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## The Chapter on Mañjuśrī's Magical Display

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*Mañjuśrīvikurvāṇaparivarta*

འཕགས་པ་འཇམ་དཔལ་རྣམ་པར་འཕྲུལ་པའི་ལཱུ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

*'phags pa 'jam dpal rnam par 'phrul pa'i le'u zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Chapter on Mañjuśrī’s Magical Display”

*Āryamañjuśrīvikurvāṇaparivartanāmamahāyānasūtra*



Toh 97

Degé Kangyur, vol. 46 (mdo sde, kha), folios 242.a–257.b.

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## SUMMARY

- s.1 In *The Chapter on Mañjuśrī's Magical Display*, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī answers a series of questions posed by the god Great Light concerning the appropriate conduct for bodhisattvas and the potential pitfalls and obstacles presented to bodhisattvas by Māra. Midway through the sūtra, the demon Māra himself appears and, after being captured and converted by Mañjuśrī, he begins to teach the Buddha's Dharma to the audience. After revealing that Māra was never truly bound by anything other than his own perception, Mañjuśrī resumes his teaching for the remainder of the sūtra.

ac.

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ac.1 Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the supervision of Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche. The translation was produced by Benjamin Ewing, who also wrote the introduction. Andreas Doctor and James Gentry compared the translation with the original Tibetan and edited the text.

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

## INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Chapter on Mañjuśrī's Magical Display*<sup>1</sup> provides a teaching on the subject of the appropriate conduct for bodhisattvas. Set in the Jeta Grove, on the outskirts of Śrāvastī, the sūtra is framed primarily as a conversation between the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and the god Great Light, while the Buddha listens to their dialog and occasionally comments. The god Great Light poses a series of questions to Mañjuśrī as to how bodhisattvas should conduct themselves properly and avoid the negative influence of Māra. While these questions generally deal with basic tenets of Buddhism and monastic conduct, Mañjuśrī's answers prioritize intention and proper view over actions themselves.

i.2 Midway through the text, the evil demon Māra makes an appearance in the form of a dark cloud (1.51). He is caught and bound by Mañjuśrī, who transforms him into a propagator of the Buddha's teaching. In the section that follows, Māra unwillingly responds to questions from elder members of the sangha concerning proper conduct as well as the bodhisattva path. At the end of this section, the god Susīma requests Mañjuśrī to free Māra (1.75). Mañjuśrī responds by saying that Māra was never physically bound, just as beings are not truly bound by suffering either. In fact, both can be liberated by understanding the empty nature of their perceived bonds. Following this section, Mañjuśrī resumes his answers to questions about the bodhisattva path.

i.3 Throughout the sūtra, conventional aspects of the Buddhist path, from generosity and discipline to insight and wisdom, are framed within an understanding of the empty nature of phenomena. In response to questions about the most appropriate conduct, Mañjuśrī teaches that the primary concern must be the proper view, rather than physical actions. Likewise, while Māra is bound by Mañjuśrī's power, he explains to the elder Upāli that upholding monastic discipline, too, is dependent upon understanding the empty nature of phenomena. Although the sūtra teaches that the view of



ultimate truth is paramount, it also makes clear that bodhisattvas must engage with beings on the conventional level for the sake of helping others. In this way, skillful means and insight, which are so central to the path of the Mahāyāna, are united.

i.4 *The Chapter on Mañjuśrī's Magical Display* is prominently placed in the Degé Kangyur as the fourth scripture in the General Sūtra section.<sup>2</sup> It appears to have been an influential scripture in both India and Tibet, as it is quoted by scholars as prominent as Vasubandhu (fourth–fifth century CE),<sup>3</sup> Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (*sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen*, 1079–1153),<sup>4</sup> and Longchen Rabjam (*klong chen rab 'byams*, 1308–1364).<sup>5</sup> It also appears that this sūtra was at times confused with a similarly named sūtra, *The Play of Mañjuśrī* (*Mañjuśrī vikrīḍitasūtra*, Toh 96).<sup>6</sup>

i.5 While there is no extant Sanskrit or other Indic version of this text, we can trace its textual history back to at least 289 CE, when it was first translated into Chinese (Taishō 589).<sup>7</sup> The translator was the monk Dharmarakṣa, who was one of the most important translators of Mahāyāna Buddhist texts in China; he was responsible for the translation of around 150 texts, including the first Chinese version of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>8</sup> Another text identified with this title was translated into Chinese in 427 CE by Zhi Yan and Bao Yun (Taishō 590),<sup>9</sup> although it is much shorter and contains other differences in content that make its precise identity difficult to determine without further research. We can reliably date the Tibetan translation to the early ninth century at the latest, as it appears in the imperial Denkarma (*ldan kar ma*) catalog.<sup>10</sup> The translators for the Tibetan version were the translator-editor Yeshé Dé and the Indian preceptors Śīlendrabodhi and Jinamitra. This sūtra was also translated into Mongolian and Korean and included in their respective canons.

i.6 This translation was prepared primarily based on the Degé Kangyur version of *The Magical Display of Mañjuśrī*. The Stok Palace manuscript and the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*) were also consulted for variant readings.

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

**The Chapter on Mañjuśrī's Magical Display**

1.

## The Translation

[F.242.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in Śrāvastī, in the Jeta Grove, the park of Anāthapiṇḍada, together with a great monastic assembly of 1,250 monks. Also in attendance was a great assembly of bodhisattvas, as well as gods of the desire realm, gods of the form realm, and various gods of the pure abodes. There, surrounded and revered by his retinue of many hundreds of thousands, the Blessed One was teaching the Dharma.

1.2 Present in the assembly at that time was a divine being known as Great Light. Also present in the assembly was youthful Mañjuśrī. The god Great Light asked youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, when Māra creates obstacles to the bodhisattvas’ unexcelled and perfect awakening, then, Mañjuśrī, what are the workings of Māra with respect to bodhisattvas?”

1.3

Youthful Mañjuśrī replied to the god Great Light, “Divine being, as long as there are actions, there are the workings of Māra. As long as there are aspirations, misapprehensions, or valuations, there are the workings of Māra. As long as there are desires, conceptions, assumptions, or superimpositions, there are the workings of Māra. Also, divine being, clinging to the mind of awakening is the working of Māra. Clinging to an attitude of generosity is the working of Māra. Clinging to thoughts of discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight is also the working of Māra. [F.242.b] Being arrogant about generosity, esteeming discipline, grasping at patience, adopting diligence, practicing concentration with marks, and having discursive insight are also the workings of Māra. Liking and wishing for the wilderness and falling into indifference are also the workings of Māra. Entertaining assumptions about having few desires, being content, engaging in ascetic practices, and reducing one’s possessions is also the working of Māra. To have assumptions and presumptions, such as ‘I abide in emptiness,’ ‘I rest free from marks,’ ‘I rest without wishes,’ ‘I rest without conceptual elaborations,’ and ‘I have obtained and adhere to the instructions of the Thus-Gone One,’ is also the working of Māra. Divine being, as long as there are objects of thought, imagination, superimposition, sight, hearing, discrimination, or cognition, there are the workings of Māra.”

1.4 The god asked, “Mañjuśrī, from where do the workings of Māra arise?”

Mañjuśrī responded, “Divine being, the workings of Māra arise from exertion. Why is that? Divine being, in exertion, there is an opportunity for Māra. On the other hand, what could Māra accomplish with nonexertion? So exertion itself is the working of Māra.”

1.5 The god asked, “Mañjuśrī, how do bodhisattvas exert themselves, and how do they not exert themselves?”

Mañjuśrī responded, “Divine being, even while they are engaged with duality, they are not exerting themselves. Why is that? To abide in the world is to have engagement with duality. Divine being, *exertion* is a synonym for proper engagement. *Proper engagement* is a synonym for nonengagement. *Nonengagement* is a synonym for the absence of conceptual elaboration. *Absence of conceptual elaboration* is a synonym for proper engagement.

1.6 “Divine being, not engaging with the eyes or form is known as the proper engagement of bodhisattvas. Not engaging with the ear or sound, [F.243.a] the nose or smell, the tongue or taste, the body or texture, or the mind or mental phenomena is known as the proper engagement of bodhisattvas. Divine being, moreover, bodhisattvas do not engage with any affliction, yet they exert themselves for the sake of eliminating the afflictions of beings. This is known as the proper engagement of bodhisattvas. Divine being,

moreover, bodhisattvas do not engage with the three realms, yet they engage with the beings who appear within the three realms. This is known as the proper engagement of bodhisattvas.

1.7 “Moreover, bodhisattvas engage in generosity free from arrogance, yet they also engage in attracting miserly beings. They engage in discipline without arrogance, yet they also engage in attracting immoral beings. They engage in patience without arrogance, yet they also engage in attracting vindictive beings. They engage in diligence without arrogance, yet they also engage in attracting lazy beings. They engage in concentration without arrogance, yet they also engage in attracting distracted beings. They engage in insight without arrogance, yet they also engage in attracting ignorant beings. These, too, are known as the proper engagement of bodhisattvas.

1.8 “Moreover, bodhisattvas engage in emptiness without arrogance. The absence of any view, while also not being free from views, is to engage in emptiness. Emptiness is empty of emptiness. Due to that emptiness, views are empty. Likewise, due to the emptiness by which views are empty, all phenomena are empty. To understand this—without having special pride in that understanding—is the proper engagement of bodhisattvas.

1.9 “Moreover, divine being, bodhisattvas engage in the absence of marks without arrogance. The absence of any thought, [F.243.b] while also not being free from thoughts, is engagement in the absence of marks. The thought through which the absence of marks is conceived is the same as the absence of marks. Bodhisattvas understand the sameness of conceptual thinking and the absence of marks by means of conceptual thinking that is devoid of marks. To understand this—without having special pride in that understanding—is the proper engagement of bodhisattvas.

1.10 “Moreover, bodhisattvas engage in the absence of wishes without arrogance, yet they also engage in willfully taking birth. Although they make aspirations, they do not form habitual thought patterns. Although they make aspirations, they are not involved in discursive thoughts due to those aspirations. Birth after birth, they are free of the views of the two extremes. They are free of the views of clinging to *me* and *mine*. Birth after birth, they are free of tumbling from death to rebirth. To understand this—without having special pride in that understanding—is the proper engagement of bodhisattvas.

1.11 “Moreover, divine being, the most excellent proper engagement of bodhisattvas is as follows:

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas do not exert themselves; yet they engage in gathering all virtuous qualities, through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.12

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage in the lack of a self, the lack of a being, the lack of a life principle, the lack of a soul, and the lack of a person; yet they also engage in the ripening of all beings, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage in neither accepting nor rejecting anything; yet they also engage in embracing all phenomena, through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.13 “With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage in the indivisibility of all buddhas and the realm of phenomena; yet they also engage in venerating, honoring, worshiping, and serving all buddhas, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with all buddhafiels as being the field of space; yet they also fully engage with the ornamental array of qualities in the buddhafiels, [F.244.a] through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.14 “With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with all noble ones as being manifestations of the unconditioned nature; yet they also engage with all the noble ones by venerating, respecting, and serving them, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with the buddha’s body by considering it to be undefiled; yet they also engage with its major marks, minor marks, and adornments, through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.15 “With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with all conditioned things by considering them to be unborn and unarisen; yet they also engage with them by intentionally taking rebirth in existence, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with emptiness, the absence of marks, and the absence of wishes; yet they also engage in teaching the abandonment of views, thoughts, and aspirations, through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.16 “With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with the superknowledges by considering them to be unborn; yet they also engage with miraculous displays by means of all the superknowledges, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with the aggregates, elements, and sense sources as being unborn and un compounded; yet they also engage in rejecting the aggregates, elements, and sense sources, through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.17

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with the understanding that existence has the nature of nirvāṇa; yet they also engage in ripening beings in saṃsāra, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage with the eye of insight; yet they also engage in accomplishing the divine eye, through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.18 “With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage in the understanding that the Dharma is inexpressible; yet they also engage in teaching the Dharma by means of words and expressions, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage in the discernment of meaning and doctrine; yet they also engage in the discernment of expression and eloquence, through their knowledge of skillful means.

1.19 “With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage in knowing the capacities—both high and low—of all beings; [F.244.b] yet they also engage in teaching the Dharma appropriate to each being, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“With their knowledge of insight, bodhisattvas engage in comprehending the 84,000 activities of beings; yet they also teach the 84,000 collections of the Dharma, through their knowledge of skillful means.

“This, divine being, is the most excellent proper engagement of bodhisattvas.”

1.20 As youthful Mañjuśrī gave this teaching on proper engagement, the intention to reach unexcelled and perfect awakening arose within eight thousand gods from that assembly, and five thousand bodhisattvas developed acceptance that phenomena are unborn.

The Blessed One gave his approval to youthful Mañjuśrī saying, “Excellent, Mañjuśrī! You have explained the proper engagement of bodhisattvas well.”

1.21 The god Great Light then asked youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, were you pleased when the Thus-Gone One gave you his approval?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, tell me, when one emanation gives approval to another emanation, does that emanation become pleased?”

1.22 The god replied, “Mañjuśrī, if the emanation has no attachment or aversion, how could it become pleased?”

Mañjuśrī responded, “Divine being, all phenomena have the inherent characteristic of being emanations, and so the Thus-Gone One and Mañjuśrī also have that characteristic. Therefore, why would I become pleased by being praised? By way of analogy, divine being, an echo does not become attached to pleasant or unpleasant sounds. Nor does it become averse to

them. Divine being, in that way all phenomena have the inherent nature of an echo. The Thus-Gone One and Mañjuśrī both have that nature. [F.245.a] So how could I become pleased by being praised?”

1.23 The god asked, “Mañjuśrī, to whom did the Thus-Gone One give his approval?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, to one who teaches that consciousness is nonabiding; to one whose mind is unobstructed concerning all the teachings; to one who does not perceive any being as a being; to one who does not perceive any phenomenon as a phenomenon; to one whose intention is set on nirvāṇa, while their activity is rooted in saṃsāra; to one who has understood the actions of Māra and knows the actions of Māra to be buddha activity; and, moreover, to one who understands that if one becomes attached to buddha activity, it too becomes the activity of Māra. It is to a bodhisattva who is righteous in that way, divine being, that the Thus-Gone One gives his approval.”

1.24 The god replied, “Mañjuśrī, why is it that because you are righteous in that way, the Thus-Gone One gives you his approval?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, tell me, is there any difference within sameness?”

The god responded, “No, Mañjuśrī, there is no difference whatsoever within sameness.”

1.25 Mañjuśrī said, “Divine being, whatever is the same as sameness is the same as the acts with immediate retribution. Whatever is the same as the acts with immediate retribution is the same as me. Whatever is the same as sameness is the same as views. Whatever is the same as views is the same as me. Whatever is the same as sameness is the same as the misunderstandings. Whatever is the same as the misunderstandings is the same as me. Whatever is the same as sameness is the same as keeping reference points. Whatever is the same as keeping reference points is the same as me. Whatever is the same as sameness is the same as the limit of saṃsāra. Whatever is the same as the limit of saṃsāra is the same as the limit of nirvāṇa. Whatever is the same as the limit of nirvāṇa is the same as the limit of the self. [F.245.b] Whatever is the same as the limit of the self is the same as the limit of reality. Whatever is the same as the limit of reality is the same as the limit of ignorance, existence, and craving. Whatever is the same as the limit of ignorance, existence, and craving is the same as the limit of knowledge and liberation. Whatever is the same as the limit of knowledge and liberation is the same as the limit of desire, aggression, and delusion. Whatever is the same as the limit of desire, aggression, and delusion is the same as the limit of emptiness, the absence of marks, and the absence of wishes. Whatever is the same as the limit of emptiness, the absence of marks, and the absence of



wishes is the same as the limit of conditioned phenomena. Whatever is the same as the limit of conditioned phenomena is the same as the limit of unconditioned phenomena. Whatever is the same as the limit of unconditioned phenomena is the same as youthful Mañjuśrī.

1.26 “Divine being, this sameness means that all phenomena are the same. Therefore, all aspects of giving approval—such as who speaks, what they say, where they say it, and to whom they say it—are all the same, just like the sameness of the sky. Since the sky is unconditioned, it is beyond any sameness or difference. Whoever conforms, without conforming, to these types of sameness is the one who receives the Thus-Gone One’s approval.”

1.27 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, please clarify this with a Dharma teaching on the topic of what is commendable and not commendable.”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, setting out for awakening with altruistic intent is commendable, while practicing trickery and deceit is not commendable. Not abandoning any being because of great compassion is commendable, while harming beings is not commendable. Not having any aggression toward beings is commendable, while a malicious attitude is not commendable. Confessing one’s transgressions openly [F.246.a] and declaring them without any lapse of time is commendable, while concealing one’s transgressions is not commendable. Acknowledging one’s own mistakes is commendable, while seeking out the faults of others is not commendable. Being grateful, being appreciative, being thankful, and repaying others’ kindness is commendable, while not being grateful, not being appreciative, not being thankful, and not repaying others’ kindness is not commendable.

1.28 “Becoming erudite is commendable, while mistaken learning is not commendable. Receiving the precepts without transgressing them is commendable, while receiving the precepts and then forsaking them is not commendable. Seeking out solitude and enjoying it is commendable, while enjoying socializing is not commendable. Sacrificing life and limb to stay in the wilderness is commendable, while being concerned for one’s life and limb is not commendable. Delighting in the noble tradition and knowing moderation are commendable, while being insatiable and greedy and yearning for what is unwholesome are not commendable. Being patient and caring toward the weak is commendable, while denigrating others is not commendable. A pure livelihood is commendable, while being lazy is not commendable. Not forsaking those who have gone for refuge is commendable, while being hostile to those who have gone for refuge is not commendable. Not breaking one’s promises and being true to one’s word is commendable, while deceiving anyone is not commendable.

1.29

“Upholding the holy Dharma is commendable, while abandoning the holy Dharma is not commendable. The teacher who is not stingy with his learning, who does not withhold the Dharma, and who teaches the Dharma without concern for material possessions is commendable. The teacher who is stingy with the Dharma, who withholds the Dharma, and who teaches the Dharma with concern for worldly things is not commendable. [F.246.b] Attracting beings with the goal of fully ripening them is commendable, while the teacher who attracts beings without concern for them and without the goal of ripening them is not commendable. Pursuing the six perfections is commendable, while discordance with the six perfections is not commendable. Actions undertaken with knowledge are commendable, while actions undertaken with pride are not commendable. Associating<sup>11</sup> with close friends is commendable, while befriending evil people is not commendable. Following the path of the ten virtuous actions is commendable, while embarking on the path of the ten nonvirtuous actions is not commendable. Avoiding all unwholesome deeds is commendable, while engaging in any unwholesome deed is not commendable.

1.30 “Divine being, the going forth of those who hold reference points is not commendable, while the renunciation of those who espouse emptiness is commendable. Teaching the views of the lokāyatas from a lion throne is not commendable, while teaching the true Dharma of the Bodhisattva Collection from a lion throne is commendable. Partaking of gifts given out of faith while having flawed ethical discipline is not commendable, while any gain, praise, or laud for someone who observes ethical discipline is commendable. Knowledge endowed with special pride is not commendable, while communicating knowledge without special pride is commendable. Having malice toward bodhisattvas is not commendable, while having fondness for bodhisattvas as the only teachers is commendable. Pretending to be a bodhisattva in order to make a living is not commendable, while the profit of a bodhisattva committed to the authentic preaching of the Dharma is commendable. Divine being, in those ways, anything that contradicts the words of the Thus-Gone One is not commendable. Likewise, anything that accords with the words of the Thus-Gone One is commendable.” [F.247.a]

1.31 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, do you exert yourself in what is commendable, or in what is not commendable?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, I do not exert myself in what is commendable, nor do I exert myself in what is not commendable. Why is that? Divine being, I do not exert myself in any phenomenon.”

1.32 The god responded, “Mañjuśrī, do you not strive for commendable qualities?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, I do not exert myself in virtuous phenomena, nor do I exert myself in nonvirtuous phenomena. Why is that? Divine being, *virtue* is conditioned. *Nonvirtue* is conditioned. *Immovability*<sup>12</sup> is conditioned as well.”

1.33 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, are you unconditioned?”

Mañjuśrī responded, “Divine being, if seen from the perspective of being afraid of the conditioned, I am unconditioned.”

1.34 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, are you not afraid of the conditioned?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, if I saw a conditioned thing that truly existed, then I would be afraid of the conditioned.”

1.35 The god replied, “Mañjuśrī, have you not seen a conditioned thing that truly existed?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine being, I have not seen a conditioned thing that truly existed, nor have I seen such an unconditioned thing that truly existed.”

1.36 The god replied, “Mañjuśrī, are you conditioned or unconditioned?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine being, I am neither conditioned nor unconditioned. Why is that? If I were conditioned, I would be like all the childish, ordinary beings. If I were unconditioned, I would be like all the hearers and solitary buddhas.”

1.37 The god replied, “Mañjuśrī, if you cannot be classified as either conditioned [F.247.b] or unconditioned, how should you be understood?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine being, what do you think? Is an emanation of the Thus-Gone One to be considered as conditioned or unconditioned?”

The god replied, “Mañjuśrī, an emanation of the Thus-Gone One is not considered as conditioned, nor is it considered as unconditioned.”

1.38 Mañjuśrī said, “Divine being, just as you understand the nature of the Thus-Gone One’s emanations, so should you understand me. Divine being, tell me, where does the consciousness of the Thus-Gone One abide? Is it in form?”

“No.”

“Does it abide in feeling, perception, or formations?”

“No.”

1.39 “Does it abide in the conditioned?”

“No.”

“Does it abide in the unconditioned?”

“No.”

1.40 “Where does the Thus-Gone One’s consciousness abide?”

“Mañjuśrī, the Thus-Gone One’s consciousness does not abide anywhere at all.”

- Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, you should understand that wherever the consciousness of the Thus-Gone One abides, there I abide.”
- 1.41 The god responded, “Mañjuśrī, are you a thus-gone one?”
- Mañjuśrī replied, “Suchness has neither coming nor going. That is the way I go and the way a thus-gone one goes. Therefore, I am a thus-gone one. I also come in the same way as suchness. Therefore, I am a thus-gone one. I also abide in the same way as suchness. Therefore, I am a thus-gone one. Divine being, *Mañjuśrī* is just like suchness. Therefore, I am a thus-gone one. Since suchness is beyond concepts and peaceful, Mañjuśrī is also beyond concepts and peaceful. Therefore, I am a thus-gone one.”
- 1.42 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, where should I search for suchness?” [F.248.a]
- Mañjuśrī responded, “Divine being, look for suchness in the sixty-two wrong views.”<sup>13</sup>
- 1.43 The god said, “Where should I look for the sixty-two wrong views?”
- Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, you should look for the sixty-two wrong views in the Thus-Gone One’s liberation, which has the character of imperturbability.”
- 1.44 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, where should I look for the Thus-Gone One’s liberation?”
- Mañjuśrī said, “Divine being, you should look for the Thus-Gone One’s liberation in the mental states and thoughts of all beings.”
- 1.45 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, where should I look for all beings’ mental states and thoughts?”
- Mañjuśrī responded, “Divine being, in the experience of the buddhas.”
- 1.46 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, where should I look for the experience of the buddhas?”
- Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, you must search for this within the knowledge of the greater and lesser faculties of beings.”
- 1.47 The god responded, “Mañjuśrī, how would you explain this in terms of lesser knowledge?”
- Mañjuśrī said, “Divine being, no one is able to understand or cognize the wisdom of a buddha. Why is that? Divine being, the wisdom of a buddha is unobstructed, beyond thinking, inexpressible, inexplicable, without engagement, and beyond words. It is separate from mind, mental faculty, and cognition. Therefore, no one could possibly understand or cognize it.”
- 1.48 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, if the wisdom of a buddha cannot be understood, how can hearers gain knowledge? How can bodhisattvas achieve the state of nonregression?”
- Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, the teaching of wisdom in words is the skillful means of the thus-gone ones. This wisdom is without words. [F.248.b] Divine being, fire does not arise from rubbing fire. Rather, fire arises from

- rubbing kindling sticks together. Divine being, just as in that analogy, if the thus-gone ones were to teach the vast wisdom of a buddha in full from the very beginning, then no one at all would comprehend the thus-gone ones' wisdom. Therefore, the thus-gone ones make use of verbal teachings that are like kindling sticks to teach wisdom. Yet the wisdom itself is without words."
- 1.49 The god said, "Mañjuśrī, what are these verbal teachings that are like kindling sticks like?"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine being, anything that is appropriate. They can be teachings on vows and having few belongings, teachings on practicing the perfections, or teachings pertaining to the factors of awakening. These are known as *teachings that are like kindling sticks*."
- 1.50 The god said, "Mañjuśrī, what teachings are not teachings that are like kindling sticks?"
- Mañjuśrī responded, "Divine being, teachings that are not about birth, destruction, or remaining; teachings that do not induce or exclude; teachings that do not explain affliction; teachings that do not cover the benefits of purification; teachings that do not inspire revulsion for saṃsāra; teachings that do not cause delight in nirvāṇa; teachings that are not for the sake of knowledge, abandonment, cultivation, or actualization; and teachings that are not for the sake of attainment or realization. Divine being, those are pure,<sup>14</sup> meaningful teachings.
- 1.51 The god said, "Mañjuśrī, when you give advice like this, Māra will surely not come to create confusion. How wonderful!"
- 1.52 No sooner had he spoken than the Evil One, Māra, manifested as a giant storm cloud in the sky above that thundered with a loud roar. The entire assembly became frightened and thought, "Who roared like that?"
- 1.53 Then the Blessed One said [F.249.a] to youthful Mañjuśrī, "Mañjuśrī, do you see the manifestation of the Evil One, Māra?"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "Blessed One, I see it. Well-Gone One, I see it."
- 1.54 Just then youthful Mañjuśrī ensnared the evil Māra with tight bonds. Māra, worried that he was going to fall down to earth, cried out, "I have been tied too tightly! I have been tied too tightly!"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "Evil One, there are other bonds that are far tighter than these. Although you have always been bound by them, you have not realized it. What are they? They are the bond of the prideful thought 'I am,' the bond of misconception, and the bonds of craving and views. Evil Māra, those are far tighter bonds than the ones in which I have now ensnared you. Although they have always bound you, you have not realized it."
- 1.55 Māra responded, "Mañjuśrī, let me go! I will return to my abode. I will not commit any demonic acts."

- Mañjuśrī replied, “Evil One, if you are meant to do the work of the Buddha, why would I let you go?”
- 1.56 Māra responded, “Mañjuśrī, I am here to cause obstacles to the teachings of the Buddha, so how could I do the work of the Buddha?”
- Mañjuśrī said, “Evil One, to cause a māra to engage in the work of a buddha is a manifestation of the bodhisattvas’ skills and knowledge. A buddha who performs buddha activity is not remarkable. A māra who performs buddha activity is truly amazing.” Having said this, youthful Mañjuśrī transformed the evil Māra so that he obtained the appearance of a buddha, sat on the lion throne of a buddha, and had the eloquence of a buddha.
- Then the evil Māra said, “Venerable ones, ask me anything you wish. [F.249.b] I will then answer and put your minds at ease.”
- 1.57 The elder Mahākāśyapa asked the evil Māra, “Evil One, what are the bonds of a monk practitioner?”
- Māra replied, “Venerable Mahākāśyapa, relishing the experience of concentration is a bond of a monk practitioner. Also, attachment to tranquility, practicing attainment in the sense source of neither perception nor nonperception, perceiving an essence in emptiness, perceiving wrong views as something to eradicate, perceiving an essence in the absence of marks, perceiving marks as something to eradicate, perceiving an essence in the absence of wishes, perceiving wishes as something to eradicate, perceiving an essence in nirvāṇa, and perceiving saṃsāra as something to eradicate—these are the bonds of a monk practitioner, venerable Mahākāśyapa.
- 1.58 “Why is that? Venerable Mahākāśyapa, emptiness is not something that must be cultivated once views have been eradicated—rather, wrong views are themselves emptiness. The absence of marks is not something that must be cultivated once marks have been eradicated—rather, the very essence of marks is the absence of marks. The absence of wishes is not something to be cultivated once wishes have been eradicated—rather, the very essence of wishes is the absence of wishes. Nirvāṇa is not something that must be cultivated once saṃsāra has been eradicated—rather, the very apprehension of saṃsāra is nirvāṇa. Venerable Mahākāśyapa, *nirvāṇa* does not partake of any notions, assumptions, or apprehension of marks. Nirvāṇa is nothing other than birth, destruction, and exhaustion—and yet, nonorigination is itself, by nature, nirvāṇa.”
- 1.59 When this teaching was given, five hundred monks had their minds liberated from defilements, with no further appropriation.
- 1.60

The elder Subhūti addressed those monks [F.250.a] saying, “Noble ones, who has trained you?”

The monks responded, “One who has no attainment and no complete awakening.”

1.61 Subhūti inquired, “What is that training like?”

The monks replied, “There is no guidance aimed at the abiding nature, yet there is also no absence of such guidance; it is known, just as it is. There is neither producing nor obstructing it; things are known to be sameness.”

When those monks gave that teaching, twelve hundred gods purified the Dharma eye regarding phenomena, so that it became clear and immaculate.

1.62 Elder Subhūti then inquired of evil Māra, “Evil One, what monks are worthy of generosity?”

Māra replied, “Venerable Subhūti, those monks who do not receive or accept anything, but sustain themselves exclusively on faith and devotion. Venerable Subhūti, monks are worthy of generosity when they regard themselves, the recipient monks, as illusions, and the offering as a hallucination, and they partake of it with neither grasping nor the absence of grasping.”

1.63 Śāradvatīputra inquired, “Evil One, what is the Blessed One’s teaching on the imperturbable absorption?”

Māra replied, “It is the absorption by which bodhisattvas do not bring even exhaustion to exhaustion, since it is entirely exhausted. Likewise, they do not produce even the unborn, since it is naturally unborn; nor do they invoke an experience of even the absence of experience, for they know all phenomena to be naturally attained. Knowing this, they reach the attainment in which all feelings are the attainment of cessation and are seen to be sameness. In this there is nothing whatsoever to be seen, nor is there anything that is not seen. This is the Blessed One’s teaching on the imperturbable absorption.”

1.64 Maudgalyāyana inquired, “Evil One, how do monks attain power over all mind states?”

Māra replied, “Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana, [F.250.b] this occurs when monks understand all phenomena to have the characteristics of the liberated mind, without being attached to the characteristics of liberation. It occurs when they know that the mind is primordially liberated and beyond bondage and liberation. It occurs when they know that all phenomena are without form, because the mind is without form. It occurs when they see that all phenomena do not abide, because the mind does not abide. It occurs when they know that all phenomena cannot be grasped, because the mind cannot be grasped. And yet, even as there is no knowing the mind by means of the mind, it occurs when they know the essential nature of the realm of

phenomena by means of the essential nature of the mind. It occurs when they attain the power of independence by means of the essential nature of the realm of phenomena. This is also the attainment of the miraculous powers of intention. Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, monks like this have power over all mind states.”

1.65 Pūrṇa inquired, “Evil One, how do monks teach the Dharma purely?”

Māra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, monks do so by not being attached to any notions of *other* or *not other*, even though they know all phenomena from each other. They do so by teaching that all phenomena are projections, and by understanding that all forms of syllables, speech, voices, and words are like echoes. They do so by seeing all those who listen to the Dharma as illusory beings, and by seeing the manifestations of their bodies to be like the moon reflected in water. They do so by knowing that all afflictions arise from superimpositions. They do so by not teaching the Dharma for the sake of possessing, discarding, avoiding, or obtaining anything. They do so without any hope of attaining mastery of the four types of correct understanding, and without any hope for approval. They do so by teaching the Dharma without asking for material possessions, and by knowing that, since their own minds are intrinsically pure, the minds of all beings are also intrinsically pure. Knowing that the mind is intrinsically pure, they see the māra of the aggregates as void. [F.251.a] They perceive the māra of the afflictions to be fabricated. They know that the māra of the Lord of Death is unborn and beyond birth. With regard to the māra of the gods, these monks are unshakable and free of all assumptions. Monks like this are pure teachers of the Dharma.”

1.66 Upāli inquired, “Evil One, how do monks uphold the Vinaya?”

Māra said, “Venerable Upāli, when monks know all phenomena to be fully tamed, they understand that the limit of the beginning of transgression is identical with the limit of disengagement. They clear away their remorse over the arising of faults and are no longer so strict. Since they can overcome even the acts with immediate retribution, there is no need to mention minor wrongdoing related to behavior and discipline. As such, they accomplish proper Dharma conduct. They are experts at taming the afflictions. They perceive that temporary afflictions are not defiled, and that they arise. They do not teach afflictions as being inside, outside, or neither. They know that such an understanding of the afflictions is to know their nonexistence, so they do not try to eliminate them or make them disappear. Rather, they know all afflictions to be like clouds, in that they use the wind of wisdom and special insight to scatter them in a way that they do not go anywhere or to any place, nor do they remain. They know that afflictions are like the moon in water, in that they show their faces through the reflections of



superimpositions. They know that afflictions are like a dark realm, such that they use the lantern of wisdom to illuminate the darkness. They know that afflictions are like thieves, *ḍākinīs*, *yakṣas*, and *rākṣasas*, in that if one investigates properly, they do not remain. They know that afflictions always exploit our vulnerabilities, in that they proliferate with improper mental engagement. [F.251.b] They know that, through the knowledge of emptiness, the absence of marks, and the absence of wishes, one prevents afflictions from entering the mind. Thus, whoever knows afflictions to be as such has compassion for beings tormented by afflictions, and they clearly perceive that there is no self and no being. When this has occurred, they are known as true upholders of the Vinaya.”

1.67 In this way, all the great hearers asked evil Māra the questions they wished, and evil Māra answered all of them conclusively, setting their minds at ease.

1.68 Present in the assembly at that time was the god *Susīma*, who asked the evil Māra, “Evil One, youthful *Mañjuśrī* spoke about the workings of Māra in relation to the bodhisattvas, but would you please also clarify? Evil One, what are the workings of Māra for the bodhisattvas?”

The Evil One replied to the god *Susīma*, “Divine being, there are twenty particularly severe workings of Māra for the bodhisattvas. What are those twenty? (1) Pleasing, serving, and venerating those practitioners who seek liberation and fear *saṃsāra* are the workings of Māra. (2) Contemplating emptiness, yet forsaking beings, is the working of Māra. (3) Contemplating the unconditioned, yet being weary of conditioned roots of virtue, is the working of Māra. (4) Generating concentration, yet attempting to turn away from concentration, is the working of Māra. (5) Teaching the Dharma, yet not having great compassion for the audience, is also the working of Māra. (6) Searching for those who have qualities and who are worthy of generosity, while harboring anger toward those who are immoral, is the working of Māra. (7) Teaching the discourses of the hearers and solitary buddhas, while concealing the teachings of the Great Vehicle, is the working of Māra. (8) Hiding the profound discourses, while teaching various other topics, is the working of Māra. (9) Knowing the path of the bodhisattvas, [F.252.a] yet not striving on the path of the perfections, is also the working of Māra. (10) Praising those who are particularly diligent, while not coaxing beings who are not diligent, is also the working of Māra. (11) Not actualizing the mind of awakening, despite having accumulated roots of virtue, is also the working of Māra. (12) Preventing others from grasping special insight, despite practicing special insight oneself, is also the working of Māra. (13) Seeking to terminate afflictions entirely, while aspiring for the afflictions in the continuation of *saṃsāra*, is also the working of Māra. (14) Using insight for

analysis, while not maintaining one's focus on great compassion, is also the working of Māra. (15) Any virtuous act that is performed unskillfully is also the working of Māra. (16) Not seeking the bodhisattva teachings, but rather, receiving the secret words of the lokāyatas, is also the working of Māra. (17) Being learned, yet being unwilling to share the Dharma out of anxiety that others will become learned, is also the working of Māra. (18) Working on worldly affairs without seeking erudition is also the working of Māra. (19) Failing to follow, serve, and venerate fellow bodhisattva Dharma teachers who practice the Great Vehicle, while delighting in dissimilar teachers who practice the vehicles of the hearers and solitary buddhas, is also the working of Māra. (20) When one has attained the greatness of resources, wealth, jewels, and power of Śakra, Brahmā, a world protector, a king, a merchant,<sup>15</sup> or a householder, it is also the working of Māra if one abstains from following, serving, and venerating those endowed with the greatness of the Dharma. Divine being, these are the twenty particularly severe workings of Māra for the bodhisattvas."

1.69 Then the Blessed One praised the evil Māra, "Evil One, you have explained the workings of Māra for the bodhisattvas very well—excellent! Bodhisattvas who hear about these workings of Māra and subsequently abandon them [F.252.b] will attain twenty qualities that ripen awakening. What are those twenty? They are (1) great kindness, (2) great compassion, (3) not being weary of saṃsāra, (4) being accepted by a spiritual friend, (5) encountering buddhas, (6) hearing about the perfections, (7) taking part in the assembly of bodhisattvas, (8) attaining dhāraṇī, (9) attaining perfect eloquence, (10) realizing the superknowledges, (11) receiving teachings one has not heard, (12) manifesting the mind of awakening in life after life, (13) always taking ordination without interruption, (14) having all the freedoms, (15) accomplishing teachings exactly as they were heard, (16) using the knowledge of skillful means and wisdom to attract beings and accept them, (17) upholding the true Dharma, (18) being honest and nondeceptive, (19) abandoning all beloved things, and (20) not having anger toward any being. They will attain these twenty qualities that ripen awakening."

1.70 Then the god Susīma said to the evil Māra, "Evil One, the Blessed One gave his approval to you. Evil One, you have obtained a great boon."

Māra said, "Divine being, I did not obtain any boon! Why do I say this? Divine being, by way of analogy, the display of a person possessed by a spirit is regarded as the expression of the spirit, not of the person. Divine being, in that same way, I am teaching due to the blessings of Mañjuśrī; this should not be seen as my own doing."

1.71

- The god replied, “Evil One, you have the marks of a buddha’s body, you sit on a buddha’s lion throne, and you teach the Dharma with a buddha’s eloquence. So are you not happy?”
- Māra responded, “Although you see me as being ornamented, I know that I am tied with tight bonds.”
- 1.72 The god said, “Evil One, [F.253.a] ask youthful Mañjuśrī for forgiveness, and he will release you.”
- Then, by Mañjuśrī’s blessings, Māra replied to the god Susīma, “Divine being, one does not need to ask the bodhisattva great beings who have entered the Great Vehicle for forgiveness. Why is that? Because they are undisturbed and without anger. One needs to ask for forgiveness from individuals who are disturbed and angry.”
- 1.73 The god inquired, “Evil One, what is the patience of the bodhisattvas like?”
- Māra replied, “Divine being, the patience of the bodhisattvas has twelve aspects. What are those twelve? It is intentional patience, because it is not artificial. It is altruistic patience, because it is without anger. It is honest patience, because it deceives no one. It is kind and compassionate patience, because it protects the poor and needy. It is patience in which actions are consistent with words, because it does not regress. It is a patience of emptiness, because it is free of views. It is a patience of confidence in the Dharma, because it is grounded in reality. It is profound patience, because it is selfless. It is appropriate patience, because it emulates the noble ones. It is true patience, because it is in harmony with dependent origination. It is a patience that is free from conformity and antagonism, because it safeguards all beings. It is an unborn and nonarising patience, because bodhisattvas have achieved acceptance that phenomena are unborn. Divine being, these are the twelve aspects of the bodhisattvas’ patience.”
- 1.74 The god inquired, “Evil One, if you were released, would you be happy?”
- Māra replied, “Divine being, I would be happy—exhilarated!”
- 1.75 So the god Susīma said to youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, please release the evil Māra, so that he can return to his home.”
- Youthful Mañjuśrī [F.253.b] said to the evil Māra, “Evil One, who bound you? From what will you be released?”
- Māra responded, “Mañjuśrī, I do not know who bound me.”
- 1.76 Mañjuśrī replied, “Evil One, just as you think you are bound when you are not, so all childish beings perceive the impermanent to be permanent, the painful to be pleasant, the selfless to be a self, the repulsive to be beautiful, the absence of form to be form, and the absence of feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness to be feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. Evil One, if I free you, from what would you be freed?”

- Māra replied, "I would not be freed from anything."
- 1.77 "Evil One, in the same way, aside from understanding their mistaken perception, those who are liberated are not liberated from anything whatsoever. Thus, it is said they are liberated through understanding."
- At this point, youthful Mañjuśrī withdrew his blessing, so that the Evil One reassumed his own appearance.
- 1.78 The elder Mahākāśyapa then said to the evil Māra, "Excellent, Evil One—excellent! You have performed the deeds of a buddha!"
- Māra replied, "Venerable Mahākāśyapa, this is not my doing. It is the work of youthful Mañjuśrī."
- 1.79 The god Susīma then inquired of youthful Mañjuśrī, "Mañjuśrī, where should one seek the deeds of a buddha?"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine being, one should seek the deeds of a buddha in the afflictions of all beings. Why is that? Because if beings were not stricken with afflictions, the buddhas would have nothing to do. Divine being, [F.254.a] by way of analogy, if beings did not fall sick, there would be nothing left for doctors to do. Divine being, likewise, if beings were not stricken with afflictions, there would be nothing for the buddhas to do."
- 1.80 The god asked, "Mañjuśrī, what must happen for a buddha to appear?"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine being, if there is birth, old age, sickness, and death, a buddha will appear. Why is that? Because the blessed buddhas appear for the sake of eliminating them."
- 1.81 The god asked, "Mañjuśrī, once a thus-gone one has found awakening, what does he create? What does he prevent?"
- Mañjuśrī responded, "Divine being, once a thus-gone one has found awakening, he does not create anything, nor does he prevent anything. Why is that? Because, divine being, all phenomena are unborn and unceasing. Divine being, *the appearance of a buddha* is just an epithet for the unborn inherent nature of things."
- 1.82 The god asked, "Mañjuśrī, how are bodhisattvas perfect in their intentions?"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "By not engaging with any phenomenon by means of a view of observation."
- 1.83 The god asked, "How are they perfect in their altruistic intent?"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "They are not attached to any inner or outer phenomenon whatsoever."
- 1.84 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas perfect in their generosity?"
- Mañjuśrī replied, "They have cast off all afflictions, but do not abandon any being."
- 1.85 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas perfect in their discipline?"

- Mañjuśrī replied, "They practice just as the teacher taught. They establish beings in discipline and, because of their altruistic intentions, [F.254.b] they do not abandon the mind of awakening."
- 1.86 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas perfect in their patience?"  
Mañjuśrī replied, "Understanding that all phenomena have the characteristic of destruction, they do not relinquish their omniscient dispositions in order to eliminate beings' malice, anger, and aggression."
- 1.87 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas perfect in their diligence?"  
Mañjuśrī replied, "Bodhisattvas do not give special regard only to achieving the object of their efforts, namely, unexcelled and perfect awakening, but also persist with diligence in order to rid all beings of laziness."
- 1.88 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas perfect in their concentration?"  
Mañjuśrī replied, "Despite knowing that all phenomena are intrinsically in a state of equanimity, they still practice concentration in order to tame the afflictions of all beings."
- 1.89 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas perfect in their insight?"  
Mañjuśrī replied, "When, having attained stillness, they are free of all conceptual elaboration, yet they still engage in analytical insight for the sake of ridding all beings of their views. At that time, bodhisattvas are perfect in their insight."
- 1.90 The god asked, "How do bodhisattvas abide in loving kindness?"  
Mañjuśrī said, "When they see all phenomena as being nirvāṇa by nature."
- 1.91 The god asked, "How do bodhisattvas abide in compassion?"  
Mañjuśrī replied, "When they understand that the results of actions do not exist with regard to any phenomenon."
- 1.92 The god asked, "How do bodhisattvas remain in joy?" [F.255.a]  
Mañjuśrī replied, "When they do not feel any joy or sorrow about any phenomenon."
- 1.93 The god asked, "How do bodhisattvas remain in equanimity?"  
Mañjuśrī replied, "When they have become free of duality with regard to all phenomena."
- 1.94 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas known as authentic bodhisattvas?"  
Mañjuśrī replied, "When they know that all phenomena are unarisen, like illusions."
- 1.95 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas great beings?"  
Mañjuśrī responded, "When bodhisattvas see that all phenomena are selfless."
- 1.96 The god asked, "How are bodhisattvas supreme beings?"

- Mañjuśrī replied, “When they know that all phenomena are ungraspable and groundless.”
- 1.97 The god asked, “How have bodhisattvas donned the great armor?”  
Mañjuśrī responded, “When they hear that all phenomena are as vast as the sky without trembling or being scared or terrified, and without abandoning the great armor.”
- 1.98 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas gentle?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When, out of great compassion, they do not distance themselves from beings, but are not overly close through habitual attachment.”
- 1.99 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas easy to be with?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they do no harm to others with body, speech, or mind, since they do not apprehend self or other.”
- 1.100 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas well-spoken?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they accomplish the teachings as they learned them [F.255.b] and practice what they preach.”
- 1.101 The god asked, “How do bodhisattvas act in accordance with the advice they have received?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they fully grasp their own minds, and therefore do not transgress the directive of any being and remain on good terms with all beings.”
- 1.102 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas perfect in their modesty and decorum?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When, in order to ripen all beings, they are peaceful inwardly while moving about outwardly.”
- 1.103 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas endowed with faith?”  
Mañjuśrī responded, “When they enjoy all desirable things without craving them.”
- 1.104 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas stable companions?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they do not interrupt the lineage of the buddhas.”
- 1.105 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas grateful?”  
Mañjuśrī responded, “When they do not squander the roots of virtue performed.”
- 1.106 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas appreciative?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they do not long for other vehicles.”
- 1.107 The god asked, “How do bodhisattvas have few desires?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they do not desire their own afflictions while also wishing to relinquish the afflictions of all beings.”
- 1.108 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas content<sup>16?</sup>”

- Mañjuśrī replied, “When, through knowledge of the noble ones’ insight, they do not appropriate any phenomenon.”
- 1.109 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas satisfied?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, [F.256.a] “When they abide in transcendent insight, yet wander the world in order to mature others.”
- 1.110 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas fully disengaged?”  
Mañjuśrī responded, “When they are not afflicted by any affliction, yet still appear to strive to eradicate the afflictions of all beings.”
- 1.111 The god asked, “How are bodhisattvas free and independent?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they appear in all buddha fields with an undefiled body, thus mastering wisdom without being governed by afflictions.”
- 1.112 The god asked, “How do bodhisattvas become erudite?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they listen to teachings they have not previously heard and cause others to hear new teachings.”
- 1.113 The god asked, “How do bodhisattvas properly exert themselves?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they neither conceptualize nor abstain from conceptualizing phenomena, knowing that they derive from all manner of observation.”
- 1.114 The god asked, “How do bodhisattvas bring forth accomplishment?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “When they do not give rise to ideas in relation to others, and understand the mind states of all beings to be void, while they also do not believe in their own mind states, and do not bring forth accomplishment based on notions of self and other.
- 1.115 The god asked, “Mañjuśrī, how are bodhisattvas perfect in recall and eloquence?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, when they retain all that they have learned, yet by disclosing it impartially according to the faculties of all beings, [F.256.b] and knowing that language is like an echo, they do not cling to it. That is how the bodhisattvas are perfect in recall and eloquence.”
- 1.116 Then the god Great Light inquired of youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, who will understand the meaning of what you have taught?”  
Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, those who have been accepted by a spiritual friend, who have excellent former connections, who have produced roots of virtue, and who partake in the state free of observation will understand the meaning of what I have taught.”
- 1.117 The god asked, “What will they be inclined toward? What will their attitude be?”  
Mañjuśrī responded, “They will be inclined toward the profound. Their attitude will be without special pride.”
- 1.118 The god asked, “Mañjuśrī, how are monks without special pride?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, when monks train in the belief in the transitory collection as being by its very nature the path of the single vehicle. When, by means of nonduality, they come to understand that the essence of the belief in the transitory collection is the same as the essence of the path of the single vehicle. When they search for what derives from ignorance, existence, and craving, but in considering what derives from ignorance, existence, and craving, they understand that the very essence of ignorance, existence, and craving is knowledge and liberation. This is how monks are without special pride.

1.119 “Moreover, divine being, it is also when monks understand that the extreme of attachment is the same as the extreme of freedom from attachment, and when they understand that the nature of the extreme of freedom from attachment is attachment. It is also when monks understand that the extreme of anger is the same as the extreme of freedom from anger, and that the nature of the extreme of freedom from anger is anger. It is also when they understand that the extreme of delusion is the same as the extreme of freedom from delusion, [F.257.a] and that the nature of the extreme of freedom from delusion is delusion. This is how monks are without special pride.

1.120 “Moreover, divine being, it is also when monks neither understand suffering, nor reject its origin, nor actualize cessation, nor cultivate the path, but by knowing that suffering is unborn, they come to understand the four truths of the noble ones. Knowing that suffering is unborn, it has no origin. Knowing that suffering is unborn, it has no cessation. Knowing that suffering is unborn, there is also no path. In that way, monks who properly exert themselves do not create anything, nor do they cause anything to cease or remain. Whatever is unborn, unceasing, and nonabiding is unconditioned. Such monks, therefore, cultivate the unconditioned nature, which is also the truth of the noble ones. Divine being, this is how monks are without special pride.”

1.121 Then, the evil Māra, suffering and unhappy, burst into tears and sobbed, “Wherever this Dharma teaching is delivered, the māras will stand no chance. Those who retain this teaching will prevent any actions of Māra from affecting them.” Having said that, the evil Māra felt sad and unhappy. Dejected, he disappeared at that very moment.

1.122 The god Great Light now addressed youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, as I have understood what you have taught, any monk who hears this profound way of being free of special pride and rejects it will no longer be a monk or ordained. The teacher of such householders, who are frightened by this supremely profound way of being free of special pride, is not the Thus-Gone One. [F.257.b] Any monk, nun, upāsaka, or upāsikā who hears this



supremely profound way of being free of special pride without being afraid, terrified, or frightened, but rather trusts it, should be recognized as liberated.”

1.123 Then the Blessed One addressed the god Great Light, “Divine being, that is correct. It is as you said. Those monks, nuns, upāsakas, and upāsikās who hear this supremely profound way of being free of special pride without being afraid, terrified, or frightened, but rather trust it, should be recognized as liberated. Why is that? It is because by accepting this teaching, I prophesy that those bodhisattvas will attain unexcelled and perfect awakening. Moreover, by accepting this teaching, any hearer or solitary buddha will attain deliverance.”

1.124 The god Great Light asked, “Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma teaching? How should it be known?”

The Blessed One replied, “Divine being, you should know this teaching as *The Chapter on Mañjuśrī’s Magical Display*. It should also be known as *The Chapter on Taming Māra*.”

1.125 After the Blessed One had given these teachings, youthful Mañjuśrī, the god Great Light, the entire assembly, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the Blessed One’s words.

1.126 *This concludes the Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Chapter on Mañjuśrī’s Magical Display.”*

c.

## Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, emended according to the new terminological register, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Śīlendrabodhi and Jinamitra, as well as the chief editor-translator, Bandé Yeshé Dé.

ab.

## ABBREVIATIONS

*C* Choné

*H* Lhasa (Zhol)

*K* Peking edition of 1684/92 (Kangxi)

*K<sub>Y</sub>* Yonglé

*L* London (Shelkar)

*N* Narthang

*S* Stok Palace manuscript

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 The Sanskrit title of this text varies between two alternatives across the Tibetan versions. Most attest to *Mañjuśrīvikurvāṇaparivarta* while some give *Mañjuśrīvikroṭitaparivarta*. The latter title appears in the Stok, Ulaanbaatar, Shey, Hemis, Phukdrak, Namgyal, Chizhi, Dongkarla, Gangteng, and Neyphug Kangyurs and the Basgo fragments, while the former title appears in the rest.
- n.2 The order of the sūtras varies across the different Kangyurs. *The Magical Display of Mañjuśrī* is placed among the first texts of the General Sūtra section in Kangyurs related to the Degé, while it appears later in some other Kangyurs.
- n.3 *blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa rgya cher 'grel pa.*
- n.4 The sūtra is quoted in the text *bstan bcos lung gi nyi 'od* (Sönam Rinchen 1998, folio 30.a).
- n.5 The sūtra is quoted in the text *yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod kyi dka' gnad*. (Drimé Özer 1999, folio 16.a).
- n.6 For an English translation of Toh 96, see Braarvig, Jens (tr.) *The Play of Mañjuśrī* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh96.html>) (2020). For one example of the confusion of the two texts, see Jñānavajra's commentary on the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* in the Tengyur (Toh 4019), folio 121.a, where a passage cited as being from this text, *The Chapter on Mañjuśrī's Magical Display*, is in fact from *The Play of Mañjuśrī* (1.195 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh96.html#UT22084-046-002-360>)).
- n.7 佛說魔逆經 (*Foshuo moni jing*).
- n.8 For more on Dharmarakṣa, see Boucher 2006.

- n.9 佛說四天王經 (*Foshuo si tianwang jing*).
- n.10 Denkarma, folio 298.b.2. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, 84, no. 154.
- n.11 Reading *bsten pa* here from K and N in place of *brtan pa*.
- n.12 This is a standard set of three terms characterizing actions and their karmic consequences: virtuous, nonvirtuous, and unmoving. This third term refers to acts that lead to rebirth in the formless realm and are so called because their result is unchangeable. See Edgerton's entry on *aniñjya* (p. 24) for further information.
- n.13 These are typically organized into two general groups: 18 views that are based on the assertion of the past and 44 views based on the assertion of the future. The first group includes assertions such as the permanence of the self and the world, impermanence, nihilism, or eternalism, and the second group includes assertions of perception, nonperception, both, or neither, as well as assertions of nihilism or that this is nirvāṇa. See also Nordrang Orgyen 2008, 3578.
- n.14 Reading *dag pa* from K<sub>Y</sub>, K, S.
- n.15 Reading *tshong* from K<sub>Y</sub>, L, K, N, C, H.
- n.16 The text reads *cho ga shes pa*, "know the procedure/behavior." Since this makes little sense in the given context, and because of the easily confused orthography, we are emending it to *chog shes pa*, "content."

b.

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g.

## GLOSSARY

g.1

Acceptance that phenomena are unborn

*mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa*

མི་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་བཟོད་པ།

*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*

An attainment characteristic of the effortless and spontaneous wakefulness of the eighth ground of the bodhisattvas.

g.2

Anāthapiṇḍada

*mgon med zas sbyin*

མགོན་མེད་བཟུང་སྤྱན།

*Anāthapiṇḍada*

An important benefactor of the Buddha who donated the Jeta Grove outside of Śrāvastī to the Buddhist community.

g.3

Belief in the transitory collection

*'jig tshogs la lta ba*

འཇིག་ཚོགས་ལ་ལྟ་བ།

*satkāyadrṣṭi*

The mistaken view that identifies the self with the ultimately transient collection of mind and body.

g.4

Brahmā

*tshangs pa*

ཚངས་པ།

*Brahmā*



A high-ranking deity, presiding over a divine world where other beings consider him the creator; he is also considered to be the “Lord of the Saha-world” (our universe).

g.5 Dākinī

*mkha' 'gro ma*

མཁའ་འགོ་མ།

*dākinī*

A class of female deities.

g.6 Dhāraṇī

*gzungs*

གཟུངས།

*dhāraṇī*

This term is used in various ways. In this case it appears to refer to the mental capacity of not forgetting. It is also very commonly used as a term for mystical verses similar to mantras, the usage of which will grant a particular power.

g.7 Factors of awakening

*byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos*

བྱང་ལྡན་གྱི་ཕྱོགས་གྱི་ཚེས།

*bodhipakṣadharmā*

The set of practices that lead to awakening, traditionally listed as thirty-seven.

g.8 Five acts with immediate retribution

*mtshams med lnga*

མཚམས་མེད་ལྔ།

*pañcānantarya*

These are killing one's mother, father, or an arhat; drawing blood from a thus-gone one; or causing a schism in the sangha.

g.9 Four types of correct understanding

*so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi*

སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ་བཞི།

*catasraḥ pratisaṃvidāḥ · catuḥpratisaṃvid*

Genuine discrimination with respect to phenomena, meaning, language, and eloquence.

g.10 Great Light

*'od mang po*

འོད་མང་པོ།

—

A divine being.

g.11 Hearer

*nyan thos*

ཉན་ཐོས།

*śrāvaka*

Someone who practices according to the Vehicle of the Hearers (“those who hear” the Buddha's teaching, i.e., his disciples). In a Mahāyāna context it refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat.

g.12 Immediate retribution

*mtshams med*

མཚམས་མེད།

*ānantarya*

See “five acts with immediate retribution.”

g.13 Jeta Grove

*rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal*

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

*Jetavana*

The park donated to the Buddha by Anāthapiṇḍada.

g.14 Jinamitra

*dzi na mi tra*

ཇོ་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

*Jinamitra*

An Indian *paṇḍita* resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

g.15 Limit of reality

*yang dag pa'i mtha'*

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

*bhūtakoti*

This term has three meanings: (1) the ultimate nature, (2) the experience of the ultimate nature, and (3) the quiescent state of a worthy one (*arhat*) to be avoided by bodhisattvas.

g.16 Lokāyata

*'jig rten rgyang phan pa*

འཇིག་རྟེན་རྒྱང་ཕན་པ།

*lokāyata*

While this term is used a name for the ancient Indian school of materialist philosophy, it can also refer to non-Buddhists in general.

g.17 Mahākāśyapa

*'od srung chen po*

འོད་སྤྱང་ཆེན་པོ།

*Mahākāśyapa*

One of the principal students of the Buddha, known for his ascetic practice.

g.18 Mañjuśrī

*'jam dpal*

འཇམ་དཔལ།

*Mañjuśrī*

A bodhisattva known for his mastery of wisdom.

g.19 Māra

*bdud*

བདུད།

*māra*

The personification of negativity. Four māras are usually listed: the aggregates, the afflictions, the māra of the gods (= the god of infatuation), and death.

g.20 Māra of the afflictions

*nyon mongs pa'i bdud*

ཉོན་མོངས་པའི་བདུད།

*kleśamāra*

This is the figurative or embodied demon of emotional disturbances.

g.21 Māra of the aggregates

*phung po'i bdud*

ཕུང་པོའི་བདུད།

*skandhamāra*

This is the figurative or embodied demon of the constituents in a being.

g.22 Māra of the gods

*lha'i bu'i bdud*

ལྷའི་བུའི་བདུད།

*devaputramāra*

This is the figurative or embodied demon of pleasure.

g.23 Māra of the Lord of Death

*'chi bdag gi bdud*

འཇི་བདག་གི་བདུད།

*mṛtyumāra*

This is the figurative or embodied demon of death.

g.24 Maudgalyāyana

*maud gal gyi bu*

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ།

*Maudgalyāyana*

An elder monk in the Buddha's retinue, famous for his mastery of supranormal powers.

g.25 Noble tradition

*'phags pa'i rigs*

འཕགས་པའི་རིགས།

*āryavaṃśa*

Being content with one's garments, food, and lodging and observing ethical behavior.

g.26 Nonregression

*phyir mi ldog pa*

ཕྱིར་མི་ལྷོག་པ།

*avinivarta · avaiivartika*

A stage on the bodhisattva path where the practitioner will never turn back, or be turned back, from progress toward the full awakening of a buddha.

g.27 Pūrṇa

*gang po*

གང་པོ།

*Pūrṇa*

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha, famous for his ability to teach.

g.28 Rākṣasa

*srin po*

སྲིན་པོ།

*rākṣasa*

A class of nonhuman beings that are often, but not always, considered demonic in the Buddhist tradition.

g.29 Realm of phenomena

*chos kyi dbyings*

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

*dharmadhātu*

The element, or nature, of ultimate reality.

g.30 Śakra

*brgya byin*

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

*Śakra*

The lord of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

g.31 Śāradvatīputra

*sha ra dwa t'i bu*

ཤ་ར་དྲ་དེ་བུ།

*Śāradvatīputra*

An elder monk in the Buddha's retinue, known for his pure observance of discipline and unparalleled knowledge of the teachings.

g.32 Sense source

*skye mched*

སྐྱེ་མཚེད།

*āyatana*

One way of describing experience and the world in terms of twelve sense sources: eye and form, ear and sound, nose and odor, tongue and taste, body and touch, and mind and mental objects.

g.33 Sense source of neither perception nor nonperception

*'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched*

འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་མིན་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

*naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāāyatana*

The highest of the four divine concentration realms in the formless realm, and the fourth of the four formless absorptions. The other three are infinite space, infinite consciousness, and nothingness.

g.34 Śīlendrabodhi

*shI len dra bo dhi*

ཤི་ལེན་ངོ་བོ་རྗེ།

*Śīlendrabodhi*

An Indian *paṇḍita* resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

g.35 Solitary buddha

*rang sangs rgyas*

རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

*pratyekabuddha*

An individual who, in their last life, attains liberation by realizing the nature of interdependent origination without relying upon a spiritual guide.

g.36 Śrāvastī

*mnyan yod*

སམ་མཁོ་ཡོད།

*Śrāvastī*

The ancient Indian kingdom of Kosala.

g.37 Subhūti

*rab 'byor*

རབ་འབྱོར།

*Subhūti*

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha, known for his profound understanding of emptiness.

g.38 Superknowledges

*mngon par shes pa*

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ།

*abhijñā*

Supernormal cognitive powers possessed to different degrees by bodhisattvas and buddhas. The five superknowledges are clairvoyance, clairaudience, knowledge of others' minds, miraculous abilities, and knowledge of past lives; a sixth, mentioned in some lists and possessed only by fully awakened buddhas, is knowledge of the exhaustion of outflows.

g.39 Susīma

*mtshams bzangs*

མཚམས་བཟངས།

*Susīma*

The name of a god.

g.40 Ten nonvirtuous actions

*mi dge ba bcu*

མི་དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

*daśakuśala*

Killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, lying, uttering divisive talk, speaking harsh words, gossiping, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

g.41 Ten virtuous actions

*dge ba bcu*

དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

*daśakuśala*

Abstaining from the ten nonvirtuous actions. Namely, abstaining from killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, lying, uttering divisive talk, speaking harsh words, gossiping, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

g.42 Upāli

*nye bar 'khor*

ཉེབར་འཁོར།

*Upāli*

An elder monk in the Buddha's retinue, famous for his knowledge of monastic discipline (*vinaya*).

g.43 Upāsaka

*dge bsnyen*

དགེ་བསྐྱེན།

*upāsaka*

Lay male devotees who uphold the five precepts.

g.44 Upāsikā

*dge bsnyen ma*

དགེ་བསྐྱེན་མ།

*upāsikā*

Lay female devotees who uphold the five precepts.

g.45 World protector

*'jig rten skyong ba*

འཇིག་རྟེན་སྐྱོང་བ།

*lokapāla*

A group of four nonhuman beings who stand guard over the four directions.

g.46 Yakṣa

*gnod sbyin*

གནོད་སྐྱིན།

*yakṣa*

A class of powerful nonhuman beings that haunt or protect natural places and cities. They can be malevolent or benevolent, and are known for bestowing wealth and worldly boons.

g.47 Yeshé Dé

*ye shes sde*

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

A prolific Tibetan translator active during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.