

*Abstract of the Teachings of Mani the Buddha of Light*

# **Abstract of the Teachings of Mani the Buddha of Light**

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***Second Edition***

A Revised Edition of the English Translation by  
G. Haloun and W.B. Henning (*The Compendium of the Doctrines  
and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light, 1952*)  
With Comparison of the Original Chinese Scroll,  
Other Chinese Texts, Parthian, Sogdian  
and Other Sutras Related to the Manijiao Buddhist Tradition

**NAMO BUDDHA MONI DHARMA RAJA**  
*(Hail to Buddha Moni, the King of the Law)*

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*Ed. note.* The ellipses contained within this work indicate texts related to chronology which originally appeared in the translation of Haloun and Henning, but have been omitted in the present edition.

Future editions of this work will contain a glossary, extensive references and clarification regarding chronology and other subjects.

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## ***One Scroll***

*The Most Virtuous Fu-to-tan having, on the 8th day of the 6th month of the 19th year of the period of K'ai-yuan, received the instruction of the Emperor, it was translated at the College of the Hall of Gathered Worthies.*

## **THE FIRST ARTICLE**

On His incarnation and native country, His names and titles, and His peculiar tenets. *Fo-i-se-te wu-lu-shen*, in translation the Messenger of Light, is also called the King of the Law (*dharmaraja*) of Perfect Wisdom, and again Moni, the Buddha of Light. These different designations of the *nirman dharmakaya* of our unsurpassable, bright, and all-wise King of Healing.

At the time when He was about to be born, the two radiant-ones having sent down spiritual power to lighten each part of the *trikaya*, He, because of His great compassion opposing the demonic forces and personally receiving the Pure Teaching from the Venerable Lord of Light, became incarnate and is therefore called the Messenger of Light.

Being most sincere, profoundly intelligent, devoted and firm, and strong in argument, He is called the King of the Law of Perfect Wisdom. Through emptiness responding to spirituality and holiness, through *bodhi* beholding the Ultimate, He is called Moni, the Buddha of Light.

Brightness is that by which He penetrates the inside and outside, all-wisdom is that by which He comprehends men and celestial beings  
unsurpassibility is that by which His place is high and venerable, and being King of Healing is that by which He distributes the remedy of Law.

Thus also, when Lord Lao was conceived, the Great Luminary poured out its brilliance; when Sakya was conceived, the sun-disc harmonized its manifestations: how should, on this basis of their

inborn spirituality, the Three Blessed Ones, Lao Tzu, Sakya, and Moni, be different? Since, by maintenance of their perfected Nature, they all apprehended the Truth.

[...] Moni, the Buddha of Light, was born in the country of Su-lin at the royal palace of Pa-ti by his wife Man-yen of the house of Chin-sa-chien. [...] Now as the natural endowments and the heavenly omens being appropriate, His mother conceived; and that, observing the rules of abstinence and strictly purifying herself, she became pregnant; that was because of His own pureness. That, having entered existence from His mother's chest, He surpassed His age and excelled everyone; and that He evidenced the spiritual verifications nine-fold and answered to the supernatural auspices five-fold; that was because His birth was beyond the ordinary. The virtues of the three resolves, the four calmnesses, five truths, and eight forms of fearlessness all perfectly provided in Him, those qualities which can at all be told may be discussed by celestial beings and men for rising above grief as well as joy and for inducing virtuous ways.

Were it not so, why should He have been bodily born in the royal palace: accomplished in spirit and understanding the Way, perceiving the Principles

and realizing the Roots, wise in counsel and extraordinarily upright, in His bodily condition singularly refined, in His reasoning embracing heaven and earth, having thorough knowledge of sun and moon; when explaining the two primeval causes perfectly just, when proclaiming the Self-Nature defining everything, when expounding the Three Epochs profoundly scholarly, when arguing the primary and secondary causes fully conclusive; exterminating the false and protecting the right, removing the impure and exalting the pure; in His words simple, in His mind upright, in His conduct correct, in His testimonies true.

For sixty years teaching the means of expediency (*upaya*), He imbued the four sanctities with power and authority and mounted the seven sections of the sutras as ships; in response to the Three Palaces he established the three venerable monastic officers and taking for a model the Five Lights He arranged the five grades of believers.

The wonderful door of His teaching possessing exceptional character, its blessing extend to life and death.

The Mahamaya Sutra says: "1,300 years after the Buddha's nirvana, the kasaya will be changed into a

white one and will be no longer dyed."

The Juan-fo san-mei-hai ching says: "When the Pearl Luster Buddhas manifested themselves in the world, they will make emission of Light the Buddha-work."

The Lao Tzu hua-hu ching says: "Having mounted a vapor of the Dao of spontaneous light, I shall fly into the country of Su-lin in the realm of the king of Hsi-na. I shall manifest myself as the crown prince, leave family-life and enter the Way, and be called Moni. I shall turn the wheel of the Great Law and shall explain the canonical precepts and regulations and the practice of meditation and knowledge, etc., as well as the doctrines of the three epochs and the two principles. All the beings, from the Realm of Light to the dark paths, will thereby be delivered. Of years five times nine having passed after Moni, my Law shall flourish."

[...] After Moni ceased the transforming work and in His person returned into true Calmness, the teaching thereupon spread to all countries and approached and converted the people. [...] Evidence and prophecy being in concord, the traces of the Blessed One have become manifest.

The teaching expounds the principle of Light, thus removing the delusion of darkness; the doctrine explains the two natures, taking discrimination between them for its particular method. Thus the Buddhist sutras say: "If a man forsake discrimination, he destroys every law. A truly pious man must not share his dwelling place." And again: "As the birds turn to the open air, as animals turn to forest and marsh, so truth turns to discrimination, so the enlightened turns to nirvana."

Unless one ascertains the principles and roots, whereto can one turn and tend? If the method of conduct is true, the reward will be realized in the Three Palaces; when the nature will be separated from the Light, its name will be One Form. (This, in the religion, is called deliverance. Henceforth, we mention points of detail in a summary way only, to the extent needed to demonstrate the approach to practice: the foreign original is rather full but our translation does not elaborate.)



## **THE SECOND ARTICLE**

The nimbus of Moni, the Buddha of Light, being twelve-fold is the excellent sign of the King of Light. His body fully displaying the Great Light has the esoteric meaning of the Limitless. His wonderful appearance is outstanding, without equal among men and gods. His being clad in a white robe symbolizes the Four Pure Dharmakayas.

His occupying the white throne depicts the five vajra lands. The union and separation of the two realms and the purport and trend of the before and after are apparent in true bearing and can be perceived if one looks at Him.

All the spiritual signs He possesses, in their hundred and thousand-fold excellency and subtlety, are, indeed, difficult to set forth fully.

### **THIRD ARTICLE**

On the style of the canon of sutras and the drawing.

All in all there are seven parts, together with a drawing:

*The first:* The Book of Wisdom Which Thoroughly Understand the Roots and Origins of the Entire Doctrines;

*The second:* The Sacred Book of the Treasure of Pure Life;

*The third:* The Sacred Book of Discipline, also called the Sacred Book of Healing;

*The fourth:* The Sacred Book of Secret Law;

*The fifth:* The Book of Instruction Which Testifies the Past;

*The sixth:* The Book of Strong Heroes;

*The seventh:* The Book of Praises and Vows;

One drawing: The Drawing of the Two Great Principles.

The seven great sutras and the one drawing mentioned above, Moni, the Buddha of Light, at the very time when He was about to descend into the world and, all Sanctities approving, responded by birth to the causes attained, and on the day of the

establishment of the Law He Himself transmitted them to the five grades of believers. As to the Authorized Dharma stated during the remainder of His sixty years, the disciples noted them down according to opportunity. Those we do not enumerate.

## **FOURTH ARTICLE**

On the style of the five grades of believers.

*The first:* The 12 Guardians of the Law and Teachers of the Way;

*The second:* The 72 Attendants of the Law;

*The third:* The 360 Principals of the Hall of Law;

*The fourth:* The Purely Good Men;

*The fifth:* All Purely Faithful Listeners.

The Pure Good Men and the higher grades all wear white hats and garments, and only the grade of All Purely Faithful Listeners are permitted to retain their ordinary dress.

If these five grades trust to each other, obey all instructions, and stand firmly by the prohibitions, each will be on the road of deliverance.

If a Guardian of the Dharma violates the Precepts, no one shall accept his instructions. Even though he is well versed in the seven sutras and eminently skilled in debate, if he has faults and vices, the five grades of believers will not assist him. Like a tree that thrives by its root, if they are exhausted, the tree withers.

If an Purely Good Man violates the Precepts, regard him as dead, expose him to public knowledge, expel him from the Religion. For, although the sea is vast, it does not suffer corpses for long. Whoever covers and screens him commits the same breach of Precepts.

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