



The Meaning of the Six Syllables of the King of Vidya-Mantras, the Heroic Lord Mañjushri

by Jampal Dewé Nyima

I bow with devotion to Mañjushri!

The meaning of the six syllables of the Heroic Lord Mañjushri, the king of all vidya-mantras, can be briefly explained in relation to three main themes:

1. the generation stage,
2. the completion stage, and
3. the great perfection

1. The Generation Stage

Om is the seed syllable that represents the five wisdoms and five kayas, and this is applicable to all three themes.

Any yogin who has pleased the vajra-master, whose mind has been ripened through the four empowerments, who has kept the samayas completely pure, and who wishes to practice the generation stage of the enlightened body, speech and mind of the jñanasattva Mañjushri in retreat, should begin with the stages of the preliminary practices. Once the yogin has become familiar with these:

A symbolizes the samadhi of suchness, which is beyond birth, dwelling, and cessation, and endowed with the most sublime of all attributes.

Ra symbolizes the all-illuminating samadhi, the all-pervasive display of referenceless compassion for sentient beings, as vast as space, which arises unstoppably out of suchness and extends forever filling the whole of space.

Pa symbolizes the causal samadhi, the seed syllable which manifests as an indestructible bindu out of the state of great bliss, the inseparable union of the two aforementioned samadhis.

Ca symbolizes generating the reigning primordial protector, Mañjushri, within the enclosure of support and supported—the mandala of the great purity of all that appears and exists—and thus awakening to the great display of wisdom's

clear appearance.

Na symbolizes the invitation of the *jñanasattva* from the all-encompassing space of *samadhi*, who merges indivisibly with the *samayasattva*, becoming of a single taste; and pleasing the deity through the offering—the magical net of all appearance and existence—and the praise—the equal taste of indivisibility.

Dhīh symbolizes the recitation in which sound never wavers from the *samadhi* of *dharmata*; the dissolution of the unceasingly clear appearance of the generation-stage deities into the *dharmadhātu*, the all-encompassing space of great emptiness; and the profound seal of referenceless dedication and aspiration.

2. *The Completion Stage*

A symbolizes the wisdom of the innate great bliss of the unborn ground—primordially pure, free from complexity, intrinsic, and indestructible.

Ra symbolizes that which resides in the form of a letter within a bindu at the navel chakra, which is found in the body of the six elements, with its four chakras and three channels. In particular, there is a red *a*-stroke, which has the nature of fire, at the navel chakra of channels, and at the crown there is an upside-down letter *hang* (ॐ) which is the essence of the bindu of great bliss, the white pure essence.

Pa symbolizes the yogin seated upon a comfortable seat, who, having assumed the seven-point posture of *Vairocana*, brings the winds of the three channels to rest in the centre of the body through the four applications of vase breathing. He then summons the winds from the *lalana* and *rasana* channels and brings them into the *avadhuti* channel. Fire blazes forth from the *a*-stroke and travels upwards through the central chakras, until it touches the syllable *hañ* at the crown. As a result, the passionate bliss melts and descends from the crown, down through the throat, heart, and navel to the secret place. The yogin traverses the four joys of stability from below, which allows actual innate wisdom to be born within the mind. Then, by relying on the winds and performing yogic exercises, the flow is reversed through the navel, heart, throat, and crown chakras, so that the ultimate non-conceptual wisdom is born within the mind and *siddhi* is attained.

Ca symbolizes the perfect application of key instructions related to the life-force—the wisdom of great bliss—and practicing with one's own body,¹ and, afterwards, the supporting method of the pith instruction on the yogas practiced with a partner.

Na symbolizes the yogin who by relying on the support—a visualized or physical consort—actualizes the blissful wisdom of descending flow and ascending stabilization,² and thereby attains the non-conceptual wisdom of the path of seeing is attained.

Dhiih symbolizes traversing the four vidyadhara levels on the path of learning and actualizing the path of no-more-learning, the stage of a vajradhara with seven aspects of union with a consort.³

3. The Great Perfection

A symbolizes the present ordinary mind, when untainted by fabrications, the great dharmakaya whose nature transcends any words, thoughts, or description. This realization of the great dharmakaya is the *direct introduction to the face of awareness itself*.⁴

Ra symbolizes its radiance, the unceasing kaya, arising as the limitless display of the kayas and wisdoms. While not grasping at this, one gains certainty in the nature of the basis, display, and adornment, the natural radiance of the dharmata, free from proliferation or reduction. This is the realization of the sambhogakaya or *the decision upon one thing and one thing only*.

Pa symbolizes remaining effortlessly aware of this innate, indestructible state—this union of awareness and emptiness—devoid of ‘someone maintaining’ or ‘something maintained’. This is the wisdom of the nirmanakaya or *confidence in the direct liberation of rising thoughts*.

Ca symbolizes having confidence in this view and, on the basis of the three crucial points, remaining free from attachment to whatever arises in limitless ways through the gates of the wisdom of outwardly radiant visions on the path of the four lamps.⁵

Na symbolizes integrating these essential practices, so that one traverses the path of the four visions. Then, within the space of inner luminosity, the display of outer luminosity will dissolve within the inner space, by means of the six special qualities of Samantabhadra.⁶

Dhiih symbolizes actualizing the benefit for oneself, the attainment of supreme awakening, so that for eons to come one manifests the luminous body of great transference and continuously engages in compassionate activity.

Upon the request of the Dharma teacher Gendün Zangpo from Taktse, in Serthar, this short verbal explanation was composed by the monk Jampal Dewé Nyima. May virtue and auspiciousness flourish!



Translation Origin

Translated by [Samye Translations](#), 2020 (trans. Peter Woods and Stefan Mang).

This work is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).

Bibliography

Tibetan Source

'jam dpal bde ba'i nyi ma. 'jam dpal dpa' bo'i rigs sngags kyi rgyal po 'bru drug pa'i don.
[s.l.]: [s.n.], [n.d.]. (BDRC W8LS19407)

Secondary Sources

Garab Dorjé. The Three Statements that Strike the Vital Point. On *Lotsawa House*.

1 Referring in particular to the yoga of heat (*gtum mo*).

2 Reading *yab 'babs mas brtan* as *yas 'babs mas brtan*.

3 The seven aspects of union with a consort (*kha sbyor yab yum bdum*), more commonly referred to as the seven aspects of union (*kha sbyor yan lag bdum*) are the seven qualities of a sambhogakaya buddha. According to Jigme Lingpa, these are: 1. complete enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs*), 2. union (*kha sbyor*), 3. great bliss (*bde ba chen po*), 4. absence of a self-nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), 5. presence of compassion (*snying rjes yongs su gang ba*), 6. being uninterrupted (*rgyun mi chad pa*) and 7. being unceasing (*gog pa med pa*).

4 The following lines in italics are the *Three Statements that Strike the Vital Point* by Garab Dorje.

5 Reading *sgrol ma bzhi* as *sgron ma bzhi*. The four lamps are: 1) the far-reaching water lamp (*rgyang zhags chu i sgron ma*); 2) the lamp of the basic space of awareness (*rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma*); 3) the lamp of empty spheres (*thig le stong pa'i sgron ma*); and 4) the lamp of naturally arising wisdom (*shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma*)

6 The six qualities of Samantabhadra (*kun bzang chos drug*) or six special attributes (*khyad chos drug*) define the process of gaining realization within the ground of being according to the Atiyoga teachings. They are: 1. awareness emerging from the ground of being (*gzhi las 'phags*), 2. perceiving its own manifestation (*rang ngor snang*), 3. distinguishing itself from any state of confusion (*bye brag phyed*), 4. gaining freedom in that distinction (*phyed thog du grol*), 5. not relying on any external condition for its presence (*gzhan lung las ma byung*), and 6. resting in its own natural lucidity (*rang sar gnas pa*).