profound meaning and vast words: "proclamation of the vast and profound."

iv. Homage

Next, in order to utterly pacify obstacles, I shall explain the homage, which says: "Homage to the youthful Mañjuśrī!" Having put his request to Śākyamuni, Vajrapani, while assembling this text, before proceeding, offered this homage to the yidam deity. Does this mean, then, that Vajrapani himself faced obstacles? Not so! He had in mind the interests of those who would follow later.

'Mañjuśrī' has already been explained. He is 'youthful' because his kāya is not subject to aging or decay throughout the three times. He eternally abides just as he appears right now. 'To' is a locative particle, here referring to Mañjuśrī himself.

'Homage' [*phyag 'tshal lo*] is the seal [*phyag; mudrā*] of realization of the *profound* meaning, and the *vast* homage offered [*'tshal ba'o*] in a most respectful manner with one's body, speech and mind.

Explanation for Average Individuals^{ix}

Next, for those of average ability, is a presentation of the divisions [of the text] from start to finish. According to the explanatory tantra, [the root tantra is] presented in fourteen chapters, the first of which is the chapter of the request.^{x 5}
To explain it:

Chapter I. The Request

It begins with the words, "And then glorious Vajradhāra," and so on. 'And then' are words of transition, here from the prior root tantra in sixteen thousand chapters. After those chapters were taught, there followed the 'perfect profession of qualities,' which are essential oral instructions presented in the form of song,

this chapter being titled 'the request.'

'Glorious' includes the glory of one's own realization, and the glory of compassion towards others, both of which are possessed by Vajrapani. 'Vajradhāra' [vajra bearer] means that, internally, he bears the indivisible fivefold, primal wisdom, the *profound* ultimate vajra. This is [also] called the 'invincible vajra,' and [makes him] the "unique sattva^{xi} of the three worlds."

As a sign that he has grasped that ultimate meaning, he carries an enormous [i.e., vast], five-pronged iron vajra. What enlightened activities does he perform with it? As [the text] says, he is "the supreme subduer of those hard to tame, [the] victorious hero of the three worlds." He tames those who are difficult to subdue, like Brahma and Vishnu, and he is called 'supreme' because all of the Buddhas gathered together atop Mt. Meru and empowered Vajrapani.

⁵ GD presents a topical scheme or outline of the root text in nine parts, the first of which covers both the request and the reply, and in connection with them, the five marvelous features of tantric transmission (teacher, retinue, place, time, and teaching).

Because he himself is fearless, and conquers others' powers, he is heroic. He is victorious over the three worlds because he defeated the lord of the subterranean world, Mahādeva, the lord of the terrestrial world, Vishnu, and the lord of the celestial world, Brahma—the three gods of body, speech and mind of nonBuddhists. Inwardly, this indicates conquering the three [primary] disturbances.

What are his peerage and emblems? It says, "Secret Victor, the Vajra Lord." So he is of the vajra class, and because he assembled the secret mantra [teachings] and is the master of Vajrayāna, he is Vajrīsvara, the Vajra Lord. He holds the secret samayas, and has triumphed internally over the disturbances, and externally over those who are incorrigible, and so is called 'Victor.'

What is his countenance like? "With eyes like blooming white lotuses, and face like a lotus in full bloom." Just as a lotus grows from the mud and yet is unaffected by the defects of mud, so Vajrapani himself, while seeming extremely wrathful, is pristine within, since he lacks any disturbances.⁶ Because his eyes are completely round, it is as if they are blooming.

What are his hand emblems like? [He] "flourishes the supreme vajra in his hand again and again." The vajra in his hand appears as the indication of its true meaning, and so is supreme. He flourishes it again and again as a symbolic offering of his request to the Bhagavat to turn the wheel of dharma over and over again.

⁶ GD elaborates: Knowing what must be done to tame others by virtue of possessing the five eyes (explained later by Vima, *infra*), no matter what he does, no harm ensues, and so he remains pristine as a lotus.

The gesture also symbolizes that he guides transient beings with ceaseless compassion. It even symbolizes that he continuously disciplines the unruly.⁷ Finally, inwardly, it symbolizes that he possesses the continuity of primal wisdom.

Who were the companions who made the request along with him? Since an entourage of five hundred wrathful Vajrapanis gathered and made the request alongside him, the text says, "With him were limitless Vajrapanis, Furrowed Brow and all the others." 'Furrowed Brow' [also] is shorthand for a set of facial features, like bared fangs, eyes rolled back, furrowed brows, eyebrows rising up, and so forth.⁸

Those assembled wrathful ones also possess unlimited excellent qualities and abilities. What enlightened activity do they perform? They are "the heroic subduers of those hard to tame," just as was explained earlier. Why 'hard to tame?' Because they must be tamed by force, with ferocity.

What is their demeanor? "Fierce and frightening." They have wrathful accoutrements. What are their hand implements? They "brandish[] vajras with radiating tips." From the tips of their vajras, tiny vajras emerge and subdue the unruly. Their activity duplicates that of the principal [Vajrapani].⁹ What distinguishes their attitude? The text says, for instance, "with great compassion, prajñā and skill... they superbly perform the welfare of beings." As they have tremendous compassion towards transient beings, this is *vastness*. As they finely distinguish phenomena with prajñā, this is *profundity*. Since they accomplish the welfare of others through such means, it is 'superb.'¹⁰

⁷ GD adds that he continually is overwhelming the disturbed mental states of beings in the three realms of conditioned existence.

⁸ These lines also present the marvelous retinue of vidyādhara emanations, as GD points out. They, too, have the ability to crush ignorance and conceptual distortions.

⁹ GD says that 'vajras with radiating tips' refers to their unimpeded wisdom awareness, and brandishing [these vajras] in their hands connotes the

What distinguishes their excellent qualities? They have "a joyous and rapturous state of mind." They enjoy helping transient beings, are enraptured by the sight of the Teacher, and rejoice when he teaches the dharma—this is what takes place in their minds.¹¹

What type of physical form do they possess, enabling them to perform Buddha activity? They have "wrathful physical form" with which to "masterfully perform enlightened activity," and which they "bow[] in reverence" while [requesting teaching].

While they remain wrathful by nature and in attire, and accomplish the aims of beings through the twelve deeds or four modes of enlightened activity, those wrathful ones nonetheless are never reckless; they make their request while physically bowing in a most respectful manner.

How, or in what way, exactly, do they make their request? "[T]hey offered homage to the Tathāgata Bhagavat, the Lord Bhagavat Tathāgata, the perfect Buddha, and joining their palms together, presented themselves and made this request...."

compassionate activity for beings they perform with the prowess and enlightened qualities of such awareness.

¹⁰ It is also superb or superlative compassion because it is not deliberate, according to GD. Rather, it arises naturally from their impartial prajñā. This line thus indicates that the kāyas and wisdoms benefit beings without deliberate effort.

¹¹ GD adds that their joy stems from not being troubled by disturbed mental states.

[The Buddha] has made the 'transition to' [gatha] the true nature [tatha], 'ventured' [gatha] to serve beings, conquered the four māras, come to possess the six outstanding qualities,^{xii} perfected all outstanding qualities, removed the obscuration of ignorance, and fully expanded primal wisdom. As is said, "Since

he has cleared away the sleep of ignorance and has fully comprehended all there is to know, Buddha is pure and expansive, like a lotus flower."^{xiii}

With vajras clasped between their joined palms, and while kneeling in [the Buddha's] presence, they made their request.

For what purpose did they make this request? The text says, "Ubiquitous Lord, for our benefit, for our welfare, out of loving concern for us, explain to us how to attain manifest, perfect awakening through the magical network."

The teacher, addressed as 'ubiquitous lord' because he pervades the animate and inanimate worlds, is implored: 'To heal us, your retinue, out of your lovingkindness towards us, please help us obtain manifest, perfect awakening through the magical network, the synthesis of exceptional method and prajñā!'¹²

Joined with the request on their own behalf is a request for the sake of others. If the preceding was the request for their own benefit, then what is the request for the sake of others? It says, "To heal all sentient beings, whose minds are troubled by disturbances and who are mired in the mud of ignorance, so that they might obtain the highest fruition...."

¹² GD parses the magical network, *Mayajala*, this way: *maya* (Tib: *sgyu 'phrul*) is ignorance and thinking; *jala* (*dra ba*) is nonduality. In other words, nonduality underlies, pervades and links all ignorant conceptual elaborations.

'Because of mental disturbances, such as anger, bodhicitta is agitated, like troubled water, and so sentient beings do not see how things really are; and like elephants stuck in a bog, they all are trapped in an ocean of suffering. So we ask that you please explain how to reverse that, so that they are healed in this life and, in a later life, obtain the fruition of unsurpassed awakening.' That is what [the petitioners] are saying.

To which teacher do they address this request? It says, "Perfect Buddha Bhagavat, Guru of Beings, Teacher...." For themselves and others, they put their request to the fully perfect Buddha, the Bhagavat. It is he who teaches the dharma to beings.

Isn' t it impossible for that teacher not to know what they seek? As it says, "Knower of the true nature, the great samaya...." As he never strays from

realization of the [true] meaning, that is the great samaya—he knows reality, as it actually is.

Doesn't he know the capacities and ideas of those to be trained? "With your supreme understanding of their ideas and abilities" means that he knows the particular capacity of, and what is suitable for, each one.

So what dharma do they request? "The wisdom being Mañjuśrī, the Bhagavats' wisdom kāya, the great uṣṇīṣa, the master of words, the wisdom kāya that is self-existing, whose name is the supreme expression of perfection...."

To the Bhagavat's wisdom kāya, everything is clear and apparent, just like in a mirror, and so this is [his] mirror-like wisdom. Great uṣṇīṣa [means that] the equality of all phenomena is worthy of the honor of [placement] above the crowns of the heads of all, and so refers to [his] wisdom of equality.

[He is the] master of words because he speaks the words of dharma through knowing distinctly the general status and individual character of every phenomenon, and so this is his wisdom of individuated knowledge.

The wisdom kāya is the kāya that actively accomplishes the aims of beings, and since it, too, is produced from primal wisdom, it is the wisdom that accomplishes aims. 'Selfexisting' means the primal wisdom of the unborn dharmadhātu.¹³

The 'wisdom being Mañjuśrī' is fundamental bodhicitta. Great, primal wisdom contemplates equality, and compassion concerns itself with the welfare of transient beings. The form kāyas appear as its emblems, and so also can be referred to as [the wisdom being].^{xiv} The perfect profession of his names, both in terms of its words and its meaning, has the greatest significance, and so is 'supreme.'

In short, their request was for a single dharma that captures the one flavor of the five primal wisdoms, along with the sixth, [fundamental] bodhicitta.

So by asking about the names, were they not asking about the meaning? [No,] as it says, "whose meaning is vast, whose meaning is profound, whose meaning is unrivaled in grandeur, and utterly tranquil, virtuous at first, in the middle, and in the end...."

¹³ GD adds that the wisdom kāya is radiant light, and not something corporeal molded from tendentious impressions in the defiled ground consciousness. It doesn't fade or falter. This is also the identification of the marvelous teacher, among the five marvelous features of transmission of secret mantra.

Why is the meaning profound? First, it is profound because the subject matter of the highly significant, secret mantra is great equality, dharmatā. It is also profound because there is no other dharma that can compare with it. It is profound, as well, because it utterly pacifies the proliferation of thought constructs.

It is profound, again, because it contains the causes of the three virtues. It is also profound because it is spoken by past, present and future Buddhas. It is profound, too, because it is a song of the vajra vehicle. Because that which is being expressed is profound in all these ways, that which expresses it is profound, as well.

As for being vast, [Mañjuśrī] appears in a variety of emanations. Because nothing whatsoever is [Mañjuśrī's] equal, he is unrivaled. All limiting thought constructs are utterly pacified.¹⁴

The initial virtue is the prajñā of listening. The intermediate virtue is the prajñā of reflection. The final virtue is the prajñā of experiential training. Why are these virtuous? Because they eradicate the mental disturbances.¹⁵

Who teaches this? [It was] "spoken by the Buddhas of the past, and...the Buddhas of the future, too, will proclaim [it], perfect Buddhas who appear at present state [it] over and over again."

¹⁴ GD says the meaning is vast because it covers the primordial enduring condition, the intermediate confused condition, and the final, liberated condition, among many other topics.

¹⁵ GD comments on the unrivaled grandeur of the meaning of the wisdom kāya: the pure ground is dharmakāya. It is ornamented by the pure result, the five kāyas of wisdom awareness. Nothing could be better than this, and nothing can compete with it.

At the time when the Victor Śākyamuni taught this to Vajrapani on Bird-Foot Mountain [in Maghada], by the blessing [of that event], in the northern world called "Pedmochen" [lotus-laden], the Tathāgata known as "Superb Lotus" also

taught it to his retinue of Bodhisattvas. It was likewise taught in this way in all five directions.

Even in the utterly pristine sphere of dharmatā, the Buddha Vajradhāra teaches this to his retinue of Tathāgatas. Likewise, the glorious Vairocana teaches this to his retinue of Bodhisattvas in Akaniṣṭa. Atop the peak of Mt. Meru as well, a nirmanakāya in the guise of a universal emperor teaches this to the gods of the Realm of Thirty-three.

In the realm of Tu ṣita, too, the Victor Maitreya teaches this to the gods. Not only that, the sound of this teaching resounds in the heavens, and in the beats from sticks and drums. As the quotation goes, "The teaching of a supreme being, his mastery and realization, is proclaimed by mouth, from every part of the body, and even from the sky itself."

He taught this once in the sixteen thousand [verse]root tantra, and later once more here in 'Delightful Experience'; Shakyamuni taught this two times.¹⁶

For what reason is the Mayajala versified as song? As the great Mayajala tantra itself says, "Great Vajradhāra, holder of secret mantra, to the great delight of countless, please teach in the form of a song!" And so, in the root tantra of the Mayajala, and elsewhere, Vajradhāra expresses immeasurable meaning through vajra songs, to the great delight of those in attendance. Here they ask, "please teach us in just the same way!"¹⁷

¹⁶ GD explains that the statement that this is taught in the great magical network tantra means that it arises out of the great, ultimate continuum of nondual wisdom awareness. That is its true source.

Next comes their commitment to retain the meaning of that which they have requested:

"Lord, so that we might come to hold the secrets of all perfect Buddhas, until we reach certainty, our resolve shall remain steady." This is the promise they each are making: 'In order to become a holder of the secret mantra teachings of the Buddhas, until I definitely attain certain awakening, I will entertain no doubt about my purpose, and will maintain it steadfastly.'

The commitment for instruction that benefits others is: "To remove all

disturbances and dispel all ignorance, please bestow instructions upon sentient beings that suit their diverse mentalities."

So, with that commitment, what is to be done? Provide instructions that relieve entirely sentient beings' mental disturbances, and eliminate their causes, ignorance and lack of understanding. Moreover, such instructions should take into account that beings have distinct mentalities and interests, and cannot just be generic.

The request is made with deep physical, verbal and mental respect: "Lord of Secrets Vajrapani thus put his request to the Tathāgata, joining his palms in respect and remaining before him." So Vajrapani folded his hands before Śākyamuni, bowed in a gesture of physical respect, arose from his lotus seat, and supplicated.

¹⁷ GD:"Let it loose from your heart, let it spill from the vase of your throat, sprinkle it over your potent tongue, measure it through the gaps between your teeth."

Chapter II. The Reply

What follows next is the chapter of the response spoken [by the Buddha], which goes: "Then the Bhagavat Śākyamuni, the perfect Buddha, supreme among bipeds," and so forth.

No sooner had the compiler [of these teachings] put his request to the Teacher, "then..." right after that [came the response], so ['then'] connects these sections together.

He has conquered all four māras, namely, the aggregates, mental disturbances, sensual fascination, and the hegemony of death; and possesses consummate glory, fame, wisdom, majesty, beauty, and zeal.^{xv}

The Victor was born to the Shakya clan, and so is named "Shakya"; not having to guard against nonvirtues of body, speech and mind, but rather being invulnerable to them by nature, he is likewise "Muni" [formidable].

He fulfills the purposes of self and others, has removed all obscurations, and has fully-developed primal wisdom.^{xvi} He is foremost among those, such as gods

and humans, who stand on two legs, and so is 'supreme.'

Or else, because his physique is supreme, he is adorned with the signs and marks. Because his speech is supreme, it is mellifluous like [the speech of] Brahma. Because his mind is supreme, it possesses omniscient wisdom. Because his qualities are supreme, like a precious, wishfulfilling jewel, they are inexhaustible. Because his activity is supreme, it is unhindered in benefitting transient beings. Thus, he is supreme in five different respects.

In what manner did he teach? He "extended his long and broad, fine tongue from his mouth," and so forth. The tongue of Śākyamuni is fine because it is the very source of propagation of the sacred dharma. It is also fine because it never utters nonvirtuous doctrine. Its features include that it is lengthy and broad within his palate, and he extends it [to speak].

What does he do next? The [root text] says he "exhibit[s] a smile that illuminates the three worlds, subdues the four māra enemies, and purifies the three inferior migrations of sentient beings." Generally speaking, a Tathāgatha is naturally endowed with luminous light. In fact, such light makes the gods look dingy by comparison, dampening their pride.

Not only that, the tip of his tongue, in particular, radiates light, first illuminating Mt. Bird-Leg, then the entire desire realm, then the form realm, and finally the formless realm.

These rays of light subjugate the four types of māras. They radiate clusters of wrathful ones who especially subdue devaputra māras^{xvii} who pose an obstacle to the teaching of tantra.

When the rays of light touch sentient beings, those who are blind can once again see forms, the deaf can hear sounds, the mute know again how to speak, and those who have lost their memories have them restored. The arthritic are again nimble. When [the rays] reach the three lower realms, they become free of suffering, and mental disturbances are purified. And so, smiling towards those in attendance, extending his tongue, and emitting rays of light from his tongue are the three precursors to [the Buddha's] transmission of dharma, just like smoke rising is a precursor to the appearance of flames.

What was his speech like? "[W]ith eloquent speech of Brahma reaching

throughout the three worlds...." For example, the sound of the voice of Brahma is pleasing, strong, subtle, clear, charismatic, enduring, uplifting, and vibrant. It brings undefiled bliss to the mind, and even from extremely far away, sounds just like it is right in front of one. In other words, he possesses boundless qualities of speech. [The Buddha's] speech here was just like that.

Although his speech covers the three worlds, since sentient beings speak many dissimilar languages, could they understand [the Buddha]? Those with a karmic propensity could understand him.

To what audience did he speak? He "spoke once more to the Mighty One, Vajrapani, Lord of Secrets." Vajrapani is the most junior among the thousand and one Buddhas, and so all the Buddhas gathered together to empower him. As it says, for instance, "I am the wrathful one bedecked in blue, the kāya comprising all Buddhas."

They also conferred upon him the secret name, Mighty One with Vajra in Hand. And, just in case you wonder whether this might have been a blessing transmission, it assuredly was not, as it says "spoke once more to...the Lord of Secrets"; and so it was an actual, spoken transmission.^{xviii}

He is the 'Lord of Secrets,' first, because he has received the secret empowerment; second, because he has been empowered into the secrets of enlightened body, speech and mind; third, because he is the compiler of secret mantra [teachings and scriptures]; and finally, because he has mastered the vehicle of [secret] mantra. And so the Teacher once more, addressing Vajrapani, gave voice to the song that he had previously sung [in the Mayajala tantra].¹⁸

For what purpose did he sing it ? [The root verse explains,] "since you possess great compassion and are determined to help beings," and so forth. In other words, 'so that you, who possess great compassion, may benefit transient beings in this [life] and in future [lives], this is my response to the request you made of me.'

Whose name is so significant when spoken ? "To speak the name of wisdom-bodied Mañjuśrī[] is highly significant, [it] purifies, [it] removes wrong actions...." Speaking the name of Mañjuśrī, who possesses a body that unites the six primal wisdoms, is extremely significant.

Why so? Merely reading it purifies all of the obscurations found in one's mind stream and clears away all of one's present wrong actions. That is why it is so meaningful.

To rouse his audience to pay close heed: "Very well, glorious Vajradhāra, Vajrapani, listen to me diligently, that would be excellent...for that reason, Lord of Secrets, I will teach you well...."

In other words, it would be very good for you to listen to me, Śākyamuni. Why [is it] very good? Because, after all, you asked me about the meaning of Mañjuśrī.

Addressing the one who would compile these teachings as 'Lord of Secrets,' [the Buddha] exhorts him by saying, 'you are to benefit sentient beings in the future, and to that end, listen with your full attention now, as I am going to present to you, in a splendid way, the profession of qualities of he who epitomizes the six lineages.'

¹⁸ According to GD, the marvelous teaching, among the five marvelous features, is identified here.

Was it really necessary to encourage Vajrapani [to listen]? It wasn't necessary. Rather, Vajrapani here served as a proxy for instructing future generations of yogins to listen carefully, so as not to forget, mix things up, or miss the point.

The [Buddha] having said this, the assembly rejoices: "'That is wonderful, Bhagavat,' they applauded." What they mean is, "Bhagavat, it is so wonderful that you are granting us this dharma of Mañjuśrī."

III. Surveying The Lineages

Next comes the chapter on surveying the lineages, beginning with, "Then the Bhagavat Śākyamuni," and so on. This is a transitional phrase, indicating that as soon as he was sure that they were listening, the Bhagavat proceeded to speak.

"The great lineage of all secret mantra...." This line shows the attention [Buddha] gave to the comprehensive lineage. The term 'mantra' of 'secret mantra' denotes protection. Simply put, it refers to exceptional skill and prajñā.

The term 'lineage' is used because [Buddhas] derive from lineages, and also to refer to holders of those lineages. Because it is sovereign over all lineages, and

subsumes all of them, it is the 'great' lineage. It is also referred to in that way because it is the source of the vehicles of kriyā, caryā and yoga [tantra].

The purpose of this lineage is to serve as a remedy that subdues the five mental disturbances systemically. This is just a very concise way to explain it.

"[T]he lineage of holders of secret mantra and vidyā mantra...." This line shows the [Buddha] directing his attention to the karma lineage. 'Secret mantra' refers to the masculine, or skillfulness. 'Vidyā mantra' is the feminine, or prajñā.

As for their functions, secret mantra dispels distorted understanding. Vidyā mantra dispels ignorance. As is said, for example, "Not to be transgressed, of secret nature that is difficult to fathom, acclaimed as practiced in secret, certainly it should be called secret mantra," and, "Since it produces the highest order of speech and possesses the siddhi one seeks, it is called 'vidyā mantra.'"

'Dhara' means to hold [this lineage]. Its purpose is to tame trainees in whom jealousy and laziness predominate.

"Fully surveyed...the three lineages...." This line shows the attention [Buddha] gave to the Tathāgata lineage.^{xix} The three lineages [here] are body, speech and mind. Since Vairocana comprises those three lineages, [the Tathāgata lineage] is described here in these terms. Its purpose is to tame those who are predominantly obtuse.

"[T]he worldly and trans-worldly lineage" describes the attention [Buddha] paid to the lotus lineage. The primal wisdom of fine discernment comprehends both the mundane and the supramundane. The way it does this is to experience duality, but not cling to it. That is why it is both a worldly and a transcendent lineage. Its purpose is to tame those who are predominantly passionate.

"The great lineage which illuminates the world...." This describes [Buddha's] consideration of the vajra lineage. All phenomena in the world appear and yet lack intrinsic nature, like images appearing in a mirror. To realize this is to 'illuminate the world.' Because [this lineage] is the heart essence of all [of them], it is a great lineage. Its purpose is to tame those who are predominantly angry.

"The supreme mahāmudrā lineage." This line is talking about the vajra lineage of fundamental bodhicitta. While, generally speaking, 'mudrā' has many meanings, here the sense of mudrā is to brand. That all dharmas do not truly arise is their greatest hallmark. The purpose of this lineage is to destroy all mentally-

constructed designations.

"[He] surveyed...the great Mahā-uṣṇīṣa lineage...."^{xx} This passage shows [the Buddha's] attention to the jewel [ratna] lineage; and as Ratnasambhava's lineage is the source of all of the sublime qualities of the Buddhas, it is a great lineage. 'Uṣṇīṣa' signifies attaining prominence through such qualities.

Where it says that Buddha "surveyed" the enumerated epithets [of Mañjuśrī], we should read this as 'he was absorbed in their contemplation in a state of samādhi.'^{xxi}

So in what sense did he see them? With the eyes of primal wisdom, he saw the profound, *i.e.*, the meaning of emptiness as it truly is; and with the eyes of compassion, he saw vastness, *i.e.*, the full range of everything there is.

Or else, there were three things he saw: the mental disturbances that are to be abandoned; divine [virtue], which is the remedy for abandoning them; and primal wisdom, which overturns even divine thoughts. This meaning applies too.

IV. Presenting The Six Lineages of Enlightenment¹⁹

Next, to present the upadeśa [instruction] chapter of the Mayajala [tantra], which is a praise to all [of the lineages, it begins], "and then the master of words spoke these verses...." The 'master of words' is none other than the Bhagavat himself.

'Verses' means that the Teacher spoke about the one who embodies the six lineages, in metered lines consisting of exactly seven syllables.^{xxii} Because of such mastery of speech, the Teacher is described as the 'master' as well. Armed with the realization gathered through his observation of the lineages, the "master of words spoke these verses...."

"[C]ontaining the six sovereigns of secret mantra...." 'Om vajra tīkṣṇa' and the rest are the six mantras of the six wisdom

beings.²⁰ What is the main thing [the Buddha] is expressing through these words? "[T]hat which arises nondually," and so on. In other words, [it is] the state of enlightenment, as embodied by the wisdom kāyas that are devoid of dualistic grasping and fixation.

"Spoke these verses...concerning that which...is unborn."

Awareness, which is intrinsically cognizant, is also, in its abiding nature, unborn, and as such is the supreme fruition [too].²¹

¹⁹ GD nominates this chapter "Presenting the Reality of Vajradhāra, Great Non-Abiding Wisdom." Accordingly, he links it together with the following chapter (V) in Vima's outline.

²⁰ GD sheds more light on including a sixth lineage: "The ground also includes a sixth kāya, the essential reality (svābhāvika) dimension. The sixth lineage, on top of the five, is the lineage of 'A'.

"The sixth female Buddha, with the other five, is Nairātmyā (absence of personal identity). The sixth poison that goes with the other five is resentment. So there are six lineages in all."

To provide inspiration, the stages of fruition are further spelled out: A Ā I Ī U Ū E AI O AU AM AH. In this regard, the twelve stages of Buddhahood have no hierarchical order. Rather, they demonstrate a range of twelve distinct qualities belonging to a single, primal wisdom.

Further, as the Buddha's omniscient wisdom has destroyed ignorance, all objects of knowledge appear clearly to it. It clearly sees mental disturbances to be primal wisdom, without rejecting them. It lacks any locus or limit, is invariant, and indivisible. It is the source of all that sentient beings want or need, and accomplishes their welfare.

At the same time, it is untainted by faults, and accomplishes the aims of others effortlessly. It is perfectly impossible to find an example adequate to illustrate it; one can only offer weak analogies. It is naturally-luminous awareness, and knows all that there is, just as it truly is. It both inherently knows, and knows that it knows.

Please understand that the foregoing was just a summary of all that has been taught about the range of excellent qualities of the Buddhas. The Vajragharbālankara tantra puts the same point this way, which is quite clear:

²¹ "The six [sattvas/lineages], in reality, do not possess dualistic characteristics, and yet feature qualities that are able to manifest. That which is unborn still

appears, as naturally-occurring nonduality has qualities that are presented unimpededly.

"The way this works is that within the state of indivisible dharmatā and dharmakāya, the five prajñā awareness kāyas ripen like seeds within the vase of the five elements, which are the natural radiance of awareness. These do not ripen into fruit, as they simply abide as essential, empty wisdom."

GD goes on to correlate the various features and qualities of this ground continuum with the twelve vowel sounds that follow.

"The great bhūmi of total light is like the the maṇḍala of the sun.

The second is the light of amrita, which is extremely luminous, like the moon.

Light of space is the third, because it is simply present, just like space.

Vajra light is the fourth, and that level is delightful.

The fifth is called 'jewel light', where one abides in empowerment.

Lotus light is the sixth, as it is wide open, like a lotus.

The seventh is 'light of action,' so-called because Buddha activity is performed.

The eighth is called 'incomparable,' as there is no apt comparison for its meaning.

'Exemplary meaning' is the ninth. Every illustration is shattered through and through. The tenth is 'light of prajñā,' and is the

unsurpassed stage of Buddhahood.

The eleventh is actual omniscience, the great bhūmi of sublime luminosity.

The twelfth is intrinsic awareness fully known to itself, the final culmination of the Buddhas' primal wisdom."

To show that Mañjuśrī personifies the hearts of all Buddhas past, present and future, the root text says, "sthito hṛdi," and so forth. 'Sthito hṛdi' means 'abides in the heart.' 'Jñānamūrti [r]' means 'the wisdom kāya.' 'Ahaṃ buddho' means 'Buddhas of the three times.' 'Buddhānāṃ' means 'I myself am the Buddha.' 'Tryadhvavartinām' means abides in the three times.

To tie this all together, "The Buddha who abides in the heart is the very embodiment of the wisdom kāyas of the Buddhas abiding in the three times."²²

With this is presented the meditation on the wheel of prajñā.

"Om vajratīkṣṇa" means sharp vajra. "Duḥkhaccheda" means

to cut off suffering. "Prajñājñānamūrtaye" means the uṣṇīṣa of primal wisdom. "Jñānakāya" means possessing the wisdom kāya. "Vāgiśvarāra" means master of speech. "Arāpacanāya te namaḥ" means [homage to] the dispassionate sphere of experience of unborn prajñā.²³

These correspond, respectively, to the padma, vajra, tathāgata, karma, ratna and vajra bodhicitta lineages. When you meditate and recite [these] mantras, visualize yourself as the Venerable One, and in your heart is a six-spoked wheel with rim, on which these six mantras are arranged. Do the emanation and collection [of light] with the recitation.

When you are reciting the "Profession of Qualities," though, you should understand that here you are [just] offering praise [to Mañjuśrī] by referring to these, his principal names.^{xxiii}

²² GD explains it this way: "From unchanging awareness appears unimpeded compassion. The mind of naturally-occurring wisdom is unchanging. They possess, in common, the compassion that accompanies equanimous wisdom. This unstoppable compassion equalizes everything." ²³ GD says that these mantras show how the kāyas and wisdoms appear from the intrinsic qualities of the ground.

V. Wisdom of Fundamental Bodhicitta

Next, to explain the chapter on the wisdom being Mañjuśrī in relation to fundamental bodhicitta, it begins with, "In this way, the Buddha Bhagavat," and so forth. And so here, to more extensively explain his qualities, they are described as being 'like this.'

Since meditation upon the fact that dharmas do not [truly] arise is what enables perfect Buddhas to appear, the verse says, "the perfect Buddha appears from 'A'." If you ask, well, how could it be that [Buddhas] arise from just this one

letter?

It is because "'A' is supreme among all syllables." Why is it supreme? Because it is the letter that conveys the great meaning of dharma, as [the next line] points out, [it is] "highly meaningful, the sacred letter."

How is it, moreover, that it conveys the grand meaning, the meaning of being 'unborn'? "Arising from within, it is unborn." You see, other letters depend upon the use of the teeth, tongue, lips and palate, whereas 'A' does not depend upon them, it simply emerges naturally from within, and so it is the holiest of all letters. Since it, itself, is inexpressibly present, it is "free of linguistic formulation."²⁴

As it is the primary cause of all expressed sounds, and is implicated in all speech, "[i]t is the supreme cause of all expression, and makes all words utterly clear."

²⁴ GD makes the analogy clear: just like, for instance, 'A' is the essence of all letters, in the same way, awareness is more vital than the five wisdoms and elements. To say that 'A' is the most meaningful (or ultimate) sacred letter is not literal; rather, it means that awareness, the dharmakāya, is indivisible total purity and natural occurrence (where natural occurrence means the same thing as non-arising).

Thus, while all phenomena of samsāra and nirvāṇa appear from the ground, that ground itself is naturally occurring, free of causes and conditions. And so they are unborn. We cannot explain their arising; it is beyond our ability to express.

So then, how are the mental disturbances removed ? The next lines say, "Great offering and great desire, he brings joy to all sentient beings." Whatever pleases the deities can be called an offering. Here, establishing that mental disturbances *are* wisdom, without rejecting them, is consistent with that sense of offering; it is an innate offering to, and within, that natural state itself. The same applies to all the subsequent references to offerings.

The adjective 'great' [as in 'great desire'] works here the way, for example, you might call a mantra that removes poison a "poison mantra"; because it defeat the opposing force, it is 'great.'

'Desire' means the innate craving to resolve mental disturbances within

equanimity. Such craving effects the removal of misguided desire, and the generation of undefiled bliss.

"Great offering and great aggression, he is the greatest foe of all emotional disturbance." He possesses an antagonism which destroys conceptuality, and thus destroys ordinary anger, making him its greatest foe.

"Great offering and great obtuseness, his wise dullness removes stupidity." Not recognizing [real] differences among phenomena, he has ultimate obtuseness, which dispels ordinary stupidity.

"Great offering and great wrath, he is the greatest foe of intense anger." Since he has no tolerance for proliferation of mental disturbances, he is very wrathful, and by so defeating commonplace anger, he is its greatest foe.

"Great offering and great passion, he dispels all passion." His passion for ultimate, undefiled bliss, removes garden-variety, parsimonious craving and attachment.

Each of these phrases is constructed the same way: the former [term] is what conquers, and the latter is what is conquered.

There are four distinct ways to connect these couplets with pith instructions on practice:

1. A trainee who is still attracted to these mental disturbances should release them through engaging in skillful conduct that resembles, rather than rejects them. This is the 'offering of liberating, analogous conduct.'

2. By transforming the mental disturbances into the five primal wisdoms, one makes the 'offering of transformative wisdom.'

3. By being freed from the five mental disturbances, one attains the great mudrā of the kāyas of the five lineages of awakening, and so makes the 'offering of the mudrā of liberation.'

4. When one investigates the mental disturbances, one discovers that they have no truly established essence, but simply abide as dharmatā. This is the 'offering of natural purity.'²⁵

"Great wish, great happiness, great joy, great delight." Sentient beings possess the spiritual wish to be free, and this is what creates the happiness of liberation.

The teaching of dharma brings them joy, and realizing its true meaning, they are delighted.

²⁵ GD reads this sequence as expressing the defining characteristics of the five wisdoms. He explains, for example, that great desire is the wisdom of fine discrimination, which through careful analysis cures ordinary desire. It is

"Great form and great figure, too. Great complexion and great heft. Great in name, as well, and great in scope—his great maṇḍala is expansive." [Mañjuśrī]'s form is visible but without solidity, and he also emanates bodies that are seemingly material. Because, in fact, those are the products of primal wisdom, they are 'great.'

His body possesses a glowing, radiant complexion as a sign of his internal, luminous wisdom; and so it has great color. Others are no match for it, and so his figure is hefty. His name is great because he is highly renowned. With extensive accumulation of merit, he is great in scope.

Since, in him, the vast and the profound are nondual, and he is the source of every ritual method of accomplishment, he is a great maṇḍala. Pervading everywhere and not obstructed by anything, this maṇḍala 'is expansive.'²⁶

What sets his wisdom apart is that "[h]e bears the great weapon of prajñā, the greatest iron hook for mental disturbances. Illustrious and highly renowned, he is most vivid, and very clear."

The weapon of prajñā conquers mental disturbances, as if disturbed mental states were a crazed elephant, and wisdom an iron hook used to subdue it. Moreover, his fame is unique throughout the three realms; and as a sign of his internal luminous wisdom, he is surrounded outwardly by an aura of light rays.²⁷

the irrepressible quality of awareness that defeats the disturbances (like aggression), which is reflective wisdom.

Similarly, great obtuseness is nonconceptuality, the dharmadhātu wisdom. In short, the wisdoms, which are the natural prowess of awareness, displace ordinary disturbances, which do not truly abide. ²⁶To GD, the expansive, great maṇḍala is wisdom awareness, which innately and unobstructedly abides within the completely pure expanse.

In what manner do his emanations appear ? "The skilled one is master of great magic; great magic accomplishes the goal. Great magic is joy beyond joy, great magic employs optical illusion."

He is expert in the means by which transient beings complete the two accumulations, such that, with illusory emanations skillfully working for the benefit of transient beings, he accomplishes the particular aims sought by each one of them. As is said,

Sentience is illusory in aspect;
awakening, too, is like an illusion,
just like some skillful conjurers
reciting spells upon shards of clay,
with sleight-of-hand and prior training,
can make a jewel or some other form
appear to a mind that craves it.

Out of compassion, he derives joy from serving transient beings, and with prajñā, he delights in the nondual meaning.²⁸ Just like a conjurer who manifests what is not there, and transforms what is there, through showing illusions to those who have not realized the profound meaning, he undermines their grasping at things as real.

²⁷ For GD, 'vivid' and 'clear' here are shorthand for the six defining qualities of dharmatā, the true nature: it is naturally cognizant, unimpeded, universal, lucently pure, invariable, and empty.

²⁸ 'Joy beyond joy,' for GD, means the special joy that manifests through experiencing the great bindu that abides within one's own nature, which is the ultimate meaning to be realized.

How does he teach the common path?

He is the foremost, great patron,
the supreme preserver of ethical discipline. He has the stability of great forbearance, and is unrelenting in great diligence.

Abiding in the samādhi of great mental equipoise, he holds the corpus of great prajñā

with great might and superior method, aspirations and an ocean of wisdom.

Charity that is completely pure of the three spheres is the foremost generosity. As no faults arise from it, his conduct upholds the highest ethical standard. Since he is undisturbed by concepts, his patience is stable. Without the taint of thoughts, his exertion is relentless. In the absence of the enemy, distraction, his samādhi is great.

Having realized nonduality, his prajñā is superior.²⁹ Having conquered the adversary māras, he is great in might. Possessing a range of methods for liberating self and other, he has become a giant of skillful means. He bears aspirations to liberate self and other, and wisdom that knows all there is, just as it is.

The magnitude [of these virtues], and of his lack of grasping at what appears, is comparable to an ocean. In this way, the Venerable One possesses the ten transcendent virtues, and teaches them to others as well.

²⁹ GD more specifically explains the allusion to the corpus (body) of prajñā. It is the precious container that supports the emergence of wisdom and the two form kāyas.

"His nature of great love is without bound, his great compassion, the finest sentiment." This love is like that of a mother for her only child, and yet, being free of attachment toward that [child], it is the grandest love. Since it is without partiality, and not just intermittent, it is without bound. Because his compassion for transient beings is ceaseless, it is superior. Because it, too, is free of attachment, it is the finest sentiment.

But there are four unlimited [virtuous sentiments], so why are joy and equanimity not mentioned here? That pair of qualities are implicitly covered here as well.

What is the difference between method and prajñā? "He possesses the great prowess of prajñā, great expertise, and the highest skill." He possesses the great prajñā that dissects phenomena most carefully, and so realizes their nonduality.

He is expert at skillful action, in the sense that he is adroit at serving the aims of transient beings. He teaches a variety of training methods suited to the diverse mentalities of disciples. Skill and prajñā are allpervasive; they are present in everything belonging to the path and the result.

How are miracles used to accomplish aims? "He bears the power of great miracles, great strength and great alacrity, great miracles of highest renown, this powerful one who overwhelms others." Blazing fire from above, gushing water from below, turning one into many and many into one, fitting the universe into a single icon and emanating icons that fill the universe and so forth, [he performs miracles].³⁰

Invincible from his own side and able to dominate others, he is powerful. He has the strength to accomplish the purposes of transient beings as swiftly as thoughts move, and is highly renowned among hearers, isolated Buddhas,^{xxiv} worldly beings, and Bodhisattvas. His greatness lies in the ability to completely overwhelm the four māras through the power of primal wisdom.³¹

³⁰ The power of great miracle, according to GD, is that from his kāya of prajñā awareness, his retinue emerges, though they are really not separate

What are his actual abilities? "He crushes the great mountain of existence, unyielding and bearing the great vajra with great ferocity, great wrath, terrifier of the most frightening." Being born over and over again within the six transient states is conditioned existence, which [process] is incredibly difficult to destroy, like a mountain. What destroys it is the realization of nonduality.

The characteristic of such [realization] is its invariability, thus it is 'unyielding.' Emptiness, like a vajra, cannot be fractured apart. Indeed, as is said, "Because it cannot be broken, cut or destroyed, emptiness is described as a vajra."

In terms of meaning, because he destroys all habitual tendencies, [Mañjuśrī] is ferocious, while in terms of symbolism, he manifests in wrathful form as the tamer of all those who are incorrigible. Whom does he terrify? The Venerable One intimidates even the most fearsome beings, like Brahma, Mahādeva and others.

What is his particular approach to the path? "Great protector of superior lineage, supreme guru of secret mantra who adheres to the way of Mahāyāna, the supreme approach of Mahāyāna." He is the best among the classes of deities of body, speech and mind who shelter and protect those in training; and because he teaches the sacred dharma in full to transient beings, he is their guru.³²

from him; and from them unimpededly appear five groups of emanations, re-emanations, and so forth, without end.

³¹ He has the power in any given moment to transform deluded experience into wisdom. GD.

Since he teaches exceptional method and prajñā, his [approach] is the highly superior secret mantra. As is said, "As not a single point remains obscure; its multiple methods are easy to employ; and it is meant for those of sharpest faculties, the teachings of mantra are vastly superior to the bhūmis and pāramitās."

Moreover, this [approach] remains Mahāyāna, though distinguished by the acuity of its prajñā and compassion. In order to bring fortunate ones along on this [vehicle], he gives the impression that he himself adheres to it.

This way of practicing Mahāyāna is superior to the pāramitās. How so? Because it teaches the indivisibility of samsāra and nirvāṇa.

³² GD says that 'great protector' identifies him as Vajrasattva, the 'lineages' are the six emanation kāyas who are the vidyādhara teachers of beings in the six realms, *i.e.*, the six Munis, and their superiority lies in their unsurpassed training methods.

VI. The Wisdom of The Dharmadhātu³³

Next, to present the epithets of the wisdom being Mañjuśrī in connection with the dharmadhātu [wisdom], "Buddha Mahāvairocana, the Mahāmuni, possesses great might. He arises from the great approach of secret mantra. He embodies the great approach of secret mantra."

Because he has removed obscurations and fully developed wisdom, he appears in various guises to those to be trained, and his greatness lies in acting for the benefit of others. His might is such that he need not even guard against nonvirtuous physical, verbal and mental deeds, and he possesses the great ability to remain in equipoise at all times.

He exhibits inconceivable ability, and his command over the vital force of both the mundane and the supramundane is 'mantra.' As this itself is difficult to realize, and not to be revealed to just anyone, it is 'secret.' Here 'approach' is synonymous with 'path.' It is [the path] via which Buddhas appear, which makes it the exceptional path. As the Venerable One himself abides as the very essence

of secret mantra, he is its 'embodiment.'

What is the common path? "He has gathered the ten pāramitās, abides in the ten pāramitās, is the purity of the ten pāramitās, the system of the ten pāramitās." He has accomplished the ten pāramitās, and in order to bring others along on this [vehicle], he gives the impression that he adheres to it. At the same time, he has no attachment to the [pāramitās], and is expertly familiar with how they operate.³⁴

³³ In GD's terms, this chapter explains that the essence of all phenomena is emptiness, which is realized by the wisdom of the dharmadhātu. The kāya that embodies this meaning is Vairocana, who is the five kāyas of awareness gazing in all ten directions, all appearing as one. As such, he is the principal sambhogakāya, as all sambhogakāya maṇḍalas are the radiance of that wisdom.

"The Lord with mastery of the ten grounds is he who abides on the ten grounds." Since they serve as the bases for the development of positive qualities, prajñā and samādhi are called 'grounds' [bhūmis].

More on these: as one achieves a mental outlook that transcends the mundane, the first bhūmi is 'extremely joyful.' Because one is free of the stains of loose moral discipline, the second is the 'stainless.' Since one's prajñā becomes extremely lucid, the third is the 'illuminating.'³⁵

Where one is radiant with the qualities that increasingly resemble the state of enlightenment, this is the fourth, 'radiant light.' Bringing together mental equipoise and action for the welfare of transient beings, one purifies that which is difficult to purify within one's own being. This is the fifth, 'difficult to purify.'

³⁴ To GD, this stanza is not at all about the common path alone. "These are not the pāramitās perfected through effort and toil. [Mañjuśrī's] 'attainment,' and where he abides, is in the primordial great wisdom that is beyond gathering [virtues] and separation [from stains]; which is not within the parameters of the three realms, and without even a point of entry to that paradigm; where nothing is overlooked, there are no challenges, and nothing stirs; which is great prajñā; which requires no effort; where anything can be made to appear or shift in any given moment; and where all qualities are complete within him."

³⁵GD presents the bhūmis in terms of the definitive meaning: "Once realization is born in the mindstream of one whose body emanated out of habitual propensities, that being is at the level [bhūmi] of adhimukticyā [on the paths of

accumulation and preparation].

"When one's guru then proffers the instructions on the four aspects of the natural state, along with the four pointing out instructions, and one sees how the kāyas and wisdoms are innately part of one's own being, that is 'extremely joyful.'

"When one is confidently free of any doubt, that is the 'stainless.' When one has distinguished thinking mind and wisdom, and overcome concepts by bringing mind and awareness under control, such that one is able to teach others in a rather limited fashion, that is the 'illuminating.'"

For extensive discussion of the meanings of the term *adhimukticyā*, see Alex Wayman, *The Enlightenment of Vairocana*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1992.

The sixth is 'made manifest,' because nonconceptual samādhi is made manifest. The seventh is 'gone far,' because one has gone far beyond conceptual qualifications. The eighth is the 'unperturbed,' because one abides in that samādhi without being perturbed by even the slightest limiting concept.³⁶

The ninth is 'outstanding intellect,' because one possesses great intellectual ability to teach dharma to disciples. The tenth level is called 'cloud of dharma,' because one possesses a great cloud of qualities for ripening spiritual crops of disciples with the rain of dharma.³⁷

Since he has mastered the ten grounds, teaches them to others, and brings others onto them, he presents himself as dwelling on them. Not only that, since he displays numerous great qualities, [the root text further says] that he "embodies the totally pure ten discernments."

The ten discernments are discernment of: (1) dharma, (2) followers, (3) others' minds, (4) conventions, (5) suffering, (6) origins, (7) cessations, (8) the path, (9) extinction, and (10) non-arising. Recognizing, too, that those ten discernments lack any intrinsic nature, makes them fully pure. Because he teaches them to others as well, he is "the exponent of the totally pure ten discernments."

³⁶ GD continues: "When fully capable of assisting others, that is 'radiant light.' When, through the generation of exceptional realization within one's mindstream, that which is difficult to purify, like the three or five poisons and ignorance, are liberated as the five wisdoms, that is 'difficult to purify.'

"Knowing the precise meaning of the three kāyas and the three confines is 'made manifest.' 'Gone far' is reached when one is free from conditional attainment. 'Unperturbed' is distinguishing between the distilled essence and the residue of the elements."

³⁷GD concludes: "Outstanding intellect' is when whatever is needed arises from within oneself. 'Cloud of dharmas' is when one has complete power over phenomena."

[As for] the "pursuit of the ten ends of the ten aspects"—the ten aspects are features of samsāra, the five aggregates and five mental disturbances, which together make ten. When you get right down to it, everything insamsāra is contained within those ten. When those are completely purified, there are ten results, namely five lineages [of awakening] and five primal wisdoms. Since those ten are ends eminently worth pursuing, they are termed 'ends.'

"The Lord of Munis, ubiquitous master of ten powers...." "Munis" means the Victorious Ones. [Mañjuśrī] is the Lord of Munis because he is chief among them all.

The ten powers are the power to:

- (1) know what is appropriate and what is inappropriate; (2) know actions and their results,
- (3) know dhātus as they actually are,
- (4) know the diverse range of paths,
- (5) know the diverse interests of others,
- (6) know whose faculties are superior and whose are not, (7) know the thoroughly disturbed and the fully cleansed, (8) know, with full recall, past birthplaces,
- (9) know the transitions at birth and death, and (10) know the defiled and the undefiled.³⁸

He abides, moreover, as the very personification of universal compassion. This compassion not only reaches everywhere, but does whatever is needed and appropriate for every single disciple, and so the text says that he "achieves the goals of all."

Then it says that he "is the great master of tenfold powers." The Venerable One possesses the qualities of the ten powers, namely, power of [or over]: (1) life, (2)

mind, (3) necessities, (4) karma, (5) birth, (6) miracle, (7) wishes, (8) aspirations, (9) wisdom, and (10) dharma.

If that is the case, doesn't the problem of being concept-bound arise? "He personifies simplicity without origin, personifies the true nature, personifies purity." Dharmatā, the true nature of all things, without beginning or end, is beyond any and all limiting imputations, and so is free of conceptual constructs. Being invariable, it is 'tathata,' just the way it is. And since he lacks the stains of grasping and fixation, he is the epitome of purity.

If that is the case, then how does he become involved with the purposes of others? "He speaks the truth and his words are consistent. He does exactly what he says he will do. He teaches nonduality without duality."

He speaks truthfully because whatever he says to others is consistent with what he means, and not misleading. His word is reliable because whatever he does is in accord with his commitment to act for the welfare of others. So he does not merely *say*, for example, that all phenomena are illusory and dream-like; he conducts himself that way too. Such consistency is also effective in sparking others' interest [in the truths he speaks].

³⁸ For GD, the five male and five female Buddhas are the display of the ten powers of prajñā.

[The next lines] show how he overwhelms contrary forces: "He dwells at the pinnacle of perfection, and with the lion's roar of 'lack of self,' strikes terror in the prey, inferior heretics, and ably accomplishes the aims of beings everywhere as swiftly as the thoughts of Tathāgatas."

From his vantage point of nonduality, ultimate and perfect, he fearlessly proclaims the sound of dharma, the absence of gross clinging to 'me' and 'mine.' Like the roar of a lion, his speech frightens and terrifies, as if they were deer, those who hold inferior, wrong views that conceive of the self [as real], and who vilify Buddhists. It also comes across in whatever way is most powerfully effective to accomplish what all transient beings require.

Further, he is right there, when and as needed, to achieve the aims of transient beings; and such alacrity is conveyed through the image of an idea occurring to the mind.^{xxv}

How do his physical qualities show themselves ? "Victor who defeats the enemy, fully victorious, most powerful cakravartin, ācārya of the assembly, leader of the assembly, head of the assembly, master of the assembly, he is laden with authority, upholds the most precious with great might, his great way beholden to no other."

His allotment of fine attributes makes him invincible, and so he is a 'Victor.' He is victorious over conceptual thoughts, and victorious over the enemy, the four māras.

Because he is also capable of emanating in the form of a temporal emperor in order to accomplish the welfare of transient beings, he is a 'cakravartin.'^{xxvi} He is likewise a cakravartin because, through turning the wheel of dharma, he serves as a charioteer for transient beings. Finally, he is a cakravartin insofar as he is the principal figure in the maṇḍala. He is 'most powerful,' too, because he defeats the hosts of opposing forces.

He also takes the role of the ācārya [preceptor] of the Śrāvaka assembly, and is the leader of the assembly in that he guides Pratyekas forward. He is the head of the community of Bodhisattvas, and the master among the ranks of Tathāgatas. He holds authority over and above them all.

Not only that, but he carries within himself the extremely precious dharma of nonduality, as he has the extraordinary ability to conquer grasping and fixation. And so he 'upholds' that [dharma]. Therefore, since he no longer treads upon the path, he has no further need of guidance from others, and so is obliged to none.³⁹

What are his qualities of speech like? "Master of words, lord of language, gifted speaker, eloquent and fluent, his words are true and spoken truly; he is the teacher of the four truths."

This stanza expresses the four fully correct and accurate understandings:

(1) "Master of words" refers to fully correct and accurate understanding of the meaning;

³⁹ In terms of the definitive meaning, according to GD, this means that the wisdom of self-existing awareness does not depend on any extrinsic causes or conditions.

(2) "Lord of language" refers to fully correct and accurate understanding of

diction;

(3) "gifted speaker" refers to fully correct and accurate understanding of subject matter; and

(4) "eloquent" refers to fully correct and accurate understanding of oration.

He communicates clearly in a multiplicity of languages, and so has fluent vocabulary. Because the dharma he speaks is nonmisleading, his words are the truth. Those words distinguish the relative from the ultimate, and distinctly teach the four truths: suffering, origins, cessations and paths.⁴⁰

How does he bestow teachings on renunciation?

Non -returner who will not regress,
conductor and rhino-like solitary victor,
arising through various ways of reaching certainty, sole source of the great elements,
bhikṣu, arhat who has exhausted the defiled, whose faculties are controlled and divorced from desire, he has found happiness and attained fearlessness.

Generally speaking, once one has gained the quality of forbearance, one won't return to an inferior migration. Once one has reached the first bhūmi (level), one won't return to samsāra. Once one reaches the eighth bhūmi, one won't return to the lesser vehicles. Thereafter, one won't fall back from the state of perfect Buddhahood, and one is done with samsāra, except that one will send emanations to assist transient beings.

⁴⁰ In the same vein, since awareness is the source of all words, he is expert in teaching its meaning without error. And he teaches from the perspective of the four truths, insofar as he embodies the four kāyas (dharma, sambhoga, nirmana, and the radiant compassion kāya), which four are infallible, honest, definite, and therefore true.

Here, "conductor...solitary victor" describes one who is 'parrot-like,' because active in a community, while 'rhino-like' describes [a solitary victor] who remains alone. The Venerable One manifests in those ways as well. Not only that, but within the frameworks of diverse vehicles, he trains disciples in whatever way is most suitable, and provides instruction on a wide range of paths that lead to definite release from the three realms [of samsāra].^{xxvii}

He can even accomplish his purpose by showing himself as the five great elements, because their source, as well, lies in nondual primal wisdom.

He takes virtue as his path,^{xxviii} and defeats the enemy,^{xxix} mental disturbances, and so exhausts all that is defiled and leads to rebirth in conditioned existence. Whatever he experiences leaves no stain, because he is free of passion and the other mental disturbances; and so their five objects appear to his eyes and other sense organs without stimulating any attachment. The bottomless chasm of samsāra therefore does not cause him fear.

What is the demeanor of he who bears those qualities? "He is coolly composed and unperturbed. He has both vision and agility; the Sugata has the world's greatest skills. Not grasping at 'mine' and not clinging to 'me,' he dwells in accord with the two truths. He has reached the very end of samsāra, his work is done, he rests on dry land. Only wisdom produces his appearance."

Dharmatā, like cool, refreshing water, relieves the agony of mental disturbances, and filters out the stains of ephemeral, discursive thoughts, like sediment from water.

He has integrated an understanding of the view (which is like eyes) with skillful engagement (which is like legs), and so freed himself from the suffering of conditioned existence and gone to the state of bliss.^{xxx}

Thus, he knows the karmic propensities of sentient beings, knows their interests, knows whether or not they are suited to receive teachings, and knows whether or not they are ready to be trained. For these reasons he is vastly superior to Hearers and Solitary Realizers, and so his skills rank supreme in this world.

Directly observable phenomena he knows to be illusory, and so he does not seize upon objects 'out there' as 'belonging to me,' and likewise does not apprehend the mind 'in here' as being 'me.' By virtue of engaging both his own, personal welfare, and the welfare of others, he remains in conformity with the two truths.⁴¹

Isn't he still involved in samsāra, then? He has "reached the very end of samsāra," that "work is done," as with great agility he has extracted himself from the mire of samsāra, as if pulling himself out of a muddy bog, and come to rest on the dry ground of awakening. This result is brought about solely through primal wisdom that realizes nonduality, out of which the two form kāyas

appear.⁴²

⁴¹ While being able to appear dualistically, and by virtue of being nestled within the truths of the two kāyas (the precious dharmakāya and the nirmanakāya), and yet lacking dualistic grasping and fixation, he conforms to the two truths. GD.

What dharma does he teach? "With the weapon of prajñā, he conquers all. The dharma king has the clarity of sacred dharma—the finest source of illumination in the world," and so forth.

P rajñā, like a weapon, destroys mental disturbances. With the sacred dharma, like a king, luminously present in his heart, he brings illuminating wisdom to worldly beings. He does so not toward some trivial end, but to create for them the best possible link to liberation.

The way in which he brings about others' well-being is described next: "The master of dharma, king of dharma, is the revealer of the excellent path. He accomplishes aims, fulfills wishes...."

Because the Venerable One, himself, possesses full mastery over the eighty-four thousand categories of dharma teachings, he is the master of dharma. He enables disciples to triumph over their mental disturbances, teaching them the outstanding path in whatever way best suits them, without any deviations. Thus, he brings about the fulfillment of sentient beings' purposes and deepest wishes.

Doesn't that mean the Venerable One himself has to be thinking about these things? He has "disposed of all conceptual thought, the nonconceptual expanse is inexhaustible, the sacred expanse of dharmas knows no end." Although he accomplishes others' welfare, he does so nonconceptually, as perfect wisdom and distorting concepts are mutually exclusive. And even though he isn't thinking *per se*, excellent qualities emerge from the expanse inexhaustibly. The dharmadhātu, as the source of enlightened qualities, knows no limit at all.

⁴² GD adds that all of samsāra and nirvāṇa (impure and pure appearances) are the vibrant expression of wisdom.

How does he complete the accumulations? "He possesses merit, accumulates merit, and with wisdom, the most extraordinary wisdom, knows what there is and is not—he has gathered the whole of the two accumulations."

The Venerable One himself primordially possesses the accumulation of merit. He acts as if he is still in the process of accumulating [merit], in order to demonstrate to others how to do so.

He also possesses the accumulation of primal wisdom. There is an enormous difference between the wisdom of a Bodhisattva, and that of Śrāvakas and Pratyekas; and indeed the wisdom of a Tathāgata is even vastly more exceptional.

In possession of such distinctive wisdom, [Mañjuśrī] knows what 'there is,' *i.e.*, everything that appears, and what 'is not,' *i.e.*, the way things truly are [empty]. Because he has perfected the two accumulations in this way, he is here described as appearing from the gathering of the accumulations.

Well, how does gathering the accumulations produce the kāyas of the Buddhas? "His eternal, all-victorious yoga, mental stability to be conceived, is the highest intelligence, unshakable, precise and intimate knowledge, first and most exalted, bearing the three kāyas," and so forth.

The ultimate, immutable dharmakāya is triumphant over the enemy, conceptual thought, and because it integrates skillful means and prajñā, it is 'yoga.' On this point, it is said, for instance: "The fusion of method and prajñā can be called 'yoga.'"

What is essentially nonconceptual cannot be disturbed by concepts, and so is mental stability [dhyāna]. Since this is something worth reflecting upon for those who strive to become enlightened, it is for them to conceive. Because it realizes nonduality, it is the highest form of intelligence.

As for its scope of understanding, it knows, distinctly and precisely, the general features and defining characteristics of each individual phenomenon. Having no craving for them, it is also unwavering.

In these ways, it ranks highest among all the kāyas. It ranks first because it is the very thing that must be accomplished in order for the other, distinct kāyas to appear. Its unique, special quality, in other words, is that it appears as three kāyas.

How do the distinct kāyas and wisdoms appear from it? "[E]mbodiment of the five Buddha kāyas, ubiquitous lord of the five wisdoms, crowned lord of the five Buddhas, possessor of the five unobscured eyes, creator of all Buddhas, the holy

and superior child of Buddhas."

The five kāyas are: dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, nirmanakāya, abisambodhikāya, and the vajralike kāya. 'Ubiquitous' means that the dharmadhātu pervades the entirety of the external universe and its contents. The five wisdoms have already been explained earlier.

The five Buddhas are Vairocana and the others. He is adorned with the five Buddhas by virtue of possessing their five wisdoms, which is here described as wearing their crown.

The five eyes are: fleshly eyes, divine eyes, prajñā eyes, dharma eyes and Buddha eyes. They function dispassionately and without hindrance at his will.

Bodhicitta [the awakened mind], which realizes just how things are, is the mother who begets all Buddhas; and Bodhisattvas who reside on the bhūmis are the children of the Buddhas.

Why aren't the Śrāvakas considered holy children? Well, take, for example, a wheel-turning emperor who has a thousand children. Still, only one among them, who is best qualified, will be chosen as most eminent [heir].

Similarly, since Śrāvakas and Pratyekas have weaker prajñā and compassion, they cannot hold the lineage of the awakened ones, and are unable to perform their feats. Therefore they are not their most eminent children. Bodhisattvas, who have stronger prajñā and compassion, can hold the lineage of the Buddhas and perform their deeds, and so are their holy, superior children.

The Venerable One here is described in this fashion because, at times, he does inhabit the form of a Bodhisattva, in order to act for the welfare of transient beings.

What are his deeds? "Through knowledge, risen from existence, without a place of birth—what arises from dharma dispels phenomenal existence, the singular, invincible, vajra entity, dispatcher at the moment of creation...."

By knowing just how things truly are, he has risen out of samsāra; he has no place of birth within it. Through realizing dharmakāya, wisdom arises, and it removes karma and disturbed mental states, the causes of phenomenal existence.

What removes them? Six wisdoms which are of a single essence, indomitable and indivisible.⁴³ When do they dispatch [karma and kleśas]? From the very

moment they first arise.⁴⁴

How is it, exactly, that the ignorance of others is dispelled through the five wisdoms? [By] "appearing just naturally from space, blazing prajñā wisdom, the great light that makes all things perceptible, sparkling starlight of wisdom, wisdom torch, butter lamp for beings...."

Out of the space-like expanse of phenomena, enlightened qualities unimpededly appear; this is the wisdom of the dharmadhātu.

Its meaning is realized by highly-refined prajñā, and the fire of this brilliant, nonconceptual wisdom destroys ordinary thought, like flames consuming dried stalks of grass; this is mirror-like wisdom.

The great blaze of light issuing from the wisdom that realizes the equality of all phenomena makes visible to disciples a panoply of fantastic qualities; this is the wisdom of equality. The wisdom of fine discrimination realizes the specific characteristics of each and every phenomenon, without confusing one for another, like constellations of stars shining brightly and distinctly in the cloudless sky above; again, this is what characterizes the wisdom of fine discrimination.

⁴³ GD elaborates on the 'singular, invincible, vajra entity': "When freed from phenomenal existence, one takes the immutable dharma seat with a form that is in the state of great transparency, of the nature of fivefold blazing, precious light, abiding as the very embodiment of awareness, with no possibility of ever reverting to a lesser form."

⁴⁴ GD's treats the Tibetan word '*gro ba* here as a noun, meaning 'transient beings,' and not a verb, meaning 'to dispatch,' as Vima does. So his take is: "These transient beings are all just the natural display [of awareness], and natural appearance, and so they are effectively re-liberated."

Effective wisdom, like a butter lamp, dispels the darkness of ignorance of transient beings, and fully accomplishes their highest purposes; again, this is why it is called effective wisdom.

To present this point specifically in the context of secret mantra, "great majesty and luminosity, sovereign of supreme mantra, king of vidyā mantra, king of secret mantra producing the great result, great uṣṇīṣa of marvelous honor...."

He has a majestic physical presence which overwhelms those around him, and is visibly surrounded by lights of five colors, an external sign of the luminous five wisdoms within him.

Guhya [secret] mantra and vidyā [knowledge] mantra are the supreme classes of mantra, and he is their sovereign. The king of vidyā mantra is prajñā and primal wisdom, and the king of secret mantra is exceptional skill and prajñā. The purposes of those who are destined and fortunate are accomplished by these two kings. Since they are such wondrous dharmas, they are deserving of a place of honor above the crowns of everyone's heads, like an uṣṇīṣa.

Not only that, he even appears in a variety of emanations: "[m]aster of space revealed diversely, paramount kāya of all Buddhas with an eye for delighting all transient beings in multiple forms of his own design." Out of the *profound* [state of realization of dharmakāya], his own welfare, he reveals himself in various guises for the welfare of others, his *vast* [activity].

Supreme among kāyas is the single essence that runs through all six. It is attentive to the needs of transient beings, and so manifests in a variety of pleasing forms in order to act for their welfare. In short, bodhicitta performs its work through diverse emanations. Simply put, bodhicitta teaches others by appearing in a great variety of forms.

Since [bodhicitta] itself is so meaningful, [Mañjuśrī] is worthy of honor from others, and so [the root text says]: "Remarkable and honored great rishi, secret mantra holder who comprises the three lineages, whose great samaya of secret mantra takes charge, principal one who takes on the three jewels...."

Generally speaking, 'rishi' refers to those accomplished in learning. 'Great rishi' means the Bhagavat, who both has entered the path of *righteousness*, and guided others *straight along* that true course.^{xxxix} For this reason, too, the Venerable One is a proper subject of offerings, and for recounting and praising his qualities.

Of what does he consist ? Physically, the lineage of Tathāgatas; verbally, the lotus lineage, and mentally, the vajra lineage—all three of these. And since he also possesses exceptional skill and prajñā, [the text refers to him as] "secret mantra holder." Since he never strays from his purpose, he takes charge of disciples through the great samaya of secret mantra.

Since fundamental bodhicitta is the foremost dharma of all, it is the 'principal' one. It takes on the roles of the three jewels, and brings others to do so as well. This [explanation] is in keeping with how the vastness [of the three] jewels is generally understood.

With respect to its profundity, because bodhicitta is nondual, it is the jewel of the Buddhas. The jewel of the dharma consists of realization of the meaning of that [nonduality]. That which reproduces it is the jewel of the saṅgha.

All possible approaches to the dharma are subsumed within the three vehicles, and so, in order to bring disciples under his care, [the root text] says that [he is the] "teacher of the three superior vehicles, all-victorious Amoghapāśa,^{xxxii} vajra lasso of mighty grip, vajra hook and great lasso."

He teaches the three great vehicles, Śrāvaka, Pratyeka Buddha and Bodhisattva, as suited to the abilities of different persons, and according to their inclinations. That is how he acts effectively to benefit transient beings. He enables them to triumph over conditioned existence.

With the lasso of compassion, he draws disciples into his custody. What makes it possible for him to do this? It comes from his realization of the vajralike dharmakāya. On this point, it is said, for instance, that "the sign of having realized emptiness to be dharmakāya is an enormous increase in love and compassion."

Compassionately taking up the welfare of disciples is compared to [wielding] an iron hook. Locking down the mental disturbances is like [binding them with] a lasso. By employing these very 'tools' without attachment, they become 'great'[ly effective].

VII. Reflective ("Mirror-like") Wisdom⁴⁵

Next, to describe the qualities of the wisdom being Mañjuśrī in terms of mirror-like wisdom, [the text] says, "Vajrabhairava who causes fear," and so forth. Here, the name of wrathful Yamāntaka is presented, to which 'vajra' is prefixed because he, too, belongs to the vajra lineage.

By showing himself with extremely frightening accoutrements, he subdues, through fear and intimidation, those like the yama lords of karma, or Mahādeva, who cannot be tamed peacefully.

The next verses, "king of the wrathful, with six frightening faces, six eyes, and six hands, powerful, with skeletons and baring his fangs," show the symbolic emblems of his enlightened qualities. Wrathful activity, such as slaying and banishing, is shown through these fierce features and implements, as is said, for example, "That which indicates ferocity, killing, and repelling, can rightly be called 'wrathful.'"

These are, in fact, signs that, internally, mirror-like wisdom has vanquished hostility and other disturbed states. As chief among the wrathful, he is their 'king.' His six faces indicate that he encompasses all six lineages. His six eyes represent his possession of the six wisdoms.⁴⁵ His six hands identify him as having the six transcendent virtues. The power he possesses is to defeat the incorrigible.

⁴⁵ GD, in his chapter title, expressly relates reflective wisdom to the unimpeded nature of the ground, following the previous chapter which was concerned with the essence being emptiness.

⁴⁶ GD here identifies the sixth as 'non-abiding wisdom.' All six are unimpededly active.

The skeletons are dried and wet human skulls that adorn him. As a sign of the sharpness of prajñā that finely dissevers and destroys mental disturbances, and of his subjugation of the wicked, his incisors are exposed.

"A hundred ha la ha la faces" describes his extremely fearsome attire. 'Ha la' means venomous, and his torso and limbs are adorned with serpents possessing four types of poisonous venom.⁴⁷

" Yamāntaka, ruler of the obstructors, with vajra strength that generates fear...." This explains his physical activities, as he plays the role of executioner who subdues the yama lords of karma. He is their ruler because he subdues those like the king of obstructors Vināyaka, and Ganapati.⁴⁸

He inspires fear and terror in the wicked as he possesses enormous strength to perform enlightened activity, which, like a vajra, none can withstand.

Just how exceptionally renowned is the vajra ? It says, "Illustrious vajra, vajra heart...." The vajra's reputation is unique, in that all phenomena [by nature] are indivisible, and so vajralike; moreover, its fame uniquely reaches throughout the

three conditioned worlds.⁴⁹

This vajralike indivisibility also functions as the basis for the propagation of all phenomena, and so, in that sense, is their heart. Or else, because he is of the vajralike mind lineage, he is the vajra heart.^{xxxiii} Then again, since the sign of wrathful deities is the vajra placed in their hearts, he is the heart vajra.

⁴⁷ For GD, the 'hala' power is the innate capacity of awareness wisdom to destroy concepts.

⁴⁸ On another level, according to GD, the wisdom of immaterial awareness, the dharmakāya, destroys conditioned phenomena, as ignorance is primordially pure, dualistic grasping and fixation are primordially pure, and this wisdom has command over all.

⁴⁹ Indivisible from emptiness, and from awareness. This vajra quality of the unimpeded dharmakāya is like a mirror, in that its presence enables all of conditioned existence and nirvāṇa to be displayed. All phenomena, effectively, 'announce' this quality, making it famous. GD.

The qualities of his body are covered by [the words] "robust, magical vajra." He emanates in a variety of magical emanations, and his vajralike figure also is replete with the internal qualities of greatness, as represented by his stout abdomen.⁵⁰

What produces that [form] ? It says, "vajra-created vajra master...." [His form] results from realization of the vajralike dharmakāya; that is its cause. As the main figure in all of the lineages [of enlightenment], he is the master of them all.

To offer an illustration, it says "vajra heart like space itself...." Because he is insubstantial, ubiquitous, and able to manifest unimpededly, he is [like] space.

Does he not, then, take on specific characteristics ? Where it says, "immovable one with hair braid bound in a single plait, draped in a raw elephant hide," this means he is decorated with the ornaments of excellent qualities, even while undisturbed by the particulars of conceptual thinking.

His hair braided and bound in a single plait indicates that he has realized nonduality. His commitment to the supreme vehicle is represented by wearing a fresh elephant hide as clothing.

⁵⁰ The robustness of the vajralike inseparability of unimpeded wisdom

(skillfulness) and unchanging dharmatā (prajñā) is that it enables all excellent qualities to arise from the ground; or rather, they arise from it, and when they vanish, they vanish back into it. GD.

What is his wrathful speech like? It says, "bellowing 'Ha Ha' loudly, striking fear with the shout of 'He He,' his powerful laughter carries far, his vajra laughter strongly thunders...."

Delighted to act for the welfare of transient beings, he exclaims 'Ha Ha'; and with the sound of 'He He,' he strikes fear in the unruly. His mighty laugh causes them to faint away. It carries so powerfully that it brooks no interference, like a vajra. Its sound can be heard throughout the three conditioned worlds.⁵¹

If you ask, then what is the nature of his mind like ? [The next verse says,] "Vajra being, great heroic being, vajra king, great bliss, fierce vajra, great joy, vajra of 'Hung' proclaiming 'Hung'...."

His indestructible, vajralike mind of great wisdom boldly regards the dharmadhātu, and out of compassion, concerns itself with the needs of transient beings. There being none above him, he is the king. His mind is imbued with undefiled great bliss, and [at the same time] is fierce, having the temerity to destroy the vicious.

He generates great joy in sentient beings, and out of his vajralike fortitude of heart, exclaims 'Hung Hung,' eradicating the wicked.

What actions does that wrathful one undertake? "[W]ielding a vajra arrow as a weapon, his vajra sword cuts through anything, the vajra-bearer who holds all vajras, the singular vajra that eliminates conflict...."

⁵¹ GD explains that 'Ha Ha' is the irrepressible expression of self-existing wisdom, and 'He He' is the sound of compassion's unstoppable conquest of limiting concepts. Likewise this laughter is the natural and irresistible response of nondual wisdom to the reality of dharmatā, and not conventional laughter.

The vajralike implements he bears in hand include the bow and arrow of skill and prajñā, which pierce through mental disturbances, and the sword of prajñā, which cuts through conceptuality.

He holds a vajra, the sign that he has conquered the five poisons, and is the

vajra-bearer in the sense that he has the vajralike might to defeat opposition. His vajralike, nondual wisdom defeats the four māras and the wicked, and drives off opposing forces.

Using his ornaments to describe his exceptional, enlightened qualities, it says,

With unbearable, blazing vajra eyes,
even his hairs are blazing vajras,
the great discharge of descending vajras.
His one hundred eyes are vajra eyes,
all the hairs on his body are vajras,
the vajra hairs of his unique body.
Vajras grow from the tips of his nails,
his skin is a surface of vajra essence;
holding a vajra rosary, he is splendidly bedecked in vajra jewelry....

Like blazing vajras, his ferocious eyes instill unbearably intense fear, and even the hairs on his head are vajras. He causes vajralike wisdom of body, speech and mind to shower down upon other beings, while the reference to 'one hundred eyes' illustrates the fact that he possesses invincible prajñā eyes that operate universally and unimpededly.

His body actually is covered with coiled vajra hairs, and those vajra hairs ornament his nondual figure. As a sign that he tames the terrible, and that he is inseparable from the five lineages and five wisdoms, vajras sprout from the tips of his fingers.

As a sign that everything comes down to nonduality, he has vajra skin that is tough and hard. Wielding a vajra rosary, he acts to benefit others, and so is glorious. It symbolizes the fact that he possesses ever-unfolding magnificent qualities, like the continuous thread on a rosary.⁵²

That is how his exceptional qualities can be described in terms of the unique vajra ornaments that adorn him, since he belongs to the vajra mind lineage.

What are the qualities of speech by which he guides transient beings? It says that,

He projects his piercing 'Ha Ha' laugh with assurance, his six syllables are vajra sound,

the great sound of Mahā-Mañjugosha,
one sound reaching three realms of existence, a sound that carries to the ends of
space,
the very best among all types of sound.

He exclaims 'Ha Ha,' a sound that expresses his delight at serving the needs of
transient beings. The 'six syllables' refer, most broadly, to the mantra of six
syllables, and more concisely, to the six letters of Vāgiśvara[*s* mantra].^{xxxiv} Both
of those are the sounds of secret mantra Vajrayāna.⁵³

⁵² That awareness ornaments dharmatā is glorious. That wisdom ornaments
awareness is glorious. That compassion ornaments wisdom is glorious.
Compassion affords endless protection. Vajra ornamentation means that the
fruition kāyas and wisdoms are the adornment of dharmakāya. GD.

Since they sound sweet and attractive to those with the right karmic propensity,
they are 'Mañju' [smooth] 'ghosha' [and melodious]. Because such sounds
convey a meaning that is highly significant, they are 'Mahā' [great].^{xxxv}

Where are they heard? In the three conditioned worlds. Since these are the
sounds that express nonduality, they are one [*i.e.*, singular]. Also, although they
can be heard every which way, they are as one in guiding transient beings. Yet
again, since such sound knows no rival or peer, it stands alone.

How far does this sound reach? Everywhere throughout space. Among all
possible sounds, this sound of dharma reigns supreme, since it is associated with
the great meaning.⁵⁴

⁵³ GD says the six syllables of vajra sound are twofold—the audible six
syllables, and the ultimate six syllables of dharmatā. The former is 'vajra
pratiṣṭhā hung' and the latter is 'a A sha sa ma ha,' which is known as the
enduring condition of the ground, or else as the speech of unified dharmatā.

Pratiṣṭhā means 'honor' and the latter mantra is often explained to be the seed
syllables of the six Munis who purify/are the purity of the six realms of
conditioned existence, within the one hundred deity maṇḍala of peaceful and
wrathful ones who adorn Vajrasattva.

⁵⁴"When the vibrancy of dharmakāya appears as sound, then awareness-
dharmakāya is expressed as audible qualities. Displayed in this fashion,

unimpeded awareness is like a mirror image. The kāya of such unobstructed expression is called Vajrasattva." GD.

VIII. Wisdom of Individuation⁵⁵

Next, to present the qualities of the wisdom being Mañjuśrī in terms of the wisdom of individuation, the text says, *inter alia*, "Perfect lack of selfidentity, the true nature, final perfection that is not linguistic...." And so here, the cause of [his] speech is perfect lack of selfidentity, the true nature of reality.⁵⁶

The magnitude of his speech is described as "discourse on emptiness that heads the ranks, proclamation of the vast and profound with the great sound of the dharma conch and great sound of the dharma gong that transport to non-abiding nirvāṇa, the great dharma drum [heard] in the ten directions."

All phenomena are said to be emptiness. Since this is the most important among all things that can be said, it is at the head of the ranks. For example, when an elephant calf loses its mother and father, but a lioness succors the child at its breast, we call it the lead bull of the herd. This is just like the way [the elephant calf] pulls rank over the 'rank and file' creatures.

Why is his [speech] the best? Because it is the proclamation of the profound and vast dharma. The heralds of the appearance of dharma are the great sound, like a dharma conch, that subdues the māras, and the great sound, like a dharma gong, that gathers the retinue [of disciples]. They portend the dharma teaching on nirvāṇa that abides in neither of the two extremes. As is said, for example, "Through knowledge, not remaining in phenomenal existence, and through compassion, not remaining in stillness."

How far does it reach? Everywhere throughout the ten directions. What makes [that sound]? The majestic sound of dharma resounds, like a great drum.

⁵⁵ GD calls this chapter "Completely Decisive Prajna: The Meaning of Individuating [Wisdom]."

⁵⁶GD notes that dharmakāya is beyond expression.

What is the source from which it originates? The text says, "Formless, holy and excellent form, with manifold, mentally generated forms, glorious among all apparent forms, capturing the image of every form...."

Because dharmakāya is essentially insubstantial, it has no form. From its blessing appears the sambhogakāya, adorned with marks and signs. This is the most sacred and excellent of forms.⁵⁷

The manifold physical forms of nirmanakāya are said to 'arise from the liberation of relative mind into primal wisdom,' or else, according to another explanation, the diverse physical forms of nirmanakāya "appear exactly and however they wish."

The Venerable One displays himself in the very image of those whose purposes he is fulfilling, no matter who they may be— for example, as a Śrāvaka, as a Pratyeka Buddha, as a Bodhisattva, as Brahma, or as Indra.

Just how great is his physical figure? "[I]ndomitable and known for his greatness, the great master of the three domains abides far above the Nobles' path, great dispensation, pinnacle of dharma...."

By force of his perfect completion of the two accumulations, no opponent can best him. His enormous renown stems from the fact that no one—not māras, not tīrthikas, nor anyone else—can gain an advantage over him.

⁵⁷ It is holy (or sacred) because nondual with respect to dharmakāya; and in actuality, it is Vajrasattva. GD

Moreover, he even has gone beyond the paths of the Nobles, as he abides in nondual wisdom. The great dispensation of dharma is the eighty-four thousand collections of dharma he comprehends. Nonduality is the 'pinnacle,' the most elevated of all [dharmas].

As for how he shows himself to disciples according to their interests, [it is] "With one youth's body in three worlds, [as] a sage, an elder, a leader of beings of the nine ranks, bearer of the thirty-two major marks, most handsome beauty in the three worlds...."

For those to be trained by Bodhisattvas, he does not appear to age or decline; rather, he continually acts for others' benefit while maintaining a charming, youthful appearance, like that of an eight-year old. To those who are best trained by a Śrāvaka, he emanates in a form like that of the Sthavira Subhuti.

For those to be trained by a Pratyeka Buddha, he emanates in a form like that of

an elder Pratyeka Buddha who displays great miracles. For those who could be trained in a variety of ways, he manifests as an elite individual within the nine ranks, and fulfills their purposes.

The nine ranks of beings are: Śrāvakas, Pratyeka Buddhas, and [followers of] Mahāyāna, these three; and on top of those, the six Muni Nirmanakāyas within the respective realms of the six classes of sentient beings, who act for their welfare—making nine in all.

The 'thirty-two major marks' are as commonly taught:

1. the [soles of the] feet and hands [each] have a wheel marked on them;
2. the feet are set like a turtle's [torso];
3. the digits of the hands and feet are conjoined;
4. the hands and feet are supple and soft;
5. there are seven raised areas;
6. the fingers are long;
7. the heels are broad;
8. the body is large and posture straight;
9. there are no obvious swellings;
10. the body hairs extend out in a curl;
11. the calves are like those of an Enaya deer; 12. the arms are long and lovely;
13. the genitals are withdrawn inside a sheath; 14. the complexion is golden;
15. the skin is smooth;
16. each hair curls clockwise;
17. the face is adorned with a ringlet of hair; 18. the torso is like a lion's;
19. the tops of the shoulders are rounded;
20. the chest is broad;
21. the palate is most refined;
22. the body is wellproportioned like a Nyagrodha tree; 23. on the head is an uṣṇīṣa;
24. the tongue is long;
25. the voicebox carries the euphony of Brahma; 26. the jaws are like those of a lion;
27. the teeth are white,
28. evenly-sized,
29. evenly set,
30. and forty in number;
31. the eyes are set like sapphires; and

32. the eyelashes are like a ewe's.

Another, special way of explaining this is that the glorious Vairocana is adorned with the sixteen causal Sattvas and the sixteen resultant Sattvas.^{xxxvi}

In this way, he is regarded as extremely beautiful and attractive in all three worlds, where he generates yearning in [beings] who can never gaze enough upon him.

How does he cause worldly beings to become weary [with samsāra]? It says, "Teacher of the world's finest arts, fearless ācārya of the world, beloved defender of the world, peerless refuge and protector...."

It is the Venerable One himself who teaches secular medicine and arts, even while he acts as the ācārya who shows how to turn away from false paths and onto the sacred path. With his expertise in rhetoric and logic, though others may challenge him, he defends his role in the world with temerity and confidence.⁵⁸ In whatever ways strike him as appropriate, at first he grants refuge, and later on, too, he affords protection, inasmuch as he facilitates the attainment of unsurpassed awakening.

⁵⁸ Although he acts within the world, since he is untouched by mental disturbances, conditioned existence poses no threat to him. GD.

How much knowledge does he possess in his mind? "[His] experience spans the ends of space, the sea of omniscient wisdom...." The dharmakāya's sphere of experience and realization is like infinite space, as it possesses the great, oceanic quality of omniscient wisdom, which knows everything there is to know, just as it truly is.

What is its function? It "cracks open the shell of ignorance, destroy[s] of the web of the phenomenal world [and] pacifies each and every afflictive mind state, has gone to the far shore of samsāra's ocean...."

Realizing the meaning of nonduality splits open the sheath of ignorance like cracking an eggshell, and destroys the network of phenomenal existence, *i.e.*, that which is associated with karma and disturbed states of mind.

Having pacified the five, or six, root mental disturbances, the twenty proximate

mental disturbances, and, *e.g.*, the three or eight thoroughly afflictive mind states, he has reached the far side of the ocean of conditioned existence.⁵⁹

The advantages of such realization are [that he]:

wears the diadem of wisdom empowerment and carries the gems of the perfect Buddhas, and eases the suffering of threefold suffering. Removing three, countless are delivered to threefold liberation.

Certainly freed of all obscurations,
he abides in space-like equanimity,
and has left behind all stains of mental afflictions.

⁵⁹ He roams free outside the territorial limits of grasping and fixation, through distinguishing wisdom from conceptual mind, and so having freed himself from impure confusion, he makes his home in the bardo of dharmatā. GD.

By realizing the meaning of nonduality, the five disturbed states of mind are liberated right on the spot, without being rejected, and so appear as the five primal wisdoms. This is known as the "empowerment of the perfect, single wisdom," which is independent of the vase and the rest of the empowerments.

The way in which this singular, basic awareness displays itself is with the ornaments of the primal wisdoms, which are extremely beautiful, and thus a diadem. As is said, for example, "when the mind attains the power of dharma[kāya], it thereby receives all empowerments of substance, word and indication, without them being conferred."

The five primal wisdoms appear in the images of the five Buddhas, which, being brilliant and lovely, are described as 'gems.'

Suffering can be subsumed into three [types]. By realizing [nonduality], those three, namely the suffering of suffering, the suffering of the composite, and the suffering of change, are quelled. Likewise, the disturbances of mind are reducible to the three poisons, which are thereby dispelled and relinquished.

The removal of those three fulfills the aims of limitless transient beings, delivering them to the three liberated states of Śrāvakas, Pratyekas and Bodhisattvas. Even more specifically, they are able to [attain] the three kāyas.⁶⁰

Further, having been freed entirely from the obscuration of mental disturbances and the obscuration of what can be known, [he] abides in spacious equanimity, and so is beyond, ever after, the stains of afflictive mind states.

What is such realization, essentially ? It says, "Comprehending the three times and eternity, he is the great leader of all sentient beings, crowned among those with lofty qualities. Fully freed of all bodily guises, he serenely abides in the byways of space."

In [the state of] equanimity, the three times are undifferentiated, as is said, for instance: "There is no distinction whatsoever among the dharmatā in the past, the dharmatā as it will be in the future, and this present dharmatā."

It is this realization [of nonduality], chiefly and above all else, that distinguishes [Mañjuśrī] as vastly superior to all sentient beings. Indeed, "Śrāvakas possess greater qualities than do worldly beings, and the qualities of Pratyekas are even greater; Bodhisattvas' qualities are greater still, and the qualities of Tathāgatas are greatest of all."

'Crowned' means to be beautifully adorned with fine qualities. The Venerable One himself is even more exquisite, like a beautiful tiara. Freed from taking birth in any of the physical forms of transient beings, he abides in space-like primal wisdom.

⁶⁰ "From the tongues of the mother and father sambhogakāya, the precious sound of the six syllables emerges, and the dancing light rays of their vocalization become the six nirmanakāyas; these remove the obscurations of body, speech and mind of the six classes of beings, freeing countless sentient beings from their physical bodies, and for those of highest, or at least decent abilities, freeing them to manifest the kāyas and wisdoms." GD.

So then how does he act for the welfare of transient beings? "Holder of the great wishfulfilling jewel, universal lord, master of all that is precious, towering wishfulfilling tree, capacious excellent vase, whose actions achieve the aims of all sentient beings, altruistic ally of sentient beings...."

A wishfulfilling jewel—the symbol for benefitting others— has eight qualities: it produces whatever sentient beings wish for and need; if not requested, it is not productive; if a request is made, it is productive; its production is timely; it

produces in the right measure; its production is inexhaustible; it produces without pre-conception; and it expects no recompense. He is the universal embodiment of such excellent qualities, like a precious jewel.

Or else, he is like a wishfulfilling tree, which also has ten features. On top of the eight that were just recited, it provides shade, and a place for fatigued beings to rest, which makes ten in all.⁶¹

Yet again, he is like an excellent accomplishment vase. This has ten qualities. On top of the aforementioned eight [qualities], if accomplished, it produces, and if not accomplished, it does not produce, making ten in all.⁶² As is said, for example, "If an excellent vase, a wish-granting tree, or a wishfulfilling jewel, without any idea in mind, can yield what is sought by sentient beings, what need be said of Victors who possess tremendous compassion?" And so he helps like a mother does her only child.

⁶¹ "From the jewellike dharmakāya emerge boundless qualities. Just like a precious [wishfulfilling] tree has a root system, the root [here] is awareness itself. And just as a tree has branches, attributes multiply [from that root]. Or else, [the root and branches] are like the main figure and retinue of the maṇḍala. The leaves and flowers are the kāyas and wisdoms. The dharmakāya of realization is like the fruit." GD.

⁶² "Just like everything one might ever need can be produced out of the cavity of a precious vase, from out of the great hollow of the dharmakāya appear the five great sprouts of wisdom; and from them, the five precious

How does he know what those to be trained are thinking? "He knows good from bad and when it is time, universal master who knows samaya and holds samaya, he knows how to be timely, knows the faculties and drives of sentient beings; expert in the three modes of liberation, he possesses and appreciates good qualities."

He knows positive and negative karmic actions, and how much time remains before their results transpire. This master of universal compassion knows the status of others' samaya, and he himself observes the samaya of never straying from just how things really are.

When he acts on behalf of sentient beings, he knows when the time has come to train them; knows their capacities, whether greater, average, or lesser; and

knows how to work with those of greater, average or lesser faith and diligence. In addition, since he possesses omniscient wisdom, he is expert in the three modes of liberation, *i.e.*, of Śrāvakas, Pratyekas and followers of Mahāyāna.⁶³

The Venerable One possesses excellent qualities, like the kāyas, wisdoms, powers and fearlessnesses, and he also perceives whatever good qualities exist in the minds of Śrāvakas, Pratyekas, and others.

kāyas clearly appear. From those [kāyas] appear compassionate nirmanakāyas who serve the needs of sentient beings, like a treasure harvest of jewels." GD.

⁶³ GD offers a different angle on the (Tibetan) words *rnam grol gsum*, reading this as liberation *from* three aspects, namely, perceived objects, the perceiving mind, and the physical body.

Next, to show that such [qualities] are the most sublime among all things auspicious, "Knowing dharma, the auspicious source of auspiciousness, most auspicious of all that is auspicious, famously auspicious with esteemed virtues, great assurance and great celebration, great joy and great revelry."

Because knowing the meaning of dharma is the source of all outstanding qualities, even in this life, it is auspicious. It is also auspicious because it is the source of good qualities arising in the future, too. Amidst the auspicious factors enjoyed by worldly beings, like longevity, wealth, prosperous family, and so forth, it stands out as the most sublimely auspicious.

As the source of the finest and most valued qualities in the three realms, his auspiciousness is renowned. Concerned only with all types of virtue, as opposed to any non-virtue, his stellar reputation is virtuous as well.

By warranting the path to liberation for transient beings, he provides them a great banquet of delightful dharma, and the undefiled great bliss attained thereby is great joy. Since pleasurable sense qualities need not be rejected, there is 'great revelry.'

Here is how he protects transient beings: "Spectacular veneration and reverence, supremely joyful, renowned and glorious, supremely endowed, first at bestowing the best, holiest refuge and worthiest source of refuge, ideal (refuge) from the enemy, worldliness, dispeller of all dangers." He is revered by all, and worthy of veneration because he is the treasury of all outstanding qualities, both mundane

and supramundane. He takes greatest joy in serving sentient beings, is famous throughout the three realms, and his glory lies in having completed the two accumulations.

He is endowed with supremely fortunate qualities, and is foremost at bestowing the best upon others. He protects those who suffer the strains of conditioned existence, and since none are better than he at that, he is the most worthwhile refuge.

From what does he protect? Worldly values are the enemy, and it is from that enemy that he affords protection. Better than worldly (refuges) are Śrāvakas. Better even than they are Pratyekas. Better still are Bodhisattvas. Better yet, indeed best of all, is the Venerable One. Only he can completely get rid of māras and suffering.

Since one of the ways in which he accomplishes the welfare of beings is by manifesting in the guise of a tīrthika for those who need to be trained in that way, the next verses say: "Crown tuft, braided locks and strands, plaits, munja and crowning ribbons, he has five faces and five long locks of hair, five jewelled strands and flowered clasp."

'Hair tuft' refers to his scalp hair being shaven, leaving just a tuft on the crown of his head, which is how he appears to those whom he trains through such guise. With the rest of his hair shaved away, the remaining locks are bound at his forehead. The strands are long, separated hairs. The plaits and other styles of bound hair are to take on the appearance of those who worship the great gods [Brahma, etc.].

The munja [girdle] is made of grass stalks reaching all the way down to the toes, and is held on by a belt. 'Ribbons' refer to silks or other materials used to hold something up—here the last, outer layer or wrapping holding the hair in place.

'Five faces' refers to his having a face in each of the four directions, and another, fifth face protruding from the top of his head. The four faces are reciting the four Vēda scriptures: the eastern, [reciting the] Hymnal Vēda; the southern, [reciting the] Offering Vēda; the western, [reciting the] Poetic Song Vēda; and the northern, reciting the Protection Spell Vēda. And so he appears in this form, which resembles five-faced Brahma, in order to tame certain beings.

Further, he manifests as having five long locks of hair hanging from his head, in

the style of the tīrthika Vaiśeṣikas, in order to tame them. Also, he emanates in the form of Gandharvin, having five jewelled strands on his head, in order to tame those beings. He appears, too, in a form resembling the deities in the ParaNirmita-Vasavartin realm, with a flowered clasp on his head, in order to tame them.

So then, how does he maintain the disciplined demeanor of the Buddhists? "Shaven-headed with refined comportment, his brahmacarya conduct is the highest discipline. He has completed all austerities, is a great ascetic, holy rishi Gautama, pure brahmin who knows sanctity."

For those to be tamed by one holding a renunciate's ordination like Śākyamuni, he appears with a shaved head, observing the strict discipline of refraining from that which is harmful. Also, for those to be tamed by one who maintains the vow and upholds the strict conduct of brahmacarya [celibacy], he presents himself that way. For those who engage in austerities like Śākyamuni did along the banks of the Nairanjana river, he appears that way as well.

'Gautama' refers to the Shakya clan. He emanates as a member of the royal caste who observe purification rites, or as one who is naturally austere, or like a Brahmin who observes that caste's purification rituals.

Because he himself is untainted by faults and shortcomings, he is a pure brahmin; and since he knows well the means whereby others can rid themselves of faults, he is said to 'know sanctity.'⁶⁴

What is the value of manifesting in those forms? "Transcender of misery who has attained true purity, liberated and freed, he has the body of complete freedom. Totally liberated and pacified, he has true peace. Transcending misery, he has reached nirvāṇa, has approached nirvāṇa in the finest way; clearing away both happiness and suffering, he has reached finality."

Since he is free of the suffering of samsāra, he has transcended misery. And since he lacks craving even for that state of transcendence, he has attained true purity. Having released and freed himself from all fetters in that way, he has attained the wisdom kāya. It is called a 'body' because it serves as the support for all positive qualities to appear.

⁶⁴ GD relates all of these verses describing their attire to the three kāya maṇḍala deities themselves. For instance, the locks and strands of hair and so forth

describe the appearance of the deities of the five lineages of the sambhogakāya retinue, who are not truly differentiable from Mañjuśrī himself, or else to the five herukas who are the radiance of the five wisdoms within his being.

The deity with five faces is Vairocana Sarvavid, the form of Vairocana known as Kunrig in Tibetan, the omniscient one, surrounded by the Buddhas of the various lineages. He carries the wisdom heruka on his head as a seal or confirmation of his status.

Having freed himself from mental disturbances in that way, and put to rest all conceptual constructs, he is at peace. Out of that tranquility, the qualities and features of nirvāṇa arise, nirvāṇa being the [goal of the] Śrāvaka path. The next reference to nirvāṇa is the Pratyeka path. The 'finest' form of nirvāṇa is that of the Bodhisattvas.

Happiness [means] the extremity of nirvāṇa, and suffering, the extremity of samsāra: clearing away both, and so possessing the final wisdom, is Buddhahood itself.

Next, in order to show that the fundamental, enduring condition is the immaculate, essential nature,

Freed of passion, transcender of the imputed, indomitable, incomparable, nothing manifests, appears or needs illumination, unchangeable, he is allpervasive and omnipresent, subtle, without the seeds of defilement, free of blemishes; freed of blemishes, he is stainless, he has abandoned faults and is devoid of error.

He has transcended the apparent, as his wisdom is beyond the mentality of attachment to perceptible objects. At the same time, since that wisdom is invulnerable to discordant forces, he is indomitable. As nothing whatsoever can match him, he is incomparable.

He does not see any objects as having identifiable characteristics, since such concepts about things do not appear in his experience. Indeed, as he abides as the embodiment of innate luminosity, like a butter lamp, things do not need to be made clearer to him.

Because his is not a composite form, there are no conditions under which he

could be changed. That fully liberated essence of the awakened state is allpervasive, like the oil in sesame seeds.

It is subtle, because the dull cannot understand it. He is free of defilement, the ignorant grasping at one's self as real, which is the seed for rebirth in this conditioned world. And so, when the ground [state of consciousness] is purified of the debris of conceptual thinking, [that seed] is not there.

When the limited mind that [provisionally] doesn't realize this comes to realize, too, how [the ground] really is, it will also become free from the blemishes of concepts. When it does not even cling to this realization, [such a mind] is also stainless. Through eliminating the two obscurations in this way, he is entirely free of faults and errors.

The way in which the ultimate—nonduality—is spontaneously present, is as follows: "Wide awake, master of alertness, he is the holy one who knows, who sees all. He has gone beyond ordinary states of consciousness, epitomizes nondual wisdom that is nonconceptual and spontaneously present."

He has woken up from the two obscurations, or else, his perceptions have awakened as wisdom; or, he has awoken to the mind being empty. Therefore, he knows all that there is, and sees just how things are. Knowing these inseparably, as well, makes him holy.

Being free from conceptual thought in this manner, he has merged into the expanse that is the true nature of ordinary consciousness. That transition is just what qualifies his wisdom as nondual. Nonconceptual wisdom is spontaneously present, without causes and conditions. Its essence is to be spontaneously present. All of the qualities of that essence are spontaneously present—its spontaneously present qualities.

How can it be that they are not generated from causes and conditions? The root text says, "The creation of Buddhas past, present and future, Buddha without beginning or end, the original Buddha without a cause, single wisdom eye free from fault, Tathāgata embodiment of wisdom."

What Buddhas do, in the past, present and future, is guide sentient beings. Buddhas did not first come from a specific source in the past, nor is there somewhere to which they go in the end. They are originally without any cause. Because a Buddha lacks the stain of dualistic grasping, the eye of wisdom is

singular. And because his body is the one taste comprising six wisdoms, it is described in that way.

What is special about his speech? It says, "Master of words, great speaker, primary speaker, king of speech, exalted speaker at a superior level, he is the undaunted lion of speech."

He speaks the profound and vast dharma, which makes him the master of words, a great speaker. What he says is superior to what tīrthikas teach, and since his words outshine the Śrāvakas', he is the king of speech. Being superior even to the speech of Pratyekas, his is exalted. Since there is no dharma of which to speak that rises above the sound of non-arising, it occupies the highest level. Like a lion, it is invulnerable to attack, whether from māras or anything else.

So then, what makes his physical being great? It says, "Allseeing and supremely joyful, his majestic figure delightful to behold, blazing with brilliant light and a knot of glory, his hand shines with blazing light."

Exalted prajñā beholds the ultimate truth, and exalted compassion regards transient beings. In this way, he sees it all. Harboring great bliss makes him supremely joyful. He has a magnificent physical presence that is handsome and attractive to others, while internally the six wisdoms blaze, clearing away the darkness of ignorance, indicated outwardly by a blazing aura of six-colored light.

One of his remarkable signs is a precious knot ornament at his heart. Even his hands emit rays of blazing light, which inspire those who can be tamed through peaceful methods, and annihilate those who cannot.

If you wonder, how does he heal the illnesses of transient beings, it says: "Chief and paramount healer, greatest reliever of pain, fruitful tree of all medicines, great panacea for all disease." The best among physicians is the one who teaches the meaning of lack of selfidentity, thereby relieving the pain of grasping at a self.

A wishfulfilling tree is used to represent healing. Just as a tree's fruit springs from its roots, branches, leaves, and flowers, here the root is bodhicitta. The branches are the different branches of skillful means that produce realization. The leaves are the specific dharmas of each of the vehicles, which do not obstruct one another. The flowers are the experiences of realization, and the fruit

is the completion of the entire process.

Another way to understand this imagery is that he emanates various kinds of outer and inner medicines. These dispel the foes of outer and inner illnesses.⁶⁵

What, then, are his special physical attributes? It says, "Most winsome in all three worlds, he is a glorious maṇḍala among the star constellations." Appearing to sentient beings as lovely and beautiful, outshining gods and humans. he accomplishes his purpose, like the way the moon [dominates the sky] amidst the starry constellations.⁶⁶

⁶⁵GD: "Glorious Vajrasattva, along with other nirmanakāyas, destroy grasping and fixation and the pain of disturbed mental states, and the three

What is his sheltering compassion like? The root verses say, "At the farthest reaches of space in the ten directions he firmly plants the victory banner of dharma. Wherever he goes, he bears the broad parasol of the maṇḍalas of love and compassion. Glorious lotus lord of dance, great monarch of the precious parasol."

His proclamation of the holy dharma extends to the farthest ends of space in the ten directions, here depicted as planting the victory banner [of the teachings]. Just as a parasol affords protection from the rain and the sun, so too does he [protect beings], through the powers of lovingkindness and compassion he possesses.⁶⁷

Being unstained, he is also like a lotus, and the varied, evershifting steps he takes to guides transient beings are like a dance. Moreover, like the parasol of precious qualities, the Venerable Lord himself is their chief protector.

Since, no matter in which way one proceeds, there is but one certain path, [the next verse says], "Great majesty of all Buddhas, embodiment of all Buddha kāyas, great yoga of all Buddhas, sole doctrine of all Buddhas...."

kāyas and four wisdoms are the very best nectar for removing [imbalances of] phlegm, bile and wind."

⁶⁶For GD, the maṇḍala here is the orb of the sun, which is like sambhogakāya, from which emanations (nirmanakāyas) appear like rays of sunlight.

⁶⁷The circular symmetry of the maṇḍalas also represents the impartial and unconfined scope of his compassion.

The Venerable Lord possesses the magnificence of all Buddhas, as well the threefoldkāyas of all Buddhas, since they are all emanations of the Venerable Lord himself.

The great yoga of all Buddhas pertains mainly to method and wisdom, and yet, although he teaches the full range of the Buddhadharmā, in truth, there is just the one vehicle, which is taught nondually. As is said, for instance, "Although the vehicle has infinite points of access, ultimately, there is just one [vehicle]."

How is it that five wisdoms appear within what is ultimately one? It says, "Glorious, precious, vajra empowerment,⁶⁸ lord and master of all that is precious, Lokeśvara who reigns over all, leader of all vajra holders, great heart of all Buddhas...."

The vajra is adamant, and penetrates through everything that can be known. Possessing the power to realize the expanse of dharmas, it represents mirror-like wisdom, in essence Akṣobhya. It pacifies ordinary anger.

Realizing the equality of all dharmas, and so commanding all precious qualities, it is the primal wisdom of equality, in essence Ratnasambhava. This pacifies ordinary pride and possessiveness.

⁶⁸ GD says that this line refers to the empowerment of the prowess of awareness; or else, to all of the vase empowerment, the empowerment of the precious sprout, the inner empowerment of the mudrās that signify the [five] Victors, the empowerment of the five kāyas of prajñā awareness, and the secret empowerment of suchness.

'Precious' here refers, for instance, to the precious sound of a word used to confer the empowerment of the prowess of awareness, which relies upon such a sign or indication.

It commands the masterful ability to clearly distinguish the essential features of each and every worldly phenomenon, the wisdom of discernment, in essence Amitābha. This pacifies ordinary desire.

Carrying out enlightened activity that is unimpeded, like a vajra, is effectual wisdom, in essence Amoghasiddhi, which pacifies ordinary jealousy and laziness.

The heart of all Buddhas, the great, completely pure dharmadhātu, is the wisdom of the expanse of dharmas, in essence Vairocana, which pacifies ordinary obliviousness.

To demonstrate how these also can be classified in terms of body, speech and mind, [the next verses say], "abiding in the heart of all Buddhas, great kāya of all Buddhas, he is the speech of all Buddhas, too."

The mind of the Venerable Lord is the oneness and equality of the six primal wisdoms, which pervades and abides within the hearts of all Buddhas. Since he also perceives and comprehends all that can be known, we can say 'mind' instead [of heart].

It is also the Venerable Lord who emanates as the kāyas of all Buddhas, and so among all kāyas, he is the greatest. He is a 'kāya' in the sense that he pervades, supports, and manifests.

It is the Venerable Lord, as well, who causes the speech of all Buddhas to issue forth, and is their very essence. He is 'speech' in the sense that he brings clarity, understanding, and renown.

It is he who benefit others, dispelling their darkness while remaining untouched by it. As it says, "Great radiance of the vajra sun, stainless light of the vajra moon, great passion of freedom from desires, effulgent with multicolored light, in vajra posture of full enlightenment, propounder of the dharma for transient beings, glorious lotus-born Buddha...."

The 'great sun' is the wisdom of nonduality, which dries up the ocean of existence. The light of the moon clears away the darkness of ignorance. Freed of ordinary desire, his passionate concern is for those to be trained, and [fulfilling] his purpose.

Or else, to those individuals who are to be tamed through the pāramitās, he teaches the dharma in terms of freedom from passion, whereas to those predisposed toward secret mantra, he teaches the dharma in terms of harnessing passion within one's experience.

As a sign that wisdom and compassion are ablaze internally, outwardly he blazes with multicolored lights. As a sign of inseparable skillfulness and prajñā, he sits in vajra posture.

It should be understood that the way in which Buddhas propound the dharma out of love for sentient beings is nonconceptually, as natural utterance. And as the lotus represents being free of any fault or defect, it is identified as the birthplace of all Buddhas.

How does that work? "[H]older of the treasury of omniscient wisdom, monarch with mastery of manifold magic, great holder of secret mantra and vidyā mantra."

He holds the treasury of omniscient wisdom, since he knows all that there is, just as it is. His qualities exceed any specified amount, he has triumphed over the māras, and, through his magical emanations, he employs a great variety of methods for taming others according to their diverse interests.⁶⁹

The greatest among his exceptional qualities are skillfulness and prajñā—the essence of secret mantra; and prajñā and primal wisdom—the essence of vidyā mantra.⁷⁰

So then, what is it that prajñā does? "Sharp vajra and large sword, supreme, fully pure letter, great vehicle that cuts off suffering, great weapon of vajra dharma, emperor of vajra profundity, vajra intellect that sees things as they are...."

Non-dual wisdom, like a sword, cuts through all conceptions of an existent self;⁷¹ and the unchanging truth is like a letter ['A'], supreme because it is untouched by the stains of concepts.

The great vehicle is distinguished by its prajñā and compassion, and their realization completely extirpates the roots of suffering. The weapon that cuts off suffering is vajralike, nondual wisdom.

'Jina Jikra' means that such profundity is like an emperor among kings.^{72xxxvii} With a mind furnished with great prajñā, he comprehends the true meaning of all that can be known.

⁶⁹ He radiates an inconceivable number and variety of nirmanakāyas from his uṣṇīṣa and elsewhere on his physical form. GD

⁷⁰ In GD's version of the text, this line reads: "great holder of the Buddhas' vidyā mantras." The meaning essentially is the same—he is the master of all secret mantra.

⁷¹ GD specifically associates this 'sharpness' with individuating discrimination.

⁷² GD also says 'dzi na dzi kra,' and explains that secret mantra reigns supreme, as it rules over the Śrāvaka and other, lesser vehicles. See the accompanying endnote.

Understanding things in that way, here is how he teaches the cause and effect vehicle to disciples: "perfection of all pāramitās, bedecked in the ornaments of all bhūmis, completely pure dharma of no selfidentity, finest moonlight of perfect wisdom, most assiduous magical network, the supreme master of all tantras."

The Venerable One himself perfectly possesses the essence of the pāramitās, and is ornamented with the qualities of the ten bhūmis, too.⁷³ His dharma of lack of selfidentity is completely pure, as it is free from any shortcoming.

Perfect wisdom, like the light of the moon, relieves ignorance and affliction. Having great diligence in the service of transient beings, he teaches them in a variety of illusory forms and emanations. In particular, he teaches the highest among all the tantras, the wisdom of nonduality.

In order to show that fundamental bodhicitta, because it is nondual, is the heart of all Victors, [the next verses] say: "In full possession of the vajra seat, commanding all wisdom kāyas, Samantabhadra of exemplary intellect, Kṣitigarbha who supports all beings, great heart of all Buddhas."

Through his vajralike realization of the ground dharmakāya, a variety of wisdom kāyas appear, and since he entirely lacks discriminations of good and evil, acceptance or rejection, he is fully good (Samantabhadra). Knowing how to truly benefit himself and others, his understanding is excellent.

⁷³ GD here elaborates upon Vima's earlier discussion of the bhūmis ('grounds'). "From the first, 'most joyful,' up to and including the tenth, are the nirmanakāya grounds. These are progressively accomplished through the prowess of prajñā.

"The eleventh through fourteenth are the sambhogakāya levels, from where, having finally perfected great wisdom, the [sambhogakāya] issues forth nirmanakāyas to the nirmanakāya levels. It has reached the definitive level, the pure domain.

"The fifteenth and sixteenth are the level of nirvāṇa, the tranquil domain of

dharmakāya, where one abides in undifferentiated prajñā. One might say that these are delineated in terms of the different dimensions of the ultimate truth."

This understanding is like the earth (K ṣiti), insofar as it generates the enlightened qualities that benefit sentient beings, and likewise insofar as such work for beings is carried out through emanations who appear in the material world, and finally, insofar as it is the great heart essence (garbha) from which all emanations of Buddhas appear.

How is it that emanations appear from that heart essence? "Source of manifold emanation cycles, supreme nature of all entities, encompassing the nature of all entities, this unborn dharma exhibits endless variations."

Because awareness (vidyā), the enlightened mind (bodhicitta), can take on any and all forms, the various, particular methods of accomplishment (sādhanās) appear.

And, not only that, it is also the basis for the diverse emanations of enlightened body, speech and mind. And finally, since it is the abiding, unborn nature of all things animate and inanimate, it is supreme, too.⁷⁴

Since, in reality, nothing truly arises, then all things, from forms up to omniscience, arise unimpededly, and are therefore encompassed within that nature. In short, this shows that while profoundly unborn, [things] appear in endless profusion. Because it teaches such profundity and vastness to be nondual, this is called the supreme among all vehicles.

⁷⁴ Here once more GD identifies the one who comprises manifold emanation cycles as Vajrasattva, from whom, e.g., the six nirmanakāyas arise. He consistently equates Vajrasattva with Mañjuśrī throughout this treatise.

If one were to ask, what is the essential quality of sacred prajñā? It says, "Comprising the very essence of all dharmas, great prajñā, in an instant, comprehends all dharmas, directly realizes all dharmas."

The very essence of all dharmas, such as the aggregates, constituents and sense fields, or any other interdependently appearing phenomenon, is great equality.

That which realizes this to be so is great prajñā which, in a given moment of comprehension of [the nature of] all knowable entities, directly and clearly

realizes this essential quality.

How could the power of that *prajñā* be described? [The root verses] say: "Triumphant, with superior prowess, he defeats spirits; personification of sheer lucidity and stillness, bearer of the bodhi of all perfect Buddhas, directly manifest to all Buddhas, the most luminous flame of wisdom."

It is capable of overcoming nonvirtuous actions of body, speech and mind, and possesses the highest intellectual capacity to realize *dharmatā*, and so removes the harm caused by conceptual thoughts, like warding off evil spirits. The awakened mind of a completely perfected Buddha is the epitome of nonconceptuality and lucidity, unperturbed by thought activity, like waveless water.⁷⁵

What is [merely] understood perfectly well by a yogin in training on the path is realized directly and manifestly by a Buddha. Such wisdom is compared here to a burning flame, as it destroys ignorance, removes mental disturbances, completely overwhelms the [feeble] light cast by fireflies and the like, and indeed illuminates countless worlds.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ GD's explanation of this line is, "With the Teacher's superior intellect, he realizes the precious *dharmakāya*, the end of all that arises." While most Tibetan texts consistently say '*byung ba*, meaning 'element' or 'arising,' which matches GD's reading, it is notable that the Sanskrit sources tend to

IX. The Wisdom of Equality⁷⁷

Next, to describe the qualities of the wisdom being *Mañjuśrī* in terms of the wisdom of equality, we have [the following verses]: "Holy one who fulfills all desired aims and fully purifies all inferior realms, lord who reigns supreme over sentient beings, emancipates all sentient beings with singular valor in the conflict with *kleśas*, and crushes the arrogant enemy, ignorance."

For those who seek [rebirth in] the higher realms and liberation, he makes this achievable through [the perfection of] generosity and the other [*pāramitās*].⁷⁸ For those who are worst off, he teaches a dharma commensurate with their need to be liberated from the three lower realms, which is training in cause and effect. By so serving the needs of all sentient beings, he reigns supreme.

say *bhūtā*, meaning 'spirits,' which in Tibetan usually is '*byung po*, consistent

with Vima's reading of the line.

⁷⁶ GD ties this last line of the chapter directly back to its principal subject matter: "Within the expanse of awareness, the five vessels of wisdom shine. Within that state abide the five kāyas of prajñā awareness. All of those are the radiance of the wisdom of careful discrimination of the true meaning." ⁷⁷ GD's title is 'the wisdom of the unbroken equality of all phenomena.'⁷⁸The two form kāyas are the radiance or display of the qualities of

dharmakāya awareness, yet remain one with that essence. So in reality, the three kāyas never come together or separate, never arise or cease, but simply abide as (or within) the wisdom of equality. GD.

Because he knows what all sentient beings are thinking, working with their varied mentalities, he enables them to break out of the constraints of their disturbed states of mind. So although he teaches every dharma imaginable, he does it solely as a remedy to tame mental disturbances. Such teachings, therefore, overwhelm heterodox doctrines, destroying arrogant [beliefs].

If you wonder, since he is able to crush the mental disturbances of others in that way, what form does he assume when taming them? Here the root verses say, "Glorious, astute and attractive, steady and bearing a repulsive form...."

As the most glorious among us all, his intellect possesses the highest degree of prajñā; and because he appears so beautiful when you look at him, he is attractive as well.

He is consistent in that his purpose never varies, and yet he assumes a very threatening form when he needs to, such as to repel māras who cannot be tamed through peaceful methods.

Further, for those who are interested in dance, he teaches through dancing movements: "[M]oving all one hundred of his hands, dancing in a striding manner, each of one hundred elegant hands filled, dancing everywhere throughout space."⁷⁹

As a dance to tame Brahma, he emanates one hundred hands which rotate, and he also emanates with one hundred hands through the power of having completed the two accumulations. In this way, he acts for the benefit of beings to the furthest

reaches of space.

⁷⁹ This is also a metaphor for the dexterity of awareness. GD.

In a further demonstration of his miraculous physical powers, "The entire span of the earth maṇḍala's surface he presses down with the sole of one foot, while he pins down Brahma's realm with just the edge of the nail of his big toe."

In order to remedy the fact that the four continents have been tamed by Brahma, he holds down the four continents, along with Mt. Meru, under the sole of one foot, without the continents getting any smaller or his foot growing any larger. Extending just the big toe of that foot upwards, he is able to pin down the realm of Brahma at the same time. As before, neither grows larger or smaller in size, which is why this is a miraculous demonstration.⁸⁰

You might wonder, how can one ever be liberated without rejecting this [domain of] samsāra? It says,

One in meaning, nondual, the ultimate dharma, ultimate truth that is unassailable,
which takes on forms with diverse capacities and a richly diverse continuum of consciousness delighting in every object and entity,
a passionate intellect that delights in emptiness while devoid of all worldly desires,
taking greatest joy in threefold existence.

' Nondual' refers to the ultimate, dharmakāya.⁸¹ It is unassailable because invincible to others[' refutations]. Through the forces of compassion and positive aspirations, it manifests in a variety of forms with different skill sets.

⁸⁰ His foot pressing on the ground also symbolizes how he remains firmly in contact with the state of dharmatā at all times.

⁸¹'One in meaning' means that all of samsāra and nirvāṇa are ultimately the same (equal). GD

The ground state of consciousness itself is a continuum, because all possible mental constructs are connected to it. In that sense, he delightedly involves himself with all the entities which samsāra comprises. Ultimately, though, the passion for emptiness that his mind enjoys is far removed from ordinary worldly

passions, and so [in that sense] he has abandoned them.⁸²

While his great prajñā is not caught within the phenomenal world, out of compassion he nonetheless emanates within it, and enjoys the mission that he undertakes there.

When so engaged in his purpose, how majestic and brilliant is his form? "White as a clean white cloud, like the fine light of autumn moonlight, stunning as the sun's disc at dawn. The lustre of his nails is mostly red."

As an indication that, in reality, he is free of all stains, he glows with the whiteness of a cloud. He radiates light rays of wisdom, showing that, like autumn moonlight, he dispels the darkness of ignorance and satisfies longings.

Not only that, but as an indication that the six wisdoms are really of one taste, his physical form possesses all six colors, while his compassionate concern for transient beings is shown by his red fingernails.⁸³

What are his distinctive ornaments? "Above the crest of his azure, lovely diadem, his fine hair is bound like a blue sapphire. He has a strikingly beautiful, great jewel, and wears the Buddha's emanations as ornaments."

As a sign that he has fully overcome the two extremes [of existence and non-existence], on his head he wears a jewelled diadem that is fine and beautiful. Even his hair is unlike that of others: it is jewellike, blue as the autumn sky, and rather gorgeous.

⁸² He has realized that the still dharmatā and the insubstantial dharmakāya never meet or separate. GD

⁸³ This is also one of the special marks and signs of a Sugata. GD.

As a sign that he perfectly accomplishes the welfare of beings, at his heart he is decorated with a most precious, wishfulfilling jewel. To show that he is the source of boundless Buddha emanations, a wisdom being is clearly visible in and decorates each one of his pores.

What is distinctive about the path of one who possesses these kinds of features? "He moves a hundred worldly realms as one, carries the great powers of the legs of miracle, and retains perfect recollection of reality."

The reference here to a hundred worldly realms is just illustrative, as he actually moves infinite realms. In what sense does he move them? With the four legs of miracle and other powers, he accomplishes the welfare of transient beings.⁸⁴

[To have] the four legs of miracle means to possess: (1) the power of purposeful samādhi; (2) the power of intentional samādhi; (3) the power of diligent samādhi, and (4) the power of discerning samādhi.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Ceaseless compassion transforms deluded experience into the pure display of wisdom. GD

⁸⁵ He doesn't need to progress in steady strides; rather the wind of wisdom transports him instantly. GD.

He also possesses great power of recollection, which never loses track of the truth.

Then what are the branches of awakening? "King of samādhis with fourfold mindfulness, branches of awakening fragrant with flowers, great sea of the Tathāgatas' qualities, seeing the eightfold path unfolding, understanding the path of perfect Buddhas...."

The four types of mindfulness are the close placements of mindfulness upon the body, thoughts, sensations, and events. These are practiced while on the path of accumulation. When one has no attachment even for these four types of mindfulness, that is the king of samādhis.⁸⁶

On the path of vision, there are the seven branches of awakening. These are the branches of: perfect awakening of mindfulness; fine discrimination of phenomena; diligence; joyfulness; being extremely well-trained; samādhi, and equanimity.

Because, through qualities like these, one works for the benefit of beings and pleases the Noble Ones, they are like fragrances from flowers.⁸⁷ Indeed, the Venerable One himself is the very basis for the oceanic qualities of the Tathāgatas, such as the eighteen unique features of Buddhas.⁸⁸

Next, while on the path of meditation, there are the eight branches of the Nobles' path, which are: perfect view; perfect conception; perfect speech; perfect action; perfect livelihood; perfect effort; perfect recollection; and perfect samādhi.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ This can also refer to four different degrees to which recollection is roused by the development of prajñā. GD

⁸⁷ In terms of the five deity maṇḍalas of the Mayajala, this would be the flower-bearing, incense-wafting, and other groups of goddesses (and gods) surrounding the 'awakened one' (the central deity) and 'branches' (the deities who are the vibrant display of the central figure). GD

⁸⁸ In the same vein, the qualities of the five lineages are on display as fortytwo kāyas (maṇḍala deities), which eternally abide within the tranquil state of dharmatā. GD

Knowing how the paths are laid out that way, he leads beings onward. Knowing this layout, he knows the path to perfect enlightenment.⁹⁰

Because one must give birth to compassion before one will ever be able to accomplish the purposes [of beings], it says, "lovingly disposed toward all sentient beings, yet free of passion, like space itself. Attuned to the minds of all sentient beings, as swift as the thoughts of sentient beings...."

His compassionate concern for beings is like a mother's for her only child.⁹¹ Doesn't this mean that his mind is qualified [by such concern]? Because he knows reality to be space-like, there is no chance that his feelings of care would be so ordinary. Moreover, he penetrates and permeates the minds of all sentient beings,⁹² and his diligent efforts in their service keep pace with the very movements of their thoughts.

To show that he knows those whose purposes he aims to achieve, the next verses say, "knowing the abilities and goals of all sentient beings, he steals away the minds of all sentient beings. He knows the five aggregates' truth and reality and possesses the five fully pure aggregates."

⁸⁹ GD says that if one wishes to interpret these as actual branches, then they are the four methods and four times.

⁹⁰ He understands that there is nothing on which to meditate. GD⁹¹ GD reads this line as "It has virtually arisen in all sentient beings," meaning that, in keeping with the crucial point that there is no real difference in their awareness, the understanding of Buddhas is also present within the minds of sentient beings.

⁹² The mind of a sentient being and the enlightened mind of a Buddha are not

two. GD

He knows all beings' capacities, whether greater, average or lesser, and likewise knows in which things they are interested. He even captivates them by showing himself in lovely forms from which they can't tear their eyes away. Or we could say that he steals their minds away, in the sense that he draws their minds over from the conceptual to the nonconceptual.

He also understands that the five aggregates, in reality, are conventional and illusory, because ultimately they are unborn. But he himself possesses five fully-pure aggregations, which are the aggregate of disciplined conduct, the aggregate of samādhi, the aggregate of prajñā, the aggregate of total liberation, and the aggregate of seeing the wisdom of total liberation.

If you ask, how is it that he knows the means to achieve their aims? The next verses say, "He abides in the finality of full renunciation, is expert in all aspects of renunciation, is found on the paths of all renunciates, and teaches all about renunciation."

Of all the dharmas that definitely lead one out of the three realms, nondual wisdom is conclusive. The Venerable One himself innately abides within that wisdom. He is also expert at teaching all of the doctrines that definitely lead out of samsāra. He himself demonstrates how to remain on that path, so that others may emulate him. And so, he is wellpositioned to teach in whatever way seems expedient for those to be trained.

How does he accomplish the welfare of others?

He exposes the twelve branches at the root of existence, embodies the twelve aspects of purity, exemplifies the operation of the four truths, possesses realization of eightfold consciousness and the twelve features of final truth.

He sees the sixteen aspects of reality,
has awakened in twenty respects,
is the complete Buddha with supreme omniscience who dispatches countless millions
of nirmanakāyas of all Buddhas.

The twelve branches of dependent origination produce conditioned existence. Through the force of ignorance, karmic formations appear. Because of these formations,

consciousness arises, and from consciousness, name and form. Due to name and form there arise the six sense fields, and from the six sense fields, sensory contact.

From sensory contact arises sensation, and from sensation, craving. Craving leads to appropriation, appropriation leads to probable experiential outcomes, and such existential possibilities result in birth. The inevitable result of birth is aging and death.

The root of all of these, then, is ignorance, because if you can put an end to ignorance, all of them will be stopped. And it is great, nondual wisdom that uproots ignorance.

The twelve sense factors to be purified are the visual sense and forms; the auditory sense and sounds; the olfactory sense and smells; the gustatory sense and tastes; the tactile sense and objects of contact; and the mental imagination and its objects.⁹³

He also instructs sentient beings in the four noble truths, which are the truth of suffering, the truth of its origin, the truth of its cessation, and the truth of the path.⁹⁴ The foregoing are all instructions on the general path.

The special path is to realize the nature of the eight groupings of consciousness. Seven of those groupings arise through the blessing of the universal ground [consciousness], and so if one knows that the universal ground is unborn, by extension one will come to understand that all eight [groupings] are unborn. In that regard, it is said, for example: "Through knowing that the eight are unborn, one's understanding matches that of all Victors."

He also possesses the twelve qualities of the enlightened state, which are features of the perfect truth. These are: the five families and five wisdoms, and exceptional prajñā and compassion.⁹⁵

The sixteen aspects of reality are sixteen emptinesses, namely: emptiness of the inner, emptiness of the outer, emptiness of inner and outer, emptiness of emptiness, great emptiness, emptiness of the ultimate, emptiness of the conditioned, emptiness of the unconditioned, infinite emptiness, emptiness without beginning or end, emptiness of the non-relinquished, natural emptiness, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of personal characteristics, referenceless

emptiness, and emptiness of essential immateriality.

⁹³ GD directly correlates this line with the one preceding, stating that the teacher, having purified ignorance and the remaining branches, possesses realization.

⁹⁴ The four symbolic introductions, according to GD.

⁹⁵ According to GD, the four aforementioned symbolic introductions, which are vital points about the objects glimpsed, as well as the four nails of oral instructions, and the four final results.

While one remains a sentient being who does not realize these [emptinesses], one's experience has twenty aspects: earth and the rest of the five elements; form and the remainder of the five aggregates; desire and the others, the five disturbed mentalities; and the five faculties, such as the visual power.

When one realizes the truth, however, these appear as the five families and five wisdoms, etc., such that all of the features of enlightenment are complete within those [twenty]. And so, because liberation from those aspects is the awakening of the Buddhas, this [realization] is supreme.

In this connection, [the scriptures] say, for example: "Once freed of attachment to the five elements, the five aggregates and disturbed mental states, and five sense faculties, these appear as the five [Buddha] families and five wisdoms—this is the awakening of complete enlightenment."

When one is enlightened in this way, one possesses wisdom that knows every detail of everything, and so is omniscient. With this awareness, one dispatches countless millions of emanations who act for the welfare of sentient beings.

He also teaches whichever vehicles are best suited to the abilities of those to be trained, and so the next verses state: "He directly comprehends all in an instant, knows all things with a moment's attention. With the approaches of the various vehicles he knows what is to be done for beings. Through three vehicles, he brings deliverance, and through a single vehicle, abides in fruition."

Instantly perceiving everything that those to be trained are thinking, even beneath their own conscious recognition, he acts as needed.

If you wonder, well then, mustn't he too be caught up in concepts? In fact, he is well aware that conceptual activity, too, is unborn. Being so aware, he is able to

act for the benefit of beings through the various vehicles. As is said [in scriptures], for example, "For as long as thoughts go on, the vehicles will reach no end."

The three vehicles through which he trains those whose minds must be tamed are the Śrāvaka, Pratyeka and Mahāyāna teachings. The single, perfect vehicle is the Vajrayāna vehicle of fruition. It is called 'abiding in the fruition' because one adopts as one's path, from this very moment onward, the way things really are, once one has reached the fruition of Buddhahood.

While the nine vehicles of teachings for the nine types of living beings are taught exclusively to serve their needs, and so it would be proper to refer to all of them as nothing less than perfect vehicles, still, three are causal vehicles, and one is the resultant vehicle. As is said, for example, "[The Buddha] reserved the short path of the resultant vehicle for a later time, until after he had exhaustively turned the wheel of causal dharmas, which work with the causes."

In order to identify distinctly the objects of abandonment, the [next verses] state: "He purifies all types of mental disturbances and causes all karmas to become exhausted, has traversed all rivers and oceans, and arisen from the yoga of isolation, is permanently rid of primary, secondary and fullfledged mental disturbances, along with all tendentious impressions."

Realizing nonduality purifies mental disturbances, such that one loses all interest in becoming involved in negative actions, and one's karma is exhausted. The endless preoccupations of conditioned existence are like a rushing river: long and winding, carrying one off course, hard to traverse, and overflowing.⁹⁶

And so, the wisdom that carries one across, until one reaches one's destination, is known as the 'fastness of isolation from concepts.' Here, the six primary mental disturbances, as well as the twenty secondary disturbances and the intense suffering of fullfledged mental disturbances, along with all tendentious impressions and their seeds, are permanently removed.⁹⁷

In what way does he himself possess superior prajñā and skillfulness? "Skilled in great compassion and understanding, he effectively accomplishes the aims of beings, has abandoned all objects of perception, and put a halt to objects of consciousness."

Because he has tremendous compassion, he does not dwell in the extreme of

peace; and because he possesses great prajñā, he does not dwell within conditioned existence, or samsāra, either. Through such skillful means, he effectively works for the welfare of transient beings.

'Well, doesn't that make him one who grasps at ideas about [how things are]?' He lacks that fault, because he has abandoned perceptions which seize upon the characteristics of their objects, and indeed has realized the unborn nature of all defiled states of consciousness.

⁹⁶ He teaches how to rise out of the four rivers, which are desire, conditioned existence, wrong view, and ignorance. GD

⁹⁷ The six mental disturbances (including resentment as the sixth) are liberated as great wisdom, and habitual tendencies spontaneously vanish, through abiding in the knowledge of primordially pure awareness. GD

Since his own realization is unmistakable in this way, the way he sets others on the unmistakable path follows:

Knowing how the minds of sentient beings work, and knowing the minds of all enlightened beings, he resides in the minds of all sentient beings, proceeds in harmony with their way of thinking, and so brings satisfaction to all sentient beings, is the joy of every sentient being.

He completes his mission free from confusion, is completely rid of all mistakes, and his mind has no doubts about the three meanings— he has mastered the three qualities that serve all.

He acts for the benefit of beings, attuned to their ways of thinking. He does this, too, through being nonconceptually aware of the minds of enlightened beings. He is pervasively present within the thinking minds of all sentient beings.⁹⁸

Since he undertakes their service already attuned to their thoughts and wishes, once so engaged he readily satisfies sentient beings' wishes and pleases them, until he finally accomplishes their ultimate purpose.

He does this, too, without the slightest mistake or error. That is because he lacks any doubt or uncertainty about provisional meanings, definitive meanings, and the meanings within the different vehicles, these three. In short, he is completely certain in his understanding of all the tenet systems. He is the very embodiment

of the qualities of enlightened body, speech and mind, which serve the needs of all sentient beings. As mentioned earlier, "abiding in the heart of all Buddhas, great kāya of all Buddhas, he is the speech of all Buddhas, too."

⁹⁸ A Buddha's mind is immaterial wisdom awareness, which exists within the conceptual minds of transient beings. GD

Next, to show how, by realizing the cause, the result is supremely accomplished:

He finely discerns the operation of the five aggregates in every instant, past, present and future,
and is perfectly enlightened in a single instant. He exemplifies the nature of all Buddhas.

He has no body, and so his bodies are sublime bodies; realizing what bodies are, in the end,
he displays a glorious variety of facets,
like a great jewel, or a precious crown.

At the causal stage, he finely discerns the operation of the five aggregates, breaking them down to their smallest instants, past, present and future, making him a master even among worldly scholars.⁹⁹

At the time of fruition, since full comprehension of the nature of reality is not something that occurs step by step, Buddhahood is also instantaneous. This is taught to be the quick path for those with the very highest faculties and right karmic propensity, who entirely dispense with deliberate effort and contrivance, and simply meditate upon reality as it truly is.

Dropping all deliberate effort and mental constructs is also discussed, for example, in the following verse from scripture: "Although the virtues of the path not imbued with sacred prajñā will bear you to rebirth in realms aloft, as a god or human, you will not attain a level free from birth and death."

⁹⁹ There is always this present moment, and then the one right after, and whether wisdom is born in one or the other is what distinguishes how those of highest and of medium capacities are liberated, respectively. Better yet, indeed best of all, is complete enlightenment in any given moment. GD

Moreover, it would appear that, while all Buddhas share the same nature, and are alike in acting out of compassion for sentient beings, they exhibit styles of

action, physical statures, lifespans, mannerisms, and lineages that are not the same. And so [Mañjuśrī] exemplifies that unborn nature.

The dharmakāya is not a perishable physical body; and thus, through its blessings, the most sublime of all bodies, the sambhogakāya, appears.¹⁰⁰

Out of his realization that all bodies, in the end, are unborn, appear a variety of emanation kāyas for the glory of transient beings. Because these kāyas fulfill their deepest yearnings, like wishfulfilling jewels, they are called "sublime," or else "crown tufts" or "bouquets."

Furthermore, the sambhogakāya possesses fivefold certainty: certainty of aspect, place, retinue, dharma and time. The nirmanakāya, by contrast, has no certain aspect, nor determinate place, retinue, dharma or time.

X. Effectual Wisdom

Next comes the presentation of the qualities of the wisdom being Mañjuśrī in respect of his effectual wisdom. ¹⁰⁰ GD agrees, stating that he contains the fortytwo [peaceful] sambhogakāya deities.

You might ask, what is the cause of enlightened activity? The root text says, "That which all Buddhas realize, unsurpassed awakening into enlightenment," and so on. Nondual dharmakāya, the nature of all Buddhas, is the great dharma to be realized. Realizing it results in the unsurpassed awakening of Buddhahood.

The verse continues, "[it] arises from secret mantra but has no syllables. Great secret mantra, with three lineages, generates the full meaning of secret mantra. The great sphere is beyond words. Great emptiness has five syllables, and the empty sphere, a hundred letters."

Because the essential reality of dharmas that [is realized] through prajñā and skillful means is inexpressible, it has no syllables.¹⁰¹ From the superior causes, prajñā and method, arises the superior result, the spontaneous presence of the three lineages of enlightened body, speech and mind.¹⁰² They, in turn, instill the meaning of secret mantradevelopment stage and completion stage—within the experience of others.¹⁰³

Ultimately, the immutable sphere of dharmatā covers all coordinates and is all-

encompassing, and so its essence cannot be set down in words. From great emptiness, the dharmakāya itself, the seed syllables of the five Tathāgatas appear unimpededly. These five are: Om̐, Āḥ, Hūṅ, Svā and Hā.¹⁰⁴ Also, from that unborn sphere, there arise one hundred letters or syllables, based upon which there have appeared a broad range of sādhanā practices.¹⁰⁵ xxxviii In short, the vital power of the dharmakāya is unconfined and unconstrained.

¹⁰¹ All words and syllables arise from the essential meaning of secret mantra, which, in and of itself, is beyond words and syllables. GD

¹⁰² "The illuminating lamp of language [of secret mantra] is taught as outer, inner [and secret], these three [variations]." GD

¹⁰³ "The teachings of secret mantra that issue forth from the basis, the source of secret mantra, illustrate that very reality, and so generate the realization of it." GD

¹⁰⁴ The single syllable 'A' represents all of them. GD

So then, which are the emanations of [his] mind? "Replete with all aspects and lacking any aspect, with the bindu of half and half again of sixteen, beyond reckoning or categorization, at the very peak of the four concentrations, knowing all permutations of the concentrations, seeing the range of samādhis and minds of others...."

On the relative level, he has all the aspects of the animate and inanimate world, such as the marks and signs [of a perfect nirmanakāya], while ultimately, there is essentially nothing to appear.

Half of the sixteen vowel sounds are eight, and so half of those, again, are four—A Ā AMĀḤ. These four are meant to be illustrative. Illustrative of what? They represent the four gateways to full liberation, namely, the full liberation [gateways] of emptiness, lack of personal characteristics, absence of aspiration, and expertise.

More about this: [The gateway of] emptiness eliminates [grasping at] materiality. [The gateway of] lack of personal characteristics further withdraws clinging to subtle characteristics. Absence of aspiration removes the limiting conception of hoping and yearning for results. And finally, expertise draws you away from inferior and unskillful methods.

¹⁰⁵ These are known as 'the 100 syllables of unobstructed power and method,'

which arise as all the phenomena of samsāra and nirvāṇa, the full gamut of expressions and expressed. The number 100 is figurative, and not an enumeration *per se*. It simply means a great many. GD

These are described to be four in number, in that each of them has the quality of cutting off one of the four types of limiting mental constructs; but in reality, the great sphere or bindu is beyond words.¹⁰⁶

Or else, at the crown of the head, in the cakra of great bliss, bodhicitta is present as sixteen distinct droplets, and in dependence upon the particulars of the methodology of karma mudrā, half (*i.e.*, eight) of these sixteen bindus of bodhicitta in the great bliss cakra at the crown of the head melt, and descend into the dharma cakra at the heart.

Half of those melted droplets descend again, to the emanation cakra at the navel. Half of those, in turn, descend to the conservation of bliss cakra in the private region. One then must train to recognize when [those last] two are lost, and when they are held in balance.

As one grows more and more accustomed to this, one finally becomes free of even the slightest clinging to that [blissful experience]. One then realizes the great bindu that is beyond words. As is said, "The four profound total liberations are taught for those who are extremely sharp. Circulating through the four cakras should be understood as designed for those who are dull."¹⁰⁷

Training in this way has no conceptual components, and is beyond linguistic reckoning. The excellent samādhi referred to here is the four concentrations, like the samādhi of the gods, for example. He himself possesses these, and he also is familiar with all the different divisions of concentration experienced by others absorbed in samādhi.

¹⁰⁶ Each sambhogakāya Buddha is surrounded by four male and four female Bodhisattvas, their retinue of groups of deities in each of the four cardinal directions. There are sixteen male and female Bodhisattvas all together, half (eight) of each. 'Half again' then refers to the group of four found in each direction. GD

¹⁰⁷ Compare Vima's explanation with the following from GD:

In the context of nirmanakāya Buddhas, the explanation is as follows: From the bindu of the naturally-subsisting expanse, its vibrancy appears internally and

externally. Internally it appears as wisdom and [ordinary] mind. Externally, from the secret bindu of great bliss, great bliss arises in the form of a bindu of blazing light.

He also knows the state of meditative concentration in the desire realm that consists predominantly of vipaśyanā (penetrative insight). He likewise knows the concentration of the formless realm that is predominantly śamatha (serene abiding). He knows, too, the concentration in the form realm that is the integration of śamatha and vipaśyanā.

The four concentrations themselves have eighteen divisions. The first concentration has five branches: conception, examination, joy, bliss, and one-pointed mind. The second concentration has four sub-divisions: joy, bliss, inner brilliance, and one-pointedness.

The third concentration has five divisions: equanimity, recollection, presence of mind, bliss, and one-pointed mind. The fourth concentration has four divisions: immaculate equanimity, immaculate recollection, immaculate sensibility that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, and one-pointed mind. The Venerable One himself is familiar with all of these.

There are also the emboldening samādhi, the precious mudrā samādhi, the perfectly poised lion samādhi, and the samādhi

From that bindu, in turn, great bliss pervades everywhere, at which point, sixteen is halved into eight, and eight into four. One of those four bindus appears as the lotus. One disintegrates. One is experienced as bliss, clarity, or nonconceptuality. When the fourth vibrates uncontrollably, the bliss of dharmakāya is identified, and a compassionate nirmanakāya is emitted.

called the glorious lunar victory banner, among others—a hundred and one samādhis which he knows full well, just as he perceives and knows whatever the mental streams of individual beings contain, including their thoughts (both conscious and unconscious), and life experiences.¹⁰⁸

How is the sambhogakāya portrayed? "[W]ith a body of samādhi, the supreme body, the sambhogakāya that towers over all." That which possesses a body of samādhi is the dharmakāya. This kāya acts as a support, and stands above all [others], and so is the basis [for the form kāyas].

From it, according to the Mahāyāna teachings, appears the sambhogakāya in the form of Vairocana. He possesses the five certainties and his presence is like that of a universal emperor. As is said, "Fully engaged in the Mahāyāna, it is termed the Muni's kāya of perfect engagement."

Further, in view of the fact that this kāya's deeds and conduct are completely pure, it turns the wheel of dharma primarily for the retinue of Bodhisattvas on the ten bhūmis.

So what, then, are the deeds and actions of the nirmanakāya? "The nirmanakāya that is the supreme kāya, sustaining a flow of enlightened emanations, sending profuse emanations throughout the ten directions that accomplish just what beings need[.]"

And so the Victor's nirmanakāya, through his completely pure communications, turns the wheel of dharma for his retinue of beings of the six classes, Śrāvakas and Pratyekas.

¹⁰⁸ He holds the peak of all dhyānas because his [concentration] transcends worldly states of concentration; he is spontaneously present as the very embodiment of the innate and natural state. GD

Superior to all impure nirmanakāyas are the succession of one thousand and two emanations, such as the Buddhas Vipashyin and Shikhiṇ.^{xxxix} Having emanated, they then disperse throughout the ten directions. Why do they spread themselves out this way? To do whatever is needed and appropriate for transient beings.¹⁰⁹

Which are the impure emanations, then? "[M]ightiest god, god of gods, lord of gods, lord of asuras, mightiest immortal, highest celestial, conqueror and ruler of all conquerors."

He emanates as the mightiest god, *i.e.*, Vishnu, for those who can be tamed by Vishnu. The god among gods is Brahma. The lord of gods is Indra, and the lord of asuras is Vemacitra.

Mightiest immortal refers to the king of the gods like those of the Aviha [realm]. Highest celestial refers to the king of the gods like those of the Paranirmitavasavartin [realm]. Conqueror refers to wrathful Bhairava, and the ruler of all conquerors is Mahādeva. [Mañjuśrī] emanates as those deities in

order to accomplish the welfare of those who may be tamed by them.¹¹⁰

Here is how he offers the dharma:

He has crossed the wilderness of existence, the singular teacher, guru of transient beings, most renowned throughout the universe for his great philanthropy of dharma,

clad in the breastplate of kindness,

equipped with the armor of compassion, carrying the sword of prajñā, a bow and arrow to repel the attacks of kleśas and ignorance, heroic enemy of māras who subdues the māras, who dispels the dangers of the four māras, who sends the hordes of māras to defeat.

¹⁰⁹ GD says that nirmanakāyas fulfill the purposes of transient beings 'just like that' (Tib: *ji bzhin pa*) in two senses: they continue to carry out such service in *just the same way* past nirmanakāyas did, replicating their example; and they tame and fulfill the purposes of beings by appearing to them *in ways that conform to their own appearance (bzhin pa)*. Vima addresses the latter point at length.

¹¹⁰ The duplication of the term 'conqueror' indicates that he has conquered grasping and conquered fixation, *i.e.*, conquered the dualistic paradigm of experience. GD

[Conditioned] existence is the place which one must certainly leave. The wilderness of existence is that from which one [seeks to be] sheltered. And so, having left [conditioned existence] behind by realizing the truth of nonduality, he is the one and only true teacher.

Or else [this phrase means that] there cannot be two teachers of one doctrine. And because he is the teacher of all transient beings, he is called 'guru.'

That is also why he is renowned throughout the ten directions of the world. The reason for his fame is that he has given the dharma [to the world]. But this fame does not make him conceited. Rather, he is clad in the breastplate of lovingkindness and wears the armor of compassion.¹¹¹

His weapons are the sword of prajñā that cuts through mental disturbances, and the bow and arrow of skillful means and prajñā, which repel the attacks of mental disturbances and ignorance.

¹¹¹ This line illustrates how he tames the minds of beings and accomplishes their welfare through the four immeasurable virtues. GD

What makes him a hero? He is heroic for having tamed the māras. Further, he affords protection from the dangers posed by the four māras, and dispels them as well. He doesn't just close one avenue of attack, but rather puts all the hordes and classes of māra to defeat.

To spell this out further: through realizing that mind is unborn, he defeats the māra of mental disturbances. Because the nature of mind neither ages nor weakens, he defeats the māra of the aggregates.

Likewise, since the nature of mind neither is born nor dies, he defeats the māra of the lord of death. And finally, by realizing the nature of mind, he is free of ambivalence, and so defeats the māra of the god child.

As is said, "Even if a group of millions of māras were to transform themselves into the forms of Buddhas and pronounce [the presence of] obstacles, those who are skilled in dharma, having well realized dharmatā, cannot be held back from awakening by them."

Next, to show that by virtue of having such qualities, Mañjuśrī is worthy of worship, "Perfect Buddha, guide of the world, worthy of worship, worthy of praise, object of homage, ever worthy of depiction, deserving respect, most honorable, finest guru to whom homage is owed."

The Venerable One, embodiment of the Buddhas, leads all worldly beings to the domain of complete liberation.¹¹² Therefore, he is deserving of worship and praise and homage; of offerings, worship, decoration, and reverence to drawn images of his form; [deserving, too,] of publicity for his excellent qualities, and of utmost mental, verbal and physical respect. After all, he is the finest of gurus!

¹¹² "When the intermediate body, the wisdom kāya, appears clearly in the space of dharmatā, it possesses dharmatā eyes, along with super-sensory cognition, and from out of its mouth emerges the wheel of the six syllables, [which manifest as] nirmanakāyas who guide transient beings within the conditioned worlds." GD

What are the particulars of his knowledge? "He strides across the three worlds in a single step; like space, without any limit, he overwhelms all. Seeing the three,

he is clean and pure, possesses six paranormal perceptions and six powers of recollection."

He traverses the three worlds with the single step of prajñā, as represented by the miracle of straddling the worlds in one stride.¹¹³ His infinite realization of space-like dharmakāya overwhelms the mental disturbances.

He also sees the three realms outwardly, and enlightened body, speech and mind inwardly.¹¹⁴ Free from the stains of [grasping at] self and other, he is entirely clean and pure.

Next, the six paranormal cognitions are: the divine eye; the divine ear; knowledge of the thoughts of others; recollection of past lives; knowledge of how to perform miracles; and manifest cognition of the exhaustion of defilements.

The six powers of recollection are: recollection of the Buddha, the dharma, the saṅgha, samaya, compassion, and enlightened action.

¹¹³ "When, through the compassion of the Teacher, realization is born within the continuum of one's mind, one instantly leaps from this nirmanakāya level of the Buddhas to the Buddhas' sambhogakāya level, like the way a lion pounces." GD

¹¹⁴ GD says that while there are several different ways to interpret this line, "within our own, great system, this refers to the three enclosures [Tib: *sbubs gsum*]."

What is exalted prajñā like? "Bodhisattva, Mahāsattva, great transcendent miracle worker, prajñā that secures the final truth, the final pāramitā...."

'Bodhisattva' refers to one's own welfare, and 'Mahāsattva' [great being] concerns the welfare of others.¹¹⁵ 'Bodhi' is the space-like dharmakāya, and 'sattva' refers to having the longing to realize that, and being heroic in assisting others.^{x1} As it says in scripture, "bodhi has the character of space, devoid of all conceptual thinking. One who wishes to realize that is called a Bodhisattva."

His acquisition of great powers of miracle makes him transcendent as well. The final pāramitā is just reality itself, which is secured through prajñā.¹¹⁶

To show that he is beyond analogy, the next verses say, "knowing all about self,

knowing all about other, the supreme individual of benefit to all, beyond compare, consummate master of knowing and the known."

Knowing 'how it all is' fulfills his own purpose, and knowing 'all there is' fulfills the purposes of others, and so he is able to benefit one and all. And even though he might emanate in the form of an individual person, that is not really [who or how] he is; and so he is supreme.

Because nothing and no one is even slightly comparable to him, he is beyond analogy. He is, moreover, the supreme master of both purposes: instilling knowledge [in others], and that which is known [for oneself].

¹¹⁵ GD puts this succinctly: "Being concerned (Tib: *sems*) with your own needs is the opposite of bravery. Thinking [*sems*] about others' welfare is a heroic state of mind."

¹¹⁶ That which involves effort is incapable of *delivering you from* (Tib: *pha rol tu phyin*; Skt: *pāramitā*) conditioned existence. It is through the power of realization generated within one's mind by exceptional *prajñā* that one *reaches that far side* (same term). Undistorted *prajñā* rests in nonconceptuality. GD

How is it that he instills knowledge? "The principal patron of dharma who reveals the meanings of the four *mudrās* is the highest object of beings' reverence. He is purity and glory, the final aim of those who journey within all three vehicles, the greatest fortune in the three worlds."

Since the Venerable One is the most important of all Buddhas, it follows that his offering of dharma is the most important of all offerings. The Venerable One is the master of such offering.

He teaches (about) the four *mudrās*. These are the four *mudrās* that epitomize the Buddha's teachings. The four *mudrās* that epitomize the Buddha's teachings, within the context of the lesser vehicle, are: impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and lack of identity.

To quote scripture, "Impermanence, suffering, emptiness and lack of identity are the dharmas taught by the Buddha." Again, earlier in this very text, it said: "[he] exemplifies the operation of the four truths."

In the context of the Mahāyāna, [the four *mudrās*] are to be found in the scriptures; to be consistent with its meaning; to be sensible; and to be further

explainable through logical reasoning. As is said, for instance, "Scriptural, meaningful, observable, reasonable, being consistent with these parameters is highly proper."

Then there are the four great mudrās of the form of the deity: mahāmudrā, which is form; dharmamudrā, which is speech; samayamudrā, which is mind; and karmamudrā, which is radiation and collection.¹¹⁷

Next are the four mudrās of the path for those in training: karmamudrā, dharmamudrā, mahāmudrā and samayamudrā. And so the teacher of those [mudrās] should be the highest object of reverence for transient beings.

The three vehicles are the three ways to generate certainty. The fruition to which they convey one is the ultimate state, purified of the two obscurations, a glorious result for oneself and others. This is the greatest fortune to be found in the three worlds.¹¹⁸

Who teaches in this way? None other than the Venerable One, who has completed the two accumulations, who is a glorious boon to himself and all others, who bestows an abundance of magnificent riches.¹¹⁹ And so it says, "Glorious one, creator of all goodness, Mañjuśrī, his glorious eminence!"

¹¹⁷ GD's explanation differs somewhat. The immaterial, unimpeded dharmakāya is the mahā (great) mudrā. The display of its intrinsic qualities, the sambhokāya of brilliant light, is the samaya (sacred bond) mudrā. Naturally occurring wisdom expressed as unceasing speech is the dharma mudrā. The compassionate nirmanakāyas acting for the welfare of disciples are the karma (action) mudrā.

¹¹⁸This is also the integrated unity of the three kāyas. GD¹¹⁹ The riches, for those who form a connection with the meaning imparted by Mañjuśrī, are the wealth of kāyas and wisdoms. GD

XI. Expressing His Greatness and Construing The Mantra¹²⁰

Next, to present the chapter of praises to the wisdom being Mañjuśrī, [it begins with:] "Homage to you, supreme vajra who grants supremacy, homage to you who have achieved perfection. Homage to you who arises from emptiness, homage to you, enlightenment of Buddhas."

This [part] is a praise with regard to the wisdom of the dharmadhātu. It means,

'Since you, Venerable Mañjuśrī, whose vajras of body, speech and mind are supremely indivisible, are the one who offers to others [access to] the supremacy of the dharmadhātu, I bow before and pay homage to you!'¹²¹

'To you' is the form of address used in each of these verses of praise. And so, we bow to you who is unborn, having achieved final perfection.¹²² We bow to you who have arisen from realization of the meaning of emptiness.¹²³ And we say, we bow with utmost respect before you because you *are* the exalted awakening of the Buddhas.

The next set of praises are expressed in terms of reflective (mirror-like) wisdom: "Homage to you, dwelling of the Buddhas, homage and honor to the wish of Buddhas.

¹²⁰ This is GD's chapter title, which covers both this and the next topic in Vima's commentary.

¹²¹ You have accomplished your jewellike intention, the extraordinarily great meaning that has just been described at length. You never join with or separate from the immutable dharmatā. You have become exactly what is meant by nonduality. GD

¹²² You have reached the great and final destination, the immutable jewellike kāya. GD

¹²³ From out of the inseparability of the empty expanse and empty awareness, the internally luminous two kāyas appear. GD

Homage to you, the delight of Buddhas, homage and honor to the revelry of Buddhas."

We bow before you who dwells within and inhabits the dharmadhātu with the mirror-like wisdom of the Buddhas. We bow to you who, out of the compassion of the Buddhas, wishes to guide transient beings.¹²⁴

We bow to you who delights in the realization of the dharmadhātu with the mirror-like wisdom of the Buddhas. Because you revel in the nondual wisdom and expanse of the state of enlightenment, reverence and homage to you!

The next set of praises are concerned with discriminating wisdom. "Homage to you, the smile of the Buddhas, homage and honor to the laughter of Buddhas. Homage to you, the very speech of Buddhas. Homage and honor to the mind of

Buddhas."

We bow to you whose face opens with a smile of pleasure, because you have comprehended just exactly what enlightenment is. Buddhas laugh out of delight in accomplishing the welfare of transient beings, which is a signal that they are about to teach the dharma. Homage and honor to you, the teacher!

We bow to you who teaches the dharma to disciples in a multitude of ways, with the speech of the Buddhas. And finally we say, homage and honor to you, because even while the Buddha teaches the dharma to transient beings, his mind never wavers from a state of perfect equanimity.¹²⁵ Next are presented the set of praises addressing the equanimous wisdom of the Buddhas. "Homage to you who appears from nothing, homage to you, the appearance of Buddhas. Homage to you who appears from space, homage to you who comes from wisdom."

¹²⁴ GD reverses this: "homage to you who are what we all wish to be." ¹²⁵ Immutable awareness free of tendentious imprints. GD

We bow before you, who arises from the realization that all phenomena are insubstantial. We bow to you, the Buddha who appears in the world for the sake of transient beings.

Homage to you, all of whose outstanding qualities arise from the realization of space-like dharmatā. Homage to you, Mañjuśrī, who arises from the wisdom of equality.

Next, to express praises in terms of eff ectual wisdom, "Homage to you, tapestry of magical creations, homage to you, the display of Buddha's prowess. Homage to you who has all and does all, homage to you, the true wisdom kāya."

Those [last] praises mean the following: all of the magical emanations [of the Buddhas] are the interplay of prajñā and skillful means, like an interlaced web. I bow before you who emanates what isn't there, and transforms what is [there].

Homage to you who exhibits the pageantry of enlightened body, speech and mind in all different ways for the benefit of transient beings. Homage to you who possess all good qualities, and employs all those qualities to accomplish the welfare of others.

Mañjuśrī , you are the kāya that is produced from the underlying unity of the six

primal wisdoms, and so we offer homage and veneration to you!
[Next, so that these words addressed to Mañjuśrī will accomplish their purpose, comes the explanation of the benefits of putting them into effect.]^{xli}

XII. The Meaning of The Mantras

Next comes the extremely concise version, *i.e.*, the presentation of the mantra that summarizes all of the qualities [of Mañjuśrī]. This is, "Om̐ sarva dharmā," and so on.

'O m̐' can be used to express auspiciousness. It also represents the five wisdoms. It can also be used to express homage and convey blessings.

'Sarva' means all, 'dharm ā' means phenomena, 'abhāva' means insubstantial, 'svabhava' means by nature, 'viśuddha' means completely pure, [vajra] 'cakṣu' is eyes, and the syllables a ā aṃ aḥ represent the four [doorways of] liberation, namely emptiness, lack of personal characteristics, absence of aspiration, and skillfulness. These four also contain the meaning of non-arising.

And so, putting these all together, the meaning [thus far] is: 'Since all phenomena are insubstantial by nature, the meaning of non-arising is known with completely pure [vajra] eyes.' Up to this point has been the root mantra.

Then, 'prak ṛti' means the nonduality of vastness and profundity, 'pariśuddhāḥ' means thoroughly pure, 'sarva dharmā' means all phenomena, 'yaduta' means generation, 'sarva...' means all tathāgathas, 'jñāna kāya' means the wisdom kāya, and 'mañjuśrī' is Mañjuśrī.

'Pariśuddhitām' is [again] thoroughly pure, and 'upādāyati' can mean to convey blessings, or else, 'I accept, I will take this on.'

To put this all together, '[I] commit to accepting that completely pure Mañjuśrī is the kāya of all Tathāgatas, and as such, generates all phenomena out of complete purity, the nonduality of vastness and profundity.'

A āḥ means neither arising nor ceasing, then 'sarva' (all) tathāgatha[s], 'hṛdayaṃ' is heart, *i.e.*, mind, 'hara hara' means to steal away, om̐hūmhrīḥ is the blessing of body, speech and mind, 'bhagavan' is bhagavan (transcendent conqueror), 'jñāna mūrti' means wisdom kāya, 'vāgīśvara' is master of speech, 'mahā vaca' is great eloquence, 'sarva' [is] (all) dharma[s], 'gagana' means space-

like, 'amala' is stainless, and 'supari śuddha' is completely pure. Then 'dharmadhātu,' and 'jñāna garbha āḥ' is the essence of wisdom.

To put this all together: 'You steal away the minds of all unborn and undying Tathāgatas, you bestow blessings on their body, speech and mind, wisdom kāya of the bhagavats, highly eloquent master of speech, all dharmas are stainless and completely pure, like space; this is the essence of the dharmadhātu.'

That was a summary presentation of the meaning of the activity mantra.

XIII. Through Rejoicing, Showing The Fulfillment of One's Own and Others' Intentions¹²⁶

The next section shows how the foregoing presentation of the exceptional qualities of both the path and its result by the Teacher Śākyamuni caused the retinue surrounding him to rejoice. "Then, glorious Vajradhāra joined his palms with gladness and joy," *etc.*

This shows the manner in which they rejoiced. After the completion of the main litany of qualities, glorious Vajradhāra, delighted by this fine accomplishment of his own and others' welfare, bowed before the teacher who had explained them, coming to rest on one knee and with his palms joined together, thereby showing that he rejoiced.¹²⁷

To whom did he offer this gesture of rejoicing? "[A]nd prostrated to the Lord Bhagavat Tathāgata, the perfect Buddha...."

Fulfilling the needs of transient beings, he is Śākyamuni, conqueror of the four māras, in possession of six fine qualities, immersed in the profound state of reality, and immersed as well in the vast enterprise of serving transient beings, having perfected the two accumulations and having gathered all the marvels of abandonment as well as marvelous wisdom.

¹²⁶ This is Garab Dorje's title.

¹²⁷ Why, again, is Vajrapani—the one making the request—glorious? Realization is one's own glory, and he possesses that through having understood the knowledge contained in the Teacher's mind, as conveyed through this teaching. He also possesses compassion, the glory of others, since, having requested to know the meaning of secret mantra, he is prepared to serve the welfare of

transient beings.

Also, this petitioner is no independent agent, but rather sprang directly from the sphere of Vajrasattva's heart. Light rays of five colors were expelled from the latter's nasal breathing passage, which then turned into the form of Vajrapani. GD

It is to him, with physical, verbal and mental shows of respect, that Guhyapati Vajrapani, together with his enormous retinue, offered homage.

Who are these members of his retinue who rejoiced alongside him? "[T]hereafter, the Lord Vajrapani, Guhyapati, king of wrathful ones, with his august company...."

The lord protector of transient beings, Guhyapati Vajrapani, was empowered by all Buddhas to carry out wrathful activity, and as a sign of this empowerment, they placed a vajra in his hand.

That is how he came to be given the secret name "vajra in hand" (Vajrapani), the king of wrathful ones. It was he, together with a group of five hundred others possessing a variety of different qualities, who together rejoiced.^{xlii}

With what words did they express their rejoicing? "[They] offered unreserved praise, and then these words: "Lord, all of us rejoice! This is wonderful, truly wonderful, well said indeed!"

'Unreservedly' means that, without any hesitation, they lauded his prestigious status[, saying, in effect:] 'We and those with us all rejoice. How wonderful is the profound, from which our own benefit arises; how wonderful is the vast, from which the benefit of others arises. Teaching that the vast and the profound are not two, you have indeed spoken well!'

What is the purpose of their rejoicing? "[For] all those helpless beings who yearn for the fruit of total liberation, and [for] us who pursue the great purpose, which is to attain complete and perfect awakening...."

[To paraphrase:] 'We do this for all those unprotected transient beings who wish to be freed from the confines of their own disturbed states of mind, and so that we ourselves might attain complete enlightenment.'

In what dharma teaching do they rejoice? "[T]his presentation of the approach of

the magical network is the correct and superior path, profound, extensive and vast, the great purpose that accomplishes the aims of beings...."

This teaching within the dharma of the Mayajala (tantra) is a most excellent path, because it is profound, vast, and comprehensive, accomplishing the welfare of transient beings.¹²⁸

What is the reason why they were confident to rejoice in this way? [Because this teaching is] "the province of the Buddhas, as described by all perfect Buddhas."

This dharma pertains to the actual experience of the Buddhas, and was not spoken by some ordinary individual. Rather, because it was spoken by a perfect Buddha, one can be confident that it is neither fraudulent nor erroneous. That is the explanation for why it says that 'they all rejoiced.'

As is said, "'Scripture' means words that are trustworthy, faultless, without a single false word uttered, and with no cause to do so. Know it to be 'scripture free from fault'."

¹²⁸ This tantra shows the manner in which awareness and wisdom abide. It is unerring, its depths are difficult to fathom, it is the source of all meaning, and highly illuminating; and like the sky itself, it will never fade away. GD

Author's Colophon

Although the qualities of Mañjuśrī, the epitome of all Buddhas, are profound, vast, and difficult to fathom, I have composed this at the request of my students, based on the explanatory tantras and other codified instructions. Any mistakes I have made I confess to the Nobles and to scholars. May whatever accuracy and virtue there is in this composition enable everyone alike to attain the status of Mañjuśrī.

In order to make this easily understandable to Tibetans, I have not relied upon highly technical dharma terminology, but rather have parlayed it into their own common vernacular.

Therefore, it would be inappropriate for scholars to parse my words too finely. In the event that you would be willing to go so far as to denigrate the dictates of the Victor himself, then I suppose, in that case, you might as well go ahead and

deprecate a treatise written by someone like me.

This completes the commentary on the perfect profession of the qualities of Mañjuśrī, called "The Lamp that Illuminates the Meaning of His Qualities." It was written by Vimalamitra at the request of his heart disciple Nyang[ben] Tingdzin [Zangpo], and translated by Nyag Jñāna [Kumāra].

May the great, long tradition of the Abbot, Ācārya and Dharma King spread throughout the three levels of the world, may the minds of beings never be apart from the perception of the Three Jewels, and may virtue and goodness prevail at all times.

APPENDIX

AN EXPLANATION OF THREE POINTS: A COMMENTARY ON THE MAÑJUŚRĪNĀMASAMĠTIḤ

When we speak of the "Perfect Profession of The Qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī," we might ask, with regard to the one whom we call "Noble Mañjuśrī," what is his essence like? What are his different qualities? And how are they to be expressed perfectly?

1. Who is Noble Mañjuśrī?

Noble Mañjuśrī is nondual, primal wisdom. He is the personification of the primal wisdom of all Buddhas of the past, present and future. He is in essence bodhicitta, and nothing other than the dharmatā nature of all phenomena.

And so, therefore, embodied as the apparent form kāyas (the [kāya] of perfected experience and the emanation kāya), he appears as the supports for primal wisdom. He appears in a wide variety of ways that are famously presented in the greater and lesser vehicles, taking the forms of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. And so he is asserted to be the "Noble Mañjuśrī."

At this point someone might wonder, if Noble Mañjuśrī is the personification of the nondual, primal wisdom of all Buddhas, then are the selfknowing wisdoms of each of the Buddhas of the ten directions and three times, in fact, one thing, or are they multiple? By the same token, are their dharmatā natures and their actions identical, or distinct?

Here is what someone who poses such questions should understand. In a certain

sense, the wisdom continua of Tathāgatas are distinct, as are their dharmatā natures and their actions.

At the same time, however, they are equivalent in four respects. What are those four? Their dharma, their kāyas, their speech and their words are said to be equivalent.

Looked at another way, while their wisdoms are distinct because produced out of the mental continua of different individuals, their dharmatā natures and actions are interchangeable, and so can be asserted not to be distinct.

Yet another way to see this is that we distinguish between our own and others' mental continua simply due to the ingrained tendency to believe in a personal self. That belief, however, is a delusion; and so whatever is generated, and whatever is perceived through the force of that belief, is likewise not true.

Therefore, even while we remain sentient beings, our mental continua are not truly established as separate from one another. That being the case, how could the wisdoms of Buddhas, who are not bound by the belief in a personal self, be established as belonging to separate continua?

It follows, then, that it is not the case that Buddhas have distinct mental continua, accomplish their purposes through different continua and via different approaches, or accomplish their purposes in different fields and at different times.

And so, even while the Holy Scriptures of the lesser and greater vehicles proclaim the names of Noble Mañjuśrī, Mighty Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapani, or else the Buddhas Śākyamuni, Dīpankara, and Maitreya;

Or else Vairocana, Ak ṣobhya and Ratnasambhava, among so many other sambhogakāya and nirmanakāya forms with their own, distinct disciples and pure realms, styles, teachings and epochs, all of whom are bases for great, primal wisdom to be displayed;

Still, despite the fact that they appear to the minds of worthy disciples with pure tendencies as being distinct from one another, due to their realization of dharmatā with the nondual wisdom of all Buddhas, as well as [due to] previous aspiration prayers and the force of compassion, from the perspective of the Buddhas themselves, there is not even the slightest such distinction to be drawn or found.

Therefore, what you ought to understand is that this profession of the qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī is the expression of the enlightened qualities of all Buddhas of the three times and ten directions.

Depending upon in which form Noble Mañjuśrī appears, there are a number of different ways in which he is known. For instance, when he appears in the style of a Śrāvaka, the one called Noble Mañjuśrī is said to be included within the succession of Bodhisattvas, still an ordinary being who has not yet reached the Ārya level.

According to the common system of the pāramitās, he is said to be a Bodhisattva who has mastered the tenth bhūmi. He was a member of the retinue of the Conqueror Śākyamuni in this world of Jambudvīpa; and he is said to be a close disciple of the Conqueror Vairocana in Akaniṣṭa, too.

According to the profound sutra class, it is said that he became enlightened long ago, and yet retains the semblance of a Bodhisattva.

One variation found in secret mantra teachings holds that he is the lord of the lineages, a sovereign emanation from the Tathāgatas' uṣṇīṣas, who maintains the guise of a Bodhisattva.

One account from the yoga tantras asserts that, among the sixteen great wisdom beings emanated from the heart of the Conqueror Vairocana, he is Vajra Tīkṣṇa (Sharp Vajra), also known as Mañjuśrī Vajra.

Yet another version taught in the anuttara yoga tantras asserts that he is called Wisdom Being Mañjuśrī and Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and likewise Vajrasattva and Samantabhadra, and is also the chief among all Buddhas who are immersed in great bliss, and the sovereign lord of all maṇḍalas.

In the Mañjuśrī Mayajala [tantra], it is said that the 'gentle vajra' is present in the hearts of all Tathāgatas, and it is also asserted that he abides as the primordial Buddha, or else as a wisdom being.

This has been a presentation of the identity of the Noble Mañjuśrī.

2. What are the different qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī?

To the extent that there are corruptible phenomena or incorruptible phenomena, mundane things or supramundane things, composites or non-composites, tangible or intangible entities, minds or mental projections, among so many

other things;

And to the extent that their names may be assigned by finely distinguishing their characteristics, or are proclaimed in the temples of this world, or in the lesser vehicle, or in the great vehicle, or in the greatest of all vehicles, the secret mantra — No matter by which names phenomena are called, not a single one of them is excluded as a name of Noble Mañjuśrī. What should be understood, in other words, is that *all of them* are among his qualities.

Here, someone might well ask:

It seems fine to describe the names of incorruptible phenomena as qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī, since Noble Mañjuśrī himself epitomizes the attainment of an incorruptible state.

How could it make sense, though, to describe the names of corruptible phenomena as among his qualities? Since Noble Mañjuśrī epitomizes the thorough extinction of all corruptible phenomena, wouldn't it be improper to describe his qualities with the names of such phenomena?

Though it certainly is the case that Noble Mañjuśrī is the epitome of incorruptible phenomena, there is no contradiction in describing him in this manner.

For Noble Mañjuśrī is **the [true] nature** even of corruptible phenomena. It is he who **pervades** them all, who **manifests** as them, who **delights** in them, who **knows** them all, who **speaks** them, who **thoroughly purifies** them, who **possesses mastery** over them, and who **generates** them, and from them that he **arises**.

These ten rubrics should be understood to hold with regard to all phenomena of both samsāra and nirvāṇa. How do they work?

A. Their true nature.

If someone were to question, for instance, whether [Mañjuśrī] is the nature or identity of all phenomena, this text itself provides the answer. For example, it says:

Supreme nature of all entities,

encompassing the nature of all entities,
this unborn dharma exhibits endless variations. Comprising the very essence of
all dharmas....

And,
which takes on forms with diverse capacities and a richly diverse continuum of
consciousness....

And,
[he] eases the suffering of threefold suffering....

And,
the pursuit of the ten ends of the ten aspects....

And,
He accomplishes aims, fulfills wishes, but has disposed of all conceptual
thought....

So this is covered in these and other passages within the text, where it is
explained that he is the nature of all entities, as well as the nature of intangible
phenomena; and indeed is the very essence of all phenomena.

To elaborate further on this, where it says [that he] "takes on forms with diverse
capacities," this means that Mañjuśrī is the true identity of the thinking mind, the
will, and cognition, as well as what appears [to them].

Similarly, where we read that, "[he] eases the suffering of threefold suffering,"
threefold suffering refers to suffering itself, while the other mention of 'suffering'
refers to the origin from which suffering is produced, and 'eases' refers to its
cessation. What is being explained here is that Noble Mañjuśrī is all of the[se
noble truths].

As for "the pursuit of the ten ends of the ten aspects," what is meant by 'ten
aspects' is ten ways in which we believe in selfidentity, and the 'ends' are the ten
remedies for these [beliefs].

And so, again, what is being shown here is that Noble Mañjuśrī is these
incongruous [views] *and* their antidotes. Here, and elsewhere, too, we are
instructed that Noble Mañjuśrī is the very essence of all phenomena.

And so, all of these types of qualities, as expressed in these terms, are his
'names.'

B. In what sense does Noble Mañjuśrī pervade all phenomena?

It says here,
unchangeable, he is allpervasive and omnipresent...
or else,
abiding in the heart of all Buddhas...
or else,
he resides in the minds of all sentient beings...

and so forth—there are many such examples.

There are actually four different senses in which he is allpervasive, namely: pervasive dharmatā; pervasive primal wisdom; pervasive compassion; and universal action.

Of these, the pervasiveness of dharmatā means that all phenomena are devoid of any personal nature, and thus without a self. As is said in another scripture, "Except for the dharmadhātu, not a single phenomenon exists." Therefore, the dharmadhātu is Noble Mañjuśrī; and that is why he pervades all.

The pervasiveness of primal wisdom means that this dharmadhātu is self-aware *per se*, and thus, all phenomena, too, must be included within such self-awareness; and so there is nothing which, by nature, is excluded from being known by wisdom. For that reason, [he is] pervasive by means of his wisdom, too.

His compassion is also pervasive. Within the compass of primal wisdom fully integrated with the expanse [of the dharmadhātu], great compassion is also unceasing.

Similarly, his [enlightened] actions are also pervasive. Wherever the preceding three phenomena [*i.e.*, the dharmadhātu, wisdom, and compassion] come together, there, too, such actions are unceasing.

Therefore, the hearts of Buddhas and the minds of sentient beings are pervaded by Noble Mañjuśrī. Those [three] phenomena don't come from anywhere at all, nor do they go anywhere. As there is nowhere, either, where they dwell, in accordance with sentient beings' fortunes and interests, [Mañjuśrī] is capable of acting on their behalf.

And so, all of these types of qualities, as expressed in these terms, are his 'names.'

C. Next, in what sense does Noble Mañjuśrī manifest as all phenomena?

It says in this very text,
glorious among all apparent forms,¹²⁹
with manifold, mentally generated forms,

to take just one example. Ready to do whatever it takes to tame transient beings, he manifests in a profusion of forms, both animate and inanimate. And where this text says,

Crown tuft, braided locks and strands,
plaits, munja and crowning ribbons,
and so forth, this means that he emanates as one who maintains all the disciplines of yoga conduct.

Moreover, by the very definition of [all] forms, be it a sambhoga[kāya] or nirmana[kāya], Bodhisattva, Pratyeka or Śrāvaka [form], or [as] a leader of the nine ranks of beings, and so on;

or in a beautiful form or an ugly one, in an old or young body (or even if young, having strong mental disturbances), or as having depleted all defilements—

there is no phenomenal image in which Noble Mañjuśrī does not manifest. And so, these types of qualities, expressed in these terms, are all among his 'names.'

¹²⁹ Rongzom appears to reverse the order of these lines. An alternate translation that better highlights the point being made here would be "glorious display of all forms/ in a variety of forms, his mind's design."

D. Next, how is it that Noble Mañjuśrī takes delight in all phenomena?

It says right in this text, for example,

delighting in every object and entity,
a passionate intellect that delights in emptiness... taking greatest joy in threefold existence.

This shows that he enjoys all phenomena as means to tame the minds of transient beings, that his compassion elicits a fondness and liking for conditioned existence, and that his prajñā evokes passion and delight in emptiness.

Therefore, all of the terms used when speaking of qualities like these are among the names of his qualities, too.

E. Next, in what way does he know all phenomena? It says here, great prajñā, in an instant, comprehends all dharmas, directly realizes all dharmas.

As this indicates, all of the terms that attest to and demonstrate his capacity to know all phenomena are also names belonging to him.

F. Next, what does it mean to say that he speaks of all phenomena?

Here it says, for instance,

primary speaker, king of speech,
exalted speaker at a superior level,
he is the undaunted lion of speech.

Insofar as he masterfully is able to talk about all phenomena in an accurate way, in that sense, any phenomena of which he so speaks also count among his names.

G. In what way does he personify the complete purity of all phenomena?

It says in this text that he has "exhausted the defiled," and "is "freed of all obscurations," and "pacifies...afflictive mind state[s]," and "crushes... existence," and has "left conditioned existence behind" and "crossed over the sea [of existence]," and "exposes...the root of existence." And so he is described repeatedly in terms of purifying the stains of phenomenal existence.

Moreover, passages like "embodies the twelve aspects of purity," and "possesses the five fully pure aggregates," and "is the purity of the ten pāramitās," and "embodies the totally pure ten discernments," demonstrate, too, through his complete possession of incorruptible dharmas, that his defining quality is utmost purity.

Since they show, in this way, the quality of purity of all phenomena, these terms and expressions are all descriptions of his qualities as well.

H. How is he the master of all phenomena?

Here it says,

The master of dharma, king of dharma,

and similar statements to the effect that he possesses control over all dharmas, rules over them, is the king of dharmas, their chief, and their lord; and so the

expressions of these qualities are all his qualities as well.

I. How is it, next, that he generates all dharmas?

In this text, it says, "creator of all Buddhas," and "sole source of the great elements," and "generates the full assortment of objects," and "generates the full meaning of secret mantra," and so on.

These kinds of passages show that all phenomena are produced from Noble Mañjuśrī. Since he is reality, he produces all phenomena, and since he is prajñā and skill, he is the producer of all Buddhas.

Since he is the training in discipline, he produces all emanations. Since these, and other qualities like them, are spoken of here, all of these terms that are mentioned are also his 'names.'

J. Finally, how is it that he arises from all phenomena?

He arises from dharmatā, as is said, "appearing just naturally from space." He arises from primal wisdom, as is said, "[o]nly wisdom produces his appearance." And he arises from mind, as is said, "with manifold, mentally generated forms."

He arises from the Śrāvaka path, the Pratyeka Buddha path, and the path of complete and perfect Buddhas—from all of them. As is said, [he] "appears from the various means [by which] certainty [] arise[s]."

He also arises from the greatest of great vehicles, the approach of secret mantra, as is said, for example, "He arises from the great approach of secret mantra." He arises, too, from fully purified dharmas, as is said, "what arises from dharma dispels phenomenal existence." He arises from the indivisibility of all phenomena, their defining feature, as is said, "vajra-created vajra master."

Since it can be demonstrated, in this way, that he arises from all phenomena, all of the names that express their qualities are also his names.

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The foregoing has shown, in common terms, through these ten rubrics, how the names of all phenomena, both corruptible and incorruptible, qualify as his names as well. Now a particular point needs to be made.

When, speaking about corruptible phenomena, we want to indicate that they partake of his identity, what we must say is that corruptible phenomena, by definition, are the Noble Mañjuśrī. What we cannot say is that the Noble Mañjuśrī, by definition, is corruptible.

For example, we would have to say that a vase, by its very definition, is something impermanent; but what we cannot say is that impermanence, by its very definition, is a vase. This is how definitions and their defined bases are set forth.

Definitions and their bases are presented in relation to each other, for instance, as greater and lesser in scope, coarser and finer, sacred and profane, or true and false, and so it is never appropriate to confound or conflate them. That is why we do not say that it is a quality of Mañjuśrī to be defined as a corruptible phenomenon.

Thus, in the context of demonstrating that [Mañjuśrī] pervades all phenomena, when we presented 'that which supports' and 'that which is supported,' the Noble Mañjuśrī was 'that which' pervades corruptible phenomena [i.e., the basis or support], and *not* that which is supported.

For example, space encompasses all forms; however, space is not defined as that which forms support. For this reason, we cannot describe, as a quality of Noble Mañjuśrī, that he somehow depends upon corruptible phenomena.

Likewise, when we demonstrated how he emanates and penetrates all corruptible phenomena, for instance, what we mean to show is that his compassion and his emanations permeate corruptible phenomena, and even that he infuses and blesses them—not that he in turn is caught up in or tainted by the corruptible.

For example, when the rays of the sun shine down on dirty places, even though sunlight touches and suffuses such dirty places, that dirt does not, in turn, permeate and bless the light. And so, even though he reaches everywhere, we cannot describe, as one of his qualities, that he is somehow tainted by phenomena.

While there would be no conflict in saying that, in the ways just mentioned, corruptible phenomena are the products of Noble Mañjuśrī, still, we cannot describe his qualities in terms of corruptible factors.

When we talk about his qualities in terms of complete purity, since corruptible

phenomena are characterized by being faulty, defective or stained, then his qualities are expressed in terms of removing or exhausting those phenomena. When we show, on the other hand, how incorruptible phenomena are completely pure, since all manner of stains that are inconsistent with such [purity] are gone forever, his qualities can simply be expressed as complete purity.

Those qualities are expressed as nonduality on an ultimate level, and since stains are to be abandoned merely on a conventional level, it is in that context that [his qualities] are expressed in terms of abandonment and exhaustion [of stains].

When we were explaining how [Mañjuśrī] arises from corruptible phenomena, we noted that those phenomena are really nothing at all, and how through the gateways of selfknowing cognition, mistaken phenomena appear in diverse forms.

It is in that sense that we can describe phenomena as the controlling condition for [Mañjuśrī to appear]. We are not saying, however, that they are the causal condition.

So in the context of explaining how [Mañjuśrī] arises from all phenomena, Noble Mañjuśrī can be described as arising even under the sway of corruptible phenomena; but that is not to say that they are the causal condition for his appearance. And that is why it is improper to describe his qualities in those terms.

In the specific context of discussing incorruptible phenomena, which are the exact opposite of [corruptible phenomena], it is, by contrast, proper to express his qualities in terms of being the one who possesses the defining features of the incorruptible, of depending upon them, of being suffused and blessed by them, and so forth.

The foregoing discussion has shown how it is the case that the names of all phenomena describe qualities of Noble Mañjuśrī—both a generalized sense in which it is proper to describe corruptible and incorruptible phenomena alike as among his qualities, and the particular way in which the latter may, but the former may not, be considered to express his qualities.

This discussion likewise has presented just a concise summary of what those qualities are; the more detailed exposition is to be found in this scripture itself, where all the facets and branches of his qualities are finely distinguished.

3. How the names of Mañjuśrī are to be perfectly expressed.

Now I will explain how the names of Mañjuśrī are to be perfectly expressed. This also has three parts, namely: the way they are to be expressed so as to bring his qualities into view; how they are to be expressed in connection with secret mantra; and how they are to be expressed in view of the meaning of nonduality.

A. Reciting to Bring His Qualities into View

Let's begin with how his names are to be expressed in order to bring his qualities into view. How is this done?

On this point:

All you sons of the lineage or daughters of the lineage who have engendered the aspiration to attain unsurpassed, complete and perfect enlightenment, and have entered the doorway of the Mahāyāna, who possess faith based on knowing the qualities of Buddhas—

From the very beginning, the Conqueror Wisdom Being Mañjuśrī has been the grand embodiment of all Tathāgatas of the ten directions, has possessed the sublime qualities of all of them, and through the unceasing compassion and activities of all Buddhas, has accomplished the intentions of all Buddhas throughout the endless expanse of the universe.

He has performed enlightened activities in complete fulfillment of the hopes of all manner of sentient beings, without the slightest exception, and is always present before each and every sentient being.

Therefore, whoever speaks his name, speaks the names of all Buddhas over the span of as many eons as there are grains of sand along the banks of the Ganges River. And so none can stand comparison to him.

Having thus aroused faithful admiration and interest, and further, spurred forward by the aspiration prayer, "I shall profess [his names] in order to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings," and with the power of the motivation, "I shall profess his qualities once I have generated bodhicitta," you should bring to mind the following, and set your mind upon it.

The Conqueror Wisdom Being Mañjuśrī, with majestic command over such qualities as omniscient wisdom, compassion and love, is always present before each and every being to be trained.

Therefore, it really makes no difference whether or not one deliberately sets in front of oneself an exquisite replica of his form, since he is always right there anyway. And so, one should simply profess his qualities with undistracted attention, as an expression of worship to him.

On the other hand, while it goes without saying that the nature of the Conqueror is like that, still, if one does deliberately bring to mind an exceptionally fine image of his form, blessings will flow upon one's own and others' worthiest endeavors.

Understanding this, visualize in the space in front of you a most precious, gigantic, wishfulfilling tree, and in its broad shade, a jewel and lotus throne, upon which, atop the moon's disc, sits the Conqueror, Youthful Mañjuśrī, whose complexion is like saffron scattered on clean snow.

He wears multicolored clothing. In his left hand he holds an open, blue utpala flower, and his right hand gestures with supreme generosity. See him dressed in the fashion of a universal emperor, adorned with all types of ornaments.

In order to elicit his qualities, recite his names with undistracted attention.

Alternatively, you may bring his image and hand emblems to mind in whatever way you wish. For instance, he might hold a volume and sword and display the teaching mudrā, with a body hue like the moon or twenty-four carat gold.

Once your expressions of worship are complete, petition him for that which you seek. Invite him to return to his immaculately pure realm, and then arise [from the session].

Or else, with the power of a well-disciplined mind, visualize the following:

Think that directly above the Bhagavat [Mañjuśrī], as you have just conceived him, are seated the Bhagavat Śākyamuni along with all other Buddhas of the ten directions, in monastic attire. To his right are seated the Bodhisattvas Maitreya, Samantabhadra, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapani, Kṣitigarbha, Âkāśagarbha, and Sarvanivāraṇa-viṣkambhin, together with other Bodhisattvas of this fortunate eon, all dressed as householders, but retaining their ornaments and other characteristic features.

Think that to his left are seated the Noble Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Subhūti, Ānanda, and the other great Arhats, in monastic garb.

See, just below him, the godly Śiva and other gods from pure lineages, along with Brahma—the god-children who hold sway in the form realm, white in color and fully-ornamented. There, too, are Indra and the other gods of the heaven of the thirty-three, of various colors and adorned with all their ornaments.

One makes prostrations before them, presents offerings, and so forth, performing the seven branches of worship; and casting aspirational prayers in this way, one generates the supreme outlook of bodhicitta. As a form of offering to all of them, recite the names of the Bhagavat.

With regard to the Tathāgatas [present before you], they are seated in balanced posture atop seats consisting of thrones upheld by lions and constructed of vajra jewels, jewelled lotuses, and sun and moon maṇḍalas. Their hands display the mudrās of equanimity and teaching the dharma.

The Bodhisattvas [are seated on] jewelled lotuses and moon maṇḍalas, with legs loosely crossed, left leg laying down flat. Each holds his or her own emblem, and shows the mudrā of requesting teachings.

Think that the great Śrāvakas are [also] on jewelled lotuses, and are requesting teachings. Each [worldly] god has his or her own mount and particular features; or else simply see each of them on a jewelled throne, requesting teachings.

When all the offerings have been completed, one makes confessions, and petitions for that which one seeks, at which point one requests each [being] to return to its own realm and place, and concludes the session.

(One need not extend an invitation to the deities to approach, since their blessings are conferred merely upon thinking of them.)

This is the way in which to frame one's mind while reciting, so as to elicit [Mañjuśrī's] qualities from his names.

Just what are these qualities like ? They are of two types, in keeping with the pāramitā system and the secret mantra system.

i. Qualities in The Pāramitā System

According to the pāramitā system, there are qualities commonly associated with worldly practitioners, Śrāvakas, Pratyeka Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas. And then there are qualities uncommonly possessed by Tathāgatas alone.

The common [qualities] include the path of ten virtuous actions, the concentrations, the immeasurables, and the progressive absorptions, along with their results, [rebirth] in the higher realms.

There are also the [contemplations upon the] four noble truths, the eight cognitions, and the total liberations, together with the results of this śrāmaṇera¹³⁰ approach.

Similarly, there are the factors [conducive to enlightenment], the pāramitās, the abilities and super-sensory cognitions, the bhūmis and Bodhisattva powers, Bodhisattva fearlessnesses, Bodhisattva dhāraṇīs and samādhis, and so forth.

The uncommon qualities, for example, are ones like those known as the ten powers of Tathāgatas, the eighteen unique features, the excellent signs and marks, the dhāraṇīs and samādhis, the thirty-two forms of great compassion, the three unique close placements of mindfulness, the complete elimination of all linking habitual tendencies, the property of lack of forgetfulness, and supreme omniscient wisdom.

These are also called the ocean of Tathāgatas' qualities, because they are as vast and as deep as an ocean, beyond fathoming or reckoning.

The foregoing qualities [of Tathāgatas] can be summarized as being of four types:

- (1) the full knowledge of all phenomena that can be known, without exception;
- (2) the permanent elimination of each and every phenomenon to be abandoned;
- (3) the permanent and unerring transformation of all phenomena to be transformed; and

¹³⁰ Tibetan *dge sbyong*. This is an umbrella term referring to the disciplines and practices of ordained monks or renunciates according to the prātimokṣa or common vehicle.

- (4) the permanent obtainment of all phenomena to be obtained.

This is the way in which the oceanic qualities of the Tathāgatas can be subsumed within four categories.

ii. Qualities in The Secret Mantra System

In the context of secret mantra, the magnificent qualities of the Tathāgatas are said to be of three types. What are these three? There are allpervasive qualities,

incalculable qualities, and supreme qualities.

a. allpervasive qualities

What are the allpervasive qualities? The Tathāgatas' qualities are like this:

The pure and impure realms of the infinite expanse of the universe, reaching to the very bounds of the dharmadhātu, and the individual beings residing in those realms, both in training and beyond training, as well as phenomena belonging to neither of those two categories;

And thus phenomena from aggregates, constituents and sense fields, and interdependent occurrences, up until supreme omniscient wisdom, the dharmadhātu and the ultimate degree of purity—

There is none among these that [a Tathāgata] does not encompass. This is the quality of allpervasiveness.

The way in which [a Tathāgata] pervades those [phenomena] has been covered in the section explaining [Mañjuśrī's] qualities, and so can be known by referring to it.

b. incalculable qualities

What are the incalculable qualities of a Tathāgata? Well, there are qualities associated with a Tathāgata's body, and likewise with his speech, mind, qualities, and enlightened activities.

Since each of those elements, in turn, is divisible into five separate qualities, there are five kāyas, and likewise five [qualities] belonging to each of the other elements; and each within these groups of five has its five varieties [of qualities as well].

And each of those has its essence, mudrā, secret mantra, and vidyā mantra, so sub-dividing them further in this way makes for a hundred in each basic group [and so five hundred in all].

Further sub-dividing all of these, we arrive at a hundred thousand varieties, challenging our very powers of expression, and finally a countless number of variations which are simply called 'oceanic.'

It says elsewhere, for example, "The classes, said to be endless, are all contained within the great classes." And as it says here, "Buddha without beginning or end, the original Buddha without a cause...."

As for the references to five classes, six classes and endless classes, it says right here:

Then the Bhagavat Sakyamuni fully surveyed the great lineage of all secret mantra, the lineage of holders of secret mantra and vidyā mantra, and the three lineages. He surveyed the worldly and trans-worldly lineage, the great lineage which illuminates the world, the supreme mahāmudrā lineage, and the great mahā-uṣṇīṣa lineage.

The vajra lineage alone is without any limit, as it says here, when the qualities of the one requesting the teaching, Vajrapani, are being expressed: "limitless Vajrapanis, Furrowed Brow and all the others...." And later, "Vajrabhairava who causes fear," and so on, speaks to the various wrathful vajra families.

The same applies to the other lineages. For instance, in regard to the Tathāgata lineage, it says here in this text, for instance, "great uṣṇīṣa of marvelous honor, master of space revealed diversely...." With reference to the lotus lineage, it says, for example, "great heart of all Buddhas. Source of manifold emanation cycles...."

Concerning the jewel lineage, it says, among other things, "who dispatches countless millions of nirmanakāyas of all Buddhas." And this is what it says about the action lineage: "sustaining a flow of enlightened emanations, sending profuse emanations throughout the ten directions...."

These types of sublime qualities that are completely beyond enumeration are called 'the [Tathāgatas] incalculable qualities.'

c. supreme qualities

Finally, which are the supreme qualities?

This refers to qualities of Tathāgatas like *total* completion, *total* perfection, *total* purity, and *preeminence*, as well as those spoken of here, in this text, as exceptional vajra qualities (with regard to being indivisible), exceptional qualities of greatness (with regard to being unequalled), as well as other

exceptional qualities described as 'highest,' or 'supreme,' or 'sacred,' or 'superior,' and so forth.

And similarly, there are those described with other titles of distinction, like 'chief,' 'master,' 'lord,' 'king' and so forth, along with those special qualities expressed by the use of terms like 'all,' 'each and every,' 'without exception,' 'always,' and so on. This is what is meant by supreme qualities.

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What one must understand, in other words, is that all of the Tathāgatas' qualities are included within these three types of superlative qualities.

This completes [the discussion of] how the names [of Mañjuśrī] are recited as a way to express his qualities.

B. Reciting in Connection with Secret Mantra

Next I will explain the way in which to express his names in connection with secret mantra [practice].

So now, sons or daughters of the lineage, those of you who have interest in the approach of profound prajñā and method, and who wish swiftly to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings through engaging in the most delightful vidyā and guhya mantras and other practices of which secret mantra consists, and who wish to form a connection with the profound path that simultaneously unites method and prajñā through expert activity, in order rapidly to attain perfect and complete enlightenment—

First of all, place yourselves under the care of a virtuous spiritual advisor who teaches the Mahāyāna without any error, and then enter into the secret maṇḍala which that advisor discloses to you.

At that time, accept the common and uncommon vows—take the cornerstone Prātimokṣa vows, and take, as well, the Bodhisattva vows and Vidyādhara vows.

And then, too, receive properly the oral instructions on sādhanā practice; and after that, without relaxing your enthusiasm and by remaining diligent, exert yourselves in the following yoga.

Here are the stages for this yoga practice:

In a mantra practice center or some other suitable place, carefully wipe clean a

specially-designated table, studded with precious jewels, about eighteen inches high (although larger is also fine), and there invite a statue of the noble Mañjuśrī to be seated, or use a painted image instead, if that is what you have.

Spread flower petals around it, and also arrange other types of offerings, whichever are available. Seat yourself on a comfortable seat, and before proceeding further, first request permission. Reflect upon the vows you have previously received, both those intact and those destroyed.

Think that you are confessing those destroyed vows for which confession is fitting, and re-taking those that are suitable to take once more. Stabilize the ones that remain unbroken. Bolstered by these acts, generate the awakened attitude of bodhicitta. These vows, which are to be firmly maintained, you should stabilize in the presence of the noble ones.

Next, generate applied bodhicitta, resolving to meditate upon the abhisambhodi pancakrama.¹³¹

Consider how the varied constitutions of sentient beings are clear, like reflections. To do so, first draw this connection by relating it to mirror-like wisdom.

Just as each and every image appears distinctly within a mirror free of impurities, so does bodhicitta, cognate with the fully pure dharmadhātu, appear clearly, like a reflection, in the varied constitutions of sentient beings. Since this is the case, generate great compassion toward sentient beings.

Next, one should relate this to the wisdom of equality. As is said, "Since the nature of all phenomena is purity, one's own nature is completely pure as well." This must be connected, too, with the equality of all phenomena as lacking independent identity.

Recite the mantra, "O ṃ akāro mukhaṃ sarva dharmānāmādyā nutpanna tvāt oṃāḥ hūṃ phaṭ svāhā," which is the defining statement of the realization of this lack of personal identity of all phenomena.¹³²

Individuating wisdom, great compassion directed toward all phenomena, is generated from the power of the wisdom of equality that was just now explained; and so meditate upon that.

¹³¹ Literally, five stages of full awakening (Tib: *mngon par byang chub rim pa lnga*). The general implication here is development stage yoga. The term properly defines a particular method of generating the appearance of the maṇḍala of deities, through five steps or stages.

¹³² The mantra means, "Om, the syllable A is the source of all, since it is primordially unborn," followed by the syllables of the six wisdom lineages. See Vima's commentary on the line, "Great emptiness has five syllables." The sixth syllable here is 'phaṭ.'

As soon as you have done this, meditate upon the corresponding non-referential, great compassion, which is natural luminosity entirely free from dualistic grasping and fixation—the extremely pure wisdom of the expanse of phenomena.

Next, since it is unacceptable to do nothing at all for the benefit of sentient beings, out of great non-referential compassion, bring forth the wisdom of intensive action, the product of previous aspirations and the powers of sentient beings [wishes].

The result entailed by [generating] these two types of bodhicitta has the character of integrated skillful means and prajñā, which is the actual access point to the characteristics of a Tathāgatha.

And so, at the very beginning, visualize in the center of space the vowel and consonant particles, the naturally luminous array of the magical network, like shining stars.

Meditate that these are then entirely transformed into a great syllable HUNG, Samantabhadra, the nature of bodhicitta, blue in color and garlanded in lights, amidst blazing wrathful garlands [of light].

Tathāgata s emanating from the tips of its light rays journey to all the pure realms, such that manifestations of the Buddhas [are summoned to] do whatever needs to be done. The light rays then reverse course and are absorbed back into the HUNG syllable, which as a result becomes the great wisdom vajra.

Meditate upon this five-pronged wisdom vajra, which has six gates of six colors, with six Buddha realms present inside those gates, Abhirati and the others. Its brilliance and majesty permeate all pure realms; māras cannot bear to meet it

with their gaze.

Meditate that within its hub is a red syllable BHRUNG, which is transformed into a stupa constructed of four types of precious jewels, and equal in extent to the billionfold universe of worlds.

Inside that [stupa], from the syllable HRI, appears a white tetrahedral dharmodaya¹³³ standing upright. Inside it, from the letter AH, appears a vajra cross, which blesses the ground and foundation as a white vajra.

Visualize on top of that, from the syllable HUNG, a palace of enlightenment constructed of stacked vajras, jewels, and other precious materials. Its defining features are as described in the Glorious Compendium of The Real¹³⁴ and other sources. Meditate upon this great maṇḍala of the vajradhātu. Inside this palace is a seat, on which, from the letter A, Mahā-Vairocana is fully generated. He is white in color, with all the features of Samantamukha¹³⁵, his locks bound by a crown ornament. He displays the mudrā of supreme awakening, and is the fundamental Buddha.

¹³³ In Tibetan, *chos 'byung*, a 'source of dharmas.' This is, in this case, a pyramidal enclosure or dwelling place.

¹³⁴ Tibetan *dpal de nyid 'dus pa*. This clearly refers to a particular text in which the measurements and symbolic features of a palace of enlightenment (Tib: *gzhal yas khang*) are spelled out, but the text is difficult to identify. Possibly it belonged to the canonical sources of the *dpal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* collection, the hallmark of the Bodong school and its chief proponent, Chogle Namgyal (*phyogs las rnam rgyal*), who lived several centuries after Rongzom.

In his heart, from the syllable DHIH, appears Mañjuśrī, the original Buddha, with five faces and five hair tufts, each face a different color: the east is blue; south, yellow; west, red; and north, green. In the center, right above the other faces, is a white, peaceful face, adorned with coral ornaments.

His manner is charming, and he wears an assortment of garments. Of his eight hands, in four are distributed four volumes of the hundred thousand stanza prajñāpāramitā, which he holds at his heart. Each of the remaining [four] hands holds a sword of prajñā.

Meditate upon him in this form. Just think that the Buddhas of the seats and the

samaya beings emerging from below have turned into their respective families.

So this is how you should conceive of it.

In the heart of that original Buddha visualize a wheel of prajñā, which appears from A. It has six spokes of six different colors, and has four radial rims, two inner and two outer. In the very center of its hub, think that there is the letter A.

On the first radial rim surrounding [the hub and letter A], arrange the root secret mantra of the wisdom sattva Mañjuśrī, ¹³⁵ *I.e., the 'multi-faceted one.'*

'Oṃsarva dharmā bhāva svabhava viśuddha cakṣu vajra a ā

aṃ aḥ.¹³⁶

On the second radial rim beyond it, arrange the twelve vowel sounds.¹³⁷

On the spokes extending outward from that rim, on the first

spoke is 'oṃvajra tīkṣṇa ya te namaḥ.' On the second is '**oṃ duḥkhaccheda ya te namaḥ.'** On the third is '**oṃprajñā jñāna mūrta ya te namaḥ.'**

On the fourth is 'oṃjñāna kāya ya te namaḥ.' On the fifth, '**oṃ vāgīśvari ya te namaḥ.'** And on the sixth, '**oṃārāpacanāya te namaḥ.'**

On the first radial rim beyond them [*i.e., the third,*] is 'a āḥ

sarva tathāgatha hṛdayaṃ hara hara oṃ hūṃ hrīḥ bhagavan jñānamūrti
vāgīśvara mahāvaca sarva dharmā gaganāmala

supariśuddha dharmadhātu jñāna garbha āḥ.'

On the latter of the two outermost rims, arrange 'ka kha' and the rest of the thirty-three consonants, ending with 'svāhā.'¹³⁸ These letters on the fourth radial rim are white in color. The colors of the letters on the six spokes are those of the six lineages, in order.

The Bhagavat wisdom being appears from the letter A in the center of the wheel. He is the color of the autumn moon, with topknot the color of sapphire, and is surrounded by a disc of light like the circle of the rising sun. He possesses the

'ornament of reality' samādhi¹³⁹ of all Buddhas.

¹³⁶ Rongzom's version reverses the order of the words 'cakṣu' and 'vajra' visà-vis many (but by no means all) versions of the mantra, including Vima's.

¹³⁷ These are A Ā I Ī U Ū E AI O AU AM AḤ.¹³⁸ Rongzom's count is uncertain. Possibly he is omitting the final Sanskrit consonant 'kṣa.'

He is seated on a multicolored lotus. In his two hands he holds a red and a blue utpala flower, on which rest two volumes of prajñāpāramitā. Regard him as the very embodiment of peacefulness.

Visualize a moon disc in his heart, on top of which is the letter A, the very nature of prajñāpāramitā, the condition for the appearance of omniscient wisdom, the genesis of all Śrāvakas and Pratyeka Buddhas, the substance of the accumulations of merit and wisdom of all Bodhisattvas, the ultimate seed syllable, and the causal condition of all letters.

Visualize these A letters, as they have just been described, to be extremely bright and luminous. That radiant light, which removes all obstacles, illuminates [the deities'] own bodies from within.

It then emerges from the [original Buddha Mañjuśrī's] four mouths, lighting up the entire universe of a billion worlds. Light rays of six colors then emerge from the six vajra gateways, filling all Buddha realms throughout the vastness of space, where the welfare of sentient beings is accomplished.

The light illuminates the environs of the ma ṇḍala, turns back around, and then circles the wisdom vajra three times. It enters one's own mouth, eliciting prajñā wisdom, such that the lack of identity of phenomena penetrates one's mind. The light reunites with the letter located on the moon disc within the center of Mañjuśrī's heart, and then one simply rests in meditation.

¹³⁹ Tib: *rgyan gyi dngos po'i ting nge 'dzin*. The Sanskrit is possibly alamkara vastu.

One should cultivate recollective awareness by means of three focal points. The first is to be focused upon the vajra kāya. The second is associated with the moon disc, and the last is related to the letter A. With these, one should abide in union with, and manifest, the nirmanakāya of all Buddhas, as one then proceeds

to recite the names [of Mañjuśrī].

I will not here separately explain the [deity and mantra] cycles of each individual lineage[, which are mentioned in the visualizations that follow].

As one begins the recitation of the names, starting with "And then glorious Vajradhāra," up until the end of the mantra, "ya

te namaḥ," one should chant while practicing this very

samādhi. One need not think about the other visualizations [that follow].

Beginning again from "In this way, the Buddha Bhagavat," up until "the supreme approach of Mahāyāna," one should meditate that, through the proclamation of the words of the name mantras, there appear the thirty-seven principal deities, along with the sixteen Bodhisattvas of the fortunate eon, belonging to the great maṇḍala of the vajradhātu, each of whom has its proper color and hand implements.

They radiate outward to all of the pure realms of the Buddhas, readily accomplishing enlightened deeds, and then return back according to their particular lineages. One should visualize that, as they each return to their respective places within the great maṇḍala of the vajradhātu, they then take their own, respective seats.

Then, from "Buddha Mahāvairocana," until "vajra hook and great lasso," as one recites this [chapter of] 'one line short of twenty-five stanzas,' the letter A in the heart of the wisdom being emits the one hundred and eighty-five letters of the name mantras.

Those, in turn, unleash the Bhagavat Mahāvairocana and the other deities [of this lineage], who are white in color, holding wheels and swords, and so forth.

Having been released in this way, they journey to all Buddha fields, where they open their own particular doorway to liberation, purifying those sentient beings who are trapped in obliviousness, and illuminating the Buddha fields.

They then reverse course, turning back into the component letters of the name mantras, five of which dissolve into each among the thirty-seven principal deities of the great [vajradhātu] maṇḍala, who simply remain present.

Then, through reciting [the chapter containing] 'one line more than ten stanzas,' beginning with "Vajrabhairava who causes fear" and ending with "the very best among all types of sound," from the letter [A] in the heart of the wisdom being, the secret mantra of his name, consisting of seventy-one [letters], is projected out.

In order to tame the unruly beings of the three worlds, multitudes of wrathful vajra [deities], as they are described in all of the tantras, faces blazing with fury, and featuring blazing vajras, hands blazing with fire, and other hand implements, appear [from those letters], wrathful kāyas of many colors and ornaments, wearing an assortment of clothing.

They tame all who are hostile in all the realms of the world, and illuminate the Buddha fields.

Turning back, this second maṇḍala group out from the vajradhātu maṇḍala, consisting of seventy-one letters of the name [mantra], revert to their proper colors and forms, according to lineage, and take their places in an orderly fashion.

Think of them as divided this way into five groups of fourteen, present as the embodiments of the five lineages.

Next, by reciting [the chapter consisting of] fortytwo stanzas beginning with "Perfect lack of selfidentity, the true nature," until "the most luminous flame of wisdom," the two hundred and seventy-five letters of the name mantra spring forth from the letter [A] in the heart of the wisdom being.

From these are emanated manifestations of the Bhagavat Amitābha, in accordance with the needs of sentient beings; some assuming, *e.g.*, the form of Brahma; others in the form, *e.g.*, of Śrāvakas; others still in the forms of Bodhisattvas or complete and perfect Buddhas; and yet others as mobile and immobile objects, like excellent vases and great medicines.

These emanations perform enlightened actions, and through their particular gateway of liberation, serve the welfare of sentient beings who act out of desire, and illuminate the Buddha fields as well.

Returning back, they revert to the form of the letters of the secret mantra, and on the third wheel out from the great vajradhātu maṇḍala, they remain in this aspect, as the third mantra group in order.

Dividing these by lineage, to each lineage belongs a group of fifty-five letters of the name mantra.

While reciting [the chapter of] twenty-four stanzas, starting with "Holy one who fulfills all desired aims," and ending with "like a great jewel, or a precious crown," visualize as follows.

From the letter [A] in the heart of the wisdom being emerge the one hundred and twenty-four words of the name mantra. Through the samādhi of the Bhagavat Âkāśagarbha, they travel endlessly throughout the ten directions, and through their particular gateway to liberation, they conquer the miserliness of sentient beings and illuminate the maṇḍalas of the Buddhas' retinues.

Returning back to the fourth circle around the great vajradhātu maṇḍala, they resume their respective colors and take their proper places, according to the overall order of the maṇḍalas. Organized according to their lineages, there are twenty-five of them connected with each lineage.

While reciting the [chapter with] fifteen stanzas beginning with "That which all Buddhas realize," and ending with "Mañjuśrī, his glorious eminence," visualize that from the letter [A] in the heart center of the wisdom being, the ninetyfive words of the name mantra emerge.

Assuming the aspect of the Bhagavat Amoghasiddhi, they entirely and perfectly fulfill the wishes of all sentient beings, and via their own gateway to liberation, they remove the indolence of sentient beings. They also illuminate the maṇḍalas of the Tathāgathas' retinues, and then turn back.

At the fifth ring around the great vajra dhātu maṇḍala, they come fully to rest in accordance with their rank. Divided into lineages, in this case there are nineteen of them belonging to each lineage.

This division into lineages also occurs, in just the same way, when the emanations radiate forth. When they gather back in, and arrange themselves in a circle, they once more resume their places according to lineage.

Next, recite the praises, "Homage to you, supreme vajra who grants supremacy," and so on. The mantra, "Oṃ sarva dharmā," and so on, is the very one that was [visually] arranged earlier.

"Then, glorious Vajradhāra" and the words that follow are the praises of rejoicing. There are also expressions of qualities that are to be recited.¹⁴⁰

With a boost of confidence [from those recitations], offer a celebratory feast using the arrangement of offerings you had previously gathered together. Also offer confession, and request the fulfillment of your aims.

With these tasks completed, gradually withdraw those large groups [of letters and deities] of the maṇḍala, until they are finally all gathered back into the letter [A] at the heart of the wisdom being.

Finally, be sure to take care of your body, resting in whatever way is comfortable.

This way of [chanting and visualizing] involves a highly developed degree of concentration. There exists an even more elaborate way of meditating on seven circles of the maṇḍala.

¹⁴⁰ See endnote xli.

It is by practicing with strong interest, diligence, and intelligence that one's concentration can be so highly developed. It is for those individuals of lesser capacity, whose interest, diligence, or intelligence is weak, that a simpler form of concentration is taught.

** ** *

There certainly are some who are interested in engaging in this practice using the approach of secret mantra, and who seek, through reciting the names of the Bhagavat Mañjugosha, to increase merit and wisdom, draw near to attainment, and act for the good of sentient beings.

But those who lack such enthusiasm and who are unable to concentrate on such a vast scale, in the way that was just taught, should simply keep their vows, generate the attitude of bodhicitta, and then think, "For the sake of all sentient beings, I am going to recite the names of the Bhagavat, the gentle vajra," and then proceed to recite his names.

While reciting "A Ā I Ī U Ū E AI O AU AM AH," meditate on

[the meaning of] all phenomena being primordially unborn, essentially completely pure, and naturally luminous.

When chanting "sthito h ṛdi jñānamūrtir ahaṃ buddho buddhānāṃ tryadhvavartinām," think, "It is I who resides in the hearts of all Buddhas of the three times, the Buddhas' wisdom kāya," and so remain within the pride of the dharmakāya.

Then, saying the secret mantras "o ṃ vajratīkṣṇa," and so forth, meditate vividly upon the kāya that is the very definition of mahāmudrā, whose nature is the six lineages of the bhagavat. Within his heart are the so-called "great radiance of the vajra sun" and "stainless light of the vajra moon," the essence of the result, Samantabhadra's bodhicitta, the actualization of the highest [nature] of all sentient beings, taking such forms [*i.e.*, sun and moon discs].

These very embodiments of method and prajñā you may either visualize as side by side, or stacked one atop the other, whichever is easier for you.

While reciting the next verses, from "In this way, the Buddha Bhagavat," up until, "and makes all words utterly clear," think that on top of both the sun and the moon, there is a letter A, the embodiment of prajñāpāramitā, the causal condition for the arising of omniscient wisdom, the basis of the merit and wisdom of all of the multitudes of nobles, the essence of all letters.

Continuing to chant from "Great offering and great desire," all the way until "Mañjuśrī, his glorious eminence," visualize that from those [two] 'A' letters, the essence of all secret mantras, all the letters of the secret mantras of his names, radiate brilliant rays of light, which completely illuminate oneself, splendidly accomplish the welfare of sentient beings who reside within the various Buddha fields, and also illuminate the maṇḍalas of the retinues of the Buddhas.

Then recite from "Homage to you, supreme vajra who grants supremacy," until "homage to you, the true wisdom kāya," thinking that you are praising the Bhagavat who is the very nature of the six lineages.

The secret mantra that one next recites, from "Oṃ sarva

dharmā," until "a ā aṃ aḥ," is the root secret mantra of the

Bhagavat. So recite it in the manner you would recite a root secret mantra,

thinking that in so doing, you are pleasing [the deity].

"Prakṛtipariśuddhāḥ" until "mupādāyeti" are words that

signify the commitment and promise to fully apprehend the wisdom kāya of the bhagavat. And so therefore, while reciting them, think, "I will apprehend [it], as these words I am reciting state."

The secret mantra beginning with "[Oṃ]sarvatathāgatha

hṛdaya[m]"until "jñāna garbha āḥ" is the garland mantra of all

Tathāgatas, and so approach its recitation in the way you would the recitation of a garland secret mantra.

Then, if you have the resources, make offerings, and request the fulfillment of your aims. Dissolve the samādhi of the deity into the unborn state of dharmas, and then arise [from the session].

The concluding [section] of Vajrapani offering praise and rejoicing in [the words of] the Bhagavat, along with the recitation of the numerous qualities [of reciting the names], is not said to be something on which to concentrate [as a specific visualization]. Rather, it is there so that those who recite it will understand those benefits, and so should be recited for that reason, and in order to gather an accumulation of merit.

This completes the presentation of the way in which to express his names in connection with secret mantra.

C. Reciting in View of The Meaning of Nonduality

How are his names to be expressed in view of the meaning of nonduality? To do so:

Sons or daughters of the lineage, whomever you may be, should you wish to conduct yourselves according to the profound approach of the Mahāyāna, and wish yourselves quickly to be rid of all obscurations, and wish, too, to bring to light the manifold dharmas of enlightenment, in just the way a stainless mirror makes visible all images before it—

Then, in that case, recite perfectly, recite expressly, recite enthusiastically, the ultimate name of the wisdom being, the Bhagavat Mañjuśrī, and in that way,

generate within your being the wisdom of nonduality.

How is it that the wisdom of nonduality can be generated through reciting his names?

What you must understand is that the immeasurable collections of dharmas of the Tathāgathas, and all of the eighty-four thousand, and more, teachings as well, taught only that which is true, and helpful.

Moreover, their benefit is established by virtue of their truth. Their truth is also confirmed by their benefits. These two, in terms of action and function, share a single identity.

Therefore, this nondual dharma is the basis, root and essence of whatever benefits may be found within this world and beyond this world, and any and all truths there are, too. As was stated elsewhere, "the twelve branches of scripture, which accord with dharmatā."

Here, too, in the chapter on the qualities,¹⁴¹ it says that to apprehend the names is to grasp that which is nondual. For this reason, you should understand it to be so.

An objection could be raised here:

You say that whatever is true is also helpful. So how is it, then, that the truths of suffering and the source of suffering, for example, are intrinsically helpful?

And if whatever is helpful is also true, then in what way are the helpful nonBuddhist Vēda protection spells true?

To respond, the entirety of the beneficial teachings of the Tathāgathas are truthful, just as their truths are beneficial. Thus, the truths of suffering and its origin address such empirical realities as impermanence, suffering, and emptiness. Therefore, directing one's attention to, and meditating upon those truths, yields genuine benefit.

The very definition of harmfulness is to see [things] as permanent, pleasurable and real; since these are not true, one has been, in so many words, fooled.

While the benefits of the protection spells of the nonBuddhists are not known to be benefits specifically mentioned by the Tathāgatha, those benefits,

nevertheless, do not lie outside of what is meant by being true.

Another [possible] objection:

Your point being well-founded, still, when we perfectly profess the qualities [of Mañjuśrī], and so express the meaning of nonduality, how is that actually helpful?

¹⁴¹ **The omitted chapter on the benefits of reciting the tantra.**

To that I respond, all of the pronouncements of the Victors are solely to show us what is true and helpful, and since what is helpful and what is true essentially are one and the same thing, they are not taught to be two.

The heart and essence of all that is true and helpful is the nondual dharma, and so, no matter which among the names and qualities of the Tathāgathas one proclaims, what each and every one of them actually is expressing is the dharmakāya.

And so, what must be understood is that one recites the names precisely so that one might assimilate the nondual dharma, and fully accomplish it. This is exactly what is meant, when we speak of the "perfect profession of the ultimate name."¹⁴²

While there is just this one definitive way to recite the names, whose purpose is to introduce into one's being the nondual dharma, you should understand that, due to differences among the faculties of trainees, there are three different ways to go about it. What are these three?

The first way is to prevent further arising of the causes of defilement, through realizing the nondual dharma.

The second way concerns how to conjoin method and prajñā, so as to avert the waste from spilling the fruits of defilement, and thereby turn back the causes [of defilement] as well.

The third way is spontaneously to establish the mind of natural luminosity, in which cause and effect are indistinguishable, through the viewpoint of great equality.

¹⁴² See footnote 1. *i. Exhausting The Causes of Defilement*

As for the way to exhaust the causes [of defilement]:

By reciting the names, I wish to express the qualities of the nondual dharma! I will remember to do so! I am delighted to do so! I will generate confident faith!

Through the power of that, I will give birth, within my being, to faith that is consistent with the nondual dharma, to diligence, to recollection, to samādhi, and to prajñā!

Through the power of that, I will get rid of the belief in 'me' and 'mine.' Without such a view of the self, I will have nothing about which to think.

Through the power of that, I will not grasp at characteristics, not dwell upon experiences, and not become attached to whatever manifests.

Through the power of that, I will be free of passion and not get attached. In that way, there will be nowhere left for suffering to find a foothold.

Therefore, by growing familiar with the nondual dharma, repeatedly familiarizing myself with it, and becoming extremely familiar with it, all defilement will become depleted. Nondual wisdom itself will have taken its place!

The method for generating such [wisdom] is the recitation of names. Through it, both accumulations, of merit and wisdom, will be generated simultaneously. Why so?

By virtue of expressing the qualities of the Tath āgathas, and because it is an expression of benefiting sentient beings, it completes all merits.

And by virtue of expressing the true meaning of nondual dharma, and giving rise to nonduality within one's own being, wisdom is complete [within it], too.

Therefore, an individual who is interested in the system of the pāramitās and dedicates himself earnestly to the accumulation of wisdom, and by the same token seeks to generate the accumulation of merit as a companion to it, with his mind so engaged, should make a firm commitment:

I will perfectly recite, and bring to mind, the ultimate name of the wisdom being, the Bhagavat Mañjuśrī. For right here [in this text], and from the very outset, is

described that which is unborn, which arises nondually, and contains the six sovereigns of secret mantra:

'In this way, the Buddha Bhagavat,
the perfect Buddha, appears from 'A.'
'A' is supreme among all syllables,
highly meaningful, the sacred letter.

Arising from within, it is unborn,
free of linguistic formulation.
It is the supreme cause of all expression.'

This [passage from the root text] shows that the wisdom being Mañjuśrī is the meaning of nondual dharma, and it is in this context that [the Buddha] agreed to express his names, and did speak them, and [spoke] of nothing else, nor for some other reason.

After that, in the same connection, are presented the root mantra, the commitment to apprehend [the meaning], and the garland mantra.
First, the four 'A' syllables [a ā aṃ aḥ], the root mantra, bless one to see that all phenomena are essentially completely pure.

Next, one promises to express the complete purity of Mañjuśrī, who is the wisdom kāya of all Tathāgatas, in order to apprehend how all phenomena, by nature, are completely pure. This is the commitment to apprehend [the meaning].

The Bhagavat, the wisdom kāya Mañjuśrī, the space-like stainlessness of all phenomena, the essence of the primal wisdom of the extremely and utterly pure dharmadhātu, blessed by the two 'A' syllables [a āḥ], enchants the hearts of all Buddhas, incinerates all obscurations. This is the garland mantra.¹⁴³

Therefore, here the Bhagavat speaks of only, and nothing other than, expressing the qualities of the nondual dharma.

ii. applying prajñā and skill to the fruits of defilement, to exhaust the causes and generate nondual wisdom

It is taught that a method for manifesting the nondual dharma is to avert the spilling of reproductive fluid, by means of great prajñā and expertise. This also exhausts the defilements of the disturbed states within one's mind, such that nondual wisdom rapidly arises within one's being.

This teaching [by the Buddha] on the recitation of the names of the Bhagavat, from top to bottom, is an expression of the qualities of the six wisdoms. The six wisdoms, moreover, are characterized by nondual wisdom.

¹⁴³ Cf. the discussion of these mantras and commitments in Chapter XII of Vima's commentary, where the final one is called the 'activity' rather than the 'garland' mantra.

Thus, nondual wisdom is the true character of mirror-like wisdom, such that it is completely pure of all stains, and enables all of the features of enlightenment to appear, like reflections.

It is the true character of equality. Not susceptible to selfcherishing, it serves as the source for all precious qualities,¹⁴⁴ such as the distinctive powers, and so forth.

It is the true character of individuation. Devoid of all grasping at characteristics [as real], it is the basis for knowing, and teaching, all that there is, just as it is.

It is the true character of effectuation. It is the locus of spontaneous compassion and action out of concern for sentient beings.

It is the true character of the fully pure dharmadhātu, as it serves as the basis for all else.

The indivisibility of these five wisdoms is nondual wisdom. That, itself, is the wisdom being Mañjuśrī. It is the sacred letter. It is bodhicitta. Similarly, it is what we call Vajrasattva, and Samantabhadra, and great bliss, and so on. Indeed, the words of every single name [of Mañjuśrī] that can be expressed mean exactly that.

¹⁴⁴ It would be improper not to discuss at all the key Tibetan term that is so much 'at play' in these commentaries, and in the Tibetan title of the root tantra itself: *tsen* (*mtshan*).

The common word for 'name,' *ming*, is used sparingly throughout the Tibetan text of the tantra and its commentaries. The word *tsen* is used throughout instead, and it is not only the honorific term for name or title, but also means quality or characteristic, both in a pejorative sense (to be conceptually qualified),

and in a positive sense (positive or enlightened traits or indications; see, e.g., endnote iv).

It seems proper finally to introduce this point after Vima and Rongzom have so painstakingly explained the interplay of 'name' and 'quality' when reciting the 'tsen' of Mañjuśrī.

This is well-expressed right here [in this text], where it says, "highly meaningful, the sacred letter." The term 'sacred letter,' as used here, refers to undefiled wisdom.

'Defilement' here means having the identify of the ten constituents, of which the form [aggregate] and its associated faculty are said to be the seed. These [constituents] are said to remain throughout the progression from [the] desire [realm] to [the] form and formless realms.

Here there is an objection:

How, by reversing the degradation of the form [aggregate] and faculty, could defiled thoughts and mental states be reversed?

It is like this—with respect to any thought or mental state, where the stains of form are completely purified, it is impossible to say "the stains of the four named [aggregates] are not completely purified."

By the same token, when the stains of the four named [aggregates] are purified, it is also impossible for the stains of form not to be purified.

Now, since form is incredibly coarse, enduring and observable, overcoming its stains takes precedence. For once these are overcome, all of the others will be purified as well; that is how it works.

For example, when the top of a tree is chopped and cut, such that it has nowhere left further to grow, its roots will also quickly wither away; at which point, it is too late for more subtle steps to make any difference, to help or to harm.

In the same way, when the fruits of defilement are overturned, their causes, too, will quickly be exhausted, such that subtle ones, even, will bring no harm.

Therefore, please understand that turning back from the result is taught to be the

field of those with great expertise. The intention is not to teach this approach of skill and great prajñā to everyone.

To put it in proper context, if those with weak skills and prajñā are unable to avoid faults at the time of the cause, by the time the result has fully emerged, it is too late; they are helpless.

And so, here the noble Mañjuśrī, embodiment of the six wisdoms, is referred to as 'the sacred letter,' which signifies primal wisdom that thoroughly exhausts the five defilements. This is the kāya of great bliss, of the nature of sixteen instants of blissful wisdom, the culmination of the the four moments of arising of wisdom. It is the very definition of non-abiding nirvāṇa.

It is the source texts of the perfect profession of names that teach this, best exemplified by the phrase, "highly meaningful, the sacred letter."

The 'exhaustion of the five defilements' is laid out with respect to both cause and result. "Great emptiness [that] has five syllables" relates to exhaustion of the five causal defilements, while "and the empty sphere [has six] letters," relates to exhaustion of the resultant defilements.

With regard to the latter, the first five letters refer to knowledge of exhaustion, and the sixth to knowledge of the unborn. The sixteen instants of blissful wisdom are contained within the four moments of arising [of wisdom].

Their identity as blissful wisdom is presented in [the lines],

replete with all aspects and lacking any aspect, with the bindu of half and half again of sixteen, beyond reckoning or categorization, at the very peak of the four concentrations.

'Sixteen' refers to the sixteen lunar components of wisdom. Half and half again of those is four, *i.e.*, the four instants in which blissful wisdom is born. The bindu ["with the bindu..."] is the fourth of these, unwavering wisdom, also known as the pinnacle of the four dhyāna concentrations.

In this context, the words 'five letters,' or 'six,' or 'eight,' or 'half and half again of sixteen,' are explained conventionally as the lunar phases, as bindus, and as nādas, which we can call their literal interpretation, the way they are explained for a general audience.

The way this works[, however,] must be explained through oral instructions; and so I have just brushed over it, so that at least, for present purposes, the topic has been covered.

The way to properly accomplish this is through practices for which one receives empowerment, and pith instructions that must be transmitted through an oral lineage. Therefore, I will write nothing further about it here.

The subject here has been the way to overturn defilements pertaining to the results, by recourse to skill and great prajñā, and thereby generate the wisdom of nonduality. That is precisely what this perfect profession of the qualities of noble Mañjuśrī teaches. So it is asserted.

Put differently, the majority of the main text, from "A Ā" until "Mañjuśrī, his glorious eminence," teaches about the six letters. The six wisdoms, in turn, explain the wisdom of nonduality; and that nondual wisdom is the sacred letter.

It is so called because it exhausts the five defilements, and yields unwavering bliss. It is the Bhagavat, the wisdom being Mañjuśrī. And so, the main thrust of this text is to show and produce this [wisdom]. So it is asserted.

iii. spontaneously establishing the mind of natural luminosity, in which cause and effect are indistinguishable ab initio, through the viewpoint of great equality

How does this work?

Any yoga practitioner who wishes to realize that all phenomena, by virtue of their great purity and equality, innately are unborn, naturally luminous, and spontaneously established as qualities of fruition;

Who don't look to bring about fruition, at some later point, through accomplishing its causes;

Who neither accept nor reject what are known as thoroughly afflicted mind states and the qualities of complete purification;

Who don't distinguish the ultimate from the relative, nor even draw distinctions based on the operations of cause and effect;

Who wish effortlessly to abide in spontaneous completeness, the state in which

all phenomena included within mind and the display of mind are perfect as the nature of Mañjuśrī Vajra, where there is nothing about which to think, nothing for which to search, and nothing to be accomplished—

From the very beginning, he or she should receive from a holy spiritual guide, in the form of a scriptural transmission, the system of instruction on great equality, and then by application of threefold prajñā, realize its meaning and grow increasingly familiar with it.

At that point, don't shun the enormous field of skillful conduct of the Mahāyāna, but also don't generate, out of attachment, the effort to practice it. Don't even regard the workings of māra as something to reject—by being completely free of grasping, they won't stain you at all.

A yogin who wishes to rest in this type of way, with an outlook that in no way seeks to obstruct the experiences of the three gates, since all of these apparent phenomena are merely the ornamental display of wisdom, should proceed to recite the names.

And so, first, when reciting, " A Ā I Ī U Ū E AI O AU AM AH," understand the meaning to be like this: this magical display of letters is manifest, perfect enlightenment through the magical network.

How is that? Recall that the request of the vajra holder, here, was:

Ubiquitous Lord, for our benefit, for our welfare, out of loving concern for us, explain to us how to attain manifest, perfect awakening through the magical network.

In response, the Buddha taught how to attain manifest, perfect awakening through the magical network by speaking just these twelve 'A's.

A more extensive treatment of the meaning of the magical network is found in the later Mayajala tantra of Mañjuśrī:

This Mañjuśrī is the glorious kāya of perfection, the exceptional, nondual, pervasive dharma, the equalization of the three times, father of all Victors, mother dharmadhātu herself,
the progenitor of supreme sattva children.

Those who are wise, and who wish to glimpse this sutra, logically and by valid,

direct experience— the magical network, like the turning of a wheel, is the ultimate Mañjuśrī of the wheel of letters.

The originally pure and unborn sphere,

"A Ā ," is uncompounded phenomena.

Since, in the absence of cause, there is no result to seek, just remain steadily, like 'A,' in the ease of dharmakāya.

The ultimate expanse is pervasive and invisible, like space. Like the Muni thrusting the sword of Mañjuśrī and cutting through what abides without nature, the *gigu*¹⁴⁵ of 'A', compassion, naturally radiates. "I Ī" is the way of the true mother of dharmas, prajnapāramitā, Manjugosha.

¹⁴⁵ The short i vowel sound; a mark that is added above the implicit 'A' vowel in both Sanskrit and Tibetan to produce the vowel 'I.'

Neither choosing to arise, nor not to arise,

is the exceptional, honorable repose of Samantabhadra. The very state of not being arises from nothing; "U Ū," the essence of absence dawns. Great wisdom is beyond extremes of being or not being.

The great state joins itself to the joy of all beings. Not separate from that itself, the inconceivable and inexpressible triangle whose nature is 'E' never wavers. "E" is its nominal designation, but it cannot be expressed. Mind and its thoughts are the samādhi of Mañjuśrī.

The manifold, magical manifestations

of method and prajñā, "O AU," gather and disperse, an excitation of light rays, the rainbow's many hues pleasingly conjoined, Mañjuśrī happily playing the part of Mañjuśrī.

The great yoga, glorious wealth of wisdom,

the invisible sky, "AM" is wisdom's treasury, unadulterated prajñā wisdom beyond 'A,'

emptiness ever intangible, yet spontaneously present.

By providing for all needs, he is free of preferences, this one whose nature is settled, who is gentle glory itself. If one neither rests in nor conceives of the inconceivable, one will equal Mañjuśrī's

own perfection of qualities.

The way complete awakening manifests through this magical network of letters is as follows.

'A' means that the unborn and uncompounded is illusorily produced; and so with no result to pursue, the original dharmakāya is great bliss.

'I' means that since ['A'] itself is invisible like space, great prajñā resolves that it is so, and great compassion free of reference points radiates forth; and so its nature ever and always has been identified with prajnapāramitā.

'U' means since ['I'] is like that, the nature of Samantabhadra's awakening is that upon the arising of thoughts and limiting constructs, they are not rejected as inferior; and when they do not arise, they are not sought out. The infinitely vast domain of immaculately pure bodhicitta naturally links all transient beings to great bliss.

'E' means that since that is the case, all phenomena are beyond thought or expression, and in stable equilibrium. Since they are not established even conventionally, mind and its conceptual thoughts also abide as, and within the samādhi of, Mañjuśrī.

'O' means that since the nature of things is that way, all displays of mind's multifarious manifestations are the totality of the magical network [mayajala] of method and prajñā. Like rainbows in space, they correlate with the mentalities of each and every being, and partake equally of the great blissfulness of Mañjuśrī's playful creativity.

'A M̐' means that the wisdom of great yoga endowed with those features is the wellspring of all glory; it is the skytreasury samādhi.

'A H̐' means that prajñā and wisdom never make contact with any phenomenon, and transcend them all, and so, through these twelve letters, noble Mañjuśrī is enlightened by nature, innately free of selectivity towards all phenomena. Thus, he primordially abides as the being in whom all things are complete. And so, any yoga practitioner who realizes all phenomena to be that way, dwells upon, thinks about, takes up, and rejects no phenomenon, and thereby equals Mañjuśrī's own perfection of qualities. So it is taught.

It also says, in the same source,

This is the way of the magical network:
as soon as it is heard, the meaning is clearly felt. A Ā, Mañjuśrī himself, is the
expanse of the kāya of natural dharmatā.

I Ī is equilibrium; from within the state of stillness, the mother clearly appears.

U Ū is the unborn. This very state of purity is Samantabhadra. From this
continuum, the Sattva Victor carves through wisdom's domain.

E AI is union with space. Since there is no result, it abides in the cause. Through
illuminating the impure, it becomes the subtle path of Mañjugosha.

O AU is beyond E. O M̄ reveals the great method of secret mantra. E and O are
the natural expanse, and MUM is essential space.

A demonstrates playfulness.
Through AM̄, nondual union,
comes the final samādhi of the profound vajra.

MA is beyond equality or inequality,
the perfection of Mañjuśrī wisdom vajra.

This wheel of the magical network abides neither in nirvāṇa nor saṃsāra—the
vajra pinnacle. If one simply remains in the expanse
that is not the product of thinking, then all is perfected.

Going back over how this works, as shown through the twelve letters whose
nature is nondual method and prajñā—the nature of manifest complete
awakening, primordially beyond deliberate effort, Buddha nature, is the noble
Mañjuśrī.

As the nature of all phenomena is also just like that, if a yoga practitioner, too,
settles his mind into that very state, he will also perfect the qualities of Mañjuśrī.
So it is taught.

For now, we can say that the letters A and Ā are Mañjuśrī, the dharmakāya. I Ī
are the mother, Prajnapāramitā. U Ū are bodhicitta, Samantabhadra, and mind
nature, the Mahāsattva nature. E AI are union with space, beyond gathering or
separation. O AU are the natural radiation of skillful manifestations of great
numbers of letter wheels, which pass through those [spaces].

When A M̄ is joined with O, it becomes OM̄. That is the kāya of secret mantra. The circular M̄ mark in AM̄ is MUM̄, the intrinsic liberation of all phenomena. AM̄ is the samādhi of nonduality replete with all good qualities. The circular M̄ mark is the inseparability of the equality and inequality of all phenomena.

This ultimate Mañjuśrī wisdom vajra is the vajra pinnacle of wisdom, dwelling neither in the extreme of samsāra nor in the extreme of nirvāṇa. Since all phenomena, by nature, are like that, a yoga practitioner should well absorb this.

All phenomena are not to be thought about, not to be pursued, and not to be accomplished; they are beyond all that. From the very beginning, they have been completely pure, naturally luminous, and primally, manifestly, and perfectly enlightened. Effortlessly, they are spontaneously present.

Since they are naturally, manifestly and perfectly awakened in this way, if one simply settles the mind in the state of that being so, any names one might recite are simply revelations of that very nature. They become part of the overall magical network of method and prajñā.

Having realized that they are ornaments of dharmatā, the play of wisdom, and unimpeded manifestations, one should recite without being troubled by thoughts of what to accept or reject, or what to achieve.

Once the recitation is complete, even then, understanding the nature of the three times to be equality, one should simply rest without looking ahead to anything further.

This has been the explanation of how to recite the names in a nondual fashion, and so now all three topics have been explained.

** **

A full explanation of the names, by itself, at least will enable one to realize the general meaning of the scripture, and to develop an initial understand of how sentient beings possess a great range of proclivities.

To that end, I have explained just three points: Mañjuśrī; his names; and how to profess them.

This was the commentary on the perfect profession of the names of noble Mañjuśrī, composed by Dharmabhadra.¹⁴⁶ May it be virtuous!

¹⁴⁶ Dharmabhadra in Tibetan is Chokyi Zangpo (*chos kyi bzang po*), Rongzom's proper name.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ A stanza in the Tibetan text corresponds to four lines of seven syllables each, for a total of twenty-eight syllables. The 'pada' or metered feet of the Sanskrit verses are measured as thirty-two per stanza.

Although neither the Sanskrit nor the Tibetan texts do so, the English version I have broken into paragraphs of irregular length simply to follow the flow of Vima's commentary more easily.

ⁱⁱ The chapter titles are not stated explicitly in Vima's commentary. The titles used here are those found in the Derge Kangyur, except where otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱⁱ Vima's commentary on this line, and his citation of it, refer to a version of this verse, found, for example, in the Derge Kangyur, which says "whose face is like a lotus in full bloom." Many versions of the text here say, instead, that Vajrapani "was seated on a broad lotus seat." That is GD's reading, who notes that the lotus seat refers to the outstanding place, among the five outstanding features.

^{iv} According to a highly-detailed manual on drawing a painted or sand representation for the complete maṇḍala of Mañjuśrī according to the Mayajala tantra, Furrowed Brow (Tib: *khro gnyer rim par ldan*) is the vajrahook wielding deity at the eastern gate of the palace, followed at the other three gates by denominated deities holding lasso, chains, and bell, respectively.

These four are part of a larger grouping of twentyone maṇḍala deities who display various characteristics or qualities (Tib: *mtshan ma*) of the main deity, Manjusri.

^v This is māyājālābhisambodhikrama. Māyājālā is the root tantra (the "Magical Network"), and the teachings on the maṇḍalas of enlightenment (and their respective wisdoms) contained within it.

Ābhisambodhi (Tib: *mngon par rdzogs par byang chub*) can refer to the quality of the svābhāvika kāya, or essential truth dimension (or substratum) of the enlightened state, that underlies and runs through all of the kāyas. This is a central theme of Vima's reading of this tantra—the unity or one taste of all the

wisdoms and lineages of enlightenment.

^{vi} The proper transliteration and diacritics are missing for Vima's Sanskrit title, as he uses phonetic Tibetan spelling for it, and his phonetic Sanskrit and his Tibetan titles are not (semantically) identical in any case. ^{vii} The Śāstras (authoritative treatises) on this text extant at the time of Vima appear to have been extensive, if those preserved in the Tangyur (bstan 'gyur) canon serve as an indication.

The particular commentarial tradition on which he relied is exemplified by several works found in the Transmitted Teachings of the Old Tradition (rnying ma bka' ma), including those of the great ācārya Padmasambhava..

^{viii} Later on, Vima will explain that '*nges 'byung*' can mean the same thing as '*theg pa*,' vehicle. This term is typically translated as 'renunciation.'

More literally, it can mean either the arising of certainty (Tib: *nges pa 'byung ba*) or certainly arising (Tib: *nges par 'byung ba*). In other words, the certainty or determination that conditioned existence is futile and one must by all means traverse a path to liberation, or the paths or vehicles that definitely result in liberation. Therefore, a renunciate is one with such determination and committed to such a path.

^{ix} In fact, Vima merges together his explanation of the sequence of chapters, and his Socratic and summary word commentary.

^x The root text here is presented in thirteen chapters. The fourteenth chapter would be the cycles of praises (the description of the benefits of professing the qualities), here omitted. See note xli. below.

^{xi} See the note below on the meaning of *sattva*.

^{xii} Here Vima parses the first two syllables of the Tibetan term for Bhagavat, *bcom* (to conquer), and *ldan* (to possess), but does not parse the final syllable, '*das* (to transcend).

^{xiii} Again, Vima parses the syllables of the Tibetan word for Buddha, '*sangs* (clean or pure) and *rgyas* (to expand or blossom).

^{xiv} Vima is elaborating on the Tibetan term *sems*, in order to link together the meanings of bodhicitta (Tib: *byang chub sems*) and wisdom being (Skt: *jñāna sattva*; Tib: *ye shes sems dpa'*). *Sems* as an active verb means both the *contemplation* undertaken by primal wisdom, as well as the compassionate *concern* directed toward beings; and as a noun compound, the *being* whose form appears due to, and embodies, these two qualities.

Here he introduces an important theme of his commentary: that the wisdom of fundamental bodhicitta is the wisdom being Manjusri, the sixth wisdom that is the underlying identity of, and contains, the other five primal wisdoms of the Buddhas.

^{xv} This is another gloss on Bhagavat, *i.e.*, to conquer and to possess. ^{xvi} This line again parses the words perfect Buddha, which are the three syllables *rdzogs* (perfect or complete), *sangs* (cleanse or purify) and *rgyas* (expand or blossom).

^{xvii} Above I translated this term as 'sensual fascination.' Devaputra literally means 'divine child.'

^{xviii} The question raised here is whether the tantra was spoken by Vajrapani through the blessing of the Buddha, who, while present, remained silently immersed in a state of *samādhi*, like, for instance, the Heart Sutra, which was actually spoken by the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in that manner, and later transcribed by Vajrapani.

^{xix} In other words, this is the lineage of three lineages.

^{xx} Properly this would be spelled *mahoṣṇīṣa*, but it is important here that readers recognize the terms 'Mahā' and 'uṣṇīṣa,' and so the grammar rule for their conjunction was ignored.

^{xxi} In addition to the usual five lineages (*karma*; *tathāgata*; *padma*; *ratna*; and *vajra*), Vima identifies the sixth lineage as the *vajra* lineage of fundamental bodhicitta, in keeping with his theme throughout this work of the one essence running through all Buddha lineages being *Mañjuśrī*.

Here, though, he seemingly further identifies a 'comprehensive' lineage, as if it were a seventh lineage, and not just the collection of all six. ^{xxii} More precisely, the 'pada' (feet) of the Sanskrit text was translated into Tibetan metered lines of

seven syllables.

^{xxiii} Thus, "te namaḥ." "To all of you, homage!"

^{xxiv} Another way to translate the Tibetan "*rang sangs rgyas*," besides Solitary Realizers or Buddhas. As Vima elsewhere explains, not all Isolated Buddhas are solitary.

^{xxv} Cf. the earlier discussion of the meaning of Tathāgata (Tib: *de bzhin gshegs pa*), to which Vima adds another twist here: *de ka bzhin du gshegs*— he is there, just like that, in a flash, out of compassion, to serve beings.

^{xxvi} Tib: *'khor los sgyur ba'I rgyal po*. Monarch who turns the wheel. Vima offers three different, complementary interpretations of this term.

The first wheel is that held and turned by a universal emperor according to brahmanic cosmology. The second is the driver turning the wheels of the chariot vehicle of dharma. The third is the center of the circle of the maṇḍala of deities, around whom all enlightened activity revolves. ^{xxvii}On 'definite release,' see the earlier note on the meaning of the term often translated as renunciation.

^{xxviii} Tib: *dge slong*, Skt: bhikṣu, one who adopts virtue as a sole objective. ^{xxix} Tib: *dgra bcom*, Skt: arhat, one who defeats the enemy, mental disturbances and defilements.

^{xxx} Here Vima is explaining the epithet Sugata (Tib: *bde bar gshegs pa*), gone to bliss.

^{xxxi} Rishi in Tibetan is *drang srong*, straight and true (as in 'well-directed').

^{xxxii} Amoghapāśa (Tib: *don yod zhag pa*) is an epithet of the compassionate one, Avalokiteśvara, *i.e.*, Chenrezig.

^{xxxiii} In the beginning of this sentence, Vima says *thugs kyi rigs*, mind lineage. When speaking of the three lineages, body, speech and mind, *thugs* is mind, though typically located in the heart region (whereas body is associated with the head or top of the head). *Thugs* is also the honorific form for heart, and the second time Vima explicitly says *rdo rje'i snying*, or vajra heart, to make his point clear.

^{xxxiv} None of the deity name mantras included in this chapter of the Mayajala fits this description. Conceivably, Vima is referring to Arapacana's mantra as the

more general one of six syllables (ārāpacanā dhīḥ), while the Vāgiśvara mantra is most likely "oṃ vagiśvara muḥ," though it possibly could be "oṃ vākyaeda namaḥ," as taught in the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpaṃ.

^{xxxv} Mañjughosha is the epithet and form of Manjusri associated with his mastery of speech, which may well be why, in this context, Vima references the six-syllable mantra of Vāgiśvara, the Master of Speech.

^{xxxvi} This could refer to the groupings of Bodhisattvas found in the maṇḍala of Vairocana in the Mahā-Vairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra.

^{xxxvii} The root verse in Tibetan contains what appears to be a phoneticized Sanskrit term, jina jig. Its etymology, however, is opaque. Jina could well be Victor (Tib: *rgyal ba*). Although available Sanskrit sources likewise employ this term, 'jig' is obscure.

Wayman quotes a variety of Indian commentators on the possible meaning of this term, and Vima's interpretation agrees with one of them, though the term 'jikra' is likewise obscure. Possibly it is a distortion of cakra, as in cakravartin, a universal emperor. No extant and published English translation of the root verses of which I am aware either translates this term or convincingly explains it.

^{xxxviii} Vima may be referring to the 100 seed syllables of the maṇḍalas of peaceful and wrathful deities, all contained within the comprehensive maṇḍala of Vajrasattva.

^{xxxix} These are earlier Buddhas among the one thousand and two Buddhas who appear in the current age, according to the general vehicle. ^{xl} See the earlier note on the meaning of the Tibetan term *sems dpa'* (Skt: sattva).

^{xli} Here I will quote Professor Wayman:

A prose set of praises for the Chanting the Names (of Manjusri) is found in some editions.... This insertion is doubtless a later composition than the Manjusrinamasamgī itself. It is lacking in the [Beijing] text ... as well as in the Dharamsala edition... [h]owever it is found in Sanskrit as edited by Minaeff and was translated [into Tibetan] in the Derge Kangyur edition.

Alex Wayman, *Chanting The Names of Manjusri*, Buddhist Tradition Series Vol. 38, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers (India) 1985, at p. 42.

Indeed, the Derge edition of the Kangyur includes 185 cycles of praise to five maṇḍalas of Mañjuśrī, plus "immeasurable" cycles of praise to the sixth maṇḍala. While styled 'praises,' they follow the classical form of statements of the benefits of reciting the text (Tib: *phan yon* or *yon tan*).

Interestingly, this section is not even found, at least in complete form, in most extant Sanskrit sources, *e.g.*, the editions by Pandey and Raghu Vira contain, at most, only the first cycle of eleven praises, which likely corresponds only to the survey of the six maṇḍalas chanted in Sanskrit toward the beginning of the root text.

Vima himself spends almost no time on these verses, which in fulllength virtually exceed in words and scope the entire *Profession of Qualities* itself. In the scant two pages of his commentary covering this section, he mainly says that the meaning is obvious. Indeed, the prose is very literal and clear.

Also worth noting is that none of the dozen (or twenty) recent editions of this text I have reviewed in Tibetan recitation manuals published in Tibet or outside Tibet includes these cycles of praise. It is clear that the Tibetan practice tradition is not to recite these praises when professing the qualities of Mañjuśrī.

In light of the above, and in consideration of the main purpose of this present work, a translation of the entire set of praises, as well as Vima's sparse notes on them, has been omitted. Indeed, Garab Dorje does not even mention this section in his word by word commentary.

^{xlii} Guhyapati means Lord of Secrets or Secrecy, or Secret Lord, as explained elsewhere.