

༄༅། །འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱིས་བསྟན་པ།

Mañjuśrī's Teaching

Mañjuśrīnirdeśa

འཕགས་པ་འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱིས་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa 'jam dpal gyis bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “Mañjuśrī’s Teaching”

Āryamañjuśrīnirdeśanāmamahāyānasūtra



Toh 177
Degé Kangyur, vol. 60 (mdo sde, ma), folios 240.a–240.b.

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s.

SUMMARY

- s.1 The bodhisattva Mañjuśrī approaches the Buddha, who is teaching the Dharma in Śrāvastī, and offers him the shade of a jeweled parasol. The god Susīma, who is in the audience, asks Mañjuśrī whether he is satisfied with his offering, to which Mañjuśrī replies that those who seek enlightenment should never be content with making offerings to the Buddha. Susīma then asks what purpose one should keep in mind when making offerings to the Buddha. In response, Mañjuśrī lists a set of four purposes.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 This sūtra was translated by the Kīrtimukha Translation Group. Celso Wilkinson, Laura Goetz, and L.S. Summer translated the text from the Tibetan and Sanskrit. William Giddings provided comparisons to the Chinese versions of the text.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

Mañjuśrī's Teaching takes place in the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī, where the Buddha is giving a teaching to congregations of monks and bodhisattvas. Mañjuśrī emerges from the audience with a parasol and holds it over the Buddha's head as an offering. The god Susīma, who is in the audience, asks Mañjuśrī whether he is satisfied with his offering. Mañjuśrī replies that those who seek enlightenment should never be content with making offerings to the Buddha. Susīma then asks which purpose one should keep in mind when making offerings to the Buddha. In response, Mañjuśrī lists a set of four purposes: (1) the mind of awakening, (2) liberating all sentient beings, (3) preserving unbroken the lineage of the Three Jewels, and (4) purifying the buddha realms.

i.2

This list of the four purposes seems to be uncommon in the Buddhist tradition. Although there are a few other sets of fourfold purposes found in the Kangyur and Tengyur in various contexts, there is only one other occurrence of this list, which is found in the *Catuṣkanirhārasūtra*.¹ This sūtra is interesting as it begins with a passage closely resembling *Mañjuśrī's Teaching*; its setting and opening are the same and are followed by the same dialogue between Mañjuśrī and the god, although here the god's name is Śrībhadrā (*dpal bzang*) rather than Susīma. In the *Catuṣkanirhārasūtra* the four purposes are phrased in somewhat different terms but have essentially the same meaning.² The sūtra is considerably longer, too, since after receiving Mañjuśrī's reply regarding the four purposes Śrībhadrā proceeds to ask a series of questions, all regarding things that are taught in sets of four.

i.3

There was no known Sanskrit witness of *Mañjuśrī's Teaching* until recently, when a manuscript containing twenty texts, all of them sūtras, was found in the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Bhikṣuṇī Vinītā published a critical edition and English translation of this collection in the series Sanskrit Texts from the Autonomous Region (2010). Unfortunately, due to the inaccessibility of the manuscript collection and because it is missing a final colophon, its origin

and date are currently unknown.³ Citations of the Sanskrit are given using Vinītā's emendations of the handwritten manuscript. There seems to be a thematic connection among the twenty sūtras. Vinītā gives the example of moral discipline (*śīla*) as a recurrent theme in the manuscript,⁴ and we also can note the prevalence of themes of karmic cause and effect and the hierarchy of merit. Interestingly, this sūtra is quoted among others, including several sūtras from the Potala manuscript, by Kawa Paltsek (*ska ba dpal brtsegs*, eighth century CE) in a text contained in the Tengyur called the *gsung rab rin po che'i gtam rgyud dang shAkya'i rabs rgyud*.⁵ Here we can identify the same recurrent themes among the quotations.

i.4 There is no Chinese translation of this sūtra,⁶ but there is a Chinese translation of the *Catuṣkanirhārasūtra*, which, as mentioned above, has an opening passage that closely parallels that of *Mañjuśrī's Teaching*. This Chinese version of the *Catuṣkanirhāra* was translated by Śikṣānanda between 695–700 CE.⁷

i.5 According to the Tibetan translators' colophon, *Mañjuśrī's Teaching* was translated into Tibetan by the Indian preceptor Surendrabodhi and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé, who were active during the late eighth–early ninth centuries CE. The Denkarma and Phangthangma imperial catalogs, which are dated to the early ninth century, both list *Mañjuśrī's Teaching* among their inventories of sūtras.⁸

i.6 We have based our translation on the Degé edition of the Tibetan Kangyur in consultation with the Sanskrit and other Kangyur editions, and compared this scripture to the parallel section found in both the Tibetan and Chinese versions of the *Catuṣkanirhārasūtra*. These various Tibetan witnesses, along with the Sanskrit, are generally consistent. Any instance in which we have diverged from the Degé has been noted, and significant differences found in the various versions of the sūtra are recorded in the notes.

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

Mañjuśrī's Teaching

1.

The Translation

[F.240.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!⁹

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in Anāthapiṇḍada's Park, the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī, together with a great congregation of 1,250 monks and five thousand bodhisattvas.

1.2 At that time, the Blessed One was teaching the Dharma surrounded and venerated by an audience of many hundreds of thousands. Youthful Mañjuśrī then hoisted a jeweled parasol measuring ten yojanas in circumference and held it directly over the Blessed One's head.

1.3 Present in the retinue, along with his entourage, was a god from the house of Santuṣita called Susīma,¹⁰ whose progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening had become irreversible. He now rose from his seat, approached the place where Youthful Mañjuśrī was, and addressed him: "Mañjuśrī, aren't you satisfied with your offering to the Blessed One?"

1.4 Mañjuśrī asked in return, "Divine being, tell me, is the great ocean ever satisfied by having water poured into it?"

"Mañjuśrī, no, it is not," replied the god.

1.5 Mañjuśrī said, "Divine being, likewise, the wisdom of omniscience is as profound, immeasurable, and boundless¹¹ as the great ocean. Those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to search for that wisdom should never¹² be content in their desire to make offerings to the Tathāgata."

1.6 The god then asked, "Mañjuśrī, with what purpose in mind should offerings be made to the Tathāgata?" [F.240.b]

Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine being, offerings should be made to the Tathāgata with four purposes in mind. What are those four? They are (1) the purpose of the mind of awakening,¹³ (2) the purpose of liberating all sentient beings, (3) the purpose that the lineage of the Three Jewels will continue

uninterrupted, and (4) the purpose of purifying all buddha realms.¹⁴ Divine being, it is with these four purposes in mind that offerings should be made to the Tathāgata.”

1.7 When Mañjuśrī had spoken, the god Susīma, the monks, nuns,¹⁵ bodhisattvas, and the entire retinue, along with the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised the words of Youthful Mañjuśrī.¹⁶

1.8 *This concludes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra, “Mañjuśrī’s Teaching.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Surendrabodhi and the chief editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- C* Choné (*co ne*) Kangyur
- D* Degé (*sde dge*) Kangyur
- Go.* Gondhla Collection
- H* Lhasa (*zhol*) Kangyur
- K* Peking (*pe cin*) or “Kangxi” Kangyur
- K_Y* Yongle (*g.yung lo*) Kangyur
- N* Narthang (*snar thang*) Kangyur
- S* Stok Palace (*stog pho brang bris ma*) Kangyur
- Sanskrit* Sanskrit manuscript found in the Potala Palace (see introduction and bibliography)
- Toh 252* *Catuṣkanirhārasūtra*, which contains a parallel list of the four purposes addressed in *Mañjuśrī’s Teaching* (see introduction and bibliography)
- U* Urga (*ku re*) Kangyur

NOTES

n.

n.1 See Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans., *The Fourfold Accomplishment* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh252.html>), Toh 252, 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2021.

n.2 See n.13 and n.14. The parallel passages are found in *The Fourfold Accomplishment*, 1.1 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh252.html#UT22084-066-010-15>)–1.7 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh252.html#UT22084-066-010-24>). In the latter “four purposes” is translated as “four things that bodhisattvas should focus on.”

n.3 Currently the manuscript is kept in the Potala. Vinītā’s critical edition is based on a copy of the manuscript that is kept in the China Tibetology Research Center. For further details on the state of this manuscript see Vinītā (2010), pp. xv–xvii.

n.4 Vinītā (2010), pp. xxvii–xxix.

n.5 *Mañjuśrī’s Teaching* is quoted on page 812 in the comparative edition.

n.6 Due to the parallel opening, there are a few sources that have mistakenly identified Taishō 774, the Chinese translation of the *Catuṣkanirhāra*, as a translation of the *Mañjuśrīnirdeśa*.

n.7 Lewis R. Lancaster, “K 485,” *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0485.html#note-ko485-1), accessed October 18, 2018.

n.8 Denkarma, folio 300.a; Phangthangma (2003), p. 18. The Denkarma describes its length as fourteen and a half *ślokas*, while the Phangthangma describes it as seventeen and a half.

- n.9 Homage absent in Sanskrit.
- n.10 The Sanskrit gives his name as Sukhīna, which is not a recognizable name; however, the Tibetan *mtshams bzangs* (“Susīma”) appears in other sūtras as a god and disciple of the Buddha.
- n.11 Sanskrit adds “extraordinary” (*asādhāraṇa*).
- n.12 D, H, and K: *gzhar yang* (“never”); C, K, N, and U: *gzhan yang* (“furthermore they should not be content in their desire to make offerings to the Tathāgata”).
- n.13 Toh 252: “the purpose of omniscience” (*thams cad mkhyen pa nyid la dmigs pa*).
- n.14 Toh 252: “the purpose of attaining the array of qualities of the buddhafiield” (*sangs rgyas kyi zhing gi yon tan bkod pa yongs su gzung ba la dmigs pa*).
- n.15 The nuns (*bhikṣuṇī*) are absent in S, Go., and Sanskrit.
- n.16 Sanskrit adds *bhagavato*, “the Blessed One,” together with Mañjuśrī.

b.

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g.

GLOSSARY

g.1

Anāthapiṇḍada's Park

mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

Anāthapiṇḍadārāma

A name of one of the first Buddhist monasteries, which is located outside of Śrāvastī. The monastery is also known as Jeta Grove. Anāthapiṇḍada, a merchant and benefactor of the Buddha, bought the land from Prince Jeta and donated it to the saṅgha. It is said that both names are used to acknowledge their mutual efforts in building the monastery. It was there that the Buddha spent several rainy seasons and gave discourses there that were later recorded as sūtras.

g.2

Jeta Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

Jetavana

A name of one of the first Buddhist monasteries, which is located outside of Śrāvastī. The monastery is also known as Anāthapiṇḍada's Park.

Anāthapiṇḍada, a merchant and benefactor of the Buddha, bought the land from Prince Jeta and donated it to the saṅgha. It is said that both names are mentioned to acknowledge their mutual efforts in building the monastery. It was there that the Buddha spent several rainy seasons and gave discourses there that were later recorded as sūtras.

g.3

Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

Mañjuśrī

One of the eight “close sons” of the Buddha, the embodiment of wisdom.

g.4 Mind of awakening

byang chub kyi sems

བྱང་ལྷན་གྱི་སེམས།

bodhicitta

The intent at the heart of the Great Vehicle, namely to obtain buddhahood in order to liberate all sentient beings from suffering. In its relative aspect, it is both this aspiration and the practices toward buddhahood. In its absolute aspect, it is the realization of emptiness or the awakened mind itself.

g.5 Purpose

dmigs pa

དམིགས་པ།

ālambana

In the Potala manuscript, the term is rendered as *ārambaṇa*, which is an equivalent term in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

g.6 Santuṣita

yongs su dga' ldan

ཡོངས་སུ་དགའ་ལྡན།

Santuṣita

King of the god realm of Tuṣita (“Joyful”).

g.7 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

མཉམ་ཡོད།

Śrāvastī

The capital of the ancient Indian kingdom of Kośala, where the Buddha spent many summers and gave numerous teachings. The city was ruled by King Prasenajit, who makes frequent appearances in the sūtras. It is also the site of the Jeta Grove, which was gifted to the Buddha by his patron Anāthapiṇḍada.

g.8 Susīma

mtshams bzangs

མཚོམས་བཟངས།

Susīma

The name of a god from the realm of Tuṣita and the main interlocutor of *Mañjuśrī's Teaching*. In the Kangyur, Susīma appears as a minor interlocutor in several other sūtras; his other most notable appearance is as an interlocutor in conversation with Māra in *The Chapter on Mañjuśrī's Magical Display*, Toh 97, [1.68](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh97.html#UT22084-046-003-148) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh97.html#UT22084-046-003-148>)-[1.78](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh97.html#UT22084-046-003-169) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh97.html#UT22084-046-003-169>). He also appears in some Pali sources; see *Buddhist Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, Susīma (4–5).

g.9 Tathāgata

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

A frequently used synonym for a buddha, literally meaning “one who has thus gone.”

g.10 Yojana

dpag tshad

དཔག་ཚད།

yojana

A standard measure of distance used in ancient India. The Sanskrit literally means “yoking” or “joining.” It is the distance a yoked ox can travel in a day or before needing to be unyoked. Sources calculate the exact distance in variably somewhere between four and ten miles.

g.11 Youthful Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa

འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ།

Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta

An epithet for the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, as he appears always youthful, like a prince of sixteen.

