

CLARIFYING MIND
An Introduction to the Tradition of Pramana
A Shambhala Core Texts Program
Six Tuesdays, 7-9:30 pm
January 20, 27, February 3, 10, 17, & 24

Part One
THE SWORD OF WISDOM
By Mipham Rinpoche

SOURCEBOOK
Table of Contents

1. Summary Outline:
 - a. *The Sword of Wisdom* by Mipham
 - b. *The Blazing Lights of the Sun and Moon* by Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche
2. Course Syllabus
3. Dignaga & Dharmakirti
4. Acharya Dignaga
5. Biography of Mipham
6. *The Sword of Wisdom*-translation by Adam Pearcey

MANJUSHRI SUPPLICATIONS

Through the blessings of awareness-emptiness, Prince Manjushri,
Open the eight treasures of courage, which descend from the expanse of wisdom,
So I may become the commander of the ocean of the dharma treasury of scripture
and realization.

I supplicate Mipham, the melody of gentleness (Manjughosha).
Om Arapachana Dhi Hum

This was composed by Mipham Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee

Whatever the virtues of the many fields of knowledge
All are steps on the path of omniscience.
May these arise in the clear mirror of intellect.
O Manjushri, please accomplish this.

*This was specially composed by Mangala (Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche). Translated by the
Nalanda Translation Committee*

The Sword of Wisdom
By Mipham Rinpoche

And the commentary
The Blazing Lights of the Sun and Moon
By Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche

Summary Outline
RT v = Root Text verses; C pp. = Commentary pages

- I. Introduction, RT v. 1-3, C pp. 1-17**
 - A. Offering, v. 1
 - B. Promise to compose the text, v.2
 - C. Introducing the subject, v. 3

- II. The Main Topic: The Ways of Reasoning, RT v. 4-58, C pp. 17-92**
 - A. Summary as the Two Reasons, v. 4
 - B. Detailed Presentation of the Four Reasons, v. 5-58
 - 1. Interdependence, v. 5
 - 2. Productive Action, v. 6-8c
 - 3. Nature, v. 8d-12
 - 4. Summary of the first three reasons, v. 13-15
 - 5. Suitable Establishing, v. 16-
 - a) Summary, v. 16-17
 - b) Direct Perception, v. 18-28
 - c) Inference, v. 29-47
 - d) Abandoning Contention, v. 48-58

- III. The Four Means of Reliance, RT v. 59-91, C pp. 92-114**
 - 1. Generally, v. 59-62
 - 2. Rely on the teachings, not the teacher, v. 63-65
 - 3. Rely on the meaning, not the words, v. 66-70
 - 4. Rely on the true meaning, not the provisional meaning, v. 71-79
 - 5. Rely on wisdom, not on consciousness, v. 80-91

- IV. The Eight Great Treasures of Confidence, RT v. 92-98, C pp. 114-116**

- V. Conclusion, RT v. 99-102, C pp. 116-118**

- VI. Dedication and Aspiration, RT v. 103-104, C pp. 118-123**

CLARIFYING MIND
An Introduction to the Tradition of Pramana
A Shambhala Core Texts Program
Six Tuesdays, 7-9:30 pm
January 20, 27, February 3, 10, 17, & 24

Part One
THE SWORD OF WISDOM
By Mipham Rinpoche

Texts

- Mipham, *The Sword of Wisdom*, translated by Adam Pearcey, Ann Helm, Ives Waldo
- Khenchen Palden Sherab, *don rnam par nges pa shes rab ral gri'i 'grel pa shes rab nyi zla 'bar ba'i sgron me*, translated as “*The Blazing Lights of the Sun and Moon*” by Ives Waldo (draft internal version).

Syllabus

I. Class One: Introduction to the Path of Pramana

A. Topics:

1. The Legendary Dignaga and Dharmakirti
2. The Role of Pramana
3. Direct and Indirect Pramana
4. Mipham's Contribution
5. The Sword of Wisdom
6. Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche and his commentary

B. Reading: In Class

1. Root, v. 1-3

II. Class Two: Using Reason to Recognize Truth

A. Topic:

1. Fundamentals of Reasoning
2. Reasoning as Two-fold

B. Reading:

1. Root, v. 4
2. Commentary, pp. 1-17

III. Class Three: The Four Reasons

A. Topics:

1. Interdependence, v. 5
2. Productive Action, v. 6-8c
3. Nature, v. 8d-12
4. Summary of the first three reasons, v. 13-15

B. Reading:

1. Root, v. 5-15
2. Commentary, pp. 18-41

IV. Class Four: The Pramana of Direct Perception

A. Topics:

1. Introduction to Suitable Establishing, v. 16-17
2. Direct Perception, v. 18-28

B. Reading:

1. Root, v. 16-28
2. Commentary, pp. 41-57

V. Class Five: Inference as Pramana

A. Topics:

1. Inference, v. 29-35

B. Reading:

1. Root, v. 29-58
2. Commentary, pp. 57-77
- 3.

To Be Addressed Later: Inference in Practice

C. Topics:

1. How to make inferences, v. 36-47
2. Abandoning Contention, v. 48-58

D. Reading:

1. Root, v. 36-58
2. Commentary, pp. 77-92

VI. Class Six: Pointing Out the Means

A. Topics:

1. The Four Means of Reliance, v. 59-91
 - a) Reliance, v. 59-62
 - b) Rely on the teachings, not the teacher, v. 63-65
 - c) Rely on the meaning, not the words, v. 66-70
 - d) Rely on the true meaning, not the provisional, v. 71-79
 - e) Rely on wisdom, not on consciousness, v. 80-91
2. The Eight Great Treasures of Confidence, v. 92-98
3. Conclusion, Dedication and Aspiration, v. 99-104

B. Reading:

1. Root, v. 59-104
2. Commentary, pp. 92-110

Dignaga and Dharmakirti

Dignāga: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dign%C4%81ga>.

Dignāga (c 480-540 CE) was an Indian scholar and one of the Buddhist founders of Indian logic. He was born into a Brahmin family in Simhavakta near Kanchi (Kanchipuram), and very little is known of his early years, except that he took as his spiritual preceptor Nagadatta of the Vatsiputriya school. This branch of Buddhist thought defended the view that there exists a kind of real personality independent of the elements or aggregates composing it.

Dignāga's Works:

1. *Hetucakra* (The wheel of reason): Among Dignaga's works this is considered his first work on formal logic, advancing a new form of deductive reasoning. It may be regarded as a bridge between the older doctrine of *trairūpya* and Dignaga's own later theory of *vyāpti* which is a concept related to the Western notion of implication.
2. *The Treatise on the Objects of Cognition* (*Ālambana-parīkṣā*)
3. *The Treatise on Systems of Cognition* (*Pramāṇa-samuccaya*)
4. *The Treatise on the Correct Principles of Logic* (**Nyāya-mukha*), produced in an effort to establish what were the valid sources of knowledge.

Dharmakirti: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharmakirti>.

Dharmakirti (ca. 7th century), was an Indian scholar and one of the Buddhist founders of Indian philosophical logic. He was one of the primary theorists of Buddhist atomism, according to which the only items considered to exist are momentary Buddhist atoms and states of consciousness. Born around the turn of the 7th century, Dharmakirti was a South Indian Brahmin and became a teacher at the famed Nalanda University, as well as a poet. He built on and reinterpreted the work of Dignaga, the pioneer of Buddhist Logic, and was very influential among Brahman logicians as well as Buddhists. His theories became normative in Tibet and are studied to this day as a part of the basic monastic curriculum. Dharmakirti presents most of his ideas in the guise of commentary on Dignaga's works, even if his theories go beyond what was presented by his predecessor. Some of his ideas, like his proof for the authority of the Buddha's words, are innovations, for Dignaga considered language just as fallible as inference.

Dharmakirti's Writings: *The Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition*:

1. *Sabandhaparikshāvṛtti* (Analysis of Relations)
2. *Pramānaviniścaya* (Ascertainment of Valid Cognition)
3. *Pramānavārttikakārika* (Commentary on Dignaga's 'Compendium of Valid Cognition')
4. *Nyāyabinduprakarana* (Drop of Reasoning)
5. *Hetubindunāmaprakarana* (Drop of Reasons)
6. *Santānāntarasiddhināmaprakarana* (Proof of Others' Continuums)
7. *Vādanāyānāmaprakarana* (Reasoning for Debate)

References:

- Dunne, John D. (2004). *Foundations of Dharmakirti's Philosophy*. Somerville, Mass.: Wisdom Publications.
- Dreyfus, Georges (1997). *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakirti's Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretations*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Acharya Dignaga

Nagarjuna is referred to as the first of the **Two Supreme Ones**, the second is Arya Asanga. They are also referenced together with the Golden Chain of Wisdom and Compassionate Ones known as the "**The Six Scholarly Ornaments**;" together this group of eight includes: Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha and Shakyaprabha.

In the 5th century after almost nine centuries of Buddha's mahaparinirvana, there lived the renowned scholar Acharya Vasubandhu who had four extraordinary disciples who became even more learned than the Guru himself in four different subjects. Among these disciples was Acharya Dignaga who became especially articulate in the subject of Pramana, or Logic. Initially Acharya Dignaga composed 108 volumes of Logic text followed by *Pramanasamuccaya*, which consisted of entire meanings of those earlier composed 108 volumes. Thus it became known as the Pramana Sutra, or Fundamental Logic Text.

*I salute him who is Logic personified,
Who attends to the welfare of living beings,
The Guru, the Blessed One, the Protector,
And to demonstrate the ways of Logical Proof,
I shall draw together under one head
The different fragments from my other writings.*

*From the *Pramanasamuccaya* by DIGNAGA*

*"When Dignaga had written this on a rock with a piece of chalk, the earth shook,
a light blazed forth and a thunderous sound was heard."*

History of Buddhism in India, TARANATHA

Dignaga's *Pramanasamuccaya* ("Compendium of the Means of True Knowledge") is one of the greatest works on Buddhist logic. Dignaga gave a new definition of "perception" - a knowledge that is free from all conceptual constructions, including name and class concepts. In effect, he regarded only the pure sensation as perception.

The philosophical traditions of India have always honored logic, the art of reasoning. Hindu, Buddhist and Jain sages alike looked beyond the limits of reason and conceptualization, but they insisted upon the crucial role played by clarity of thinking in self-transcendence and spiritual realization. Like Plato and unlike Aristotle, Indian thinkers paid more attention to the logic of concepts and principles of inference than to the topology of categories. Nagarjuna raised logic to the esoteric level of compelling dialectic, and those who came after him refined various aspects of his crucial work. Vasubandhu in particular addressed the need for precise dialectic, because debate was neither a mere intellectual game nor an occasion for mutual hostilities. The spiritual seriousness of argument is evidenced by the fact that an individual defeated in a thorough and exhaustive exchange was honor-bound to accept the victor's standpoint, even if this meant changing religious allegiances. While logic had been a dominant concern of many

thinkers and teachers, Dignaga turned his whole mind to the topic and refounded the art of reasoning in the service of Truth.

Sometime in the early years of the fifth century, Dignaga (also known as Dinnaga) was born into a Brahmin family in Simhavakta near Kanchi (Kanchipuram). Little is known of his early years except that he took as his *Upadhyaya*, spiritual teacher, Nagadatta of the Vatsiputriya school. This branch of Buddhist thought espoused the view that there existed a kind of real personality independent of the elements or aggregates composing it.

Though Dignaga learned the whole of the *Tripitaka*, the Three Baskets of non-Mahayana Buddhist wisdom, he was not satisfied with Vatsiputriyan attempts to deny the never-ending nature of self while affirming its continuity through a series of lives. When his teacher enjoined him to search for the "indescribable self", the principle of "I" which is neither identical with nor different from the *skandhas*, he opened all the windows of his dwelling by day and filled every corner of it with lamps by night. Stripping himself naked, he repeatedly examined himself from every angle. Soon other monks noticed his bizarre behavior and reported it to Nagadatta. When asked why he carried on in this way, he replied that he failed to understand what he had been instructed to seek and so had bared himself to see if it might be uncovered. Recognizing a challenge to his doctrine, Nagadatta grew angry and ordered Dignaga to leave his monastic community.

Dignaga left in silence. He knew that he could demonstrate the inaccuracy of Nagadatta's doctrines, but he was profoundly aware of the wrongness of attacking the teachings of one's *Upadhyaya*. His efforts to indicate a fundamental problem indirectly had only angered Nagadatta, and Dignaga departed with a heavy heart. In time, however, he encountered Vasubandhu who fully understood Dignaga's insights, and willingly undertook to teach him Yogachara thought. Vasubandhu explained five hundred *sutras* to Dignaga, including all those belonging to the Mahayana and Hinayana traditions, as well as the mysterious *dharani sutras*. He mastered the science of *vidya mantra* and refined the art of debate. Nonetheless, he felt that he was a worthless student because of his inability to persuade his first teacher to reconsider his doctrines. Once when he was in a state of spiritual depression, Manjushri, the sword-wielding Bodhisattva of supernal wisdom, appeared to him in a vision, brought him to his senses and instructed him at great length in the Dharma. Dignaga was spiritually regenerated and took up his work with a zeal that never waned for the rest of his life. He retired to a cave in the Bhotashela hill near Odivisha (Orissa) where his intense meditation bore the inexpressible fruit of *samadhi*.

A few years later, a great debate was arranged at Nalanda. As in most monastic communities, Buddhists of diverse schools dwelt peacefully together. Even while they vigorously debated the merits of their differing doctrines, they were bound together in the brotherhood of the Dharma. Nalanda not only hosted every shade and hue of Buddhist thought, but also housed numerous non-Buddhist teachers and students. Dignaga was invited to debate a group of remarkable *tirthikas*, non-Buddhist instructors, renowned for their dialectical agility. Dignaga defeated each one in turn so decisively that they all joined the Sangha. He tarried for some time at Nalanda, where he taught the *sutras* and

wrote many volumes on Yogachara doctrine and on logic. Eventually he returned to his cave near Odivisha and devoted himself to meditation. While there, he resolved to compose the *Pramanasamuccaya*, aphorisms on *pramana*, valid knowledge.

According to Taranatha, he wrote the beginning lines of this great treatise with a piece of chalk on a rock. When he took his begging bowl and went out for his morning round, a Brahmin called Krishnamuniraja came upon these words, realized their portentous significance, and erased them. The next morning Dignaga began again, but once more the words were eradicated in his absence. On the third morning Dignaga wrote the same words, but added the sentence "Know this to be extremely important" and challenged the defacer to a debate. Reading this challenge, Krishnamuniraja sat down and waited for Dignaga to return from gathering alms. When Dignaga came back to his dwelling, the two engaged in a ferocious debate. When Dignaga emerged victorious, he invited the *tirthika* to accept the Dharma, but Krishnamuniraja threw a magic powder which ignited the belongings of Dignaga and then fled. Once again, Dignaga fell into a spiritual depression, blaming himself for failing to convert his opponent. But Manjushri appeared to him and remonstrated with him, warning that "wrong ideas result from evil company." Assuring him that no one would bring harm to his treatise, Manjushri promised to remain Dignaga's *kalyana-mitra*, true spiritual friend, until he attained full enlightenment.

Dignaga composed his treatise in peace and returned to his meditations. Once he grew ill. After his mendicant rounds, he returned to the forest and fell fast asleep. While he slept, he had visions of numerous glorious Buddhas who instructed him. Meanwhile, the king, out in the forest for recreation, came across the sleeping monk. Celestial deities were raining flowers upon Dignaga, the forest plants were bowing in his direction, and elephants stood quietly over him to afford him shade. When the king awoke him with the sweet sounds of musical instruments, he asked, "Are you Dignaga?" "So I am called", the monk replied. And the king prostrated before his feet. Tradition records that Dignaga journeyed south and restored damaged *viharas*. The king of Odivisha and the royal treasurer helped build monasteries, and Dignaga continued to draw opponents into the embrace of the Dharma. He performed a number of wondrous feats, including restoring a precious tree to life by chanting over it. Though he had many followers, he refused to have attendants, preferring to live alone. He died alone in the verdant forests of Odivisha having lived a life dedicated to meditation and teaching others to clarify consciousness for the sake of Truth.

Dignaga set himself a monumental task. He sought on the one hand to produce a definitive treatise on the principles of logic which could be used to understand the fundamental meaning of ideas and ideals. On the other hand, he wanted to show that diverse standpoints could be understood, communicated, assessed and reconciled. Some resisted his teaching, for it demanded rigorous mental training, the renunciation of bias and a desire to bring all one's mental faculties to peak awareness. Some thought he was a quibbler and a hair-splitter, but such judgments confuse the careful, even ponderous, quality of his work with the fiery spirit which infuses it. Despite the stringent dialectical requirements of the *Pramanasamuccaya*, it rapidly assumed importance for Buddhists of every school, and Hindus, Jains and Zoroastrians alike felt the need to grasp its content

not only for debates like those held at Nalanda, but also as an aid in understanding their own spiritual inheritance. It was translated into Chinese in the second half of the sixth century, and it remains the foundation stone of the "new logic", fulfilling the prophecy of Manjushri that "in later times this Shastra will become the sole eye of all the Shastras".

The first chapter of the *Pramanasamuccaya* takes up the question of *pramana*, valid knowledge. A number of dialecticians treated perception, logical inference, the testimony of others, authority and scripture as independent means to truth and implicitly endowed them with equal epistemological status. Dignaga did not question the value of these sources of knowledge and opinions, but he clarified their relationship to one another and delineated their ranges of application. For him there are only two means to knowledge – *pratyaksha* and *anumana*, perception and inference. Dignaga offered no definition of perception, in part because it is common knowledge and in part because it cannot be defined except through itself. Pure perception is free from preconception of any kind and is therefore unconnected with name, genus, species and conceptualization. This suggests that most of what is ordinarily called perception is in fact tainted by the mental constructs and habits which mediate and obscure the function of the senses. Thus, when one mistakes a rope for a snake, the error does not occur because of misperception, but rather because of preconception based on fear, previous experience, or memories of frightening encounters recounted by others in the past. Given this characterization of perception, it is possible for the man of meditation to perceive supramundane realms of objects and planes of being inaccessible to untrained consciousness victimized by the *kleshas* and *caittas* enumerated by Vasubandhu.

Perception, never susceptible to categorization, is in every case unique. Thus perception is invariably of individual characteristics or "infinite peculiarities". In attempting to convey to another what one has perceived, one invokes class descriptions, communicating a generalized phenomenon – a cow, book or whatever – rather than the unique perception one experienced. Inference, however, is quite another matter, for inferential knowledge is general and can be expressed by name, genus, species and all the categories of thought and language. Dignaga cannot say that perception involves the interaction of senses with their objects, because such a claim could be established only by invoking the elements of inference. Thus, Dignaga's conception of perception is the epistemological correlate of *chittamatra*, Mind-only. Those pairs of opposites which give value and tone to perceptions – pleasure and pain, for example – are not objects of knowledge but rather colorations of consciousness.

Anumana, inference, is of two kinds: *svarthanumana* and *pararthanumana*, inference for oneself and inference for another. Inference for oneself is knowledge of a thing derived from its distinctive marks or characteristics. The mark might be the effect of the thing inferred, as one infers fire from smoke which is its effect. It might be essential identity, as an acacia is identical with a tree. And it might be absence of perception signifying the non-existence of what is not perceived. Non-perception of a pot, for instance, permits the inference that no pot exists here where one is looking. *Pararthanumana*, inference for the sake of others, is more complex for it is concerned with what one can demonstrate to another on the basis of what one can infer for oneself. In addition to the inference, one

must show its validity by some parallel example to another. For instance, in the assertion that:

This sound is non-eternal,
Because it is a product of effort
Like a pot, unlike *akasha*

The reason for the non-eternality of this sound is that it is the result of effort. The parallel example or homologue is a pot, which is also the product of effort, and the non-parallel example or heterologue is *Akasha*, which is not the product of effort.

Dignaga devised a list of nine reasons which can link subject and predicate, centering on non-eternality, being produced or a product of something else, audibility and tangibility. Depending on whether the reason is wholly present in, partially present in or absent from the homologue and the heterologue, Dignaga created a table of validity, which was the first attempt of its kind to systematize logical inferences. Though its structure is logical, the nature of his reasons requires basic knowledge of the world in order to determine the truth of arguments. As in Aristotelian syllogisms and in modern propositional logic, the conclusions are true if and only if the premises are true and the logical form is valid. The reason (*hetu*) can be either affirmative or negative. It is affirmative when it is always accompanied by whatever is given in the predicate: the hill is fiery because it is smoky, smoke being the reason. It is negative when what is declared absent in the reason is absent in the predicate: the hill is not smoky because it is not fiery. Dignaga's "law of extension" requires that one who wishes to convince another of his own conclusion has to state both subject and predicate as well as the reason which connects them, along with suitable examples which illustrate the linkage between the reason and the predicate.

For Dignaga, comparison was not an independent source of knowledge, because recognizing the similarity between two objects is an act of perception. Similarly, the testimony of others depends upon either the credibility of the individual or the credibility of the fact itself. In the first case, inference is involved, while the second is a case of perception. Even though Dignaga reduced the means to knowledge to only two, he showed that the traditionally accepted sources of understanding do not have to be rejected since they can be understood as special instances of perception and inference. He also discussed the importance of the use of analogy and sought to distinguish between acceptable and far-fetched analogues. The basic schema of Dignaga's system of logic left a variety of issues unresolved, many of which he took up in other treatises. In addition to extensive discussions of subjects and predicates (minor and major terms) and the use of example, he compiled illustrated collections of fallacies. He also warned against theses or propositions which one must reject out of hand because they are incompatible with perception, contradict inference, reject overwhelming public opinion, deny one's belief, are self-contradictory (e.g., "My mother has always been barren"), or use terms incomprehensible to the system of thought under discussion. He added that one cannot prove a thesis which is universally accepted (for example, "Fire is warm") precisely because of its universal acceptability.

Demonstration and refutation together with their fallacies are useful in arguing with others; and perception and inference together with their fallacies are useful for self-understanding.

Dignaga established a three-step method of proof when one reasons with oneself, and a five-step method for convincing others. Since all that one experiences short of Enlightenment is chittamatra, merely consciousness, clarity of thought is crucial at every stage of the Bodhisattva Path. For Dignaga, logic is not an end in itself but rather an invaluable aid in transforming the processes of consciousness. He elevated debate out of the murky plane of polemic into the realm of dispassionate discourse and became the founder of medieval Buddhist logic. In later centuries he was given the name Tarkapungava, Fighting Bull, for his formidable dialectical skills. Unfortunately, subsequent generations lost something of the sacred vision that brought Dignaga face to face with Manjushri and retained only the logic. Thus his pioneering work became the backbone of an uninspiring scholasticism and the tool of those who take greater delight in quibbling than in meditation. Nonetheless, his work was a valuable aid not just for the Yogachara school, but for all Buddhists and numerous Hindu traditions as well. His efforts have been honored by the fact that all who have known them have used them freely.

Biography Jamgon Ju Mipham Rinpoche Namgyal Gyatso

By Lhobpon Rechungpa and Eric Forgeng

http://www.rangjung.com/authors/jamgon_mipham.htm

Now, without deceit or exaggeration, I will write a little of his life that was visible to ordinary beings. The reason he is called "Ju" ("holding") Mipham is because his clan originated as clear light deities who came to the human world holding ("ju") a rope.

His family originated with Achak Dru, one of the six original Tibetans who were born of the union of the Monkey Bodhisattva (an emanation of Avalokiteshvara) and the female Rock Demoness, whose descendant was a general of the king of Mongolia. These people later lived under the Dharma King of Dege, Tenpa Tsering. Many learned and accomplished people arose in this lineage, including many powerful ngakpas. From this lineage came one named Gyud la Do de, an emanation of Medicine Buddha. His descendant, Ju Gonpo Targye, was Mipham's father.

His mother's lineage was called Mukpo Dong gi Gyudpa (the Brown Face lineage). This family was very wealthy and generous to the Dharma. One of them, called Cho Dar, was a minister to the King of Dege. His daughter Sing Chung was Jamgon Mipham's mother.

Depending on this perfectly endowed family lineage, in the fourteenth Rabjung, in the Male Fire Horse year (1846), at a very auspicious time, in the region of Do-Kham called Four Rivers and Six Hills (Chu Zhi Gang Druk), in the place called Deng Chung, with many miracles, Jamgon Mipham was born. His Uncle, Pon Lama Drupchok Pema Tarjay, gave him the name Mipham Gyamtso (Invincible Ocean). When he was very young, the qualities of faith, renunciation, wisdom, and compassion were naturally present, indicating that he was naturally of the Mahayana family. Everyone who knew him said that he had only one thought: that his yidam was the peaceful and wrathful Manjushri and his Protector was Ling Gesar.

When he was six or seven he memorized the Certainty of the Three Vows (Dom Sum Nam Nye) scripture, and he learned the preliminaries for white and black astrology. By the age of ten he was learned at reading and writing and had composed many texts. When he was twelve years old he entered the monastery as an ordinary monk of the Ogmin Urgyen Mindroling lineage at a branch monastery of Zechen Ten Nyi Targye Ling, called Gyu Mohor Sang Ngak Choling. At that time everyone praised his accomplishment, calling him "Tsun Chung Khe Pa", "Intelligent Small Monk."

When he was fifteen or sixteen, after studying the very difficult Mindroling system of chanting for only a few days, and praying to Manjushri, he completely mastered it. In an 18-month retreat of Gyu Nyong he accomplished the Mra Seng Manjushri. He made many rilbu, and many miraculous signs were manifest. After this, he could accomplish any sutra or tantra without any effort, and no text was unknown to him. He went to many lamas to obtain the necessary lungs (oral transmissions), but he needed no study or teachings for any texts. When

he was seventeen he moved, along with all the people of his region, to Amdo Golok. He proved very expert at divining the qualities of land and mountains for the safety of the people. At the age of eighteen he went with his maternal uncle, Gyur Zang, on a pilgrimage to Lhasa. He stayed at Gaden Dratsang for one month. Then he went on pilgrimage to all the holy places of Southern Tibet.

When he went to Lhodrak Kar Chu, all appearances arose as bliss and emptiness. Many qualities of realization arose in him and he remained in that experience for many days. He thought that these experiences were the blessing of the holy place of Lhodrak Kar Chu. He recounted this experience to his best friend, who was also his attendant. When he went to the Northern Plain, he had a pure vision of Sarasvati giving him a crystalline book.

Later, when he returned home, His Holiness Wangchen Garab Dorje bestowed upon him the empowerments of White Manjushri and Ling Gesar. All the canonical signs of having perfectly received the empowerments manifested. From the emanation of Lokeshvara, Dza Paltrul Rinpoche, he received the Wisdom Chapter of the Bodhicharyavatara in only five days. Based on this, he wrote the commentary on the Wisdom Chapter known as the She Drel Keta Ka. Particularly, prostrating his head at the lotus feet of the Lord of the Family with whom he had a karmic connection from innumerable past lives, the Lord of Dharma, Pema Ösal Do Ngak Lingpa, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, emanation of the incomparable Lord Manjushri, he engaged in hearing, contemplating, and meditating, becoming his main Heart Son.

From the first empowerment of the White Manjusri, which opened the door of the Dharma, he continually learned ordinary and extraordinary dharmas. Sacred instructions and the entire Dharma, including dharmas of the Close Lineage (Termas), main texts of Sutra and Tantra and, particularly, ripening empowerments of secret mantra, liberating instructions, and supporting explanations, were poured into Jamgon Mipham like the nectar from one vase completely filling another.

From Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye he learned grammar and epistemology, the arts of gilding, and other uncommon and common arts, and obtained many empowerments and authorizations of Manjushri.

From Dzogchen Khen Rinpoche Padma Vajra and many other lamas, he obtained an ocean of dharmas of sutra and mantra. He not only heard these dharmas but accomplished them perfectly. His self-arising pristine awareness, vast and profound like space, was victorious, by achieving the enlightened qualities of the Eight Confident Great Treasures:

Stable treasure of mindfulness

Intelligent treasure of discrimination

Realization treasure of realizing the meaning of all Buddhadharma

Holding treasure of remembering everything ever heard

Confident treasure of eloquently satisfying all sentient beings

Dharma treasure of completely protecting the Dharma

Bodhichitta treasure of the unbroken lineage of the Three Jewels
Accomplished treasure of the patience of the unborn Dharma of emptiness.

Jamgon Mipham's kalyanamitra, or spiritual guide, was Juwon Jigme Dorje. From him he received the transmission of the Root of the Short Sutra. After this, Jamgon Rinpoche immediately taught this for one month. From Bumsar Geshe Ngawang Jungne he received, along with many others, the Uma Jukpa transmission. After receiving this, Geshe Ngawang Jungne tested Jamgon Mipham on his understanding. Jamgon Mipham's replies amazed the Geshe so much that he announced publicly that although he himself had the name of Geshe, he possessed not even a small amount of the intelligence of Jamgon Mipham.

From Ponlob Loter Wangpo, he received the Tsema Rigter logic of Sakya Pandita. From Solpon Pema, he received the Jam Cho Jang Sa and many others. Rinpoche received these transmissions, and then later gave very extensive teachings on these topics to others. Also, from Ser Shul Geshe Lharampa, Rinpoche received transmission of the Abhidharmakosa.

In short, Rinpoche received teachings completely without bias at the feet of many masters of all lineages, Sarma and Nyingma, on whatever Dharma had come down to the time. Especially, from his Omniscient Lama, Khyentse Wangpo he received almost all the Nyingma teachings of Kama and Terma, the Uma Gyen, the Gyed Nyi (Uta Namje and Chonyid Namje), Vimalamitra's Manjushrinamsamgiti commentary, Guru Rinpoche's Men Ngak Da Treng, the Ka Gyed Nam She, and so on. The meaning of all these teachings spontaneously arose in his mind.

In the center of the debating gathering of all the teachings and traditions, Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche relaxed at ease like a fearless lion.

Everyone witnessed his fluency and command of teaching, debate, and composition, and no one could deny his mastery.

Jamgon Mipham himself said: "When I was young, I was present when many accomplished, learned lamas gave Dharma teachings, but I only seriously studied Dza Patrul Rinpoche's teachings on the Wisdom Chapter of the Bodhicharyavatara. Later, in dependence on the kindness of my venerable lama and Manjushri, no difficulties with study ever arose for me. I could understand any text simply by reading it casually. When I first began to study, the Sarma teachings were easier to understand. The Nyingma teachings were more difficult. However, I assumed that the difficulty was due to my own misunderstanding, and not to any fault in the teachings. I never had a doubt that these teachings of the profound lineage of the vidyadharas were meaningless. From this auspicious confidence my wisdom completely ripened. Later, when I looked again at these teachings, the profound essential points were only to be found in the Nyingma texts. I experienced the arising of perfect certainty.

"At that time, the Lord Protector, Khyentse Rinpoche, asked me to write some textbooks for our tradition. With the Buddha's teaching in mind, I wrote some

textbooks on Sutra to fulfill his command and improve my own understanding. In these texts, my explanations emphasized our own Nyingma view. Scholars of other traditions heard that I had refuted their views, so letters debating my texts arrived from everywhere.

"My own motivation was to fulfill the command of my lama and to help revive the teachings of the Nyingma, whose doctrine had become diminished and was like the painting of a butter lamp. These days there are very few who even wonder about the Nyingma view, much less investigate it. For this reason I hoped it would be beneficial to write. I wouldn't otherwise have even dreamed of disparaging other traditions or praising myself. In front of those Buddhas who possess the eye of pristine awareness, I have nothing to be ashamed of. My own intention was to analyze for myself what is true or not. Even with no real thought of someone benefiting someone, it might happen that others benefit. If someone with the Dharma eye refutes me with scripture and reasoning, I should rely on him as a physician, and not argue with him out of anger. Thus, with honest intention, I have debated on occasion."

Jamgon Mipham's command of logic from previous lives manifested in many ways. When he was studying Dharmakirti's text on logic (the *Pramanavarttika*), he dreamed of Sakya Pandita, who appeared as an Indian Pandita. Sakya Pandita said: "What don't you understand about this text? It has both refutation and proof." He then took a copy of the *Pramanavarttika* and divided it in two, saying: "You put them back together." Mipham did so, and the book became a sword, and all objects of knowledge appeared before him. Waving the sword once, everything was cut through instantly. He told Solpon Padma that after this he understood every word in the *Pramanavarttika*.

He also had difficulty with some passages the first time he read the Vinaya Sutra. He applied himself and read all thirteen volumes at one sitting, then said that there was nothing in the Vinaya Sutra that he did not understand. One auspicious day, his root lama, Vajradhara Khyentse Rinpoche, placed many rare and precious volumes of sutra and tantra on an altar and made extensive offerings. He put Mipham on a high throne in front of them, and said: "I entrust all these teachings to you. Preserve them through teaching, debating, and composition. Help the Buddha's teaching to remain in the world for a long time." Thus, he empowered Mipham as a master of Dharma. At that time, Khyentse Rinpoche wrote a poem on the back of a beautiful painting of White Tara:

Om Svasti Dzayantu!
You directly realized the intentions of Mipham Gonpo!
Like Manjushri, you have mastery of all knowledge!
Like Dharmakirti, you are victorious everywhere!
May your fame pervade everywhere like the ocean!

Once Mipham Rinpoche came before his root lama, Khyentse Rinpoche. The lama asked Mipham, "What practice did you do in retreat?" Mipham replied: "While studying, I applied reason, and I have diligently practiced the creation stage." Khyentse Rinpoche replied: "That is difficult! The Omniscient Longchenpa said, 'Without doing anything, come to rest right where you are.' By resting like that I

haven't seen any 'face of mind' with white skin and a rosy complexion, but I'd be alright anyway if I died right now!" Khyentse Rinpoche laughed out loud. Mipham understood this to be his lama's practical advice.

When Mipham was staying in Chamdo there were rumors of a Chinese army invasion. Mipham's attendant, Lama Ösal, was worried. Mipham said, "If I am to be the Rigdzin King, Drakpo Chakkor Chen, the Wrathful Wielder of the Iron Wheel, I should be able to handle them." When Mipham was staying near Ga To, the Chinese army came near, but was not able to come close to the lama's residence, and had to go away.

In short, considering his power of wisdom and realization, his motivation, his activity and accomplishment, and his learning and reasoning, it is indisputable that Mipham's inconceivable liberation was obvious to all. The great writings of this holy being are excellent in meaning and composition, well organized, complete, pure, and clear. They are his blessed enlightened speech. His commentaries are not in any way different in words or meaning from the commentaries of Nagarjuna and Asanga and the Eight Great Vidyadharas. This should be obvious to those with the eye of Dharma.

Especially in this time, when the five degenerations are increasing, when the Buddhadharma in general and the teachings of the Nyingma in particular are becoming extremely weak, as if gasping for breath at the point of death, Mipham's teachings are wonderful. Those who care about the precious teachings of our own and other's traditions should treasure Mipham's teachings in their hearts and honor them on the crowns of their heads.

Mipham's most important students were Dodrub Rinpoche, Tertön Sogyal, the Fifth Dzogchen Rinpoche, Gemang Kyab Gon, Khenpo Padmavajra, Katog Situ Rinpoche, Zhechen Rabjam, Gyaltsab Tulku, Palyul Gyaltrul, Karma Yangtrul, Palpung Situ Rinpoche, Ling Jetrung, Adzom Drukpa, Tokden Shakya Shri, Ngor Ponlob, and others. The great tulkus of Zhechen, Dzogchen, Katog, Palyul, Palpung, Dege Gonchen, Repkong and others of all lineages, Sakya, Gelug, KaGyu, and Nyingma, all became his disciples.

In the Water Mouse Year (1912), Mipham Rinpoche's sixty-seventh year, he left his retreat, wrote his final testament, and concealed it. He said to his students, "Now, because of the times and my illness, I don't wish to stay. Even if I did, it would be hard to be worthwhile, so stay in retreat. You have plenty of experience, so don't rely on other teachers. We will meet again in life, death, and the intermediate state. Finally, we will be inseparable in the pure realms. "Nowadays, if you speak the truth, nobody listens. If you lie, everyone thinks it's the truth. I have never said this before: I am not an ordinary person. I am a bodhisattva who has been born by aspiration. My suffering in this body is the remains of my karma, but from now on I will not have to experience karmic obscurations.

"Now is a critical time. In these last days, the barbarians are close to destroying the Dharma, so there is no point in my taking rebirth. From now on, I will not take rebirth in impure realms. It is said that it is the nature of enlightened beings

to appear continually until the end of time, staying in pure realms and benefiting beings with miraculous emanations by the power of prayer.

"Now, the illness from which I suffered is completely healed. I have no suffering at all. Day and night I only see visions of realization: rainbow light, spheres of light, forms of buddhas, and pure realms.

"Now I definitely will not stay, or take rebirth, I have to go to Shambhala, in the north."

On his last day, the 29th day of the fourth month, Dzogchen Rinpoche and I arrived early and found the remains of Mipham Rinpoche seated upright in the vajra posture with his hands in the mudras of meditation and teaching the Dharma. We stayed with him while he abided in the expanse of the original ground. In the presence of many miraculous signs, Mipham Rinpoche spoke the words "rainbow body vajra" three times before he dissolved into space like a rainbow just as the sun rose.

This is just a rough idea of Mipham's outer biography, with no mention of his inconceivable inner and secret biographies. In general, Jamgon Mipham was renowned as a great scholar and meditator who had crossed the ocean of hearing, contemplating, and meditating. In his realization and activity he was no different from Manjushri, Vajrapani, and so on. For a being such as this, seeing deities and displaying miracles is not unusual. Here I have recounted just what I heard myself, without exaggerating or minimizing anything.

This was written by Samantabhadra Dharmakirti.

This was translated and adapted from Samantabhadra Dharmakirti's short biography of Jamgon Mipham, found in Mipham's collected writings, by Lhobpon Rechungpa and Eric Forgeng, during the teaching of the Beacon of Certainty at Tashi Choling, in the Spring of 2003.

© 2003 Mipham Shedra <http://www.miphamshedra.org/bioJuMipham.html>
Webmaster: maratika@lanset.com

The Sword of Wisdom
For Thoroughly Ascertaining Reality
By Mipham Rinpoche

You have not the slightest confusion about philosophy,
And have completely abandoned every fault,
Your mind has no doubts about the three points [1]—
Before Mañjushri, the treasure of wisdom, I bow. (1)

Profound, vast and difficult to realize
Is the nectar-like teaching of the sugatas—
To those who long to taste it,
I here grant the light of intelligence. (2)

The Dharma taught by the Buddha
Depends entirely upon the two levels of truth,
The relative truth of the mundane
And the truth of the ultimate meaning. [2] (3)

If one is to apply an unerring and certain mind
To the nature of these two truths,
One must cultivate the excellent vision
Of the two flawless valid cognitions. [3] (4)

These appearances in all their rich variety
Arise through dependent origination.
Something that is truly independent,
Like a lotus in the sky, will not appear. (5)

It is a complete gathering of causes
That functions to bring about an effect.
All effects, whatsoever they may be,
Depend upon their own particular causes. (6)

It is by knowing what is or is not the case
In terms of causes and their effects
That we pursue one thing and avoid another,
Whether in crafts or in philosophy— (7)

They all have this as their starting point.
This includes not only worldly disciplines,
But also the training that transcends the world.

All phenomena, arisen in mutual dependence, (8)

Naturally possess their own particular
Characteristics, which are uniquely theirs.
The plain and simple facts of the conventional—
Solidity, fluidity, warmth and so on—are incontestable. (9)

Even just a single thing has countless properties,
And can be classified in infinite ways,
Based on affirmation and negation.
These are natural features of the thing itself. (10)

An object that is perceived clearly and directly,
Has properties that seem separate and distinct,
But these distinctions are mental designations,
Distinguished and engaged with by conceptual mind. (11)

Actual substance and what is imputed conceptually—
These are two ways in which one can understand
All that can be known, and many are the categories
That come from further elaborating on these two. (12)

Just so, they have their own causes, effects and natures,
But when phenomena are investigated authentically,
That which brings about arising can not be observed,
Nor is there anything that arises in dependence. (13)

Each thing appears with its own identity,
Yet is empty by its very nature,
Absolute space with threefold liberation,
The very nature of the ultimate. (14)

How something functions and how it depends
Are both aspects of its particular nature,
So it is with a thing's nature that reasoning ends,
And it would be futile to enquire any further. [4] (15)

This kind of evaluation of things in their nature,
According to each of the two levels of reality,
Is proven by the basic facts of how things are,
So it is reasoning that establishes what is tenable. (16)

How things appear or how they ultimately abide,
Can be known through perceiving their nature directly,
Or it can be inferred unerringly based on
Something else which is clearly apparent. (17)

Direct perception itself is of four kinds:
Unmistaken sensory, mental, self-awareness
And yogic; all of which are non-conceptual,
Since their objects appear with specific characteristics. (18)

Without these direct perceptions
There would be no evidence and hence no inference,
And any perception of things arising from causes
And then ceasing would become impossible. (19)

If that were the case, how could we ever
Understand them to be empty and so on?
Without relying upon the conventional,
There can be no realization of the ultimate. [5] (20)

Cognitions brought about by the five senses
Clearly experience their own objects.
Without this direct sensory perception,
Like blind folk, we would fail to see. (21)

Mental direct perception arises from the faculty of mind,
And clearly determines both outer and inner objects.
Without it, there would be no aspect of consciousness
Capable of perceiving all types of phenomena. (22)

Yogic direct perception is the culmination of meditation
Practised properly and according to the instructions.
It clearly experiences its own objects, and without it
There would be no vision of objects beyond the ordinary. (23)

Just as this direct experience can eliminate
Misperceptions about outer forms and the like,
This is also how it is within the mind itself,
If there were some other knower, there would be no end to them. (24)

A mind that is cognizant and aware
Naturally knows its objects, but at the same time
Is also aware of itself, without relying upon something else,
And this is what is termed "self-awareness." (25)

Any experience of the other direct perceptions
Is only determined to be actual direct perception
By means of self-awareness; without this
There would be no way of establishing it. (26)

The root of inference lies in direct perception,
And direct perception is determined by self-awareness.
It all comes down to the experience of an undeluded mind;
There are no other means of establishment beyond this. (27)

Therefore, it is based on direct perceptions,
Which are non-conceptual and undeluded,
That misperceptions of apparent phenomena
Can be decisively eliminated. (28)

The conceptual mind is that which
Conceives of objects by way of general images,
Associating them with names to form concepts,
From which stem all manner of words and thoughts. (29)

Even for someone unaware of the proper expression, [6]
Generic images will appear in the mind,
Ready to be named, and through such concepts,
Objects can still be pursued or avoided. [7] (30)

Without this conceptual mind,
There could be no conventions of affirmation or denial,
And it would be impossible to infer anything
Or communicate the points of training. (31)

Conceptual thought enquires into and establishes
That which is not evident directly, such as future pursuits.
Without this ability to infer things conceptually,
We would all become like newborn babies. (32)

A reason is information that allows us to know something else. [8]
The reason must be a feature of the subject, [9]
And there must be positive and negative logical pervasion [10]—
When these three modes are present, there can be no delusion. (33)

From a reason that is arrived at through
Valid direct perception and valid inference,
What is hidden can be logically inferred,
And things can be proven by means of relationship. (34)

There are reasons that are results and natural reasons. [11]

When a thing is not observed or its opposite is seen,
Something is negated for the reason that it can not be observed—
Like this, there are three types of evidence in all. (35)

From a genuine perspective, all appearances
Are now, and always have been, the same;
And since a pure mind sees only purity,
Their nature remains entirely pure. (36)

Real functioning things dependently arise,
And what is unreal is dependently imputed;
Therefore both the real and the unreal
Are empty by their very nature. (37)

In the way things are, one can not separate
A thing which is empty from its own emptiness.
So appearance and emptiness are indivisibly united,
This is inexpressible—one must know it for oneself! (38)

Any affirmation, whatsoever it may be,
Must affirm either existence or identity;
And any negation, whatsoever it may be,
Must negate either existence or identity. (39)

Negations and affirmations based on what is valid
May be set out definitively in the proper way,
And then, while remaining logically consistent,
One can prove a point to others or make a refutation. (40)

When it comes to refutation, you can compose
Your own syllogisms including all three modes,
Or you can state the consequences that follow
From the opponent's very own assertions. (41)

Within the conventional, there is that which
We call "impure and narrow vision" because
Reality and appearances do not coincide,
And a vision in which things are purely seen. (42)

This makes two types of conventional validity,
Like seeing with eyes that are human and divine.
The difference between the two lies in their
Essential natures, causes, results and functions. (43)

One is an undeceived cognition of limited scope,
That arises from a correct perception of its object,
Clearing misperceptions of things in a narrow field of vision,
To bring a thorough apprehension of a given object. (44)

One is a pristine cognition of what is vast in nature,
That arises from an observation of precisely how things are,
Clearing misperceptions of objects beyond the imagination,
To bring the result of wisdom that knows all there is. (45)

The absolute as well has its two aspects:
Categorized and uncategorized conceptually,
And then to evaluate them, two types of validity
For looking into what is ultimately true. (46)

It is by relying on the former that one reaches the latter.
Like impaired vision that is healed and made pure,
When the eye of valid cognition is fully developed,
The truth of purity and equalness can be seen. (47)

It is because the mind, both with concepts and without,
Is sometimes deluded—as when perceiving two moons,
Dreaming or believing a rope is a snake [12] —and sometimes not,
That we have the categories of valid and invalid cognition. (48)

Without these categories of valid and invalid cognition,
A clear separation between the deluded and false
And the undeluded and true would be impossible,
And the tenets of philosophy could not be put forward. (49)

When we investigate on the level of reality,
In spite of all these conceptual elaborations,
Based on classifications such as direct perception,
Inference, valid and invalid cognition and so on, (50)

All is empty by its very nature.
And this natural simplicity itself
Is a feature of all conventional constructs,
Just as heat is a property of fire. (51)

So it is that appearance and emptiness
Are inseparable in all phenomena
As the method and its outcome, [13] which is why
You can not negate one and affirm the other. (52)

“Without investigating what is and is not valid,
But through mundane perception alone,
Can one enter into the ultimate?” you may ask.
It is true that this is not ruled out. (53)

Seeing how this thing is produced from that thing
Is the direct perception of ordinary people,
Based on which they infer and make predictions—
In fact, this is “pramana” in all but name. (54)

Without the two kinds of conventional valid cognition,
Pure visions would seem false, and, even for the impure,
It would be unfeasible to say of a conch shell,
“White is its true colour, and yellow it is not.” (55)

Without the two approaches to ultimate analysis,
We would not know the unity of the two truths,
The ultimate would fall into conceptual extremes,
And be a cause for its very own destruction. (56)

The relative, that which is examined, is not real.
So too the probing mind and self-awareness.
When we look, they are not there, like the moon in water—
This is the ultimate indivisibility of the two truths. (57)

This is the one truth, nirvana, the limit of reality,
It is the ultimate state of all phenomena,
Enlightened being wherein knowing and known are inseparable,
Pure wisdom experience, without limit or centre. (58)

Once the excellent eye of discriminating wisdom
Has opened to the profound and vast like this,
One sees the noble path travelled by
The bliss-gone buddhas and their heirs, (59)

Those enlightened beings of mighty intelligence.
This is the way of the sutra and mantra vehicles,
So difficult to find. When we have the opportunity,
Let us not fail to gain the result! (60)

Possessing in this way the four reasonings,
And endowed with the light of intelligence,
Let us not be deceived by others, but investigate
And be sure to follow the four reliances. (61)

If we do not have this understanding,
Then, like a blind man leaning on his staff,
We can rely on fame, mere words or what is easy to understand,
And go against the logic of the four reliances. (62)

Therefore do not rely on individuals,
But rely upon the Dharma.

Freedom comes from the genuine path that is taught,
Not from the one who teaches it. (63)

When the teachings are well presented,
It does not matter what the speaker is like.
Even the bliss-gone buddhas themselves
Appear as butchers and such like to train disciples. (64)

If he contradicts the Mahayana and so on,
Then however eloquent a speaker may seem,
He will bring you no real benefit,
Like a demon assuming Buddha's form. (65)

Whenever you study or contemplate the Dharma,
Rely not on the words, but on their meaning.
If the point is understood, it matters little
How eloquently or not the words were spoken. (66)

Once you have understood what the speaker
Intended to communicate, if you then continue
To think about each word and expression,
It is as if your elephant is found, yet still you search. (67)

If you misinterpret the words they will only increase,
And you'll never stop till you run out of thoughts,
All the while straying further and further from the point.
Like a child at play, you'll only end up exhausted. (68)

Even for a single phrase like "Fetch the wood!"
Out of context, there's no end to what it might mean.
Yet if you understand what is meant,
The need for the words ends just there. (69)

When a finger points to the moon,
The ignorant look at the finger itself.
Fools, who are attached to language alone,
May think they understand, but it will not be easy. (70)

When it comes to the meaning of what is taught,
You should know the provisional and definitive,
And rely not on any provisional meaning,
But only on the meaning that has certain truth. (71)

The All-Knowing One himself, in all his wisdom,
Taught in accord with students' capacities and intentions,
Presenting vehicles of various levels,
Just like the rungs of a ladder. (72)

Wisely, he spoke with certain intentions in mind,
As with the eight kinds of implied or indirect instructions.
If taken literally, these might be invalidated,
But they were spoken for specific reasons. (73)

From the four schools of buddhist philosophy
Through to the ultimate vajra vehicle,
Aspects not fully realized by the lower approaches,
Are made clear by those which are more advanced. (74)

Seeing it to be superior according to the texts and logic,
The intelligent seize the definitive meaning
Like a swan drawing milk from water,
And revel in the ocean of buddhist teachings. (75)

The teachings of the profound vajra vehicle are also sealed
By means of the six limits and four modes. [14]
But can be definitively established by stainless reasoning,
Accompanied by the pith instructions of the lineage. (76)

The inseparable union of the primordial purity
And great equalness of all phenomena
Is the point that is definitively established
By the two authentic valid cognitions. (77)

By applying the key points of the literal, general,
Hidden and ultimate meaning, without any conflict
In the approaches of the paramitas, development phase,
Completion phase and the Great Perfection, (78)

One gains the confidence of certainty about reality.
Then the supremely intelligent heirs of the buddhas
Come to master an inexhaustible treasury of Dharma,
As a sign of victory for the teachings of scripture and realization. (79)

When taking the definitive meaning into experience,
Do not rely upon the ordinary dualistic mind
That chases after words and concepts,
But upon non-dual wisdom itself. (80)

That which operates with conceptual ideas is the ordinary mind,
Whose nature is dualistic, involving 'perceiver' and 'perceived.'
All that it conceptualizes in this way is false,
And can never reach the actual nature of reality. (81)

Any idea of something real or unreal, both or neither—

Any such concept, however it's conceived—is still only a concept,
And whatever ideas we hold in mind,
They are still within the domain of Mara. (82)

This has been stated in the sutras.
It is not by any assertion or denial
That we will put an end to concepts.
But once we see without rejecting or affirming, there is freedom. (83)

Although it is without any perceiving subject or object perceived,
There is naturally occurring wisdom that is aware of itself,
And all ideas of existence, non-existence, both and neither have ceased
completely—
This is said to be supreme primordial wisdom. (84)

Just like the orb of the sun to someone blind since birth,
This has never been seen by the spiritually immature.
However much they think about it, they fail to understand,
And so it is only a cause of fear in the minds of the foolish. (85)

Yet through scriptures of authentic origin,
Reasoning that refutes all four conceptual extremes,
And the force of the master's practical instructions,
It arises in our experience, like sight that is restored. (86)

At that time, with a faith that comes from savouring
The nectar-like taste of the Buddhadharma,
Our eyes open widely in purest joy
And we glimpse the buddhas' wisdom kaya. (87)

In this, all things without exception
Are seen in their ultimate state of equality,
And with this certainty about what is itself beyond expression,
Skillfully, one expresses the unending treasury of Dharma. (88)

Having become learned in the ways of the two truths,
When seeing the reality of their inseparable unity,
One knows that, just as a husk is removed to reveal the grain,
All the various methods are simply to lead one to this point. (89)

With the thought, "Skilled in means are the buddhas,
And all these methods make a genuine path,"
An irreversible sense of confidence will arise
In the teachers and their teachings. (90)

By gaining the supreme non-abiding wisdom,
Naturally one is freed from the extremes of existence and quiescence,
And the ornament of great and effortless compassion

Arises to pervade throughout the furthest reaches of space and time. (91)

When the correct approach to the two truths
Is realized through contemplating the four reasonings
In this way, it brings the four genuine reliances.
From such a supreme and flawless cause as this (92)

Comes the result of profound primordial wisdom.
When this experience is developed to its fullest
It releases the eight great treasures of confidence [15]
That were sealed within the absolute space of awareness. (93)

Scriptures heard and contemplated in the past
Are never forgotten—this is the treasure of recollection.
Knowing precisely their profound and vast points—
This is the treasure of intelligence. (94)

Understanding all the themes of the sutra and tantra collections—
This is the treasure of realization.
Never forgetting any detail from one's studies—
This is the treasure of retention. (95)

Satisfying all beings with excellent explanations—
This is the treasure of confidence.
Safeguarding the precious treasury of sacred teachings—
This is the treasure of Dharma. (96)

Not severing the continuous line of the Three Jewels—
This is the treasure of bodhichitta.
Gaining acceptance of the nature of equality beyond arising—
This is the treasure of accomplishment. (97)

Someone who has mastered these eight great inexhaustible treasures
Will never separate from them, and
Will be praised by the buddhas and their heirs
And become a sovereign of the three worlds. (98)

The valid teachings of the victorious buddhas
Are established by the valid cognitions,
So by developing confidence through the valid path,
The true result of the valid teachings will be seen. (99)

With noble vision, completely and utterly pure,
And great compassion that has reached perfection,
The bliss-gone buddha revealed the path
And said, "The taste of this nectar I have discovered (100)

Should be experienced by means of
The four reasonings and the four reliances."
Although a portion of this elixir has now been shared,
In this modern age rife with degeneration, (101)

Through all the methods that run counter to this approach,
It is difficult to savour the supreme taste of the teachings.
With this in mind, and with an altruistic intention
And a mind of supreme devotion for the teachings, (102)

I have here briefly explained how to generate
The immaculate wisdom that is born of reflection.
Through the merit of this may all beings
Become the very equal of Manjushri! (103)

Turned towards the sun of Manjushri's speech,
The water-born lotus of my heart opens in devotion,
May these golden honey drops of excellent explanation
Become a plentiful feast for the bees of good fortune! (104)

I had had the intention to write this for a while, but in accord with the recent request made by the learned scholar Lhaksam Gyaltsen, this was written in a single day by Jampal Gyepa on the twenty-ninth day of the third month of the Sakyong year (i.e. Wood Bird, 1885). Mangalam. There are one hundred and four verses. Virtue!

Translated by Adam Pearcey, © Adam Pearcey 2004.
<http://www.lotsawahouse.org/sword.html>

Notes:

1. Mipham Rinpoche in his own commentary, *don rnam par nges pa shes rab ral gri mchan bcas* (hereafter MR) says that this refers to the three modes of a valid inference.
2. This verse appears in Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, XXIV, 8.
3. MR: conventional and ultimate valid cognition.
4. For example, heat is the nature of fire. We don't need to look into why fire is hot, that is simply how it is.
5. These last two lines are a quotation from Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamikakarika*, XXIV, 10.
6. MR gives the example of a small child or even an animal.
7. MR says for example fire is avoided and water sought after.
8. MR says for example, through the presence of smoke, we can know that there is fire behind the mountain.
9. In the well-known syllogism, "Given the subject of sound, it is impermanent because it is created" this refers to the fact that sound is created.
10. In the above example, positive logical pervasion would be the fact that whatever is created is impermanent. Negative logical pervasion refers to the fact that whatever is not impermanent is not created.
11. The three types of evidence are: resultant evidence, natural, and non-observation.
12. MR. Seeing two moons is a deluded sensory perception, dreaming is deluded mental perception, both of which are non-conceptual, and mistaking a rope for a snake is deluded and conceptual.
13. MR Appearance is the method, emptiness is the outcome.
14. Six limits: 1) provisional meaning, 2) definitive meaning, 3) indirect, 4) not indirect, 5) literally true and 6) not literally true. Four modes: 1) literal, 2) general, 3) hidden and 4) ultimate.
15. These eight are mentioned in the Lalitavistara Sutra (*rgya cher rol pa*). This is all based on a quotation from that text.