

GLENN WALLIS

The Buddha's Remains:
mantra in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa**

*The lord of the world, the maker of light
remains through the form of the mantra.
The omniscient one, possessing all forms,
appears on the surface of the earth. (Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa 25.286.9-10)*

An abiding concern of Mahāyāna Buddhists has been the accessibility of a *buddha*'s power in the world.¹ Some Buddhists, notably philosophers and their commentators, have grappled with the very coherence of such a possibility.² Viewing the question from a logical perspective, it has been necessary for such systematic thinkers to reconcile the apparent inconsistency ensuing from the two essential qualities deemed definitive of a *buddha*. A *buddha* is one who, by virtue of his awareness of the nature of reality, is completely liberated from the life-impelling force of mental defilements, and is thus beyond the scope of our world; *and* he is one who, by virtue of his profound compassion, is naturally compelled to continue engagement with beings still delusively ensnared in the world. Logically, these two qualities are at odds. Not all Buddhists, however, have sought a solution to the dilemma of accessing a *buddha*'s

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1. "Power" corresponds to the Sanskrit word *adhiṣṭhāna*, which, in its Indian Buddhist context, refers to the sustained presence of a salvific force. This force is believed to follow spontaneously from a person's attainment of enlightenment. It is a natural consequence of the practices that result in enlightenment; for example, the aspirant's repeated, ritualized taking of the vow (*samaya*) never to abandon living beings.
2. See John MAKRANSKY's tour de force, *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet*, Albany 1997; Paul GRIFFITHS, *On Being Buddha: the classical doctrine of Buddhahood*, Albany, 1994; John DUNNE, "Thoughtless Buddha, Passionate Buddha," *Journal of the American Academy of Religions*, LXIV/3 (1995): 525-556; and M. David ECKEL, *To See the Buddha: a philosopher's quest for the meaning of emptiness*, Princeton 1992.

power on the basis of logical or epistemological theory. Some Buddhists have, rather, sought an imaginative-cultic solution. Relics, statues, paintings, architectural monuments, books, remembrance, meditation, *guru* veneration, and visualization have, at various times and in various places, been held to be the most effective means of rendering present the otherwise inaccessible or obscured power that accompanies a *buddha*. In this article, I trace the idea of the *mantra* as a vehicle of enlightened presence as it was presented to Indian Mahāyāna Buddhists in the medieval period.

The source for this presentation is the eighth century Indian Buddhist ritual manual called the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*.³ My choice of locating the presentation of *mantra* in a text, and in this text distinctively, implicitly indicates two points that I would like to make in this article about our understanding of *mantra*, as well as of Indian cultic practice *per se*. First, although certain recognizable Indian cultural and philosophical axioms may be present in a given theory of *mantra*, theoretical presentations always concern the specific; that is, they are always bound to self-delineated groups, communities, texts, and so on. The axiomatic features of cultic practice are never sufficient for understanding what is being posited as unique and specific to that practice. For example, we learn little from the fact that a ritual practitioner performs an oblation (*homa*), since this is a widely shared cultural form. (The assumptions concerning the general worthiness, usefulness, effectiveness, and theoretical grounding of the *homa* remain unstated in the ritual manuals; hence, they are axiomatic.) But that the practitioner may burn only *aśoka* wood and not *āmla* wood in the fire teaches us a good deal about the basic orientation of the practice. This tells us, for example, that the practi-

3. The printed text that forms the basis of this study, *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, was prepared by T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī from the single known manuscript of the work, discovered near Padmanabhapuram, in South India, in 1909. This was published in three parts in the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series: Part I = no. LXX, 1920; Part II = LXXVI, 1922; Part III = LXXXIV, 1925, Trivandrum. This was reprinted in a single volume by CBH Publications, Trivandrum 1992, and recast with superficial changes by P. L. VAIDYA, *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha*, Part II, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, no. 18, Bihar, 1964. I have occasionally consulted an eleventh century Tibetan translation as well: Taipei Edition, volume XVIII *bka' gyur, 'phags pa 'jam dpal gyi rtsa ba'i rgyud*, 540 no. 543, 25/175 (1)-96/667. This is referred to as "T" in the transliterations below. My translations of the text, however, are based on the Sanskrit. For the dating of the *Mmk*, see MATSUNAGA 1985.

tioner is engaged in one of the cults directed towards pacification (of evil supernatural influences, etc.) and increase (of worldly or spiritual fortune, etc.). Conversely, we can conclude that the practitioner is not a devotee of one of the “left-handed” (*vāmācāra*) cults. When we additionally learn of the hand gestures, verbal formulas, and so on, that are employed during the oblation, the specific nature of the cult – its cosmology, doctrine, and broader affiliations – begins to emerge. We might use the phrase *the economy of forms* to capture this kind of specific borrowing, fashioning, and preservation of *Indian* modes and theoretical bases of cultic activity.⁴ The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*’s theory of *mantra* provides us with an illuminating example of how common elements of India’s religious culture get economized yet creatively transformed into emblems of a unique practice. Second, by analyzing *mantra* (or any other cultic constituent) as presented in a ritual manual, we are confronted with a form of argumentation that differs significantly from other, more frequently studied, genres. The rhetoric of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* is spatial and imaginal. The text does not venture to say what a *mantra* is. Rather, its aim is to show the reader what *mantra* does. In other words, the nature of the *mantra* in the ritual manual can only be understood from the images of *mantric* use presented in the text; it can not be known from explicit statements. This is characteristic of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and ritual literature as a whole. Certainly, there is nothing approaching the sort of “theological” discussions concerning the *mantra* found in the *jñānapada* sections of Vaiṣṇava and Śaivite ritual texts.⁵ There is, in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, nonetheless, a richly presented imaginal discussion.

The nature of mantra in the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa

In the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (*Mmk*), a *mantra* is presented as a linguistic space occupied by the force of some enlightened being, such as a *buddha* or a *bodhisattva*. It is thus analogous to a relic or an icon. A *mantra* is spoken, so it is a form of speech. Like ordinary speech, it must be learned. Learning it means knowing how to use it, and in which contexts. But the sense of a *mantra* relies on a “grammar” completely different from ordinary speech. That is, the system of rules implicit in *mantric* language does not concern linguistic features, but social,

4. See DAVIDSON 1995.

5. See, for example, *Lakṣmītantra* 18, summarized in SMITH 1975: 353.

doctrinal, and ritual ones. A *mantra*, like an ordinary word, is effective only when spoken under the proper conditions; and the proper conditions exist only once numerous social, doctrinal, and ritual rules have been strictly followed. These conditions are discussed below.

The *mantra* is a central component of the form of Buddhist practice propagated in the *Mmk*. Indeed, the very term for its mode of practice is called *mantracaryā* – *mantra* performance. In the *Mmk*, the “word of the Buddha,” the *buddhavacana*, consists not of his discourses, but of the *mantras* that he, and “all *buddhas*,” have spoken throughout time.

The *Mmk* begins and ends with *mantra*. The text is preceded by a phrase that commonly marks the appearance of either a *sūtra* or a *mantra*: *namaḥ sarvabuddhabodhisattvebhyaḥ*.⁶ And it ends, 721 pages later, with the statement: “in short, every *mantra* causes success” (*samāsenā sarvamantram sādhayati*).⁷ The former phrase intimates that every word that follows is to be regarded broadly as *mantra*, as a form occupied by the power of an enlightened being. The fact that the book itself, as a repository of such forms, is to be treated as a potent object of veneration supports this.⁸ The position of the latter statement, too, tells us something about the nature of the *mantra*; namely, that its success is dependent on a considerable infrastructure. In the text that lies between the two phrases are found the social, doctrinal, and ritual foundations upon which the success of the *mantra* rests.

The *Mmk* community’s reticence to make explicit statements about the *mantra* should not be passed over too quickly. As authors and practitioners of a ritual manual (*kalpa*), those who embraced the text would have been well aware of the exegetical and apologetic traditions governing ritual discourse. All the major groups – Vedic, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Śākta, Buddhist – in their numerous varieties have developed such traditions. So why is the *Mmk*, and ritual manuals generally, silent on philosophical justification?

It is not the case that the text is devoid of rhetorical justification; rather, what is significant is the form that the justification takes. The *Mmk* shows what other texts say. It presents images – of, for instance,

6. *Mmk* 1.1.1 (the notation refers to chapter, page, and line in T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī’s edition). This is followed by, *evaṃ mayā śrutam*, marking the beginning of the text.

7. *Mmk* 55.721.23-24.

8. See, for example, *Mmk* 1.24.14-22.

iconographical paintings (*paṭa*), rituals in action (*sādhana*) or imagined (called *dhyāna* in the text) – and teaches the reader how to make those images his own, in reality. In this sense, the *Mmk* reflects an extra-intellectualist and extra-theoretical tradition. Here, philosophical propositions are considered instruments of a logic that applies only to the most limited aspects of the world. The authors of the *Mmk* avoid philosophical modes of discourse because they – this tradition – apparently view it as ineffectual in the pursuit of enlightened power. This attitude evokes the ancient image of the Buddha as one who speaks only about that which is conducive to the end of suffering and to enlightenment – or, more to the point, as one who *shows* (*deśika*) the direct way. To this way of thinking, language embodies the limits of the world. Transcending the limitations of the immediate world – which is the purpose of cultic practice – can therefore not be spoken about, but only shown. This is not to say that the *Mmk* is exempt from criticism concerning its “pictorial” propositions. That is, the text is still making claims that can be tested for their coherency. But if a skeptic argued in terms of foundations and justifications, the practitioner of the *Mmk* would respond by showing him an image – imaginative or actual – and teaching him how to realize it as his own. This is the spirit behind the text: a theory about *mantra* has nothing to do with *mantra*; a theory is a mere calculus, a lifeless symbolic notation; this sort of thing is of no use to a *sādhaka* – for he is one who *practices*.

The text, thus, shows the *mantra*. It does this by ascribing it authority, describing its use, and demonstrating its effect. *Ascription of authority, description of use, and demonstration of effect* are the means by which the several dimensions of the *mantra* in the *Mmk* are revealed. Therefore, I will present the *mantra* in the *Mmk* along these lines.

Ascription of authority

The *Mmk* shows that its *mantras* are inscribed with the authority of *buddhas*. The following passage is the first presentation of *mantras* in the text. Mañjuśrī is abiding in the “*buddha*-field” known as the Land of Flowers (*kusumāvatī*), presided over by the *buddha* Saṅkusumitarājendra. Saṅkusumitarājendra is enjoining the *bodhisattva* to go and “stand in the presence” of Śākyamuni in order to receive the instructions which comprise the *mantra* practice (*mantracaryā*) of the *Mmk*. The vehicle for attaining this “presence,” in spite of the Buddha’s location in a distant *buddha*-field, is invocation of a *mantra*.

The blessed *tathāgata* Saṅkusumitarājendra further said to the princely Mañjuśrī: “Moreover, O prince, your *mantra* practice ... has been pronounced, and will be pronounced, by one hundred thousand *tathāgatas*, perfected ones, perfectly enlightened ones, equaling the sands of the Ganges river ... Now consented to by me as well, you must go, O princely Mañjuśrī, if you think the time is fit, and stand in the presence of Śākyamuni. You will listen to this discourse on the doctrine, and then you, too, will proclaim that. The *mantra* [for this purpose] is: *namaḥ sarvatathāgatānām acintyāpratihataśāsanānām om ra ra smara / apratihataśāsanakumārārūpadhāriṇa hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā* (Homage to the inconceivable, unobstructed teachings of the *tathāgatas*: *Om ra ra remember O unobstructed teaching O bearer of the princely form hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ hail!*) This, O princely Mañjuśrī, is the basic *mantra*, the essence of all *buddhas*. It has been, and will be, uttered by all *buddhas*. Now, you, too, will utter it. When you have arrived in the Sahā world, [utter] each all-accomplishing [*mantra*] in turn. The [*mantra* of] supreme essence has been authorized by the *tathāgata* Śākyamuni. It is: *Om vākye da nama*; and the *upahṛdaya* is: *vākye hūm*.”⁹

9. (Note on the Sanskrit text: The *Mmk* is written in a form of Sanskrit that deviates regularly from the norms of Pāṇini. In virtually every sentence examples of the following are found: homogeneity of nominative and accusative; use of plural subject with singular verb, or *vice versa*; mixing of passive and active forms; variant and inconsistent spellings. While many of these forms can be found in other *vaipulya* works, as is documented by EDGERTON in both volumes of the *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, others await further analysis of internal consistency, as well as a comparison of the printed text with the manuscript, in order to determine whether they are viable local forms of written Sanskrit, editor’s errors, or printer’s errors.)

Mmk 1.2.20-22; 27-3.1-9: *atha bhagavān saṅkusumitarājendras tathāgato mañjuśriyaṃ kumārabhūtam etad avocat [/] api tu kumāra śatasahasra-gaṅgānadīsikataprakhyais tathāgatair arhadbhiḥ saṃyaksambuddhais tvadīyaṃ mantracaryā° ... bhāṣitavantaḥ bhāṣiṣyante ca [/] mayāpy etarhi anumoditum eva [/] gaccha tvam mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūta yasyedānīm kālaṃ manyase / śākyamunisamīpaṃ sammukham / iyaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ śroṣyasi / tvam api bhāṣiṣyase bhavati cātra mantraḥ [/] namaḥ sarvatathāgatānām acintyāprati-*

Mañjuśrī then enters into a deep meditation. The four directions are filled with *buddhas*. He is praised for achieving this deep meditation. Saṅkusumitarājendra then reveals the “utmost essential, utmost secretive” *mantra* (*paramahṛdayaṃ paramaguhyam*). Saṅkusumitarājendra suddenly becomes quiet. Entering into meditation, he brings forth the *mantra* with his benevolent mind (*maitrātmakena cetasā*): *namaḥ sarva-buddhānām* (homage to all *buddhas*). This *mantra*, the text states, is Mañjuśrī, is the utmost essence of that being, whose power is a *panacea* for all ills (*mantraḥ eṣa mañjuśrīḥ paramahṛdayaḥ sarvakarmakaraḥ*).¹⁰

When the text ascribes authority to *mantra* utterance, it is doing several things at once. It is, first of all, making a claim about mythic origin. The *mantras* were originally uttered by not only Śākyamuni Buddha, but by all *buddhas* throughout space and time. The fact that Saṅkusumitarājendra accesses the *mantra* by entering into a contemplative state suggests that this is where *mantras* originate: in the minds of the *buddhas*, which are infused with benevolence. Similarly, that Mañjuśrī receives the *mantra* only after he has entered into a deep meditation suggests that it is in the deeper layers of consciousness that such *mantras* are held to resonate fully. We read, for instance, that *dhāraṇīs*, a type of *mantra*, “arise from the penetrative mind, which ensues naturally from meditative absorption” (*samādhiniṣpandaparibhāvitamānasodbhavā*), and that *vidyārājñīs*, the bearers of *mantras* called *vidyās*, “issue forth from the meditative absorption on the body of Avalokiteśvara” (*vidyārājñībhir lokeśvaramūrttisamādhivisṛtaiḥ*).¹¹ The “inconceivable, unobstructed teaching of the *tathāgatas*,” furthermore, is equivalent to the *ur*-transmission of the *mantras* and accompanying practices that have constituted the practice of all *buddhas*. This is a picture of both a lineage and a particular relationship. The teaching on *mantra* practice is given to the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī by the *buddha* Saṅkusumitarājendra. Once he has received it, Mañjuśrī must then teach it to beings in the world, where it will be inscribed into the text. The

*hataśāsanānām om ra ra smara / apratihataśāsanakumārarūpadhāriṇa hūm
hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā // ayaṃ sa kumāra mañjuśrīḥ mūlamantraḥ / sarveṣāṃ
tathāgatānāṃ hṛdayaḥ sarvaiś ca tathāgatair bhāṣitaḥ bhāṣiṣyante / sa tvam
apīdānīm bhāṣiṣyase / sahāṃ lokadhātuṃ gatvā vistaravibhāgaśaḥ sarvakarma-
karam / śākyamuninā tathāgatenābhyanujñātaḥ / paramahṛdayaṃ bhavati cātra
om vākye da namaḥ / upahṛdayaṃ cātra vākye hūm //*

10. Summarizes *Mmk* 1.3.21-24.

11. *Mmk* 1.12.20, *Mmk* 1.10.14-15.

reader of the text, past and present, is thus placed within the lineage, into direct relation to all *buddhas*.

The presentation of mythic origin leads easily into a claim about the means of knowledge (called *pramāṇa* in Indian epistemology): the validity of the knowledge about *mantras* contained in the passage is established precisely on the fact that both text and *mantras* were spoken by *buddhas*. To a non-adherent, the argument from authority is a weak form of *pramāṇa*. The logical incertitude of this claim, however, is overcome by a further dimension of the ascription of authority, since this aspect lays the theoretical foundation for efficacy and, thus, for “direct perception,” the strongest form of *pramāṇa*. The *Mmk* makes it clear in its opening statement that the theoretical basis for the *mantra* is “the inconceivable, wonderful, miraculous transformation of the *bodhisattva*,” or *vikurvaṇa*.¹² This process is alluded to above in the statement, “this *mantra* is Mañjuśrī, the utmost essence, the *panacea*” (*mantraḥ eṣa mañjuśrīḥ paramaḥṛdayaḥ sarvakarmakaraḥ*). The *vikurvaṇa* of the *bodhisattva* is a wide-ranging concept. Elsewhere in the *Mmk* this concept serves as the mechanism of embodiment (*avatāra*) in general. Here, I would like to consider its bearing on the text’s claims about *mantra*.

The statement, “that upon which all beings depend: the miraculous transformation of the *bodhisattva* (*bodhisattvavikurvaṇa*),” refers to a foundational axiom in the *Mmk* concerning both the method of the Buddha’s activity in the world and the constitution of ritual efficacy. The mode of practice recorded in the *Mmk* has no basis – as *Buddhist* practice – removed from this foundation. It might even be argued that it is primarily the framework supported by the concept of *vikurvaṇa*, “miraculous transformation,” that distinguishes the Buddhist ritual of the *Mmk* from other forms of medieval Indian cultic activity.

The term *vikurvaṇa* has several layers of meaning. Combining the root \sqrt{kr} (to make), with the affix *vi* (apart, asunder, different directions), it means “to make different, change, transform.” As the Pāli equivalent *vikubbana* indicates, however, Buddhists employed the term technically from an early date to denote a transformation effected by potent mental forces (*iddhivikubbana*).¹³ Being on the same scale as a *bodhisattva* – albeit at a lower point – the practitioner of the *Mmk* develops such psychic powers, enabling him to perform several supernatural transfor-

12. At, for example, *Mmk* 1.1.6.

13. *PED* s.v. *vikubbana*.

mations, or “miracles,” such as becoming invisible, walking on water, flying through the air, ascending to the highest heavens.

The implications of the term *bodhisattvavikurvaṇa* in the *Mmk*, however, exceed even these technical meanings. As one of the ten powers of the *bodhisattva* (*bodhisattvabala*),¹⁴ the power of miraculous transformation (*vikurvaṇabala*) is, for the Buddhist engaged in the *Mmk*, the mechanism generating the *mantra*. Mañjuśrī, by means of his powers of transformation, becomes the *mantra*. The *mantra* is an effective instrument by virtue of its being nothing less than a form assumed by the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī. As the various categories of *mantras* mentioned above indicate – *hṛdaya*, *upahṛdaya*, *paramahṛdaya* – the *mantras* are the very essence, the heart (*hṛdaya*) of the *bodhisattva*. The *paramahṛdaya mantra* is “Mañjuśrī himself” (*svayam eva mañjuśrīḥ*), existing (*upasthitah*) through the form of the *mantra* (*mantrarūpena*).¹⁵ One indication of the force believed to pervade the *mantra* is the power attributed to it: “when merely remembered, it [the *paramahṛdaya mantra*] cleanses [the practitioner] of the five acts entailing immediate retribution” (*yatra smaritamātreṇa pañcānantaryāṇi pariśodhayati*).¹⁶

Since the *bodhisattva* and the “form of the *mantra*” are, in essence, one, and because the text is not explicit about its claims, an analysis of one of these forms should reveal a clearer picture of the relationship between the *mantra* and the *bodhisattva* in the *Mmk*.

*om śodhaya śodhaya sarvaviḥṇaghāṭaka mahākāruṇika kumārarūpadhāriṇe /
vikurva vikurva / samayam anusmara / tiṣṭha tiṣṭha hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā //
(Om purify purify! O destroyer of all obstacles! O you of great compassion! O
bearer of youthful form! perform a miraculous transformation, perform a
miraculous transformation! remember your vow! be present, be present! hūm
hūm phaṭ phaṭ hail!)*¹⁷

In the opening scene of the *Mmk*, Mañjuśrī was “impelled” (*codāṇa*)¹⁸ by the radiating force of Śākyamuni’s omniscience to perform his obligation as a tenth-stage *bodhisattva*. His existence as the *mantra* is one mode through which that obligation is fulfilled. The power that

14. *Mahāvīyupatti* 767, cited in *BHSD* s.v. *vikurvaṇa*.

15. *Mmk* 2.26.24-25.

16. *Mmk* 2.26.25. “The five acts entailing immediate retribution” (*pañcānantarya*): killing one’s own mother or father, killing an arhant, causing dissension in the monastic order, deliberately causing a *buddha*’s blood to flow; see *BHSD*:95.

17. *Mmk* 4.55.23-26.

18. *Mmk* 1.1.20.

enables this equivalency, in turn, involves two additional doctrinal stances operating in the *mantra*. The first, as we have seen, is indicated by the imperative to “perform a miraculous transformation” (*vikurva*); the second, in the imperative “remember your vow” (*samayam anu-smara*). The power of *vikurvaṇa* is one of the ten supernatural powers of the *bodhisattva* (*bodhisattvabala*). Based, in turn, on the doctrinal axiom of “the ontological equivalence or ultimate convertibility of phenomena and absolute,”¹⁹ *vikurvaṇa* is, in Luis GÓMEZ’ words, “the capacity to effect, by sheer psychic power, the transformation, displacement or multiplication of the human body.”²⁰ The *bodhisattva* is a being situated in the world. Because, however, the *bodhisattva* is an enlightened being, it follows that he or she possesses complete knowledge of the illusory nature of the world, and thereby gains the ability to move unimpededly through the world, manipulating its forms at will. The world of the *bodhisattva* becomes the *dharmadhātu*, the world seen as a composition of ultimately non-substantial components subject – precisely because of their lack of real substance – to manipulation. The *Samādhirājā*, referred to in the *Mmk*,²¹ likens the freedom of movement that ensues from this understanding of reality to “wind blow[ing] swiftly through space” or the unbounded flight of birds in the sky.

As birds do not leave a path in space, thus do Bodhisattvas awaken to the true nature of Awakening. The sky is said to be ungraspable, in it there is nothing to grasp. This is the true nature of *dharmas*, ungraspable like the sky.²²

The invocation of the *bodhisattva* by means of the purificatory *mantra* above impells him to inhabit (*tiṣṭha*), and thus become identical with, in the *Mmk* passage cited above, certain ritual implements. The means generating this result is alluded to in the plea that the *bodhisattva* remember his vow, and in the invoking of his universal compassion. Another text referred to in the *Mmk*, the *Gaṇḍavyūha*,²³ contains an elaborate version on the *bodhisattva* vow (called *samaya* in the *Mmk*,

19. GÓMEZ 1977:225.

20. *Ibid.*

21. This text is also known as *Candrapradīpasamādhi* (see WARDER 1991 [1970]: 395), by which it is referred at *Mmk* 2.38.12.

22. GÓMEZ 1977:225-226.

23. *Mmk* 2.38.12.

and *pranidhāna* in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*).²⁴ In the following extract, allusions are made to the several points of doctrine mentioned above.

By the power of supernatural abilities, swiftly abounding everywhere;
 by the power of universally eminent knowledge;
 by the power of perfectly virtuous conduct;
 by the power of universal love;
 by the power of perfectly pure merit;
 by the power of unimpeded knowledge;
 by the power of wisdom, means, and contemplation;
 acquiring (*samudānaya mānaḥ*)²⁵ the power of enlightenment;
 completely purifying the power of retributive actions (*karma*).
 completely grinding the power of afflictions;
 rendering powerless the power of death and time (*māra*)
 I fulfill all of the powers of good conduct.

...

Having completely fulfilled all of those [vows],
 may I act for the happiness of beings
 as long as [they remain] in the world.²⁶

The above purificatory *mantra* is thus inscribed with the authority of the *bodhisattva*. The *bodhisattva*'s original vow to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings eventually produces the being capable of traversing the world, and of playfully entering and transforming linguistic “shells,” or spaces.

Description of use

From the angle of the ascription of authority, we learned that the *mantra* is a sound, word, or series of words that was spoken by enlightened beings in the past and, through the mechanism of *vikurvaṇa*, embodied by their force in the present and future. A *mantra* is therefore presented as a sonic embodiment or crystalization of a particular type of power.

24. The vow is sometimes referred to as *pranidhāna* in the *Mmk*; for example, at *Mmk* 22.230.6 and 34.354.5, where a short vow is given.

25. See *BHSD* s.v. *samudānaya*.

26. *Gaṇḍavyūha* 433.7-18 and 436.3-4: *ṛddhibalena samantajavena jñānabalena samantamukhena / caryabalena samantaḡuṇena maitrabalena samantagatena // puṇyabalena samantaśubhena jñānabalena asaṃgatena / prajñ[o]pāya-samādhibalena bodhibalaṃ samudānaya mānaḥ // karmabalaṃ pairśodhaya-mānaḥ kleṣabalaṃ parimardaya mānaḥ // mārabalaṃ abalaṃkaramānaḥ pūrayi bhadracarībala sarvān // ... tāṃś ca ahaṃ paripūrya aśeṣān sattvahiṃ kari yāvata loke //*

When we consider the *mantra* from the angle of the text’s descriptions of its use, these sounds, words, and series of words begin to separate out into subtly different types of utterance stemming from distinct aspects of that power.

Essence (*hṛdaya*) *mantras*

At the beginning of *Mmk* 2, there is reference to Mañjuśrī’s “class of *mantras*” (*tvadīyaṃ mantragaṇaṃ*).²⁷ This is followed by a compendium of the *mantras* used in the *Mmk* rituals. The first group comprises *hṛdaya mantras*. Examples of these were given above (at *Mmk* 1.2.20-22, 27-3.9): the *hṛdaya*, *paramahṛdaya*, and *upahṛdaya mantras*. There, it was said that the *hṛdaya mantra* accomplishes the task of leading Mañjuśrī into the presence of Śākyamuni, while the other two are called “all-accomplishing,” or “*panaceaic*” (*sarvakarmakara*) – *mantras* to be employed for any purpose. These *mantras* are “all-accomplishing” because they are the “utmost essence” (*paramahṛdaya*) of compassionate, enlightened power, which is unlimited. These are the same *mantras* suggested for use in the preparation phase (*puraścaraṇa*) of the *Mmk*’s *mantracaryā*. A paradigmatic sequence of this *mantracaryā* is that given in the passage on the “ritual for superior attainment” (*uttamasādhana*):

First, he who has observed the vow, fulfilled the preliminary practices, received the initiation, taken the essential (*hṛdaya*), basic *mantra* from this best of ordinances, or the *upahṛdaya* or some other *mantra*, or having received a single syllable [*mantra*] or another one – according to one’s wishes – and who, having gone to a great forest, eats leaves and roots, who subsists on fruits and water, should recite [the *mantra*] three million times. He becomes one who has completed the preliminary practice.²⁸

Here, by means of the mental and physical purity attained through prolonged recitation, the *sādhaka* is able to “come into the presence” (*sākṣāt paśyati*) of *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*.²⁹ The image presented at *Mmk* 2 of the power inhering in these *mantras* emphasizes the purifying, protective, and *panaceaic* nature of these *mantras*. Mañjuśrī addresses

27. *Mmk* 2.25.10.

28. *Mmk* 8.79.10-28: *adau tāvat dr̥ṣṭasamayāḥ kṛtapuraścaraṇāḥ labdhābhiṣekāḥ asmin kalparājamūlamantrahṛdayaṃ upahṛdayaṃ vā anyataraṃ vā mantram gṛh̥tvā ekākṣaraṃ vā anyam vā yathepsitaṃ mahāraṇyaṃ gatvā triśallakṣāṇi jape phalodakāhāraḥ mūlaparṇabhakṣo vā kṛtapuraścaraṇo bhavati //*

29. Page 80 is missing from my copy; I am thus referring to VAIDYA’s 1964 reprint (see Citations): p. 56.12.

the section to Vajrapāṇi. Vajrapāṇi appears in the *Mmk* as the “lord of *yakṣas*, the master of *guhyakas*” (*āguhyakādhipatin yakṣendra*):³⁰ by mastering these destructive divinities, Vajrapāṇi converts them into powers serving the aims of the practitioner. Thus, the *mantras* presented here are of this nature. They destroy, purify, and convert energy of various forms of embodiment, including mental, supernatural, and physical.

The first *mantra* presented is that of Yamāntaka, the “sovereign of wrath” (*krodharāja*),³¹ who, in later *tantric* theory, though not here, is identified as an emanation of Mañjuśrī himself. For the practitioner of the *Mmk*’s rituals, the first step towards acquiring essential knowledge is protection and the destruction of obstacles.

Then Mañjuśrī [bestowed] the preeminently heroic, all achieving essence (*hṛdaya*) of the sovereign of wrath, Yamāntaka ... *om āḥ hūm*. This is the essence (*hṛdaya*) of him whose wrath is great; it is all-accomplishing; it is taught by the great being Mañjughoṣa for [use in] all *maṇḍala* and *mantra* rituals; it destroys all obstacles.

Then Mañjuśrī lifted his right hand and placed it on the head of Krodha, and spoke thus: “Obeisance to all *buddhas*! May the blessed *buddhas* pay heed! May the *bodhisattvas*, who are dwelling in whatever world of the ten directions, and who possess unlimited, infinite, supernatural power (*maharddhika*), be firm in their vow!” Saying that, he circled [the Tibetan text reads: his hand] around the king of wrath, and dismissed him. The instant that the great king of wrath was dispatched to the entire world-realm, beings possessing great supernatural powers immediately restrained all evil-minded beings. He made them enter the Śuddhāvāsa, the great assembly. Making them remain there, becoming the family of those who are engulfed in flaming garlands, he stood at the head, among the evil-beings.³²

30. *Mmk* 2.25.11.

31. *Mmk* 2.25.17.

32. *Mmk* 2.25.17-18; 2.25.22-26.7: *atha mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūtaḥ yamāntakasya krodharājasya hṛdayaṃ sarvakarmikaṃ ekavīraṃ ... om āḥ hūm / idaṃ tan mahākrodhasya hṛdayaṃ / sarvakarmikaṃ sarvamaṇḍaleṣu sarvamantra-caryāsu ca nidiṣṭaṃ mahāsattvena mañjughoṣeṇa sarvaviḥnavināśanam / atha mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūtaḥ dakṣiṇaṃ pāṇim udyamya krodhasya mūrdhni sthāpayāṃ āsa / evaṅcāha / namas te sarvabuddhānām / samanvāharanta [>°antu] buddhā bhagavantaḥ / ye kecid daśadig lokadhātuvyavasthitā anantā-paryāntās ca bodhisattvā maharddhikāḥ samayam adhiṣṭhanta [>°antu] / ity evam ukṭvā taṃ krodharājānaṃ bhrāmayitvā kṣipiti sma / samanantaranikṣipte mahākrodharāje sarvāvantaṃ lokadhātuṃ sattvā kṣaṇamātreṇa ye duṣṭāśayāḥ sattvā maharddhikāḥ tāṃ nigrhānayati sma / taṃ mahāparṣan maṇḍalaṃ śuddhāvāsabhavanaṃ praveśayati sma / vyavasthāyāñ ca sthāpayitvā samanta-jvālāmālākulo bhūtvā duṣṭasattveṣu ca mūrdhni tiṣṭhate sma //*

The *mantra om āḥ hūm* embodies the “essence” of Yamāntaka; it is therefore used in any ritual for the purpose of destroying malevolent obstacles. Here, the text presents an image of the violent, pre-linguistic archetype operating behind the use of this *mantra*. Placing his hand on the head of Yamāntaka, Mañjuśrī invokes the authorizing presence of all *buddhas*. Yamāntaka becomes an agent of the *bodhisattva*, who, in turn, is an agent of all *buddhas*. So empowered, Yamāntaka gains mastery over all evil forces within the world. In subduing “all evil-minded beings,” Yamāntaka converts them into agents of his own violently purifying, protective force. When the practitioner recites the sounds *om āḥ hūm*, this image, capturing the essential (*hrdaya*) function and activity of Yamāntaka, is effected. That is, hindering forces are dispelled from the ritual space; protection is achieved, and the area where a given ritual is performed thereby consecrated.

Additional “essence *mantras*” given at *Mmk* 2 are presented as belonging to the *bodhisattva* Vajrapāṇi, although the references within the *mantras* point to, respectively, Yamāntaka or Mañjuśrī. Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional: the protective function of Mañjuśrī is effected by Vajrapāṇi and Yamāntaka; the forms of each are ultimately undifferentiated. In any case, the *mantras* of this class are presented as serving as “rulers of great wrath that destroy all obstacles.”

Then the youthful Mañjuśrī spoke to the *bodhisattva* Vajrapāṇi: “O master of secrets, these *mantras* are esoteric and supremely mysterious ...

Homage to all *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, whose teachings are indestructible. *um̐ kara kara kuru kuru mama kāryam bhañja bhañja sarvaviḥnām daha daha sarva vajravīṇyakam mūrdhataḥajīvitāntakara mahāvīkṛtarūpiṇe paca paca sarvaduṣṭām mahāgaṇapatijīvitāntakara bandha bandha sarvagrahām ṣaṅmukha ṣaḍbhujā ṣaṭcaraṇa rudramānaya viṣṇumānaya brahmādyām devān ānaya mā vilamba mā vilamba iyal iyal maṇḍalamadhye praveśaya samayam anusmara hūm hūm hūm hūm hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā (O maker O maker do do for me what should be done shatter shatter all obstacles burn burn all adamant impediments O killer of Mūrdhataḥaka O you of extraordinary appearance cook cook all evil O killer of great Gaṇapati bind bind all demons O six-faced one O six-armed one O six-legged one subdue Rudra subdue Viṣṇu subdue the gods, beginning with Brahman do not delay do not delay become silent become silent enter into the maṇḍala remember your vow! hail!)*

O supreme master of secrets, this [*mantra*] is the supreme secret, the great hero, Mañjuśrī; it is called “six-faced one,” and is the ruler of the great wrath which destroys all obstacles. By merely reciting that, *bodhisattvas* who are established in the ten stages are dispersed, let alone evil obstructions. By merely

reciting that, great protection is created. There is also a sealing gesture (*mudrā*) known as "the great spike," the destroyer of all obstacles."³³

This *mantra*, equated with both Mañjuśrī ("this is ... Mañjuśrī") and Yamāntaka (the "six-faced one"), begins with an interjection of anger and pacification (*uṃ*). Among the powers that it serves to shatter and subdue are those connected to other cults: Viṣṇu, Śiva (Rudra), Gaṇapati, Mūrdhātaka, and Brahma. The *mantra* counteracts the power of these deities that has been set in motion by their adherents, and subjects that power – these deities – to the ends of the *Mmk* practitioner. This point is made explicit several pages later when the *mantras* of these cultic deities are presented as having been taught by Śākyamuni. Like an antibody, this *mantra* repels not only alien forms of power encroaching on the ritual space of the practitioner, but even the most advanced, allied *bodhisattvas* (tenth-stage ones). This indicates a degree of power bordering on the noxious. It is a small step from incapacitating the *effected* powers of rival deities to incapacitating those who effect such power. Indeed, the next *mantra* given justifies the destruction of "all enemies," presumably human as well as non-human.

This is the essence (*hr̥daya*) of the ruler of wrath [Yamāntaka]: *om hr̥ṭh jñṭh vikṛtānana hum / sarvaśatrūṃ nāśaya stambhaya phaṭ phaṭ svāhā* (shame! destroy all enemies incapacitate! hail!) By means of this *mantra*, all enemies are seized by the great spike disease or by the fever that arises every four days. With a hundred recitations, or as many as desired, benevolence is not practiced. Then, he obtains a compassionate mind. May there not be liberation at the end of the recitation. Those offending the three jewels, saying, "he dies," should not be treated entirely as those of gentle mind. The sealing gesture (*mudrā*) called "the great spike," should be used. In this instance, the secondary essence [*mantra*] (*upahr̥daya*) is this: *om hr̥m̃h kālarūpa hūṃ khaṃ svāhā* (shame O you with the

33. *Mmk* 2.28.21-22-29.1-11: *atha khalu mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūtaḥ vajrapāṇiṃ bodhisattvam āmantrayate sma / imāni guhyakādhipate mantrapadāni sarahasyaṇi paramaguhyakāni [...] namaḥ sarvabuddhabodhisattvānām apratihataśāsanānām / uṃ kara kara kuru kuru mama kāryam bhañja bhañja sarvavighnām daha daha sarva vajravināyakam mūrdhātakajīvitāntakara mahāvīkṛtarūpiṇe paca paca sarvaduṣṭāṃ mahāgaṇapatijīvitāntakara bandha bandha sarvagrahām ṣaṇmukha ṣaḍbhujā ṣaṭcaraṇa rudramānaya viṣṇumānaya brahmādyām devānānaya mā vilamba mā vilamba iyal iyal maṇḍalamadhye praveśaya samayam anusmara hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ svāhā / eṣa saḥ paramaguhyakādhipate paramaguhyāḥ mahāvīryāḥ mañjuśrīḥ ṣaṇmukho nāma mahākrodharājā sarvavighnavināśakaḥ / anena paṭhitamātreṇa daśabhūmipraṭiṣṭhāpitabodhisattvā vidravante / kiṃ punarduṣṭavighnāḥ / anena paṭhitamātreṇa mahārakṣā kṛtā bhavati / mudrā cātra bhavati mahāśūleti vikhyātā sarvavighnavināśikā /*

appearance of a crow! hail!) The sealing gesture to be used is also “the great spike.” Whatever evil he desires, that he accomplishes. The *paramahṛdaya* [mantra] is indeed the single syllable empowered by all *buddhas*: *hūm*. This accomplishes all deeds. The sealing gesture to be used is also “the great spike.” It hinders all misfortunes. In short, O ruler of wrath, this [mantra] is to be employed in every ritual for the subjugation of all demons.³⁴

The mention of the *mudrā* in this *mantra* passage points to a significant aspect of the *mantra* as it is used in the *Mmk*. The hand gesture is an indispensable aspect of the type of ritual promulgated in the Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātra *saṃhitas*, Śaiva Siddhānta *āgamas*, as well as in the *Mmk*. By the early medieval era, the *mudrā* becomes an increasingly widespread element of the type of worship known as *mantracaryā* or *tantra*.³⁵ The importance of the *mudrā* for the practitioners of the Buddhist form of *mantracaryā* is evident from the fact that ten of the fifty-five chapters of the *Mmk* are devoted to it. At *Mmk* 34 we read of a *mudrākośa*, a treasury of ritual gestures.³⁶ *Mmk* 34-37 and 41-46 is an extensive compendium, a “text on gestures” (*mudrātantra*).³⁷ In the *Mmk*, these gestures invariably accompany verbal actions. The two, *mudrās* and *mantras*, are in fact so closely bound that they can be said to form a single instrumental act:³⁸ “The *mudrās* are the seals of the *mantras*; and with the *mantras* they are well-sealed. There is no *mantra* without a *mudrā*; devoid of the *mudrā*, there is no seal.”³⁹ In many instances, the

34. *Mmk* 2.29.11-22: *asyaiva krodharājasya hṛdayaṃ / om hṛīmḥ jñīḥ vikṛtānana hum / sarvaśatruṃ nāśaya stambhaya phaṭ phaṭ svāhā / anena mantreṇa sarvaśatruṃ mahāśūlarogeṇa caturthakena vā gṛhṇāpayati / śatatajapena vā yāvad rocate maitratāṃ vā na pratipadyate / atha karuṇācittaṃ labhate / jāpānte muktir na syāt / mṛyate iti ratnatrayāpakariṇāṃ kartavyaṃ nāśeṣaṃ saumya-cittānāṃ [/] mudrā mahāśūlaiva prayojanīyā / upahṛdayaṃ cātra bhavati / om hṛīmḥ kālārūpa hūm khaṃ svāhā / mudrā mahāśūlyaiva prayojanīyā / sarvaduṣṭāṃ yam icchati taṃ kārayati / paramahṛdayam / sarvabuddhādhiṣṭhitaṃ ekākṣaraṃ nāma / hūm / eṣa sarvakarmakaraḥ / mudrā mahāśūlyaiva prayojanīyā / sarvānarthanivāraṇam / sarvabhūtaśaṃkaraḥ saṃkṣepataḥ / eṣa krodhrāja sarvakarmeṣu prayoktavyaḥ [/]*

35. See SMITH:1980 s.v. *mudrā*; DAVIS 1991:32f; GONDA 1977:73.

36. *Mmk* 34.351.8 and 35.355.10.

37. *Mmk* 34.350.16.

38. See, for example, *Mmk* 2.26.8-35.10, where numerous *mantras* and *vidyās* are given with their corresponding *mudrās*. The correspondences are made fairly explicit here.

39. *Mmk* 34.351.20-21: *mantrāṇāṃ mudritā mudrā mantraiś cāpi sumudritā // na mantraṃ mudrahīnaṃ tu na mudrā mudravarjitā.*

mudrās seem to be bodily presentations of the object either invoked or offered by means of the *mantra* (e.g., the “three-headed” and “five-headed” gestures imitating the head dress of Mañjuśrī; “the spike,” and the “seat of the peacock”). Stephan BEYER calls these types of *mudrās*, “*mimetic representations* of the objects being offered – simulacra that control the transmission of worship to the god, just as the mantras of offering enjoin its acceptance and response.”⁴⁰ Beyer also mentions a “stereotyped gesture,” that is, a ritualized use of a common gesture for threat. Such *mudrās* correspond to *mantras* such as *phaṭ* – i.e., the ritual use of sounds that are employed in everyday expression. Examples of this type of *mudrā* are gestures of “reverence, threat, welcome, or farewell.”⁴¹ (No such gestures are prescribed at *Mmk* 2.) In sum, the *mudrā*, when employed by a serious initiate⁴² in conjunction with the proper *mantra*, creates quick and infallible results (*mudrā mantra-samopetā saṃyuktā kṣiprakarmikā; mudrā mantrasamopetā saṃyuktā sarvakarmikā*).⁴³

So far, I have discussed *hṛdaya mantras*. The text describes several uses of these *mantras*. Those related directly to the Buddha/all *buddhas* and to Mañjuśrī are “all-accomplishing;” that is, their application is manifold, ranging from the fulfillment of personal wishes, good health, and fortunate rebirth, to enlightenment. Those attached specifically to the “fierce” aspect of Mañjuśrī – in the form of Vajrapāṇi and Yamāntaka – are used to purify and protect the mental and physical space of the practitioner.

Invocation (*āhvānana*) *mantras*

After the presentation of the “powerful eight syllabled” *hṛdaya mantra* (*Mmk* 2.26.13-27.3), *Mmk* 2 presents what it calls *āhvānana mantras*. As the term indicates, these are to be used specifically for the invocation (*āhvānana*) of both enlightened forces (Mañjuśrī, all *bodhisattvas*, all solitary *buddhas*, noble hearers) and worldly forces and spirits.

40. BEYER 1973:146. See *Mmk* 35.355.24ff. for obvious examples of this category of *mudrā*. Gestures given there include *utphala*, *svasitka*, *dhvaja*, *chatra*, *ghaṭa*, *mālā*, *śūla*, *kumbha*, and *Mmk* 2.27.10ff. for similar correspondences.

41. BEYER 1973:146.

42. See, for instance, *Mmk* 34.350.10-21, a section on the requirements of the the practitioner who receives *mudrā*: he must be adorned with *bodhicitta*, follow the *buddhas*’ path interminably, etc.

43. *Mmk* 34.351.9 and 22.

Here are the *mantras* for invocation: *Om he he kumārarūpisvarūpiṇe sarvabālabhāṣitaprabodhane āyāhi bhagavaṃ āyāhi kumārakṛīdotpaladhāriṇe maṇḍalamadhye tiṣṭha tiṣṭha samayam anusmara apratihataśāsana hūm mā vilamba ru ru phaṭ svāhā* (*O you whose own form is the form of a prince O awakening spoken by all youth approach O blessed one approach O you who bear the lotus playing as a prince abide abide in the middle of the maṇḍala! remember the vow! O indestructible teaching hūm! do not delay! hail!*) This is the *mantra* for invoking the blessed Mañjuśrī, and [for invoking] all beings, all *bodhisattvas*, all solitary *buddhas*, noble hearers, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, [*asuras*], *garuḍas*, *kinnaras*, *mahoragas*, *piśācas*, *rākṣasas*, *bhūtas*.⁴⁴

Several of the *mantras* presented so far have referred to the *maṇḍala*. The fact that this section on *mantras* precedes the prescriptions for the initiation (*abhiṣeka*) ritual indicates that the *mantras* are to be applied specifically during that ritual. The initiation is performed within a *maṇḍala*. The act of invoking auspicious, protective, and potentially threatening forces is a standard feature of the *Mmk* ritual practice. One example should suffice to show this. The raw cotton used for making the cult image must be consecrated (*abhimantraṇa*) before it is woven into a canvas. This is achieved, as mentioned above, by invoking the force of “all *buddhas*” in the form of Mañjuśrī.

om śodhaya śodhaya sarvaviḥnaghātaka mahākāruṇika kumārarūpadhāriṇe vikurva vikurva samayam anusmara tiṣṭha tiṣṭha hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā (*purify purify! O destroyer of all obstacles O you of great compassion O bearer of youthful form! perform a miraculous transformation perform a miraculous transformation! remember your vow! be present be present! hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ hail!*)⁴⁵

Similarly, the *āhvānana* *mantras* consecrate the object into which some force is being drawn, or, in the language of the text, is being implored to approach (*āyāhi*) the object and abide (*tiṣṭha*) within it. While the *mantra* is always specific in that its terms refer directly to the effected object, and its corresponding *mudrā* often “mimicks” the object, the pattern of invocation is consistently generalized throughout the *Mmk*.

44. *Mmk* 2.27.3-9: *āhvānanamantrā cātra bhavati / om he he kumārarūpisvarūpiṇe sarvabālabhāṣitaprabodhane āyāhi bhagavaṃ āyāhi / kumārakṛīdotpaladhāriṇe maṇḍalamadhye tiṣṭha tiṣṭha / samayam anusmara / apratihataśāsana hūm / mā vilamba ru ru phaṭ svāhā / eṣa bhagavaṃ mañjuśriyaḥ āhvānanamantrā / sarvasattvānām sarvabodhisattvānām sarvapratyekabuddhārya śrāvakadevanāgayakṣagandharvagaruḍakinnaramahoragapiśācarākṣasasarvabhūtānām [/]*

45. *Mmk* 4.55.23-26.

Offering *mantras*

From the *mantras* used to summon powers into the *maṇḍala* or to any other place where rituals are performed, the text moves to the objects of offering that are being directed to these powers. Since the goal of these offerings is to make present the invoked object, these *mantras* may be considered a sub-category of *āhvānana mantras*. The following example shows the sensual nature of the language of these passages.

Having prepared the sandalwood water, consecrated seven times, he should scatter it everywhere: in all four directions, upwards, downwards, horizontally. All *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, the retinue of Mañjuśrī himself, all *mantras*, ordinary and extraordinary, all classes of creatures, and all beings must appear. Homage to all *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible! *Om̐ dhu dhura dhura dhūpavāsini dhūpārciṣi hūm tiṣṭha samayam anusmara svāhā* (*O you dwelling in the incense O luster of the incense abide remember your vow! hail!*) [This is the] “incense *mantra*.” Then, having prepared the saffron, camphor, and sandalwood, [the incense *mantra*] should be bestowed on the incense. All *tathāgatas* and *bodhisattvas* come, and they are drawn out of the heart of the gratified incense. The *mudrā* of this [*mantra*] is known as “the garland,” and is auspicious, attracting all beings. These *mantras* of invocation and their *mudrās* are beautiful garlands of lotuses. They should be offered to all the *buddhas*, *bodhisattvas* and other beings who come. After stirring water with camphor, sandalwood and saffron, and preparing a mixture of two draughts of crushed *bakula* flowers, white lotuses grown in the rainy season and fresh garlands of jasmine with some other fragrant flower that is in season, an offering should be made along with the *mantra*. Homage to all *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible! The *mantra* is: *he he mahākāruṇika viśvarūpadhāriṇi arghyaṃ pratīcchad pratīcchāpaya samayam anusmara tiṣṭha tiṣṭha maṇḍalamadhye praveśaya praviśa sarvabhūtānukampaka gṛhṇa gṛhṇa hūm ambaravicāriṇe svāhā* (*hey hey you of great compassion, bearer of manifold forms regard this offering receive this offering remember your vow! abide abide in the center of the maṇḍala! lead into it enter into it! O you who possess compassion for all beings seize seize O you who traverse the sky! hail!*) The *mudrā* for this is known as “abundance,” and it is followed by all *buddhas*.⁴⁶

46. *Mmk* 2.27.10-26: *saptābhimantritaṃ candanodakaṃ kṛtvā / caturdiśam ity ūdhvamadhastiryaksarvataḥ kṣipet / sarvabuddhabodhisattvāḥ mañjuśriyaḥ svayaṃ tasya parivāraḥ sarvalaukikalokottarās ca mantrāḥ sarve ca bhūtagaṇāḥ sarvasattvās ca āgatā bhavyeḥ / namaḥ sarvabuddhānām apratihataśāsanānām / om̐ dhu dhura dhura dhūpavāsini dhūpārciṣi hūm tiṣṭha samayam anusmara svāhā / dhūpamantraḥ / candanaṃ karpūraṃ kuṃkumaṃ caikīkṛtya dhūpaṃ dāpayettataḥ / āgatānām tathāgatānām sarvabodhisattvānām ca dhūpāpyāyitamanasaḥ ākrṣṭā bhavanti / bhavati cātra mudrā yasya māleti vikhyātā sarvasattvākaraṇī śivā / āhvānanamantrāyās ca ayameva mudrā padmamālā śubhā / āgatānām ca sarvabuddhabodhisattvānām sarvasattvānām cāgatānām arghyo deyaḥ / karpūracandanakuṃkumair udakamāloḍyajātikusu-*

The equivalency of the *mantra*, *mudrā*, object of consecration, and possessing force is explicit in these offering *mantras*. These are called variously incense *mantras* (*dhūpamantra*), fragrance *mantras* (*gandhamantra*), oblation *mantras* (*balimantra*), illumination *mantras* (*pradīpamantra*), and fire *mantras* (*agnimantra*).

And here are the perpetually fragrant *mantras* (*gandhamantra*). Homage to all *buddhas*! Homage to the *tathāgata*, whose glory, brilliance and fragrance are universal! The *mantra* is: *gandhe gandhe gandhādhye gandhamanorame pratīcche pratīcchemaṃ gandham samantānusāriṇe svāhā!* (*O fragrant one O fragrant one O you abounding in fragrance O joy within the fragrance attend attend to me O you who entirely penetrate this fragrance! hail!*) The sealing gesture (*mudrā*) in this case is called “the bud that completely fulfills all desires.” And here are the flower *mantras* (*puṣpamantra*). Homage to all *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible! Homage to the *tathāgata*, the ruler of those who have fully blossomed! The *mantra* is this: *kusume kusume kusumādhye kusumapuravāsini kusumāvati svāhā* (*O blossoming O blossoming O you abounding in blossoms O you dwelling in the city of blossoms O land of blossoms! hail!*) He should thus fumigate with the incense *mantra* (*dhūpamantra*), mentioned above, [and] with incense.

Making obeisance to the *buddhas*,
who possess inconceivably wonderful forms,
I will proclaim this oblation *mantra* (*balimantra*),
which has been spoken by the perfectly enlightened *buddhas*.

Homage to all *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, whose teachings are indestructible! The *mantra* is this: *he he bhagavaṃ mahāsattva buddhāvalokita mā vilamba idaṃ balim grhṇāpaya grhṇa hūm hūm sarvaśiva ra ra ta ta phaṣ svāhā hey hey blessed one!* (*O great being! do not delay take this offering take! O all and everything! hail!*) Along with [reciting] this, he should present the offering and the oblation to all sentient beings. The *mudrā* has the power to ward off all evil. Homage to the indestructible teaching of all *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, which completely destroys the darkness of delusions! Homage to the *tathāgata* whose glory, resplendence and fragrance shines universally! The [illumination *mantra* (*pradīpamantra*: 28.15)] is: *he he bhagavaṃ jyotiraśmiśatasahasrapratimaṇḍitaśarīra virkurva vikurva mahābodhisattvasamantajvāloodyotitamūrti khurda khurda avalokaya avalokaya sarvasattvānāṃ svāhā* (*O you whose body is adorned with a hundred thousand rays of light transform transform O mani-*

manavamālikavārṣikapunnāganāgavavakulapiṇḍitagarābhyāṃ eteṣāṃ anyatamena puṣpeṇa yathārttukena vā sugandhapuṣpeṇa miśikṛtya anena mantreṇa arghyo deyaḥ / namaḥ sarvabuddhānāṃ apratihataśāsanānāṃ tadyathā / he he mahākāruṇika viśvarūpadhāriṇi arghyaṃ pratīcchad pratīcchāpaya samayam anusmara tiṣṭha tiṣṭha maṇḍalamadhye praveśaya praviśa sarvabhūtānukampaka grhṇa grhṇa hūm ambaravicāriṇe svāhā / mudrā cātrapūrṇeti vikyātā sarvabuddhānuvartini /

festation who shines replendently and universally on the great bodhisattvas play play behold all beings! hail!) These are the illumination *mantras*. Together with this, the lamp (*pradīpa*) should be offered. The *mudrā* is called “the beam of light that beholds all beings.” Homage to all *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, whose teachings are indestructible! The [*mantra*] is: *jvala jvala jvālaya jvālaya hūm vibodhaka harikṛṣṇapiṅgala svāhā* (*blaze blaze illuminate illuminate O awakening O reddish-brown dark green one! hail!*)

These are the fire *mantras*. The *mudrā*, called “the covered box” (*samputa*), is famous throughout the world. Shining brilliantly on all beings, it was previously proclaimed by those best of *munis* for the wise *bodhisattva*.⁴⁷

The offering *mantras* highlight the fact that a *mantra* must be preceded by a liturgical formula acknowledging the glory of the *buddhas*. As with any ritual practice in the *Mmk*, preparation is a central feature of all forms of *mantra* recitation. In every instance, preparation involves mentally focussing on the authority that stands behind the power being made manifest by means of the *mantra*.

Dismissal (*visarjana*) *mantra*

Following the offering *mantras*, the text gives the “dismissal *mantra*” (*visarjanamantra*). This is used for withdrawing the power of the *mantra* after it has “effected” the goal of the practitioner.

47. *Mmk* 2.27.27-28.20: *dhruvā gandhamantrā cātra bhavati / namaḥ sarva-buddhānām namaḥ samantagandhāvabhāsaśrīyāya tathāgatāya / tadyathā / gandhe gandhe gandhādhye gandhamanorame pratīcche pratīccheyam gandham samantānusāriṇe svāhā / bhavati cātra mudrā pallavā nāma sarvāśā-paripūrīkā / puṣpamantrā cātra bhavati / namaḥ sarvabuddhānām apratihataśāsānām / namaḥ saṃkusumitarājasya tathāgatasya / tadyathā / kusume kusume kusumādhye kusumapuravāsini kusumāvati svāhā / tenaiva dhūpamantreṇa pūrvoktenaiva dhūpena dhūpayet / sarvabuddhām namaskṛtya acintyādbhutarūpiṇām / balimantram pravakṣyāmi samyaksambuddhabhāṣitām // namaḥ sarvabuddhabodhisattvānām apratihataśāsānām tadyathā / he he bhagavaṃ mahāsattva buddhāvalokita mā vilamba idaṃ baliṃ grhṇāpaya grhṇa hūm hūm sarvaviśva ra ra ṭa ṭa phaṭ svāhā / nivedyam cānena dāpayet baliṃ / ca sarva-bhautikam / bhavati cātra mudrā śaktiḥ sarvaduṣṭānivāriṇī / namaḥ sarva-buddhānām apratihataśāsānām sarvatamo ’ndhakāravindhvaṃsinām namaḥ samantajyotigandhāvabhāsaśrīyāya tathāgatāya / tadyathā / he he bhagavaṃ jyotiraśmiśatasahasrapratimaṇḍitaśarīra virkurva vikurva mahābodhisattva-samantajvālyodyotitamūrti khurda khurda avalokaya avalokaya sarvasattvānām svāhā / pradīpamantrā / pradīpaṃ cānena dāpayet / mudrā vikāsinī nāma sarvasattvāvalokinī / namaḥ samantabuddhānām apratihataśāsānām / tad yathā / jvala jvala jvālaya jvālaya / hūm / vibodhaka harikṛṣṇapiṅgala svāhā / agnikārikā mantrā / bhavati cātra mudrā samputa nāma lokaviśrutā / sarvasattvaprabhodyotanī bhāṣitā munivaraiḥ pūrvam bodhisattvasya dhīmata /*

The dismissal *mantras*. Homage to all *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible. [The *mantra*] is: *jaya jaya sujaya mahākāruṇika viśvarūpiṇe gaccha gaccha svabhavanam sarvabuddhāṃś ca visarjaya saparivārāṃ svabhavanam cānupraveśaya samayam anusmara sarvārthāś ca me siddhyantu mantrapadāḥ manoratham ca me paripūraya svāhā* (conquer conquer completely conquer O you of great compassion who appears in various forms go go to your own abode and dismiss all buddhas enter your own abode along with your retinue remember your vow may the mantra words effect all of my goals and my heart's desire completely fulfill! hail!) This dismissal *mantra* should be employed in all rituals. The sealing gesture is known as “the throne of good” (*bhadrapīṭha*). Together with this, a seat should be offered. The *mantra* adept (*mantrasiddhi*) should employ the *visarjana* together with seven [silent] mental recitations (*manasā saptajaptena*) for all ordinary and extraordinary [rituals], *maṇḍala* [rituals] and *mantra* [rituals], and when under occasional vows – during *jāpa* recitation.⁴⁸

Vidyā mantras

Following this is a long section on a class of *mantras* called *vidyā*, taught by Mañjuśrī to the assembly gathered in the Śuddhāvāsa palace. As with the above classes of *mantra*, the *Mmk* does not offer explicit explanations of the *vidyā*, but presents images and descriptions of use. The image of the *vidyā* is of a “female companion” (*anucari*) of Mañjuśrī – all *vidyās* are given in the feminine gender. The *vidyās* are “possessed of beautiful hair” (*keśinī*, *upakeśinī*), “star-like” (*tārāvatī*), “possessed of brilliant, glorious beauty” (*śvetaśrīvapu*), “of great loveliness” (*mahālakṣmī*).⁴⁹ As with all other *mantras*, *mudrās* – usually “mimetic” – invariably accompany *vidyās*. And, as the following examples illustrate, *vidyās* are applied for various purposes.

Homage to all *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible: *om riṭi svāhā!* This is the *vidyā* that does everything; it is called “lovely hair” (*keśinī*), [and is] the female companion of Mañjuśrī. During all rituals requiring an attendant the great

48. *Mmk* 2.29.22-29: *visarjanamantrā bhavanti / namaḥ sarvabuddhānām apratihataśāsanānām / tadyathā / jaya jaya sujaya mahākāruṇika viśvarūpiṇe gaccha gaccha svabhavanam sarvabuddhāṃś ca visarjaya / saparivārāṃ svabhavanam cānupraveśaya / samayam anusmara / sarvārthāś ca me siddhyantu mantrapadāḥ manoratham ca me paripūraya[°ntu = T.] svāhā / ayaṃ visarjanamantrāḥ sarvakarmeṣu prayoktavyaḥ / mudrā bhadrapīṭheti vikhyātā / āsanam cānena dāpayet / manasā saptajaptena visarjanam sarvebhyaḥ laukikalokottarebhyo maṇḍalebhyaḥ mantrebhyaś caiva mantrasiddhiḥ / samayajapa-kālaniyameṣu ca prayoktavyeti //*

49. *Mmk* 2.30.4, 7, 25, 31.11, and 22, respectively.

sealing gesture, “five-crests,” is used. Homage to the universal *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible: *om niṭi*. This *vidyā*, called *upakeśinī*, does everything. [This] should be used with the sealing gesture “blooming” (*vikāsinī*) in all rituals of seizure (*sarvagrahakarma*).

Homage to the universal *buddhas*,
who possess inconceivably wondrous forms.

Om nu re [T. = *tāre*] *svāhā*.

This *vidyā*, called “star-like” (*tārāvātī*)⁵⁰

is commended for all rituals.

Done together with the sealing gesture

“staff of force” (*śaktiyaṣṭi*),

[this *vidyā*] is a destroyer of obstacles.

Homage to the universal *buddhas*,
who proceed on an unobstructed course.

[The *vidyā* is] *om śrīḥ*.

This spell, “she of great loveliness” (*mahālakṣmī*),

was taught by the protectors of the world.

Practiced with the sealing gesture

“bowl-shaped” (*samputā*),

she grants the rank of “emperor.”⁵¹

The *vidyās* refer to feminine deities that were appropriated by Buddhists. As such, they are classed as belonging not to the family of *buddhas* (*tathāgatakula*), but to that of the “lotus” (*abjakula*). *Mmk* 1 mentions numerous *vidyārājñīs* “proceeding from the *samādhi* of the manifest Lokeśvara” (*vidyārājñībhir lokeśvaramūrttisamādhivisṛtaiḥ*);⁵² the *vidhārājñīs* “proceed from the *mantras* and penetrate the vow of the lotus family” (*abjakulasamayānupraveśamantravicāribhiḥ*).⁵³

50. At *Mmk* 10.16 *tārā* heads a list of *vidyārājñīs*; at *Mmk* 4.65.9 called “compassion of Avalokiteśvara.”

51. *Mmk* 2.30.3-7; 30.23-26; 31.20-23: *namaḥ sarvabuddhānām apratihataśāsānām / om riṭi svāhā // mañjuśrīyasyedam anucarī keśinī nāma vidyā sarvakarmikā / mahāmudrāyā pañcaśikhāyā yojyasarvaviṣakarmasu / namaḥ samantabuddhānām apratihataśāsānām / om niṭi / upakeśinī nāma vidyeyam sarvakarmikā mudrayā vikāsinīyā ca yojayet / sarvagrahakarmeṣu / namaḥ samantabuddhānām acintyādbhūtarūpiṇām [I] om nu re [T. = tāre] svāhā / vidyā tārāvātī nāma praśastā sarvakarmasu / mudrayā śaktiyaṣṭayā tu yojitā vighnaghātini // namaḥ sarvabuddhānām apratihataḡata[T. śākti]pracāriṇām [I] tadyathā / om śrīḥ / eṣā vidyā mahālakṣmī lokanāthaistu deśitā / mudrā samputayā yuktā mahārājyapradāyikā //*

52. *Mmk* 1.10.14-15.

53. *Mmk* 1.11.3.

Non-Buddhist *mantras*

In this vein, the section on *mantras* at *Mmk* 2 ends with an appropriation of the *mantras* of major non-Buddhist deities. This sub-section is prefaced by a polemical “revisionist” history of the *mantras* that are then presented. The central contention of the history is that all previous *mantras* – those of Brahma, Śiva, Viṣṇu, etc. – were originally spoken by the Buddhist *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī, though in the form of Brahma, Śiva, etc. Mañjuśrī merely took the form of these Hindu deities as an *upāya* – in this case, as a means of conversion. Specifically, the preface identifies Mañjuśrī with Kārttikeya (also called Skanda), the six-headed son of Śiva in Purāṇic mythology.⁵⁴ In this manner, the *Mmk* presents its own Purāṇa fragment of sorts, rewriting the history of Kārttikeya, revealing essential facts about his life that had been left out of the Śaivite account. In the *Mmk* version, Kārttikeya’s name is combined with Mañjuśrī’s: Kārttikeyamañjuśrī. This synthetic name gives a clear picture of the authors’ intention to co-opt Śaivite claims and subordinate these to those of the *Mmk*. Although there are allusions to Kārttikeya/Skanda’s role as the leader of the demons who cause illness in children, here that role is reversed: Kārttikeyamañjuśrī declares a *mantra* that “completely frees from illness during the period of youth.” Finally, Kārttikeya is assigned the roll of attendant (*anucara*) to the *bodhisattva*.

This was spoken by the *bodhisattva* Mañjughoṣa,
the protector, whose six[-faced] transformation
shook the entire world.

54. See O’FLAHERTY 1975: 161ff. The *Mmk* emphasizes this equivalency by presenting an unmistakable image of Mañjuśrī as “six-faced” (*ṣaṇmukha*), and as making the gesture mimicking the seat of the peacock (the vehicle of Kārttikeya). This occurs immediately before the “Purāṇa,” as the final *vidyā*. It reads as follows (note the masculine forms). *om kumāra mahākumāra krīḍa krīḍa ṣaṇmukha bodhisattvānujñāta mayūrāsanaśaṅghodyatapāṇi raktāṅga raktaganḍhānulepanapriya kha kha khāni khāni khāni huṃ nṛtya nṛtya raktapuṣpārcitamūrti samayam anusmara bhrama bhrama bhrāmaya bhrāmaya lahu lahu mā vilamba sarvakāryāṇi me kuru kuru tiṣṭha tiṣṭha huṃ huṃ sarvabuddhānujñāta svāhā* (*O youthful one O great youth play play O six-faced one authorized by bodhisattvas you whose hand is raised in the [mudrā] seat of the peacock flock O red-limbed one O beloved anointed with myrrh dancing dancing O you whose body is aflame with red flowers remember your vow wander wander cause to wander cause to wander cause to wander quickly quickly do not delay do do for me all work O you who bear a bright-colored form abide abide O you who have been authorized by all buddhas hail!*)

To hinder evil beings
for the sake of all beings' welfare,
the terrible son of Maheśvara (= of Śiva)
came here in order to convert others.

Well marked by the emblems of demons
and with charcoal,
he who speaks sweetly (*mañjubhāṣinī*⁵⁵)
spoke with a mind engrossed
in compassion to Skanda.

This the great-souled *bodhisattva*,
for creating welfare for children,
proclaimed wherever beings wandered
throughout the world.

Combined with the sealing gesture of the great-souled one,
[called] “staff of force” (*śaktiyaṣṭi*),
he leads one to Brahma, and so forth [i.e., to all the gods],
let alone to human results.

Kārttikeyamañjuśrī declared this *mantra*,
in brief, so that one may be
completely free from illness during
the period of youth.

Desirous of conferring benefits on beings,
the *bodhisattva* came here
to proclaim the three-syllabled essence
of his *mantra*.

He attends closely to attracting fortune
for the welfare of every beings,
and, fixed with the sealing gesture “staff of force,”
accomplishes all deeds.

om hūm jaḥ

This *mantra* would achieve human results fully.

Homage to all *buddhas*, whose embodiments manifest universally.
om vikṛtagraha hūm phaṭ svāhā (*O mutilated demon phaṭ hail!*)
And the employment of its *upahṛdaya*
together with the force of the sealing gesture,
averts *bhūtas*, *grahas*, and *mātaras*.

Fixing it with sealing gestures
that seal all,
it would be fruitful.

55. Inexplicably, the Sanskrit gives feminine *mañjubhāṣinī*. I translate the more consistent masculine form of the Tibetan, 'jam pa'i ñag gis.

It causes terror to *bhūtas*,
releasing those intent on evil.

This is the youthful, all-achieving attendant of Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta, named Kārttikeyamañjuśrī. Through mere repetition [of the *mantra*], he accomplishes all deeds, terrifies all *bhūtas*, attracts, subjugates, hurts, kills, or whatever is desired by the practitioner of spells (*vidyādhara*),⁵⁶ all of that is effected.⁵⁷

The *mantras* given here reflect the synthetic nature of the section as a whole. The one *mantra*, *om hūm jaḥ*, has both the formal and functional elements of the *buddha/bodhisattva hṛdaya mantras*, while the other, *om vikṛtagraha hūm phaṭ svāhā*, has those of the *abjakula* protective forces. This double function of the *mantras* is apparent when the text turns to those of Brahma, Śiva, and Viṣṇu.

Homage to the universal *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible.
[The *mantra* is]: *om brahma subrahma bramavarcase śāntim kuru svāhā* (*O Brahma perfect Brahma O divine splendor make peace! hail!*)

This *mantra*, “great Brahmā,”
was spoken by the *bodhisattva*.
Beings attained peace;
from this moment on they are gentle.

Employed with the five-crested sealing gesture (*mudrā*),
he would quickly make auspicious progress.

56. For *vidyādhara*, see PRYZLUSKI 1923.

57. *Mmk* 2.32.17-33.18: *bhāṣitā bodhisattvena mañjughoṣeṇa nāyinā* [T. *skyob pa < tāyinā*] / *ṣaḍvikārā mahī kṛtsnā pracacāla samantataḥ* // *hitārtham sarvasattvānām duṣṭasattvanivāraṇam* / *maheśvarasya* [T. *mi bzad < sahā°*] *sūto ghorō vaine yārthamihāgataḥ* // *skandamaṅgārakaś caiva grahacihnaiḥ sucihnitaḥ* / *mañjubhāṣinī tato bhāṣe karuṇāviṣṭena* [T. *brlan pa < °āvṛṣṭi*] *cetasā* // *mahātmā bodhisattvo* 'yaṃ *bālānām hitakāriṇaḥ* / *sattvacaryā yataḥ prokto viceruḥ sarvato jagat* // *mudrāśaktiyaṣṭyānusamyukto sa mahātmanaḥ* / *āvartayati brahmādyāṃ kiṃ punar mānuṣaṃ phalam* // *kaumārabhittamakhilam kalyamasya samāsataḥ* / *kārttikeyamañjuśrīḥ mantrō* 'yaṃ *samudāhṛtaḥ* // *sattvānugrahakāmyarthaṃ bodhisattva ihāgataḥ* / *tryakṣaram nāma hṛdayaṃ mantrasyāsyā udāhṛtam* // *sarvasattvahitārthāya bhogākaraṣaṇataparāḥ* [T. *mchog < °parama*] / *mudrayā śaktiyaṣṭyā tu vinyastaḥ sarvakarmikaḥ* // *om hūm jaḥ* / *eṣa mantraḥ samāsena kurānmānuṣakaṃ phalam* / *namaḥ samantabuddhānām samantodyotitamūrtinām* [I] *vikṛtagraha hūm phaṭ svāhā* // *upahṛdayaṃ cāsya samyukto mudrā śaktinā tathā* / *āvartayati bhūtāni sagrahāṃ mātārāṃ tathā* // *sarvamudritamudreṣu vinyastā saphalā bhavet* / *vitṛṣayati bhūtānām duṣṭāviṣṭavimocanī* // *eṣa mañjuśriyasya kumārabhūtasya kārttikeyamañjuśrī nāma kumāraḥ anucaraḥ sarvakarmikaḥ japamātreṇaiva sarvakarmāni karoti sarvabhūtāni trāsayati ākarṣayati vaśamānayati śoṣayati ghātayati yathepsitaṃ vā vidyādharasya tat sarvaṃ sampādayati* /

It is mentioned in the Atharva Veda⁵⁸
for all of the rites of malediction.
In short, this is taught in the abridged [version]
of that ordinance.

Homage to the universal *buddhas*, whose teachings are indestructible.
[The *mantra* is]: *om garūḍavāhana cakrapāṇi caturbhujā hūm hūm samayam anusmara / bodhisattvo jñāpayati (O you who ride upon Garūḍa O you who hold the discus in your hand O four-armed one! hūm hūm remember your vow! the bodhisattva has revealed this!)*

Authorized by Mañjuḥoṣa,
[this *mantra*] accomplishes all matters quickly
and is auspicious.
With the form of Viṣṇu as a body for the people,
it causes demons to be put to flight.

Employed with the “three-crested” sealing gesture
it is steadfast, accomplishing all matters quickly.
Those extensive ordinances that were proclaimed
in the Vaiṣṇava *tantra*
were spoken by Mañjuḥoṣa
as but a means for converting people.⁵⁹

After making identical claims about the *mantras* used in the cults of Śiva and Garūḍa,⁶⁰ the *Mmk* ends this section on *mantras* with an image showing the relationship between these cults and the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī. According to this image, those who employ non-Buddhist – non-*Mmk* – *mantras*, do so foolishly, like playing children who wander dangerously far from their mother. But these non-Buddhist practitioners are ultimately saved from their transgression since the forms they

58. Correct text’s reading of *athavā ceda* on basis of Tibetan: see MACDONALD: 39, fn. 3.

59. *Mmk* 2.33.19-24; 26-34.5: *namaḥ samantabuddhānām apratihataśāsānām / tadyathā / om brahma subrahma bramavarcasē sāntim kuru svāhā // eṣa mantrō mahābrahmā bodhisattvena bhāṣitāḥ / sāntim prajagmurbhūtāni tat kṣaṇād eva sītālā // mudrā pañcaśikhāyuktā kṣipraṃ svastyayanaṃ bhavet / ābhicārukeṣu sarveṣu athavo cedapathyate [T. srid sruṃ gi ni rig byed < atharvaveda°] [I] eṣa samkṣepata ukto kalpamasya samāsataḥ [I] namaḥ samantabuddhānām apratihataśāsānām [I] tadyathā / om garūḍavāhana cakrapāṇi caturbhujā hūm hūm samayam anusmara / bodhisattvo jñāpayati svāhā // ājñāpto mañjuḥoṣeṇa kṣipramarthakaraḥ śivaḥ / vidrāpayati bhūtāni viṣṇurupeṇa dehinām // mudrā trīśikhe yuktaḥ kṣipramarthakaraḥ sthiraḥ / ya eva vaiṣṇave tantrē kathitāḥ kalpavistarāḥ / upāyavaineyasattvānām mañjuḥoṣeṇa bhāṣitāḥ //*

60. *Mmk* 2.34.6-13 and 14-26, respectively.

worship, and the *mantras* they recite, are really aspects of the *bodhisattva*, gently prodding them into the family of the *buddhas*.

Just as a mother watchfully plays
with her children in various ways,
I (Mañjuśrī) wander among those
of child-like intelligence in the form of the *mantra*.

Previously proclaimed by *buddhas*,
and now uttered by me – the resplendant prince –
is the meaning of all *mantra* texts.

Those [*mantras*] which were sung by the greatest of victors,
those [*mantras*] which were sung by the sons of the *buddhas* –
those were sung by him whose voice is pleasant
in the aspect of miraculous, inconceivable forms.⁶¹

The image of the mother (*dhātrī*) playing (*lālati*) with her children evokes the mythological image of the cosmic play (*līlā*) of the creator (*dhātr*) with his creation, and of the *bodhisattva* playfully entering and transforming material forms. It also calls to mind the *uttamasādhana*, where the *sādhaka* “becomes one who playfully enjoys immortality” (*ajarāmaralīlī bhavati*⁶²) and other results of *mantra* practice. The metaphor of play is apt for a ritual text like the *Mmk*. In a sense, it can be argued that the very purpose of such a text is to provide the rules for playing. The game being played is of course the game of *mantric* utterance. Like a mother protecting her children by setting limits, the *Mmk* protects its aspiring *sādhakas* by laying down the rules for what its community holds to be real achievement, namely, the efficacious use of the *mantra* and all the benefits that that entails.

Demonstration of effect

By “demonstration of effect,” I mean the *Mmk*’s presentation of a passage describing the results of *mantra* practice. An example is as follows.

He proceeds instantly to the Brahmaloaka. He stays in the world-realm Kusumāvātī, where the *tathāgata* Saṅkūsumitarājendra dwells, exists, abides and

61. *Mmk* 2.35.5-10: *yathā hi dhātrī bahudhā bālānāṃ lālati yatnataḥ / tathā bālīśa-buddhīnāṃ mantrarūpī carāmyaham // daśabalaiḥ kathitaṃ pūrve adhunā ca mayoditam / sakalaṃ mantratantrārthaṃ kumāro ’pyāham mahādyutiḥ // jina-varaiś ca ye gītā gītā daśabalātmañaiḥ / mañjusvareṇa te gītā acintyādbutarūpiṇām //*

62. VAIDYA 1964: p.56.14.

teaches the *dharma*. He beholds Mañjuśrī directly (*sākṣāt*). He hears the true teaching (*dharma*). He also sees several thousand *bodhisattvas*, and worships them. He becomes one who playfully enjoys non-aging and immortality for a thousand great eons. The *paṭa* is also there. He is empowered by all *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, and he declares to them his firm resolution to attain enlightenment] and proceeds to their hundred thousand paradises. [Their] hundred thousand bodies are revealed to him. He becomes possessed of numerous powers and supernatural abilities. The noble Mañjuśrī becomes his virtuous friend. He becomes one for whom the goal of enlightenment is certain.⁶³

When the *Mmk* presents a passage demonstrating the effect of the *mantra*, it is showing the end of its own form of *mantracaryā* – *end*, in several senses: purpose, consummation, extent, realization. But the ability to effect the power of the *mantra* represents more than the culmination of a religious practice; it represents the ends of both Buddhism as a whole and of the culture from which this practice emerges. If, as is the view of religious practitioners, such practices lead to levels of meaning and satisfaction not attainable through non-religious means, then demonstrations of effects are eschatological, in the most literal sense of the word: they are discourses (*logos*) on what lies furthest (*eschatos*) – furthest from the culture of which they are the culmination. A civilization that cultivates a Christian worldview will present as “last things” such issues as the end of history, redemption, final judgement, heaven, and hell. Such concerns follow from the temporal and spatial notions embedded in, and generating, Christian cosmology. Christian liturgy, worship, prayer, etc., are, then, believed to be the keys for unlocking that cosmic structure. A society that cultivates Buddhist views will offer a different set or sets of final things, such as *nirvāṇa*, salvific knowledge, liberation, cessation of suffering and of *samsāra*, and it will mold the keys, produced by its culture, to fit its specific cosmology. So, when the *Mmk* demonstrates the effect of its *mantra* practice it is revealing what its community held to be the most valuable ends

63. *Mmk* 8.79.27-28: *acchaṭāmātreṇa brahmalokamatikrāmati / kusumāvātīm loka-dhātum sampratiṣṭhati / yatrāsau bhagavāṃ saṃkusumitrājendras tathāgataḥ tiṣṭhati dhriyate* [VAIDYA 1964: p. 56.12-16] *yapāyati dharmam ca deśayati / āryamañjuśriyam ca sākṣāt paśyati / dharmam śṛṇoti / anekānyapi bodhisattvaśatasahasrā paśyati / tāṃś ca parupāste / mahākālpasahasraṃ ajarāmaralī bhavati / paṭas tatraiva tiṣṭhati / sarvabuddhabodhisattvādhiṣṭhito bhavati / teṣāṃ cādhiṣṭānaṃ saṃjānīte kṣetraśatasahasraṃ cākrāmati / kāyaśatasahasraṃ vā darśayati / anekarddhiprabhāvasamudgato bhavati / āryamañjuśriyaś ca kalyāṇamitra bhavati / niyataṃ bodhiparāyaṇo bhavātīti //*

grounded in, though transcending, the social world that gives that practice life and meaning.

At the beginning of this article, I noted that a *mantra* is a form of speech, and that, like ordinary speech, it must be learned, and then used in specific contexts, if it is to be effective. I mentioned too that the system of rules implicit in *mantric* language is not dependent on linguistic features. The first two sub-sections then considered some of the ritual and doctrinal features of *mantric* “grammar.” This sub-section will look at the social dimension of *mantric* utterance.

“The social dimension of *mantric* utterance” is a phrase used by Harvey ALPER to emphasize the fact that the acceptance of the ideas revolving around the Indian *mantra* is “not itself discursive, it is social.”⁶⁴ ALPER has drawn his inspiration from categories developed by Wittgenstein – particularly in his *Philosophical Investigations* – and attempted to apply “Wittgensteinian concepts to the study of mantras.” However, I want to limit my observations to three points made by ALPER, which, interestingly, correspond closely to points made in the *Mmk*. These points are as follows (in ALPER’s words): (1) uttering a *mantra* is a thing done, and hence, a learned activity; (2) uttering a *mantra* is both a context- and a rule-dependent activity; (3) the activity of uttering a *mantra* may be compared profitably to a move in a game.

Before turning to the *Mmk*, it will be helpful to give as background the general sense of what is meant by “the social dimension of *mantric* utterance.” ALPER offers a clear statement in this regard.

In the Hindu tradition ... there is an explicit awareness that achieving religious consummation involves the mastery of specifiable techniques. Ironically, this situation obscures the fact that the mastery of specifiable techniques itself presupposes a prior mastery of skills that resist specification. The successful use of an “instrument” such as mantric utterance presupposes that one has already acquired the proper attitudes, demeanor, and expectations – that is the proper frame of mind – by having been successfully socialized in the society that recognizes mantric utterance as an “authorized” technique that makes possible one of the kinds of transcendence it is deemed acceptable to experience.

The confident, routine use of mantras surely presupposes a specific, identifiable set of convictions concerning the human condition, the ideal social order, and the purpose of existence. Acceptance of these convictions is a tacit ground without which Mantraśāstra would neither have been invented nor have remained vital. Whatever reasons might be adduced to defend these convictions, their

64. ALPER 1989a:258. All citations of ALPER henceforth are from *ibid*: 249-294 unless otherwise noted.

acceptance is not itself discursive, it is social. As lived, they are part of the forms of life, “the formal conditions, the patterns in the weave of our lives,” that give meaning to the language-game of uttering mantras.

... Self-evidently, the language-game of uttering mantras is situated within a social cosmos organized according to the principles of caste hierarchy, culminating in and yet transcended by institutional renunciation (*samnyāsa*), which, as such, recognizes the authority of an elite of “perfect spiritual masters” (*gurus*) and which experiences the cosmos as a fabric interwoven of various “powers,” as *śāktic*. These are, in general, the “situation and facts” that are invariably concomitant with mantric utterance. They are the preconditions that make it possible and lend it meaning.

(1) Uttering a *mantra* is a thing done, and hence, a learned activity.

The *Mmk sādḥaka* must learn how to employ a *mantra*. The force of a *mantra* can be harnessed only through acquired technique, the possibility of which was embedded in medieval Indian religious culture. The efficacy of the *mantra* is thus equally dependent on both the power of enlightened force, as shown above, *and* proper training within a socially authorized structure. As great as it is, the force of *buddhas* alone does not ensure the success of the *mantra*; rather, the activation of this force is dependent on the presence of further, social, conditions.

The clue to the social nature of effective *mantric* utterance is given at the beginning of a primary ritual passage.

First, he who has observed the vow, fulfilled the preliminary practices (*puraścaraṇa*), received the initiation, taken the essential (*hṛdaya*), basic *mantra* from this best of ordinances, or the *upahṛdaya*⁶⁵ or some other *mantra*, or having received a single syllable [*mantra*] or another one – according to one’s wishes – and who, having gone to a great forest, eats leaves and roots, who subsists on fruits and water, should recite [the *mantra*] three million times. He becomes one who has completed the preliminary practice.⁶⁶

In the *Mmk*, even the briefest ritualized act, in order to succeed, must be preceded by a long period of preparatory training (*puraścaraṇa*). For our purposes here, we could translate *puraścaraṇa* as *inculturation*. “Preparation” entails an infusion into the practitioner of everything his culture might bring to bear on his quest for enlightenment, liberation, power, etc. Hidden behind the description here is the agent behind that

65. At *Mmk* 1.3.8-9 the *hṛdayamantra* and *upahṛdayamantra* are given respectively as *om vākyeda namaḥ* and *vākye hūm*. The *hṛdayamantra* appears again at *Mmk* 29.322.7-16 as Mañjuśrī’s “incomparable,” etc., six-syllable *mantra*. There, it is employed in a *caitya* ritual.

66. Sanskrit above, footnote 28.

infusion: the *guru*. The *guru* is the person who “socializes” the *sādhaka*, guiding him through the process that will enable him to use *mantric* speech appropriately and effectively. Another passage, at *Mmk* 11, brings the *guru*, and his socializing role, more into the open.

First, one must take upon oneself the undertaking of knowledge, the vow, and moral conduct. First of all, one must obey the precepts and instructions of the *maṇḍala* master [i.e., the *guru* presiding over the initiation].

The *sādhaka* ... should make a request to the *maṇḍala* master [*guru*] in this manner: “I desire to enter into, through the agency of the master, the vow (*samaya*) of the great *bodhisattva*, the princely, noble Mañjuśrī. This having been said, [may] the master [become] compassionate, his mind impelled by sympathy for us!” Then, having been carefully examined by the *maṇḍala* master, by whom instruction, in accordance with the ordinance, was previously given, as previously described [at *Mmk* 2] the student is introduced [to the practice]. Having conferred the initiation, as previously mentioned [at *Mmk* 2], he should bestow the *mantra*. Duly, by degrees, he should reveal the vow. And, having considered very carefully that the time has arrived, and knowing the mental disposition [of the *sādhaka*] he should reveal the esoteric *mudrās* from the text (*tantra*) as well as the subsequent rituals ...

Then, the *maṇḍala* master has to bring about the notion “son” (*putraka*). He [the *sādhaka*] should behave like a son, who says “the benefits (*bhoga*) are to be offered to my mother.”⁶⁷

We saw in the previous sub-section that Mañjuśrī “wander[s] among those of childlike intelligence in the form of the *mantra*,” (*tathā bālīśabuddhīnāṃ mantrarūpī carāmy aham*) and that he does so “just as a mother watchfully plays with her children in various ways” (*yathā hi dhātrī bahudhā bālānāṃ lālati yatnataḥ*).⁶⁸ The child-parent relationship is made explicit here, too. The practitioner is “the son, the child of *dharma*, [and must] be protected always, with continued effort” (*rakṣa-*

67. *Mmk* 11.93.14-15: *ādau tāvad vidyāvratasīlacaryāsamādānaṃ prathamata eva samādadet / prathamam tāvan maṇḍalācāryopadeśanasamayam anupraviśet / Mmk* 11.93.26-94.6; 94.10-11: *sādhakaś ca ... maṇḍalācāryamabhyarthyā prārthayet / icchāmyācāryeṇa mahābodhisattvasya kumārabhūtasāryamañjuśrīyasya samayam anupraviṣṭum / tad vadatvācāryo ’smākam anukampārtham hitacitto dayāvāṃ / tatas tena maṇḍalācāryeṇa pūrvanirdiṣṭena vidhinā śiṣyāṃ yathāpūrvam parīkṣya praveśayet / pūrvavadabhiṣekaṃ dattvā mantram dadyāt / yathāvat kramaśo samayaṃ darśayet / rahasyatantramudrām anukarmāṇi karmāṇi ca prabhūtakālenaiva superīkṣya āśayaṃ jñātvā darśayet / ... [94.10-11] tatas tena maṇḍalācāryeṇa putrasaṃjñā upasthāpayitavyā / putravat pratipattavyam / mātuś ca bhogā upasaṃhartavyā iti //*

68. *Mmk* 2.35.5-6.

ṅīyo prayatnena putro dharmavatsalaḥ sadā).⁶⁹ The ultimate form of protection that the *Mmk guru* can extend to his disciple is that afforded by effective *mantric* utterance. As an embodiment of his culture's highest spiritual ideals, the *guru* is thus extending that culture's ultimate form of protection, too. *Mantric* speech is both meaningful and effective only when properly learned and applied. This fact is significant because it complicates the understanding of *mantras* as "magical speech," commonly found in scholarly studies on the subject.⁷⁰ Rather, it is like ordinary speech. Someone who utters incoherent sounds will fail in social life; even someone who speaks with poor grammar or a "low class" accent will be limited through his language. Assuming, for the sake of argument, the desirability of attaining the upper levels of a culture's material promise – status, wealth, etc. – then social protection involves teaching a child the proper forms of language. This analogy can be applied to *mantric* speech. Though the interface of this type of speech is not limited to social reality, it is a form of speech whose efficacy depends on the user's ability as a speaker of *mantras* (*mantravādin*), or, as the text often puts it, as "one who mantras" (*mantrin*). Like ordinary speech, *mantras* can fail to serve as instruments serving the speaker's goals. That point is made explicit throughout the *Mmk*, as in the inverse of this statement.

The disciple who honors that teacher (*guru*)
obtains an excellent destiny.
His *mantras* are successful
because he has been thoroughly shown
the path of the ordinances.⁷¹

(2) Uttering a *mantra* is both a context- and a rule-dependent activity. As that last statement shows, there is a direct correlation between being socialized into *mantric* speech, and the adherence to rules: like regular speech, the rules are what make it social ("one person alone cannot follow a rule").

The *Mmk* is nothing if it is not a text of rules. It is, in this sense, a sort of etiquette for *sādhakas*. It records the community's prescriptions for

69. *Mmk* 11.96.24.

70. See, for example, ALPER:1989c:330 for bibliographical references.

71. *Mmk* 11.96.3-4: *puṣkalaṃ gatiṃ āpnoti śiṣyo pūjyas tu taṃ guruṃ / mantrāstasya ca sidhyanti vidhimārgopadarśanāt//*

all of the forms of behavior expected of the *sādhaka*. From gathering the wood for prayer beads (*Mmk* 12), sleeping, eating, and begging for alms (*Mmk* 11), to constructing the oblation pit (*Mmk* 13), the text binds its practitioner to a strictly delineated mode of acting in the world. The promise behind its prescribed limits is that real power and freedom, both social (*laukika*) and “spiritual” (*lokottara*), will follow from observing the rules. The reason that this is so is that the rule-dependent activities of the *sādhaka* produce the conditions – the necessary context – for effective *mantric* utterance.

When the *mantras* are applied according to the ordinances, then one rapidly succeeds.⁷²

- (3) The activity of uttering a *mantra* may be compared profitably to a move in a game.

The metaphor of *mantric* utterance as a move in a game follows easily from the previous two assertions. Games are clear instances of learned, and context- and rule-dependent activities. The movement of a piece of wood on a checkered board or the kicking of a leather ball on a gridded field must be interpreted within the larger framework within which they take place – the games of chess and soccer; otherwise, they appear to be senseless activities. Efficacy, furthermore, follows from sense – these moves are effective within the strictures provided by the rules, and the rules orient the player toward the accepted notion of success, or victory. Uttering a *mantra* is like this. Saying *om āh hūṃ* only makes sense within the larger game-matrix of *mantracaryā*. The meaningfulness of *mantracaryā*, in turn, is founded on the assumed possibility of what ALPER calls an “epistemological event” (the *sādhaka* sees the *buddha*, attains enlightenment) and an “ontological fact” (the existence of the beings and forces that are embodied in the *mantras*) – *mantracaryā* notions of victory.

The *Mmk* is the book of rules for the game of *mantracaryā*. Recitation of *mantras* comprises the moves in the game, leading the player, the *sādhaka*, to victory. It is profitable to compare the activity of uttering a *mantra* to a move in a game because this brings out points that the text is emphatic about. These are: *mantras* are effective (1) because of the presupposed cosmological situation (the “unlocking” of which constitutes winning the game), (2) when socially learned becoming a

72. *Mmk* 32.336.19: *vidhiyuktā hi mantrā vai kṣipraṃ siddhim avāpnuyāt ||*

player, (3) when the rules of their utterance are adhered to (playing by the rules), (4) when engaged in (playing). This appreciably clarifies the context for such seemingly trivial statements – pervading the text – such as “those *well-recited mantras* are majestic, extremely powerful” (*sujaptā mantrā hy ete tejavanto maharddhikā*), “the majestic *mantras* succeed for *those of faith*, and for *no others*” (*sidhyante mantrarāt tasya śrāddhasyaiveha nānyathā*), “the success of the *mantra* is *not impelled* by an ascetic of bad morals” (*duḥśīlasya munīndreṇa mantrasiddhir na coditā*).⁷³ A *mantra* is effective by virtue of its being a “key that unlocks the śaktic structure of the cosmos.” But the ability to employ a *mantra* effectively requires that the practitioner properly negotiate the complex game of *mantracaryā*. To the extent that he does this, recitation of a *mantra* becomes the linguistic game-piece, which, like a wooden chessman, is indispensable to the game. Enlightened power abides, dwells (*adhiṣṭhāna*) through the deft moves of a skillfully formed player. But unlike other games, the promise held out to the *sādhaka* is nothing less than the ability to wield with efficacy the now vivified remains of the Buddha’s speech.

73. *Mmk* 33.342.8, 7.77.4, 11.101.9.

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