

Mañjuśrī: Origins, Role And Significance (Parts 1 & 2)

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I pay salutation to Mañjughoṣa: by his favour the mind becomes bright.
– Śāntideva¹

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Introduction

MAÑJUŚRĪ IS ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN and most important of the bodhisattvas of Mahāyāna Buddhism and is especially associated with the wisdom of awakening. He is often depicted as a beautiful youth, in keeping with the notion of the sense of freshness and newness of such liberating awareness, and is seated cross-legged on a lotus-flower throne, attired in princely silks and ornaments. In his right hand, raised above his head, he wields the symbol most distinctively his, a flaming sword of wisdom that cuts through the ignorance which binds sentient beings to a cycle of suffering and unhappiness. In his left hand, at his heart, he holds a book, a volume of the Perfection of Wisdom, representing both the source and embodiment of his awakened understanding.

Mañjuśrī's popularity spans almost two millenia, beginning with his appearance in early Mahāyāna sūtras in the first or second centuries CE. His fame as a source of inspiration, teaching and protection and as a focus for devotion and meditation spread from India throughout the whole classical Mahāyāna Buddhist world, to China, Korea, Japan and Tibet. His popularity continues today, not only within traditional Buddhist communities but also in [50] contemporary 'western' Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions. American, European and Australasian Buddhists visualise Mañjuśrī, recite his name and depict his form as part of their practice, seeing these as effective means of developing the insightful awareness (*jñāna*) that is at the heart of the Mahāyāna Buddhist perspective.

This article examines the two topics of Mañjuśrī's origins and his portrayal in non-tantric Mahāyāna literature. The rather complicated question of Mañjuśrī's origins is not ever likely to be settled conclusively. Nonetheless, I argue that Brahmā Sanatkumāra is more likely to have had some influence on Mañjuśrī's make-up than other figures previously proposed.

Although the main features of Mañjuśrī's portrayal in Mahāyāna literature are clear, the account can be only partial at present. A number of early Mahāyāna sūtras featuring Mañjuśrī, which survive only in Chinese, have yet to appear in European translation. A perhaps unexpected emphasis that emerges from the present review is the regularity with which Mañjuśrī appears as the wielder of far-reaching, and often inconceivable, miraculous power.

In what follows I tread a difficult line in writing for both a scholarly audience and for those whose focus on Mañjuśrī is primarily one of practice. I have tried to keep the body of the text relatively free from technical discussion; nonetheless the second part may be initially more approachable for some. Since there is comparatively little material readily available on Mañjuśrī – the most important monograph on him to date is in French in an academic journal (Lamotte, 1960) – part of my purpose in writing has been to make existing scholarship more widely known. Source references are supplied for those who wish to pursue topics further.

Part I: Origins

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to give a straightforward account of the origins of Mañjuśrī, unlike a number of figures in the Buddhist or, indeed, Hindu tradition. He shows no obvious development in status comparable with that seen, for instance, in the figure of Vajrapāṇi, who first appears as a *yakṣa* attendant of the Buddha, later becoming a bodhisattva and finally a Buddha under the name of Vajradhara.² Mañjuśrī does not appear in the Theravāda Pāli canon or in any other non-Mahāyāna text. In the sūtras of Mahāyāna Buddhism, [51] Mañjuśrī is found fully-formed as an advanced bodhisattva. Yet despite the lack of a clear ancestry, various influences have been perceived in his make-up and a number of theories proposed as to his origins.

i. *Pañcaśikha*

THE FRENCH SCHOLAR MARCELLE LALOU has pointed to a number of affinities between Mañjuśrī and a celestial musician (Skt. *gandharva*) called Pañcaśikha, who appears in both Sanskrit and Pali texts.³ Lalou argues that one such affinity is a similarity in meaning between the name Pañcaśikha and a term sometimes used to describe Mañjuśrī's appearance, *pañcacīraka*, "Possessing Five [Hair-]braids".⁴ Pañcaśikha means "Five-Crests" and this is taken by Buddhaghosa to refer to a way of styling the hair. He says that Pañcaśikha owes his name to the fact that he wears his hair in five tresses or braids in the fashion of young men.⁵ On this interpretation the name Pañcaśikha becomes a synonym of *pañcacīraka*. However, "Five-Crests" does not necessarily refer to hair and Buddhaghosa's account should perhaps be treated with some caution. He could have been attempting to make sense of what was, for him, a puzzling name. Alternative explanations are possible; for example, 'crest' (*śikha*) might denote the crest or peak of a mountain and the name Pañcaśikha might therefore allude to Pañcaśikha's geographical origins. (Evidence for such an interpretation is discussed in the following section.) At the same time, it may be true that there evolved a tradition of Pañcaśikha wearing his hair as Buddhaghosa describes. The eighth-century author Vilāsavajra also glosses the word *pañcaśikha* as referring to five hair braids.⁶

Lalou points to another affinity between Mañjuśrī and Pañcaśikha in the sphere of their qualities of voice and speech. In the *Sakkapañha Sutta*, Pañcaśikha acts as an intermediary between Śakra (i.e. Indra), chief of the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (P. *Tāvātimsa*), and the Buddha.⁷ Śakra wants to speak to the Buddha but feels he is not easy to approach, so he asks Pañcaśikha to put the Buddha in an amenable mood by playing and singing to him. This Pañcaśikha does and, as a result, the Buddha praises Pañcaśikha and in so doing reveals an aptitude for aesthetic appreciation:

The sound of your strings combines well with the sound of your song, Pañcaśikha, as does the sound of your song with the sound of your strings. [52] Also, the sound of your strings does not dominate the sound of your song, Pañcaśikha, neither does the sound of your song [dominate] the sound of your strings.⁸

It is hardly surprising that Pañcaśikha, being a *gandharva*, is a good musician but here his singing or voice is praised as well. Mañjuśrī, as is well-known, is renowned for his mellifluous speech, and many of his epithets and names refer to the qualities of his voice. Perhaps best-known of Mañjuśrī's names is Mañjughoṣa, "Sweet-Voiced";⁹ he is also known as Mañjusvara,¹⁰ which also means "Sweet-Voiced", and as Mañjurava, "Of Sweet Sounds". His epithets include *vādirāja*, *vāgīśvara* and *gīṣpati*, all meaning "Lord of Speech".

A third link between Mañjuśrī and Pañcaśikha is that of youth. Pañcaśikha, as a god (*deva*), is both beautiful and perpetually young. Mañjuśrī also tends to be envisaged in the form of a young man or youth, as is witnessed by his standard epithet *kumārabhūta*, which can mean both “being a youth” and “being a prince”. It is not clear, however, that this affinity is of significance since Pañcaśikha is not portrayed as more youthful than other gods. Nevertheless, Lalou suggests that the popularity of both Pañcaśikha and Mañjuśrī derives from a single mythic source, belief in a god who is eternally young. Whether or not this might be true for Pañcaśikha, in Mañjuśrī’s case such a proposal takes no account of his specifically Buddhist role as one of the most important bodhisattvas. No doubt youth would render Mañjuśrī attractive and contribute to his appeal, but it is unlikely to have been the determining factor in his popularity; despite Mañjuśrī’s epithet *kumārabhūta*, youth is a characteristic shared by many figures in the Buddhist pantheon, especially bodhisattvas, not all of whom gained the popularity of Mañjuśrī. Furthermore, in China, where Mañjuśrī became particularly popular, especially in the T’ang period, he became renowned for appearing in the form of an old man or a beggar.¹¹

Finally, Pañcaśikha, like Mañjuśrī, appears in the role of interlocutor, questioning and receiving replies from the Buddha. In the *Mahāgovinda Sutta*, Pañcaśikha approaches the Buddha, who is staying at the Vulture’s Peak, and recounts events that he has witnessed in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, including the sight of Brahmā Sanatkumāra manifesting as himself (i.e. [53] as Pañcaśikha)!¹² The same story is found in the *Mahāvastu* where there is a section at the end, not found in the Pali version, in which Pañcaśikha has the role of interlocutor.¹³ This text depicts a closer relationship between Śākyamuni and Pañcaśikha than is found elsewhere, one which could be seen as paralleling or anticipating Mañjuśrī’s role as the major interlocutor in many Mahāyāna sūtras.

Given these affinities in the areas of name, appearance, qualities and role, might Pañcaśikha be an earlier form of Mañjuśrī? Such a theory has been proposed by David Snellgrove, who suggests that Pañcaśikha was initially called Pañcaśikha Mañjughoṣa, where the term ‘Mañjughoṣa’ is an epithet, referring to the quality of Pañcaśikha’s voice.¹⁴ Later, Snellgrove argues, the name became reversed, becoming Mañjughoṣa Pañcaśikha, where ‘Pañcaśikha’ is now the epithet of a figure whose name is Mañjughoṣa. By this account Mañjughoṣa must have been Mañjuśrī’s original name, a claim which had been made earlier by Louis de La Vallée Poussin.¹⁵ However, neither he nor Snellgrove give any reasons for this supposition nor do they cite any supporting evidence. Snellgrove’s account may seem plausible given the affinities between Pañcaśikha and Mañjuśrī, but it is not free from difficulty. There is, firstly, a lack of textual evidence linking the names Mañjughoṣa and Pañcaśikha. Snellgrove himself gives no textual support for his theory and as far as I have been able to ascertain, Pañcaśikha is never given the epithet Mañjughoṣa in the Pali texts. Nevertheless, it may be that the *king* of the *gandharva*-s was so-called, at least on one occasion. A passage from the *Dīrghāgama*, one of the Sanskrit recensions of the early Mainstream (non-Mahāyāna) Buddhist canon, describes the Himalayan mountain Gandhamādana and states that,

Miao-yin (Mañjughoṣa), king of the *gandharva*-s, surrounded by five hundred *gandharva*-s, lives there.¹⁶

However, since this passage survives only in Chinese translation, the name Mañjughoṣa is a reconstruction, so it is possible that the original Sanskrit was different.¹⁷

A further difficulty in using this passage to sustain a link between Pañcaśikha and Mañjughoṣa is that it refers to the king of the *gandharva*-s. [54] There is no doubt that Pañcaśikha is a *gandharva* but it is not clear that he is king of the *gandharva*-s. He is never referred to as such

in the Pali texts.¹⁸ Certain passages describe individuals being reborn as Pañcaśikha, which suggests that the name denoted an office – like that of ‘Śakra’, for the king of the gods – as much as a particular individual.¹⁹ Sanskrit texts generally depict Pañcaśikha in the same way as the Pali texts do, as a well-known *gandharva* and as the name of an office.²⁰

In the *Sakkapañha Sutta* Pañcaśikha himself refers to one Timbaru as king of the *gandharva*-s.²¹ At the end of the sutta, Śakra rewards Pañcaśikha for his services in helping him speak with the Buddha by giving him Timbaru’s daughter, Bhaddā, with whom Pañcaśikha has fallen in love. Śakra also says that in the future Pañcaśikha shall be king of the *gandharva*-s, presumably because of his marriage to Bhaddā.²² This promise of Śakra, noted by Lalou,²³ may account for the tendency of writers to assume Pañcaśikha’s kingship. Both Lamotte and John Brough so refer to him, though Lamotte cites no sources and implies that he is following Lalou, whereas Brough’s article is unclear as to whether his source actually refers to Pañcaśikha as a king.²⁴ Lalou does cite two instances of Pañcaśikha being described as king of the *gandharva*-s – one in the tantric work, the *Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa*, “The Root Ordinance of Mañjuśrī”, and one in the sūtra section of the Tibetan Kanjur – and I have noted another in the *Dharmadhātu-vāgīśvara-maṇḍala* of Abhayākara-gupta’s *Niṣpanna-yogāvali*.²⁵ Such references, perhaps deriving their authority from the utterance of Śakra in the *Sakkapañha Sutta*, seem to be the exception rather than the rule, however. They can hardly be regarded as evidence from which one can safely conclude that it is Pañcaśikha who is named Miao-yin (possibly Mañjughoṣa in Skt.) in the Chinese translation of the *Dīrghāgama* quoted above.

Another difficulty concerns Snellgrove’s claim that *pañcaśikha* is an epithet of Mañjuśrī, or rather of his purportedly original name, Mañjughoṣa.²⁶ Snellgrove himself offers no examples, and Lalou never suggests that *pañcaśikha* is found as one of his epithets in arguing her case for the affinity between Pañcaśikha and Mañjuśrī. As Lalou points out, Mañjuśrī does have the epithet *pañcacīra*, and a version of this, *pañcacīra-kumāra*, “youth with five hair-braids”, is preserved in the *Sādhana-mālā* for a number of his visu[55]alised forms.²⁷ In her study of Mañjuśrī’s iconography, Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann makes no mention of an epithet *pañcaśikha*. Though the term *pañcaśikha* does appear in association with Mañjuśrī in the *Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa*, it is as the name of a symbolic hand gesture (*mudrā*) rather than as an epithet.²⁸

In an important tantric work centred on Mañjuśrī, the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, “The Chanting of Names,” *pañcaśikha* occurs as one of the ‘Names’ (*nāma*). Generally, the ‘Names’ of the *Nāmasaṃgīti* are taken to be those of Mañjuśrī, who is to be understood in this context as the Knowledge-Being Mañjuśrī (Mañjuśrī-jñānasattva) rather than the bodhisattva.²⁹ Verse 93 reads:

Crested, with a tuft of hair; an ascetic, with twisted hair locks; shaven headed; wearing a crown; five-faced; with five crests [of hair] (*pañcaśikha*); with five braids of hair for a crown.³⁰

The commentator Vilāsavajra takes the term *pañcaśikha* here to refer to five hair braids and this gloss, which was noted earlier, makes good sense given the context of the rest of the verse.³¹ Theoretically it would be possible to interpret *pañcaśikha* as a *mudrā*, though this seems unlikely to be the sense intended, and this may therefore count as an instance of *pañcaśikha* used as an epithet for a form of Mañjuśrī, albeit a rarefied one. However, the ‘Names’ of the *Nāmasaṃgīti* include a wide range of terms that are not more usually associated with Mañjuśrī. Thus, the existence of *pañcaśikha* as a ‘Name’ cannot be taken to imply that it is one of Mañjuśrī’s standard epithets. Equally, the *Nāmasaṃgīti* is a relatively late work, perhaps seventh century CE, and earlier

examples of *pañcaśikha* as an epithet of Mañjuśrī need to be found for Snellgrove's account to be tenable.

To summarise this rather complicated discussion, the relation between Mañjuśrī and Pañcaśikha is at best tenuous. The affinities pointed to by Lalou are not as convincing as she would like them to be, and there is no real evidence that Mañjuśrī as a figure derives from that of Pañcaśikha in the way that David Snellgrove suggests.

ii. *Gandhamādana*

IN THE PASSAGE from the *Dirghāgama* quoted above, a mountain called Gandhamādana was referred to as the home of the king of the *gandharva*-s, Miao-[56]yin (possibly 'Mañjughoṣa'). Gandhamādana is part of a chain of Himalayan mountains which surround a lake known by the name Anavatapta in the Buddhist tradition and famous as the source of the rivers Ganges, Indus and Oxus. In the commentary to the *Udāna* the mountains and lake are itemised:

The lake Anavatapta is surrounded by five mountain peaks called, respectively, Sudarśana, Citra, Kāla, Gandhamādana, and Kailāsa.³²

Thus Gandhamādana is part of a distinctive five-peaked – *pañcaśikha* or *pañcaśīrṣa* in Sanskrit – group of mountains. The association of the term *pañcaśikha* with the region where the king of the *gandharva*-s and his retinue are reputed to live might suggest that Pañcaśikha, being a celebrated *gandharva*, could derive his name from the geographical features of this area. The Indian tradition generally took the Himalayas to be the home of *gandharva*-s and Pañcaśikha is also said to frequent them.³³ In the *Mañjarī Jātaka* of the *Mahāvastu* he visits a Himalayan hermit to persuade him to develop generosity,³⁴ and in the *Mahāmāyūrī* he is said to live in Kashmir, the north-western region of the Himalayas close to (or containing) the five mountain peaks surrounding lake Anavatapta.³⁵

Mañjuśrī is also associated with Gandhamādana. In the short *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*, which is discussed and translated into French by Lamotte,³⁶ he is described as visiting the Himalayas where he converts five hundred hermits (*rṣi*) to Buddhism. Some time later, Mañjuśrī appears to enter final Nirvāṇa in a blaze of light and fire through his skill as an advanced bodhisattva. It is this event that gives the sūtra its name.³⁷ His remains are taken to the summit of a certain "Perfume Mountain" where, it is said, he will be honoured by innumerable *deva*-s, *nāga*-s and *yakṣa*-s. Perfume Mountain is identified by Lamotte as Gandhamādana, "[Mountain] Intoxicating with Perfumes".³⁸

As Mañjuśrī's popularity spread he came to be connected with mountains in other parts of the Buddhist world, notably Gośṛṅga in Khotan and Wu-t'ai shan, "Five-Terrace Mountain", in China.³⁹ Both Gośṛṅga and Wu-t'ai shan also have lakes nearby and the Wu-t'ai shan complex, as its name indicates, has five peaks. This double association with five-peaked mountains may be no more than coincidence, but if Mañjuśrī was already known by the epithet *pañcacāra*, locations also associated with the number five could have been [57] seen as appropriate to him. Alternatively, Wu-t'ai shan may have appeared as a suitable abode for Mañjuśrī because of an earlier association with the five-peaked region of Mt. Gandhamādana.

iii. *Brahmā & Brahmā Sanatkumāra*

A FIGURE WHO MAY have had some influence on the make-up of Mañjuśrī is the god Brahmā, who in the Hindu tradition is well-known for his activities of world-creation. Richard Robinson has noted that Mañjuśrī and Brahmā share the epithet Vāgīśvara, "Lord of Speech".⁴⁰ Buddhist texts

speak of ‘Brahmā-s’ in the plural, referring to those who live in the highest of the realms of the gods, the Brahmāloka. The Pali *Janavasabha Sutta* describes the qualities of speech of a Brahmā called Sanatkumāra, who is also a disciple of the Buddha. So that he can appear to the assembled gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, Brahmā Sanatkumāra takes on the form of Pañcaśikha – as he does, as noted earlier, in the *Mahāgovinda Sutta* – and in this form, which is said to outshine the other gods in splendour, he proceeds to discourse on the Buddha’s Dharma. The text describes his voice as “fluent, intelligible, sweet (*mañju*), audible, continuous, distinct, deep and resonant”,⁴¹ and as one that communicates perfectly with the assembly but does not penetrate beyond it. One possessing a voice with these eight characteristics, the *Sutta* continues, is said to be “Brahmā-voiced” (*brahmassara*).⁴²

Brahmā Sanatkumāra’s great qualities of voice and speech are not his only link with Mañjuśrī. His name Sanat-kumāra, meaning “Forever-a-youth”, is almost identical to Mañjuśrī’s standard epithet, *kumārabhūta*, “Being a youth”. One reason that Brahmā Sanatkumāra is “Forever-a-youth” is that, like all the gods, he never grows old. Buddhaghosa provides a more individual reason. In a former birth, Brahmā Sanatkumāra practised meditation while still a boy with his hair tied in five knots (*pañcacūḷa*) (in the fashion of boys) and was reborn into the Brahma world with his meditative state (*jhāna*) intact.⁴³ That Mañjuśrī also wears his hair in the manner of a youth is suggested by his epithet *kumārabhūta*; it is made explicit by the description *pañcacīraka*, “Having Five Braids [of Hair]”, discussed above.

As a candidate for having an influence in the make-up of Mañjuśrī, the figure of Brahmā Sanatkumāra has at least as good a claim as Pañcaśikha. The [58] affinity of the names Sanatkumāra and Kumārabhūta is immediate and clear; no interpretation is required as it is with *pañcaśikha* and *pañcacīraka*. Brahmā Sanatkumāra’s qualities of speech are more apparent and consonant with Mañjuśrī’s than are Pañcaśikha’s. Furthermore, in the *Janavasabha Sutta* he is depicted not only as a disciple of the Buddha but as one who teaches the Dharma, acting in effect as the Buddha’s spokesman just as Mañjuśrī does. Also like Mañjuśrī, he is able to employ magical powers in order to make his teaching more effective. The *Janavasabha Sutta* describes him as creating thirty-three forms of himself, one sitting at the couch of each of the gods; each form talks in such a way that each god thinks that only the figure of Brahmā Sanatkumāra near at hand is speaking.⁴⁴ Sanatkumāra is associated with wisdom elsewhere. In the Pali *Samyutta Nikāya* he is referred to as the author of a verse praising wisdom (*vijjā*)⁴⁵ and in the brāhmanical *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (bk.7) he teaches Nārada the highest truth.

In Hindu Purāṇic literature, Brahmā’s consort is said to be the goddess Sarasvatī, patroness of the arts and of learning, and in some Buddhist contexts she is found as Mañjuśrī’s consort. Sarasvatī was an important figure in the Vedic period well before her connection with Brahmā. As the goddess of the river along which Vedic learning developed, she became the inspirer of eloquence and was known as Vāgdevī, “Goddess of Speech”. In the post-Vedic period Sarasvatī’s role was not fixed: sometimes she is depicted as Viṣṇu’s consort, sometimes as Brahmā’s daughter as well as his consort. It is not clear, therefore, that her role as Mañjuśrī’s consort is calqued on her relationship with Brahmā. Certainly, given the importance of speech in Mañjuśrī’s ‘personality’, Sarasvatī would be an obvious choice as a consort. It should also be noted that Sarasvatī only appears as Mañjuśrī’s consort within the context of a later (and tantric) period of Buddhism, so that if there is any influence from Brahmā here it comes after the formation of Mañjuśrī’s defining role and status as the bodhisattva of wisdom.⁴⁶

iv. Kārttikeya

As well as suggesting that Mañjuśrī has an affinity with Pañcaśikha, Lalou argues that he also has one with the Hindu god Kārttikeya.⁴⁷ The *Harivaṃsa*, traditionally taken as an appendix to the *Mahābhārata* and concerned with the [59] glorification of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, identifies Brahmā Sanatkumāra with Kārttikeya, also known as Skanda and Kumāra. In the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ* there is a description of a Kārttikeya-Mañjuśrī, to be depicted, according to the text, sitting upon a peacock, the usual throne of Kārttikeya.⁴⁸ The same work contains a mantra called Kārttikeya-Mañjuśrī, extolled as being particular to Mañjuśrī.⁴⁹ Mañjuśrī is also given the epithet Kumāra, which Lalou takes as a borrowing from Kārttikeya. Lalou concludes that Mañjuśrī, “appears very much to be the Mahāyānist equivalent of the brahmanical Kārttikeya”.⁵⁰

It is not clear whether Lalou is suggesting that Kārttikeya is a prototype or antecedent of Mañjuśrī. If the latter, her source references are rather too late: the *Harivaṃsa* is usually dated to 300–500 CE⁵¹ and the figure of Mañjuśrī is well established as a bodhisattva in Mahāyāna sūtras translated into Chinese in the second century CE by Lokakṣema. As for the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ*, it is a composite work, which as it stands cannot be earlier than the 8th century since it includes a history of Buddhism down to the beginning of the Pāla dynasty.⁵² However, parts of it are very likely to be older and Wayman believes that some could go back to the 4th century.⁵³ The *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ* certainly shows signs of being influenced by the brāhmanical tradition, yet the composition of this text must post-date the period during which Mañjuśrī appeared. The *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ* is also a tantric text, as the reference to a Kārttikeya-Mañjuśrī mantra indicates, and it is likely that, for whatever reason, Kārttikeya-Mañjuśrī represents a grafting of extraneous material onto a pre-existing figure.

If, on the other hand, Lalou is suggesting that Kārttikeya parallels Mañjuśrī in terms of make-up or ‘personality’, again evidence is lacking. Kārttikeya has very little in common with Mañjuśrī. The son of Agni, fostered by the Kṛttikās (the Pleiades, from whom his name, a patronymic, derives), Kārttikeya becomes the chief battle god of the Hindu pantheon.⁵⁴ Military exploits seem to be his major interest and although Mañjuśrī is given, at least in the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ*, the epithet Kumāra, in Kārttikeya’s case this appears to refer to his bachelorhood, a state resulting, according to most accounts, from his dislike of women. The common epithet Kumāra may help account both for the identification of Brahmā Sanatkumāra with Kārttikeya as well as [60] for the evolution of a form of Mañjuśrī – dubbed Kārttikeya-Mañjuśrī. However, a shared epithet is insufficient a basis upon which to establish a structural parallel.

v. Nepal

BENOYTOSH BHATTACHARYA⁵⁵ puts forward the thesis that Mañjuśrī was a great man who brought civilization to Nepal from China and was subsequently deified. His textual source for this is the *Svayambhū Purāṇa*,⁵⁶ which contains a legend that Mañjuśrī came from China and created Nepal, at that time just the Kathmandu valley, by draining the lake that previously covered it. According to the legend, Mañjuśrī was living in China on Mount Pañcaśīrṣa (“Five-Peak”) with a number of disciples when by supernormal means he gained the knowledge that the Self-Existent (*svayambhū*) Ādibuddha had manifested in Nepal on a hill near a lake called Kālī (*kālīhrada*). Mañjuśrī travels to Nepal with his disciples to pay homage to the Ādibuddha but discovers on arrival that the place where he has manifested is almost inaccessible because of the surrounding *nāga*-infested lake. Using the power of his sword, Mañjuśrī cuts six valleys into the mountain range at the south of the lake, allowing it to drain away. At the same time he excavates a site for another lake, in which the *nāga*-s of Kālīhrada are invited to take up residence. He then

builds a temple for the Ādibuddha (on present-day Svayambhunath Hill) and makes a residence for himself nearby.⁵⁷ After creating a king for the newly-formed land of Nepal from among his followers Mañjuśrī returns to China where he soon becomes a divine bodhisattva, leaving his material body behind.⁵⁸

What is to be made of Bhattacharyya's interpretation of this material? Firstly the *Svayambhū Purāṇa* is not an early work: Winternitz has suggested that it may not predate the 16th century CE.⁵⁹ Though the legendary material concerning Mañjuśrī may of course be earlier, one of its central terms, *svayambhū*, "self-existent", the name of the Buddha whose manifestation precipitated Mañjuśrī's visit to Nepal, would hardly be in use before the 6th century.⁶⁰ As they stand, therefore, the legends must be more recent than references to Mañjuśrī found in *sūtra*-s that can be dated by their translation into Chinese. Bhattacharyya here uses his source material rather uncritically. [61] This is coupled, perhaps, with a predisposition to see bodhisattvas as deified humans and to read legends as elaborated and magicalised accounts of human happenings.

This account of Mañjuśrī's origins is also rendered untenable by the work of John Brough,⁶¹ who shows that much of this legendary material concerning Nepal almost certainly originated in Khotan and was later attached to Nepal by Tibetans, possibly from about the 10th century CE. Brough illustrates in considerable detail how legends concerning Khotan parallel those dealing with Nepal. Two instances are particularly striking: firstly, the country of Khotan is also created by the draining of a lake. The *Gośṛṅga Vyākaraṇa* recounts that Śākyamuni arrives at the hill of Gośṛṅga, and seeing a lake asks Śāriputra and Vaiśrāvana to give the land borders. This they do, using respectively a monk's staff and a lance, by draining the lake and transferring it and its inhabitants to another position nearby. Secondly, the same text recounts that Mañjuśrī gave his special blessing and protection to a site on the hill Gośṛṅga upon which a monastery would later arise. Gośṛṅga was the chief centre of Buddhism in Khotan, as Svayambhū Hill was in the Kathmandu valley. Brough gives a number of reasons why Khotan should have priority as the provenance for these legends. There is not the space to detail them here, except to mention that the *Svayambhū Purāṇa* lists Gośṛṅga as an earlier name of Svayambhū Hill. Brough suggests that the reason why this cycle of legends should be transferred to Nepal may be connected with the name Li. Li-Yul was the old Tibetan name for Khotan ('yul' means 'land'), but after its disappearance as an independent kingdom there seems to have arisen some uncertainty about its location. By the time of the compilation of the Tibetan Kanjur, Li-Yul had become identified with Nepal. The legends associated with the land of Li could then become attached to Nepal and the Nepalese may have adopted these traditions as their own. Finally, the element in the Nepalese legend that tells of Mañjuśrī coming from China could have come from China itself or even from India, as by the 7th century CE Indians thought of Mañjuśrī as residing in China.⁶²

In summary, Mañjuśrī's origins as a figure remain obscure, though his appearance in early Mahāyāna sūtras indicates that they are probably Indian. His affinities with the *gandharva* Pañcaśikha are not as striking or as conclusive as Lalou and others suggest. The figure of Brahmā Sanatkumāra, on the other hand, displays a rather more convincing kinship with Mañjuśrī across a range of factors including name, appearance, role and associated qualities. An input from Kārttikeya seems very doubtful, and the suggestion that Mañjuśrī is a deified human from China is both historically and critically naive. Geographically, Mañjuśrī has some association with Mount Gandhamādana and there remains a possibility that the five-peaked range of which the mountain is a part may have influenced his subsequent connection with Wu-t'ai shan, "Five-Terrace Mountain", in China.

To say that Mañjuśrī's origins as a figure are probably Indian is not, of course, to say that the origins of a cult of Mañjuśrī are Indian. The geographical locus or loci in which a figure becomes popular may be far from where that figure itself originates.⁶³ Whether or not there was any significant non-Buddhist contribution in the process of Mañjuśrī's birth, he remains, as Louis de la Vallée Poussin has remarked, "an entirely Buddhist personage in definition if not in origin".⁶⁴ The extent to which this is true will become clear when we turn to Mañjuśrī's role in the literature of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

II. Mañjuśrī's Role in Mahāyāna Literature

[Mañjughoṣa –]

Who calms the flames of ambitions for one's own pleasure,
with the waters of long-cultivated compassion,
Who cuts the net of imaginative fabrications,
by seeing the reality of the profound as it is.
– Tsong kha pa.⁶⁵

GIVEN HIS PROMINENCE as a bodhisattva it is not surprising that there is a wealth of material in Mahāyāna literature concerning Mañjuśrī. I have structured the following account by separating discussion of Mañjuśrī's differing functions from that of his status. The two are, of course, closely connected: Mañjuśrī's status allows him to act in particular ways. I should note that this examination of Mañjuśrī's role in Mahāyāna literature is largely restricted to [63] his depiction in Mahāyāna sūtras. Except for the occasional reference, I do not deal with his role in Buddhist tantric literature.

1. FUNCTIONS

i. Interlocutor and Spokesman

MAÑJUŚRĪ HAS A ROLE as interlocutor in many Mahāyāna sūtras, particularly on questions dealing with wisdom and ultimate truth. He has this function in both the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra*, "The Lotus of the True Teaching" (hereafter *Lotus Sūtra*), and the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, "The Teaching of Vimalakīrti", both early sūtras.

In the opening of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Mañjuśrī is enumerated first, before Avalokiteśvara, in the assembly of bodhisattvas.⁶⁶ He knows what the Buddha is about to do, whereas Maitreya does not. The Buddha, deep in meditation, has emitted a ray of light illuminating eighteen thousand Buddha-lands together with their presiding Buddhas. Maitreya, knowing that Mañjuśrī has served innumerable Buddhas in the past and so may have witnessed such events before, asks him about their significance. Mañjuśrī tells him they indicate that the Buddha is about to preach the *Lotus Sūtra* itself.⁶⁷

In the initial chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra* Śāriputra, the early disciple of Śākyamuni particularly associated with wisdom, is the Buddha's interlocutor; not until chapters 12 and 14 does Mañjuśrī appear in this role.⁶⁸ In some respects Mañjuśrī can be seen as Śāriputra's Mahāyāna equivalent – the *bodhisattva* foremost in wisdom. As a result, Śāriputra's role shifts, so that he is often depicted in Mahāyāna sūtras as embodying wisdom that is limited in scope and depth. For example, in chapter 12 of the *Lotus Sūtra* a young *nāga* princess appears, revealed as having speedily become an irreversible bodhisattva thanks to Mañjuśrī's teaching. Śāriputra is astounded

and doubts that such a thing could have occurred. How is such quick progress possible, especially in a female body? By way of an answer the princess, transforming herself into a male form, travels to another world-sphere and straightaway becomes enlightened for all to see.⁶⁹ [64]

In the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, Mañjuśrī's role as interlocutor is more prominent. He is the only bodhisattva prepared to enquire after the lay bodhisattva Vimalakīrti's apparent ill-health, and their subsequent dialogue forms the core of the sūtra.⁷⁰ Again, Śāriputra is portrayed as possessing an overly narrow perspective and, because of this, gentle fun is made of him on a number of occasions.⁷¹

The role of being an interlocutor shades into that of becoming Śākyamuni's spokesman and articulator of teachings in his own right. Whereas in chapter 14 of the *Lotus Sūtra* Mañjuśrī does no more than ask the Buddha the opening question whose answer takes up the rest of the chapter, in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* he not only questions Vimalakīrti closely on subjects such as emptiness and compassion but also speaks at some length himself:

Then, the Licchavi Vimalakīrti said to the crown prince Mañjuśrī, "Mañjuśrī, what is the 'family of the Tathāgatas'?"

Mañjuśrī replied, "Noble sir, the family of the Tathāgatas consists of all basic egoism; of ignorance and the thirst for existence; of lust, hate, and folly; of the four misapprehensions, of the five obscurations, of the six media of sense, of the seven abodes of consciousness, of the eight false paths, of the nine causes of irritation, of the paths of ten sins. Such is the family of the Tathāgatas. In short, noble sir, the sixty-two kinds of convictions constitute the family of the Tathāgatas!"

Vimalakīrti: Mañjuśrī, with what in mind do you say so?

Mañjuśrī: Noble sir, one who stays in the fixed determination of the vision of the uncreated is not capable of conceiving the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment. However, one who lives among created things, in the mines of passions, without seeing any truth, is indeed capable of conceiving the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment.

Noble sir, flowers like the blue lotus, the red lotus, the white lotus, the water lily, and the moon lily do not grow on the dry ground in the wilderness, but do grow in the swamps and mud banks. Just so, the Buddha-qualities do not grow in living beings certainly destined for the uncreated but do grow in those living beings who are like swamps and mud banks of passions. Likewise, as seeds do not grow in the sky but do grow in the earth, so the Buddha-qualities do not grow in those determined for the absolute but do grow in those who conceive the spirit of enlightenment, after having produced a Sumeru-like mountain of egoistic views.

Noble sir, through these considerations can one understand that all passions constitute the family of the Tathāgatas. For example, noble sir, without going out into the great ocean, it is impossible to find precious, priceless pearls. Likewise, without going into the ocean of passions, it is impossible to obtain the mind of omniscience.⁷²

In works such as *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*, "The Perfection of Wisdom in 700 Lines", and the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha Sūtra*, "The Sūtra on the Array of Qualities of Mañjuśrī's Buddha-Land", and also the *Acintya-buddhaviśaya-nirdeśa*, "The Teaching of the Inconceivable Scope of Buddha[hood]",⁷³ Mañjuśrī fully functions as Śākyamuni's spokesman. This is possible because of his status. Insofar as he is a bodhisattva already perfect in wisdom he can act fully on

behalf of his presiding Buddha. Thus in the *Acintya-buddhaviṣaya-nirdeśa* the Buddha asks Mañjuśrī to teach:

At that time, Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva Mañjuśrī and the god Sugaṇa were both present among the assembly. The World-Honoured One told Mañjuśrī, “You should explain the profound state of Buddhahood for the celestial beings and the Bodhisattvas of this assembly.”⁷⁴

In the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā* Mañjuśrī elaborates the meaning of Perfect Wisdom:

The Lord: Do you, Mañjuśrī, reflect on the dharmas of a Buddha?

Mañjuśrī: No indeed, O Lord. If I could see the specific accomplishment of the dharmas of a Buddha, then I would reflect on them. But the development of perfect wisdom is not set up through discriminating any dharma and saying that “these are the dharmas of ordinary people, these are the dharmas of Disciples, these are the dharmas of Pratyekabuddhas, these the dharmas of fully enlightened Buddhas”. The son of good family who has given himself up to the Yoga of the development of perfect wisdom does just not apprehend that dharma which would allow him to describe these [66] dharmas as dharmas of ordinary people, or as dharmas of those in training, or as dharmas of the adepts, or as dharmas of fully enlightened Buddhas. Because as absolutely non-existent I do not review those dharmas. Such a development, O Lord, is a development of perfect wisdom. ... And again, O Lord, the development of perfect wisdom neither benefits nor injures any dharma. For perfect wisdom, when developed, is not a donor of the dharmas of a Buddha, nor an eliminator of the dharmas of an ordinary person. Just that, O Lord, is the development of perfect wisdom where there is neither the stopping of the dharmas of an ordinary person nor the acquisition of the dharmas of a Buddha.

The Lord: Well said, well said, Mañjuśrī, you who demonstrate this dharma which is so deep.⁷⁵

Another sūtra in which Mañjuśrī is depicted teaching the Perfection of Wisdom is the *Suṣṭhitamati-devaputra-paripṛcchā*, “The Questions of the god Suṣṭhitamati”.⁷⁶ Here, in a dialogue between Suṣṭhitamati and Mañjuśrī, Suṣṭhitamati asks if he can join Mañjuśrī so that they might together cultivate pure conduct. Mañjuśrī replies:

“Son of heaven, now, if you can take the lives of all sentient beings without using a knife, a cudgel, a large stick, or a stone, I will cultivate pure conduct with you.”

Suṣṭhitamati asked, “Great sage, why do you say this?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Son of heaven, regarding sentient beings, what do you think of them?”

Suṣṭhitamati answered, “I think that sentient beings and all other dharmas are nothing but names and are all concocted by thoughts.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Son of heaven, I therefore say that now you should kill the thoughts of a self, of a personal identity, of a sentient being, and of a life, eliminating the thoughts of even these names. You should kill in this way.”

Suṣṭhitamati asked, “Great sage, what instrument should one use to kill [in this way]?” [67]

Mañjuśrī answered, “Son of heaven, I always kill with the sharp knife of wisdom. In the act of killing, one should hold the sharp knife of wisdom and kill in such a manner as to have no thought of holding the knife or of killing. Son of heaven, in this way, you should know well

that to kill the thoughts of a self and a sentient being is to kill all sentient beings truly. [If you can do that,] I will give you permission to cultivate pure conduct.”⁷⁷

This dialogue leads into the climax of the *sūtra*, in which the Buddha employs Mañjuśrī in a vivid piece of dramatic action which reiterates the theme of killing. Within the narrative structure of the *sūtra* it has the effect of triggering the realisation of the Non-arising of Dharma in a group of bodhisattvas who have been held back by being unable to forget their past negative actions.

At that time, in order to rid those five hundred bodhisattvas of mental discrimination, the World-Honoured One inspired Mañjuśrī with his miraculous power; as a result, Mañjuśrī rose from his seat, adjusted his robe, bared his right shoulder, and holding a sharp sword in hand, advanced straight toward the World-Honoured One to kill him.

Hurriedly, the Buddha said to Mañjuśrī, “Stop, stop! Do not do the wrong thing. Do not kill me in this way. If you must kill me, you should first know the best way to do so. Why? Because, Mañjuśrī, from the beginning there is no self, no others, no person; as soon as one perceives in his mind the [non-]existence of an ego and a personal identity, he has killed me; and this is called killing.”⁷⁸

The *Suṣṭhitamati-devaputra-paripṛcchā* may well be source for the iconographic depiction of Mañjuśrī with a sword (of wisdom) – which he holds or which rests on a lotus blossom that he holds. I know of no earlier reference that associates Mañjuśrī with a sword. The legend in the *Svayambhū Purāṇa* of Mañjuśrī using his sword to drain the lake covering the Kathmandu valley must be later. That story assumes that Mañjuśrī has a sword; the *Suṣṭhitamati-devaputra-paripṛcchā* gives a story that accounts for him holding one.

Mañjuśrī does not appear in what is usually regarded as the earliest Perfection of Wisdom *sūtra*, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, “The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines”, (hereafter *Aṣṭa*). In the early part of the *Aṣṭa*, however, no bodhisattvas are mentioned. Śākyamuni is attended by monks, with Subhuti and Śāriputra among the principal interlocutors. In the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, “The Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 Lines”, and the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, “The Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Lines”, both placed by Conze in the second phase of the development of the Perfection of Wisdom literature (approx. 100–300 CE), Mañjuśrī is still only mentioned in passing.⁷⁹ It is not until the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*, cited above and given a date of composition of about 450 CE by Conze, that Mañjuśrī has a speaking role.⁸⁰

As the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī’s low profile in the earlier major Perfection of Wisdom *sūtras* is perhaps rather surprising. Yet to conclude that Mañjuśrī is unimportant in early Perfection of Wisdom literature as a whole may be premature. Although he does not appear in the *Aṣṭa*, he has active and important role in the *Ajātaśatru-kauṛṭya-vinodana Sūtra*, “The Sūtra on the Dispelling of Ajātaśatru’s Misdeeds”, a work written from a Perfection of Wisdom perspective. Here Mañjuśrī’s great magical power is extolled and exemplified, and he is said to have helped the Buddha on his way to awakening in the past. This *sūtra* is known to have been translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema in the latter half of the second century CE (T. 626), making it one of the earlier Mahāyāna *sūtras*.⁸¹ (For further discussion of the *Ajātaśatru-kauṛṭya-vinodana* see Part II 2.i, below.)

ii. Converter of Beings to the Buddhist Dharma

THOUGH MAÑJUŚRĪ IS CHARACTERISTICALLY found discoursing on the emptiness of phenomena and stressing that on the ultimate level (*paramārtha-satya*) no-one saves anyone, a number of *sūtras* nonetheless testify to Mañjuśrī's compassionate activity. In chapter 12 of the *Lotus Sūtra* Mañjuśrī is recounted as having visited the underwater palace of Sāgara, king of the *nāga*-s.⁸² A bodhisattva present in the assembly, Prajñākūṭa, asks Mañjuśrī how many beings he has converted there. "The number is beyond dimension; it is incalculable", he replies, at which point,

...numberless bodhisattvas, seated on jewelled lotus blossoms, welled up out of the sea and went to Mount Gṛdhra-kūṭa where they rested in mid-air. [69] These bodhisattvas had all been converted and conveyed to salvation by Mañjuśrī, all had perfected bodhisattva-conduct, and all were discussing together the six *pāramitā*-s.⁸³

It transpires that it is the *Lotus Sūtra* that Mañjuśrī has been teaching to the *nāga*-s and that of all those he has taught it is the *nāga* king's daughter who has made the best progress, the veracity of which Śāriputra questions, as mentioned above.

A second instance which gives an example of Mañjuśrī's activity as a converter of beings and which connects him with *nāga*-s is found in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*. At the opening of the *sūtra* Mañjuśrī travels to the human realm, coming to "a great city in the south named Dhanyākara". He stays in the forest outside the city at a shrine built by past Buddhas where he is visited by millions of *nāga*-s who have left the ocean in order to hear the Dharma. As a result of Mañjuśrī's teaching they cease to want to be *nāga*-s and, desiring the qualities of Buddhahood, are reborn either as gods or human beings, several thousand becoming irreversible bodhisattvas.⁸⁴

In the *Ratnakāraṇḍa Sūtra* there is an account of Mañjuśrī converting followers of the Jain teacher Satyaka Nirgranthaputra.⁸⁵ Satyaka is described as staying at Vaiśālī with a large number of disciples whom the monk Pūrṇa has unsuccessfully attempted to convert to Buddhism. Taking up the challenge, Mañjuśrī adopts a different stratagem. Using his magical powers, he creates five hundred (non-Buddhist) wanderers and, posing as their teacher and leader, goes with them to Satyaka. They all prostrate before him and ask to become his pupils, saying they have heard his praises from afar. By means of this subterfuge Mañjuśrī and his 'disciples' enter Satyaka's camp and are able to work on gaining the confidence of his followers. When the time is ripe Mañjuśrī expounds the Dharma to them and his words are so effective that five hundred of them experience the opening of the Dharma-Eye and eight thousand others generate the Awakening Mind (*bodhicitta*). At this key point Mañjuśrī's five hundred 'disciples' fall to the ground and prostrate with a cry of "Salutation to the Buddha, Salutation to the Buddha". This ruse carries the day and the remaining Jains follow suit, also prostrating and crying "Salutation to the Buddha!"⁸⁶ [70]

Mañjuśrī's psychic powers as a high-level bodhisattva are thus pressed into service in his work of converting beings to Buddhism. A further and more dramatic instance of this is seen in the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*, a *sūtra* that, apparently at least, is not about Mañjuśrī's actual *parinirvāṇa* but one 'performed' by him out of compassion for living beings.⁸⁷ At the opening of the *sūtra* the Buddha emits a ray of light that illuminates and transforms Mañjuśrī's dwelling place. Mañjuśrī then appears in the assembly of the Buddha, attended by the spontaneous appearance of golden lotus flowers from the fingers and palms of his hands as he joins them in salutation. Mañjuśrī throws the flowers towards the Buddha and they transform into a huge jewel-parasol within which appear innumerable Buddhas and bodhisattvas from throughout the different regions of space. The bodhisattva Bhadrāpāla asks the Buddha about Mañjuśrī:

“Fortunate One, this Mañjuśrī, Prince of the Dharma, has already served hundreds of thousands of Buddhas and here, in the Sahā world, he does the work of the Buddha and manifests his miraculous power in the ten regions. After how many aeons will he enter Parinirvāṇa?”

The Buddha replied to Bhadrupāla, “Mañjuśrī has great friendliness and great compassion... He dwells in the meditation (*samādhi*) of the Heroic Progress (*śūraṅgama*) and by the power of this meditation he manifests at will, in the ten regions, the birth, going forth, enlightenment, final enlightenment and leaving of relics [of a Buddha]. All this is [performed] for the good of living beings. This worthy man stays for a long time in the [meditation called] Heroic Progress.

“Four hundred and fifty years after the awakening of the Buddha he will go to Mount Himavat where he will preach to five hundred hermits, expounding the twelve kinds of sacred text. He will convert and ripen these five hundred hermits as a result of which they will become irreversible bodhisattvas... [Then] he will return to the country of his birth, flying through the air.

“There, in a wild marsh, seated under a Banyan tree with his legs crossed, he enters the Heroic Progress meditation and all the pores of his skin emit [71] rays of golden light as a result of the strength of his samādhi. This light illuminates beings susceptible to being converted in the worlds of the ten directions. Each of the five hundred hermits sees fire being emitted from the pores of their skin.

“Mañjuśrī’s body then becomes like a mountain of gold. His height is six arm-spans; he is adorned with an aureole of light, surrounding him equally. Within this aureole can be seen five hundred [magically] created Buddhas, each with an entourage of five [magically] created bodhisattvas. Mañjuśrī’s head-dress is adorned with the precious jewel called *śakrābhilagna*, which has five hundred different colours. In each of these colours there appears the sun and moon, the stars, the palaces of the gods and *nāga*-s and all the marvels of the world. Between his eye-brows is a white tuft of hair that turns to the right. [Magically] created Buddhas appear [from this] and enter the net of light. All of their bodies shine and they are surrounded with flames; within each of these flames are five precious jewels [and] each of these precious jewels is flaming and many-coloured. Within these colours appear [magically] created Buddhas and bodhisattvas, impossible to describe; in their left hands they hold alms-bowls; in their right hands they raise Mahāyāna scriptures.”⁸⁸

The flames and lights of this vision also appear to constitute an act of self-cremation.⁸⁹ When everything dies down only a beryl statue covered in miraculous marks remains, itself containing a Buddha-image made of gold at its heart. Not surprisingly, the Buddha says to Bhadrupāla, “This Mañjuśrī possesses vast supernatural powers and an immense power of transformation, escaping all description”.

In the *Mañjuśrī-vikrīḍita Sūtra* Mañjuśrī converts a prostitute by taking on the guise of a handsome young man.⁹⁰ This bodhisattva-activity contrasts with chapter 14 of the *Lotus Sūtra* where the Buddha answers Mañjuśrī’s question concerning the behaviour appropriate for a bodhisattva. The Buddha’s reply is largely a reiteration of the essentials of the monastic discipline (*vinaya*). There is a list of people with whom he – despite the events of chapter 12 the bodhisattva here is very much male⁹¹ – should not become familiar. The bodhisattva should keep away from women: [72]

Not even for Dharma's sake does he become familiar or close. How much the less for anything else!⁹²

There is also a passage which enjoins the bodhisattva not to approach Jain monks with familiarity.⁹³

The example from the *Mañjuśrī-vikrīḍita Sūtra* illustrates the tension that sometimes exists between the pursuit of compassionate activity (*upāyakaṣālya*) by the bodhisattva and the strict following of the precepts. There is, of course, precedent for Mañjuśrī's conversion of the prostitute. Vimalakīrti engages in a wide range of worldly activity out of compassion in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*. In the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi Sūtra* the aptly-named bodhisattva Māragocarānupālita, "Undefined by Māra's Sphere", makes love to two hundred goddesses dwelling in Māra's palaces by transforming himself into two hundred equally beautiful gods. Once satisfied they are receptive to hearing the Dharma.⁹⁴

iii. Spiritual Friend

A NUMBER OF Mahāyāna sūtras portray Mañjuśrī either generally or in more specific and concrete terms as a spiritual friend (*kalyāṇa-mitra*). Thus, in the *Ajātaśatruṛāja Sūtra* the Buddha tells Śāriputra that Mañjuśrī is the spiritual friend of the bodhisattvas and in the *Druma-kiṃnaraṛāja-paripṛcchā*, Druma, king of the Kiṃnaras, tells Ajātaśatru he has the great advantage of having Mañjuśrī as a spiritual friend.⁹⁵

An important source for Mañjuśrī's role as *kalyāṇamitra* is the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, which has for its theme the arising of the Awakening Mind (*bodhicitta*) and the subsequent spiritual journey towards the goal of awakening. At the same time, it is a story of transformation from seeing things as they are ordinarily seen (*lokadhātu*), to seeing things as they are seen by advanced bodhisattvas (*dharmadhātu*). The *sūtra* follows the quest of Sudhana, the son of a rich merchant, who hears Mañjuśrī teaching at Dhanyākara (where he has been teaching the *nāga*-s) and as a result develops *bodhicitta*. Mañjuśrī teaches him that the basis which identifies all bodhisattvas as such is the state of Complete Benevolence (*samantabhadra*), and then sets him to learn the nature of the life of the bodhisattva by seeking out spiritual friends who will teach and guide him. The emphasis on spiritual [73] friendship pervades the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtrā* and is established at the outset by Mañjuśrī's initial teaching to Sudhana,

Then, Mañjuśrī, gazing like an elephant, said to Sudhana, "It is good that you follow spiritual friends, having set your mind on supreme enlightenment; that you should inquire into the practice of bodhisattvas, wishing to fulfil the path of bodhisattvas. Attending and serving spiritual friends is the beginning, the logical course, for the accomplishment of omniscience. Therefore you should tirelessly attend spiritual friends."⁹⁶

Mañjuśrī thereby becomes the first of fifty-two spiritual friends that Sudhana visits. At the culmination of this pilgrimage Sudhana meets Maitreya who takes him into Vairocana's tower, the realm of perfect interpenetrability, the Dharma-Sphere (*dharmadhātu*). Maitreya tells Sudhana that when he, Maitreya, attains awakening they will meet again together with "the spiritual friend Mañjuśrī". Sudhana is sent off back to Mañjuśrī for a final teaching on Complete Benevolence.⁹⁷ Maitreya's final words to Sudhana constitute a remarkable eulogy to Mañjuśrī:

Now go back to Mañjuśrī and ask him how a bodhisattva is to learn and carry out the practice of bodhisattvas, enter the sphere of universally good practice, undertake and carry it out, expand it, follow it, purify it, enter fully into it and fulfil it. He will show you the real spiritual friend. Why? The best of vows of decillions of bodhisattvas is Mañjuśrī's; vast is the outcome

of the practice of Mañjuśrī; measureless is the accomplishment of vows of Mañjuśrī; ceaseless is Mañjuśrī's achievement of the best virtues of all bodhisattvas; Mañjuśrī is the mother of decillions of Buddhas; Mañjuśrī is the teacher of decillions of bodhisattvas; Mañjuśrī is engaged in the perfection of all beings; widespread is the name of Mañjuśrī in all the worlds of the ten directions; Mañjuśrī is the interlocutor in the assemblies of untold Buddhas; Mañjuśrī is praised by all Buddhas; abiding in the knowledge of profound truth, Mañjuśrī sees all things according to their true significance; Mañjuśrī has ranged far into all modes of liberation; he is immersed in the practice of universally good bodhisattvas. He is the progenitor of spiritual friends, who makes you grow in the family of the enlightened, causes you to establish roots of goodness, shows you the pro-[74]visions for enlightenment, introduces you to true benefactors, immerses you in all virtues, establishes you in the network of universal vows, causes you to hear of the accomplishment of all vows, shows the secrets of all bodhisattvas, and has similarly practiced the wonder of all bodhisattvas together with you in past lives.

Therefore when you go to Mañjuśrī, do not be faint-hearted, do not become weary in receiving instruction in all virtues. Why? All the spiritual friends you have seen, all the ways of practice you have heard, all the modes of liberation you have entered, all the vows you have plunged into, should all be looked upon as the empowerment of Mañjuśrī; and Mañjuśrī has reached the ultimate perfection.⁹⁸

Mañjuśrī's relationship with Sudhana in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* is immediate, practical and down-to-earth. In China, where this text became very popular, there was what D.T. Suzuki called a gradual 'secularization' of the great bodhisattvas. They are increasingly shown in paintings as inhabiting the ordinary world.⁹⁹ In Mañjuśrī's case this is likely to have been further encouraged by the identification of Wu T'ai shan, "Five-Terrace Mountain", as his principal earthly abode. There are numerous accounts of visions and encounters with Mañjuśrī at Wu T'ai shan, where he was often said to take the form of an old man.¹⁰⁰

iv. Object of Meditation and Devotion

MAÑJUŚRĪ IS FOUND in the Mahāyāna sūtras not only as an interlocutor, spokesman, spiritual friend and converter of sentient beings. He is also portrayed as a bodhisattva worthy of veneration and devotion; keeping his name in mind and meditating upon his form is a way of acquiring both merit and insight. Two sūtras that promote this aspect of Mañjuśrī are the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha Sūtra*, "The Sūtra on the Array of Qualities of Mañjuśrī's Buddha-Land",¹⁰¹ and the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*.

In the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha*, the Buddha describes how, in the distant past, the Awakening Mind (*bodhicitta*) arose in Mañjuśrī at a time when he was a universal king (*cakravartin*) who had gained much merit through making offerings to a Tathāgata named Meghasvara. As the universal [75] king, Mañjuśrī wonders how he should dedicate this merit; should he dedicate it to the end of becoming Śakra or Brahmā, or to becoming a *śrāvaka* or a Pratyekabuddha, in his next life. The gods, knowing what is going through his mind, tell him that these aspirations are narrow and inferior and that he should rather engender the aspiration to highest awakening. When Mañjuśrī, convinced by their words, visits Meghasvara to ask him how he should develop this aspiration, Meghasvara's short teaching is enough to arouse it in him. Mañjuśrī rejoices and utters "a great lion's roar":

In the presence of the Lords, I beget

The Thought of Perfect Enlightenment,
 And issuing invitation to all creatures,
 I will save them all from the cycle of rebirth,
 Beginning from this moment and henceforth,
 Until I obtain the Highest Enlightenment,
 I shall not permit ill-will or anger,
 Avarice or envy, to occupy my mind.
 I shall practice the Pure Life,
 And renounce sin and base desire;
 I shall imitate the Buddha
 By rejoicing in the vow of Conduct.
 Myself, I am not keen to reach
 Enlightenment in some swift way;
 I shall remain until the final end
 For the sake of but a single creature.
 I shall purify the innumerable
 Inconceivable fields of the universe,
 And from the taking of this [new] name, [henceforth]
 I shall live in the ten directions.
 Purifying the actions of
 My body and speech entirely,
 I shall cleanse my mind's activity as well;
 No unvirtuous deed will ever be mine.¹⁰² [76]

The Buddha, continuing to relate Mañjuśrī's story, describes how, after many aeons, Mañjuśrī goes on to achieve the realization of the non-arising of dharmas and to attain the ten stages of the bodhisattva as well as the ten powers of a Tathāgata: "he perfected every dharma of the Buddha-stage, but he never thought: 'I shall become a Buddha!'" It is revealed that Mañjuśrī will nonetheless eventually become a Buddha and that he will be called Samantadarśin ("Appearing Universally"), so-named since he will make himself visible to all the sentient beings in innumerable millions of Buddha-lands throughout the ten directions in space. All these beings will then be certain to gain supreme awakening. The Buddha adds that Mañjuśrī's, ie. Samantadarśin's, Buddha-land will contain the present Sāhā world within it.

Mañjuśrī is asked what his Buddha-land will be like. After protesting that since he does not seek awakening the question is meaningless, Mañjuśrī is persuaded to describe it by telling of the vows he has made concerning its adornment. He first recounts a vow designed to defer his awakening for an incalculable time and then continues:

Furthermore, World-Honoured One, I have vowed to combine the worlds of Buddhas as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges into a single Buddha-land and to adorn it with incalculable, intermingled, exquisite jewels. If I cannot do this, I shall never attain supreme enlightenment.¹⁰³

Mañjuśrī goes on to say that he has vowed that his Buddha-land will have no women, *śrāvakas* or Pratyekabuddhas, but will be inhabited only by bodhisattvas – born dressed in monastic robes and seated crossed-legged! It "will be free from the eight adversities, unwholesome dharmas, wrongdoing and prohibition, pain, annoyance, and unhappiness".¹⁰⁴ It will be made of wonderful, rare and precious jewels, yet will be able to appear differently according to the wishes of individual

bodhisattvas, and it will be possible for these different ways of appearing to coexist without interfering with one another. Thus it can appear as desired, whether made of gold, silver, crystal, lapis lazuli, agate or pearls, or of fragrant sandalwood or aloe wood. The usual sources of illumination are also absent:

My land will not be illuminated by the brilliance of suns, moons, pearls, stars, fire, and so forth. All the bodhisattvas there will illuminate hundreds [77] of billions of myriads of Buddha-lands with their own lights. In my land, it will be daytime when flowers open and night when flowers close, and the seasons will change according to the bodhisattva's wishes. There will be no cold, heat, old age, illness or death.

If they wish, bodhisattvas in my land may go to any other land to attain enlightenment; they will attain it after descending from the Tuṣita Heaven when their lives come to an end there. No one in my Buddha-land will enter Nirvāṇa.¹⁰⁵

The last and paradoxical feature of Mañjuśrī's future Buddha-land, that none of the bodhisattvas in it will enter Nirvāṇa, can be read as an aspect of Mañjuśrī's own reluctance to gain enlightenment speedily. This reluctance springs from his compassion for living beings as witnessed in his original vows made before the Tathāgata Meghasvara at the time when he was a universal king.

Following closely on these descriptions of Mañjuśrī's vows concerning his adornment of his future Buddha-land is a passage that is important from the perspective of promoting devotion to Mañjuśrī.

Then, in the assembly, incalculable hundreds of thousands of billions of myriads of bodhisattvas said in unison, "He who hears the name of Samantadarśin Buddha will obtain excellent benefits, let alone those who are born in his land. If a person has an opportunity to hear the doctrine of 'The Prediction of Mañjuśrī's Attainment of Buddhahood' explained and the name of Mañjuśrī mentioned, he is meeting all Buddhas face to face."

The Buddha said to those bodhisattvas, "It is so, it is so, just as you say. Good men, suppose a person keeps in mind hundreds of thousands of billions of Buddhas' names. And suppose another person keeps in mind the name of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The blessings of the latter outnumber those of the former, let alone the blessings of those who keep in mind the name of Samantadarśin Buddha. Why? Because even the benefits which hundreds of thousands of billions of myriads of Buddhas give to sentient beings cannot compare with those which Mañjuśrī gives during one kalpa."¹⁰⁶ [78]

In contrast with *sūtras* describing the Buddha-lands of Amitābha and Akṣobhya,¹⁰⁷ the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha* contains no account of how to gain future rebirth in Mañjuśrī's Buddha-land. Although keeping his name in mind is said to lead to immense benefit, being equivalent to meeting all the Buddhas 'face-to-face', it is not said to lead to future rebirth in his [ie. Samantadarśin's] Buddha-land. There may be a number of reasons for this omission. In Mañjuśrī's case his vows have not yet been fulfilled, so that his Buddha-land is not a present option for rebirth. Moreover, the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha* is more concerned, in its description of Mañjuśrī's future Buddha-land, to extol the virtue and compassion of Mañjuśrī as a present bodhisattva rather than as a future Buddha; recalling the name of Mañjuśrī is more beneficial than recalling that of Samantadarśin.

Exactly what keeping in mind the name of Mañjuśrī involves and what sort of benefits can be expected to accrue from it are not spelled out in the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha Sūtra*. The *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*, however, is much more explicit. Towards the end of the *sūtra*,

after the account of Mañjuśrī's 'parinirvāṇa' and the magical display of Buddhas and bodhisattvas within the lights and flames of his aureole (see above), Śākyamuni describes the benefits and results of meditating on and being devoted to Mañjuśrī. Just hearing his name will lead to the subtraction of many aeons from one's stay in *samsāra*. Those who pay salutation to him and venerate him will be reborn into the family of the Buddha and will enjoy Mañjuśrī's protection. Meditating on his form and on his teaching will lead to seeing him and gaining insight. Furthermore:

Those who are not able to see him should recite the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and say the name of Mañjuśrī. In a period of between one and seven days Mañjuśrī will come to them. If they are fettered by their previous actions they will see him in a dream. If those who see him in a dream are disciples (*śrāvaka*) at that time, then they will become Stream Entrants, Once-Returners or Non-Returners as a result of that vision alone. If they are religious wanderers (*pravrajita*) and they see Mañjuśrī, then as soon as they see him, they will become Arhats in the space of a day and a night. [79]

For [followers of the Mahāyāna] who firmly believe in the extended *sūtras* (*vaipulyasūtra*) Mañjuśrī, Prince of the Dharma, will expound the profound teachings to them in meditation or, if they are too distracted, he will explain the true meaning in a dream in order to engender certainty in them. Then, they will become irreversible bodhisattvas on the supreme path of the Mahāyāna.

For those who accumulate merit by reflecting on him or venerating him, Mañjuśrī, Prince of the Dharma, will transform his body and, appearing poor, protectorless and in pain, he will appear before them. Indeed, those who reflect on Mañjuśrī develop thoughts of kindness, and developing these thoughts of kindness, they are able to see him. In truth, that is why the wise should contemplate Mañjuśrī's thirty-two major and forty-eight minor marks. Those who practice this meditation are rapidly able to see Mañjuśrī, through the power of the Heroic Advance (*śūraṃgama*) [meditation]. Those who practice this meditation are true meditators; others are false meditators.

After the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha, all beings who have heard the name of Mañjuśrī spoken and who have seen his image will escape unhappy destinies for one hundred thousand aeons. Those who remember and recite the name of Mañjuśrī will not fall into the cruel fires of the Avīci hell, whatever their faults, but will always be reborn in the Pure Lands of other worlds; they will meet Buddhas, hear the Dharma and attain [the state of] receptivity concerning the non-origination of phenomena (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*).¹⁰⁸

Devotion to Mañjuśrī, then, whether by meditating on his form and teaching or by repeating his name, leads to seeing him, possibly to receiving teachings and to the gaining of appropriate spiritual insight. At the very least, the devotee can be sure of Mañjuśrī's protection and freedom from a poor rebirth.

It may be useful to place this passage from the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra* within a broader context. The sorts of benefits described as well as the language used are found in other Mahāyāna sūtras. A striking example, which [80] parallels both the manner and time scale of appearance of the figure meditated upon, is found in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*.¹⁰⁹

If he [the devotee] concentrates on the Tathāgata Amitāyus with undistracted thought for seven days and nights, then when seven days and nights have elapsed he shall see the Lord, the Tathāgata Amitāyus. If he does not see the Lord by day, then in a dream while sleeping the face of the Lord, the Tathāgata, will appear.¹¹⁰

This ‘seeing’ of the figure meditated upon is found also in the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* where the Buddha tells Mañjuśrī that to attain awakening quickly one should cultivate the “single-minded meditation (*samādhi*)”, a practice which involves concentrating one’s mind on a Buddha and reciting his name single-mindedly. As a result, those who do this “will be able to see all the Buddhas of the past, present and future right in each moment.”¹¹¹

These meditation practices, in which the mind is focused on a particular Buddha or bodhisattva, have their roots in the tradition of the Recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti*). This practice, going back to the earliest phase of Buddhism, involves bringing to mind or ‘recollecting’ the different qualities of the Buddha Śākyamuni. One of its results, according to Buddhaghosa, is that the meditator can come “to feel as if he were living in the Master’s presence”.¹¹² A visual dimension to this experience, though not mentioned by Buddhaghosa, is suggested by other sources. For example, in the Pali *Sutta Nipāta*, there is a story of a Brahmin called Piṅgiya, who because of old age is not able physically to accompany the Buddha. Nonetheless, Piṅgiya does not feel separated from the Buddha because, “with constant and careful vigilance it is possible for me to see him as clearly as with my eyes, in night as well as day”.¹¹³ This early account, which may predate formalised practice of *buddhānusmṛti*, suggests that its early practice may have grown out of visualisation of the Buddha and his qualities.¹¹⁴

The effects of the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* were also seen as far-reaching, at least in some circles. Paul Harrison, in his study of *buddhānusmṛti* in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, cites a non-Mahāyāna scriptural passage (*āgama*) which states that as a result of practicing one dharma, namely *buddhānusmṛti*, one “shall have renown, achieve the great [81] fruit, attain all good, acquire the taste of nectar, and reach the station of the unconditioned,” and thereby “achieve magic power, eliminate distractions of thought, attain the fruit of the *śramaṇa* and arrive at Nirvāṇa”.¹¹⁵

Within the expanded Buddhological context of the Mahāyāna it would be a natural step to extend *buddhānusmṛti*-type practices to Buddhas and their Buddha-lands, and thence to bodhisattvas.¹¹⁶ The *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*, by its contention that “those who practice this meditation [ie. on Mañjuśrī] are true meditators; others are false meditators”, may well be revealing here an awareness that these types of meditations were used in relation to figures apart from Mañjuśrī. Some of these ‘others’ may have been meditating on Amitāyus (“Of Infinite Life”), referred to in the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra* passage that so closely parallels the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*.¹¹⁷ Any borrowing between these two sūtras is likely to have been from the *Pratyutpanna* rather than vice versa. The dates of the Chinese translations suggest that the *Pratyutpanna* was the earlier work; it was translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema in 179 CE and is among the earliest sūtras introduced into China. The *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*, on the other hand, was not translated until over a hundred years later.¹¹⁸

Awareness of the competing attractions of Amitāyus’ Buddha-land is explicit in the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha Sūtra*. In this text, in which Amitāyus is known by the alternative name of Amitābha, “Of Infinite Light”, the Buddha reveals that at the time when Mañjuśrī will achieve supreme awakening, becoming the Tathāgata Samantadarśin, his Buddha-land will be incomparably more magnificent than Amitābha’s:

Supposing a person splits a hair into one hundred parts and, with one part, takes a droplet of water from a vast ocean. If he compares the droplet of water to the magnificence of Amitābha’s Buddha-land, and the remaining water of the vast ocean to the magnificence of Samantadarśin’s Buddha-land, the contrast will not suffice.¹¹⁹

The Buddha also discloses that there are many more bodhisattvas in Mañjuśrī's Buddha-land than in Amitābha's, despite the number of bodhisattvas and *śrāvakas* in Amitābha's Buddha-land being incalculable: [82]

Good man, compare one kernel taken from a bushel of linseed from the kingdom of Magadha to the number of the *śrāvakas* and bodhisattvas in Amitābha Buddha's land, compare the kernels remaining in the bushel to the number of bodhisattvas in Mañjuśrī's assembly when he attains supreme enlightenment – even this contrast is inadequate.¹²⁰

The broader picture suggested by the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra* and the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha Sūtra*, therefore, is one of competing cults centred on different Buddhas and bodhisattvas, with that of Mañjuśrī probably post-dating and to some extent modelling itself on that of Amitābha. Mañjuśrī's future Buddha-land is alluded to in a sūtra called the *Vimaladattā-paripṛcchā*, "The Questioning of [the Bodhisattva] Pure Giving", where he is equalled in a discourse on wisdom by an eight year old girl. Her Buddha-land, it is said, will be more magnificent than even Mañjuśrī's.¹²¹

With the development of Buddhist tantra, Mañjuśrī's role as an object of meditation expanded greatly. It is not difficult to see continuities between the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*'s recommendation to meditate on Mañjuśrī's form and to repeat his name, and the standard structure of visualisation combined with mantra recitation found in texts giving instructions for tantric forms of meditation (*sādhana*). This is especially so when the figure is visualised 'in front' and the mantra consists in its name. Mañjuśrī's popularity in tantric Buddhism is witnessed by the large numbers of *sādhana*-s (forty-one) devoted to him in the collection called the *Sādhana-mālā*, "The Garland of [Visualisation] Practices".¹²²

Closely connected to Mañjuśrī's role as an object of devotion and meditation is that of visionary inspirer. Mañjuśrī is recorded as appearing, often in dreams, to the devotee or meditator. Again, this role can be seen as the natural development of Mañjuśrī's depiction in the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*. The Tibetan historians give a number of accounts of Mañjuśrī appearing to Indian Buddhists, and the seventh century Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang tells a story of a certain 'Jina Bodhisattva' being persuaded by Mañjuśrī not to gain awakening as an Arhat.¹²³ [83]

v. Protector

The function of protector (*nātha*) is closely linked to devotion, since protection reciprocates the attention given by the devotee. An instance of Mañjuśrī appearing as a protector in a Mahāyāna scripture occurs in the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra* where, as we have seen, Mañjuśrī is commended as an object of devotion, and is depicted as giving the devotee his protection in future lives. Mañjuśrī's role as a protector is not one that appears to be especially emphasised in Mahāyāna sūtra texts. In tantric Buddhism, however, and particularly in China and Tibet, this function increasingly comes into prominence. In company with Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī forms a well-known triad of protectors, one of the earliest examples of which is found in the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ*. In the same text, Yamāntaka, later identified as a wrathful manifestation of Mañjuśrī, is portrayed as being at Mañjuśrī's service.¹²⁴

2. Mañjuśrī's Status

MAÑJUŚRĪ IS A BODHISATTVA of the tenth and final stage (*bhūmi*) of the bodhisattva path, and at this level he is joined by figures such as Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya. As stated above, Mañjuśrī's standard epithet *kumārabhūta* has a double sense, "[being] a youth" or "[being] a prince". Understood as 'prince' the term also has a technical meaning which indicates that its bearer has received consecration (*abhiṣeka*) from the Buddha as crown prince (*kumāra*) of the Dharma, making him a tenth stage bodhisattva. The consecration gives him the powers of a Buddha, enabling him to be a Cloud of the Dharma (*dharmamegha*) that rains down the Buddha's teachings upon the world for its benefit. As well as 'Cloud of the Dharma' the tenth stage of the bodhisattva path is therefore also called the Stage of Consecration (*abhiṣeka-bhūmi*).¹²⁵

From the point of view of an unawakened person, a tenth stage bodhisattva is indistinguishable from a Buddha. The *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñā*-[84]*pāramitā* says that "the bodhisattva, the great being, who is found in the tenth stage must be called, purely and simply, a Tathāgata".¹²⁶ At this level the bodhisattva is able to enter the Heroic Advance meditation (*śūraṅgama-samādhi*), only accessible to tenth stage bodhisattvas and Buddhas. This gives such bodhisattvas enormous powers that can be used in the service of suffering beings. They can appear as if they were traversing all the stages in the life of a Buddha – birth, going forth, awakening, final Nirvāṇa etc. – directing themselves anywhere in the ten regions of space. Tenth stage bodhisattvas can thus magically produce Buddha forms.

In the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi Sūtra* Mahākāśyapa addresses the Buddha and claims that Mañjuśrī has himself in the past acted in this way, appearing as a Buddha, sitting at the place of awakening (*bodhimāṇḍa*), turning the wheel of the Dharma, teaching beings and entering the state of final Nirvāṇa. The Buddha replies by describing the career of a Tathāgata called Nāgakuḥlottama who lived many aeons ago in a Buddha-land named 'Level' where he gained supreme awakening, turned the wheel of the Dharma and converted and spiritually ripened vast numbers of bodhisattvas:

The life-span of Nāgakuḥlottama was forty thousand years. Having worked for the welfare of the world with its gods and men, he entered great final Nirvāṇa (*mahāparinirvāṇa*). Since his relics increased copiously, a huge number of *stūpa*-s were erected over them, worshipped by all beings.¹²⁷

After giving this account of Nāgakuḥlottama's life, Śākyamuni reveals that Nāgakuḥlottama was not really a fully awakened Buddha at all but in fact was "nobody else but Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta". Nāgakuḥlottama's awakening and final Nirvāṇa were only apparent. His whole life was an appearance adopted by Mañjuśrī for the benefit of the living beings of that region, a act of compassion made possible by his powers as a tenth stage bodhisattva.

Earlier in the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi Sūtra* Mañjuśrī describes how in the past, during an aeon called Virocana ('Illuminating') at a time when the Dharma had disappeared, he appeared as a Pratyekabuddha out of compassion for beings. In all the towns and villages of the region he was venerated as a Pratyekabuddha and offerings were made to him. By giving discourses and displaying miracles he was able to establish morally healthy roots of behav-[85]iour in innumerable people. For their sake he also feigned entry into final Nirvāṇa.¹²⁸ Throughout that aeon, Mañjuśrī enacted this whole cycle of appearing as a Pratyekabuddha, teaching and entering final Nirvāṇa, hundreds of thousands of times, enabling millions of beings to be saved. This story, as well as further demonstrating Mañjuśrī's immense powers as a tenth stage bodhisattva, provides an unusual example of a Pratyekabuddha, or an apparent Pratyekabuddha, described as teaching.

Mañjuśrī's magical powers are generally exercised for the purpose of converting beings and increasing their faith. His conversion of Jains through the creation of illusory disciples (*Ratnakāraṇḍa Sūtra*) and his conversion of a prostitute by appearing as a handsome young man (*Mañjuśrī-vikrīḍita Sūtra*) have been mentioned earlier (Part II, 1.ii). Use of magical powers can also be seen as a way of demonstrating the essential emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of phenomena; if nothing has any permanent and independent self-existence, then the boundaries of things are not fixed in the way that we usually take them to be. The material universe can be traversed and transformed at will by an advanced bodhisattva who has realised the truth of *śūnyatā*. Mañjuśrī, as a supreme exemplar of Buddhist wisdom, should be a master of magical power on a grand scale.

In the *Acintya-buddhaviśaya-nirdeśa*, the god Suguṇa, after hearing Mañjuśrī teach the Dharma, asks him also to teach the gods of the Tuṣita heaven.¹²⁹

Mañjuśrī immediately performed a miraculous feat that caused the god Suguṇa and all the others in the assembly to believe that they had arrived at the palace of the Tuṣita heaven. There they saw gardens, woods, magnificent palaces and mansions with sumptuous tiers of railings and windows, high and spacious twenty-storied towers with jewelled nets and curtains, celestial flowers covering the ground, various wonderful birds hovering in flocks and warbling, and celestial maidens in the air scattering flowers of the coral tree, singing verses in chorus, and playing merrily.¹³⁰

The Buddha reveals that they have not in fact gone anywhere at all, but that their experience is the result of Mañjuśrī's miraculous powers. Suguṇa is amazed and praises Mañjuśrī's abilities. But the Buddha continues: [86]

Son of heaven, is this your understanding of Mañjuśrī's miraculous power? As I understand it, if Mañjuśrī wishes, he can gather all the merits and magnificent attributes of Buddha-lands as numerous as the sands of the Ganges and cause them to appear in one Buddha-land. He can, with one fingertip, lift up the Buddha-lands below ours, which are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and put them in the empty space on top of the Buddha-lands above ours, which are also as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. He can put all the water of the four great oceans of all the Buddha-lands into a single pore without making the aquatic beings in it feel crowded or removing them from the seas. He can put all the Mount Sumeru-s of all the worlds into a mustard seed, yet the gods on these mountains will feel that they are living in their own palaces. He can place all sentient beings of the five planes of existence of all the Buddha-lands on his palm, and cause them to see all kinds of exquisite material objects such as those available in delightful, magnificent countries. He can gather all the fire of all the worlds into a piece of cotton. He can use a spot as small as a pore to eclipse completely every sun and moon in every Buddha-land. In short, he can accomplish whatever he wishes to do.¹³¹

Hearing this, Māra, disguised as a monk, sceptically demands to see Mañjuśrī perform such feats, so the Buddha tells Mañjuśrī he should display his miraculous powers there and then. Mañjuśrī, entering *samādhi*, does so and Māra is so impressed that he vows never again to obstruct the practice of the Dharma and reveals a spell (*dhāraṇī*) that will protect practitioners from other negative forces. The *sūtra* closes with the Buddha congratulating Māra, saying that his eloquence is a manifestation of Mañjuśrī's miraculous power.

Mañjuśrī's miraculous power is also much in evidence in the *Suṣhītamatī-devaputra-paripṛcchā* where he uses it to increase the size of the assembly so that more beings are able to hear

the Buddha's teaching. First, in order to call together a host of bodhisattvas from other Buddha-lands,

Mañjuśrī entered the Samādhi of Adorning all with Undefined Illumination. While in this samādhi, he emitted a great light which illuminated Buddha-lands in the east as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, so that all those lands became mild, lustrous, clean, clear, spotless, and inexpressibly wonderful. The light also illuminated worlds in the other nine directions: in the south, the west, the north, the four intermediate directions, the zenith, and the nadir. As a result, all the dark, secluded places, cliffs, forests, great and small mountains ... became bright, limpid, and transparent.¹³²

The bodhisattvas ask their respective Buddhas the reason for this light and are told that it has been emitted by the great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī who is about to question the Tathāgata Śākyamuni about a profound Dharma-door. The Buddhas praise Mañjuśrī's virtue, wisdom and powers, and the bodhisattvas, not wanting to miss such an event, depart for the present world with their Buddhas' permission. Meanwhile, Mañjuśrī has not yet left his own dwelling and is visited there by a host of gods including Suṣṭhitamati, the figure who gives his name to the sūtra. The gods cause heavenly coral tree flowers to rain down and form the shape of a giant *stūpa*, but Mañjuśrī outdoes this by causing a floral net to spread over the whole universe; the net radiates light and rains down heavenly coral tree flowers. He then spontaneously creates a huge throne made of precious stones, upon which he sits and engages Suṣṭhitamati in dialogue, discussing the nature of regression in bodhisattvas and the non-difference of Emptiness and the Tathāgata. Next,

By his miraculous powers, the bodhisattva-mahāsattva Mañjuśrī produced from nothing thirty-two square, multi-storied, jewelled halls furnished with imperial carriages... In the halls, there were wonderful precious couches covered with exquisite garments. On each couch sat a magically produced bodhisattva possessing the thirty-two auspicious signs of a great man.¹³³

Then, Mañjuśrī, the host of gods and the magically produced bodhisattvas (on their seats, complete with halls and carriages) all go to join Śākyamuni's assembly. However, Mañjuśrī disappears again in order to summon demon kings. What follows must surely have been composed with some humorous intent:

Meanwhile, Mañjuśrī had entered the Samādhi of Defeating Demons. Because of the power of this *samādhi*, ten billion demon palaces in the billion-world universe immediately became dilapidated, old, and dark, and seemed about to fall to ruin. After undergoing these changes, the demons' palaces lost their splendour and were no longer liked by the demons. The [88] demons saw their bodies become dull, decrepit, weak, and emaciated, and they had to walk with staffs; and the celestial maidens were transformed into old hags. Seeing these [changes], all the demons felt very distressed, and the hair on their bodies stood on end. They each thought fearfully to themselves, "What bizarre events and inauspicious signs are these occurring inside and outside of my body? Has the hour of death come and my karmic reward been spent? Are these the catastrophes heralding the destruction of the world at the end of the kalpa?"¹³⁴

Mañjuśrī then creates ten million *deva*-s who appear before the demons. The *deva*-s tell them that the changes have been caused by Mañjuśrī and suggest that they had better quickly go to see the Tathāgata Śākyamuni who is kind and compassionate. This they do and ask the Buddha for his protection, saying that hearing Mañjuśrī's name makes them feel terrified as if they were going to

die. The Buddha praises Mañjuśrī, saying that he alone is able to accomplish this great feat and that he does it for the benefit of beings. On Mañjuśrī's arrival (attended by even more *deva*-s, bodhisattvas, *gandharva*-s, and *yakṣa*-s) the Buddha persuades him to give the demons back their original forms. This Mañjuśrī does, but only after extracting a promise from the demons that they will 'detest desire' and not become attached to the three realms.

It will be clear from this that the *Suṣṭhitamati-devaputra-paripṛcchā* has a strong narrative element combined with teachings which emphasise the perspective of the Perfection of Wisdom. Mañjuśrī's unequalled miraculous power, and praise of him by the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and by Śākyamuni, indicate the supremacy of the Perfection of Wisdom. Its mastery gives him power greater than that of gods and demons, enabling him to convert them as well as ordinary humans.

The Perfection of Wisdom, and therefore Mañjuśrī, has access to spheres that cannot be entered by ordinary *śrāvakas* and Pratyekabuddhas. This is vividly illustrated in a story found in the *Ajātaśatru-kaukrtya-vinodana Sūtra*, the miracle of the bowl, which has the effect of bolstering the failing confidence in the Dharma of a number of gods. The story may be summarised as follows.¹³⁵ [89]

Two hundred gods are having doubts about following the bodhisattva path. The Buddha reads their minds and forms a plan to save them: he magically creates a lay-disciple who appears holding a bowl of delicious food, which he offers to the Buddha. However, as the Buddha is about to eat, Mañjuśrī rises and says, "Lord, if you do not give me some of this food, you will be guilty of ingratitude." Amazed by this behaviour, Śāriputra asks how Mañjuśrī can say such a thing. The Buddha replies, "Wait and I shall tell you," and throws the bowl to the ground. It sinks into the earth and drops through vast numbers of Buddha-fields, equal in total to seventy-two times the number of grains of sand in the river Ganges. As the bowl descends, all the Buddhas of the intermediate worlds see it passing downwards. Finally, it comes to rest in mid-air in the world called Avabhāsa, the Buddha-field of the Tathāgata Raśmirāja.

The Buddha asks Śāriputra to fetch the bowl. Śāriputra, disappearing from the assembly, enters ten thousand *samādhi*-s and descends through ten thousand Buddha-fields but is unable to find the bowl. Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Subhūti, and then five hundred monks, attempt to find the bowl using different numbers of *samādhi*-s according to their abilities. They likewise fail in the task and so Subhūti asks Maitreya to try, but Maitreya defers to Mañjuśrī since he has greater meditational attainments. Thus Subhūti requests the Buddha to ask Mañjuśrī, which he does.

Mañjuśrī thinks to himself, "Let me fetch this bowl without getting up from this seat or disappearing from the assembly." He enters a *samādhi* called All-Pervasive and plunges his hand into the ground; his arm elongates and the hand passes through the Buddha-fields. As it descends the hand salutes the different Buddhas and a voice is heard enquiring after their health. From each hair pore on the arm millions of light rays are emitted; from each ray millions of lotus-flowers blossom and in the calyx of each flower sits a bodhisattva praising Śākyamuni. Each Buddha-field is convulsed with tremors, flooded with a blaze of light, and filled with parasols, flags and banners. Mañjuśrī's hand continues descending until it appears above the bowl in the Buddha-field Avabhāsa.

Seeing bowl, arm and hand in mid-air, the bodhisattvas in Raśmirāja's assembly ask him what all this signifies. Raśmirāja informs them and also emits a ray of light from between his eyes that penetrates the intervening world-[90]systems and makes Śākyamuni and his assembly visible to them. As the light-ray passes through the different world-systems it brings their occupants bliss and spiritual attainments. Śākyamuni's assembly, seeing light rays emerging from the ground, asks the

meaning of it. By way of explanation, the Buddha emits a light-ray from the soles of his feet which makes Avabhāsa visible. Mañjuśrī now grasps the bowl and brings it back up; as he does so the lights and lotus-flowers vanish. Raśmirāja's attendant bodhisattvas accompany the bowl on its journey. Mañjuśrī then rises and presents the bowl to Śākyamuni.

The Buddha now answers Śāriputra's original question by recounting an episode (*avadāna*) from the past. Long ago there was a Buddha called Aparājitadhvaṃsa whose world-system was called Anindya. One day, one of his disciples, a monk called Jñānarāja, goes for alms. After collecting delicious food, a child, a merchant's son called Vimalabāhu, runs up to him asking for some of the food. Jñānarāja gives him a little and the child follows him back to where Aparājitadhvaṃsa is staying. Jñānarāja then gives the bowl to the child and tells him to offer it to the Tathāgata Aparājitadhvaṃsa. When Aparājitadhvaṃsa's bowl is filled some food remains, and so the boy offers it to the ninety-six thousand strong assembly. Yet still more food remains, enough to feed the entire assembly for seven days. The young boy, Vimalabāhu, realising the inexhaustible merit that is to be gained from making offerings to the Buddha, joins the Sangha and conceives the Awakening Mind. Having finished the story, Śākyamuni reveals that at that time he was Vimalabāhu and that Mañjuśrī was the monk Jñānarāja. So he, Śākyamuni, developed the aspiration for awakening at the initiation of Mañjuśrī. Likewise, adds Śākyamuni, all his Tathāgata qualities derive entirely from Mañjuśrī's initiative. Furthermore, not only is this the case for his own qualities but also for those of all past Buddhas and for all those following the career of the bodhisattva in the present. Mañjuśrī is the father and mother of the Buddhas and that is why he can charge Śākyamuni with ingratitude. Hearing all this the two hundred gods regain their faith in the bodhisattva path and countless beings conceive the aspiration to full and perfect awakening. Also, the Buddhas from countless Buddha-fields in the ten directions send jewelled parasols as offerings to Mañjuśrī and from these parasols are [91] heard voices proclaiming, "What Śākyamuni says is true – we too were all set on our path by Mañjuśrī."

ii. *Fully Awakened (Buddha)*

THE *MAÑJUŚRĪ-BUDDHAKṢETRA-GUṆAVĪYHA SŪTRA* contains a passage where Mañjuśrī is asked why, since he has attained the ten stages of a bodhisattva, he does not attain awakening. He answers:

Good man, no-one realises enlightenment after he has achieved perfection in all Buddha-dharmas. Why? Because if one has achieved perfection in all Buddha-dharmas, he need not realise anything more.¹³⁶

Later, the *sūtra* adds that he does not seek awakening because "Mañjuśrī is no other than enlightenment and vice versa."¹³⁷ So Mañjuśrī would seem to be fully awakened. Yet at no point is he said to be a Buddha, despite the fact that full awakening is only possessed by a Buddha. The *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavīyha Sūtra* was written within a self-conscious literary tradition in which Mañjuśrī is depicted as the *bodhisattva* who, *par excellence*, embodies wisdom. Although he is indistinguishable from a Buddha, to portray him as such would jar with tradition. Another reason why Mañjuśrī cannot be described as a Buddha is that he is present in Śākyamuni's Buddha-field, and Buddhas, as rediscoverers of the path, arise just one at a time in any given Buddha-field. Nevertheless, Mañjuśrī's vow not to attain Buddhahood in haste indicates an ambivalence about the goal of Buddhahood in the *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavīyha Sūtra*. Though Buddhahood embodies full awakening, its attainment implies the subsequent entering of final Nirvāṇa and going beyond the reach of living beings. This latter could be construed as abandoning beings.¹³⁸ So Mañjuśrī will become a Buddha with a Pure Land, yet he does not seek awakening because he is

already awakened as a bodhisattva. Mañjuśrī's decision not to seek perfect awakening appears to be more than an expression of the shift in level of semantic analysis from conventional (*samvṛti*-) to ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*) that is a familiar device in Perfection of Wisdom literature: there it is often asserted that awakening is not in fact a thing or entity that can be sought after.¹³⁹ [92]

The *Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra* states that Mañjuśrī is actually a Buddha of the present, though not in our universe but in one called 'Always Happy' (Nityapramuditā), so-named since in it the words 'old age', 'disease', and 'suffering' – and hence their referents – are unknown. Only the Mahāyāna is practiced there and it is always pleasant.¹⁴⁰

iii. Teacher of Buddhas

AS WE HAVE SEEN, the *Ajātaśatru-kaukrtya-vinodana Sūtra* relates how the Buddha himself owed his initiation into the spiritual path to Mañjuśrī and that it is due to Mañjuśrī that he became a Buddha. The *sūtra* also relates that innumerable other Buddhas were Mañjuśrī's disciples in the past, and that in the future, innumerable Buddhas will likewise be led by his power and compassion. Thus:

In the same way that, in the world, all children have a father and a mother, so in the religion of the Buddha, Mañjuśrī is the father and mother.¹⁴¹

This description is reminiscent of that of the Perfection of Wisdom as the mother of the Buddhas in chapter 12 of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Prajñāpāramitā, the perfect wisdom that gives birth to awakening, later became personified as a female deity. Here, Mañjuśrī, because of his association with wisdom, also adopts this function of spiritual progenitor.

In an influential text of later Indian Buddhism, the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, "The Chanting of Names", the depiction of Mañjuśrī as the wisdom underlying awakening is elaborated more fully.¹⁴² Since it is a tantric work, the *Nāmasaṃgīti* falls outside the scope of the present discussion, though a few comments may be appropriate. In this text Mañjuśrī is portrayed as the wisdom or non-dual awakened awareness (*jñāna*) embodied by every Buddha, and which also underlies every aspect of the Buddhist tradition that promotes the attainment of that awareness. Mañjuśrī is thus referred to as 'Mañjuśrī the Knowledge-Being' (Mañjuśrī-jñānasattva), and it is this figure, or his manifestations, whom the 'Names' (*nāma*-) of the *Nāmasaṃgīti* name. Thus Mañjuśrī the Knowledge-Being is: [93]

Without beginning or end, Awakened (*buddha*); primordial Buddha (*ādibuddha*), free from [causal] connection; possessing the peerless eye of Awareness, stainless; embodiment of Awareness, a Tathāgata.¹⁴³

The text is able to exploit paradox. Thus, he is both "the progenitor of all the Buddhas", and "the supreme, foremost son of the Buddhas".¹⁴⁴ He also "possesses the limbs of a youth, peerless in the three worlds", and yet is "an elder, an old man; lord of creatures".¹⁴⁵ At the same time, he is "Yamāntaka, king of obstacles",¹⁴⁶ "an Arhat", and "a *bhikṣu* with senses controlled".¹⁴⁷

In the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, therefore, Mañjuśrī the bodhisattva of wisdom becomes the wisdom of the bodhisattvas – and also that of the Buddhas and any other embodiment of Buddhist wisdom. The depersonalising of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, hinted at in sūtras such as the *Ajātaśatru-kaukrtya-vinodana*, is thus made explicit. Yet the early commentators on the *Nāmasaṃgīti* gave a visual form to Mañjuśrī the Knowledge-Being in the *sādhana*-s they created, allowing the Mañjuśrī who is found at the heart of all Tathāgatas to continue to be a focus of meditation, devotion and realisation.

III. MAÑJUŚRĪ & THE COMPILATION, PRESERVATION AND PROMULGATION OF MAHĀYĀNA LITERATURE.

MAHĀYĀNA COMMENTATORS MAINTAINED that the Mahāyāna sūtras were the authentic word of the Buddha. Nevertheless, they were aware that these scriptures did not appear in India until some centuries after the Buddha's final Nirvāṇa. In order to explain the time gap, a number of legends evolved to account for their compilation and subsequent preservation during the period prior to their appearance. Mañjuśrī, with his high status as one of the great bodhisattvas, plays a part in these accounts.¹⁴⁸

In outline, the story concerning the compilation of the Mahāyāna scriptures runs as follows: at the same time as the five hundred Arhats gathered on Gṛdhrakūṭa to recite and compile the Non-Mahāyāna canon (*tripiṭaka*), a gathering of bodhisattvas compiled the Mahāyāna sūtras. In the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-upadeśa*, a long Perfection of Wisdom commentary attributed to Nāgārjuna,¹⁴⁹ it is Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, aided by Ānanda, who creates a double so that he can be present at both meetings, that are the compilers.¹⁵⁰ [94] Moreover, in his *Tarkajvāla*, the ninth century Indian commentator Haribhadra mentions Mañjuśrī as one of the principal compilers, together with Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi (under his name Guhyakādhipati, "Lord of the Guhyakas") and Maitreya. Some detail is added to this account by the Tibetan historian Bu ston, who says that tradition located the gathering of bodhisattvas to the south of Rājagṛha, on a (mythical) mountain named Vimalasvabhāva, where in an assembly of a million Mañjuśrī recited the Mahāyāna Abhidharma, Maitreya the Vinaya, and Vajrapāṇi the Sūtras.¹⁵¹ Bu ston, in assigning the recitation of the sūtras to Vajrapāṇi, cites a passage by Haribhadra that refers to two scriptures where the Buddha names Vajrapāṇi as the preserver and protector of Mahāyāna scriptures. Though the contents of the Mahāyāna Abhidharma are not specified, it makes sense to have Mañjuśrī as its recitor; both are concerned with higher wisdom. According to the third Hua-yen patriarch, Fa tsang (643-712 CE), Mañjuśrī compiled many Mahāyāna sūtras including the *Avataṃsaka*.

Fa tsang also gives an account of what occurred during the interval between the recitation of the Mahāyāna scriptures and their later promulgation. After the Buddha's final Nirvāṇa, he says, the followers of the Mahāyāna hid themselves while the non-Mahāyānists contended for power. Since there was no-one to receive the Mahāyāna teachings, the scriptures remained in the palace of the king of the *nāga*-s until, six hundred years later, Nāgārjuna visited the *nāga*-s and learnt them by heart. On his return Nāgārjuna was able to proclaim them to the world.¹⁵²

The story of Nāgārjuna's visit to the *nāga* palace to recover Mahāyāna scriptures is found in a number of sources. More often than not it is part of the Perfection of Wisdom corpus that he finds, particularly the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, "The Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Lines",¹⁵³ rather than the whole of the Mahāyāna canon. Usually Mañjuśrī does not figure in the accounts of the depositing of the Mahāyāna sūtras for safekeeping with the *nāga*-s, though one modern source does state that it was Mañjuśrī who entrusted them with the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* for later recovery by Nāgārjuna.¹⁵⁴ The Mahāyāna sūtras are described as (re)appearing in a number of ways: some are found hidden in buildings, others are taught by individual bodhisattvas to individual humans (notably to Asaṅga by Maitreya). [95] Tāranātha reports a story of Mañjuśrī, disguised as a monk, leaving a manuscript of the *Aṣṭa* at the house of the king of Oḍiṣa (Orissa). This, he says was the first appearance of the Mahāyāna in the human world after the Buddha's Nirvāṇa.¹⁵⁵ Though, as we have seen (II, 1.i), Mañjuśrī does not appear in the *Aṣṭa* and has only a passing reference in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* and *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, it is hardly surprising that the bodhisattva of wisdom should become associated with these wisdom texts.

In Atiśa's autocommentary to his influential summary of the bodhisattva path, the *Bodhipatha-pradīpa*, "Light on the Bodhi[sattva] Path" (c. 1042 CE), he refers to Mañjuśrī as Nāgārjuna's teacher.¹⁵⁶ Did Atiśa have any source in mind when he said this? As far as I can ascertain, none of the often colourful Tibetan or Chinese biographies of Nāgārjuna mention any relation between him and Mañjuśrī. Tāranātha records a number of instances where Mañjuśrī appears to important figures but Nāgārjuna is not one of them. Also, Mañjuśrī is not referred to in any of Nāgārjuna's works or, indeed, in any of the works of his pupil Āryadeva.¹⁵⁷ Of course, Atiśa may be speaking metaphorically and, in any case, it is understandable that he links Mañjuśrī and Nāgārjuna. Mañjuśrī is the embodiment of the Perfection of Wisdom, and Nāgārjuna is its most famous promulgator. Also, they both have associations with *nāga*-s and with the South of India.¹⁵⁸ Atiśa's depiction of the relation between Mañjuśrī and Nāgārjuna may well have been modelled on the famous one between Maitreya and Asaṅga. Certainly, in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, these two pairs of figures came to represent the two fundamental and complementary aspects of the bodhisattva path. Mañjuśrī and Nāgārjuna are associated with profound wisdom, whereas Maitreya and Asaṅga are linked with compassion, or 'extensive deeds' (referring to compassion's breadth of scope). Thus, the twentieth century teacher, Geshe Wangyal, writes:

Buddha taught two great paths: to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī he taught the path of Profound View, and to the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the path of Extensive Deeds. After several hundred years, as Buddha had prophesied, these two paths were extended by Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga.¹⁵⁹

[96] Tibetan Buddhism, in particular the dGe lugs tradition, came also to see Mañjuśrī as the source of inspiration of the Madhyamaka school of philosophy. One reason for this was that Indian Mādhyamika thinkers such as Candrakīrti (c. 600–660 CE), who contrasted their position with that of Yogācārin (especially as exemplified by Asaṅga), claimed to derive their approach from that of Nāgārjuna. If Nāgārjuna's teacher was Mañjuśrī, then Madhyamaka thought could be traced to him. Atiśa, who links Nāgārjuna with Mañjuśrī, places himself in the Madhyamaka lineage:

The nectar of Ārya Nāgārjuna's words filled Āryadeva, Candrakīrti, Bhavya [Bhāvaviveka] and Śāntideva down to Bodhibhadra too; even on me a little has been sprinkled.¹⁶⁰

The link between the Madhyamaka school and Mañjuśrī was further strengthened and refined by Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), the founder of the Tibetan dGe lugs school. Tsong kha pa's biography recounts his many visions of Mañjuśrī, during which he would often ask Mañjuśrī questions and receive advice, clarification and teaching in return.¹⁶¹ In one of the most striking visions, Mañjuśrī's sword of wisdom extended from Mañjuśrī's heart to Tsong kha pa's; along the sword, the nectar of the five wisdoms flowed, in rainbow colours, to its tip in Tsong kha pa's heart. At one point Mañjuśrī tells Tsong kha pa that the latter no longer needs further advice on the correct view of emptiness, and adds that when he teaches he should adopt the perspective of Nāgārjuna and Atiśa, that is, that of the Madhyamaka. Later, when he was on retreat and intensively studying Nāgārjuna's key work, the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, "The Root Verses on the Middle [Way]", Tsong kha pa had a vision of Nāgārjuna with his disciples, Āryadeva, Buddhapālita, Bhāvaviveka and Candrakīrti. In the vision, Buddhapālita placed his commentary to the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* on top of Tsong kha pa's head, giving him inspiration and blessing. Tsong kha pa took this to indicate that he should follow Buddhapālita's understanding of Nāgārjuna. A feature of Buddhapālita's commentary was his use of arguments that displayed the contradictory and unsatisfactory consequences (*prasaṅga*) of an opponent's position. This approach led, retrospectively, to the name Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka being given to it as a Madhyamaka sub-

school.¹⁶² Following Tsong kha pa, the dGe lugs [97] adopted the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka standpoint; Mañjuśrī could now be seen as the source of inspiration for not only the Madhyamaka in general but, more specifically, for the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka.¹⁶³

Nevertheless, it is neither entirely fair nor accurate to portray Mañjuśrī as the supporter of the Madhyamaka but not of the Yogācāra. As the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī might be expected to support and promote the whole spectrum of attempts to articulate more systematically the Perfection of Wisdom teachings. Asaṅga and the Yogācāra school can be seen as working within this context just as much as Nāgārjuna. Indeed, it is not clear that Asaṅga saw his approach as conflicting with that of Nāgārjuna. Tāranātha comments that before Buddhapālita and Bhāvaviveka, no-one had thought the doctrines of Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga were fundamentally different.¹⁶⁴ It is not surprising, then, that Mañjuśrī is recorded as having appeared to Yogācārins as well as to Mādhyamikas. In the instances reported by Tāranātha, Mañjuśrī appears about as many times to proponents of the two traditions. He appeared to the Mādhyamikas Buddhapālita and Śāntideva, but also to the Yogācārins Dignāga and Candragomin.¹⁶⁵

Tāranātha tells a story of a public debate at the great Buddhist university at Nālandā between Candragomin, who was defending the Yogācārin position, and the Mādhyamika Candrakīrti. Before the debate began a procession formed for their ceremonial entrance into the university precincts. A statue of Mañjuśrī was carried between them, and as they moved towards the gate, Candragomin glanced at the statue. It appeared to him as Mañjughoṣa himself. Candragomin spontaneously uttered a hymn of praise and the statue, to the amazement of the onlookers, turned its head towards Candragomin as if to listen to him. As the debate progressed, Candrakīrti found that he was unable to defeat Candragomin, and it transpired that Candragomin was being taught every night in a temple by a stone image of Avalokiteśvara. On discovering this, Candrakīrti – presumably somewhat upset – prayed to Avalokiteśvara, who appeared in a dream and said, “You are already blessed by Mañjughoṣa and so you are not in need of my blessings”. The debate seemingly came to an end with neither side victorious.¹⁶⁶ [98]

Another story is told by the seventh century Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang. A certain ‘Jina Bodhisattva’ is persuaded by Mañjuśrī not to gain awakening as an Arhat but to help living beings by teaching a Yogācārin scripture:

At this time Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, knowing his [ie. Jina Bodhisattva’s] purpose, was moved with pity. Wishing to arouse him to the truth and to awaken him in a moment, he came and said, “Alas! how have you given up your great purpose, and only fixed your mind on your own personal profit, with narrow aims, giving up the purpose of saving all! If you would really do good, you ought to transmit and explain the rules of the Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra of Maitreya Bodhisattva. By that you may lead and direct students, and cause them to receive great advantage.”¹⁶⁷

That Mañjuśrī appears to both Mādhyamikas and Yogācārins should be expected. He is, after all, the bodhisattva of a wisdom that, by its nature, transcends all verbalisation and conceptualisation. Such wisdom both liberates and sees the world as it truly is. According to the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, which speaks in visionary rather than philosophical terms, and in which, as we have seen, Mañjuśrī plays a central role, the universe, when seen correctly is one that is simultaneously empty of inherent existence and which has pure consciousness as its ultimate ground; it is a luminous, radiant world, free from hard edges and one in which the bodhisattva wields inconceivable magical powers out of great compassion for all sentient beings.

In conclusion, we can say that Mahāyāna literature and, in particular, Mahāyāna sūtras, portray Mañjuśrī as ‘an entirely Buddhist personage’. As a bodhisattva of the highest level, at the least, Mañjuśrī is able to perform a wide range of functions. Perfectly equipped to teach living beings and convert them to Buddhism, he can be the Buddhas’ spokesman and the perfect spiritual friend. Effectively indistinguishable from the Buddhas, he can also be a focus for devotion and meditation, bestowing protection from suffering and pain as a consequence.

Śāntideva, near the conclusion of his famous work on the path of the bodhisattva, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, “Introduction to the Path of Awakening”, in dedicating himself to a life of compassionate activity, sees that life figured in the person of the great bodhisattva of wisdom:

Just as Mañjuśrī acts —
 Bringing about the well-being of all beings
 Dwelling throughout space in the ten directions
 — So may I act.¹⁶⁸

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Abbreviations

AjāKauVin	<i>Ajātaśatru-kaukrtya-vinodana Sūtra</i>
Avś	<i>Avadāna-śataka</i>
Aṣṭa	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra</i>
BoCāA	<i>Bodhicaryāvatāra</i> of Śāntideva, ed. Louis de la Vallée Poussin
DN	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i> , ed. T.W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter
J	<i>Jātaka</i>
JIABS	<i>Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies</i>
JIP	<i>Journal of Indian Philosophy</i>
Kanjur	bKa’ ’gyur
MañjBuKṣ	<i>Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavūyha Sūtra</i>
MañjMūK	<i>Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa</i> , ed. Gaṇapati Śāstri
MañjPari	<i>Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra</i>
MCB	<i>Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques</i>
MV	<i>Mahāvastu</i>
NS	<i>Mañjuśrī-jñānasattvasya Nāmasaṃgīti</i> , ed. R. Davidson
P.	Pali
PTS	Pali Text Society
SaRā	<i>Samādhirāja Sūtra</i>
Skt.	Sanskrit
Sn	Sutta Nipāta
T.	Taisho number
Tib.	Tibetan
Tōh.	No. in the Tohoku catalogue of the Tibetan Kanjur and Tanjur, ed. Hakuju Ui et al.

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Endnotes

¹ *mañjughoṣaṃ namasyāmi yat prasādān matih śubhe* (BoCāA 10: 58ab)

² For a discussion of Vajrapāṇi and his rise to eminence see David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors* (London & Boston: Serindia, 1987), pp.134–141. In the Hindu tradition Śiva and Viṣṇu provide examples of figures whose standing was radically transformed over time. In the Vedas they are relatively minor figures but through a process of accretion and promotion in status each became the supreme deity for their respective followers. The notion of incarnation (*avatāra*) aided this process for Viṣṇu, allowing the [105] myths of other deities to be credited to him; Śiva became a complex composite figure with tensions between the various strands in his nature, most notably the ascetic and the erotic. See J. L. Brockington, *The Sacred Thread* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), pp.64–73; T. L. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition* (California: Dickenson, 1971), pp.87–89.

³ See Marcelle Lalou, *Iconographie des étoffes peintes dans le Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (Paris: 1930), pp.66–70.

⁴ The primary source text consulted by Lalou for the use of *pañcacīraka* as an descriptive term for Mañjuśrī is the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa*, "The Root Ordinance concerning Mañjuśrī" (see MañjMūK IV, 62; V, 68, cited by Lalou, 1930, p.66), where it is used to refer to Mañjuśrī's head-dress. As well as taking it to mean "possessing five hair-braids," Tibetan translators occasionally interpreted *pañcacīraka* as indicating the possession of a five-pointed tiara (ibid. pp.66–7). Perhaps they did to harmonise with Mañjuśrī's iconographic portrayal as a prince, a depiction which could be justified by taking his epithet *kumārabhūta* to mean '[being] a prince.' In general Sanskrit usage, however, the term *cīra* refers to a lock or braid of hair and not a diadem. Five such braids were worn by youths when dressed for festivals, and so Mañjuśrī's head would be adorned like that of a youth. See s.v. 'cīraka', F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p.231. Lalou also notes references to a head-dress of five locks or braids being worn by ascetics, *kṣatriya*-s and children (ibid. p.67, note 3). For further discussion of *pañcacīra/ka* as an epithet of Mañjuśrī see Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, *Etude iconographique sur Mañjuśrī* (Paris: 1964), pp.13–14. Lalou also notes (ibid., p.67, note 4) a reference to the use of *pañcacīra* as an epithet for Mañjuśrī by A. Foucher (*Iconographie bouddhique*, II p.42).

⁵ *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* II, p.647. Quoted by Etienne Lamotte, 'Mañjuśrī,' *T'oung Pao* (1960), pp.1–96. See p.2, note 3.

⁶ Vilāsavajra's gloss of the word *pañcaśikha* occurs when he cites it from *Nāmasaṃgīti* 93cd (*pañcānanaḥ pañcaśikhaḥ pañcacīrakaśekharaḥ*) in the context of a description of how to visualise the Ādibuddha: [He should visualise] the Fortunate One, the Ādibuddha, as "having five faces", as "having five crests" (*pañcaśikhaḥ*), that is to say, having five hair-braids (*pañcacīrakam*). It is

through tying up those [hair-braids that] “he has a head-dress of five hair-braids”. (Adapted from Tribe, 1994b, p.106.) This description, part of a *sādhana* in which Mañjuśrī, conceived as the Knowledge-Being (Mañjuśrī-jñānasattva), is visualised at the heart of the ādibuddha, occurs in Vilāsavajra’s *Nāmasaṃgītiṭīkā Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*.

⁷ DN II 263–289.

⁸ *saṃsandati kho pana te pañcasikha tantissaro gītassarena gītassaro ca tantissarena na ca pana te pañcasikha tantissaro ativaṇṇati gītassaraṃ gītassaro vā tantissaraṃ* (DN II 267).

⁹ Mañjuśrī is called Mañjughoṣa three times in the Lotus Sūtra: twice by Maitreya in chapter 1, and once by the Buddha śākyamuni at the end of chapter 13 (see H. Kern, *The Saddharma-puṇḍarīka or The Lotus of the True Law*, 1884, pp.11, 15, 280).

¹⁰ The name Mañjusvara is also used by Maitreya for Mañjuśrī in chapter 1 of the *Lotus Sūtra* (Kern, 1884, p.16).

¹¹ See Raoul Birnbaum, ‘Mañjuśrī’, in M. Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: 1987), pp.174-5; also H. Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900–1950* (Harvard: 1967), p.307; C. Luk, trans., *Empty Cloud, The Autobiography of the Chinese Zen Master Xu Yun* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: 1988), p.14ff.

¹² DN II 230. For an English translation, see T.W. Rhys Davids, tr., *Dialogues of the Buddha, Part II* (London, 1910), p.266. This paradox is suggestive of the composite nature of many of the Pali texts, where a number of standard passages of varying lengths may be joined together to form a sūtra. This probably has its roots in the oral nature of the early tradition. For a useful discussion on this see L.S. Cousins, ‘Pali Oral Literature’, in P. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky, eds., *Buddhist Studies Ancient & Modern* (London: 1983), pp.1–11.

¹³ *Mahāgovindīya Sūtra* (MV III 197–224). For an English translation see J.J. Jones, tr., *The Mahāvastu, Vol. III*, (London: PTS, 1956), pp.193–219. The passage where Pañcaśikha acts as interlocuter is found at MV III 215ff.

¹⁴ David L. Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himālaya* (Oxford: Cassirer 1957), pp.61–2.

¹⁵ See Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ‘Mañjuśrī’, in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh and New York: 1908), p.405.

¹⁶ Lamotte, 1960, p.34, translating from the *Dīrghāgama* (P. *Dīgha Nikāya*), T1.K.30 p.117a. Alex Wayman (1985, p.5) implies that this passage also names the king of the *gandharva*-s as Pañcaśikha. However, I think that Wayman has taken this from a summarising passage by Lamotte, “en tout état de cause, le Gandhamādāna était fréquenté par les ṛṣi et les Pratyekabuddha et servait de résidence au roi des Gandharva Mañjughoṣa, encore nommé Pañcaśikha” (1960, p.34).

¹⁷ The Chinese characters transcribed as Miao-yin are commonly used either for the bodhisattva Gadgadasvara, the Buddha Sughoṣa or the Arhat Ghoṣa. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London: 1937; reprinted Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), p.236a.

¹⁸ For Pali text references to Pañcaśikha see G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, 1937, vol. II, p.107.

¹⁹ See, eg., the *Biḷārakosiya Jātaka* (J IV 69); also the *Sudhābhajana Jātaka* (J V 412) and its Skt. parallel, the *Mañjarī Jātaka*, in the *Mahāvastu* (MV II 49).

²⁰ Eg. MV III 197; MV III 215; Avś I 95; Avś I 113; SaRā 19; SaRā 37 (cited in Edgerton, 1953, p.315).

²¹ DN II 268.

²² DN II 288.

²³ Lalou, 1930, p.69, note 2.

²⁴ Lamotte, 1960, p. 2; John Brough, 'Legends of Khotan and Nepal', *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies XII* (1948), p.333. Brough describes the account, found in the Gośrṅga Vyākaraṇa, of the spread of Buddhism to the central Asian city state of Khotan. The text depicts Śākyamuni arriving accompanied by a retinue, and Brough comments that "among his attendants on this occasion the text mentions the *gandharva*-king, Pañcaśikha." It is unclear from this whether the text simply refers to Pañcaśikha and Brough is taking it for granted that he is king of the *gandharva*-s, or whether Pañcaśikha is specifically referred to as a king. I have been unable to check the original text.

²⁵ See Lalou, 1930, p. 69, note 2. Her references are to MañjMūK II 46, line 1 (*gandharvarāt pañcaśikhaḥ*) and *mDo*, III f.123b. I have not traced the Tibetan citation. For the third instance, see NisṣYā (text) p 63, line 17 (*pañcaśikho gandharvarājendraḥ*). Pañcaśikha is here positioned beyond the fourth circle of the maṇḍala amongst a group of kings. This group is one of a number of groupings of Hindu deities – gods, planets, *nāga*-s, kings, planets – found in the very elaborate *Dharmadhātu-vāgīśvara-maṇḍala*. For an outline of its structure see Bhattacharyya's introduction, p. 65. In the MañjMūK, Pañcaśikha is similarly one of, in this case, three kings that are part of a maṇḍala description. Both the NisṣYā and the MañjMūK are tantric works and almost certainly come considerably later than the *Dīrghāgama* reference to the king of the *gandharva*-s being called Miao-yin. The only candidate for a contemporary reference is that from the Tibetan Kanjur.

²⁶ Snellgrove, 1957, p.61; 1987, pp.59, 367.

²⁷ Mallmann, 1964, note 40.

²⁸ MañjMūK II 26, 15; II 37, 8; II 37, 26-7; IV 58, 24. For a (French) translation of the passage in chapter 2, see Lalou, 1930, p.25. However, Edgerton (1953, p.315, s.v. 'pañcaśikha') points out that as a *mudrā* the term pañcaśikha is regularly feminine in form, ie. *pañcaśikhā*.

²⁹ There is no explicit attribution in the *Nāmasaṃgīti* of its Names to Mañjuśrī. For discussion of the issue of whom the 'Names' of the *Nāmasaṃgīti* name, see my 'Mañjuśrī and "The Chanting of Names" (*Nāmasaṃgīti*): Wisdom and its Embodiment in an Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist Text' in S. Hamilton and J. Connolly, eds., *Indian Insights: Buddhism, Brahmanism and Bhakti* (New York: Weatherhill, 1997).

³⁰ *śikhī śikhaṇḍī jaṭilo jaṭī maṇḍī kirīṭimān / pañcānanah pañcaśikhaḥ pañcacīrakaśekharaḥ //* (*Nāmasaṃgīti* 93).

³¹ As noted above (see note 6) Vilāsavajra takes the 'Name' *pañcaśikha* to describe the visualised form of the Ādibuddha. However, since the Ādibuddha has Mañjuśrī[jñānasattva] as his nature, the 'Name' also can be taken to name Mañjuśrī.

³² Cited by Lamotte, 1960, p. 35.

³³ In Brāhmaṇical cosmology, whose structure was largely adopted by Buddhism, *gandharva*-s dwell in the foothills of Mt. Meru. Though said to have their own cities, they are most often found in Indraś heaven where they play their musical instruments for his entertainment. They were famed for their fondness for, and power over, women, as well as for their dislike of *nāga*-s. See V. Ions, *Indian Mythology* (London: 2nd. ed., 1983), pp. 77, 118–9.

³⁴ MV II 48ff.

³⁵ Cited by Lamotte (1960, p. 3), who also refers to A. Foucher's suggestion that Pañcaśikha's repeated representation in Gandhāra art points to his enjoying great popularity in North-West India. Whether the five-peaked mountain chain surrounding Anavatapta lay within the region designated as Kashmir at the time of the Mahāmāyūrī, I do not know.

³⁶ The Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra appears to be extant only in a single Chinese translation by Nie Tao-tchen, made towards the end of the 3rd century CE (T. 463: Wen chou che li pan nie p'an king). Lamotte gives a French translation in his monograph (1960, pp. 35–39).

³⁷ For further discussion and citation of part of the Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra see Part II 1.i & ii, below.

³⁸ Lamotte, 1960, pp.33–4.

³⁹ For a discussion of Mañjuśrī's association with Wu-t'ai shan, see my 'Mañjuśrī – Origins, Role and Significance. Part 3: The Cult of Mañjuśrī', *Western Buddhist Review* 1, 1994, pp.30–37. See also Raoul Birnbaum, *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī: A group of East Asian maṇḍalas and their traditional symbolism* (Boulder: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, Monograph no. 2, 1983), pp.7–39.

⁴⁰ R.H. Robinson and W.L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (3rd edition, Belmont, California: 1982), p.104.

⁴¹ T.W. Rhys Davids, tr., *Dialogues of the Buddha, Part II* (London, 1910), p.245 (*vissatṭho ca viññeyyo ca mañju ca savaṇṭyo ca bindu ca avisārī ca gambhīro ca ninnādī ca*: DN II 211).

⁴² In Vajrāyudha's praise (*stuti*) of Mañjughoṣa his voice is described as sixty-four fold, "resounding loud as thunder, waking the sleep of the *kleśa*-s, unfastening the iron fetters of karma, dispersing the darkness of ignorance" (quoted in Sangharakshita, *The Three Jewels: An Introduction to Buddhism* (London: 1967), p.191).

⁴³ See Malalasekera, 1937, vol. II, p.1022, s.v. śanaṅkumāra.

⁴⁴ DN II 211–212.

⁴⁵ S I 153.

⁴⁶ As far as I am aware no Sanskrit source for Sarasvatī as the consort of Mañjuśrī has yet been traced. For discussion of this see Alex Wayman, 'The Goddess Sarasvatī – From India to Tibet', in George R. Elder, ed., *Buddhist Insight. Essays by Alex Wayman* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), pp.431–9. Wayman reports that Mallman (1964) had not found any connection between Sarasvatī and Mañjuśrī in her work on his iconography. In the Sādhana-mālā, Mañjuśrī is generally depicted alone, there being just one form of Mañjuśrī, namely Mañjuvajra, who has a sexual consort, who is un-named and referred to as his *prajñā* ('wisdom'); (Mañjuvajra is one of the central deities of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*). In Tibetan sādhana collections, however, Sarasvatī is found as Mañjuśrī's consort (Wayman, *ibid.*, pp.438–9). Wayman suggests that Sanskrit texts concerned with Mañjuśrī's wrathful forms, such as Yamāri or Yamāntaka, may be the source of the association between Mañjuśrī and Sarasvatī. If this turns out to be the case, then it is not until around the eighth century CE – when these Yogottara (or Mahāyoga) Tantras begin to appear (pace Wayman) – that Sarasvatī functions as Mañjuśrī's consort. Generally speaking, this would not be surprising as it is only from the Yogottara Tantras, such as the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, onwards that Buddhist figures, even in tantric contexts, are portrayed in sexual union. An early appearance of Sarasvatī in Buddhism is in *The Sūtra of Golden Light* (*Suvarṇaprabhāsottama Sūtra*), where one of her skills is that of astrology. See R.E. Emmerick, tr., *The Sūtra of Golden Light* (London: Luzac & Co., 1970), pp.44–6. Mañjuśrī is also given credit for astrological skills, briefly in the *Nāmasaṃgīti* (Davidson, 1981: verse 103), and more extensively in one of the Tibetan biographies of Padmasambhava. See W.Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation* (London: OUP, 1954), pp.135–6. See also Tribe, 1994a, note 53, pp.45–6.

⁴⁷ Lalou, 1930, p.69.

⁴⁸ MañjMūK 45, line 12.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 33, line 2.

⁵⁰ “...parait bien être l’équivalent Mahāyāniste du Kārttikeya brahmanique.” (Lalou, 1930, p.69).

⁵¹ J.L. Brockington, 1981, p.61.

⁵² K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), pp.494.

⁵³ Wayman, 1985, p.6.

⁵⁴ See Ions, *Indian Mythology* (1967), pp.84–8; revised ed. (1983), pp.80–2.

⁵⁵ Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (2nd ed. Calcutta: 1958), pp.101–3.

⁵⁶ Bhattacharyya uses the description of the Svayambhū Purāṇa given by R. Mitra, *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* (1882; repr. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1981), pp.249–258.

⁵⁷ There is still a caitya dedicated to Mañjuśrī not far from the Svayambhunath stūpa.

⁵⁸ There are variants to the story as retold by Bhattacharyya, Getty, Snellgrove and Brough. This account relies largely on Brough’s retelling.

⁵⁹ See Maurice Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature, vol. II* (Calcutta: 1927; 2nd ed. 1972), pp.377–8. Mitra (1882, p.249) states that the author was Mañjuśrī and that he lived in the 10th century CE.

⁶⁰ I take this point from David Snellgrove (1957, p.95).

⁶¹ John Brough, 1948. Brough’s work is referred to briefly by Snellgrove (1987, p.366).

⁶² See Tribe, 1994a, pp.36–7.

⁶³ This issue, that of the origins of a cult of Mañjuśrī, is the subject of the third part of this study, already published (see Tribe, 1994a).

⁶⁴ La Vallée Poussin, in Hastings (ed.), 1908, p.405. I know of just one account of Mañjuśrī having a definite birth. In the Padma bKa’i Thang, a Tibetan gter ma text of the rNying ma school, he is said to have been born in China at Wu T’ai shan. He emerges fully-formed from a swelling in a tree. The swelling has been produced by a light ray emitted by the Buddha Śākyamuni, and Mañjuśrī is born in China so that the Chinese, who are resistant to the teachings of the Buddha, may be converted. See Kenneth Douglas and Gwendolyn Bays (tr.), *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava* (Berkeley, California: Dharma Publishing, 1978), pp.224–5.

⁶⁵ Quoted from ‘The Ocean of Clouds of Praises of the Guru Mañjughoṣa,’ in R. Thurman, ed., *The Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982), p.188.

⁶⁶ See Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma. Translated from the Chinese of Kumārajīva* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p.1. The Sanskrit version of chapter 21 reiterates Mañjuśrī’s position as head of the bodhisattvas (see Hurvitz, *ibid.*, p. 398, note 1).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4f.

⁶⁸ I give the chapter numbers of Kumārajīva’s translation, as followed by Hurvitz. From chapter 12 onwards the Chinese and Sanskrit numbering is out of step. See Hurvitz, *ibid.*, pp. xxiv–xxv, for a comparative chart. Mañjuśrī also appears in the role of interlocutor in chapter 24 where he enquires after the source of the magical appearance of eighty-four thousand jewel lotus flowers and, learning that they were created by a bodhisattva named Gadgadasvara from another world system, asks to see him.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 199–201. In Kumārajīva’s translation the tradition that awakening itself is only possible from a male body is therefore still upheld. There are some differences in the surviving Sanskrit version as translated by H. Kern, *The Saddharma-puṇḍarīka or The Lotus of the True Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1884), pp.250–254. At one point the nāga princess appears to claim that she is already fully awakened (“I have obtained enlightenment according to my wish”, p.252), so that there is the implication that in the distant world system she is manifesting awakening rather

than attaining it. For a second translation of the Sanskrit, see Hurvitz, *ibid.*, notes 5–9, pp.378–380. He notes the difficulty in understanding the exact sense of the half-verse where the princess makes a claim with respect to her awakening.

⁷⁰ See Robert A. F. Thurman, tr., *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti. A Mahāyāna Scripture* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p.42f.

⁷¹ In chapter 7, for example, a goddess dwelling in Vimalakīrti's house transforms Śāriputra into her female form and her own into Śāriputra's in order to demonstrate the relativity of being female or male.

⁷² Thurman, 1976, pp.65–66.

⁷³ The *Acintya-buddhaviṣaya-nirdeśa* is part of the Mahāratnakūṭa collection, which survives in Tibetan and Chinese translation. It is translated with the title, “The Inconceivable State of Buddhahood”, in Garma C. C. Chang, ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras* (Pennsylvania & London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), pp.27–40.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1983, p.27.

⁷⁵ Edward Conze, *The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts* (London: Luzac & Co., 1973), pp.83–84.

⁷⁶ The *Suṣṭhitamati-devaputra-paripṛcchā* is part of the Mahāratnakūṭa collection and is translated in Chang, 1983, pp.41–72, under the title, “How to Kill with the Sword of Wisdom”.

⁷⁷ Chang, 1983, p.65.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.66. Chang's translation reads “as soon as one perceives in his mind the existence of an ego and a personal identity, he has killed me; and this is called killing.” I have provisionally made a crucial emendation to ‘non-existence’ on grounds of sense (I have not been able to check the Tibetan or Chinese). If to see the non-existence of a personal identity of the Buddha is to kill him then the passage chimes with Mañjuśrī's preceding dialogue with Suṣṭhitamati. It also makes of the Buddha saying that he will show Mañjuśrī the best way to kill him, i.e. the way to kill him is to see him truly, thereby killing the (idea of the) Buddha as a self-existent entity. Otherwise he is teaching Mañjuśrī how to see falsely, which seems unlikely. A case could be made for accepting the unemended reading, however. If to see the existence of a personal identity of the Buddha is to kill him then to do so would be to misperceive him and thereby, it would have to be argued, ‘kill’ him. However on this reading, the passage would have to be taken as reversing the previous metaphor of killing with the knife of wisdom, so that Mañjuśrī's sword here becomes one of ignorance.

⁷⁹ In these two *sūtras*, Mañjuśrī is mentioned as one of the bodhisattvas in the assembly attending the Buddha. He is also mentioned at the end of the introductory section where the present world system is transformed, to become composed of jewels and precious stones, and filled with flowers and fruits “just like the world system Padmāvatī, the Buddha-field of the Tathāgata Samantakusuma, where Mañjuśrī the Crown Prince resides, and the Bodhisattva Suṣṭhitamati, and other very powerful Bodhisattvas” (Edward Conze, tr., *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with the Divisions of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p.44. For Sanskrit text references, see Lamotte, 1960, p.8, note 20). I know of no other reference to Mañjuśrī residing in Padmāvatī. On the development of the Perfection of Wisdom Literature in India, see Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (2nd ed., Tokyo: The Reiyukai, 1978), pp.1–18. *The Perfection of Wisdom in 700 Lines* was translated into Chinese three times (T 232, 233, 220), where it was (twice) given the title *The Prajñāpāramitā as Taught by Mañjuśrī*. See Conze, *ibid.*, pp.58–9.

⁸⁰ Mañjuśrī plays a major role in the *The Questions of Nāgaśrī*, which was first translated into Chinese in 420 CE with the title *The Sūtra on the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī's Highest Pure Act of Seeking for Alms*. A few short extracts of this work, which is concerned with the application of the perfection of wisdom in the practical sphere of begging for alms, are translated into English by

Conze (1973, pp.160–164). In the tantric Perfection of Wisdom text, *The Perfection of Wisdom in 150 Lines*, Mañjuśrī teaches the letter A as the supreme quintessence of the perfection of wisdom (ibid., p.188).

⁸¹ For these comments on the content and perspective of the *Ajātaśatru-kaukrīya-vinodana Sūtra* (AjāKauVin), I am indebted to Paul Harrison, who discussed this material in a lecture, “Spiritual Fantasy and the Message of Narrative,” given as part of a series entitled “The Quest for the Origins of the Mahāyāna,” at the Oriental Institute, Oxford, 1994. The AjāKauVin was translated into Chinese more than once (T. 626, 627, 628) and chapters 3 and 4, containing the material on Mañjuśrī, also survive as an independent work (T. 629). There is, at present, no published translation of the AjāKauVin in any European language.

⁸² This episode is included in chapter 11 of the Sanskrit.

⁸³ Hurvitz, 1976, p. 198.

⁸⁴ See Thomas Cleary, tr., *The Flower Ornament Scripture. A translation of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra. Vol. III: Entry into the Realm of Reality* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1987), pp.48–9. Lamotte (1960, p. 46) identifies Dhanyākara as Dhānyakaṭaka, the capital of Andhra, frequently mentioned in Buddhist Brāhmī inscriptions. According to the Tibetan historians Bu ston and Tāranātha, Dhānyakaṭaka (‘*bras spungs*) was the residence of Nāgārjuna. The *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* survives in Sanskrit and so is probably of Indian origin, unlike much of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* of which it is a part, and could thus be a source for later Indian *śāstra* material on Mañjuśrī.

⁸⁵ The *Ratnakāraṇḍa Sūtra* was translated twice into Chinese, by Dharmarakṣa in 270 CE (T. 461) and by Guṇabhadra between 436 and 468 CE (T. 462). There is also a Tibetan translation by Ratnarakṣita (Tōh. 117). Satyaka Nirgranthaputra – as Saccaka Nigaṇṭhaputta – is found in Pali texts, e.g. Cūlasaccaka and Mahāsaccaka Sutta-s (M I 227–237; 237–251). Lamotte (1960, p.40) gives a partial translation of this story (as found in Guṇabhadra’s translation) from which the present account is taken. It should be noted that the *Ratnakāraṇḍa Sūtra* is not the same work as the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra* (T. 1050; Tōh. 116), which focuses on the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and his six-syllabled mantra.

⁸⁶ A passage in the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi Sūtra* describes how, by means of the Heroic Advance (*śūraṅgama*) meditation, a tenth-stage bodhisattva is able to enter a non-Buddhist order for the purpose of converting beings. Of course he has not really joined the non-Buddhists and he is able to appear to adopt their attitudes without being contaminated by their views (*mithyādr̥ṣṭi*) or giving them any credence. See Lamotte, *Le concentration de la marche héroïque (Śūraṅgamasamādhi Sūtra)*, Traduit et annoté (MCB XIII, Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1965), pp.146–7.

⁸⁷ The *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāṇa Sūtra* survives in a 3rd century CE Chinese translation by Nie Tao-tchen (T. 463). For a translation into French see Lamotte, 1960, pp.36-9.

⁸⁸ Lamotte, 1960, p.37 (my translation from the French).

⁸⁹ In the *Akṣobhyatathāgatasya Vyūha Sūtra*, Śākyamuni says that when it is the time for Akṣobhya’s *parinirvāṇa*, he will cremate himself by issuing fire from his body. Also, Akṣobhya’s relics will be golden in colour and will be covered inside and out with auspicious signs in the form of swastikas (see Chang, 1983, p.331, where the *sūtra* is translated with the title “Praising Tathāgata Akṣobhya’s Merits”). Arhats, in Akṣobhya’s Buddha-land, may also produce fire from their bodies to cremate themselves at their *parinirvāṇa*. Other options are possible. They may spontaneously disappear leaving nothing behind, or they may become like five-coloured clouds in the sky before disappearing. Finally, they may “stand in the sky and then vanish like rain falling to the ground” (ibid., p.326).

⁹⁰ This incident is mentioned by Louis de La Vallée Poussin in his article ‘Mañjuśrī’ in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh, London and New York, 1908), p.405, note 2. The *Mañjuśrī-vikrīḍita Sūtra* does not survive in the original Sanskrit except for a single citation in Śāntideva’s *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. It was translated into Chinese twice (T. 817, 818) as well as into Tibetan (Tōh. 92).

⁹¹ It is chapter 12 of the *Lotus Sūtra* that contains the story of the young *nāga* princess who is revealed as having become an advanced bodhisattva, thanks to Mañjuśrī’s teaching. Tensions such as these within a text, as in this case, or between texts, can sometimes be resolved by taking a diachronic rather than synchronic perspective; for example, chapter 12 of the *Lotus Sūtra* is thought to be an interpolation. It is likely that the notion of the bodhisattva evolved over time. Paul Harrison (1987) discusses evidence which suggests that the early conception of the bodhisattva was that of a *bhikṣu* devoted to the goal of Buddhahood; in other words, the bodhisattva is an ordinary human (monk) following certain ideals. Within the Mahāyāna tradition itself, a key hermeneutic device for dealing with such tensions was the distinction between a meaning that is provisional (*neyārtha*) and so in need of interpretation, and a meaning that is final (*nītārtha*) and so in no further need of interpretation. A important strand of Indian, and subsequently of Tibetan, Buddhist philosophy revolved around discussion of which teachings were provisional and which final.

⁹² Hurvitz, 1976, p.209.

⁹³ Ibid., p.208.

⁹⁴ For a translation of this passage, see Snellgrove, 1987, p. 66. In the *Vidyutprāpta-paripṛchhā*, the Buddha describes how pure bodhisattvas can liberate those who are lustful by transforming themselves into beautiful and desirable men or women in order to satisfy those who are to be liberated before teaching them the Dharma. This is the “bodhisattva-mahāsattva’s store of wisdom for the lustful” (see Chang, 1983, pp.152–4; partly quoted by Sangharakshita, 1985, p.185).

⁹⁵ Lamotte, 1960, p.95.

⁹⁶ Cleary, 1987, p.54 (slightly adapted). See also Suzuki, 1953, p.170.

⁹⁷ See Cleary, 1987, p.377. The bodhisattva Samantabhadra, embodiment of the state of complete benevolence (*samantabhadra*), appears to Sudhana at the very end of the *sūtra*. The *Gaṇḍavūyha Sūtra* thus equates the life of the bodhisattva (*bodhi<sattva>caryā*) with the life of benevolence (*bhadracaryā*).

⁹⁸ Cleary, 1987, pp.377–8 (slightly adapted).

⁹⁹ For examples of this, see “Mañjuśrī in a grass-robe” by Hsüeh-Chien, in Suzuki, 1953, plate VII, facing p.80, and “Samantabhadra” by Ma Lin, ibid., plate VIII, facing p.81.

¹⁰⁰ For discussion of Mañjuśrī’s association with Wu T’ai Shan, see Tribe, 1994a, pp.31–37. For accounts of visions of Mañjuśrī at Wu T’ai shan, see Birnbaum, 1987, p.175; Welsh, 1967, p.307; Luk, 1988, p.14f.

¹⁰¹ The *Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇavyūha Sūtra* is part of the Mahāratnakūṭa collection and has been translated by Chang (1983, pp.164–186) and titled ‘The Prediction of Mañjuśrī’s Attainment of Buddhahood’. It was translated three times into Chinese (by Dharmarakṣa in 290 CE, by Bodhiruci between 706 and 713 CE, and in the eighth century by Amoghavajra) and once into Tibetan (Otani 760). A small part of Bodhiruci’s translation has been translated into French by Lamotte (1960, pp.20–23).

¹⁰² These verses of Mañjuśrī’s vows in the MañBuKṣ are cited in Atīśa’s *Bodhipatha-pradīpa*, “Light on the Path of the Bodhi[sattva]”. It is from Sherburne’s translation of this work that I quote: see Richard Sherburne, tr. & annot., *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary by Atīśa* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), pp.7–8. Some of the verses are also quoted in Śāntideva’s *Śikṣā-*

samuccaya, which survives in the original Sanskrit. See Cecil Bendall and W. H. D. Rouse, *Śikṣā-samuccaya, a Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine* (London: John Murray, 1922; reprinted Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), p.15. See Lamotte, 1960, p.22, note 50, for the Sanskrit, taken from Bendall's edition of the Sanskrit text. Both Śāntideva and Atiśa use the verses as a ritual formula for the taking of the Bodhisattva Vow.

¹⁰³ Chang, 1983, p.179.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.181.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.181.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.182.

¹⁰⁷ I.e. the larger and smaller *Sukhāvatī-vyūha* and the *Amitāyur-buddhānusmṛti* for Amitābha, and the *Akṣobhyavyūha* for Akṣobhya.

¹⁰⁸ Lamotte, 1960, p.38 (translated from the French).

¹⁰⁹ The full title is *Pratyutpannabuddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra*, "The Sūtra on the Samādhi of Standing Face-to-Face with the Buddhas of the Present".

¹¹⁰ Translated by P.M. Harrison, 'Buddhānusmṛti in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*,' (JIP 6, 1978), p.43.

¹¹¹ Chang, 1983, p.110.

¹¹² Ñānamoli, tr., *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, p.230 (*Visuddhimagga* VII.67).

¹¹³ Quoted by Williams, 1989, p.217 (Sn 1140–42). For a general discussion of *buddhānusmṛti*, see Williams, *ibid.*, pp. 217–224; see also Harrison, 1978.

¹¹⁴ This was argued by Charles Hallisey in a paper, "Varieties of Pūjā in Theravāda Buddhism," given in May 1990 at the Oriental Institute, Oxford. The recitation (*japa*) of the Buddha's qualities, for example as classically enumerated in the Salutation to the Three Jewels (*Triratanavandana*), may have evolved as an aide-mémoire or accompaniment to visualisation.

¹¹⁵ *Ekottarāgama*, quoted in Harrison, 1978, p.37.

¹¹⁶ A number of meditation schools are known to have flourished in Kashmir, which may be the geographical source of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* concerned with these practices (see Demiéville, 1954). Kashmir would have formed a good spring-board for diffusion to China where *buddhānusmṛti* practices soon became popular (see Williams, 1989, p.220f; Beyer, 1977, p.337f.).

¹¹⁷ Although Amitāyus is not central to the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra*, rebirth in his Buddha-land is mentioned as a goal of practice. This indicates some level of prior existence of his cult (see Harrison, 1978, pp.51–2; 1987, p.80).

¹¹⁸ For details of the Chinese translation of the MañjPari see above, note 87; Lamotte, 1960, p.7.

¹¹⁹ See Chang, 1983, p.182–3. The Buddha also reveals that Mañjuśrī's Buddha-land will be called "Wish-Fulfilling Accumulation of Perfect Purity" (*ibid.*, p.181).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.184; see also p.180, where Mañjuśrī compares the nature of the food that nourishes the inhabitants of his and Amitābha's Buddha-land.

¹²¹ The *Vimaladattā-paripṛcchā* is part of the Mahāratnakūṭa, translated by Chang (1983, pp.73–99) with the title, "A Discourse on Ready Eloquence". This *sūtra* resembles the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*. Through her eloquence, the young girl Vimaladattā, "Pure Giving", renders speechless the eight great *śrāvakas* and the eight great Bodhisattvas, with the exception of Mañjuśrī (pp.83–84). It transpires that she is an advanced Bodhisattva of long-standing:

The Buddha said, "Since she resolved to attain bodhi, Bodhisattva Pure Giving has performed deeds leading to supreme enlightenment for eighty thousand incalculable kalpas. Bodhisattva Pure Giving had been treading the Bodhisattva-path for sixty kalpas when the Dharma Prince Mañjuśrī resolved to become a Bodhisattva. Ānanda, to match the merits and magnificent

attributes of Bodhisattva Pure Giving's [future] Buddha-land, it would take all the merits and magnificent attributes of the [future] Buddha-lands of the eighty-six thousand great Bodhisattvas, including Mañjuśrī." (Ibid., pp.93–4)

¹²² See Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (2nd ed., Calcutta, 1958), p.102. For Mañjuśrī *sādhana*-s written by two of the Dalai Lamas, see Glen H. Mullin, tr., *Selected Works of the Dalai Lama II. Tantric Yogas of Sister Niguma* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1985), pp.65–8; and Glen H. Mullin, ed., *Meditations on the Lower Tantras* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1983), pp.87–92.

¹²³ For some examples see Part II.3 and notes 165, 167.

¹²⁴ For a translation of the relevant passage from the MañjMūK see Snellgrove, 1987, pp.192–4. Tsong kha pa, whose special relationship with Mañjuśrī has been noted, writes:

It is very important to rely on Mañjughoṣa when one strives for Buddhahood, as he is the father of all Buddhas. Mañjughoṣa manifests in the wrathful forms of the Red and Black Yamāntaka and the terrible Vajrabhairava. As a result his alertness and discrimination is much greater than it would be if he had remained as himself, because the manifestation, Vajrabhairava, has been deputized, as it were, to assist the aspirant during the periods of his beginning, his goal activity, and his spiritual activity (tr., Herbert V. Guenther, *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way*. Berkeley: Shambhala, 1976, pp.30–31).

¹²⁵ See Louis de la Vallée Poussin, in Hastings, ed., 1908, vol. 8, p.405; also Williams, 1989, p.213.

¹²⁶ *daśamyām bodhisattvabhūmau vartamāno bodhisattvo mahāsattvas tathāgata eveti vaktavyaḥ*. (Cited and translated by Lamotte, 1960, p.13.)

¹²⁷ Kalsang & Pasadika, 1975, p.4, where the name Nāgakuḷottama is reconstructed from the Tibetan klu'i rigs mchog; Lamotte, 1965, pp.260–3, reconstructs the name as Nāgavaṃśāgra. Before he entered final Nirvāṇa, Nāgakuḷottama, in line with the traditional pattern of activity of a Tathāgata, also prophesied the awakening of one of his disciples, the bodhisattva Jñānaprabha.

¹²⁸ Lamotte, 1965, pp.242–5.

¹²⁹ For details of this sūtra see above, note 73.

¹³⁰ Chang, 1983, p.34.

¹³¹ Ibid., pp.34–5.

¹³² Ibid., p.42.

¹³³ Ibid. p.51.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp.51–2.

¹³⁵ As far as I am aware, this story, found in chapters 2 and 3 of the AjāKauVin, has not been translated. The summary follows a résumé given by Paul Harrison in a lecture (Harrison, 1994). For earlier reference to the AjāKauVin see Part II 1.i of the present article and note 81 above. A short excerpt has been translated by Lamotte, part of which is cited in the section following.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.177.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.183.

¹³⁸ If gaining Buddhahood is so construed, however, there arises the paradoxical implication that, in comparison with a bodhisattva, a Buddha is deficient in compassion.

¹³⁹ This approach, namely that there is, ultimately, no 'thing' to be sought after or 'sentient being' to do the seeking, is by no means absent from the MañjBuKṣ:

Bodhisattva Lion of Thundering Voice asked, "Virtuous One, do you not seek enlightenment?"

Mañjuśrī answered, “No. Why not? Because Mañjuśrī is no other than enlightenment and vice versa. Why? Because ‘Mañjuśrī’ is only an arbitrary name and so is ‘supreme enlightenment’. Furthermore the name is non-existent and cannot act; therefore, it is empty. The nature of emptiness is no other than enlightenment.” (Chang, 1983, p.183)

And again:

Then, Bodhisattva Lion of Thundering Voice asked Mañjuśrī, “Virtuous One, since you achieved the Realization of the Non-arising of Dharmas, you have never harboured a notion [in your mind] of attaining supreme enlightenment. Why do you now urge others to progress toward enlightenment?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “I really do not urge any sentient being to progress toward enlightenment. Why? Because sentient beings are non-existent and devoid of self-entity. If sentient beings were apprehensible, I would cause them to progress toward enlightenment, but since they are inapprehensible, I do not urge them to do so. Why? Because enlightenment and sentient beings are equal and not different from each other.” (Ibid., p.177.)

It should be noted that the MañjBuKṣ does not say that Mañjuśrī will postpone his awakening until all beings have been placed in Nirvāṇa, which, as Paul Williams has pointed out would be *prima facie* incoherent, since “if all other beings must be placed in nirvāṇa before a particular Bodhisattva attains nirvāṇa himself there could obviously be only one Bodhisattva.” (1989, p.52.)

¹⁴⁰ The *Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra* is extant in a Chinese translation by Guṇabhadra, made between 436 and 443 CE (T. 120), and a Tibetan translation by Śākyaprabha, Dharmatāśīla and Tong a ca la (Lamotte, 1960, pp.29–30).

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp.93-4.

¹⁴² The *Nāmasaṃgīti* (NS) has been translated into English twice. See Ronald M. Davidson, ‘The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī’, in *Tantric & Taoist Studies in Honour of Professor R. A. Stein*, vol. I. MCB no. 20 (1981), pp.1–69; also Alex Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1985). Davidson’s work also contains an excellent introduction. For discussion of the portrayal of Mañjuśrī in the NS, see Tribe, 1997.

¹⁴³ *anādinidhano buddha ādibuddho niranvayaḥ / jñānaikacakṣur amalō jñānamūrtis tathāgataḥ* (NS 100ab)

¹⁴⁴ *janakaḥ sarvabuddhānām buddhaputraḥ paro varaḥ* (NS 60ab)

¹⁴⁵ *trailokyaikakumārāṅgaḥ sthaviro vṛddhaḥ prajāpatiḥ* (NS 81ab)

¹⁴⁶ *yamāntako vighnarājo* (NS 68ab)

¹⁴⁷ *arhan kṣīṇāsravo bhikṣur* (NS 52ab)

¹⁴⁸ For a long note on the traditional accounts of the compilation and preservation of the Mahāyāna scriptures, see Etienne Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa*), vol. II (Louvain: Bureaux du Muséon., 1949), p.939, note 1; in relation to Mañjuśrī, see also Lamotte, 1960, pp.40–6.

¹⁴⁹ The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa* (Ta-chih-tu lun: T 1509) survives only in Chinese into which it was translated (and annotated) by Kumārajīva between 402 and 404 CE. Modern scholarship suggests that the (Chinese) attribution to Nāgārjuna is unlikely to be correct. On the question of which works can be attributed to Nāgārjuna, see Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana. Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1982. Reprinted Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), pp.9–23; see also Williams, 1989, pp.55–57.

¹⁵⁰ Lamotte, 1949, p.939, note 1.

¹⁵¹ See E. Obermiller, *History of Buddhism. Being an English translation of Bu-ston's Chos 'byung, part II* (Heidelberg, 1931–2; repr. as *History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1986), p.101.

¹⁵² Lamotte, 1960, p.42.

¹⁵³ Lamotte (ibid., pp.41–2) notes the tradition that the Mahāyāna *sūtras* taught by the Buddha and compiled by the bodhisattvas were very large, at least 100,000 lines in length. About the Perfection of Wisdom *sūtras* there therefore arose, especially in China, the belief that the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* was the oldest and hence the original *sūtra*, and so the most to be valued. It is not surprising that it is this *sūtra* which is represented as being given to the *nāga*-s, and as being recovered by Nāgārjuna.

¹⁵⁴ See Jamyang Khyentze Rinpoche, *The Opening of the Dharma. A Brief Explanation of the Essence of the Buddha's Many Vehicles* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1974), p.13.

¹⁵⁵ See Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, tr., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970), p. 90. Tāranātha adds that followers of tantra believe that it was a manuscript of the Yoga tantra, the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, that Mañjuśrī left.

¹⁵⁶ Specifically, Atiśa states that Nāgārjuna received the gift of his spiritual perfection from Mañjughoṣa. See Sherburne, 1983, p.144.

¹⁵⁷ Thus Bhattacharyya, 1958, p.100. As noted above, though Mañjuśrī is mentioned in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa*, it is unlikely that Nāgārjuna is its author.

¹⁵⁸ The *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* both contain passages linking Mañjuśrī with the *nāga*-s. See above, II.1.ii, for Nāgārjuna's connection with South India, see note 84.

¹⁵⁹ Geshe Wangyal, *The Door of Liberation* (New York: Maurice Girodias Associates, 1973), p.11.

¹⁶⁰ Sherburne, 1983, p.139.

¹⁶¹ For a biography of Tsong kha pa, see Robert A.F. Thurman, ed., *The Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982), pp.1–34. See also, Robert A.F. Thurman, *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence. Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), introduction, especially pp.77–82. Tsong kha pa came to be seen as an incarnation of Mañjuśrī, though he was not the first Tibetan to be accorded such a status. Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251 CE), the important Sa skya scholar, was considered an emanation of Mañjuśrī and the Sa skya generally saw themselves as embodying Mañjuśrī's activity. For a discussion of Mañjuśrī and the evolving Tibetan tradition, see Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), pp.485–490.

¹⁶² The word 'Prāsaṅgika' is derived from *prasaṅga*, and means, 'possessing a connection with – or devotion to – *prasaṅga*-s (consequences)'. The Tibetan tradition, which was responsible for identifying and naming most of these 'sub-schools', credits Candrakīrti with the actual founding of the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka school insofar as he first defended the position of Buddhapālita against the criticisms of Bhāvaviveka, whose position was termed Svātantrika-Madhyamaka. See Donald S. Lopez, *A Study of Svātantrika* (New York: Snow Lion, 1987), pp.14–15.

¹⁶³ Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan, the tutor to the eighth Dalai Lama (1758–1805 CE), in his dedicatory verses at the beginning of a short work on the essence of the *sūtra* and tantra paths, writes:

Mañjughoṣa, in whom are manifested both Guru and Buddhahood,
An ideal inspiring, in which is condensed the spirituality
Of all the Buddhas in the infinite Buddha-realms,

Resides for ever in the lotus of my heart.

(H. Guenther, *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way*, Berkeley, 1976, p.76.) Guenther appends the following note to his translation of this verse: “Mañjughoṣa is a symbol for Buddhahood as it expresses itself in the more intellectual form of an unbiased philosophical outlook. Conceived of in human form he is the spiritual forefather of those who developed the ‘middle view’ or the direct apprehension of the existentiality of all that is as being nothing in the sense that all that which we perceive cannot be reduced to an essence by virtue of which the things are what they are. It is an aesthetic outlook rather than a theory about things. Although the four major philosophical trends in Buddhism, the Vaibhāṣikas, Sautrāntikas, Vijñānavādins, and Mādhyamikas with their division into Svātantrikas and Prāsaṅgikas, claim to adopt a ‘middle view’, the most strictly unbiased viewpoint is represented by the Prāsaṅgikas who derive their tradition from Mañjughoṣa through Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva. (Ibid., p.76, note 5.)

¹⁶⁴ Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, 1970, p.187.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.182–4 (Dignāga); p.186 (Buddhapālita); p.204 (Candragomin); p. 215–17 (Śāntideva).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pp.204–206. Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya record a note of Vasilev’s which suggests that Candrakīrti brought the debate to a close because he “considered it impossible to argue with divinity” (p.205, note 49).

¹⁶⁷ Translated in Samuel Beal, *Si-yu-ki, Buddhist Records of the Western World, pt.ii* (London, 1884. Reprinted Delhi, 1981), pp.219–220. Lamotte, 1960, p.49, identifies ‘Jina Bodhisattva’ as Dignāga. Of course, being a Yogācārin himself, Hsüan-tsang would have an interest in reporting such a story.

¹⁶⁸ *daśadigvyomaparyantasarvasattvārthasādhane / yathā carati mañjuśrīḥ saiva caryā bhaven mama* // (BoCāA 10: 53)