

Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī

Scribe/translator's homage:

Homage to the ever-youthful Mañjuśrī!

1. The request

And then Vajradhara, the glorious,
Supreme subduer of the hard to tame,
The hero conquering the triple world,
The vajra lord and master of secrets, (1)

With eyes wide open like white lotuses,
And a face that's like a lily in full bloom,
Shaking about an excellent vajra
Over and over again with his two hands— (2)

Accompanied by countless Vajrapāṇis,
With features such as fierce, turbulent frowns,
Heroes, subduers of the hard to tame,
Appearing with heroic, hideous forms, (3)

And shaking in their hands their great vajras,
The tips of which shine forth intensively,
Great benefactors to all living beings
Through skill, through insight, and through great compassion, (4)

With pleased and happy attitudes, joyful,
Their bodies those of wrathful deities,
Protectors who assist the buddhas' deeds,
Bowing their bodies reverentially—(5)

Paid homage to the fully awakened one,
Protector, Blessed One, *tathāgata*.
And joining his two palms respectfully,
He said before the lord the following: (6)

'O omnipresent lord, for my benefit,
Out of concern for me and for my sake,
That I may reach complete awakening
According to the Net of Illusion;¹ (7)

And for the sake of every living being—
Sunk deep into the mud of ignorance,
Their thoughts disturbed by various afflictions—
So that they may obtain the highest fruit, (8)

¹"The Net of Illusion" can be understood as a proper name referring to the *Māyājālatantra* and the tantric system presented therein. Various esoteric and non-esoteric glosses of this name are possible: for example, Vimalamitra states that the word hints at the unity of a special form of insight and means.

May you—the most supreme awakened one,
The Blessed One, the world's guru, teacher,
Who knows the great *samaya*'s reality,
Aware of wishes and abilities—(9)

Please teach to us the great name chanting of
The wisdom body of the Blessed One,
The great *uṣṇīṣa*, master of language,
The self-arising body of wisdom,
The wisdom deity called Mañjuśrī; (10)

These names with meaning both profound and vast;
Of great significance; peerless; tranquil;
Good at their start, their middle, and their end; (11)

Taught by the buddhas of the aeons past,
And to be taught by buddhas yet to come;
And taught not once but time and time again
By all the buddhas of the present age; (12)

Which were respectfully recited in
This great tantra, the *Net of Illusion*,
By great Vajrapāṇis, beyond number,
Joyous upholders of the secret mantras. (13)

And this I shall uphold with firm resolve,
Until I reach my final liberation,
So that I may become, O great protector,
Upholder of the buddhas' every secret; (14)

In order to relieve every affliction,
So that all ignorance may be dispelled,
I shall reveal this to all sentient beings
According to each one's capacity.' (15)

The master of secrets, Vajrapāṇi,
Having so spoken to the *tathāgata*,
Palms pressed together in due reverence,
Stood with his body bowed before the lord. (16)

2. The Reply

And then Śākyamuni, the Blessed One,
The fully awakened one, the best of men,
Extending from his mouth his handsome tongue,
A tongue unmatched in both its breadth and length, (17)

Showing a gentle smile to living beings—
A smile that fills the threefold world with light;

Subduing enemies, the four Māras;
Dispelling all three types of bad rebirth—(18)

With his sweet-sounding voice, like that of Brahmā,
Filling all reaches of the triple world,
Replied as follows to the lord of secrets,
To Vajrapāṇi, strongest of the strong: (19)

“That you, being suffused with great compassion
And aiming to assist all living beings,
Are willing and prepared to hear from me
The chanting of the names, so filled with meaning, (20)

Of Mañjuśrī’s wisdom embodiment—
Chanting which purifies and quells all evil—
That is most excellent, Vajradhara;
Most excellent of you, Vajrapāṇi! (21)

And so, O master of secrets, I shall
Teach this to you in a way most excellent.
Listen to it with single-minded focus.’
‘How excellent!’ replied Vajrapāṇi,
That is most excellent, O Blessed One.’ (22)

3. The survey of the six families

And then Śākyamuni, the Blessed One,
Surveyed in full the family great with mantras,
The family that upholds *vidyās* and *mantras*,
The family that by nature is threefold, (23)

The family of and yet beyond the world,
The family great in brightening the world,
The foremost family of *mahāmudrā*,
And the great family of the great *uṣṇīṣa*. (24)

4. The stages of awakening according to the Net of Illusion

And then, about the lord of speech,² he spoke
These verses, which include six kingly mantras,³
Which manifest from non-duality,
Which bear the quality of non-arising: (25)

²Vimalamitra, as well as the witnesses we have consulted of the *Nāmasaṅgīti*’s Tibetan translations, indicates that ‘the lord of speech’ is the Buddha: i.e., ‘the Buddha, the lord of speech, spoke these verses’. Vilāsavajra and the Sanskrit witnesses of the *Nāmasaṅgīti*, however, indicate that ‘the lord of speech’ refers to Mañjuśrī. The latter reading and interpretation are, in our opinion, preferable on the grounds of grammar and sense, and we therefore reflect it in our English translation.

³The six mantra are expressed in verse 27.

a ā i ī u ū e ai
o au aṃ aḥ sthito hr̥di |
jñāna-mūrtir ahaṃ buddho
*buddhānāṃ trya-dhva-vartinām ||*⁴ (26)

om vajra-tīkṣṇa duḥkha-ccheda
prajñā-jñāna-mūrtaye
jñāna-kāya vāgīśvara
*arapacanāye te namaḥ |*⁵ (27)

5. The great Vajradhātu *maṇḍala*

And so, he is the Blessed One, the Buddha,
Fully awakened, born of the letter *a*;
He is the letter *a*, the foremost phoneme,⁶
Supreme-most syllable of great meaning, (28)

Without arising, from great vital force,⁷
Beyond any expression using words,
The foremost cause of every form of speech,
The shining forth of language of all types, (29)

Great feast⁸ who takes the form of great passion,
Producing bliss in every sentient being,
Great feast who takes the form of great anger,
Great enemy of all mental affliction, (30)

Great feast who is by nature great delusion,
Delusion's vanquisher for deluded minds,
Great feast who is in essence great fury,
Great adversary to all furiousness, (31)

Great feast who takes the form of great desire,
Destroyer of desire in all its forms;
He is great carnal lust; he is great bliss;
He is great happiness; he is great joy; (32)

⁴This mantra can be translated as follows: *a ā i ī u ū e ai o au aṃ aḥ*—I, the Buddha, located in the heart, am the wisdom body of all buddhas of the past, present, and future.

⁵This mantra can be translated as follow: *Om*, homage to you, Vajratīkṣṇa ('vajra-sharp'), Duḥkhaccheda ('eliminator of suffering'), Prajñājñānamūrti ('embodiment of insight-wisdom'), Jñānakāya ('wisdom body'), Vāgīśvara ('lord of speech'), Arapacana!

⁶The Sanskrit word *akṣara* (letter/phoneme/syllable) can also be understood to refer to an imperishable thing. This understanding is reflected in the Kangyur's translation of the *Nāmasaṅgīti*: i.e., 'He is the ultimate, imperishable thing'.

⁷When used in reference to letters, the word *mahāprāṇa* means 'aspiration', which would normally not apply to a vowel such as *a*. Vimalamitra explains that the vowel *a* is unique in not depending on the teeth, nose, tongue, and so on for its articulation; rather, it arises simply from *prāṇa*, a person's vital force. Thus the word *mahāprāṇa* connotes something that is naturally arisen from the vital force alone.

⁸We use the word 'feast' in the sense of a festival, particularly one that involves religious worship.

With great appearance, with a great body,
With great complexion, with a great physique,
With great renown, the great munificent one,
Who rules a great and spacious *maṇḍala*, (33)

The holder of the great weapon of wisdom,
The foremost goad for great mental afflictions,
Of great glory, possessing great renown,
With brightness great, with lustre ever great, (34)

Most wise upholder of the great illusion,
Fulfiller of the great illusion's aims,
Raptured by rapture from the great illusion,
The great illusion's great illusionist, (35)

The foremost lord of great munificence,⁹
Supreme upholder of great discipline,
Steady maintainer of great tolerance,
With valour rooted in great diligence, (36)

Fixed in *samādhi* with great concentration,
Maintaining bodies rich in great wisdom,
Most great in strength, with skilfully great methods,
Ocean of aspiration and of knowledge, (37)

Boundless in being suffused with great kindness,
Enriched with great compassion, the foremost mind,
The great wise one, the great intelligent one,
Great dexterous one, with methods ever great, (38)

Commanding powers and great miracles,
Wielding great driving force, with speed most great,
Renowned as the great lord, of great majesty,
Most valorous owing to his great strength, (39)

Smashing the massive mountain of becoming,
Most firm from holding his supreme vajra,
Great terrifying lord, the great cruel one,
Provoking fear in great fearsome creatures,¹⁰ (40)

Protector as the best of great *vidyās*,¹¹

⁹Beginning in this verse the tantra lists the ten *pāramitās*: 1. generosity; 2. discipline; 3. patience ('tolerance'); 4. diligence; 5. meditative concentration; 6. wisdom; 7. skilful means; 8. strength; 9. aspiration; and 10. knowledge.

¹⁰Vimalamitra understands what we translate as "fearsome beings" (Skt. *mahābhaya*; Tib. 'jigs chen) to refer to non-Buddhist gods such as Viṣṇu and Śiva. Vilāsavajra, similarly, understands the word to refer to Śiva in his Mahābhairava form.

¹¹Here we believe that the majority of witnesses of the Tibetan translations have suffered from corruption, with the word 'rig' becoming 'rigs'. Following the corrupted text, we may translate the name, 'the best of the great families'. This reading, along with its interpretations, appears to be common in Tibetan commentaries, including that of Vimalamitra. Witnesses of the text reading 'rig' (*vidyā*) can also be found,

Guru in being the best of great *mantras*,
 Riding along the Mahāyāna's path,
 Himself the Mahāyāna's foremost way; (41)

6. The wisdom of the immaculate *dharmadhātu*

He is the great Buddha Vairocana;
 Great sage; observing great, intensive silence;¹²
 Arising from the Way of Great Mantra;
 Being the Way of Great Mantra in essence; (42)

Accomplished in the ten *pāramitās*,
 Having the ten *pāramitās* as home,
 In whom the ten *pāramitās* are pure,
 For whom the ten *pāramitās* are means, (43)

Protector, reigning over all ten grounds,¹³
 On the ten grounds most firmly situated,
 Made pure in nature by the tenfold knowledge,¹⁴
 Bearing that tenfold knowledge's purity, (44)

With tenfold forms, intent on ten referents,¹⁵
 With tenfold power,¹⁶ omnipresent, sage lord,
 Achieving every aim of everyone,
 Endowed with tenfold mastery,¹⁷ great being, (45)

Beginningless, void of complexities,
 By nature pure, reality in essence,

and these are almost certainly to be regarded as correct.

¹²At face value the Tibetan could be taken to mean 'endowed with great sagesness'.

¹³The ten grounds (*bhūmis*) refer to stages of the path to awakening that a bodhisattva traverses after having a perceptual realisation of highest reality.

¹⁴The ten knowledges (Skt. *daśa jñānāni*; Tib. *shes pa bcu*) are mentioned, for example, the *Abidharma-kośa* ch. 7. They are knowledge of: 1. dharma; 2. concordance; 3. conventions; 4. other minds; 5. suffering; 6. origin; 7. cessation; 8. the path; 9. exhaustion; 10. non-arising.

¹⁵Commentators interpret these enumerations variously: Vilāsavajra understands the "ten forms" to be the ten ways of grasping to the self, which are taught in the third chapter of the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, and he understands the "ten referents" to be their remedies—i.e., the ten topics of mastery (which are mentioned in the same work, and which serve as the main topics of Mipham Rinpoche's *Gateway to Knowledge*). Vilāsavajra further explains that Mañjuśrī receives such names because he can appear both as phenomena that are in discord with awakening and as the remedies to such phenomena. Vimalamitra, by contrast, takes the "ten forms" to be the five aggregates and the five mental afflictions, and the "ten referents" to be the five wisdoms and five bodies.

¹⁶The ten powers refer ten types of knowledge known as the powers of a *tathāgata* (Skt. *tathāgatabala*; Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i stobs*)—namely, knowledge of 1. what is correct and incorrect; 2. the results of actions; 3. the diverse aspirations of beings; 4. the diverse dispositions of beings; 5. the quality of beings' acumens; 6. the paths that lead in all directions; 7. all forms of meditative concentration and the like; 8. past lives; 9. death and rebirth; and 10. the destruction of defilements.

¹⁷Vilāsavajra and Vimalamitra both understand this to refer to the ten masteries (*vaśitā*; Tib. *dbang*)—namely the power over 1. life; 2. mind; 3. material provisions; 4. action; 5. birth; 6. aspirations; 7. resolve; 8. supernatural powers; 9. Dharma; and 10. knowledge.

Speaker of truth, speaking consistently,
With speech and action perfectly aligned, (46)

Non-dual, teacher of non-dualality,
Established at reality's summit,
Whose roar is that of lion-like no self,
Who terrifies deer-like misled seekers,¹⁸ (47)

With journeys fruitful, travelling everywhere,¹⁹
As swift as all *tathāgatas*' thinking,
A victor, triumphant, a slayer of foes,
A universal king, with forces great,²⁰ (48)

Assembly head, instructor for assemblies,
Assembly lord, assembly chief, and ruler,
Most influential, bearing precious burdens,
Not other-bound, his way the greatest way, (49)

The lord of speech, the master of expression,
Most skilled with words, adept with language, truthful,
With boundless words, the teacher of the truth,
Providing teachings on fourfold truth, (50)

Not turning back, not coming back, rhino,
The leader of the *pratyekabuddhas*,²¹
Gone forth by going forth in different ways,
The single cause of all great elements, (51)

Bhikṣu, *arhat*, defilements exhausted,
Devoid of passion, master of the senses,
Arrived at comfort, met with security,
For he, having cooled down, is free from stains; (52)

Fully equipped with knowledge and its feet,²²
A *sugata*, best knower of the world,
Not thinking 'me', not clinging onto 'mine',
Established in the system of two truths, (53)

¹⁸'Seekers' (Skt. *tīrthya*; Tib. *mu stegs*) refer to those who seek liberation from suffering. They are described as 'misled' or 'bad' insofar as they do not follow the Buddhist path, and they are 'deer-like' because they are terrified by the roar of the lion-like 'no self' doctrine.

¹⁹Based on Vimalamitra's commentary, which contains a reading of the text found only in certain witnesses of the Tibetan translation (*kun tu 'gro ba'i don yod stobs*), we may translate the first quarter as, 'he who has strength that is fruitful for all beings'.

²⁰Here 'force' (*bala*; Tib. *stobs*) is most naturally understood in the sense of military force.

²¹Vilāsavajra explains that 'rhino' refers to the *pratyekabuddhas* who lead solitary lives, whereas the following refers to *pratyekabuddhas* who congregate in groups.

²²This term (*vidyācaraṇasampanna*; Tib. *rig pa dang zhabs su/rkang par ldan pa*) is a stock epithet for the Buddha and refers to knowledge and good conduct, or, more technically, the Eightfold Path of the Nobles (namely, knowledge refers to right view, and its "feet" or supporting factors are the remaining seven branches).

Upon the edge of cyclic life's far shore;
With deeds accomplished; resting on the bank;
Emerging from untainted, lone awareness;
With sword-like insight ever penetrating; (54)

Sublime Dharma, the Dharma king, the sun,
Supreme illuminator of the world,
The sovereign of Dharma, the Dharma lord,
The teacher of the path to excellence, (55)

Accomplishing all goals, fulfilling wishes,
Completely free from want of any kind,
Bereft of thought, an undepleting source,
The Dharma source, supreme, beyond decay, (56)

Enriched by merit, merit's gathering,
Great unique wisdom, wisdom, wisdom-rich,
Aware of what exists and what does not,
While gathering the twofold gathering, (57)

Eternal, *yogin*, king of everywhere,
The object and the mind of concentration,
The master of intelligent reflection—
For by oneself alone is he experienced—
The unmoving and ultimate beginning,
Bearing embodiment in its three forms, (58)

Comprised of five bodies,²³ the awakened one,
The omnipresent, formed of five wisdoms,
Wearing a crown made of the five buddhas,
With eyes of five kinds,²⁴ bearing no attachments, (59)

The great progenitor of all the buddhas,
The best and foremost offspring of the buddhas,
Arising from the world that is his insight,
The sourceless, Dharma source, existence ending, (60)

Comprised of vajras, wholly firm and dense,
The newborn sovereign ruler of the world,
Emerging from the sky, the self arisen,
A great inferno of knowledge of insight, (61)

The one who blazes forth,²⁵ a great beacon,

²³Four of these five bodies are the *dharmakāya*, *svabhāvakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya*. The fifth is given variously as 'the body of ripening' (*vipākakāya*), 'the body of wisdom-dharma' (**jñānadhar-makāya), or the *vajra body* (*vajrakāya**). Vilāśavajra refers to the first of these, whereas Vimalamitra refers to the fourth.

²⁴The five eyes, which are five organs of superior vision, are the bodily eye, divine eye, insight eye, dharma eye, and buddha's eye.

²⁵Vairocana. The name Mahāvairocana occurs in verse 42.

A lamp of wisdom, he who is blazing,
A light for beings, a lantern unto wisdom,
With energy supreme, most radiant, (62)

The king of *vidyās*, lord of foremost mantras,
The king of mantras, serving noble aims,
The great *uṣṇīṣa*, marvellous *uṣṇīṣa*,
The lord of space, revealer of all things, (63)

The best embodiment of every buddha,
With eyes the joy of every living being,
Creator, manifesting varied forms,
Great sage, most praiseworthy, most venerable, (64)

Upholder of the triple family,²⁶ *mantrin*,
Bearing the mantra of the foremost pledge,²⁷
The foremost keeper of the triple gem,
The teacher of the three supreme *yānas*; (65)

Victorious, with snare unfailing snare,
The great snatcher, the snare made of vajras,
The hook made of vajras, the supreme snare.²⁸

7. The mirror-like wisdom

He is Vajrabhairava, the terrific, (66)

The king of anger,²⁹ six-faced, dreadful,
With six eyes, and with six arms, powerful,
A skeleton, baring his terrible fangs,
Halāhala,³⁰ of one hundred faces, (67)

Yama's killer,³¹ king over obstacles,³²
With vajra-like impetus, terrorising,
Vajra-hearted, with the renowned vajra,
Large-bellied, with the vajra of illusion, (68)

Born of the vajra, sovereign of the vajra,
Having the vajra as his core, like space,

²⁶The three families are those of Body, Speech, and Mind.

²⁷The great samaya may, as Vilāsavajra suggests, refer to a deity, or it may refer more generally to the pledges of the Vajrayāna.

²⁸A number of names in this verse correspond to well-known deities: Amoghapāśa (translated as 'with an unfailing snare') is a form of Lokeśvara, while Vajrapāśa (translated as 'the snare made of vajras') and Vajrāṅkuśa (translated as 'the hook made of vajras') are found as the door-keepers in a number of maṇḍalas.

²⁹Alternatively, 'King of wrathful deities'.

³⁰Halāhala is the poison that, according to Hindu mythology, was produced during the churning of the ocean.

³¹This translates the name Yamāntaka.

³²This translates the name Vighnarāja, a common epithet for Gaṇeśa.

Unmoving,³³ proud of his single dreadlock,
Clothed in the fresh hide of an elephant, (69)

The great terrific one, crying *hā hā*,
Screaming *hī hī*, instilling intense fear,
Laughing a screeching laugh and a booming laugh,
He is the vajra laugh, the mighty howl; (70)

He is Vajrasattva, the great *sattva*,
Great bliss, the sovereign of the vajra,
Ferocity of the vajra, great joy,
Voicing Vajrahūmkāra's *hum* syllables, (71)

Wielding as his weapon a vajra arrow,
With his vajra sword, slashing thoroughly,
Holder of all vajras, vajra bearer,
The sole vajra bearer, removing conflict, (72)

With frightening eyes like a vajra ablaze,
With hair that's like a vajra set alight,
Great entering, making the vajra enter,
With eyes like vajras, with a hundred eyes, (73)

The one whose body sprouts with vajra hairs,
Whose one body is marked by vajra hairs,
Whose fingernails advance with vajra tips,
Whose skin is compact like a vajra's core. (74)

Wearing a vajra garland splendidly,³⁴
Adorned with ornaments made of vajras,
Laughing his screech '*ha ha*', with a loud voice,
Six syllabled, sounding a vajra's rumble, (75)

The great Mañjuhoṣa and the great sound,
Whose roar is unique in the threefold world,
He is the voice that reaches the ends of space,
The greatest of all those endowed with voices. (76)

8. The wisdom of discernment

He is the one for whom there is the truth,
Reality, its summit, and no-self;³⁵
Unexpressed;³⁶ best teacher of emptiness;
Whose voice intones profound and vast teachings; (77)

³³This translates the name Acala.

³⁴Garland (mālā; phreng ba) may refer to a mālā in the sense of rosary.

³⁵According to Vilāśavajra, the meaning of this epithet is that Mañjuśrī has knowledge of these four things: truth, reality, reality's summit, and no-self (the commentator glosses these four as slightly different aspects of the ultimate reality).

³⁶Literally 'without letters'; the Sanskrit name can also mean 'imperishable'.

The conch of Dharma, he whose sound is great,
The gong of Dharma, with great resonance,
Having entered unbounded nirvāṇa,³⁷
He is the Dharma drum of all ten quarters; (78)

He is formless, with handsome form, supreme,
Endowed with diverse forms, comprised of mind,
With splendour that appears in every form,
Wielding control over every illusion, (79)

Invincible, known as a great master,
The great sovereign who rules the threefold world,
Abiding on the nobles' lofty path,
Great source of flourishing, the Dharma's crown, (80)

With a young form most unique in all worlds,
Elder, senior, father of living beings,
Who's ornamented by the thirty-two marks,
Most beautiful, most handsome in all worlds, (81)

Teacher of mundane knowledge and virtues,
Teacher to beings, supremely confident,
Protector, saviour, the world's trustworthy guide,
The unsurpassed refuge, and guardian, (82)

With enjoyments that reach the limits of space,
An ocean of the omniscient one's knowledge,
Breaking the eggshell that is ignorance,
Smashing the cage of cyclic existence, (83)

He who has quelled affliction in all forms,
Who crosses the ocean that is *saṃsāra*,
And crowned for the empowerment of wisdom,
He is adorned with the perfect buddhas; (84)

Quelling the pain of threefold suffering,
Bringing the trio³⁸ to an end, endless,
Arriving at the threefold liberation,
Completely free of every obscuration,
Having achieved sky-like equality, (85)

Passing beyond affliction's every stain,
Knowing the timelessness of all three times,

³⁷Unbounded nirvāṇa (*apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. *mi gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa*) refers to the state of liberation that is bound to neither *saṃsāra* nor utter quiescence.

³⁸For Vimalamitra, 'the trio' here refers to the three poisons. Vilāsavajra interprets this name as meaning 'the end of the three', and the three refer to the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of Origin, and the Truth of Cessation; thus, Mañjuśrī is identified as the end of these three, the Truth of the Path.

Most eminent³⁹ amongst all sentient beings,
The crown amongst those crowned with fine qualities, (86)

Completely free from all forms of substrates,⁴⁰
Well situated on the path of space,
Holding a splendid wish-fulfilling jewel,
Omnipresent, best of all precious gems, (87)

Great wish-fulfilling tree, most plentiful,
Supreme amongst the great vases of fortune,
A doer, who fulfills the aims of beings,
An ally, most beloved to all creatures, (88)

Knower of good and bad, knower of times,
The omnipresent knower of *samayas*,
Upholding *samayas*, occasion knower,
Knower of varied aptitudes in beings,
Most skilled with liberation in three forms,⁴¹ (89)

Virtued, knower of virtues, Dharma knower,
Auspicious one, the source of auspiciousness,
Auspicious amongst all that is auspicious,
He is splendour, glory, good, and fortune; (90)

Great reassurance, and great celebration,
Great joy, and one for whom there is great pleasure,
Reverence, abundance, venerable action,
Great joy, a glorious master of splendour, (91)

Wished for, the greatest granter of what's wished,
Refuge bestowing, the greatest source of refuge,
The greatest enemy of great dangers,
Dispeller of all danger in all forms, (92)

One with a tuft of hair, with a plume of hair,
With matted hair, with matted locks, chord-tied,⁴²

³⁹Literally 'great elephant', or 'great *nāga*', 'amongst sentient beings'. The word *nāga* at the end of the compound frequently denotes pre-eminence in general.

⁴⁰For the *Nāmasaṅgīti*, we translate *upadhi* as 'substrate', but the word as a technical Buddhist term has a number of possible meanings, depending on context. For example, it can also mean 'remainder', 'body', or 'afflictions'. Tibetan translations of the *Nāmasaṅgīti* and other texts render this term in various ways.

⁴¹According to both Vimalamitra and Vilāsavajra, the three forms of liberations are that of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and buddhas.

⁴²'Chord-wearing' (Skt. *mauñjin*) indicates that Mañjuśrī wears the sacred chord of a brahmin. In some witnesses of the text, this name is swapped with the name *mauṇḍin* from the following verse, and this can be interpreted to mean that Mañjuśrī has a shaved head (as a renunciate) or that he carries a skull cup (as a practitioner of extreme asceticism). The Kangyur translation of the *Nāmasaṅgīti* indicates that *mauṇḍin* was read both in this verse and the next. Regardless, commentators tend to agree that this portion of the text shows how Mañjuśrī can appear with the garb and appearance of various Buddhist and non-Buddhist religious practitioners.

Wearing a crown, five faced, with five hair tufts,
Crowned with a flower garland of five strands, (93)

Upholding great observances, head shaven,
Best of observances, the chaste disciple,
In whom austerity has culminated,
With great austerity, bather, Gautama; (94)

Brahmin, Brahṁā, a knower of *brahman*,⁴³
He who has reached the *brahman nirvāṇa*,
Freedom, awakening and its branches,⁴⁴
Release, calmness, and full tranquillity;⁴⁵ (95)

He is *nirvāṇa*, quiescence, and peace,
Approaching fine entry into *nirvāṇa*,
The culmination, ending pleasure and pain,
Passionlessness, destruction of substrates, (96)

Beyond defeat, matchless, unmanifest,
Not making manifest, and not appearing,
Timeless, omnipresent, fully pervasive,
Subtle, seedless, free from defilement, (97)

Without stains, void of passion, passionless,⁴⁶
Defeating faults, he is affliction free;
Fully awake, by nature most awakened,
Omniscient, all knowing, and most supreme, (98)

Beyond reality as consciousness,
Pristine awareness, bearing non-dual form,
Free from conceptualisation, effortless,
Acting as all buddhas of all three times, (99)

Buddha, with no beginning and no end,
Primordial buddha, free from sequence,
With wisdom as his only eye, stainless,
With wisdom as his body, *tathāgata*, (100)

⁴³A 'brahmin' is a member of the bhramin caste, 'Brahṁā' refers to the deity known by that name, and 'brahman' can be understood as ultimate reality. Commentators vary in their accounts of how these conventionally 'Hindu' terms relate to Mañjuśrī.

⁴⁴Vilāsavajra comments that 'the branches of awakening' (Skt. *vimokṣaṅga*) are the seven branches of awakening and the eight-branched path of noble beings. Vimalamitra, perhaps led by the Tibetan rendering the term 'branch' as *lus* ('body'), interprets as meaning 'the body of awakening'—i.e., the body that is achieved on achieving full liberation.

⁴⁵The word *śiva* may also be understood with the meaning 'good' or 'beneficial', or, although it is not mentioned by commentators, the god who bears the name Śiva.

⁴⁶The names translated here as 'void of passion' and 'passionless' point toward the *guṇa* of *rajas*, from the triad of *sattva* (light/goodness), *rajas* (passion/energy), and *tamas* (darkness/inertia). This connection also suits the two names given in 98b, which connote freedom from disease related to the three humours (which are in turn based on the three *guṇas*). The Tibetan translation of the word *rajas* (*rdul*), while also referring to the *guṇa* in a technical context, can equally imply either a minute particle or a fault (*nyes rkyon*).

Sovereign of all language, the great debater,
The king of discourse, the best of orators,
The best and greatest among communicators,
The unassailable, the lion of speech, (101)

Seeing in all directions, true delight,
With garlands of fierce energy, most handsome,
Most radiant, lustre, the endless knot,⁴⁷
With shining rays in hand, providing light; (102)

Supreme and great physician, eminent,
Unparalleled in getting rid of pain,
A tree that's rich with every medicine,
Arch enemy against all maladies, (103)

The crown jewel of the triple world, lovely,
A shining star cluster, most glorious,
The end of space in all the ten directions,
Hoisting on high the Dharma's victory flag, (104)

Sharing one large umbrella with all beings,
His *maṇḍala* being love and empathy,
The glorious lotus lord of the dance,⁴⁸
Omnipresent with his jewel parasol, (105)

The great fierce energy of all buddhas,
Who possess the bodies of all buddhas,
The great union enjoyed with all buddhas,
The teaching unique to all buddhas, (106)

Most glorious with Vajraratna's blessing,
The sovereign ruler of Sarvaratna,
The master of Sarvalokeśvara,
Supreme monarch of Sarvavajradhara, (107)

The ultimate mind of Sarvabuddha,⁴⁹
Residing in the mind of every buddha,
For every buddha being their great body,
As well for each buddha their sweet speech, (108)

Magnificent light from the vajra sun,
With stainless beams streamed from the vajra moon,

⁴⁷Alternatively, Mañjuśrī is 'Śrī's beloved' (*śrīvatsa*). According to Vailāsavajra, a mark which has the shape of a so-called endless knot is situated uniquely at the hearts of buddhas. Śrīvatsa is also a common epithet for Viṣṇu and the mark on his chest.

⁴⁸Padmanarteśvara, a name commonly associated with Lokeśvara.

⁴⁹Vilāsavajra appears to treat Vajraratna and so on (i.e. the names in verse 107–108a) as proper names, and he, as Vimalamitra does too, identifies them with, respectively, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, and Vairocana.

Great passion of the passion-free and others,
With blazing rays of variegated colours, (109)

The vajra posture of the perfect Buddha,
Upholder of the Buddha's Dharma for beings,
Most glorious, born from the lotus Buddha,
The Omniscient One's knowledge treasurer, (110)

Sovereign, controller of varied illusions,
The greatest master of the Buddha's spells,
He is Vajratikṣṇa, the mighty sword,
Completely pure, the ultimate syllable; (111)

With vajra-Dharma as his great weapon
While on the Great Vehicle—pain's remedy,
Rich in vajra profundity, Jinajik,
With a vajra mind, knowing all as it is, (112)

Perfecting all perfections thoroughly,
Whom all the bodhisattva grounds adorn,
The selflessness of pure phenomena,
The moon of true knowledge with his bright light, (113)

With great deeds from the Net of Illusion,
The master over all tantras, supreme,
Richly endowed with every vajra posture,
Fully furnished with every wisdom body, (114)

Completely good, with fine intelligence,
The embryo of earth,⁵⁰ sustaining beings,
Great embryo from which all buddhas form,
Whose emanation circles are diverse, (115)

The highest nature of all that exists,
Supportive of the nature of all things,
With *dharmas* unarisen, with goals for all,
Supportive of the nature of all *dharmas*, (116)

And bearing knowledge of all phenomena
In but an instant as the most wise one,
Realising vividly all phenomena,
He is a sage, with great intelligence,
One vanquishing all hosts of evil spirits, (117)

Unwavering, completely pure in nature,
Holding the true Buddha's awakening,
Being the direct perception of all buddhas,
He is the flame of wisdom, most luminous; (118)

⁵⁰The first three names mentioned in this verse are also the names of well-known bodhisattvas: Samantabhadra, Sumati, and Kṣitigarbha.

9. The wisdom of equality

The great fulfiller of desired aims,
The purifier of all evil states,
Protector, greatest of all living beings,
Who liberates all beings with great vigour, (119)

Unmatched hero in battle with afflictions,
Crushing the pride of ignorance—the enemy,
The glorious mind⁵¹ grasping amorousness,
Bearing repulsive and heroic forms, (120)

The dancer moving his many hundreds
Of lengthy arms while setting down his stride,
The dancer who covers the whole of space
And fills it with Śrīmat's one hundred arms,⁵² (121)

Standing atop the surface of the earth
That's covered by just one of his foot soles,
Standing atop the summit of the world⁵³
And holding it just with his big toenail, (122)

Whose aim is one; whose aim is non-dual Dharma;
Eternal one; whose aim is ultimate;
Whose mind consists in groups of consciousness
With varied cognisance, objects, and forms; (123)

Enjoying every object of existence,
A passion-filled mind, relishing emptiness,
Transcending worldly passion and the like,
Taking great pleasure in the threefold world, (124)

White in complexion like pristine white clouds,
With radiance like beams from autumn moons,
With lustre equal to the morning sun's,
With nails projecting light with deep redness,⁵⁴ (125)

Whose handsome crown has sterling sapphires,
Whose hair has tips of deep sapphire blue,
With glory from the light of his great jewel,
Adorned with emanations of the buddhas, (126)

The shaker of a hundred worldly realms,
Having miraculous power as strength,⁵⁵

⁵¹Or, alternatively, 'the glorious letter *dhiḥ*'.

⁵²According to Vilāsavajra, Śrīmat refers to Padmanarteśvara, who is mentioned in verse 105.

⁵³The Sanskrit word translated here as 'the world' is *brahmāṇḍa*, lit. 'Brahmā egg', a term more commonly in non-Buddhist texts in reference to the universe.

⁵⁴Or 'of great passion' (mahārāga).

⁵⁵The four bases of miraculous powers (Skt. *caturddhipāda*, Tib. *rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi*) are: 1. intention (canda, 'dun pa); 2. diligence (vīrya, brtson 'grus); 3. attention (citta, sems pa); and 4. discernment

Suchness, maintainer of great mindfulness,
Samādhi king of fourfold mindfulness,⁵⁶ (127)

Fragrant with flowers of bodhi's branches,
An ocean of *thathāgata* qualities,
Knowing the journey of the eightfold path,
Knowing the path of true and perfect buddhas, (128)

The great attachment of all living beings,
Attachment-free, comparable to space,
When springing up in every creature's mind,
He is, for every being, as swift as mind; (129)

Knowing the aptitude of every being,
And captivating every creature's mind,
Knowing the essence of the aggregated,⁵⁷
Himself with fully pure five aggregates, (130)

Reaching the endpoint of all going forth,
Skilful at going forth in every way,
Established on all paths of going forth,
Teacher of going forth in all its forms, (131)

Using the twelve links to uproot becoming,
Bearing the fully purified twelve forms,⁵⁸
His own form being the way of fourfold truth,
He is one who has gained the eightfold knowledge;⁵⁹ (132)

Bearing the truth's meaning in twelve aspects,⁶⁰
Knowing reality in sixteen forms,⁶¹
Whose great awakening has twenty forms,⁶²

(mīmāṃsā, dpyod pa).

⁵⁶The four applications of mindfulness (*catuḥ-smṛtyupasthāna*, *dran pa nye bar bzhag pa bzhi*) are mindfulness of 1. body (*kāya*, *lus*), 2. feelings (*vedanā*, *tshor ba*), 3. mind (*citta*, *sems*), and 4. phenomena (*dharma*, *chos*).

⁵⁷A more literal translation may be, 'he who know the reality of the objects [subsumed in] the five aggregates'.

⁵⁸According to the commentators, this refers to the twelve sense sources (*āyatana*, *skye mched*) in their pure forms.

⁵⁹These eight knowledges are understood by *Vilāsavajra* as follows: knowledge of Dharma, knowledge of non-duality, knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the origin, knowledge of cessation, knowledge of the path, knowledge of destruction, and knowledge of non-arising. *Vimalamitra*, however, offers another interpretation: *Mañjuśrī* realises that the eight forms of consciousness (from eye consciousness through to the storehouse consciousness) are unarisen.

⁶⁰*Vilāsavajra* identifies these twelve aspects as the forms of the Four Truths as divided across the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma. *Vimalamitra*, by contrast, enumerates the twelve as the five families (*rigs lnga*), the five wisdoms (*ye shes lnga*), and insight (*shes rab*) and compassion (*snying rje*).

⁶¹*Vilāsavajra* explains that sixteen forms referred to here are sixteen moments of realisation of the Four Truths on the Path of Seeing. *Vimalamitra*, by contrast, enumerates these as the sixteen varieties of emptiness.

⁶²*Vilāsavajra* enumerates these twenty forms as four ways in which each of the five aggregates are not conceptualised. For example, by achieving awakening, one does not believe that (1) material form is the self,

The true Buddha, omniscient, most supreme, (133)

Dispatching some ten million buddha bodies
With emanations inconceivable,
The final realisation of all moments,
Knowing for every mind each moment's object, (134)

And manifesting for the sake of all
With means derived from varied vehicles,
Having gone forth on all three vehicles,
Abiding in the single vehicle's fruit, (135)

With purified afflictive spheres⁶³ at heart,
Annihilator of all karmic spheres,
Having traversed all oceanic floods,⁶⁴
Having emerged from yoga's dark forest,⁶⁵ (136)

Casting off general, minor and complete
Afflictions and their latent tendencies;
Having great insight, means, and empathy;
Achieving fruitful aims for living beings; (137)

Being object-free by means of all perceptions,⁶⁶
With consciousness as object, with cessation,
Holding all beings as objects of his mind,
His knowledge being the mind of all the buddhas, (138)

Residing in the mind of every being,
Having become their minds' equality,
And satisfying the mind of every being,
He is for every being great mental joy; (139)

Confusion-free regarding points of doctrine,⁶⁷
Lacking erroneousness in all its forms,
With doubt-free thinking, knowing three objects,
With all objects, three properties by nature,⁶⁸ (140)

(2) the self is within material form, (3) material form is within the self, or (4) material form possesses the self. Multiple by five aggregates, these add up to twenty forms. Vimalamitra, on the other hand, understands these twenty forms as the transformation of the five elements, of the five aggregates, of the five afflictions, and of the five faculties.

⁶³Vilāsavajra unpacks 'afflictive spheres' as referring to the eighteen spheres (*dhātu, kṛmāṣṭi*) beginning the eye sphere.

⁶⁴Vilāsavajra explains that 'oceanic floods' are the traditionally enumerated four floods—namely, the floods of desire, cyclic existence, views, and ignorance.

⁶⁵Vilāsavajra explains that here the practice of *yoga* is compared to a 'dark forest' because it is not easily traversed; Mañjuśrī has emerged from the practice of *yoga* and has arrived the state of *nirvāṇa*.

⁶⁶According to Vilāsavajra, the words 'all perceptions' (*sarvasaṃjñā*) refer to certain forms of mundane meditative concentration. Through these meditations, Mañjuśrī enters a state of objectless awareness.

⁶⁷An alternate reading and interpretation of this verse may read, 'one who has reached the end of accomplishment, confusion free'.

⁶⁸Vilāsavajra explains the final three cryptic names here as follows: 'three objects' are the past, present, and future; 'all objects' are all objects of the animate and inanimate world; and the 'three properties' are

With objects of the five *skandhas*, three times,
Discerning thoroughly moment by moment,
Awakening in but a single moment,
His nature being equal to all buddhas, (141)

His body bodiless, the best of bodies,
Having realised the pinnacle of bodies,
Displaying his forms of every possible kind,
He is the great gem, most precious stone; (142)

10. The wisdom of performing actions

To be realised by all of the buddhas,
The buddhas' unsurpassed awakening,
Devoid of syllables, yet born of mantra,
Bred of Great Mantra's threefold lineage,⁶⁹ (143)

The father to the meaning of all mantras,
The great *bindu*, bereft of syllables,
Five syllabled, the greatest empty one,⁷⁰
Bindu-void, with a hundred syllables,⁷¹ (144)

Endowed with every form, but free from form,
Bearing the half of half of sixteen *bindus*,⁷²
Without members, transcending every grouping,
Grasping the summit of the fourth *dhyāna*. (145)

Knowing the *dhyāna*'s each and every aspect,
Knowing *samādhis*' pedigrees and families,
The best of bodies as the *samādhi* body,
The king of every body of enjoyment, (146)

The best of bodies—emanation body,
The heir to emanations of the buddhas,
With varied emanations everywhere,
While benefiting all, however needed, (147)

The sovereign of the gods, the god of gods,
The lord of *asuras*, a deity ruler,

the three *guṇas* extensively described in Sāṅkhya philosophy.

⁶⁹According to Vilāsavajra, the three lineages (i.e. families) are those of Vairocana, Akṣobhya, and Amitābha.

⁷⁰Vilāsavajra and Vimalamitra both identify these syllables as the seeds of the five *tathāgatas*, but they diverge regarding precisely how these syllables are to be identified.

⁷¹Some witnesses of the text in Sanskrit and Tibetan indicate that the name is 'one with six syllables'. Vilāsavajra identifies the six syllables as 'oṃ vāgiśvara hūm', while Vimalamitra, reading 'one with a hundred syllables', interprets the hundred syllables as a generic large number that points to all the various mantras for which Mañjuśrī is the source.

⁷²Vilāsavajra refrains from offering a commentary on this line, but Vimalamitra clarifies that the four drops/*bindus* (i.e. 'half of half of sixteen') are the seed syllables *a ā am aḥ*. This being a commonly quoted verse, a variety of highly esoteric interpretations can be found.

The sovereign of immortals, guru of gods,
The highest lord of *pramathas*,⁷³ Pramatha, (148)

Crossing the gloomy forest of existence,
The single teacher, guru of all beings,
In every directions of well-known worlds
He is the greatest teacher of the Dharma; (149)

Armoured in armour made of loving-kindness;
And shielded by the shield of his compassion;
Holding a wisdom sword, arrow, and bow;
Ending the war with ignorance and *kleśas*; (150)

Hero, the *māras*' enemy and tamer,
Dispeller of the four *māras*' danger,
Defeater of all armies of *mārās*,
The true buddha, a guide to living beings, (151)

Worthy of reverence and respect-worthy,
Worthy of homage, always honourable,
Worthy of worship and most highly adored,
Worthy of obeisance, the highest guru, (152)

Spanning three worlds with just a single stride,
His step reaching the boundary of space,
Knowing the three,⁷⁴ well versed, and purified,
With six knowledges and six recollections, (153)

The bodhisattva and mahāsattva,
With great power, transcending worldly life,
Perfected from perfecting his insight,
Having obtained insight's reality, (154)

Knowing himself, knowing others, the whole,
For, wholly beneficial, he's man's best;
Surpassing all points of comparison,
The greatest master of knowledge and knowing, (155)

The foremost master of bestowing Dharma,
Teaching the meaning of the fourfold seal,
Supremely venerable amongst all beings
Engaged in going forth on the three paths, (156)

With glory purified by ultimate truth,
Most fortunate within the threefold world,

⁷³Pramathas are a class of being otherwise known as *gaṇas*. They are known as serving as attendants to Śiva.

⁷⁴The three names in this verse quarter evoke the Vedic learning of a Brahman. Vilāsavajra understands 'Knowing the three' to refer to the three vedas: Rgveda, Yajurveda, and Sāmaveda. Vimalamitra comments that the three are the scriptures of the *tripiṭaka*, or else three bodies of a buddha.

The glorious provider of all wealth,
The best amongst the glorious, Mañjuśrī. (157)

11. Praise for the wisdom of the five *tathāgatas*.

Homage to you, boon granter, best of vajras;
The summit of existence, homage to you;
Homage to you, whose source is emptiness;
O Buddha's awakening, homage to you; (158)

O passion of the buddhas, homage to you;
Desire of the buddhas, I pay you homage;
O love of every buddha, homage to you;
The joy of all the buddhas, I pay you homage; (159)

O smile of every buddha, homage to you;
The laugh of all the buddhas, I pay to you homage;
O speech of every buddha, homage to you;
The heart of all the buddhas, I pay to you homage; (160)

Arisen from non-being, homage to you;
Homage to you, arisen from the buddhas;
Arisen from the sky, homage to you;
Homage to you, born of pristine wisdom; (161)

O net of illusion, homage to you;
Homage to you, the buddhas' spectacle;
Homage to you, the everything of all;
O body of wisdom, homage to you! (162)

*om sarva-dharmābhāva-svabhāva viśuddha-vajra a ā aṃ aḥ | prakṛti-pariśuddhāḥ
sarva-dharmā yad uta sarva-tathāgata-jñāna-kāya-mañjuśrī-pariśuddhitām upādāyati
a āḥ | sarva-tathāgata-hṛdayaṃ hara hara | om hūṃ hrīḥ bhagavan jñāna-mūrti
vāg-iśvara mahā-vāca sarva-dharma gaganāmala-supariśuddha-dharma-dhātu-jñāna-
garbha āḥ* ⁷⁵

And then Vajradhara, the glorious,
Most pleased and satisfied, with folded palms,
Prostrated to the Buddha, the great protector,
The Blessed One and the *tathāgata*, (163)

And with a host of other numerous
Vajrapāṇis—the lords of *guhyakas*,
Noble protectors and great wrathful kings—
He spoke the following intensive praise: (164)

⁷⁵ *Om!* O you whose nature is the absence of all phenomena, whose vajra-essence is completely pure—*a ā aṃ aḥ!* All phenomena are by nature fully pure—to explain, they are fully pure based on state of complete purity that is Mañjuśrī, the wisdom body of all *tathāgatas*—*a āḥ!* Seize, seize the heart of all *tathāgatas*. *Om hūṃ hrīḥ!* O Blessed One, wisdom body, lord of speech whose speech is great, he who is all Dharma, whose essence is the wisdom of the Dharma realm that's completely pure like stainless space—*āḥ!*

Protector, we rejoice! How excellent!
It's truly excellent what you have taught!
By you our lofty aim has been achieved,
Which leads to true and full awakening; (165)

And so the aims of helpless mundane beings,
Who seek the fruits of perfect liberation.
Just this, taught in the *Māyājāla*'s system,
Is the pure path leading to excellence: (166)

With largeness, vastness, and profundity,
With meaning great, achieving beings' aims,
Just this makes up the sphere of every buddha
That's taught by every truly awakened one. (167)

Colophon:

This concludes the supreme chanting of the names of the Blessed One Mañjuśrī, the wisdom deity. Extracted from the noble *Net of Illusion*, a *mahāyoga* tantra in sixteen thousand parts, from its "Net of *Samādhi*" chapter, it was spoken by the Blessed One Śākyamuni, the *tathāgata*.