
The Importance of the Text

The dharma activities of His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's life can be divided into six main phases. Each phase is marked by an important pith instruction text. These six texts are respectively *Dawn Flush of Advice*, *Drops of My Heartfelt Advice*, *Nectar Drops of Advice*, *Song of Victory*, *Teachings of the Four Vehicles*, and *Teachings during Magnetizing All that Appears and Exists*. As well as these texts, there are also the teachings given just before His Holiness entered into nirvana.

These texts are not like ordinary articles drawn from a few years of academic research studies, but rather they are the essence of His Holiness' wisdom gained through a lifetime of study, reflection, and practice. His attained realization, his biography and his considerable merit have proven him to be a great saint and an enlightened master in each of his lifetimes spanning from the time of Buddha Shakyamuni to that of Guru Padmasambhava. Not only has he accumulated abundant good karma in his previous lives, but during his present life, he has spent more than 60 years focused on the study, reflection and practice of the Buddha's teachings, which he began around 5 years of age, and continued into his late 60's. His Holiness has devoted his entire life to all sentient beings and Buddhism, and his words and teachings, distilled from such a deep well of wisdom, are indeed very precious.

The *Song of Victory* was an extemporaneous vajra Doha¹ sung by His Holiness in front of almost five thousand ordained sangha on an auspicious victory-celebrating day in the Tibetan calendar, the 21st September, 1996, when His Holiness and his disciples had dispelled all the external, internal and secret hindrances.

Khenpo Sodargye once said during one of his teachings, "Those with wisdom will fully understand how transcendent the *Song of Victory* is after they study it. In the past, when His Holiness gave us teachings, to begin with we did not recognize their great worth. However, after constant contemplation of the Dharma and as time went by, along with exposure to various religious doctrines, we realized that His Holiness is indeed the most extraordinary of human beings."

As a matter of fact, even though the Buddha taught eighty-four thousand teachings, we are not able to master them all in one lifetime. However, now that His Holiness has summarized these teachings into this wonderful pith instruction based on his practice and realization, we should treasure it and try to comprehend its profound meaning.

Theoretically speaking, dharma practitioners should study both the sutras and tantras extensively, such as the Five Great Mahayana Treatises². But life is short, and it is hard to know how much longer one will live. Many changes can happen in a few brief moments and nothing is certain. Therefore, the study of a short text containing a great pith instruction is of great value to all practitioners; otherwise, they may not be adequately prepared when the time

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songs_of_realization

² <http://kopanmonastery.com/about-kopan/monastic-education/the-five-great-treatises>

comes to leave this world.

His Holiness requested all his lineage disciples to teach or chant the *Song of Victory* once before they teach or study a dharma text, so that any obstacles that may occur during the process can be dispelled. Likewise, if someone aspires to follow the Dharma, chanting this text once beforehand will make their aspiration come true, and protect them from encountering any obstacles. Additionally, any obstacles that may be encountered while studying or practicing Dharma can be transformed into favorable conditions just by reading this text or by taking it with you everywhere. Therefore, His Holiness requested again and again that anyone who took refuge in or relied upon him should memorize the *Song of Victory* and grasp its profound meaning.

The Background of the Text

In September, 1995, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche planned to visit Taiwan and then to leave for Nepal to stay in Padmasambhava's cave for an Amitayus Buddha retreat. But after he arrived in Chengdu, there were some problems related to the processing of his passport application. He also suffered a deterioration in his physical health, and the hospital in Chengdu was unable to diagnose the cause of his illness. Consequently, he stayed at Chengdu for more than five months, remaining in a state of Samadhi, and except during meal times, he did not utter a word.

Then one night, His Holiness had a dream in which Venerable Atisha³, Venerable Dromtonpa⁴, Ju Mipham Rinpoche⁵, and Lama Lodro⁶, all appeared to him. Venerable Atisha silently cast his kind and loving gaze at His Holiness. Venerable Dromtonpa said, "We have come here because Venerable Atisha is very concerned about you. These huge surging waves of the ocean will terminate on the 10th of March, do you understand the implications? (By this he meant that His Holiness would, at that time, fully recover from his illness). Venerable Atisha and Venerable Dromtonpa then disappeared.

Ju Mipham Rinpoche remained seated majestically, prayed forcefully to Padmasambhava in an extremely wrathful way, in order to dispel all external, internal, and secret hindrances and to vanquish various kinds of evils manifested from confusion and differentiation. After that, he transformed himself into a flash of light and disappeared.

Lama Lodro gave some merciful advice: "You should reside in the luminous state of Great Perfection, the great union of appearance and emptiness. Out of this profound concentration, you should benefit sentient beings with Bodhichitta, exchanging others' suffering with your happiness. Then, all unfavorable conditions will disappear into emptiness." He also gave some others teachings and then also dissolved into luminosity.

³ <http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Atisha>

⁴ http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Dromt%C3%B6npa_Gyalw%C3%A9_Jungn%C3%A9

⁵ http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Mipham_Rinpoche

⁶ One of His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's gurus

After this dream, His Holiness began to recover slowly and, as predicted by Venerable Dromtonpa, he had completely recovered his health by March 10th. On returning to Larung Gar all his disciples gave His Holiness a most ceremonial Welcome Back. He sang the *Song of Victory* extemporaneously among the fourfold assembly of all the disciples. Everybody's happiness at that moment was indescribable. His Holiness also named the assembly of Han disciples as *Victorious Subdue-Mara Land*, indicating the great victory.

The Title of the Text

A1: Opening

B1: Title

Song of Victory – The Wonderful Sound of the Celestial Drum

a. The Meaning of the Title

In the title, *Victory* means that practitioners are able to dispel all external, internal, and secret obstacles and achieve the complete victory through the blessings of the guru and the Three Jewels. *Song* refers to a Doha, a song sung extemporaneously by an enlightened being with a certain level of realization. Celestial drum is a huge drum in the thirty-third heaven⁷, the appearance of which is due to celestial beings' great merits.

This *Song of Victory* is described by the metaphor 'the *Wonderful Sound of the Celestial Drum*' because this drum has a natural sound that means "all you celestial beings, do not fear". (As when celestial beings were battling the Asuras, with the help of the wonderful sound of the Celestial Drum, they were able to defeat the Asuras and win the battle.) Hence the title draws this analogy between the *Song of Victory* and the *Wonderful Sound of the Celestial Drum*. This short text contains the essence of all the sutrayana and tantrayana teachings, as well as the very profound pith instructions of His Holiness' lifetime of practice.

b. Four Main Aspects of the Path

In *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path*, Lama Tsongkhapa⁸ discusses three main aspects, which are renunciation, bodhichitta, and non-dualistic wisdom. However, in this short text, His Holiness summarizes the entire path of enlightenment into four main aspects, including the additional aspect of virtuous personality. Also, non-dualistic wisdom can be explained within both the Mahayana and the Vajrayana paths. In the *Song of Victory*, non-dualistic wisdom is described from the perspective of the Great Perfection, or Dzogchen⁹, the highest level of realization in Vajrayana practice, based on the view of emptiness in Mahayana teaching.

The realization of the Great Perfection is the most desirable enlightenment worthy of

⁷ http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Heaven_of_the_Thirty-Three

⁸ http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Tsongkhapa_Lobzang_Drakpa

⁹ <http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Dzogchen>

seeking by spiritual practitioners. What is the prerequisite for such enlightenment? It is bodhichitta. Without bodhichitta, as Shantideva says in *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, there is no way to achieve full enlightenment, no matter how much supreme merit one possesses. Then how can bodhichitta arise in one's mind? For this to occur one needs to first possess renunciation mind, which in turn has to be founded on a virtuous personality. Therefore, the sequence of practice should be: a virtuous personality to be a good person, a mind of renunciation to abandon all worldly attachment, an aspiration of bodhichitta to guide all living beings to achieve Buddhahood, and eventually, the practice of Dzogchen to achieve full enlightenment within a single lifetime. These are four main aspects of the path that are summarized in this *Song of Victory*.

Homage to Manjushri

B2: Homage

*The embodiment of the wisdom of all the buddhas, who are the protectors of all sentient beings,
Venerable Manjughosha, who appears as a young boy,
May you abide forever in my heart, the stamens of the eight-petalled lotus,
Bless me, such that my words will benefit all sentient beings.*

a. The Sincere Devotion to Manjushri

His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche says in this verse, “Buddhas of all the worlds in the ten directions are the protectors of all sentient beings. The aggregate wisdom of all the buddhas of the ten directions is embodied in Manjushri, who appears as a young boy to benefit all sentient beings. I pray that Manjushri will fill my eight-petalled lotus-heart with his uniquely blessed bright sunlight, and will remain perpetually in the stamens of my lotus heart. I pray that, with the power from Manjushri's compassion, my words can universally benefit all sentient beings in this world.”

Here an analogy is drawn between the eight-petalled lotus and the heart, which has many external, internal and secret meanings in Vajrayana, and will not be discussed in detail here.

This is a homage to Manjushri. His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche regarded Manjushri as his main deity and after meeting Manjushri in person at Wutai Mountain, whenever he was going to compose a treatise he would first pay homage to Manjushri. This demonstrates his extraordinary faith in Manjushri.

His Holiness has always had a close affinity with Manjushri since his childhood. According to his biography¹⁰, he recited the Manjushri mantra¹¹, *om arapacana dhih*, aloud as an infant, immediately after he was born. At the age of 6, he discovered a copy of *The Speech Lion of Manjushri*, hidden in a pile of rocks, and noticed a verse at the end, saying there was a man in India aged 99 years old who after just one day of practice attained enlightenment when

¹⁰ <http://www.khenposodargye.org/2013/03/biography-of-h-h-jigmey-phuntsok-dharmaraja/>

¹¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manjushri#Mantras>

Manjushri appeared before him.

His Holiness thought, “If someone that old could meet Manjushri after just one day’s practice, I should be able to practice and attain enlightenment without any problems because I am beginning at such tender young age.” He was very thrilled and practiced with full concentration for a few days. Consequently, he experienced many signs of attainment, and naturally mastered all the scriptures and commentaries in the sutras and tantras.

His Holiness often emphasized that dharma practitioners should chant Manjushri’s mantra frequently and pray to Manjushri often, because the power of the blessings from Manjushri are quite special, compared with those from other buddhas. As ordinary beings we cannot determine whether Buddha Shakyamuni’s blessing or Bodhisattva Manjushri’s blessing are more powerful, but it is quite possible to make a reasonable judgment according to relevant sutras, since this has been explained in the related sutras.

On the surface, Manjushri appears as just a bodhisattva. But based on what is mentioned in the sutras, he actually attained Buddhahood a long time ago, and he is the embodiment of the aggregate wisdom of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas from all the worlds of the ten directions, and is regarded as the father of all buddhas. He guided infinite sentient beings to achieve buddhahood by motivating them to arouse bodhichitta. Hence the power of his blessing is inconceivably amazing.

Everyone can benefit from the blessings of Manjushri. The key lies in whether or not one has authentic faith in him. As Khenpo Sodargye said in his teaching, once when he visited Wutai Mountain, he was constantly filled with the hope that he would see Manjushri in person, and in the end, although he did not see Manjushri, he did receive some blessings which manifested in him being able to memorize and fully recite dharma texts after reading them only a few times. So Khenpo Sodargye concluded that different people may have different levels of faith, but as long as they are blessed by Manjushri, all the scriptures and commentaries on sutras and tantras will come to manifest in their mind. If one constantly prays to Manjushri, wisdom will be bestowed upon this person lifetime after lifetime. And meanwhile, blessings from all the buddhas can be integrated and passed on in his or her mind’s continuity.

b. A Great Story of Manjushri¹²

Once when the Buddha was teaching the Dharma at Vulture Peak, in the city below the mountain there was a prostitute named Marvelous Golden Ray. She was very beautiful and enticingly attractive. But more amazingly, her entire body glowed with a golden aura. Thus, the emperor, ministers, and all sorts of men became extremely enchanted by her. Although she was just a prostitute from a lowly caste, a huge crowd always surrounded her.

One day, she accompanied the son of a business owner on a shopping trip to the market. They were planning to have some fun at the amusement park. Along the way Manjushri transformed himself into a handsome young man, for he knew the circumstances were ready to enlighten Marvelous Golden Ray. His entire body glowed with an extraordinarily dazzling

¹² More details can be found in *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra*, translated by Dharmarakṣa from Sanskrit into Chinese in West Jin Dynasty.

light. Marvelous Golden Ray noticed that the light radiating from the youth far surpassed her own golden rays and as she stood in the glow of his light, her own light was fading away. She became greedy for his clothing, and immediately dumped the son of the business owner, climbing out of the vehicle they were traveling in and attempted to seduce the young man with her beauty.

At that moment, Manjushri empowered Vaisravaṇa to advise Marvelous Golden Ray, and he told her, “You must not arouse your greed for the young man, as he is the Bodhisattva Manjushri, who is the aggregate of all buddha’s wisdom. He can fulfill all your wishes. What do you need?” Marvelous Golden Ray said, “I do not need anything except for his beautiful clothing.” Manjushri then replied, “If you can enter the door of Bodhi, I will give my clothing to you.” As she did not understand what that entailed, Manjushri then started to give her detailed instructions.

At Vulture Peak Shakyamuni Buddha voiced his praise, saying “Well done!” during the course of Manjushri’s teaching, and that jolted the cosmos of a billion universes. Manjushri’s retinue asked the Buddha why he had said this. The Buddha replied, “Bodhisattva Manjushri is preaching the buddhadharma with compassion and wisdom in order to enlighten a prostitute. You may go there if you would like to listen.” So, many of the Buddha’s disciples went over to Manjushri’s place. Some disciples obtained the purity of the dharma-eye to see the truth clearly and purely. Some attained the full apprehension of the truth of no birth; some achieved the non-regressive fruition... Tens of thousands of sentient beings received corresponding benefits, after listening to the teachings of Manjushri.

Marvelous Golden Ray also developed a firm understanding of the theory that nothing has its own self-nature. She really wanted to follow Manjushri and to live her life as a Buddhist nun. But Manjushri told her that the path of renunciation did not necessarily mean shaving one’s head, but rather, involved practicing buddhadharma diligently and giving up one’s self-interest for the benefit of others. Manjushri also advised her to return to the vehicle of the business owner’s son and leave with him.

When Marvelous Golden Ray and the son of the business owner arrived at the amusement park, they had a taste of impermanence when she died in his embrace. At first, he was greatly saddened. But as her body started to gradually decay, with blood and pus effusing from her eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth, and a foul smell emanating from her body, the businessman’s son became extremely frightened and ran all the way to Vulture Peak to seek protection from Shakyamuni Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha imparted the buddhadharma to him, and he attained full apprehension of the truth of no birth. The Buddha then predicted: “Due to the empowerment of Bodhisattva Manjushri in inspiring her motivation, Marvelous Golden Ray will attain Buddhahood in a Buddha-land in the future. She will be named Precious Light Buddha. And the son of the business owner will become a bodhisattva acting on her behalf, named Bodhisattva Virtuous Brilliance.”

The son of the business owner was puzzled, “Why will the disciple of Bodhisattva Manjushri, Marvelous Golden Ray, attain Buddhahood? But I, as the disciple of the Buddha, will only become a bodhisattva?” He could not understand this. The Buddha said, “The merits of Bodhisattva Manjushri are inconceivable. I also, made my initial vow to develop Bodhichitta

in front of Manjushri, as did the immeasurable number of Buddhas in the past; so have the immeasurable number of Buddhas of the present and so will it be for the immeasurable number of Buddhas in the future.”

c. The Right Motivation of Receiving the Teaching

His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche composed this text neither for the sake of recovering from his grave illness, nor for the desire to become wealthy or to attain happiness for himself. Rather, he prayed for Manjushri’s blessing in order to benefit all living beings, temporarily or ultimately, through his words and his teachings. Likewise, we also need to examine our motives when receiving his teaching. Some people muddle along without any sense of purpose. They see others go for the teaching, so they follow them without any specific purpose. As a matter of fact, the purpose of receiving the Dharma teaching should be to benefit the numerous sentient beings, not just for the benefit of oneself. Each practitioner should tune his or her motivation accordingly in this way.