

## Manjushri and Swayambhu Stupa: the settlement of Kathmandu Valley

### Who is Manjushri in Mahayana Buddhism?



Manjushri is known as the four great bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism. He is worshiped as the first Buddha among all seven Buddhas ever existed. He has two forms in which are different variations and worship formations in different countries, where he always carries a flaming sword and a lotus representing wisdom. He has a main form of a youthful Prince with blue skin, sitting on a blue lion, holding a lotus flower and an orange-flamed sword. In his other hand, he holds a lotus with such a powerful spell known as the Perfection of Wisdom or Transcendental Knowledge of 8,000 lines. The central teaching of this sutra is sunyata, or the emptiness of self-nature in all things. He is known as the bodhisattva of wisdom also has another side of Yamantaka, known as the lord of death. Manjushri,

some variations have six legs, six arms, and six faces, always riding a water buffalo.

## **How the Flaming Sword, Blue Lion, Lotus, and Sutra of Wisdom Shaped the Birth of Kathmandu**

The legendary Buddhists of Mahayana Buddhism's followers have different thoughts on the formation of the Kathmandu valley. Did you know that Kathmandu wasn't always the bustling city we know today? Back then, it was a massive pond filled with methane gas flames and inhabited by Nagas, or serpents. The biggest flame began on the top of Swayambhunath hill, where we see today's Swayambhunath temple. But Manjushri was inspecting the draining of the lake from Chovar gorge with his two wives, the first king of Kathmandu, Dharmakara, and King of the Nagas Karkotaka.

The flames of the luminous flame were too massive; they could be seen from miles away worshipped as the representative of Adi Buddha. The prince of Tai Shan from China, named Manjushree, came to pay respect and wanted to see the famous pond Nag Hrada (or Swayambhu Taal). Also, an idea to drain the lake and make it habitable for humans.

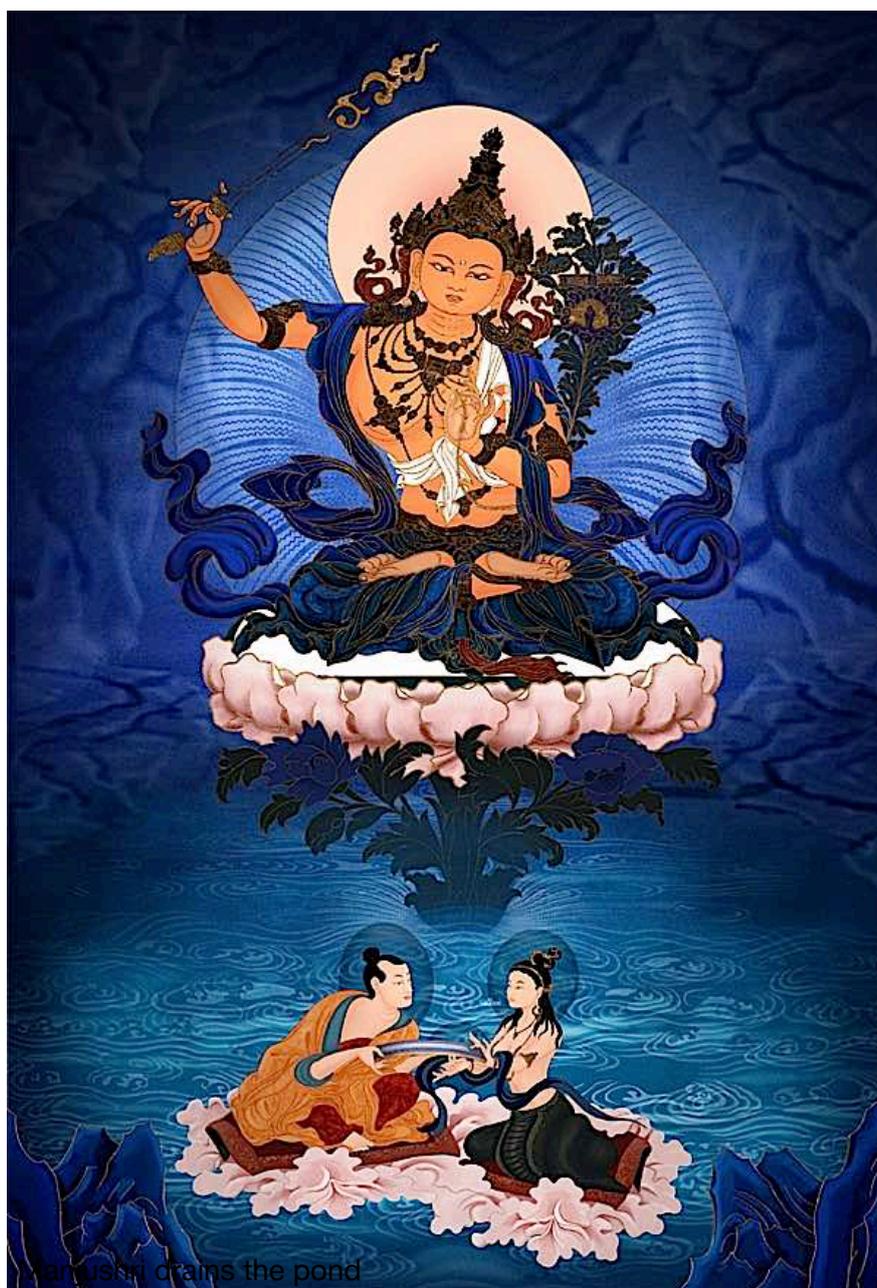
This painting is inspired by the "Swayambhu Puran," one of our oldest texts. It recounts the history of Kathmandu Valley, from the time of Manjushree to 1957, when the first motorable road was constructed to Swayambhu Stupa.

The main characters in this painting, including Manjushree, his wives, and his disciple Dharmakara, shaped the valley. Nagaraj Karkotaka relocated the Nag population to Lake Taudaha, which is still celebrated annually as Nag Panchami in honor of the Nagas who gifted Kathmandu. This ongoing festival and the lake suggest the truthfulness of the legend of Manjushree.

History is often shaped by partial truths, but these stories should be passed down through generations to preserve them.

## **Perfection of Wisdom (Om Ah Ra Pa Tsa Na Dhi) Meaning and Benefits of the Manjushri Mantra**

The mantra is a practice of bodhisattva manjushri that helps you improve your skills in learning, debating, scripting, memorizing, and thinking. A sacred Tibetan tradition emphasizes that the mantra has been chanted 100, 21, or no less than 7 times to get the benefits. During the last time the mantra is recited, the final dhi syllabus must be recited several times, with many possibilities might occur.



Let me break down the meaning of the six syllables of the Heroic Lord Mañjuśrī, the king of all vidyā-mantras, into three main themes.

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

### **1. The Generation Stage**

OM, the seed syllable describes the five wisdoms and five kayas, making it relevant to all three themes

Listen up, yogis! If you've pleased the mighty Vajra-master, mastered the four empowerments, kept your samayas pure, and want to practice the generation stage of the enlightened body, speech, and mind of the jñānasattva Mañjuśrī in retreat, start with the preliminary practices. Once comfortable, move on.

A represents samādhi, beyond birth, life, and death, with amazing qualities. Ra symbolizes the all-knowing samādhi, the all-encompassing display of compassionate love for all beings, vast as space, which comes from samādhi and fills space.

Pa symbolizes the causal samādhi, the seed syllable that manifests as an indestructible bindu out of great bliss, the inseparable union of the two samādhis.

Ca symbolizes generating the reigning primordial protector, Mañjuśrī, within the maṇḍala of the great purity of all that appears and exists, awakening to the great display of wisdom's clear appearance.

Na symbolizes the invitation of the jñānasattva from the all-encompassing samādhi space, merging with the samayasattva, becoming of a single taste. Pleasing the deity through the magical net of all appearance and existence and the praise—the equal taste of indivisibility.

Dhīḥ symbolizes the recitation where sound never wavers from the samādhi of dharmatā; the dissolution of the 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 represents the wisdom of the innate great bliss of the unborn ground—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, found in the body of the six elements, with its four chakras and three channels. In particular, there's a red a-stroke, which has the nature of fire, at the navel chakra of channels, and at the crown there's an upside-down letter haṅ, which is the essence of the bindu of great bliss, the white pure essence.

Pa symbolizes the yogin seated on a comfortable seat, who, having assumed the seven-point posture of Vairocana, brings the winds of the three channels to rest in the center of the body through the four applications of vase breathing. He then summons the winds from the lalanā and rasanā channels and brings them into the avadhūti channel. Fire blazes forth from the a-stroke and travels upwards through the central chakras, until it touches the syllable haṅ 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, 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, and thereby attains the non-conceptual wisdom of the path of seeing is attained.

Dhīḥ symbolizes traversing the four vidyādhara 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. The Great Perfection**

A represents the ordinary mind when it's pure and unclouded. This realization of the great dharmakāya is the direct path to the face of awareness itself.

Ra symbolizes its radiance, the constant kāya, which is like a limitless display of kāyas and wisdoms. Even if you don't grasp this, you'll gain certainty about the nature of the basis, the display, and the adornment. This is the realization of the sambhogakāya, which means choosing one thing and one thing only.

Pa symbolizes staying effortlessly aware of this innate, unbreakable state—the union of awareness and emptiness, without anyone or anything holding it back. This is the wisdom of the nirmāṇakāya, which means having confidence in the direct liberation of rising thoughts.

Ca symbolizes having confidence in this view and staying free from attachment to whatever comes up through the gates of the wisdom of outwardly radiant visions on the path of the four lamps.

Na symbolizes integrating these essential practices so that you can walk the path of the four visions. Then, within the space of inner light, the outer light will dissolve

into the inner space, thanks to the six special qualities of Samantabhadra.

Dhīṭ symbolizes benefiting yourself, achieving supreme awakening, so that for ages to come, you'll show the luminous body of great transference and keep doing compassionate work.

### **The flaming sword of Manjushri (the realization of transcendent wisdom)**



In Mahayana Buddhism, Manjushri is the king of wisdom and a symbol of achieving enlightenment. So, his belongings were also treated like a king, the prajnaparamita sutras, and he represents clarity, wisdom, bravery, and intellectuality. His sword, which is shown mostly in fire, symbolizes wisdom burning through ignorance, duality, and illusion, making the heaven and earth better.

Beyond its destructive image, the sword represents transformation and liberation. Also, the lotus and scripture he carries, Manjushri's attributes show his role as a guide for seekers on the path to ultimate truth and understanding. His sword which is often shown glowing flames and being on fire, represents the human spirit and

its ability to see the clear form the confusion. Many buddha teaches strongly connect Manjushri's origins to his role as the embodiment of wisdom.

This wisdom goes beyond all religions, as it shows a universal message of enlightenment and spiritual understanding. With the lotus and the scriptures held in his hand, Manjushri's features to help followers pursue clarity, strength, and wisdom of mind and heart on the path of enlightenment.