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**A Few Remarks: An Explanation of the
Praise to Noble Mañjuśrī Known as
*Glorious Wisdom's Excellent Qualities***

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

*rje btsun 'jam dpal dbyangs kyi bstod pa dpal ye shes yon tan bzang po zhes bya ba'i rnam par bshad pa nyung
ngu'i ngag*

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

In *An Explanation of the Praise to Noble Mañjuśrī*,¹ Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo gives a commentary to the famous praise to Mañjuśrī originally composed by Vajrāyudha.² Khyentse Wangpo's remarks include explanation of the praise's author, its title, the praise itself, and its benefits, which are many.

OUTLINE

I. THE AUTHOR

II. THE TITLE

III. THE TRANSLATOR'S HOMAGE

IV. THE ACTUAL MAIN PART

A. The Actual Praise

1. The Enlightened Mind

1.1 Praise of Wisdom

1.2 Praise of Love

2. Enlightened Speech

3. Enlightened Body

B. Benefits

1. Benefits of Reciting for a Certain Time

2. Benefits of Reciting it Continuously

V. CONCLUSION

རྩེ་བཅུན་འཇམ་དཔལ་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་བསྟོན་པའི་རྣམ་པར་བཤད་པ།

An Explanation of the Praise to Noble Mañjuśrī

Namo guru Mañjughoṣāya!

This explanation of the praise of *Glorious Wisdom's Excellent Qualities* has five parts: (1) author, (2) title of the work, (3) translator's homage, (4) actual main part, and (5) conclusion.

I. The Author

Here, some scholars claim that this text was written by Ācārya Vajrāyudha.³ Others have said that in the past, in the noble land of India, five hundred paṇḍitas were asked [by their abbot] to compose a praise to Mañjuśrī, and when they did so, Mañjughoṣa blessed them so that all their praises turned out exactly the same, and they felt confident that this must have come about through Mañjuśrī's blessings. It is said that the name of the praise too was taken from the name of their abbot: Śrī Jñāna Guṇaphala. In any case, the author was someone in whom we can have confidence.

II. The Title

In the divine Sanskrit language of the noble land of India the title is *Śrījñānaguṇaphalanāmastuti*. In Tibetan this becomes *Pal Yeshe Yönten Zangpo Zbechawe Töpa*.⁴

III. The Translator's Homage

"I prostrate to the transcendent and accomplished conqueror, the Glorious Gentle-Voiced Lord." This is the translator's homage, made before undertaking the work of translation, for the particular purpose of ensuring its accomplishment.

IV. The Actual Main Part

In this, there are two sections: (1) the actual praise and (2) the benefits.

A. The Actual Praise

The first section has three parts: praises to (1) enlightened mind, (2) enlightened speech, and (3) enlightened body.

1. THE ENLIGHTENED MIND

Here there is a praise of wisdom and a praise of love.

1.1 Praise of Wisdom

Your wise intelligence, O youthful Mañjuśrī, father of all the victorious buddhas, has thoroughly overcome the darkness of the **two kinds of obscuration** which are to be abandoned, both emotional ones which are the roots of desire and so on, and cognitive ones which are the roots of confused dualistic perceptions.

How is this? That too is here explained. Imagine the **sun** free from the obscuring veils of dusty haze and **clouds**; like this, your wisdom, when it discerns all dharmas, is utterly **purified** of those stains of delusion that obscure our true nature, and it is **brilliant** with the light of wisdom that penetrates all knowable things. How this wisdom perceives its objects is also explained. It says that you **perceive the whole of reality**, everything that exists, all dharmas—even the most subtle—included within "thorough affliction" and "total purification" from visual forms up until omniscience, and you see them directly and nakedly, exactly as they are, clearly discerning their essence and their distinctive characteristics.

At your heart, you hold a book of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the complete teachings on the profound and vast graduated paths of the bodhisattvas, in order to symbolize the fact that—as stated above—you possess the twofold wisdom that knows all things exactly as they are.

1.2 Praise of Love

All sentient beings without such lasting qualities are trapped in the **prison of saṃsāra**—from the peak of existence down to the lowest hell of Avīci—where the three doors of their body, speech, and mind are **shrouded in the thick darkness of ignorance**, as they cling to concepts of "I" and "mine." For all these beings without exception who are, as a consequence, **tormented by** the three kinds of **suffering**, you possess a deep,

caring compassion. This is illustrated by an example: just like the **mother** of an **only child** who **loves** them so tenderly, you, Mañjughoṣa, have the loving and unbiased wish to rescue from suffering each and every sentient being, who is currently tormented by frustration and pain.

2. ENLIGHTENED SPEECH

Inspired by this great affectionate love, and seeing the way things are, in order to establish all beings in the highest possible state of attainment, you speak and thereby clearly reveal what should be adopted and what should be abandoned, in a single voice that nevertheless has the **sixty melodious tones** of Brahmā's speech. "What is its function?" you might ask. When the **dragon** of **thunder** lets out his mighty **roar**, it rouses all other beings from their sleep. Similarly, when you speak with the voice that possesses these special qualities, and the beings to be guided hear the great roar of the 84,000 sections of the Dharma thundering in their ears, it rouses them all from the heavy slumber of their **disturbing emotions** and breaks through the tight **chains of** defiling **karma**, which cast them into saṃsāra, perpetuate it, and keep them bound within it.

In order that you might inspire all beings to attain the state of liberation and omniscience, on your right you hold the sword of knowledge, the essence of all the buddhas' wisdom, which also has its symbolic meaning. On the basis of the wisdom and loving compassion described above, with your enlightened activity of speech, you **dispel the darkness of ignorance**, in which beings cling to "I" and "mine" and are thus prevented from seeing reality. Since in the process you **cut through** all the fresh **shoots of suffering**, such as birth, old age, sickness, and death, that develop out of ignorance, **you hold the sword** of wisdom, symbolizing that this happens cleanly and unobstructedly.

3. ENLIGHTENED BODY

In definitive terms, Mañjuśrī, you are now, and **from the very beginning** you have always been, a genuine buddha, in whom all the qualities of abandonment and realization are totally perfected, because you completely traversed all ten bhūmis, such as the Joyous and so on, and purified the two obscurations, together with any latent habitual tendencies, many incalculable eons ago. Nevertheless, from a merely provisional perspective, you appear as the foremost of all the bodhisattvas, and demonstrate the means of training as a bodhisattva in the presence of all the victorious ones and their heirs throughout the ten directions.

Moreover, from the perspective of the Mantrayāna, there is no doubt whatsoever that you, Mañjuśrī, are a buddha. In fact, this is even stated in the sūtras. In the *Sūtra of the Array of Mañjuśrī's Pure Land*, for example, it says you have completed the ten bhūmis. And in two other sūtras—the *Śūraṃgamasamādhi Sūtra* and the *Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra*—you are clearly referred to as a buddha. Your enlightened form is

adorned with the ten times ten plus twelve—which is to say one hundred and twelve—major and minor **marks**.

Given that you, **Mañjuhoṣa**, the “Gentle-Voiced,” are in possession of these qualities of enlightened body, speech, mind, and activity in their entirety, **we prostrate** in homage **before you**, showing the greatest respect with our own body, speech, and mind, and pray that you may **dispel** all **the darkness from our own minds**, and, more generally, from the minds of all living creatures.

B. Benefits

Here there are two categories: the benefits of reciting this for a certain length of time and the benefits of reciting it continuously.

1. BENEFITS OF RECITING FOR A CERTAIN TIME

In regard to the benefits to be gained from reciting this, the king of praises, for a certain period of time, someone with faith and diligence, who recites this praise with a pure, altruistic motivation that is untainted by hypocrisy, and who is intent upon complete enlightenment for the sake of others, will receive benefits according to the number of recitations. As they recite the praise once, seven times, twenty-one times, or even a hundred or a thousand times each day for a month or a year or whatever period, they will gain increasing qualities, such as the purification of their obscurations. By reciting it once in this way, the obscurations that obstruct the arising of enlightened qualities will be slightly purified, and they will engage in the four close applications of mindfulness. By reciting it seven times, they will gain the ability to retain the Dharma precisely as they have heard it, which is the direct cause for developing enlightened qualities. By reciting it twenty-one times, they will develop courageous eloquence—that is, the unobstructed intelligence that is the context for enlightened qualities—and thereby apply the diligence of the four correct endeavors. With a hundred recitations, in order that their qualities might be brought to completion, they will gain the power of total recall, so that whatever learning and courageous eloquence they have already gained will never be lost, and they will achieve the samādhi of the four miraculous limbs. Through a thousand recitations, they will gain, as the function of your enlightened qualities, the power of wisdom that enables one to defeat opponents in debate.

Thus, it continues, so that if you are able to recite more than a thousand repetitions, you will gain the strength of wisdom, at which point your wisdom will become capable of withstanding challenges from opponents and any other circumstances.

This serves to illustrate that you will gain the immeasurable qualities of the paths of training, such as the other powers and strengths (meaning faith and so on), the seven

branches of enlightenment, and the eightfold noble path, as well as the qualities of the path of no more training.

2. BENEFITS OF RECITING IT CONTINUOUSLY

Beyond this, it will be explained how benefits arise from reciting the praise continuously. Someone whose mind stream has been purified through faith, diligence, and twofold bodhicitta, who recites the praise three times a day throughout their lives will come to possess all the qualities mentioned above. Upon the foundation of ultimate bodhicitta, meditating on *śūnyatā* (the aspect of wisdom) becomes the direct cause, and compassion (the aspect of skillful means) becomes the contributing condition, for completing the five paths. Then, upon the foundation of relative bodhicitta, skillful means and compassion become the direct cause, and wisdom and *śūnyatā* the contributing condition, for reaching the ten bhūmis.

As the paths and bhūmis are gradually traversed in this manner, the qualities of abandonment and realization grow proportionately greater, and one swiftly arrives at the citadel wherein all knowable things are understood with perfect wisdom. At the culmination of the paths, one actualizes the dharmakāya for one's own benefit. At the culmination of the bhūmis, one benefits others through the two form kāyas, and, like a great captain, performs the enlightened activity of liberating all beings not only from the crippling sufferings of saṃsāric existence but also their causes, continuously, for as long as space remains.

V. Conclusion

Here there are three sections: the author's colophon, the translator's colophon, and inspiring delight by means of an incidental history. The first of these, which begins "*Glorious Wisdom's Excellent Qualities...*," the second which begins "the holy translators...", and the third which begins with "Ācārya Dignāga and..." are easy to understand.

The unfathomable benefits and blessings of this king of praises have always been evident and remain clear even up to the present day. Having first received the transmission for focusing your awareness⁵ from a teacher belonging to the lineage, exert yourself in the practice with one-pointed faith and diligence.

*Written by Mañjughoṣa simply as a note to aid his own and others' memory. Sarvasattvabhito bhavatu.*⁶

NOTES

1. This translation is based on the following source-text edition: Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *'jam dbyangs bstod pa rnam bshad*, in *mkhyen brtse'i dbang po'i bka' 'bum*, vol. 5, 199–206 (Gangtok: Gonpo Tseten, 1977–1980).
2. For a translation of the praise, see <https://lotsawahouse.org/indian-masters/vajrayudha/praise-to-manjushri>.
3. *slob dpon rdo rje mtshon cha*.
4. *dpal ye shes yon tan bzang po zhes bya ba'i bstod pa*.
5. *rig gtad* is an abbreviated form of empowerment for lower tantra deities such as Mañjuśrī, usually involving a simple body, speech, and mind blessing.
6. Reading *satA* (*satā*) as *satwa* (*sattva*). This Sanskrit expression could be translated as "May all beings benefit!"

GLOSSARY

Āṅgulimālīya Sūtra

འཕགས་པ་སོར་མོའི་ཕྱང་བ་ལ་ཕན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ། • *'phags pa sor mo'i phreng ba la phan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo* • *āṅgulimālīyasūtra*

A Mahāyāna sūtra included in the list of *tathāgata garbha* sūtras for its extensive discussion on the proper view of emptiness.

Avīci

མནར་མེད། • *mnar med* • *avīci*

The Hell of Unrelenting Pain, the lowest of the eight hot hells.

bhūmi

ས། • *sa* • *bhūmi*

The bodhisattva stages or “grounds” to describe progress on the path to enlightenment.

Brahmā

ཆངས་པ། • *tshangs pa* • *brahmā*

One of the principal gods in the Indic pantheon considered to epitomize light, life, and growth.

dharmakāya

ཆོས་སྒྱུ། • *chos sku* • *dharmakāya*

The “Dharma body” of the Buddha. One of three (or four) bodies of a buddha.

Dignāga

ཕྱོགས་གྱི་གླང་པོ། • *phyogs kyi glang po* • *dignāga*

Dignāga (c. sixth century) was an Indian scholar of *pramāṇa* and student of Vasubandhu.

Glorious Gentle-Voiced Lord

དཔལ་མགོན་པོ་འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས། • *dpal mgon po 'jam pa'i dbyangs*

An epithet of Mañjuśrī.

Glorious Wisdom's Excellent Qualities

དཔལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཡོན་ཏན་བཟང་པོ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་བསྟོན་པ། • *dpal ye shes yon tan bzang po zhes bya ba'i bstod pa* • *śrījñānagunaphalanāmastuti*

A famous praise to Mañjuśrī attributed to Vajrāyudha.

kāya

སྐ ་ *sku* • *kāya*

The form or “body” of a buddha, often divided into three: dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya.

Mañjughoṣa

འཇམ་དབྱངས། • *'jam dbyangs* • *mañjughoṣa*

Another name of Mañjuśrī.

Mañjuśrī

འཇམ་དཔལ། • *'jam dpal* • *mañjuśrī*

The bodhisattva who embodies the knowledge and wisdom of the buddhas, traditionally depicted with a sword in his right hand and a text in his left hand.

Prajñāpāramitā

ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ། • *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa* • *prajñāpāramitā*

Perfection of Wisdom literature discovered by Nāgārjuna. Its central topic is emptiness.

Śrī Jñāna Guṇaphala

དཔལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཡོན་ཏན་བཟང་པོ། • *dpal ye shes yon tan bzang po* • *śrī jñāna guṇaphala*

An Indian abbot (n.d.) associated with the transmission of the eponymous *Glorious Wisdom's Excellent Qualities*.

śūnyatā

སྟོང་པ་རྟིད། • *stong pa nyid* • *śūnyatā*

Emptiness. The lack of inherent existence of self and phenomena.

Śūraṃgamasamādhi Sūtra

དཔལ་བར་འགྲོ་བའི་ཉིང་རེ་འཛིན་གྱི་མདོ། • *dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo* •

śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra

A Mahāyāna sūtra focused on the transcendental nature, supernatural powers, and feats bestowed by the “samādhi of the heroic progression.”

Sūtra of the Array of Mañjuśrī's Pure Land

འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཁྱིའི་ཡོན་ཏན་བཀོད་པ། • *'jam dpal gyi sangs rgyas kyi zhing gi yon tan bkod pa* • *mañjuśrībuddhakṣetrāgavyūha*

A Mahāyāna sūtra explaining the connection between a bodhisattva's aspirations and the qualities of their future buddha field.

Vajrāyudha

རྡོ་རྗེ་མཚོན་ཆ། • *rdo rje mtshon cha* • *vajrāyudha*

Vajrāyudha (n.d.) was an Indian Buddhist master associated with the transmission of *Glorious Wisdom's Excellent Qualities*.