THE CULT OF
THE DEITY VAJRAKĪLA

According to the Texts of
the Northern Treasures Tradition of Tibet
(Byang-gter phur-ba)

by

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A, B, C  The three collections of Byang-gter Vajrakila texts upon which the present study is based. See Appendix I.
BRT  *The Black Razor Tantra*. See Appendix II.
CIHTS  Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath.
BEFEO  *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient*.
BHS  Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.
GOS  Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda.
IASWR  The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, New York.
IIBS  The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo.
JASB  *Journal of Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.
JIABS  *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Madison.
JOI  *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda.
JRAS  *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London.
LTWA  The Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharamsala.
MCB  *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*.
MLB  Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi.
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<td>OUP</td>
<td>Oxford University Press.</td>
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<td>PTS</td>
<td>Pali Text Society, London.</td>
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<td>RAS</td>
<td>Royal Asiatic Society, London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOAS</td>
<td>School of Oriental &amp; African Studies, University of London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNY</td>
<td>The State University of New York.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VKMK</td>
<td>Vajrakilamūlatantrākhaṇḍa (P 78).</td>
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<td>WZKSA</td>
<td>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens, Wien.</td>
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<td>ZDMG</td>
<td>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Wiesbaden.</td>
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Introduction

The present work surveys the cult of the wrathful deity Vajrakīla as represented by the literature and living tradition of the Northern Treasures (Byang-gter) school of Tibetan Buddhism. Divided into three parts, it focuses its attention, in turn, upon the Byang-gter (Part One), the kila (Part Two) and the Byang-gter Kila cult (Part Three).

Part One: the Northern Treasures

The first part seeks to trace the origin and development of the Northern Treasures tradition and to indicate its vitality and relevance as a school of spiritual development within the modern world. Much of the information for this section is derived from Tibetan hagiographies dealing with the lineage of masters through whom the tradition has been transmitted, as well as from various notes and references to be found in the works of western scholars. The latter works are mainly short papers on diverse topics, for this tradition until now has not been the subject of any major research.

The Byang-gter is concerned exclusively with the esoteric tenets of Vajrayāna Buddhism and thus its documentary records consist of largely psychological narrative replete with religious symbolism, a stream of apparently miraculous events brought about by wonder-working sages (siddha). It claims a place within the more general fabric of Buddhism by recognizing each of its principal protagonists as the reincarnation of an earlier historical personality of acknowledged religious significance, the purpose of each rebirth being to carry on the work begun in a former life (sometimes several centuries earlier) on a deeper, more esoteric, level. These reincarnations, moreover, are said to have been prophesied by the earlier Buddhist masters and thus the importance of their roles in the grand design of Buddhist history is placed beyond dispute among the faithful. We find the ‘treasures’ of this school to consist of an admixture of extraordinarily profound and subtle methods of samatha and vipaśyanā (yogic preoccupations of the earliest Buddhists, brought here to their apogee in the teachings of Atiyoga) with magical rites of every weird and wonderful sort, so beloved of the medieval Indian siddha tradition.

According to the Byang-gter chronicles, cultic texts and practices concerning the wrathful deity Vajrakīla were among the many teachings transmitted to Tibetan devotees in the eighth century by the visiting Indian siddha Padmasambhava. A number of these esoteric

1. For a study of the rNying-ma gter ma tradition see Tulku Thondup, Hidden Teachings of Tibet.
3. In the view of the Byang-gter tradition, the three principal recipients of these Kila upadeśa were the king Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan, the princess Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal and the yogin sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms.
teachings, said to consist of sacred texts from India and the guru’s oral instructions concerning them, were specifically entrusted to the yogin sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms before being sealed up in a casket, together with a vast quantity of other material, and hidden away for several hundred years in a cave in La-stod-byang to the north of the Brahmaputra river. When they were eventually rediscovered and revealed to the world in 1366, this particular collection of teachings became famous as ‘The Northern Treasures’ and the doctrines of Vajrakila found among them were widely acclaimed as being of paramount importance.

As knowledge of the Byang-gter spread throughout Tibet, it gradually became established as a major religious system with over fifty monasteries propagating its teachings, chief among which was the mother monastery of rDo-Ije-brag. Monks of this seminary, properly trained in its rituals, have always been highly prized for their religious expertise. One such monk, for example, was invariably required in the sKu-Inga shrine in the Jo-khang in Lhasa, another at the lHa-mo-khang and eight in the mGon-khang at the base of the Potala palace engaged in the worship of Mahākāla. Four monks from rDo-rje-brag annually performed the 'Gong po ar gtad ritual for the supression of demons at the Lhasa Rigs-gsum shrine and the oracle of dGa'-gdong was regularly consulted to divine the whereabouts of deceased lamas. The chapter concludes with a brief note on the Byang-gter monks and monasteries now established among the Tibetan refugee population of Northern India.

Part Two: the history and form of the vajra spike

The second part of this study consists of three chapters. In the first of these (Chapter Two) I have attempted to clarify the cultural milieu out of which the Kila deity arose. To this end I have looked at the social context as well as the religious and have drawn upon both historical and mythological sources.

With regard to the name ‘Vajrakīla’, vajra as a prefix is almost ubiquitous within the Buddhist tantra. Originally meaning ‘the hard or mighty one’ and referring in particular to the thunderbolt as a weapon of Indra, it subsequently became so intimately associated with the development of tantric ideas in Buddhism that the entire system of practice came to be known as the Vajrayāna or Vajra Vehicle. Indeed, as a symbol within the Buddhist tantra it is as pregnant with meaning as the very texts themselves. Characterized as ‘unbreakable’ (abhedya) and ‘indivisible’ (acchedya), the term may be said to represent nothing less than the full enlightenment of the Samyaksambuddha who himself came to be referred to as Vajradhara (He who holds the vajra). The Sanskrit word kīla means ‘nail’, ‘peg’ or ‘spike’ and thus Vajrakīla may be taken to mean “the unassailable spike” or, on a higher level, “(He who is) the nail of supreme enlightenment”.

The roots of kīla mythology, however, may lie buried deep within the pre-Buddhist religion of ancient India where, in the Ṛgveda, the story is told of the god Indra who slew the demon Vṛtra. It is said that at that time, Indra stabilized the earth and propped up the

4. The name Vṛtra derives from the root vr with the sense of “to surround, enclose, obstruct”. Hence the noun vṛtra means restrainer, enemy or hostile host. It also stands as “the name of the Vedic personification of an imaginary malignant influence or demon of darkness and drought supposed to take possession of the clouds, causing them to obstruct the clearness of the sky and keep back
heavens and thus, at the outset, we have clearly discernable indications of a path along which a humble wooden stake might travel so as eventually to become deified as a terrifying god of awesome power, one by whom all demons are vanquished.

The idea of stabilizing the earth by pinning it down with a *kīla* was taken up by architects and priests who projected a magical function onto the wooden pegs employed by them in the process of marking out a plot of ground chosen as the site for a temple or other building. Since Buddhists also used wooden pegs and lengths of string to mark out the ground plan of a stūpa or vihāra, they naturally enough also adopted the concept of those pegs as magically potent items. In particular, the pegs struck into the four corners of the site or around its periphery were regarded as establishing a protective boundary (*rakṣācakra*) capable of repelling all harm. This idea may have been established in Buddhist practice at a remarkably early period because literary evidence for the use of the *kīla* as a magical implement is to be found in the *dhyāna-jīvas*, some of which conceivably date right back to the third or fourth centuries BC.

The earliest extant pegs of this type in which the form of the *kīla* unambiguously reflects its identification with a wrathful divinity, are believed to have been carved in the first century BC. They were discovered by the archeologist and explorer Sir Marc Aurel Stein among the debris associated with the ancient watchtowers situated at the southwest extremity of the frontier defence system to the north of Tun-huang. In the detailed reports of his expeditions, Stein describes a watchtower (which he identifies as T.VI.b) and the artifacts discovered there, among which are a number of *kīlas* to which were originally attached loops of string. He describes these items as resembling tent pegs and exhibiting evident signs of having been pegged into the ground and yet “certainly not strong enough to have served as real tent pegs”. Similar finds were made at the watchtowers T.VI.c and T.VIII. Some of these pegs bore Chinese inscriptions that could only make sense if read as personal names but no indication is given as to whether they might be the personal names of men or gods. The evidence put forward by Stein for dating these finds to the first century BC seems overwhelming.

The theme of the apotropaic spike, having come to the surface in the early *dhyāna-jīvas*, was subsequently developed extensively within the *Kriyā-* and *Yogatantra* of the later periods. Throughout this time spikes came to be employed increasingly in rituals of mundane sorcery the waters”. M. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. We shall meet with the *kīla* as an implement employed in the magical control of weather below, Chapter Two.

5. All that has a terrible aspect (*ghora*) is traditionally regarded in India as *vighna*; an impediment, obstacle, interruption, hurdle, difficulty or trouble. Indeed, the vast size of the problem of *vighna* led to its being associated with the boundary or circumference which, it is said, the Vedic Prajāpati finally overcame by taking control of the centre (an inconceivable subtlety totally devoid of extension) so that “the very root of (demonic) arrogance and conceit, viz. the vast size, ceased to have any meaning”. V. S. Agrawala, “The Meaning of *Gaṇapati*”, 1–4. So, too, we will observe throughout this study that the *kīla* that protects the circumference is also the instrument through which the centre is conquered.

6. M. A. Stein, *Serindia*. Stein’s description of the watchtower and his finds is to be found in vol. III, 644–51, and the *kīlas* themselves are depicted in plate LII (vol. IV). More recent photographs of two of those *kīlas*, currently housed in the British Museum, are to be seen in R. Whitfield & A. Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese Art from the Silk Route*, 174.
which seem to have posed no moral dilemma for their perpetrators even within a Buddhist context.

Although the mantra of Vajrakila is to be found in the fundamental Yogatantra STTS and, as pointed out by authorities on tantric practice, "the mantra is the god", the absolute deification of the sacred spike and its transformation into an awesome god of terrible wrath seems not to have been finally completed until the period of the Anuttarayogatantra. By this time the spike that brought death and destruction to its opponents came also to be regarded as the harbinger of liberation, a bestower of nirvāṇa. As a symbol of absolute stability, the paradoxical nature of the magic spike is expressed in the religious myth and ritual of the deity which everywhere depicts chaos as the natural condition of samsāra. The maṇḍala of the deified spike is a bloody charnel ground in the centre of which dwells the god in a palace of skulls, astride a throne of demonic corpses. His sanguinary sport (līlā) is the archetype of violent behaviour, leading to a distinct antinomian trend in the religious ideals of his worshippers.

Within the sacred texts of both this deity and others like him, it is said that the function of 'wrathful compassion' is to kill sentient beings and thus apparently to violate one of the primary ethical precepts of Buddhism. The question naturally arises: Is this vile injunction to be taken literally, or is it symbolic? In fact, it is to be taken both ways. The major commentary on the Kālacakra-tantra says that provisionally (neyārtha) "a Buddha may kill those who are really committing the five immediacies, who break their vows, and who damage the teaching. But a mantrin who has not attained the five special knowledges (abhiṇā) should not perform such fearful actions." On the definitive level (nītārtha), however, killing refers to the yogic practice of holding the semen at the top of the head.7

Klong-chen-pa in his commentary on the Guhyagarbha-tantra says that the skilful yogin should kill wrongdoers and release them into an exalted realm, thus saving them from the certainty of rebirth in limitless evil existences. The rite itself has two main parts (1) destruction of the evil body, speech and mind and (2) guiding the consciousness of the deceased to a 'Pure Realm' (Buddhakṣetra). There is no hatred in the rite, only an altruistic mind of awareness and compassion.8 As it says in the Samvarodaya-tantra, "Ah! Marvellous is the rite of killing. It kills the transmigration which is only imagination. It does not kill the mind recognizing suchness (tathatā, the real state of things)."9 Finally, Šubhakarasimha says that 'killing' expresses the basic concept of the vow to cut away the life of all beings, where 'life' means 'beginningless ignorance and passion' (kleśa).10

The various biographies of those whose practised this magical art of slaying, however, provide us with evidence of occasional, all too human, lapses from such noble altruism. Mortal nature is such that there have inevitably arisen in the past certain self-centred, power-hungry yogins who have been tempted to turn this philanthropic 'white magic' into 'black' for their own nefarious purposes. In the chronicles of the Byang-gtser, for example, is

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Introduction

recounted the story of combative sorcery between Lang-lab and the translator of Rva which is told below in Chapter Four.

Following the introduction of these ideas to Tibet, the *kila* as a weapon of ritual magic became immensely popular among both Buddhist and Bon-po; both within the Kila cult in which the deity Vajrakila is worshipped, and independent of that cult.

To date there have been several western studies published concerned with the ritual *kila* and the Kila cult, although none of them could be called in any way major. The first book to be published was by John Huntingdon (*The Phur-pa; Tibetan Ritual Daggers*. Ascona, 1975) in which a number of ritual *kilas* are described in terms of length, weight, material of manufacture, etc. It contains almost nothing that has any bearing on the present research.

The second book is by Thomas Marcotty (*Dagger Blessing: The Tibetan Phurba Cult: Reflections and Materials*. Delhi, 1987) in which more is said concerning the rituals in which *kilas* are symbolically employed. This book also presents translated excerpts from four Tibetan texts, including the canonical *Vajramantrabhūrusandhi-mūlatantra* (p.467) but is, unfortunately, highly subjective in nature and riddled with unwarranted and spurious assertions. Its many shortcomings have been adequately brought to light by Cathy Cantwell in her review for the *Tibet Journal*, 1989, 61–4.

Many other books have carried passing references to either the deity Vajrakila or to symbolic *kilas* as encountered in iconography or ritual, foremost among which is the classic *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* by René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz. The large number of instances cited in this text clearly demonstrates the ubiquity of the ritual *kila* as a magic weapon throughout the entire realm of Tibetan tantrism, especially following the importation from India of the cult of Vajrakila.

Several papers have also been published in academic journals and the like which have a bearing on our topic. One of the most interesting of these is the study by Bischoff and Hartman11 on the manuscript from Tun-huang listed as ‘Pelliot tibétain 44’. This is said to be “possibly the oldest document in existence referring to Padmasambhava” and is considered by Prof. Tucci as a major proof of the *siddha*’s historicity. Its theme is the summoning of the Kila *Vidyottama-tantra* from Nālandā University to the Asura cave in Nepal. In their introduction to the text, the translators deal with the problem of the widespread assertion in Tibetan literature that the Sanskrit term for *phur-ba* is *kilaya* (with or without a long *i*) when all dictionaries and Sanskrit works agree the word to be *kīla* (or *kilaka*). I suppose this to result from an indiscriminate use by Tibetans of the dative singular *kīlāya*. This form would have been familiar to them in the simple salutation *namo vajrakīlāya* (homage to Vajrakila) from which it could easily be assumed by those unfamiliar with the technicalities of Sanskrit that the name of the deity is Vajrakīlāya instead of Vajrakila. It should also be noted that the term *(vajra)kīlaya* is frequently found in Sanskrit texts (as well as in virtually every *kilamantra*) legitimately used as the denominative verb ‘to spike’, ‘transfix’, ‘nail down’, etc.

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John Huntingdon made the assumption that the precursor of Vajrakila was Mahâkâla. Such an identification appears quite plausible for Mahâkâla is, indeed, one of the earliest wrathful deities to become clearly defined in the Vajrayâna pantheon and among his many epithets and guises he is widely renowned as the destroyer of obstructors and misleaders, a role subsequently taken up by Vajrakila. Mahâkâla is, of course, a deity known to both the Buddhists and Hindus and in the opening chapter of the Hindu Uûdiñâ-tantra there is given a rite for the destruction of an enemy which involves burying “a terrible pin made of copper” in the chest of his effigy. Sitting on a seat of tiger skin, the yogin should mutter the mantra “OM Honour to the Lord Mahâkâla whose lustre is equal to the fire of destruction; Liquidate, liquidate, destroy destroy this enemy of mine called So-and-so; HûM PHAT SVÂHÁ”. Such a procedure differs in no way from its Buddhist counterparts. There is, furthermore, an attested Buddhist form of Mahâkâla with kila legs which was worshipped in Khotan, a place known to have accepted early on the notion of the kila as a god and culturally connected via the ‘silk route’ with those Central Asian finds of Sir Aurel Stein.

There is also the widespread opinion that ritual kila evolved to a certain extent from tent pegs and it is certainly true to say that tent pegs are viewed by the yogin as kilas. In rites of meditation, kilas are employed to effect a protective tent (pañjara) around an area that is to be kept ritually pure and the special form of Mahâkâla with the kila feet is known as ‘the Lord of the Tent’ (Pañjaranâtha). That god also has garauda wings and other details of iconography that match exactly those of the later Vajrakila. On the face of it, therefore, one might suppose Huntingdon’s theory of the identity of Mahâkâla and Vajrakila to be correct. In Chapter Two of the present work, however, I have drawn together several strands of literary evidence that clearly reveal not Mahâkâla but Amrtakundalin (a god also associated with the protection of boundaries) to be the precursor of Vajrakila.

This identification of Amrtakundalin with Vajrakila remains valid even in the Byang-gter literature of a much later period. The short Byang-gter text Phur pa’i dam can gnad rem, for example, gives proper names to the Kilas of the three families: Buddhakila is called Yamântaka, Padmakila is Hayagrîva and Vajrakila is Amrtakundalin. This grouping of three families (kula) belongs to the system of Kriyâtantra and therefore indicates an early provenance for this material said to have been unearthed in 1366. Such primitive features are widespread in the Byang-gter literature and I see no reason to doubt that much of it could indeed have been brought to Tibet from India in the eighth century AD.

The Byang-gter text sGrub thabs rgyun khyer exemplifies the manner in which the yogin mystically identifies himself with the deity Vajrakila as he takes the ritual nail into his hands.

13. More than one dozen rites of Mahâkâla are to be found in the Sâdhanamâlâ.
15. René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet, 51.
17. P. Pal, Art of Tibet, 244 passim.
18. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, 324.
Thinking of himself as the single-faced, two-armed god with the lower half of his body in the form of a triple-edged spike blazing in a mass of fire, the yogin blesses the ritual kila by contemplating his right hand as the mandala of the sun from which arise the bijas of the Five Tathāgatas and his left hand as the mandala of the moon emanating the bijas of their five consorts. Then, as his hands are brought together with mantras, the male and female Buddhas unite and the bodhicitta of their union flows into the kila. Rolling it between his palms, the yogin exhorts the kila to fulfil the four magical acts. He places the deity Hūṃkāra on the top of the spike and Mahābala at its lower tip. Upon the upper ‘vast knot’ he places the krodha kings of the four cardinal quarters and the kings of the intermediate directions are installed within its lower knot. Then, as the yogin rolls the empowered spike between the palms of his hands, he recites the mantra and simultaneously blesses the entire traiddhātuka with ‘liberation’.  

Chapter Three of the present work discusses the iconographic details of the principal kila deities in the retinue of the supremely wrathful Vajrakila.

The ‘history’ of the Vajrakīla-tantra as described in cultic documents is outlined in Chapter Four. Although the several short Tibetan texts dealing with this subject may not be regarded as historical works according to our own definition of the term (they tell us, for example, that the doctrines of Vajrakīla were once taught in a cremation ground by a gigantic iron scorpion with nine heads), they nevertheless throw considerable light upon the subject. According to these traditional accounts the canon of Vajrakīla arose in a previous aeon at a time when the Buddhas felt impelled to subdue the arch-demon Rudra.

The myth of the subjugation of Rudra in fact constitutes the central theme of the entire genre of wrathful tantra of Mahāyoga. In the light of comparative literature and iconography, this myth may be regarded as indicative of the final formulation of Mahāyoga tenets (including the cycle of teachings of Vajrakīla) as a conscious development designed to present a direct challenge to the perceived evils of the growing cult of Śaiva (Rudra) tantrism. The Buddhist view, however, is that the appearance of Rudra in the world is a skilful expedient (upāya) for the sake of those to be converted.

Having been taught among the gods and nāgas, the doctrines of Vajrakīla were transmitted to the human realm where they were spread in India by Indrabhūti, Dhanasamskrta, Śrīśimha, Prabhahasti and an unnamed kāpālika brahmin. In Nepal they were taught by Śilamaṇju and Śākyadevi. Śilamaṇju is said to have taught a prostitute by the name of Śanti who, in her turn, transmitted the doctrines to Guṇapatala (a prince of Nepal) so that they then became widely known in that country and Śākyadevi is said to have

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23. As far as possible for this section I have drawn upon texts of the Northern Treasures tradition but, in fact, the ‘history’ of the deity as outlined here is broadly accepted (discounting endless variations of detail) by followers of all Vajrakīla lineages in Tibet.
24. An idea currently being investigated by Robert Mayer (SOAS) and Alexis Sanderson (Oxford).
25. Explained in detail by Klong-chen-pa in his commentary to the Guhyagarbha-tantra, XV.
26. gTsang mkhan-chen, Do rje phur pa’i chos byung, 171. Nepalese kila rituals and the spread in that country of the Kīla cult have, as yet, been inadequately studied. This lamentable situation will surely change as further Nepalese manuscripts are brought to light.
taught them to Dharmakośa by whom they were subsequently propagated throughout Oḍḍiyāna.\textsuperscript{27} The doctrines are also said to have been taught in Khotan by Vairocana\textsuperscript{28} and in Tibet by Padmasambhava, Vairocana and Vimalamitra. Since one of the stated aims of the Kila doctrines is to provide a method for the subjugation of “all enemies and obstructors”, the cult was readily able to assimilate troublesome local gods and demons wherever it spread. In particular, Padmasambhava is said to have employed the occult power of Vajrakila to tame the spirits of the Himalayan regions on his journey to Tibet and convert them all to defenders of the Buddhist faith.

Part Two concludes with the observation that Indian traditions of Vajrakila must have reached their peak in the early eighth century AD, just when the cult was transmitted to Tibet. In Tibet, subsequently, a large number of Vajrakila lineages became firmly established while in India worship of the deity seems to have been abandoned.

**Part Three: the Byang-gter Kila**

The primary sources for this entire study are three collections of Byang-gter Kila texts made available in recent years under the American Library of Congress PL480 acquisition scheme.

(A) The first of these collections, the Phur pa dril sgrub, was published in Leh in 1973 as volume 75 of the Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod series and consists of manuscripts from the libraries of Padma Chos-ladan and sTag-lung-tse-sprul. From its short preface we learn that the Byang-gter tradition contains three cycles of teachings related to Vajrakila. The largest (rgyas pa) is the Che-mchog (Mahottara) cycle in fifteen sections,\textsuperscript{29} the medium (’bring po) is the sPu-gri (*Kṣura) cycle and the shortest (bsdus pa) is the Drag-sngags (Mantrabhiru).\textsuperscript{30} The Dril sgrub is a combination of these three cycles with the proper name Byang gter phur pa lugs gsum gcig tu dril ba ’ichos skor, “the religious cycle of the three traditions of Northern Treasures Kila rolled into one”. This name acts as a pun in Tibetan because Kila meditation is accompanied by the ritual act of rolling (’dril ba) a symbolic nail between the palms of the hands. The collection itself comprises 364 folios (727 pages).

(B) The second collection, in two volumes, was published in Dalhousie in 1977 under the name Phur-pa Texts of the Byang-gter Tradition. The title page says that it is a reproduction of a rare collection of manuscripts held in the Tibetan Library at Dharamsala. Its contents also encompass the three cycles listed above but, in 614 folios, it is a much larger collection than either A or C.

(C) The third collection was published in Darjeeling in 1984 with the title Byang gter phur pa ’i skor. The reproduction of a manuscript on 288 folios belonging to Yol-mo bla-ma rdo-rje, it is similar in scope to the others.

\textsuperscript{27} gTsang mkhan-chen, rDo rje phur pa ’i chos ’byung, 170.
\textsuperscript{28} Vairocana is held to have learned the doctrines of Vajrakila in India from Śrisimha. S. Karmay, The Great Perfection, 25.
\textsuperscript{29} In fact, however, only thirteen of these fifteen sections are to be found in the currently available Byang-gter literature as demonstrated, below, in this Introduction.
\textsuperscript{30} Of these three divisions, it would appear that the Mahottara cycle is unique to the Byang-gter school, the black Kṣura and Mantrabhiru cycles being the common property of all Kila lineages (each of which, however, has its own texts).
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The title of every text contained in these three collections is listed together with its page number in Appendix I of the present work, thus facilitating reference to these original sources. The texts themselves are referred to throughout the present book by their sequence numbers: A1, A2, etc. All three collections include original material said to have come from the treasure trove of Zang-zang Lha-brag, unearthed by the revealer Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem in the fourteenth century, as well as commentarial material, liturgical arrangements and the independent compositions of various historical holders of the lineage. The texts vary in length from those that merely cover a single side of a single folio to those that extend to over one hundred sides (50 folios). It is invariably the original gter ma material that is brief, the later compilations and commentaries tending to be more expansive. The gter ma material consists of a few texts of supposedly Indic origin not found elsewhere, as well as a large number of esoteric teachings on the Vajrakīla system said to have been taught by Padmasambhava to a select few among his close disciples. From the colophons of these texts, it would appear that Padmasambhava gave many of the teachings in Bhutan and that transcripts were also hidden there.

There are only two root tantras at the heart of all this material, neither one of which is accompanied by any commentary. This would seem to reflect their transmission through a lineage more concerned with meditative experience and mystic praxis than philosophical theory. The overwhelming mass of material in the collections is devoted to sādhanā and ritual, and there are also several chronicles that place these rituals within a more or less mythological context. These consist of both original gter ma texts and later elaborations.

Authors of the latter texts range from the famous to the obscure. The most illustrious name, perhaps, is that of the Fifth Dalai Lama whose own recently published Secret Visions (Samten Karmay, London, 1988) show him to be a firm believer in the power of the ritual kilā. The Fifth Dalai Lama is also shown in Eva Dargyay (The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet, 173) to hold the opinion that the Byang-gter system is the most reliable of all the rNying-ma-pa schools. Better represented, however, is his disciple Padma 'phrin-las (1641–1718), traditionally regarded as the fourth incarnation of the Byang-gter’s founder and widely acknowledged as the greatest scholar in the history of this tradition.

All the texts are written in headless (dbu med) script with only a couple of exceptions, both of which are found in collection A. A45 is a short xylographed sādhanā on six folios and A48 is a hand written ritual for turning away evil, calligraphed in dbu can on twenty-four folios. All the other texts abound with shorthand abbreviations as well as orthographic and grammatical irregularities so that deciphering and editing them has been a major task. The handwriting of collections A and B is quite similar (although not uniform throughout) and seems to conform to a type categorized by John Stevens as “originated by Vairocana the

31. These are the BRT on seven folios listed as A2, B31 & C19, and the Vajrakīlacittaguhyakāya-tantra on ten folios found at A3, B10 & C1. A31 & C13 are said to be the twenty-first chapter of a lost tantra called Phur pa me lce ‘i 'phreng ba.

32. Tārānātha claims that tantric adepts, in general, had no interest in philosophical speculation and the only religious works they composed were “great and small sādhanas and empowerments as well as major and minor texts concerning sampannakrama. The siddhas themselves did not speak at all about commentaries and explanatory works …” D. Templeman, Tārānātha’s Life of Kṛṣṇācārya, 45.
Introduction

translator". Collection C is not very different but I found it the most difficult to read. My chief native informant (Prof. C.R. Lama of Visvabharati University, West Bengal) describes the handwriting of A and B as "East Tibetan style" and I suppose C to have been written in Nepal (Yol-mo) where the Byang-gter tradition has long been established. A particular problem, of course, is presented by the mantras with which this kind of tantric literature is inevitably saturated. After so many centuries in isolation from their Indian matrix, these mantras which may originally have been encoded in formal Sanskrit interspersed with various vernacular phrases and nomenclature as well as the usual non-semantic bijas and expletives, are found within the manuscripts rendered more or less unintelligible in Tibetanized forms. Despite (or, in some cases, because of) the repetition of the most salient mantras in several texts which present us with an enormous number of variants from which to chose, a ‘correct’ reading could only be hoped for in a minority of the more obvious cases.

What is surprising about these three collections is that they contain so little in common. Each of them was once in the possession of an initiate who presumably considered his own collection complete, or at least sufficiently so for his purposes. Since they had never before been published, perhaps no-one until now has been aware of just how much material exists in this tradition. One cannot help but wonder whether more material has yet to come to light as refugee lamas of the Byang-gter tradition sort through their own manuscript holdings and compare their private collections with the three now made public.

rNying-ma-pa literature

Only one of our source materials attempts to place the Northern Treasures Kila doctrines within the context of rNying-ma sacred literature as a whole and that is B4, the Nor bu'i do shal ('Necklace of Gems'), in seventeen folios by 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms. From the colophons of his several commentarial and liturgical works to be found in collections B and C, it is evident that this lama was a student of Rig-'dzin tshe-dbang nor-bu and a teacher of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug. Since the former died in 1755 and the latter was born in 1775, we may confidently place this author in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The text of his that concerns us here was composed as an introduction to the doctrines of Vajrakilaya for a group of his disciples about to become initiated into the cult. The author states at the outset his belief that a single Vajrayāna empowerment encompasses within itself every aspect of the path and goal. “For those who cannot grasp this immensity within a single mandala”, however, he says that the Buddha taught the two vehicles known as ‘the causal vehicle of

33. J. Stevens, Sacred Calligraphy of the East, 75.
34. Yol-mo in northeast Nepal (marked on maps as Helambu) is one of the seven ‘hidden lands’ (shbas yul) deemed preeminently suitable as sites for meditational retreat, a “place where the Dharma will flourish after its disappearance in Tibet”. G. Clarke, “A Helambu History”, 7. See also, 'Gu ru'i ga'u bdun ma: A Collection of Prophecies of Guru Padmasambhava on the Location of the various Treasure caches Concealed for Future Revelations and the Concealed Lands Destined for Future gTer-ston to Reveal, Delhi, 1983. For a modern ethnographic account of life in that region see G. Clarke, “Lama and Tamang in Yolmo”. In his “A Helambu History” Clarke says (p. 11) that the main Byang-gter temple in that region is brTsu-ri dgon (Temple of the Curved Antelope Horn), founded by Sākya bzang-po.
35. Dates supplied by the publishers of collection B.
dialectics’ (mtshan nyid rgyu yi theg pa) and ‘the resultant vajra vehicle’ (bras bu rdo rje'i theg pa). The teachings of the former being contained within the sūtras and those of the latter within the tantras.36

The various sūtras and tantras followed by the rNying-ma-pa were translated into Tibetan from the languages of India, China and Central Asia, from the reign of Srong-btsan sgam-po (629–710 AD) up until the last of the early translators, Smṛtiṇāṇa, in the tenth century.37 Later, however, when the bKa’ ’gyur and bsTan ’gyur were compiled as canons of sacred literature for the followers of the gSar-ma traditions, many of the early tantras were excluded on the premise that no Sanskrit original could be found as verification of authenticity. As a consequence, many followers of the New Translation schools (gsar lugs) tended to reject the rNying-ma texts as unrepresentative of the true teachings of the Buddha. Followers of the Old Translation schools, however, embrace all the texts of the bKa’ ’gyur and bsTan ’gyur and study them in the monasteries although the philosophical viewpoints of the old and new traditions often diverge from one another quite radically.

'Phrin-las bdud-'joms continues his explanation by saying that the two yānas known as ‘the vehicle of cause’ and ‘the vehicle of result’ may, alternatively, be considered under three rubrics as ‘the vehicle which controls the source of suffering’ (kun 'byung ’dran pa'i theg pa), ‘the vehicle of the outer tantras of austere awareness’ (phyi dka' thub rig pa'i rgyud kyi theg pa) and ‘the vehicle of overpowering means’ (dbang bsgyur thabs kyi theg pa).38 Each of these three yānas has three divisions and thus there are the nine vehicles of the 1) Śrāvaka, 2) Pratyekabuddha, and 3) Bodhisattva (followers of the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna sūtras that control the source of suffering through renunciation, wisdom and compassion), 4) Kriyātantra, 5) Udbhayatantra, and 6) Yogatantra (which, by means of austere awareness, gradually transform the universe and its inhabitants into a sacred maṇḍala populated with deities), 7) Mahāyogatantra, 8) Anuyogatantra, and 9) Atiyogatantra (which, respectively, emphasize the skilful means of the utpattikrama, the discriminative awareness of the sampannakrama and the pristine cognition free of duality that is the great perfection of the final result).

'Phrin-las bdud-'joms then informs us that, within this ninefold scheme, the canon of Vajrakila embodies the skilful means (upāya) of the Anuttarayogatantra, a general term for the teachings of the seventh, eighth and ninth yānas.39 Generally in rNying-ma literature these three are known as ‘the inner tantras’ within which category the doctrines of Vajrakila

37. It is said that during the time of persecution of Buddhism in Tibet in the early ninth century by king Glang dar-mar, lay tantric yogins were spared the excesses of ill treatment suffered by their monastic brethren because the king had been frightened by demonstrations of occult power displayed to him by the kila-siddha Sangs-rgyas ye-shes. T. Thondup, The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa, 153. gZhon-nu-dpal comments that those tantric adepts hid away the śāstras and sūtras that had been translated before the time of Ral-pa-can and it is thanks to them that the early doctrines survived the ensuing years of chaos between 901 and 973 AD. G. Roerich, The Blue Annals, 60--1.
38. These three divisions are said to have been outlined in the Anuyoga text sPryi mdo dgongs pa'i 'dus pa and elaborated by teachers in the sMin-grol-gling tradition. G. Dorje, The Guhyagarbhatantra, 18.
mostly pertain to *Mahāyoga.* They are classified as ‘*tantras* of skilful means’ because of their strong bias towards enlightened activity (*phrin las*) but this is not to say that they lack the view of transcendental wisdom (*prajñā*). As well as the *Anuyoga* techniques discussed below in Chapter Eight, Kila literature is thoroughly pervaded by the viewpoint and terminology of *Atiyoga* (the system of *rDzogs-chen*) and the Byang-gter cycle even contains two *sādhanas* (A32 & A35) that purport to have been taught by Śrīśiṃha, one of the greatest luminaries of the *Atiyoga* tradition. It should be noted, however, that in at least one early *Atiyoga* document, the word *kila* is used disparagingly as an indicator of only the relative aspects of Buddhist religious practice: the accumulation of merit, contemplation and the purification of *samsāric* traces. 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms goes on to say:

“Furthermore, in this country of Tibet having both early and later transmissions of the doctrine, especially with regard to the transmissions of secret mantra, it is the early transmission of the Vajrayāna that has the two great systems of *bka’ ma* and *gter ma.* Now within this system, the tantric doctrines of Vajrakila under consideration here are classified as *gter ma* because they were taken out of hiding during a later period.”

Thus, with regard to the transmission of the doctrines, the received texts (*bka’ ma*) of the rNying-ma school are divided into three categories: *rGyal ba’i dgon gs brgyud* (“intentional lineage of the Jina”), *Rig ’dzin brda’ brgyud* (“symbolic lineage of the vidyādhara”) and *Gang zag snyan brgyud* (“aural lineage of mundane individuals”). The discovered texts (*gter ma*) moreover, have three additional lineages called *bKa’ babs lung bstan brgyud* (“lineage of prophetically declared spiritual succession”), *Las ’phro gter gyi brgyud* (“lineage of treasures of karmic maturation”) and *Tsig brgyud shog ser gyi brgyud* (“lineage of transmitted words on yellow scrolls”). The Byang-gter doctrines of Vajrakila are said to have been transmitted along all six of those lines.

The Byang-gter Kila texts

The received Byang-gter Kila literature consists of a chaotic confusion of texts dealing in large part with ritual formulae and their magical correlates, the open-ended nature of which appears to imply no theoretical limit to their exegesis. Many of the texts seem verbose and repetitive in their opening and closing, largely panegyrical, vignettes but cryptic in the extreme with regard to central content. I have tried to reflect a little of the original literary flavour of the source materials in my study but have, of necessity, to a certain extent abbreviated the flowery rhetoric and opened up the more obscure passages in order to shed a

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40. They are found under that heading, for example, in the *rNyin-ma’i rgyud-*bum (NGB).
41. A fact already noted by Eva Dargyay, *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet*, 35. In Chapter Three of the present work, in which the nature of the *kila* as well as its form and function are explored, we note the *kila* in both material (relative) and philosophic (absolute) guises: “Annihilating enemies and obstructors by means of symbolic kilas, grasping thoughts of ignorance are cut off by the actual *kila*.” A47, 471.
42. The emphasis in both these *sādhanas*, found in all three collections and dealt with below in Chapter Seven, is on the absolute, non-dual nature of the *kila*.
44. B4, 177.
45. B4, 178.
modicum of light into the cryptic gloom. In order to facilitate cross-referencing this material with the data of other Buddhist schools I have included a number of Sanskrit key terms in parentheses throughout the study, generally employing Tibetan terminology only when the Sanskrit appeared doubtful. The Tibetan-Sanskrit equivalents of most of these words are to be found in the index.

Even though the texts overlap with much repetition of data, it is noted that a fresh element or novel twist is introduced with each retelling so that the material seems to grow in organic fashion, quite unlike the lineally structured logical progression of modern western writing. The discrete title applied to the individual sections of the literature and their idiosyncratic assemblage within the three collections here studied indicates a random structure to the whole within which any given text may or may not be included with impunity.

The texts put forward an interconnected, self-sustaining dogma of symbols and ritual technique designed to serve as a means through which the initiate may both express this symbolic world and interact with it. Growing ever more skilful in this interaction, the yogin supposedly develops ritual power, the magical ability to control events in the world at large. Despite a preponderance of technical vocabulary and cosmological/religious dogma, the texts are clearly intended to convey not physical but rather psychological truths. Their purpose is conveyed to the emotion rather than the intellect so that the yogin realizes their validity within his heart not his head. Indeed, it is axiomatic that mystical insight into the ‘truth’ of the mandala is experienced by the yogin as a knowledge utterly free of propositional content.

Such a result is a phenomenologically potent spiritual ecstasy equated with the higher siddhi. The meditator is imbued with a profound sense of well-being that is understood in the Kila tradition to be the result of having banished the evil hordes of Māra beyond the confines of the mandala, the yogin’s symbolic world. Within that context the lower siddhis are indicated by omens encountered either in dreams, visions or the ordinary waking state. Thus, through his practice, the yogin learns to sustain the condition within which the world is experienced in the image of the sacred mandala of Vajrakila.

Although among Tibetans there exist several important lineages of Vajrakila teachings, at no time during the writing of this book did I feel impelled to refer to parallel texts from traditions other than the Byang-gter, either to clarify my doubts or verify my conclusions. As I worked I found that each document studied, although presenting enigmatic riddles to ponder, shed fresh light on the significance of others in the cycle so that the entire tradition seemed to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, each small text being meaningful only within the context of the whole.

The three available collections of Northern Treasures Vajrakila texts at the heart of the present study together comprise a total of 158 separate titles, all of which are listed in Appendix I in the form in which they appear at the head of the texts themselves. When these texts are checked for duplications, however, their number is reduced to 112, among which

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46. Although based entirely upon Tibetan sources I am in no doubt that the material presented here has an Indic origin, as argued below in Chapter Two. It is understood, however, that the implications of these key terms gradually shift with time so that modern Tibetan usage may not coincide exactly with that of ancient India.
are two that are not relevant to our purposes. B8 is neither a Northern Treasures text nor does it relate to the Vajrakīla cycle. C37 is a Northern Treasures text but unrelated to the Kila cycle. This leaves us with 110 separate texts, the overwhelming majority of which claim to have been among the original treasures revealed by the gter ston Rig-'dzin ggod-ladem in 1366. Fewer than twenty texts have been added to this collection in later years by named authors, an indication of the inherent clarity of the original tradition. Each of the three collections contains texts that are not found elsewhere, as well as texts that it holds in common with either one or both of the other collections. The full details of these correspondences are also listed in Appendix I.

The systematic ordering of the eight chapters of Part Three is based upon an arrangement set out in the very first of numerous minor commentaries to be found within this Northern Treasures Kila literature, the Phur pa che mchog gi them byang rin chen gter mdzod, in which we are presented with a list of the essential elements of the Vajrakīla cycle.47 Scarcely more than a single folio in length, this valuable text groups the Byang-gter Kila literature into five sets, each of which consists of three elements:

1) The fundamental elements that underpin the sacred tradition are the three called rgyud (tantra), dbang chog (rites of initiation and empowerment, adhīṣṭāna-vidhi) and 'phrin las (ritual activities, equivalent here to śādhanā).

2) The methods which are taught so that a yogin may appropriate the siddhi of the deity are the three called dKar po lam gvi sgron ma ("Lamp of the White Path"), bKa' nyan lcags kyi ber ka ("Iron Cloak of Attendants") and Nag po dug gi 'khor lo ("Wheel of Black Poison").

3) The heart of the fierce activities is said to be the three called zor (a magic weapon to be hurled against the enemy), sbyin sreg (ritual burning, homa) and mnan gtiad (forcing down, subduing).

4) For the benefit of a yogin are taught the three called tshe sgrub (for the attainment of long life, āyurvedhi), nor sgrub (for the attainment of wealth) and bza' tshogs (the presentation of offerings for a sacramental feast).

5) As supplements to make up for any deficiencies are taught the method of making sāccchas (tsha tsha, miniature reliquaries, the preparation of which fulfills broken vows), rgyud rims (sic.) and the zur 'debs (appendix).48

None of the texts at our disposal teach independent procedures for the attainment of wealth (nor sgrub), considered by the them byang to be an essential part of the Vajrakīla cycle and taught for the benefit of the yogin under section 4. Collection A apparently once contained a wealth rite that focussed upon the deity Jambhala,49 for the publishers of that collection have listed such a text between our A27 and A28. No such text is to be found there now, however. There remains also a question mark over the term rgyud rims in section 5. Rims means 'infectious disease' so the word is surely a misspelling (despite its recurrence

47. Found independently as A1, also included within C15. Although the title of the text indicates a specific relationship to the Mahottarakīla cycle, its analysis of the doctrines appears equally valid for the Kṣura and Mantrabhīru cycles.


49. Jambhala is a god of wealth popularly worshipped by Mahāyāna Buddhists in general, having no specific connection with the Kila cycle.
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at C15) of rim for rim pa, ‘order, series, succession’. rGyud rim could then mean either the successive stages of tantric practice—the bskyed rim (utpattikrama) and rdzogs rim (sampannakrama)—or ‘the succession of tantra’ more commonly referred to as brgyud rim, the succession of masters through whom the tantric tradition was transmitted (paramparā). Among the texts in the three collections are found several brgyud 'debs (prayers to the lineage masters) and these could perhaps be thought of as “supplements to make up for deficiencies in the yogin’s practice”. Our text C15 contains the words rgyud rims in its title and the text itself deals, among other things, with the transmission of the Vajrakila doctrines from the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra to Vajrasattva, Vajrapāṇi, Karmendrāṇi, Padmasambhava and finally to sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms who was the last to receive them before they were hidden away as treasures to be rediscovered by sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms’ own later incarnation as a gter ston. This, however, is unsatisfactory and thus we are left with no texts at all in the three collections that pertain unmistakably to either the category nor sgrub, the meaning of which is clear, or rgyud rims, the meaning of which is problematic. The remaining thirteen sections of this fifteenfold system of categorizing the Northern Treasures Vajrakila literature, on the other hand, are all well represented by precisely those texts which are to be found in common within all three collections.

1) The first group of (a) tantra, (b) adhiṣṭānavidhi and (c) sādhana are represented by:

(a) The two root tantras called Śrīvajrakilapotrihala-tantra (sic.) (BRT, A2, B31, C19) and the Vajrakila-cittaguhyakīya-tantra (A3, B10, C1). These two tantras, which form the subject matter of our Chapter Five, present the fundamental mythology of the Vajrakila cycle as accepted both within and without the Byang-gter school. The tantra from the black iron cache is observed to correspond remarkably closely to the fragment included in the bKa’gyur, translated by the Sa-skya paṇḍita from a Sanskrit original thought to have been brought to Tibet by Padmasambhava himself. The Mahottarakila text from the golden southern section puts forward the origin myth of the demon Rudra and the deity Vajrakila as well as a paradigm for the fierce rites of the Vajrakila cult utilizing the device of questions and answers between Vajrapāṇi and the lord of the manḍala, a traditional format of Buddhist texts.

(b) The Phur pa che mchog gi dbang chu (A8, B12, C5) and the sPu gri nag po’i dbang chog (A14, B63, C20) are analysed in Chapter Six. These are the rites of empowerment enacted in terms of a symbolic palingenesis through which the yogin who aspires to membership of the Kila cult may be introduced to its doctrines and authorized to participate in its sacred mysteries. Within this chapter the yogin’s ‘price of admission’ to the cult is considered50 as well as those benefits he may seek to gain by his entry.

(c) The Phur pa’i thugs kyi ’phrin las (A45, B42, C35) and the rTsa ba dril sgrub kyi sgrub thabs (A32, B41 & 53, C33) examined in Chapter Seven are the fundamental rites through which the yogin expresses his commitment to the cult and through which he seeks

50. By ‘price of admission’ is meant not only the fee paid to the teacher at the time of empowerment but also the vows and commitments (saṃvara and saṃaya) to which the neophyte is subsequently bound for the rest of his life. According to Śrīsimha, the essential saṃaya to be observed by Vajrakila initiates is that they should carry with them at all times a symbolic kila made of iron. A32, 227.
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to draw upon its power. Essentially these rites may be viewed as a reenactment of his own first ceremony of initiation (or ‘empowerment’) which, in turn, sought to recreate the primordial state of purity described in the deity’s *tantra*. It is by means of these rites that the *yogin* seeks to transform his view of the world until he is able to maintain it in his mind as being nothing less than the deity’s sacred *maṇḍala*.\(^{51}\) His image of himself, meanwhile, has simultaneously to be transformed into that of the deity. This process of *sādhanā*, through which both the deity and his *maṇḍala* are generated, is known as *utpattikrama*.

In accordance with the tripartite schema ubiquitous in Buddhist tantric praxis, the *sādhanaka* effects the total identification of himself with the deity by absorbing his mind in the *samādhi* of the deity, causing his speech “to resound with the unceasing recitation of *mantra*” and ‘sealing’ his body by *mudrā*.\(^ {52}\) The significance of this last term is by no means restricted to a simple ‘gesture of the hands’ but may include the physical placement of the practitioner in the deity’s favoured abode (a fearful charnel ground where wild animals roam) where he dwells within a hut made of skulls, besmearing himself with ashes and drops of blood and grease, consuming the foodstuffs of the god (especially meat and alcohol) and wearing the deity’s apparel of animal skins with ornamentation of bone.\(^ {53}\) Through this process of *utpattikrama* the *yogin* aims to gain direct and intuitive insight (the antidote to ignorance) and thus, as part of his *sādhanā*, he is instructed to “gulp down *samsāra*” and experience the one taste (*ekarasa*) of all phenomena and phenomenal processes. With the whole world in his belly he is no less than the god himself.\(^ {54}\) He has ‘liberated’ and ‘blessed’ all beings by killing them and, having gained control over worldly ‘demonic’ forces (the hosts of Māra), has become master of his own destiny. Thus the *yogin* obtains the ‘dual benefit’ of the Mahāyāna: freedom from *samsāra* for others as much as for himself.

2) The second group consists of three named texts. The *dKar po lam gyi sgron ma* (A9, B15, C6) examined in Chapter Eight describes the climax of the *utpattikrama* process. Building on his success in appropriating for himself the outward appearance of the deity, the

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51. In fact the distinction between ‘the mind’ and ‘the world’ is not much maintained in these texts. Although the theatre of *sādhanā* praxis is generally the imagination of the practitioner himself (with body, speech and mind all having their role to play), in the Black deity cycle the ritual is thematically projected upon the outer world whereas the Mahottarakila cycle deems it to occur almost entirely within the *yogin*’s own body. The anthropocosmos, however, is ritually homologized with the containing macrocosmos, especially with its underlying process of endless becoming based on ignorance and its resultant suffering, defined as birth in any realm under the sway of Māra.

52. Such a simplistic outline, however, is belied by the texts themselves within which the boundaries of ‘self’ and ‘other’, ‘inner’ and ‘outer’, remain remarkably fluid.

53. Vajrakīla meditation is concerned with the nature of *samsāra* and not nirvāṇa. HT, I, X, 34, 36 describes the calmness of the innate (*sahaja*) specifically as being “without waves” (*nistaratā*) whereas the violently agitated nature of the Vajrakīla *maṇḍala* is repeatedly stressed. Indeed, the *maṇḍala* itself is stated in the *sādhanā* to rest upon ‘a churning ocean of blood’ indicative of the waves of *samsāra*.

54. This expansion of the *yogin*’s perception from that of a merely theoretical knowledge of the dynamic principles of existence (such as the twelve *nidānas* and so on) to a first-hand (if interiorized, mystical) experience of the totality of created being is enhanced by his psychic ‘growth’ to a gigantic form of many colours with nine heads and eighteen arms in which he holds all manner of symbolic attributes, etc.
yogin now purifies his internal nature until it, too, becomes ‘divine’ in the process known as *sampannakrama* brought about by close meditation upon light.

The bkra’ nyen lcags kyi ber ka is found as A10 and the Nag po dug gi ’khor lo as A11. In collections B and C, however, the two texts are found together under a single title as B19 and C7. These documents are studied in Chapter Nine together with related texts of the Black deity cycle which detail the manner in which the yogin, having achieved total self-identification with the deity and being thus empowered to “roll the ritual nail between the palms of his hands”, may strive to bring all ‘lesser’ spiritual beings\(^{55}\) under his majesty. Once adept at controlling those powers, the yogin is able to dispatch them against his enemy in a display of violent sorcery. This chapter, then, is permeated with the darkest images of witchcraft and yet the texts themselves claim to rank among the most profound of spiritual practices. Much of their content is almost indistinguishable in kind from that encountered in the grimoires of late medieval Europe where procedures of black magic are taught for gaining the upper hand in a struggle for power over the forces of nature, personified in the guise of ‘elementals’ or mischievous sprites. Publicly disavowed by Buddhist hierarchs throughout the course of religious history, these texts nevertheless claim huge rewards for any sorcerer yogin who masters their apparently appalling methodology.

3) All three collections link zor, sbyin sreg and mnan gtad together within the single text called mNan sreg ’phang gsum found at A13, B20 and C11. Under these three rubrics, dealt with in Chapter Ten, the hitherto highly introspective yogic procedures for the destruction of foes are simplified and recast in the form of rituals that readily lend themselves to the involvement of the saṅgha as a whole. In particular, this group involvement may be coordinated in the monastic masked dances (*gar ‘cham, nartana*) during which participants don the divine accessories specifically “designed to set the individual free from any naturalistic expression, so that all the codified elements (gestures, postures, utterances) may fall into place with the structural rigor of a veritable body writing”\(^{56}\). Thus the mythology of the Kila cult is transmitted in the form of sacred drama to the wider audience of lay faithful whose pious offerings support and maintain the monastic establishments enacting these colourful rites.

4) The rDo rje phur pa’i tshe sgrub is found at A18, B22 and C12 while the bZa’ tshogs is found at A23, B24 and C14. There are no nor sgrub texts to be found in any of the three collections. Chapter Eleven therefore investigates the two remaining techniques said to be of direct benefit to the yogin in his personal life: the means to prolong his youth and vitality, and the contemplations through which he may bless all that he eats and drinks.

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55. These ‘lesser spirits’ are included within the mythology of the Vajrakila cult as local deities who, having submitted to the authority and power of Vajrakila (in the guise of Padmasambhava or other adept) were subsequently given seats around the periphery of the Vajrakila *mandala.*

56. M. Thevoz, *The Painted Body,* 90. The impersonal nature of the rites in the case of the Vajrakila cult is further reinforced by their scatological nature. The painted faces of the Kila sorcerers make play with “the very things (modern man) is so intent on averting; the dissociation of the body, the break-up of the physiognomy, the release of wild impulses, the disintegration of the *Ego*” (*ibidem* 25). In this remarkable book, Thevoz points out that the function of makeup has always been essentially magical and that ritual body decorations “are all polarized by the supernatural world, by the magical powers that govern and order reality, by their reference to the elemental forces and primordial causes which are external to and dissimilar to the society of man”. (p. 33.)
5) Sācchas are taught at A24, B24 and C14 and zur ’debs at A28, B25 and C16. The final chapter of the book is dedicated to an investigation of these procedures through which the yogin is instructed to make up for any deficiencies in his practice and pays particular attention to the symbolic value of the various sacraments utilized within the Kila cult for the celebration of community feasts (gañacakra). Spontaneously generating the Vajrakila mandala within his body, speech and mind, each yogin presents his own defilements (kleśa) as offerings to the deities. He thus seeks to eradicate from himself all traces of imperfection, "the obscurations to enlightenment", and achieve the divine purity of his goal. His oath of bodhicitta is fulfilled by contemplatively offering a boundless quantity of blood (= prajñā) and nectar (= upāya).

Throughout this study it is observed that the religious system of the wrathful deity Vajrakila requires its followers to abandon entirely all preconceived views of the mundane world and immerse themselves instead in a world of symbols, a fantastical model that adheres solely to its own internal system of logic based upon earlier Buddhist concepts of cosmology and psychology. That model, it is claimed, will liberate the yogin who is successful in its realization so that he may dwell in a state of permanent bliss. More than that, however, it will also bestow upon him a number of occult powers which may be used at his discretion for the benefit and ultimate liberation of all his fellow creatures. The work concludes with the observation that it is this intention of great compassion that is offered as the legitimizing factor for the inclusion of the cult within the general framework of Mahāyāna Buddhism and points to a profound psychology underlying its somewhat bizarre approach to the age-old problem of man’s quest for enlightenment and spiritual fulfilment.

57. The Mahāyāna ("Great Vehicle") is so called by its adherents precisely because of the emphasis it places on great compassion (mahākarunā). Within the Vajrayāna, this great compassion takes the form of such magical activities as the slaying of demons—acts considered to be great expediency (mahopāya) for the ultimate benefit of all living beings.
PART ONE

THE NORTHERN TREASURES
Chapter One
The Byang-gter Tradition

Although a significant force within the rNying-ma group of religious traditions in old Tibet, very little as yet has been published in the west concerning the Byang-gter and its revealer dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan. Brief references to the Byang-gter tradition, the fortunes of which have suffered a severe decline in the modern age since the invasion of Tibet by the communist Chinese, are to be found in a number of textbooks on the history of Buddhism in that country, especially those written from the rNying-ma-pa point of view, but no western scholar to date has attempted an exhaustive study of the subject.

A condensed history of the tradition is to be found in the form of an anonymous English language foreword to the dGongs pa zang thal, Leh, 1975, and the biography of its gter ston as compiled by dDud-'joms Rinpoche in his rNying-ma-pa history has been translated by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein, NSTB, I, 780–3. Eva Dargyay in her earlier publication, The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet, 129–32, also utilized bDud-'joms' biography, comparing it with the version of sKong-sprul padma gar-dbang from the Rin chen gter mdzod. Further information is to be found in a pamphlet entitled A Brief History of Dorje Tag Monastery in Tibet and its Lineage holders, written by sTag-lung-tse-sprul Rinpoche and published in Leh, 1985, as well as among the notes to the many translations of Byang-gter ritual texts produced by Prof. C.R. Lama of Visvabharati University, West Bengal, in collaboration with James Low. More recently, a paper by Jeremy Russell and Tsepak Rigzin entitled “Taglung Tsetrul Rinpoche, Dorje Drak and the Northern Treasure Tradition” was published in the Chos Yang journal from Dharamsala in order to commemorate the reestablishment in India of rDo-rje-brag Monastery, the chief monastery of the Byang-gter tradition.

The present account is based primarily upon three Tibetan texts: (1) The biography of our gter ston as told in the sPrul sku rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can kyi rnam thar gsal byed nyi ma'i 'od zer, written by Nyi-ma bzang-po and photographically reproduced from a manuscript in the possession of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, published in Paro, Bhutan, 1985. (2) The Rig 'dzin ngag gi dbang po'i rnam thar, written by the Fifth Dalai Lama and published in volume 37 of the Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod Series, Leh, 1972, and (3) the autobiography of bsKal-bzang padma dbang-phyug, entitled lHa rigs kyi btsun pa bskal bzang padma'i ming can rang nyid kyi rtogs par brjod pa 'jam gnyen utpal gzhad pa'i dga' tshal gzhon nu byung ba'i yid 'phrog, published as volume 43 of the same series in 1973. Also of interest is our text B4, the Byang gter phur pa'i dbang gi lo rgyus by 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms.
Chapter One

Derived as it is from these later Tibetan hagiographies rather than contemporary historical documents, this short chapter cannot pretend to the status of 'proper historical research' and the picture presented herein may seem to some to have about it an air of fanciful romance. Its Tibetan sources take for granted a view of life that is the norm within their own culture—an 'otherworldly' view quite removed from the prevailing 'rational materialist' outlook of the modern west. As pointed out recently by Michael Aris, "Indeed one does not need to look very far into Tibetan literature of any period to see that every traditional account rests on a fundamental basis of magic". In my opinion, however, the Tibetan concern is less with magic than with psychology, for the devout hagiographer sees it as his primary function to record the all-important 'inner' or subjectively experienced aspect of the situation he chronicles.

The various sources offer conflicting dates for the episodes with which they are concerned and I have chosen to deal with them by the simple expedient of deciding the most probable in the light of all the 'evidence' before me. Disparate views are to be found in the footnotes. The outline as I have given it, however, is important in that it collates for the first time all that has so far been published on the Byang-gter tradition in European languages and it is my hope that perhaps the present survey will inspire future scholars to delve more deeply into its fascinating history. It is offered here in brief simply in order to provide a context for the materials that constitute the focal point of my research: the cult of Vajrakīla as it is found within this Northern Treasures tradition.

Concealment of the treasures

Traditional Tibetan historians regularly preface their work with an attempt to locate the origins of the events or period with which they are primarily concerned as far back in time as possible, even to the beginning of the universe itself. In keeping with this tradition, the various 'biographies' of the treasure revealer dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan (1337–1408) begin by equating him with the dharmakāya Samantabhadra and then with the sambhogakāya Vajrasattva. Only after this is he supposed to have manifested physically in the world for the benefit of living beings.

His nirmānakāya career reputedly commenced in India with his manifestation as the Jinaputra Vajragarbha and the sources credit him with a further two dozen incarnations on the subcontinent, including one as Śākyamitra who played an important role in the early dissemination of the Vajrakīla doctrines, before he is said to have been born in Tibet.

59. Even the modern work on Ancient Tibet (Yeshe De Research Project, Berkeley, 1986) discusses the formation of the great Himalayan plateau during 'eons of geologic time' before beginning to talk of its earliest inhabitants.
60. Janet Gyaltsö, "Signs, Memory and History", 32, gives 1490 as the date of the gter ston's death, which I suppose to be a misprint for 1409.
61. The Fifth Dalai Lama lists the prior incarnations of the Byang-gter gter ston in India and Nepal as: (1) Samantabhadra, the dharmakāya, (2) Vajrasattva, the sambhogakāya, (3) Vajragarbha, the nirmānakāya, who gathered together all the doctrines of esoteric Buddhism, (4) Khye'u-chung she-la rog-po, (5) rGyal-sras deva bzang-skjong, (6) Byang-sems ye-shes snying-po, (7) bKa'i sdud-po Nam-mkha'i mdog-can (also known as Vajragarbha II), (8) sKye-rgu'i bdag-mo, (9) mKha'-gro bde-ltan-ma, (10) mKha'-gro rig-byed bde-ma, (11) Yid-byin (sbyin) dpal, (12)
When the eighth century ruler of Tibet and great Buddhist patron, Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan, sent messengers to India with offerings of powdered gold in order to invite the assistance of Padmasambhava in the founding of bSam-yas monastery, one of the messengers that he sent was his own uncle and close companion sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms. Following his arrival in Tibet, Padmasambhava gave a large number of esoteric instructions to sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms who remained one of his five innermost disciples throughout the period of his most intense teaching activity. These magico-religious instructions were said to be of vital importance for the protection of the future descendants of king Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan and they were all carefully entrusted to sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms before being concealed in the mountains as a treasure to be revealed in the future for the benefit of Tibet in general and for the welfare of the royal line in particular. In 1173 sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms was born again in Tibet, this time as the translator of Khro-phu, Byams-pa-dpal.

Rediscovery of the hidden treasures

In 1337, on the tenth day of the first month of the fire ox year, he was reborn in the area known as gNyan-yul (the place of snake demons) or Tho-yor nag-po (the country of the black stone cairn), his name in this incarnation being given as dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan. Upon his body were seen many auspicious marks including sacred seed-syllables (bija) and black and white moles (sme ba, tilaka) upon his head. Native biographers cite a large number of ‘prophetic texts’ concerning this gter ston, intending thereby to demonstrate the enormous significance for the rNying-ma tradition of both the person and the Byang-gter treasures that he revealed. Throughout these biographies much is made of ‘auspicious signs’, discernable omens appearing on his physical form and in the events of his life.

dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan’s mother, lo-lcam bsod-nams khye-’dren, was a lady of noble descent and his father sLob-dpon bdud-’dul (Sri-’dul-dpal) belonged to the family of sNa-mo-lung living on the estate (gzhi kha) of sNa-mo whose ancestry was said to trace back to the Mongolian king Gur-ser.


62. Las can dag pa’i ’khor inga, “the fortunate circle of five”, consisted of sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms, king Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan, his son prince Mu-khri btsan-po, Nam-mkha’i snying-po and the lady Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal. Furthermore, with regard to the doctrines of Vajrakila, in the revelations of mChog-gyur gling-pa (1829–1870), rDo-rje bdud-’joms is praised as the sovereign of all phurba-holders in Tibet and Kham’. Erik Schmidt, The Great Gate, 26.

63. According to the legends attached to the various historical personalities responsible for the subsequent discovery and preservation of the Northern Treasures tradition, king Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan himself (in the guise of his own later incarnations) was a major instigator in the unearthing of this cycle of teachings, said to be so important for his family line, and later played an important role in its preservation. See below, notes 66 & 86.

64. Tulku Thondup mentions a thirteenth century incarnation by the name of dPal-bo Ah Hbung. I suppose this to be the same person. T. Thondup, The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa, 160.

65. G. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, 634.
sLob-dpon bdud-’dul was a tantric yogin with expertise in the practice of the Phur bu ze’u smug gu, an early cycle of the deity Vajrakīla, and the young dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan studied these doctrines together with those of the Māyājāla and Mātr, and so on, under his tutelage. He is said to have demonstrated remarkable skill in both understanding and practice from a very early age, perfecting the samādhi of Vajrakīla by the time he was eight years old. Following the death of his father he continued to be educated by his mother.

When he was just eleven years old, three feathery growths appeared on the top of his head and when he was twenty-three there were five. Because these growths looked like the feathers of a vulture he became famous as rGod kyi ldem-’phru-can, “the one with vulture’s feathers”. These extraordinary signs had been foretold in the prophecies and were regarded with awe as the marks of a truly special being. He also became known as Mahāvidyādhara (Rig ’dzin chen po) and this is the title which has been held ever since by each of his successive incarnations.

In 1364 a lama by the name of Mang-lam bzang-po grags-pa unearthed a number of treasure texts at Gyang Yon-po-lung. Among these texts were eight related to the concealed treasures of Zang-zang lha-brag, near to the place where Rig-’dzin rgod-ldem was born, and these included the essential inventory (snying byang) entitled Man ngag gnas kyi don bdun ma. In the new year (February/ March 1365) bZang-po grags-pa entrusted these texts to sTon-pa bsod-nams dbang-phug and two companions with instructions to pass them on to “a yogin carrying a statue or rosary in his hand” that supposedly they would encounter to the east of the Zang-zang mountain and who would begin to engage them in a conversation concerning the king of Gung-thang.

A week or so later, as the three travellers were eating their meal on the bank of a stream near Brag-lung monastery in northern gYas-ru, rGod-ldem-can arrived there from sNa-mo-lung carrying in his hands a brass image of Vajrakīla and a rosary. As they spoke together all the requirements of the prophecy were fulfilled and so, recognizing him as the one they sought, they handed over all the treasure scrolls and a sealed letter of good wishes.

Upon his return to sNa-mo-lung, Rig-’dzin rgod-ldem interpreted the rising of the planet Jupiter in the eighth lunar mansion as a sign that the time had come to take out the key to the treasures. At the first crack of dawn on the eighth day of the snake month in the year of the fire horse (1366), there came from the east a beam of white light “like the trunk of the wish-fulfilling kalpalātā” that struck the summit of Mount bKra-bzang and a spot beneath that was indicated by a light fall of snow.

66. This lama is said to have been the incarnation of the former king of Tibet, Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan. T. Thondup, op. cit., 151.
68. Janet Gyatso (“Signs, Memory and History”, 24) writes “the appearance of the star rGyal Phu on the horizon” but rGyal is the eighth constellation called Puṣya, and Phur-pa or Bṛhaspati is its ruling planet Jupiter. This auspicious configuration marked the birth of the Buddha (Buddhacarita, I, 9; II, 36).
Thus, from the vicinity of three obelisks (rdo ring) within the cavity of a projecting white rock ('dzeng brag dkar po) beneath the summit of Ri-bo bkra-bzang, rGod-ldem-can unearthed the next link in the chain of the Northern Treasures in the form of seven paper scrolls (shog ril). In order to compensate for the removal of these scrolls, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem buried another treasure in their place and the resultant cavity known as rLung-gseng ('Windy Hollow') is reported to be still in existence today.69 During the new year celebrations on the following year, as Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem reached the age of thirty, a tree spontaneously grew up there which is also thought to have remained until now.

Two months later, on the fourth day of the sheep month 1366, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem was engaged in the rite of bestowing upon his disciples the abhi~eka of Vajrakila. During the preliminary section of the rite, just as he was establishing the mandala of deities within the bodies of his disciples, the guru arose and led his followers up into the mountains that look like a heap of poisonous snakes (dug sbrul spung 'dra). The hagiographies describe the air as sweetly scented and filled with rainbows as Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem guided his disciples to the southwest face of the mountain where the atmosphere glowed with ruby-red light in the splendour of the setting sun. They climbed up to a mountain cave and, leaving two disciples stationed beneath the entrance, rGod-ldem-can went inside and began to pray. As the sky grew dark following the setting of the sun, the rock cave began to tremor and shake as a sign that the master of the treasures (gter bdag) had arrived.

At midnight they lit a number of butter-lamps and by their light the group was able to discern upon the rock the clear image of a vişavajra. When the guru pressed beneath that mark with his paper scroll (the symbolic key to the treasures) it seemed to open like a door onto a triangular chamber within which they found a pale blue snake with a yellow belly, as thick as a man’s arm. It was lying in a coil with its face to the southeast upon a square blue stone, the top of which was marked in nine sections with silver coloured nails so that it resembled the back of a tortoise. The coils of the snake looked like an enormous eight-sided precious stone and upon its heart were three gem-like excrescences from which were extracted a roll of paper and a symbolic jewel (rin po che’i rtags tsam cig). Resting upon the blue stone slab, concealed within the serpent’s coils, lay a maroon leather casket, the fivefold repository of the Northern Treasures.

From the central compartment of deep red leather Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem took out three kilas wrapped in maroon silk70 and the Atiyoga texts of Vajrakila as well as the Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal cycle in four volumes which subsequently became among the most famous and revered of all the expositions of Atiyoga doctrines in Tibet. These treatises have twice been carved onto xylographic plates, unlike the majority of Byang-cter literature which is preserved in manuscript form only. The teachings of Bla ma rig'dzin gdung sgmb and other texts related to the sadhana of guru, deva and dākini71 were also found within this section together with hair (dbu skra, of Padmasambhava?) and other sacred articles (byin rlabs kyi rdzas) and thirty paper scrolls wrapped in blue silk.

69. NSTB, I, 780.
70. These three kilas are described in detail at A33, 239–40. See below, Chapter Four.
71. Known as “the three roots” of tantric practice.
Chapter One

The front (eastern) compartment of the box was fashioned of white conch shell and contained texts of the \textit{rgyu 'bras la ldog pa} cycle (putting an end to cause and effect) as well as teachings on the similarity of the awakened mind to the sky (\textit{dGongs pa nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i chos}) and the tantras of the \textit{Ka dag rang byung rang shar} cycle concerning the natural presence and arising of primordial purity.

The golden southern chamber of the chest contained teachings on the fourfold practice of deity invocation (\textit{snyen sgrub rnam pa bzhi'i chos}) and the texts of the \textit{gsang sgrub guru drag po rtsal} and \textit{bKa' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar}.\footnote{These important ritual cycles became famous “like the sun and the moon” due to the brightness and clarity that they induced within the minds of those who practised them. Also in this chamber were found texts relating to Vajrakīla in his form as Mahottarakīla with nine faces and eighteen hands.}

From the western compartment of red copper, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem took out the \textit{rTen 'breI khyad par can} and the \textit{Phyi sgrub 'gro ba kun grol} which form part of the \textit{rTen 'breI chos bdun} cycle. He also took out the \textit{Tsan dan gyi sdong bu lta bu'i chos} and a volume in which were found the \textit{rTa mgrin dregs pa dbang sdud}, the \textit{'Khor 'das dbang sdud} and the \textit{Lha chen} teachings, as well as a further volume containing the \textit{Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod dbang}.

Within the black northern compartment of iron were found the most violent of all the wrathful ritual texts. Most of the Vajrakīla teachings were taken from this chamber of the box as well as the \textit{dGra bgegs thal bar rlog pa'i chos}, a text said to be as pernicious as the stem of a poisonous plant (\textit{dug gi sdong po lta bu}). Eight treatises on the compounding of ritual medicine (\textit{sman gyi tshad byas pa}) were also found there, together with further commentaries (\textit{upadeśa}) and instructions on the making of ‘thread crosses’ (\textit{mdos})\footnote{But not all of these texts were transcribed and disseminated.}

Having discovered these five treasuries of teachings (\textit{mdzod lnga}), Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem is said to have organized each of the sections into one hundred and one parts and rearranged the folios of yellow paper (\textit{shog ser po ti}) into pairs like mother and son, marked with the seed-syllables of the four goddesses of the gates. He then taught the doctrines contained therein to his chosen pupils.

These teachings became known as Byang-gter or Northern Treasures in order to distinguish them from the Lho-gter (Southern Treasures) that had been revealed in previous centuries by Nyang-ral nyi-ma 'od-zer (1136–1204) and Guru chos-dbang.\footnote{None of my sources list any Bon-po doctrines among his discoveries unless these are hinted at by the words “\textit{mdos ... and further upadeśa}” both R. Prats and Tulku Thondup, however, say that rgod-ldem-can is revered by the Bon-po as a \textit{gter ston} (Prats naming him dPon-gsas khyung-thog) but neither specifies the revelations attributed to him. R. Prats, “Some Preliminary Considerations Arising from a Biographical Study of the Early \textit{gTer-ston}”, 259. T. Thondup, \textit{Buddha Mind}, 110.

Thread crosses, although known in India, are not so widely employed there as they are in Tibet. The \textit{Garudaśpurāṇa} (II, V, 14) recommends the placement of such a structure by the crossroads at night in order to propitiate the spirits of the dead. (See also below, note 99.)}
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(1212–1270). These three gter ston are widely renowned in Tibet as the kāya, vāc and citta emanations of Padmasambhava himself and thought to be the three greatest gter ston of all.

Rig-'dzin rgod-Idem is also credited with the discovery of seven ‘hidden lands’ (sbas yul) in which people could live in happiness in the peaceful pursuit of Dharma.74 Having gone to Sikkim (‘Bras-mo gshong)75 he is said to have worked miracles there and blessed the ‘White Rock Cave’ of bKra-shis-ls-sding as a powerful place for meditation. The Chronicle of the rulers of Sikkim76 describes a local cult dedicated to the holiest mountain in that vicinity (Gangs-chen mdzod-linga) as contained in the work of a later Byang-gter gter ston, Shes-rab me-'bar. Sacred dances in honour of the deities thought to reside on the five peaks of that mountain are annually performed by royal command on the full moon day of the seventh Tibetan month but of particular interest to us is the local belief that Rig-'dzin rgod-Idem himself recovered further gter ma from the central peak.77 This secondary revelation was in the form of images: one of Padmasambhava in wrathful guise and one of the goddess mThing-kha. Letters announcing these discoveries were dispatched to Tibet suspended from the necks of vultures.

Apart from the gter ma which he himself revealed, Rig-'dzin rgod-Idem held the key to other lists of hiding places (them byang, kha byang) and was thus instrumental in the unearthing of many more texts and powerful cult objects.

In fulfilment of the prophecies that describe the treasures of Zang-zang lha-brag as being of particular importance to the dynastic descendents of Khri Srong-ide'u-btsan, in 1389 at the age of fifty-two, Rig-'dzin rgod-Idem was appointed the role of personal preceptor to the king of Gung-thang, mChog-sgrub-sde. The special cult object that seems to be endowed with great power for the descendents of this line is named in our texts as ‘the precious Gong khug ma’. It remains unclear as to whether this is a text or an actual ritual kila that was always carried by the siddha Padmasambhava and inherited from him, together with appropriate oral instructions, by Ye-shes mtsho-rgyaP8 In either case it is

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74. Johan Reinhard in his article “Khembalung, the hidden valley” lists the seven hidden lands as: Khumbu, Helambu, Rongshar, Lapchi, Dolpo, Nubri and Sikkim. See note 34 to the Introduction of the present work.

75. Among the gter ston’s accredited revelations is the rDo rje nyl ma’i gnas yig gsang ba’i dkar chag, said to be a pilgrim’s guide to the hidden land of Sikkim. The text was later carved onto wooden printing blocks by Rig-'dzin rtogs-lidan dpa’-bo and a modern photographic reproduction of that edition has been published by Sonam Topgyel in 1983.

76. René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet, 218.

77. Byang-gter hagiographies credit Rig-'dzin rgod-Idem with the discovery of three major gter ma, about which it is poetically said: “One is like the eyes, a clear mirror of all possible appearances. One is like the tongue, a key to the indications of secret mantra. One is like the heart, a key to the significance of the resultant fruit.” He is also thought to have revealed approximately one hundred minor treasures.

78. Gong khug means either a small pouch worn around the neck or the breast pocket of a shirt, etc. In either case, the Gong khug ma is that which was always kept by Padmasambhava close to his heart. Some indication that the item referred to here is indeed a ritual kila is found in the gter ma revelations of mChog-gyur gling-pa where Padmasambhava is described as having a kila of bell metal in his right hand with which the māra and rākṣasa are subjugated, a kila of teak wood (khadira? Tibetan not supplied) with which the devoted disciples are protected, and an iron kila worn around his neck which is indivisible with the deity. Erik Schmidt, The Great
reckoned to represent the power of Vajrakīla and embody the essence of the Vajrakīla doctrines.

Rig-'dzin rgod-Idem passed away at the age of seventy-one in 1408, the year of the male earth mouse. The large number of teachings and special tantric precepts that he handed down to posterity were transmitted through the three lineages known as the Mother, Son and Disciple lines. The successive holders of these doctrines are renowned as having attained many higher and ordinary siddhis.

Maintaining the continuity of the tradition

Having thus established the school of the Northern Treasures in Tibet, Rig-'dzin rgod-Idem remains, to this day, committed by his vows as a bodhisattva to propagate these teachings so long as they continue to serve the needs of humanity. Thus, in accordance with his religious precepts, he is said to have been reborn in mNga'-'ris as the gter ston Legs-lDan bdud-'joms rdo-rje,79 the younger brother of the mNga'-'ris pan-chen and revealer of three further volumes of teachings.80

The mNga'-'ris pan-chen Padma dbang-rgyal (1487–1543),81 who was himself renowned as a scholar and adept in the Byang-gter lineage,82 established a temporary monastery83 around his mountainside retreat cave, to which he gave the name Eva lgog-sgar. Anticipating the future expansion of this encamped community of monks, he composed a strict code of conduct84 to be followed by all who dwelt there. In this way, the teachings of the vidyādhara householder rGod-ldem-can came to be the central field of study for a community of ordained bhikṣus. These teachings were further supplemented by Padma dbang-rgyal’s own gter ma discovery, the cycle of Rig 'dzin yongs 'dus.85 Encouraged by the gter ston Shes-rab 'od-zer, Padma dbang-rgyal continued to build up both the fabric and the reputation of this religious community and eventually established the monastery

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Gate, 124. C. R. Lama, on the other hand, insists that the Gong khug ma is a condensed ritual text.

79. R. Prats (“Some Preliminary Considerations”, 259, n. 11) remarks that “there seems to be some discrepancies” concerning the dates of this incarnation. Kong-sprul offers 1512–1625 but these dates are clearly impossible. Samten Karmay, The Great Perfection, 145.

80. Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba bdyings grol (1 vol.), Tshe sgrub bdud rtsi 'khyil pa (1 vol.), and Drag po dbu dgu (1 small vol.).


82. He is also said to have heard the Byang-gter doctrines from Drang-po gter-ston Śākya bzang-po. E. Dargyay, op. cit., 157.

83. According to bDud-'joms Rinpoche: “The entire monastic community of their seminary became a wandering encampment as a result of the depredations of Zhing-Shag-pa (Tshe-brtan rdo-rje), the governor of Tsang.” NSTB, I, 783. The troubles caused by that governor are said to have come to an end, however, when he was killed by the wrathful magic rites of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal who earned his title “Byang-bdag” (Protector of the Northern Treasures) as a result of this deed.

84. bsGrigs kyi bka' yig rdo rje 'bar ba gzi byin. He also composed the renowned sDom gsun rnam nges in which he demonstrated the interrelationship of the prātimokṣa, bodhisattva and mantra vows.

85. Bla ma bka' bzrgyad yongs 'dus chos skor.
of Thub-bstan gser-mdog-can. He died at the age of fifty-six in the village of 'On-smeg-tang.

In 1550 Padma dbang-rgyal was reborn as bKra-shis stobs-rgyal (1550–1607)86, the son of a clan chief in Northern Tibet. Furthering the work of his predecessor, bKra-shis stobs-rgyal unearthed three important cycles of teachings87 from within a cave in gTsangrong and became famous for his religious activities in both Khams and China. Wishing to heal the rift with the kings of gTsang that had disrupted the peace of the Byang-gter monastic community, and supported by his religious patron Pho-bo bka'-gnam rgyal-po, bKra-shis stobs-rgyal continued to build up the mountainside retreat centre mNga'-ris pan-chen evam lcog-sgar which he now renamed Guru padma'i evam lcog-sgar.

At the age of thirty, bKra-shis stobs-rgyal fathered a son who was recognized as the third incarnation of the Mahāvidyādhara rGod kyi ldem-'phru-can. Born in Byang ngam-ring, this great incarnation Ngag gi dbang-po (1580–1639) moved the residence of Evam lcog-sgar to the central province of dBus where, in 1599 (the year of the earth pig), he founded the monastery Guru padma'i evam lcog-sgar thub-bstan rdo-rje-brag.88 Since then, that monastery has been the main seat of learning for the lineage of the Northern Treasures and the see for all successive incarnations of its gter ston. During the lifetime of its founder it perhaps housed more than two thousand monks89 and, growing even larger in later years, it became one of the principal rNying-ma-pa monasteries in Tibet. Even so, Rig-'dzin Ngag gi dbang-po was not satisfied with what he had been able to achieve by the end of his lifetime and he entrusted further plans for its development to his leading disciple bsTan-'dzin nor-bu of Yo-l mo.90

The great Fifth Dalai Lama, in the year of his birth in 1617, was given an empowerment of long life by Ngag gi dbang-po. As he grew up he came to receive the full series of

86. A. M. Blondeau, “Analysis of the Biographies of Padmasambhava”, 51, n. 11, gives 1550–1602 but points to some cause for doubt. Both Padma dbang-rgyal and bKra-shis stobs-rgyal are traditionally thought to have been incarnations of King Khri Srong-le'u-btsan.
87. These are the Tshe sgrub sku gsun rig 'dus, the Karma guru'i chos skor and the Ma rgyud khrag rlung ma (also known as the Ma rgyud snying po don gsun).
88. The name rDo-rje-brag derives from the natural image of a vajra, easily discernible within the folds of a nearby rocky ridge. Tulku Thondup in The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa says that the monastery was built in 1632, probably the date of its final consecration. In his Buddhist Civilisation in Tibet, on the other hand, he gives the even later date of 1659, twenty years after the death of its founder.
89. This figure is given by Rigzin & Russell. Tarthang Tulku (Crystal Mirror, V) gives the figure as two hundred, whilst Wylie (The Geography of Tibet) and Ferrari & Petech (mKhyen-brtse’s Guide) give four hundred. Tarthang Tulku also mentions that, at this time, the monastery had three incarnate lamas.
90. Revered by his followers as the third incarnation of sNgags-'chang Śākya bzang-po who was responsible for opening up the 'hidden land' of Yo-l mo (Helambu district in Nepal) where the Byang-gter has flourished to this day. On a pilgrimage to the sacred sites of the Kathmandu valley, Śākya bzang-po supervised a major restoration of the great stupa at Svayambhūnāth during which a cakra and spire were placed on top of the edifice by gTsang-smyon (the crazy yogin of gTsang) Sangs-rgyas rgyal-mtshan. K. Dowman, “A Buddhist Guide”, 212. The date of this repair, patronised by King Ratnamalla, is said to have been 1504 (A. W. Macdonald & A. V. Stahl, Newar Art, 32) and yet Graham Clarke says that Śākya bzang-po founded the first temple in Yo-l mo in the late 17th century. G. Clarke, “A Helambu History”, 7.
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tantric authorisations of the Northern Treasure tradition (some of which were said to have been received directly from the deceased master bKra-shis stobs-rgyal in mystic visions91), as well as the unbiased teachings of his own (dGe-lugs-pa) and other schools. Ngag gi dbang-po died in 1639.

Two years later, at Mon-mkhar rnam-sras-gling, the birth of Blo-bzang padma 'phrin-las (1641–1718)92 was marked by an unusually high number of auspicious portents and he was recognized as the fourth in the line of Mahāvidyādhara. After the ceremony of his re­enthronement by his former disciple bsTan-'dzin nor-bu of Yol-mo, Padma 'phrin-las became a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama from whom he received both śrāmanera and bhikṣu vows.

Studying intensively under some of the greatest teachers of his day,93 Padma 'phrin-las received the empowerments and commentaries of a large number of tantric doctrines from both the old and new schools and he revised and greatly extended the teachings of his own incarnation line, the Northern Treasure school of rDo-rje-brag. Gathering together all of the teachings that had been handed down in the three streams of transmission from the original gter ston (the Mother, Son and Disciple lineages), he united them into a single line. He composed a number of new treatises and worked extensively to arrange the ritual texts of the Byang-gter in proper liturgical order, supplementing the original texts with extra parts wherever necessary. Correcting such errors as had arisen in the transmission, he reinstated earlier traditions of ritual activity which had become lost or confused, such as the proper systems of chanting, laying out of mandala, preparing the sacrificial bali and so on, filling thirteen volumes with his work. Rig-'dzin padma 'phrin-las was killed in 1718 when the invading Dzungar Mongols razed the monastery of Thub-bstan rdo-rje-brag to the ground.94

The fifth incarnation of Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem was bsKal-bzang padma dbang-phyug (1720–1770), born at Nyag-rong lcags-mdud in the district of sPo-'bor-sgang in eastern Tibet to a family claiming descent from the ancient 1Ha dynasty of Tibetan monarchs. Following his installation at rDo-rje-brag he thoroughly repaired all damage to his monastery. His own visionary teachings (dag snang) include the bKa' 'duschos kyi rgya mtsho and the Padma drag po meditations upon the guru in ferocious aspect.

After him came Khams-gsum zil-gnon (Kun-bzang 'gyur-med lhun-grub rdo-rje, the sixth incarnation),95 born at gSer-tog in the region of Dar-rtse-mdo where stands the easternmost branch monastery of the Byang-gter tradition; and Ngag-dbang 'jam-dpal mi-

91. See S. Karmay, Secret Visions, 66, 74, etc., also 34 where it is said that Padmasambhava himself gave the Fifth Dalai Lama instructions in the Byang-gter.
92. S. Karmay (op. cit.) gives his date of birth as 1640.
93. Among whom were Zur-chen chos-dbyings rang-grol, bKa'-gyur-ba bsod-nams mchog-ldan, Khra-tshang-ba blo-mchog rdo-rje, gTer-chen 'gyur-med rdo-rje, lHa-btsun nam-mkha’ 'jigs-med and Se-ston thugs-mchog 'od-bar.
94. See L. Petech, China and Tibet in the Early Eighteenth Century and D.L. Snellgrove & H.E. Richardson, A Cultural History of Tibet, for details of this troubled historical period.
95. Biographical outlines for the remaining incarnations are taken from sTag-lung-tse-sprul Rinpoche, A Brief History of Dorje Tag Monastery, 12–3.
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'gyur lhun-grub rdo-rje (the seventh) who came from rNam-sras-gling in Mon-mkhar. Both of these lamas died while still quite young.

The eighth Mahāvīryādhara of rDo-rje-brag was bsKal-bzang bdud-'dul rdo-rje, born in upper La-yag in lHo-brag. Famous for his skill in fierce tantric rites, he is said to have repulsed the invading Gorkha army by means of his occult power, for which service to his country he was rewarded by the government with the title Hu thug thu.

Thub-bstan chos-dbang mnyam-nyid rdo-rje, the ninth successor to the throne, was born near Lhasa in the fifth month of the wood monkey year (1884). He passed away in the year of the water monkey, 1932.

The present incumbent is Thub-bstan 'jig-med rnam-grol rgya-mtsho who was born in Lhasa in 1936. Recognized as the tenth incarnation of the gter ston, he was ordained as a monk by Ra-sgreng Rinpoche, the regent after the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. As well as studying the Byang-gter tradition with 'Go-tsha mkhan-chen Theg-mchog bstan-'dzin, a disciple of his predecessor, he has been taught by mKhan Rinpoche of sMin-grol-gling and bDud-'joms Rinpoche. Despite the overthrow of Tibet by the communist Chinese, rNam-grol rgya-mtsho has remained in Tibet where he has lately been active in the rebuilding of his monastery which was almost completely devastated during the ‘cultural revolution’.

Northern Treasures studies in Tibet

In general, the religious tradition of rDo-rje-brag and its affiliate monasteries includes daily recitations from the Chos sphyod rab gsal collection of Byang-gter prayers, the entire volume of which is memorized by every monk. More able students undertake arduous meditative retreats focussed upon the ‘outer, inner and secret’ sādhanas of the Byang-gter and then the study of the wrathful deities including Yamantaka and Vajrakila. All inmates are expected to train in the arts of ritual chanting, music and dance, drawing the mandala in coloured powder, sculpting the intricate balis and the weaving of mdo. Regular examinations are held in the sūtra and tantra throughout the year, for the course of study includes all branches of Buddhist knowledge, not merely the special revelations of the Byang-gter.

On the day of the first half-moon of each year, at the end of the new-year celebrations, the sangha of rDo-rje-brag gather together in order to spend a week practising the Byang-gter tshe sgrub rituals for the health and longevity of the world. This is accompanied by meditation upon Sukhāvatī, the western paradise of Amitābha, whose empowerment is bestowed upon the entire assembly on the day of the first full moon.

96. rNam-grol rgya-mtsho has repeatedly been invited to Dharamsala in northern India by the present abbot of dGa'-gdong monastery (see below).
97. cf. C. R. Lama, “The Twelve Months in the Life of a Monastery”, in which the annual cycle of practice at 'Khor-gdond-gdon is discussed.
98. Phyi sgrub thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol, Nang sgrub rig 'dzin gdung sgrub and gSang sgrub drag po rtsal.
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On the new moon day of the second month, the *bhūmibandha* is performed in preparation for the elaborate construction of the Avalokiteśvara *mandala*. The deity is then worshipped for seven days, at the end of which he is presented with the concluding *homa* offerings and his empowerment is bestowed upon the assembly.

During the third month, five days are devoted after the first half-moon to the *Zhi khro* cycle of Karma gling-pa and at the end of the month the *mandala* of Gar-dbang rdor-sems is constructed in accordance with the text *Thugs kyi me long*.

The fourth month begins with a week-long practice of Legs-ldan-rje’s *Tshe sgrub bdud rtsi 'khyil ba* cycle and the worship of *sKu gsum rigs sdu*.* A token of the ‘longevity nectar’ produced during these rites is always presented to the Dalai Lama. From the tenth to the fourteenth, the peaceful and wrathful deities of the *dGongs pa zang thal* are worshipped and one thousand butter-lamps are offered on the day of the full moon in honour of the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and entry into *parinirvāna*. The month ends with a three day *gtor zlog* ritual.

Throughout the early part of the fifth month, rehearsals of the musicians and dancers are held in preparation for the elaborate worship of *Bla ma gsang 'dus*¹⁰⁰ which is performed on the tenth. The rites of *Srog gi spu gri* are performed on the eighth and a *ganacakra* offered on the ninth in accordance with the texts of *Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub*. This is followed in the evening by the dances of the *daśakrodha* kings. Crowds of pilgrims gather to witness the spectacular masked dances of the *Guru mtsan brgyad* on the tenth and to receive an empowerment of long-life. The worship of *Bla ma gsang 'dus* continues in the temple through the eleventh and twelfth and this is followed by the rites of *Drag po rtsal* on the thirteenth and those of *Guru yon tan gter mdzod* on the fourteenth.

The fourth day of the sixth month is set aside for the offering of one thousand butter-lamps and the *posadha* ceremony for the restoration of damaged vows is performed on the fifteenth. The summer retreat for all the monks begins on the sixteenth, during which time all the known ‘words of the Buddha’ (*bKa’ gyur*) are recited. From the twenty-first to the twenty-seventh, the elaborate rite of *'Khor ba dbyings gröl* is performed using a *mandala* constructed of coloured powders. This culminates in a peaceful *homa* and the bestowal of empowerment.

The seventh and eighth days of the seventh month are spent preparing the intricate offerings required for the five day cycle of rituals to be performed from the ninth. This begins with the worship of *Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub* on the ninth and continues with an empowerment of *Bla ma gsang 'dus* on the tenth, the Nyang system of *Guru drag po* on the eleventh, the Byang-gter *Guru drag po* on the twelfth and a final *ganacakra* ceremony of *Guru yon tan gter mdzod* on the thirteenth. During the morning of the twentieth, the *bhūmibandha* is performed so that the *mandala* of Vajrakila may be constructed throughout the evening. The remainder of the month is then devoted to the worship of this deity,¹⁰¹ concluding with “the casting of the *bali*” on the twenty-ninth and the performance of four

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¹⁰⁰. Revealed by the early *gter ston* Guru chos-dbang.

¹⁰¹. Apart from this annual ten-day festival in his honour, Vajrakila is worshipped daily in his own chapel called Srid-gsum rnam-rgyal on the premises of rDo-rje-brag.
types of homa rite on the thirtieth. Following the rite of “accepting the siddhi”, the accumulated annual donations to the monastery are distributed among the monks.

The eighth and ninth months are generally taken as a holiday but during this period a delegation consisting of the abbot and ten monks have traditionally gone to Lhasa in order to spend four weeks blessing (gYang 'gug) the government with the rites of Nor bu mchog rgyal and Dur bdag.

From the seventeenth to the thirtieth of the ninth month, twenty-two monks from rDo-rje-brag would reside in the southern gate shrine of bSam-yas monastery as guests of the rDzong dpon where they would perform the Yamantaka rites called 'Char kha nag po.

On the twentieth of the eleventh month, those monks whose duty it is to attend upon the Mahāvidyādhara (gzim chung pa) perform the bhūmividhi as a prelude to laying out the coloured powder mandala of either the Byang-gter bKa’ brgyad khro rol or the Zhang-khrom Tshe bdag cycle, alternating the one with the other on successive years. The main ritual practice then continues from the twenty-second to the twenty-eighth and the rite of hurling the zor takes place on the twenty-ninth. On the final day of the month, bali offerings are made and they perform the rite of “accepting the siddhi”.

The latter half of the twelfth month is especially devoted to rituals concerned with “casting out the demons of the old year” (dgu gtor). The most elaborate preparations of the site, the mandala and the ritual offerings are made in accordance with either the bKa’ brgyad khro rol or the Tshe bdag texts, these being alternated annually as before. The main gtor zlog rites begin on the twenty-second and continue until the end of the month, accompanied by dances on each of the four final days. To mark the end of the Tibetan year, the rites conclude with particularly auspicious prayers of benediction and the practice that “averts the Lord of Death”, as taught by Padma 'phrin-las.

Beginning with the gter ston himself, who travelled extensively throughout Tibet during his lifetime, the teachings of the Byang-gter have spread to all parts of the Tibetan Buddhist world. Its doctrines have formed a part of the study curriculum in a large number of unrelated monasteries and its own establishments have numbered over fifty, both large and small, from Brag-thog-dgon in Ladakh to Yol-mo-gangs and Shar-pa in Nepal, bKra-shis-lding and others in Sikkim, and rDor-brag-dgon in Dar-rtse-mdo.

Second state oracle
Among these monasteries, of particular interest is the small establishment of dGa’-gdong-dgon, the seat of the second most important (after gNas-chung) oracle in Tibet. It is the function of the resident medium of that monastery to act as a mouthpiece for the protective deity Shing-bya-can. This yaksa ‘With a Wooden Bird’ is a member of the sKu-Inga

102. The main sgrol 'cham and zor 'cham being elaborately performed on the twenty-ninth.
103. Byang-gter rituals are widely known and practised throughout Nepal, especially by the Tamang among whom the tradition was propagated by bsTan-'dzin nor-bu, the third Rig-'dzin yol-mo-ba sprul-sku, in the seventeenth century. Yol-mo and its temples are described in C. Jest, Monuments of Northern Nepal, 80-90. A brief description of Brag-thog-dgon is to be found in D.L. Snellgrove & T. Skorupski, Cultural Heritage of Ladakh, I, 132.
104. René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet, 5, 109-15, etc.
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group\textsuperscript{105} and the particular guardian of the people of Mi-nyag, the ancestral home of the Sikkim royal family and thus closely associated with the Byang-gter tradition. In a prophesy concerning the invasion of Tibet by the Mongols, the \textit{Padma bka'i thang} recommend that this deity be invoked as a powerful protector.\textsuperscript{106}

Shing-bya-can is described as dwelling in a palace of gold to the south under the appellation 'King of Virtue' (Yon-tan gyi rgyal-po). Black in colour with one face and two hands, he wields a battle-axe and a snare and rides a black horse with white heels. He wears a cloak of snake and tiger skins and a cane hat covered with \textit{garuda} skin. His queen is the black gSer gyi spu-gri-ma who has a single face and four hands in which she holds a sword, red banner, lance and trident. She wears a garment of rough yellow silk with a belt of snakes and a black silken headdress. She roams around at night on a donkey with a red spot on its forehead. Accompanying the royal pair are an ‘emanation’ of light blue colour, their ‘minister’ Bya-rgod thang-nag, who has the appearance of a young \textit{upāsaka} carrying a \textit{vajra} and hammer, and their train of messengers consisting of long-tailed monkeys, grey-haired apes and rats.

Noted for his particular power in controlling the weather, the human medium of this deity (the \textit{dGa'-gdong} chos-rje) is regularly employed by the government of Tibet in this capacity. Of greater import, however, is his supposed ability to trace the movements of deceased religious dignitaries and thereby render great assistance to the various monastic officials (bla brang) in search of their high priest’s reincarnation. During their initial meeting with the medium, the petitioners would generally not disclose the actual details of their quest, these being put directly to the deity himself only after the medium had entered his oracular trance. Part of the reason for keeping their mission secret is that not all parents were found to be happy at the prospect of losing their child simply because he had been recognized as the rightful occupant of the lama’s throne in some far away monastery.\textsuperscript{107}

dGa’-gdong-dgon in Tibet, now totally destroyed, was home to approximately one hundred and seventy-five monks. The oracle, a married man whose family domicile lay only a few hundred yards from the monastery, was apparently expected to enter a state of trance in order to fulfill his role as Shing-bya-can’s mouthpiece as often as twice a week. All the preparatory work for the ritual trance being the responsibility of the monks, the medium would go to the monastery only after everything had been made ready. Donning the elaborate costume of the deity, he would then be questioned by the interested parties and expected to deliver his prediction(s). The spectacle of the trance would be witnessed by any number of persons but the information divulged by the deity would be kept secret—even from the medium himself who would have no recollection of events after the trance had ended. Indeed, the medium would generally fall into a faint following his ordeal and, even after regaining consciousness, would continue to experience nausea and severe abdominal pains for some time.

\textsuperscript{105} Consisting of Pe-har, the oracular deity of gNas-chung-dgon, and his four companions.
The role of the medium being an inherited one, the present dGa’-gdong chos-rje, bsTan-'dzin dbang-grags, was selected for the title from among the six eligible sons of the late oracle because he was sickly and slightly insane, such attributes being favourably regarded as indicative of a good candidate for the gruelling task of offering his body on a regular basis as host to a powerful foreign spirit. Afraid of causing offense to the deity, bsTan-'dzin dbang-grags accepted the role for which he had been chosen and began a period of ritual purification\(^{108}\) under the guidance of the senior dGa’-gdong monks. He is now settled with his wife in Dharamsala, actively involved there in building up the new dGa’-gdong monastery.

The Byang-gter Tradition in modern India

As the power and importance of rDo-rje-brag monastery grew in Tibet, so the number of incarnation lineages within its hierarchy increased.\(^{109}\) This number now stands at eleven, amongst which is that of sTag-lung-tse. The fourth incarnation in this line is the present sTag-lung-tse-sprul Rinpoche, bShad-grub nyin-byed 'phrin-las bzang-po, who was born in 1927. The foremost authority of the Byang-gter in India today, 'Phrin-las bzang-po was educated as a sprul sku at rDo-rje-brag monastery in Tibet from the age of eight, and at the age of twenty-three he became its elected abbot, a post which he held for six years.

Leaving Tibet in 1959 among the thousands of refugees fleeing from Chinese aggression, 'Phrin-las bzang-po was invited to act as the abbot of the only Byang-gter monastery in India at that time, Brag-thog-dgon in Ladakh. Within the last few years, however, he has successfully been able to reestablish Evam lcog-sgar rdo-rje-brag in his adopted home, Simla in Himachal Pradesh.

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108. During the interviews recorded with Daniel Barlocher (\textit{supra}) he stated that he could easily avoid ever becoming the deity’s medium (a role which he had not at that time actually begun to perform) by the simple expedient of adopting a dissolute lifestyle so that the deity would naturally refuse to enter his morally contaminated form.

109. See the introduction to the \textit{dGongs pa zang thal} for a list of these incarnation lineages and also for a comprehensive list of Byang-gter monasteries throughout Tibet.
PART TWO

THE KĪLA
Chapter Two
Buddhist Assimilation of the Kīla

Vedic antecedents

According to the first book of the Rgveda, the demiurge Indra employed a kīla-like weapon before the world came into being in order to slay the primordial cosmic serpent Vṛtra within whose coils were trapped 'the waters of life'. As the primeval ocean was released life began, thus revealing the kīla as an instrument of paradox: a weapon having the power of both life and death. As a religious emblem it appears to kill and yet it creates life.

It is also said that during his act of creating the world, Indra pinned down the earth and propped up the heavens. Prior to that, earth and heaven were not separated. Thus the spike can be seen to possess a cosmic dimension as a weapon that spans both earth and heaven. The special function of its lower part is to stabilize the earth, while its upper part leads to the realm of the gods.

These early themes remain discernible to the present day within the complex mythology of the Buddhist kīla. The idea of a spike that kills and liberates, a spike that strikes into the earth and reaches up to heaven, seems quite quickly to have become absorbed into Buddhism and eventually arose as the focal point of a tantric cult dedicated to the worship of the esoteric deity Vajrakīla who bears as his special symbol the ancient pointed spike adopted as a powerful instrument of ritual and magic.

A preliminary step towards the Buddhist assimilation of the kīla was probably the annual circumscription of an area within which the sangha would have been expected to remain for the duration of the summer season rains retreat. As the monks were engaged in pegging out the boundaries of their sacred domicile with wooden stakes and lengths of cord, they would undoubtedly have wished those boundaries to be secure against the onslaughts of Māra who could be relied upon to try and disturb their meditations. Thus, as the stakes were hammered into the ground, the myth of Indra versus Vṛtra may have come

111. A function often ascribed to mountains, popularly regarded in Indo-Tibetan culture as natural manifestations of the indrakīla. An apotropaic aspect of the spike is also to be noted in the Atharvaveda ritual of hammering acacia pegs into the ground in order to drive out demons of illness. G. U. Thite, Medicine: Its Magico-religious Aspects According to the Vedic and Later Literature, 148.
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to mind and been recast in Buddhist form. Any demarcation of a circumference automatically creates a centre and, for all practical purposes, a wooden stake is again the natural implement with which to mark out the central spot.

Architecture

Indian treatises on temple architecture describe a number of operations for which the use of wooden pegs is required. For the most part these pegs are nailed into the earth in order to establish the outline of the building to be constructed. The texts simply describe the distances that are required to lie between these wooden pegs and the manner in which the whole area is to be divided up by further stakes and lengths of string so as to facilitate the delineation of the full temple plan upon the ground. Of course there is nothing extraordinary in any of this. We may suppose that similar instructions would have been included in a text devoted to the planning of a medieval kitchen garden, had any such tract been written. A temple, however, is consciously dedicated to the divine and so we may reasonably expect any mythological aspect adhering to the form or function of a wooden spike to be more expressly stated in a treatise on architecture than in a gardening manual.

The initial prescription in such treatises is to locate, by astrological methods, the earth-dwelling nāga within whose domain the architects wish to construct their edifice. It is then possible to stabilize the building site by fixing that nāga with a kila judiciously driven into the earth.112

Stella Kramrisch,113 likening the temple to an image of a god, says that the āmalaka (high dome) of the building is regarded as the head and that the brahmārandhra (foramen in the skull) is pierced by the kila which fixes the stūpīkā (finial). This corresponds closely to the Vaiṣṇavite tantric meditation in which the vajrākīla is contemplated within a thousand-petalled lotus in the crown of the yogin’s head. There it pierces the centre of the six-pointed mahāyantra, an emblematic figure resembling the six-pointed dharmaodāya pierced by the tip of the Buddhist ‘cosmic kila’ (bhavakīla).114 The central axis of the Buddhist stūpa, also, is known as indrākīla115 and this has the function of stabilizing both the earth and the edifice itself.

So far, then, we have seen the kila or wooden stake as both boundary marker and holder of the centre, where ‘centre’ refers not to a single point but to a vertical axis indicated by wooden stakes both above and below. We have also noted that Indra used a kila to bring about liberation from a hostile force and that the ground where a kila is implanted is considered to be firmly fixed and held in a stable condition with the upright line of the peg itself acting as a conduit to the realm of the gods.

112. R. Mayer, “Observations on the Tibetan Phur-ba and the Indian Kila”, 167. This practice of vāstuvidyā is condemned as a vile art in the Dīgha Nikāya, I, 9 & II, 87, etc. According to Trevor Ling its purpose was to ascertain before building a house whether or not the site is haunted by spirits. T. Ling, Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil, 19.
114. Brahmāsamhitā, V, 2. A. Avalon, ed., Tantrik Texts, XV.
In the lexicons we observe the word *indrakīla*\(^{116}\) to include ‘door bolt’ among its several meanings and in later Buddhist writings this word came also to mean the threshold of any door or gate, be it the entrance to house, palace or city.\(^{117}\) Robert Mayer mentions certain pillar-like *indrakīlas* which function as boundary markers indicating the rule of law within and separating the enclosed area from the lawless wilderness of no-man’s land without. In the case of the royal palace he shows them as markers of special reserved areas for which royal authority is required before admission can be gained.\(^{118}\) The prevailing form of these pillars is octagonal in cross section, the very shape that I described in a previous work as the one required for the columns supporting the *torana* at the entrance to a tantric *maṇḍala*.\(^{119}\)

Lily de Silva links the placement of the *indrakīla* with the establishment of the *bodhimāṇḍa*, about which she says (quoting from the *Pūjāvalīya*): “(it) is a great fortress protected by the majestic wall of the ten *pāramitās*, extending up to the cupola of the Brahmā world. Even Māra with his vast array of forces could not get past this formidable barrier”.\(^{120}\) When we come to deal with the tantric rites of the *kīla* we shall observe how ten *kīlas* form just such a formidable barrier against Māra and his hordes, surrounding and enclosing the sacred palace (or fortress) of the *bodhimāṇḍala*. In the rite of initiation through which this protective power is transmitted, these ten *kīlas* are explicitly associated with the ten *pāramitās*.\(^{121}\)

The *kīla* which marks the boundary is now seen to be associated with the protection of the enclosure against intrusion. A ‘border’ or ‘threshold’, of course, need not necessarily be visibly located in space. The threshold of a house, palace or city is perhaps more tangible than the threshold of life and death but the latter, too, provides us with themes that have since become incorporated into the general mythology of the *kīla* as an instrument of magic. One such theme is derived from popular folklore at a great remove from the lofty Vedic tradition of Indra *versus* the chthonic Vṛtra. This is the idea of the *vetāla*, a picturesque topic which bears all the hallmarks of a Haitian voodoo cult nurtured in the fertile ground of village superstition.\(^{122}\)

**Vetāla: ghouls at the limit of life and death**

The term *vetāla* (‘zombie’, corpse animated by rites of black magic) was perhaps coined by the Buddhists for these creatures made their first appearance in Indian literature within


\(^{117}\) F. Edgerton, *BHS Dictionary*, 114. See also the *Pāli-English Dictionary* of the PTS where identical meanings are ascribed to *indakhīla*.

\(^{118}\) R. Mayer, *op. cit.*, cites the work of Lily de Silva, Jan Gonda and Charles Malamoud (among others) in order to show the pillar *indrakīla* to be a conflation of the door peg (*indrakīla*) with the sacrificial post (*yūpa*).


\(^{120}\) Lily de Silva, “The Symbolism of the Indrakīla in the Paritta Maṇḍapa”, 248.

\(^{121}\) See below, Chapter Seven.

\(^{122}\) The voodoo-like technique of bringing harm to an enemy by piercing his effigy with spikes is a significant feature of the later *kīla* rituals (dealt with in detail in Part Three of the present work).
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the Daśabhūmika-sūtra,123 the Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra124 and the ten-sectioned vinaya of the Sarvāstivādinś.125 Later references are to be found in the Buddhist dhāranīs, such as the Mahāmāyārī and the Pañcabuddhoṣṭa-dhāranī, and they are placed in the entourage of Śiva by the Śaivites of Kashmir.126 In the first chapter of the Vimalaprabhā they are described as naked and emaciated, holding curved knives (karttikā) and skull cups in their hands and uttering fearful howls of phat! Fire issues from their mouths and they are said to be cruel-minded eaters of human flesh.127

In a number of Buddhist tantric treatises, the krodharāja Yamāntaka is said to have as his queen the mistress of these un-dead ghouls called (appropriately enough) Vetāli. In the earlier texts, however, she is known as Śmaśānikā (Mistress of the Charnel Ground) and such is her name in the Byang-gter Vajrakila cycle. She is said to have appeared in person to Kantali, a stitcher of rags, after he pierced his finger with a spike and to have become his guru. Kantali’s success in following her instructions quickly elevated him to the rank of mahāsiddha.128 Vetāli also occurs in the circle of eight dākinīs (Gaurī and the rest) found in the maṇḍalas of Hevajra, Jñānādākini, Heruka, Yogāmba, Vajradāka and others. Her seat in the circle is in the western direction of all these maṇḍalas and her colour is given as red/black.129

In Chapter XXVI of the Maṇjuśrīmūla-kalpa (MMK) (widely acknowledged as probably the earliest of all Buddhist tantras), two rites are given through which one may seek to animate a corpse and attain the vetālasiddhi.130 According to the yogin Kāṇha, who was himself apparently adept at this art, this is one of the siddhis to be counted among ‘the eight great accomplishments’ (aṣṭamahāsiddhi).131 Narrative accounts of the modus operandi are to be found in the Kathāsārītāgāra132 and other sources,133 all of which

125. T. 1435, first translated into Chinese in 404 AD by Kumārajīva.
126. K. Dowman, Masters of Mahāmudrā, 326, says that Vetāli, the mistress of these ghouls, was worshipped by the Kāpālikas in Orissa at the popular Kāpālīni Temple of Bhubaneswar. It is also said that Vetāla and Bhairava were twin sons born to Tārāvatī after she had been raped by Śiva. W. D. O’Flaherty, Aseticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva, 69.
127. J. Upadhyaya, Vimalaprabhā, 9. On p. 8 of that text they are listed among the two groups (or the extended group?) of the eight great fears (aṣṭaṅghora) and are identified with piśācas. Such an identity is not attested elsewhere however.
129. As described in the Nispannayogāvāli.
130. MMK, 292.
131. This unusual occult accomplishment is not included among the aṣṭamahāsiddhis either in the Śādhanaṃalā or any other source consulted by me, unless it be equated with the siddhi of the sword (see below, note 139). It is listed as a minor siddhi in the Vajrabhairava-tantra (B. Siklos, 95). For the biography of Kāṇha see David Templeman (1989), within which Kāṇha’s list of eight siddhīs is to be found on p. 14.
portray the rite very much in accordance with the details given below. This would seem to indicate that the practice of this peculiar occult art eventually became widespread, partly due perhaps to the fascination that it held for the more macabre elements in the public imagination. Having successfully animated the corpse, the sādhaka was free to employ it as his servant. In the Blue Annals\(^\text{134}\) we read that the scholar Vāgīśvarakirti gained the siddhi of great memory from a vetāla.

In both of the descriptions given in the MMK, it is said that the yogin should perform this rite on a corpse in sound condition (akṣatāṅga, “with unbroken limbs”). Such a corpse (according to the first rite) should be restrained by means of four khadirakilas\(^\text{135}\) and the yogin should sit upon it and perform a homa rite\(^\text{136}\) in which he burns offerings of powdered gems. The second rite says that the corpse should be nailed down with kilas of jujube wood (badara). In both cases the kilas are presumably a precautionary measure against the sādhaka being overpowered by the monster when it arises.\(^\text{137}\)

If offerings of lohacūrṇa (which could be either red copper filings or powdered red iron rust) are placed into the mouth of the corpse it will poke out its tongue which the sādhaka must immediately sever. This magical fetish will be “as useful to its owner as a retinue of one hundred retainers”. The first version of the rite likens the tip of the tongue to a wish-fulfilling jewel (cintāmani) obtained as a magical reward for the oblations of powdered gems. The owner of such a prize becomes “an emperor among knowledge-holders” (vidyādharaśakravartin) with the power to survive an ‘intermediate aeon’ (antarakalpa) and sport (with the gods) on the summit of Mount Meru. According to Tāranātha,\(^\text{138}\) the

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\(^\text{133}\) Such as the detailed account to be found in Bāṇa’s Harṣacarita. English translation by E. B. Cowel & F. W. Thomas, MLB, reprint 1961, 90-2.

\(^\text{134}\) G. Roerich, The Blue Annals, 757-8.

\(^\text{135}\) Acacia spikes. Acacia trees bear vicious barbs up to two or three inches in length and it may be these that are referred to here for, as written in the Sadhanamāla, 171, kaṇṭakena ... kilayet, “one should fasten (it) with a thorn”. Later, however, the manufacture of ritual kilas demanded the wood of the tree itself. Cf. note 193, below.

\(^\text{136}\) The homa is to be performed in the mouth of the corpse.

\(^\text{137}\) Alexandra David-Neel, Magic and Mystery in Tibet, 102-4, and Turrell Wylie, “Ro-Langs: The Tibetan Zombie”, 74ff, provide graphic descriptions of the menace said to be caused by these uncontrolled ‘walking dead’. Surprisingly, however, neither author mentions the role of the kila in keeping them suppressed.

\(^\text{138}\) Chimp a & Chattopadhyaya, Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in India, 263. Tāranātha is said to have heard the biographies of many siddhas from his Indian teacher Buddhagupta “who was well travelled and a mine of stories”. D. Templeman, The Origin of the Tārā Tantra, 8.
severed tongue turns into a sword which bestows these powers\textsuperscript{139} while the corpse itself turns to gold. The MMK says that the owner of the tongue may travel wherever he pleases and take possession of whatever he sees. After death he enters a pure realm or he becomes a king in the realm of men.

Almost identical accounts of these rites (including specifically the use of $kīlas$ to peg down the corpse) are to be found in Chinese translations of the \textit{Vajrakumāra-tantra}.\textsuperscript{140} Bāna\textsuperscript{141} and Somadeva\textsuperscript{142} add colour to these descriptions by their observations that this $sādhana$ is to be performed during the night of the dark moon (on the fourteenth night of the waning moon), within a \textit{mandala} illumined by the flames of lamps fed with human fat. The magic circle itself is to be drawn with powdered human bones and vessels of blood are placed in the corners. These authors confirm the view that the rite brings its successful practitioner to the state of a \textit{vidyādhara}, warn of the dire consequences of failure and make note of the tongue as a magical fetish that enables its bearer to travel without hindrance.

A connection between severed tongues and the risen dead is noted in the Pāli \textit{Jātaka} tale of Padukusalama\textsuperscript{143}, thus demonstrating the antiquity of the motif in Indian folklore but the actual significance of the connection is unclear.\textsuperscript{144}

It is not the tongue gained from the \textit{vetāla} which is of importance to us here, however, but the \textit{kīla} as a means of keeping the animated corpse under control. With regard to this, Tāranātha recounts in his \textit{sGrol ma'i rgyud kyi byung khung} the story of the slaying of a \textit{vetāla} by Jñānadeva (a student of Śāntideva) who, “intoning Tārā’s mantra and wielding his \textit{kīla} … caused the zombie to fall backwards and collapse with the crown of its head caved in”.\textsuperscript{145}

Japanese tradition has it that the words \textit{Kīli Kīli} found in some of the \textit{kilamantras} are onomatopoeic for the creaking sounds made by the doors of the \textit{maṇḍala} palace as they close, thus preventing the entry of obstructing forces\textsuperscript{146} but we return fully to the theme of the zombie and the \textit{kīla} with the Nepalese tradition of architecture in which the threshold of a house is viewed as an actual or potential \textit{vetāla}. In keeping with this view, every year the Nepali householder must drive a nail into the threshold of his dwelling in order to

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\textsuperscript{139} René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, \textit{Oracles and Demons of Tibet}, 65, notes a green form of Mahākāla (mGon-po ljang-khu) who carries as an attribute a sword made out of \textit{vetāla} tongue. Possibly \textit{vetālasiddhi} is simply another term for \textit{khaḍgasiddhi} (“attainment of the magic sword”).

\textsuperscript{140} T. 1222. The significant contribution afforded by the Sino-Japanese tradition to a historical study of Vajrakīla is dealt with below. I am indebted, both here and below, to my colleagues Masahide Mori and Stephen Hodge for their invaluable assistance with all my enquiries into this field.

\textsuperscript{141} Cowell & Thomas, \textit{Harṣacarita}, 90–2.

\textsuperscript{142} Tawney, \textit{op. cit.}, vol. 1, 31, & vol. 2, 138, 206, 207, 208, 232, 233, etc. Dozens of references are to be found within these two volumes.


\textsuperscript{144} The commentary furnishes no information on this point.

\textsuperscript{145} D. Templeman, \textit{The Origin of the Tārā Tantra}, 29.

\textsuperscript{146} Y. Hatta, \textit{Shingon Jiten (A Dictionary of Mantra)}. 
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prevent this fearful monster from rising and it is particularly curious to note that this annual ritual is performed on nāgapañcamī, the day dedicated by the Nepalese to the worship of serpents, thus maintaining the intimate connection between the kīla and the nāga noted earlier. Vetāla are also to be observed lying across the threshold of hypaethral shrines in Nepal, such as the one to whom bloody oblations are presented at the entrance to the sacred site (pītha) of Pacali Bhairava on the banks of the Bagmati river.

The sūtras

Within the early Buddhist sūtras in both Pāli and Sanskrit, the wooden stake is well known as a boundary-marker and so on but there is no discernable shift in emphasis in the direction of its apotheosis. The single possible exception to this is the case of the indrakīlas placed for protection outside the city gates in Sri Lanka to which offerings of incense and flowers are made. But, in the words of de Silva, “this aspect of the indrakīla as an object worthy of honour is certainly an advancement made on the concept of indrakīla as revealed from Pāli and Sanskrit sources”.

The association of the kīla with doors, thresholds, boundaries and their protection being well attested, it is interesting to note the sixty-third sūtra of the Suttanipāta in which the seven requisites for the protection of a fortress are described. This sūtra specifically states the pillar (esikā = indakhilā) to be the chief of these because, being unmovable, it is the very symbol of stability. The seven are then likened to ‘seven forms of wealth’ (saptadhanāni) that give proper security to the ascetic. According to this list, the pillar is like faith (śraddhā), the moat shame (hṛi), the citadel modesty (apatrāpya), the armoury of swords and spears like learning (śrūta), the well-armed troops are like valour (vīrya) or renunciation (tyāga), the wise gatekeeper who refuses entry to strangers mindfulness (smṛti) or morality (śīla) and the tall, sturdy ramparts are like wisdom (prajñā).

In a recent paper entitled “Buddhism, Taoism and the Rise of the City Gods”, Timothy Barrett highlighted a class of deity known as “gods in charge of cities” (nagaradēvatā) mentioned in the Gandavyūha. In a certain passage of that sūtra strongly reminiscent of the above citation from the Suttanipāta, Ratnanetra (a god of this class) instructs the disciple Sudhana to guard and protect the city of the mind by strenuous endeavour in virtue. “Build strong walls about the city of mind by purification of mind in

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147. M. Slusser, Nepal Mandala, 362, 421. I am informed by a Nepali Hindu currently resident in London that this belief and its accompanying ritual are widespread throughout Nepal.
148. ibidem, 335, and plate 369.
149. A. K. Warder in his Introduction to Pali, PTS, 1975, 363, defines khilo as a “stake (for marking boundaries...)” and indakhilo as a “royal stake (marking the royal threshold, also as a symbol of firmness...)”. The Pāli-English Dictionary edited by T. W. Rhy-Davids & William Stede, adds, “a large slab of stone let into the ground at the entrance of a house ... Threshold”, to its definition of indakhila and also lists the adjective khilaka meaning “having stakes or stumps as obstacles”.
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carrying out the vow of practice of universal good”.154 This passage, says Barrett whose paper has much to say about the cult of gods of walls, “attracted a considerable amount of Chinese commentary”. It also says much about the Buddhist attitude to religion in which all practical matters in the mundane world are seen to have their metaphysical equivalents of practical value in the realm of the sacred. It is this attitude that lies at the heart of the apotheosis of the kila.

A curious parallel process of apotheosis is to be observed in the iconography of the four goddesses who guard the doors of the maṇḍala of Viśvaḍāka in which a white goddess in the east is the apotheosis of a lock or bolt (tālaka), a yellow goddess in the south is the apotheosis of keys (kuñcikā), a red goddess in the west is the apotheosis of a door panel (kapāṭa) and a black goddess in the north is the apotheosis of a dividing curtain (kāṇḍapata).155 Thus we should not be surprised to witness the eventual rise of the kila as a deity, despite the absence of firm indications in the early Pāli sources.

Dawn of the kilamantra (dhāraṇi)

Although very little in the earlier sūtras seemed to impinge directly upon the subject of our present enquiry, within the dhāraṇis that became increasingly prominent as a genre of later Mahāyāna literature are definite signs of the initial stages of a process through which the kila came to be incorporated into the Buddhist fold as an instrument of magical power.

With regard to its function of stabilizing the earth, there is the Vasudhārā-dhāraṇī for the goddess of the earth which closes with the words TADYATHĀ KILI KILI AKṢA AKṢA (which may include the meaning of snake) BHAGAVATI. Even following the rise of the wrathful Vajrakila tantra, the kila retains its prior function of pacification of the earth and, in particular, the subjugation of the ‘earth serpent’. The main purpose of the Mahāmāyūrī-dhāraṇī, cited above in connection with vetāla, is in fact to turn away snakes and to counteract the poison of snakebite. A phrase occurring several times within the Māyūrī charm runs ILI MILI KILI MILI.156 This and similar phrases are also to be found elsewhere157 and the important thing to note here is that, wherever they are met with, ILI and MILI refer to snakes158 and KILI can be linked to the kila. In this instance the kila functions simply to create a magical barrier against snakes but it has an association also with the yogic skill of weather control, one of the earliest rites to demand the use of the hand-held kila. This feat is thought to be achieved by overpowering those cloud-dwelling nāgas held to be responsible for rainfall, itself reminiscent of the mythology of Indra.

The Mahāmāyūrī-dhāraṇī, even in its most primitive form, proclaims its usefulness as a magical means of protecting boundaries. By the early fourth century AD, however, this

155. Viśvaḍāka is the dāka of the karmakula in the group of five dākas. Abhayākaragupta, Nisparnayogavāti, 77.
157. Vidyyādharapitaka-asṭamahādāraṇī: OṂ KILI MILI and RU RU MI HE KILI MILI ACITTA. Āryottanamahāvidyārāja-sūtra: KILI (x9) followed by MILI (x9). Mahāvajrameruśikharakītāgāra-dhāraṇī: KILI KILI KILI MILI MILI MILI MILI at one point and then KILI KILI KILI MILI MILI LALALI at another. Vajrajvalā-dhāraṇī: MILI MILI (many times) and KILI MILI CANDE ..., etc.
158. cf. HT, I, ii, 32.
Buddhist Assimilation of the Kīla

function had become so specifically marked that, in the appended notes to the text as translated into Chinese by Śrīmitra (circa 340 AD), “there are instructions for the delimitation of the ritual area which is then to be decorated with five swords, five banners, five mirrors, twenty-one arrows and twenty-one lamps. The site is to be annointed with perfumes, and mustard seeds are to be burnt to expel obstructing demons”.159 This particular function of securing a protective boundary against evil (sīmābandha) gradually became almost the exclusive preserve of the kīla.

Among other very early references to the magical protective power of the kīla are those to be found in the Mahābala-sūtra,160 a transitional text of the late Mahāyāna period displaying characteristics more commonly associated with tantra than sūtra.161 It is said to have been taught by Śākyamuni Buddha to a large gathering of Vedic divinities (including the dasadikpālas) who had assembled on the peak of Mount Mucilinda. During the course of the sūtra the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi162 uttered the dhāraṇī of vidyārāja Mahābala and enumerated its virtues. The importance of the kīla is made evident within this text where it is stated that the sūtra’s very essence (hrdaya) is contained in the word kīlikīla. Within the dhāraṇī itself occur the phrases NAMAS CANḌAVAJRAPĀṆAYE MAHĀ-YAKSAENAṬAPAYE OM KIĻIKIĻI VAJRAKĪLIĻĀYA SVĀHĀ ... CANḌAKĪLIĻĀYA SVĀHĀ. BĀĻAKĪĻI KĪĻĀYA SVĀHĀ,163 RATNAKLĪĽI YA SVĀHĀ ... OM MUNI MUNI MAHĀMUNI KIĻIKIĻA VEKI KAṬA KAṬA ..., etc.

Magic spells such as these Buddhist dhāraṇīs played a significant role in the everyday life of the people of ancient India. From a very early date the Buddhists utilized their sacred scriptures in the paritīta ceremony164 and, according to Hsuan Tsang,165 the Mahāsāṅghikas compiled a dhāraṇīpīṭaka during the fourth century BC. This was followed by a vidyādharpīṭaka, compiled in the north by the Dhammaguttas sometime during the third century BC.166

From these sources may be surmised an evolutionary line of development of the rite of sīmābandha from the purely functional process of marking out a plot of ground by means of wooden pegs and lengths of string as outlined under the rubric of Architecture, above.

160. F. A. Bischoff, Āryamaḥābalanāma-mahāyāna-sūtra, Paris, 1956. Mahābala is later to be found among the ten wrathful divinities in the primary entourage of Vajrakīla. His epithet used here, mahāvidyārāja (also noted in association with Amṛtakunḍalin), became in later texts freely interchangeable with the term krodharāja. Elementary characteristics of several of these krodha kings are clearly discernable in the dhāraṇī literature. To trace the evolution of each of them from such primitive sources, however, is a task outside the scope of the present work.
161. mKhas-grub-rgjé in fact, following the lead of ‘older authorities’, classifies this text within the Kriyātantra. F.D. Lessing & A. Wayman, Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems, 133.
162. Also called Canḍavajrapāṇi, whose role in the Vajrakīla tantra will be seen in Chapter Five, below.
163. In Chapter Three, below, Vajrakīla is styled ‘Son of Heruka’.
165. E. Lamotte, History of Indian Buddhism, 286.
166. Y. Matsunaga, op. cit., ibidem.
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During the course of this development, a religious element has been absorbed whereby the pegs have become imbued with magical power and almost transformed into gods. Such rites are then fully elaborated within the earliest historical strata of Buddhist esoteric texts (Kriyā), in which ritual activity predominates.

Simābandha in the lower Buddhist tantras

The Susiddhi-tantra, classified by Pan-chen bSod-nams grags-pa as a general tantra of the Kriyā class dealing with the fierce rites of all three Buddha families (Tathāgatakula, Vajrakula, Padmakula),\(^{167}\) "teaches in detail the rite of performing the vidyā-dhāraṇī" and "the protection according to Kriyātantra".\(^{168}\) Within this text the role of protection of the boundaries is allocated to Amṛtakunḍalin, a deity described as fierce guardian of the north and master of all yakṣas.\(^{169}\) In the performance of his duty Amṛtakunḍalin mani-fests as Kilikila and, in association with his role as boundary protector, the tantra teaches the kilamudrā.

The procedures of this tantra as practised in Japan are described in a recent study of Shingon Buddhism by Adrian Snodgrass\(^{170}\) who writes: "The sādhaka first performs the rituals of 'securing the boundaries' (bandhaya sīman) in which he defines the boundaries of the maṇḍala and expels the demonic influences that might hinder the performance of the ritual or harm the ritualist. The sādhaka secures the boundaries of the maṇḍala by wooden (or less usually iron or copper) vajra spikes (vajrakilakam)\(^{171}\) driven into the four corners of the bodhimaṇḍa. They not only delimit the borders of the maṇḍala but symbolize the firmness of the sādhaka's Bodhicitta, which harmful influences cannot move. The sādhaka symbolically drives the spikes into the corners of the bodhimaṇḍa by making a mudrā (thus)".

![Diagram](image)

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167. rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa skal bzang gi yid 'phrog, LTWA, 1975, 38.
168. F.D. Lessing & A. Wayman, op. cit., 137.
169. Later to become one of the daśakrodha deities in the primary retinue of Vajrakila. The Yoga tantra SDPT states: "The wrathful Amṛtakunḍalin is common to the three families. Since he removes all obstacles he is said to be the lord of the guhyakas." SDPT, 76. Throughout the sources referred to in this chapter no distinction is made between Amṛtakunḍalin and Vajrāṃṭa.
171. The Japanese tradition generally equates this vajrakilakam with a single-pronged vajra, but more details of the form of the kīla in Japan are given below.
This procedure establishes and encloses the area into which the deities are subsequently to be invited and transforms the site into the indestructible vajra earth out as far as the cakravāla. Thus, according to the rite it becomes impossible for even the most powerful demons to enter and all evils within the ground are purified.

The Tibetan author Tsong-kha-pa, basing himself upon the same tantra, in his “Great Exposition of Secret Mantra” gives the mantra OM KILIKILA VAJRA VAJRI BHŪR BANDHA BANDHA HŪM PHAT and says that the yogin should use it to empower scented water which is then sprinkled around the boundaries of his place of meditation in order to establish the raksācakra. He also explains the kilamudrā, as in the diagram above, and uses it to implant an unspecified number of kilas in the form of fierce deities into the hearts of obstructors around the circumference of the meditation area. The above mantra is again recited as the trouble-making demons are thus being rendered powerless. Tsong-kha-pa also says that for a yogin in the Vajrakula, self protection is afforded by the mantra OM KILI KILA VAJRA HŪM PHAT. According to him, Kūndali and Kilikila (thought of as one in the Sino-Japanese tradition) are two separate deities always associated with the protective walls, protective canopy and the circle of kilas enclosing the ritually pure area.172

I quote from A. Snodgrass; “The vajra spikes (vajra kilakama) are variously referred to as the ‘boundary spikes’, the ‘boundary vajra spikes’, ‘ground spikes’, ‘vajra spike boundaries’, ‘vajra flame boundaries’, etc. The spikes are “twelve shi” long (about seven and a half inches) and are driven about one third of their length into the ground.... The Darani shukyo specifies not four but twenty-eight spikes: six on either side of the west gate, four at each of the other three gates, and one at each of the four corners. Annen’s Dainichikyo gishaku calls for fifty-two spikes: twelve at each of the four gates, and one at each of the four corners”.173

Furthermore, the dhāraṇī that accompanies the mudrā of the vajra spikes is OM KILI KILI VAJRA VAJRI BHŪRA BANDHA BANDHA HŪM PHAT in which KILI KILI is “spike, spike”, referring both to the spike and to the action of spiking, VAJRA is ‘unassailable wisdom’ (vajraprajñā) and VAJRI is ‘unshakeable meditation’ (vajradhyāna). BHŪRA is ‘firmness’ and BANDHA BANDHA is “binding, binding”. HŪM is the seed syllable of terror and also of bodhicitta and PHAT is the seed syllable of crushing and destroying. The dhāraṇī thus means that unassailable wisdom and unshakeable meditation spike down, firmly bind and terrify the demons, crushing and destroying their great power. As he makes the mudrā and recites the dhāraṇī, the sādhaka mentally strikes each corner of the bodhimalā, three times, with a single- or triple-prong vajra(kila).174

172. J. Hopkins, The Yoga of Tibet, 96–7. The Japanese Mantrayāna (Shingon) tradition follows this system exactly. The kilamudrā given in Snodgrass (reproduced above) corresponds to that given in Hopkins and the mantra given in both Snodgrass and Hatta (Dictionary of Mantra) is OM KILI KILI VAJRA VAJRI BHŪRA BANDHA BANDHA HŪM PHAT which is little changed considering the amount of time and space that separates the two traditions.

173. A. Snodgrass, op. cit., 60–1, n. 6.

174. ibidem, 64. This use of either a single-pronged or triple-pronged vajrakila is understood in Japan to be authorized by the Susiddhi-tantra. Four kilas which were brought to Japan by Kobo Daishi, now preserved in the Yamato Muro Temple, are of the single-pronged variety.
In a chapter called *Vighnakilanavidhi* (the rite of nailing down obstacles) in Kuladatta’s *Kriyāsangrahapañjikā* (Detailed Compendium of Rituals), instructions are given for the purification and protection of the earth prior to the building of a vihāra. According to this source, thirty-two *krodha* deities (an inner group of twelve and an outer group of twenty) are embodied in twenty-eight *kilas* which are arranged in two concentric squares enclosing the site designated for the construction. Each of the *kilas* located in the four corners of the inner square is to be thought of as being occupied by two deities. The master of the rite meditates upon himself as the deity *Vajrāhursta* and utters the *sarvakarmika-mantra*, generally defined as the mantra of the deity presiding over the northern quarter of the *mandala*. The *kilas* (which are said to be eight inches long, made of either acacia wood or gold) are then fixed into the ground and as each one is hammered in, in due order, the *mantra* of the residing deity is intoned and he is called upon to subdue a particular *vighna* (“obstacle”) in the form of a Hindu deity. This being done, some of the *kilas* are then moved to new locations and details are given concerning the method of drawing lines for the plan of the vihāra utilizing lengths of string pulled out between the pegs.

An interesting story is told in the “Prophesy of the Li Country” in which a *kila* made of juniper wood, which had been used in this way during the building of a *stūpa*, subsequently grew into a tree with five branches and began to preach the Buddhist *Dharma*, graphically illustrating the notion of the peg as the abode of a god. The ‘Li Country’ (Khotan) is an area in which the Vajrayāna is known to have existed and, thanks to and thus this type is favoured by the Shingon school. The Tendai school also uses single-pronged *kilas*. The tips of the Yamato Muro Temple *kilas* have an eight-petalled lotus design with a moon disc on top of that, and then a round jewel shape. The jewel, however, is the specific emblem of the *ramakula* and as an alternative to this, in association with the various ritual functions of a *kila*, the spike may bear a *cakra*, lotus or *vajra* upon its tip. (The Tibetan method of distinguishing *kilas* in association with the four or five *kulas* of the higher *tantras* is by material of manufacture.) Other *kilas* were taken to Japan by Engyo, Keiun and Chisho.

According to these sources for the Sino-Japanese tradition, the main material to be used in the manufacture of *kilas* is *khadira* wood or else *nimba* wood (neem), iron or copper. According to T. 889, translated by Tensokuza of Kashmir (Sanskrit name uncertain) who arrived in China in 979 AD, sappy wood should be used to make the *kila* for pacification, *śrīvṛkṣa* and *śīrṣa* for enriching, *khadira* for subduing and iron for destroying. *Kālacakra-tantra* (III, 12) lists eight materials without, however, any indication of their particular functions. According to Stephen Hodge, Śubhakarasimha’s commentary on the *Mahāvairocana-tantra* also specifies the use of twenty-eight *kilas* but their arrangement on the ground is different. Six *kilas* are to be placed on either side of the western gate, four in front of the other three gates and in each of the four corners, just as in the description given below taken from Bodhiruci’s *Japanese Compendium of Dhāraṇī*.

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176. cf. E. W. Marasinghe, *The Vāstuvidyāśāstra Attributed to Mahīśūrī*, 167. Also, a modern Newāri text on the rituals of *vāstuvidyā* (written in 1899 by Vajrācārya Jujumāna) describes the procedure of laying out the ground for the erection of a *stūpa* or other building using thirty-eight pegs, measuring a span and four fingers in length, with eighty-four cubits of thread spun with strands of five colours. S. Lienhard, *Nepalese Manuscripts*, Part 1, 107–8. For examples of similar rites in the Hindu tradition (where the pegs are called either *kila* or *sanktu*) see Tarapada Bhattacharyya, *A Study of Vāstuvidyā*; Alice Boner, *Silpaprakāsa*; Bruno Dagens, *Māyāmata*; etc.


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discoveries made in Central Asia by Sir Aurel Stein, the use of kilas in the region is confirmed, dating back to antiquity. The configurations of those ancient kilas unearthed by Stein also readily confirms the view that they were conceived in some measure as the abodes of gods or spirits.

The chapter entitled Parikramaṇavādhi in Kuladatta’s ‘Compendium of Rituals’ outlines the method for establishing a protective circle around an area within which a tantric maṇḍala is to be constructed and this contains many additional elements derived from the later Anuttarayoga class of tantra. To begin with, four assistants in the rite are assigned the role of ‘masters of the gates’ (dvārācārya). They fix one kila into each of the four corners of a square as they recite the mantra OM GHA GHA GHATAYA ..., etc. and they are followed by the master of the rite (karmācārya) who, beginning in the northeast corner and moving clockwise, fixes eight kilas around the perimeter of the site while he recites OM VAJRAKILA KILAYA SARVAVIGHNĀN BANDHAYA HŪM. In this way twelve deities are arranged around the square but, because the ācārya uses the four already fixed by his assistants, they are housed in only eight kilas. The rite ends with the worship of the twelve deities who are presented with bāli offerings and requested to subdue twelve vighnas.

Both Abhayākāra-gupta in his Vajrāvalī (see below) and Jagaddarpaṇa in his Kriyāsamuccaya, on the other hand, describe the wrathful raksācakra around the maṇḍala consisting of ten kilas. This configuration is the norm for such rites in Tibet, leaving the tradition of Kuladatta as something of an anomaly.

In a recently published paper on “Monastic Initiation in Newar Buddhism”, David Gellner describes an offering rite in which, one by one, ten Vedic gods are summoned and praised and then attacked by their counterparts from the set of daśakrodha deities. The attack is in each case instigated by the command KILAYA KILAYA HŪM PHAT, in which the denominative form of our word for ‘nail’, ‘spike’ or ‘peg’ is used. The ten Vedic gods are a standard group known as the daśadikpālas, whose individual names have come to stand for the directions of the compass over which they hold sway. The Buddhist tantras are ambiguous in their attitude towards these ancient Indian deities. In the Yogatantra Sarvadurgatiparisodhana (SDPT), for example, these gods bow down before the Buddha and each one offers his mantra “for the benefit and happiness of all living beings”. Īśāna, ‘the lord of spirits’ (Śiva, Rudra, the guardian of the northeast), then assumes specific responsibility for the counteraction of poison, the stability of borders and the protective circle of vajrakilas and so on. Within the SDP maṇḍala they occupy seats of honour, as they do in the entourage of many Buddhist deities. In the Hevajra-tantra (HT) offerings are made to these gods in a fairly standard fashion but then they are abused and trampled

180. Given in full below in the section dealing with Anuttarayogatantra.
181. D. Gellner, “Monastic Initiation in Newar Buddhism”, 89–93. This section of the rite seems to be derived from Abhayākāra-gupta’s Vajrāvalī (36–7) but the placement of the deities accords with the Akṣobhya maṇḍala. Cf. A. Wayman, Yoga of the GST, 243.
182. SDPT, 51–3. Īśāna’s vow in this source corresponds remarkably with the subsequent role of Vajrakīla.
183. eg. Yogāmbara, Bhūtādāma, Dharmadhātu-vāgīśvara, etc., as described in Abhayākāra-gupta’s Nispannayogāvalī.
on by low caste women. It is clear, however, that in the latter case their names are being used merely to designate the arrangement of the women (dākini) into a circle around their lord.\textsuperscript{184} In the \textit{Vimalaprabhā}, on the other hand, Indra (foremost of the group and lord of the east) takes on the role of the arch demon Māra, whose messengers seek to destroy the concentration of \textit{yoga}\textsuperscript{185} and in the more wrathful \textit{tantras}, such as the \textit{Vajrakīla}, these deities are called \textit{vighnas} and described as being held captive and tormented by their Buddhist counterparts (the ten \textit{krodharājas}) who mercilessly pin them to the ground.

In the majority of Vajrayāna rituals in which ten spikes are nailed around the periphery of the site to be protected, those spikes are meditated upon as the actual embodiments of the ten wrathful kings and they are driven into the hearts of the ten Vedic gods. The final ‘canonical’ word on the subject may be attributed to \textit{Kālacakra-tantra}, III.27: “... in order to protect the site, stabilizing \textit{kilas} of acacia wood are stuck into the ground with blows of a hammer in the positions of the ten \textit{krodha} kings”.\textsuperscript{186} Exceptions to this pattern have now fallen into disuse in Tibet although they are still to be encountered within the Japanese tradition as a legacy of archaic Indian praxis. According to the teachings of the \textit{Vajrahrdayālāṅkā- tantra}, in order to qualify as a \textit{vajraguru} with the competence to grant \textit{abhiṣeka}, an \textit{ācārya} must be skilled not only in the technique of drawing the \textit{maṇḍala} but also in the rite of accomplishing the fierce act of tying down the gods with the magic \textit{kīla}”.\textsuperscript{187} A basic knowledge of \textit{kīla} rites therefore appears to have been widely regarded as essential to the tantric adepts of India, an assumption that I believe to be confirmed by the legends and teachings of the early \textit{mahāsiddhas}.\textsuperscript{188} Several centuries after the institution of these \textit{kīla} rites in ancient India it was stated in very matter of fact fashion by the Tibetan master mKhas-grub-rje that all tantric adepts, no matter to which school they belong nor the nature of the \textit{maṇḍala} they are effecting, protect and bless the site by nailing the obstructing demons with \textit{kīlas}.\textsuperscript{189}

\textit{Simābandha in the Anuttarayogatantra}

The final evolutionary phase of Buddhist \textit{tantras} is marked by those texts in which all aspects of yogic praxis are internalized so as to be dealt with in the mind. This is not to say that adherents of these doctrines perform no outer rituals. On the contrary, the texts describe a great number of elaborate rites to be performed with strict observance of \textit{minutiae}. Their theoretical premise, however, stresses the supremacy of mind to such an extent that all ritual activity is considered to be merely the play (\textit{līlā}) of the god within.\textsuperscript{190}

The \textit{Guhyasamāja-tantra} (GST) describes the procedure for blessing the \textit{yogin}’s meditation area thus: “(Imagine) Vajrakīla as an embodiment of the great king Vajrāmṛta and

\textsuperscript{184.} HT, II, iv, 91ff and II, v, 37.
\textsuperscript{185.} Ed. J. Upadhyaya, 1986, 10.
\textsuperscript{186.} B. Banerjee, \textit{Śrī Kālacakra-tantra-rāja}, 96.
\textsuperscript{187.} Lessing & Wayman, \textit{Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems}, 272.
\textsuperscript{188.} \textit{Kīlana} (“pegging down”) is included among the magical activities mentioned by the \textit{mahāsiddha} Matsyendranātha in Chapter IV of his \textit{Kaulajñānānāmāya}, ed.by P. C. Bagchi, Calcutta Sanskrit Series, III, 1934, 9.
\textsuperscript{189.} F.D. Lessing & A. Wayman, \textit{op. cit.}, 282.
\textsuperscript{190.} “The mind itself is the perfect Buddha and no Buddha is seen elsewhere.” HT, II, iv, 75.
This rite called \textit{jagadvinayaśāntivajra} (\textit{vajra} which rules and pacifies the world) is apparently an abbreviated, almost entirely internalized version of the rite of ten \textit{kilas} outlined above. This citation also seems to suggest that the implement employed in the rite is no longer the humble wooden peg or \textit{kila} of the earlier texts but a sophisticated and essential item of ritual paraphernalia now known as the \textit{vajrakila}. Note the continuing identification of Vajrakila with Vajramrta (\textit{Amrta} in\textit{Gan}.)

In the \textit{Śrīcakrasamvara-tantra}, in order to place a protective circle around the \textit{mañḍala} the \textit{sādhaka} is instructed to imagine a syllable \textit{Hūm} in his heart from which he causes to emanate a multitude of \textit{vajra} nails and \textit{vajra} hammers. These hammers and nails are placed into the right and left hands of assistants (\textit{dūta}) who then drag forth all obstructing forces, chief among whom are the Vedic \textit{daśadikpālas}. Being summoned, those with virtuous minds take refuge in the \textit{triratna} and are established in the mind of enlightenment, while those of an evil disposition are transfixed through the head with a \textit{kila} to the accompaniment of the \textit{mantra} \textit{OM GHA GHA GHA GHA GHA TAYA GHA TAYA SARVADUSTAN PHAT! KILAYA KILAYA SARVAPĀPAM HŪM PHAT! VAJRĀKILAYA VAJRĀDHARA ÂṉĀPAYATI SARVAVIGNĀN KĀYAVAKCITTIM KILAYA HŪM PHAT! (Oṃ begone, begone all evil ones! Phat! Nail, nail all sins! Hūm phat! Vajradhara instructs all obstacles to be nailed down with the \textit{vajra} nail of body, speech and mind! Hūm phat!) And they are pounded down to pulp with the hammers whilst reciting \textit{OM VAJRĀMUDGARA VAJRĀKILAYA ĀKOṬAYA HŪM PHAT! (Oṃ vajra hammer (you) must nail down, must beat! Hūm phat!)}\textsuperscript{192}

\textbf{Other \textit{kila} rituals}

Thus far we have seen \textit{kilas} chiefly in groups as boundary markers and (violent) protectors. They have been seen as magical pegs standing at the threshold preventing the intrusion of harm. As the guardians of order and stability they have served to destroy the power of \textit{vetālas} and \textit{nāgas} at one extreme and to stabilize the \textit{samādhi} of religious at the other. Indra, however, stabilized the earth by pinning it down with a single \textit{kila}, not with a circle of \textit{kilas} around the boundary.

A single \textit{kila} of acacia wood (\textit{khadira})\textsuperscript{193} is mentioned within a long ritual in the MMK.\textsuperscript{194} The passage in question concerns solicitation of the beautiful Manojñā in order

\textsuperscript{191} GST, XIII, 75.

\textsuperscript{192} K. Dawa-Samdup, \textit{Śrīcakrasamvara-tantra}, 171. Variants of the GHA GHA mantra are to be found in a number of Anuttarayoga tantras.

\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Khadira} is \textit{Acacia Catechu}, one of several varieties of acacia tree. Throughout the present work, however, the name “acacia” is everywhere used to refer to \textit{khadira} alone. Wood of this type is employed in many violent rites in a number of Buddhist tantras (e.g., \textit{Samvarodaya}, X, 22, etc.) and is considered by Indian doctors to cure obstinate skin diseases including leprosy (V. B. Dash, \textit{Materia Medica}, 181). Leprosy is held to be caused by vicious \textit{nāgas}, those troublesome subterranean spirits that are the prime targets in ‘earth subjugating’ rituals, and ritual \textit{kilas} generally are to be found with \textit{nāgas} engraved upon them (see J. Huntingdon, \textit{The Phur-pa}, passim). That the preferred material for their manufacture is acacia wood can be confirmed by the many references cited throughout this work including the passage from the GST quoted below (where I take the slightly ambiguous phrase \textit{khadirāgrajam} to mean \textit{khadirajam agram}, “the best is that made of acacia”). Cf. note 135, above.

\textsuperscript{194} MMK, 570–1.
to gain her wealth and sexual favours. This charming nymph granting long life to the sādhaka who may chose to live in a palace of the gods so long as he meditates upon the kīla stuck into the ground.

The kīla as a stabilizing influence in the building of a temple has already been encountered above. Here, however, we have what is possibly the earliest reference to a single kīla as the stabilizing force underpinning meditation upon a divine mandala of residence. A later, but far more explicit source is the Sarvatathāgatatattvasamgraha-tantra (STTS). In the section concerning the delineation of the maṇḍala in Chapter XI, it is written: “Having pierced the acacia wood spike in the centre of the maṇḍala, make a double-threaded string (and) with that, one should delineate (the circle). On that occasion, this is the ‘essence’ of the kīla; OM VAJRAKĪLĀ KILAYA SARVAVIGHNĀN BANDHAYA HŪM PHAT.” (Oṃ Vajrakīla, spike! Transfix all obstructors! Hūm phat!)

The form of the kīla as we find it today may be partly derived from its erstwhile use as a wooden stake to which sacrificial animals were tethered prior to their ritual slaughter. The above quotation from the STTS shows how the stake and tether are now employed as equipment for drawing circles, much as the hapless goats must have done whilst moving restlessly around the centres of their captivity. Such a procedure not only stabilizes the centre but also links that centre directly to the circumference, thereby revealing the single kīla as the instrument through which the entire ground may be rendered firm.

Indra, however, did not confine his activities to the achievement of a firm and solid earth. Propping up the firmament he took the thunderbolt as his sceptre and ruled over the lesser gods of wind and rain. In the MMK are found two short rites through which the yogin may seek to gain control over such atmospheric phenomena. In the first of these a “cloud-shaped kīla” (kabandākārakīlaka) is mentioned in connection with such dire omens as fiery comets, thunderbolts, darkness and disease. All untimely deaths are said to be pacified in the second rite by the simple expedient of burning incense, reciting mantras, flinging mustard seeds into the sky and the implantation of a kīla of acacia wood over which mantras have been recited seven times. Thus the wind is held still and the clouds are fixed in their places. The Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-tantra describes the rite for dispelling rainclouds by instructing the yogin to draw the image of such clouds

195. F. Edgerton, BHS Dictionary, 418, describes her as a yaksīṇī. She also occurs in the retinue of Vajrāmṛta (Nispamayogavati, maṇḍala no. 7).
196. manaso dhyotvo khadirakilakaṁ bhimau nikhānayet. divyam vimānam upapadyate. uddhīte ‘ntardhiyate. MMK, 571.
197. maṇḍalasya tu madhye vai vidhvā khadirakīlakam, tatas tu sūtraṁ dvigunaṁ krtvā tena prasūtraṣayet. tatredām kilakahṛdayam, oṁ vajrakīla kilaya sarvavighnān bandhaya hūm phaṭ. STTS, 91. Note that, although the kīla is being used here in a very straightforward fashion (simply as a peg to hold down one end of a piece of string while a circle is being drawn around it), this citation evinces distinct features of a wrathful rite.
198. R. Mayer, op. cit., 170ff. The knots (kanda) of rope tied to the shaft of this stake are an important element in the later iconography of the sacred kīla (dealt with in the following chapter). These kandas along the shaft of the nail also have an association with the subtle centres of psychic energy (cakra) employed in yoga and imagined to be situated along the central nāḍī of the vajra body.
199. MMK, 274. The kīla on this occasion is unaccountably given a feminine form (kīlakā) in the published text.
Buddhist Assimilation of the Kīla

upon the ground and mentally transform himself into the deity Vajrapāṇi. Arranging his fingers in the form of the mudrā, he should stab the point of the vajrakīla into the image and the rain will disperse.\textsuperscript{200} No longer employed purely for purposes of defense, then, the kīla is now a weapon of attack. In his commentary on the SDPT, Vajravarman identifies the objects to be attacked as the various defilements (kleśa). Thus, in order to destroy sin, the yogin manufactures a ‘kīla of pacification’ from white sandalwood, eight inches long with a large knot at the top. He imagines the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to assemble upon that kīla and, as he nails down the defilements he mutters \textit{OM VAJRAKĪLA KĪLA SARVĀPAŚĀNTIM KURU SVĀHĀ}. Striking it with a hammer of silver having a handle of sandalwood he pronounces the curse \textit{OM ŚAPATHA}.\textsuperscript{201}

In the \textit{Samvarodaya-tantra}, instructions are given for an act of malevolent sorcery (abhicāra) involving a six-inch kīla made of monkey bone (vānarāśthimayam kīlam). Having empowered this kīla by reciting an unspecified mantra over it seven times, if it is burned at the enemy’s door the enemy and his entire lineage will perish, or, if it is buried in a field where livestock is kept the animals will die.\textsuperscript{202} A similar ritual is given in the GST where it is said that one should chant the mantra one hundred and eight times in order to empower an eight-inch kīla made of human bone (mānuṣāśthimayam kīlam) which, if hidden near the enemy’s door, will cause death within a fortnight.\textsuperscript{203} The cycle of the \textit{Vajrabhairava-tantra}, too, includes several short vidhis in similar vein. One such rite instructs the sādhaka to draw an effigy using charcoal from the funeral pyre upon a scrap of cloth taken from the shroud of a corpse. The effigy should be stabbed in five places with a kīla of human bone.\textsuperscript{204} The same cycle also includes a kilamantra, \textit{OM VAJRA KRODHA YAMARAJA VAJRAKĪLA KĪLI HANA HANA MĀRAYA PHAṬ,} which is to be recited as the yogin transfixes the object of his meditation with a bone kīla,\textsuperscript{205} as well as instructions for stabbing an effigy in the groin as he presses down upon it with the sole of his left foot.\textsuperscript{206}

\textit{Chronological summary}

We are now in a position to assess the stages through which the kīla developed into a hand-held ritual weapon in the armoury of the tantric Buddhists and attempt to reconstruct the path of apotheosis of Vajrakīla as a wrathful deity in the Vajrayāna pantheon.

Among the most ancient kīlas in existence today are those discovered by Aurel Stein in the vicinity of the frontier forts to the north of Tun-huang. A set of four such kīlas (two of which are currently housed in the British Museum) have been dated as belonging to the first century BC.\textsuperscript{207} Approximately nine inches long, they have been crudely fashioned from an unspecified species of wood into a shape that remains instantly recognisable after

\textsuperscript{200} S. Hodge, \textit{The Mahāvairocana-tantra}, III: “The Overcoming of Obstacles”.
\textsuperscript{201} SDPT, 85.
\textsuperscript{202} S. Tsuda, \textit{The Samvarodaya-tantra}, XXVIII, 21, 22.
\textsuperscript{203} GST, XIV, 55.
\textsuperscript{204} P. 105. \textit{Śrīvajramāhābhairavāvanāma-tantra}, II, 136v.
\textsuperscript{205} P. 106. \textit{Śrīvajrabhairavakalpa-tantrarāja}, II, 150r.
\textsuperscript{206} \textit{ibidem}, 149r.
two thousand years as characteristic of the magical kīla. The upper part of each has been fashioned into the wide-eyed grimacing countenance of a wrathful deity, below which extends a tapering three-sided shaft culminating in a sharp point. If the experts at the British Museum are correct in their dating of these pegs then it would seem reasonable to assume that Buddhist dhāraṇīs calculated to invoke and utilize the apotropaic power of the kīla may also have existed in the pre-Christian era. None of the currently available texts, however, can be dated prior to the third or fourth centuries AD although it is well-known that dhāraṇīs, in general, had by then been long integrated into the vast corpus of Buddhist literature.

We have seen that the Māyūrī spell, in particular, was credited with the power of establishing a protective boundary against a range of hostile forces, especially snakes. The term mayūra means ‘peacock’ and the power of the spell is linked to the Indian belief that peacocks devour snakes in order to transform their poison into the shining colours of their iridescent plumage. In the final iconography of Vajrakīla, this legend is recast into that of the mythical guruda which emanates from the belly of Vajrakīla and has a particular antipathy for nāgas. We should also note the existence of a kīla topped with peacock feathers that is brandished as a weapon in the hands of Śridevi.208 At this stage, however, we simply have the notion of a ring of wooden stakes as (magical) weapons against snakes.

Within these early dhāraṇīs it is also possible to discern primitive features209 of the krodhārājas which are later to become the companions of Vajrakīla within his wrathful maṇḍala. Indeed, it even seems feasible to trace the emergence of Hayagrīva from such early sources as the Amitābha-vyūha-sūtra210 but such a task is beyond the scope of the present work.

Concentrating our attention on Vajrakīla, therefore, we may add to the citations above by noting the occurrence of NAMA VAJRAKI LI KILAYA in the Mahāvajrameruśikha-ra-kūṭagāra-dhāraṇī211 before moving on to consider the next phase of Buddhist literature.

Studying the well-documented stream of translations that were made into Chinese from Sanskrit sources, Yukei Matsunaga has been able to show that a large number of tantric rituals were in vogue among Indian Buddhists from the early fourth century AD.212 Within the Kriyātantra that probably arose during the next two hundred years,213 are to be found a large number of kīla rituals. The rite of sīmābandha is especially prevalent amongst these, but by no means exhaustive.214

208. Lokesh Chandra, Buddhist Iconography, 116.
209. Specific epithets and bijamantras.
210. His bijamantra HULU HULU is abundant in that text. cf. R. H. van Gulik, Hayagrīva (passim).
211. In which text, also, Vajrapāṇi is praised for his great strength (mahābala), several mantras appropriate to the krodha kings are found and the words KANKATA JAYA VIJAYA (frequently encountered in Vajrakīla literature) occur.
213. Texts cited above that belong to this category are the Susiddhi-tantra and the MMK. mKhag-rje also includes the Mahābala-dhāraṇī, saying it pertains to the messengers (pho nyan) and servants (bkā' nyan) of the vajrakīla. Lessing & Wayman, op. cit., 132–3.
214. The rite from the Susiddhi-tantra has been given above. The homa rite called Acalapūjāvidhi includes mudrā for a bhūmikīla (no. 26), a vajrakīla (for erecting the vajraprākāra or
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Other kīla rites in Kriyā literature include those for animating corpses (vetālavīḍhi), controlling the weather, and the subjugation of local spirits. Throughout this period of tantric literature, the numinous essence of the kīla invoked in the earlier dhāraṇīs has been supplemented by and absorbed into the hardware of ritual pegs. A marked change of emphasis has also taken place in that mundane objectives seem almost to have obliterated the quest for spiritual excellence. The kīla at this stage is employed in rites calculated to bring harm, satisfy erotic desires or procure slaves for necrophiles. At one point the MMK uses the denominative form of the word kīla to indicate that which has been held down, broken or defiled. It then goes on to detail a method through which the situation can be revived and describes the outcome as “unpegged, set free” (utkīlita).

The notion of Vajrakīla as a god also continued to evolve throughout this period and in the text known as the spell of Vajravidāraṇā both a deified hammer (Vajramudgara) and a deified nail (Vajrakīla) assume central roles in the mandala of Vajrāṇi. Here, the individual mantra of Vajrakīla is given as CURU CURU CANḌAKĪLĪ KĪLĀYA SVĀHĀ (Destroy! Destroy, fierce nail! Homage to the nail!) and the praise VAJRAKIŁI KĪLĀYA SVĀHĀ occurs repeatedly. We note also that the inner circle which includes both the hammer and the nail is surrounded by an outer circle consisting of ten krodharājas.

In the period of the Yogatantra which followed (circa seventh century?), the essential mantra of Vajrakīla is noted in the STTS in a configuration which has remained unchanged to the present and it is applied to the Vajrakīla positioned in the very centre

Indestructible fence, no. 27), repelling demons after the invitation of the deities (no. 38) and a wide cakrakīla for enclosing the world (cakravālā, no. 44). MMK, 693, instructs the yogin to prepare kīlas of acacia wood and recite eight hundred mantras over them. By implanting those kīlas in the four directions, the boundaries are made secure, etc.

The hagiography of Kāṇha (Templeman, 1989) is replete with examples of vetāla slaves.

The STTS and Mahāvairocana-tantra cited above belong to this group.

According to tantric theory the mantra is an aspect of the god. In discussing the procedures of yoga in the Kriyātantra, for example, mKhas-grub-rje lists six gods. Among these are the “sound-god” (śabdadevatā) and the “letter-god” (aksaradevatā) which are, respectively, the sound and the letters of the mantra to be recited. F.D. Lessing & A. Wayman, op. cit., 161. Thus we may postulate that the hrdaya of Vajrakīla within the STTS attests at least a nominal existence of the deity at that time.

Adherents of the Sa-skya school recite the mantra as found in the STTS while the rNyin-ma-pa abbreviate the denominative imperative BANDHAYA (from the root bandh; fix, fasten, suppress or bind a victim) to BĀM, a widespread technique in the formation of mantras. See A. Wayman, “Imperatives in the Buddhist Tantra Mantras”. In the Mahāvairocana-tantra, for example, JAMY stands for JAYA (be victorious!), TRAMY for TRĀHI or TRAYA (save!) and RAM for RAKŚA (protect!), all imperatives. C. Yamamoto, Mahāvairocana Śūtra, x.

Further mantras of interest deriving from this period are listed in Hatta, A Dictionary of Mantra. These include: OM VAJRĀKĪLĀ KĪLĀYA SARVAVĪGHNAN BANDHA HŪM PHAṬ (said to occur only in the STTS passage cited above); OM VAJRA KĪLĪ KILI SARVAVIGHNAN BANDHA HŪM PHAṬ (derived from the above? Found in the Bussetsu daiyokanso mandalashojyo akushu kyo, T. 939); OM VAJRĀKĪLĀ HŪM PHAṬ (from the *Vajrakrodha-samājāvapuyavidhi section of an *Avalokiteśvaravādīrāja-tantra); OM KILI KILI VAJRA HŪM PHAṬ (given as the mantra of Vajrakundalin in T. 912–T. 915); KILI KILI VAJRA MUH SVĀHĀ (related to Vajrakundalin and said to occur in the section dealing with mandala

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of the **mandala**. STTS, VI, also introduces the myth of the overthrow of Rudra/Maheśvara through which a large number of Hindu deities become assimilated into the **mandala** of the wrathful heruka Buddha. The overthrow of Rudra subsequently became central to the mythology of Vajrakila.\textsuperscript{221} The iconographic forms of the krodha kings (ten of whom later comprise the primary retinue of Vajrakila) also began to crystallize during this period. Buddhhas with many faces and hands first appeared in Chinese translations from the early sixth century, with rituals and observances dedicated to Hayagrīva as a form of Avalokiteśvara from the late seventh century.\textsuperscript{222} Wu-hsing, a Chinese traveller to India, obtained a copy of the *Mahāvairocana-tantra* in 685 AD and stated that “recently many people in India have vouch-safed the teachings of esoteric Buddhism”.

This *tantra* was the first of those translated into Chinese to teach the unity of mudrā, mantra and samādhi, and explain them as yogic means to the attainment of the three mysteries of Buddha’s Body, Speech and Mind.\textsuperscript{223} Throughout this period of the *Yogatantra*, the soteriological aspect of the Buddhist path was reasserted and the nefarious pursuits of the earlier *Kriyā* period sublimated. Necro-philiac rites seem temporarily to have been abandoned whilst other activities are ‘purified’ and reinterpreted as skilful means (*upāya*) to the attainment of enlightenment.\textsuperscript{224} Thus it is that literary references to the *kīla* throughout this period emphasize its value as a weapon in the struggle against evil, interpreting ‘enemies’ as those who bring harm to the doctrines of the Buddha. We also witness the emergence of a single *kīla* in the heart of the **mandala** whilst retaining the earlier pattern of a protective circle of spikes around the **mandala** periphery.

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221. A detailed analysis of the earliest Buddhist versions of this myth has been made by Nobumi Iyanaga, “Recits de la soumission de Maheśvara par Trailokyavijaya”. One of his early citations (p. 681) links the hand symbol vajrasūla (= vajrakīla) to the abhiseka of vajravidyottama. The Hindus themselves incorporate this myth into the vāstupuṣpa concept in remarkably similar fashion (K. Vatsyayan, *Kalātattvakāśa*, 36–7). Thus the correlation with architecture is maintained by the Brahmins whilst for the Buddhists this aspect of the myth has particular associations with the eight great charnel grounds located around the periphery of the herukamandala.

222. Y. Matsunaga, *op. cit.*, 173.


Early versions of the GST and the Jñānasiddhi of Indrabhūti (both of which feasibly arose around the close of the seventh century) list a circle of four krodharajas225 whereas the later versions of the GST list ten. The earliest Māyājāla (as translated into Chinese) on the other hand, lists two groups of four krodha kings and thus would seem, in all probability, to represent a transitional stage between the Yogatantra as represented by the STTS and the Anuttarayogatantra such as the later GST.226 Those krodha kings are assigned bijamantras in the Māyājāla that are found unchanged in the Vajrakila cycle today.

The Chinese Buddhist canon contains two Vajrakumāra (= Vajrakila?) tantras227 which are said to be derived from the Susiddhi-tantra228 and within which are to be found a collection of rites engaging both Kīla and Amṛta. Vajrakila and Vajrāṃṛta, later to emerge as quite distinct deities, are regarded as one in the Sino-Japanese traditions stemming from this period. The subsequent rise of the Anuttarayogatantra, which Matsunaga places in the eighth century,229 saw the highest flourishing of the Buddhist tantric doctrines in India and the rise of the siddha scholars. If, as we suppose, the kīla had by this time become an item of ritual equipment in the employ of Buddhist tantrics, such persons as the siddhas would have been the very ones to carry them.

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225. Yamāntaka (E), Prajñāntaka (S), Padrmāntaka (W) and Vighnāntaka (N). The later Sekoddesa-tīkā, 36–7, also specifically equates Vighnāntaka with Amṛtakundalin.
227. Both catalogued together as T. 1222 and said to have been brought to China from South India by Amoghavajra in 742 AD. This translator was a disciple of Vajrabodhi (born 689 AD) who composed T. 1223, a shorter version “in accordance with the tradition of the west (India)”. This tantra, manifestly of the utmost significance for a study of the kīla’s history, has been investigated by Stephen Hodge who concludes (in a private written communication) that the identification of Vajrakila with Vajrakumāra is not clearly established here. In the later Tibetan tradition, however, the name Vajrakumāra uniquely and ubiquitously refers to the deity Vajrakila.
228. In Hodge’s opinion, this is a false attribution.
229. Y. Matsunaga, op. cit., 179.
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An incident in the life of Nāgārjuna is related by Marcotty who, unfortunately, does not quote his source for the tale. According to this legend, while Nāgārjuna was resident at the monastery of Nālandā he is reputed to have denied access to those holy precincts to a young woman who had been identified by him as the trouble-making demoness Caṇḍikā in disguise. Her path was effectively barred by the simple expedient of driving a wooden kīla into the ground within the monastery courtyard. This story is conceivably the earliest known anecdote relating to the magical prowess of the single ritual kīla.

The hagiographies of eighty-four prominent mahāsiddhas of ancient India were gathered together in the eleventh or twelfth century by Abhayadattaśrī of Campārna. Among the stories he collected is that of the siddha Virūpa who is said to have transfixed the sun in the sky by stabbing his ritual kīla right on the line separating sunlight from shadow. Virūpa came from the monastic academy of Somapuri in Bengal, thought to have been established at the end of the eighth century, but whether the Kīla doctrines were taught there or not is unknown. On the other hand, however, we have noted above that minor kīla-siddhis are taught in at least three prominent cycles of tantric doctrines (Guhyasamāja, Cakrasamvara and Yamāntaka). It would therefore seem reasonable to suppose that both Nāgārjuna and Virūpa learned magical techniques engaging the kīla from these sources, in the systems of which they were acknowledged experts. The most salient source from this period, however, is surely the GST within which we find half a chapter uttered by the apotheosized Vajrakīla himself. This section teaches the GHA mantra quoted above (here called the Sarvatraidhātukāyavākicēttakīlaya-mantra) within that fragment of the tantra devoted exclusively to an explanation of the kīlas which transfix the Buddha’s body, speech and mind.

It begins with the bhagavat entering the samādhi called Binding vajra (nibandhana-vajra) of the body, speech and mind of all Tathāgatas. The lord then utters this mantra for transfixing the body, speech and mind of all the three realms: OṂ GHA GHA GHĀTAYA GHĀTAYA SARVADUŚṬAN PHAT! KILAYA KILAYA SARVAPĀPĀN PHAT! HŪM HŪM HŪM VAJRAKILAYA VAJRADHARA ĀJĀPAYATI KĀYAVĀKICĪTTAVAJRAM KILAYA HŪM PHAT! and as soon as it was uttered, even those powerful beings possessed of great magic skill became fearful. Candrakirti explains that “the ones possessed of great magic skill” (maharddhikā) are Śakra and the rest. In the subsequent cycle of Vajrakīla literature these Vedic gods constitute the thrones of the daśakrodha kings but in this instance, terrified by Kīla’s power they seek refuge in Mahāvajradhara.

231. K. Dowman, Masters of Mahāmudrā, 46. Note the way in which this legend modifies the paradigm of the kīla as an instrument for securing boundaries.
232. ibidem, 50.
233. It is possible, also, that kīla rites once formed part of the doctrines of Tārā, as evidenced by the incident of Jñānadeva cited above.
234. GST, XIV, 58 to chapter end.
235. C. Chakravarti, Pradīpodyotana, 158.
236. It is regularly observed that those Hindu gods who are ‘converted’ by such wrathful displays soon become the Buddha’s footstools; e.g., Gaṅapati beneath the feet of Mahākāla, Śiva and Umā trampled by Śrīheruka, etc. It is the normal practice of tantric initiates to meditate upon the guru on the crown of the head and the initiated gods are no exception to this rule. The
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The root text goes on to say that kilas made of human bone, acacia wood or iron\(^{237}\) are capable of destroying the threefold vajrakāya, to which Candrakīrti’s commentary adds that, by striking those nails on the top with a vajra hammer, one extirpates all the sins of body, speech and mind. The three kilas themselves are said to have the nature of Vairocana, Yamāntaka and Amṛtakūṇḍalin.

With regard to the actual configuration (vijṛmbhita) of the kīla, it is said that the upper part has the aspect of the samaya deity whereas the lower section from the heart to the feet is in the form of a sharp spike. The Vajramālā-tantra,\(^{238}\) an early Indian commentary on the GST, adds that the ritual kīla should be made of acacia wood, thirteen inches (angula) in length and three-sided in shape. It is to be marked with ‘the three words’ (OM ĀH HŪM), blessed with one hundred syllables\(^{239}\) and purified by the rite of Amṛtakūṇḍalin. The samayasattva whose form comprises the upper half of the peg is, according to Candrakīrti, the triple-faced, six-armed Amṛtakūṇḍalin.\(^{240}\)

A similar description is given by Nāgārjuna in his Pañcakrama within which he judiciously rearranges the entire GST in order to teach the procedures of yoga in five steps. According to this new arrangement, the rites of the vajrakīla are to be performed as a preliminary to meditation upon the maṇḍala of Guhyasamājā and thus the kilanavidhi is described in verses 8–17 of the piṇḍikramasādhana which precedes even the first krama:

- Generating the ten krodha kings,
- blazing with light and terrible like demons
- Sprung forth from the syllable HŪM and
- standing resplendent in the pratyāśīḍa attitude, (8)
- (The yogin) should think of them in proper sequence upon the tips of the circle of ten directions.
- In order to destroy all obstacles,
- visualizing Sumbha\(^{241}\) he should nail them down. (9)

iconography of the fierce deities in all respects, however, is typically extreme. Describing Vajrapāni as he tramples the prostrate Maheśvara, STTS, 59, says that Mahādeva received abhiseka and experienced all the joys of liberation through his contact with the sole of Vajrapāni’s foot.

237. Note the recurring correlation of the colours white (bone), red (wood) and black (iron).
238. P. 82.
239. The mantra of Vajrasattva.
240. Thus Amṛtakūṇḍalin’s identification with Vajrakīla remains, notwithstanding the introduction of Vairocana and Yamāntaka.
241. A demon slain by Durgā (Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa, LXXXV-XC), apotheosized by the Buddhists. The power of Sumbha (Sumbha) and his brother Nisumbha (Niśumbha) was invoked by Vajrapāni in the STTS prior to the defeat of Maheśvara. The mantra employed on that occasion, known as the mantra of four HŪMṣ, has since become ubiquitous in rites of purifying the ground as a preliminary to any major sādhana practice. “In the Vajra family of Sumbha the Royal Formula has great magical power; endowed with the four HŪM syllables, it is active in all the rites.” SDPT, 76. Sumbha alone entered the ranks of the dasākrodha kings as Sumbharāja, guardian of the nadir. In the Vajrakīla cycle, however, his place is taken by Mahābala.
Chapter Two

OM SUMBHA NISUMBHA HŪM GRHNA GRHNA HŪM GRHNĀPAYA GRHNĀPAYA
HŪM ĀNAYA HO BHAGAVAN VIDYĀRĀJA HŪM PHAT.

Having thus summoned the misleaders by means of this wrathful form,
The wise one should nail them all down in accordance with the rite. (10)
The great king Vajrāṃṛta is to be manifest as Vajrakīla,
Dark like the petals of the blue lotus,
the glory of the kula, enveloped in flames. (11)
The portion below his waist should be generated in the form of a spike (śūla),
Above which is the form of wrath with three faces and six arms. (12)
Beneath him (the yogin) sees the multitude of hindrances.
Muttering the mantra he should stab the immovable vajrakila into the bodies of (those) obstructing demons. (13)
OM GHA GHA GHAṬAYA GHAṬAYA SARVADUṬAN PHAT! KILAYA KILAYA
SARVAPĀPAN PHAT! HŪM HŪM VAJRĀKILA VAJRADHARA ĀJŚĀPAYATI
SARVAVIGHNĀNĀM KĀYAVĀKCITTAṂ KILAYA HŪM PHAT!

And he should contemplate Sumbharāja with a hammer in his hand. (14)
Imagining the vajra fire that spreads everywhere,
(The yogin) should think that the wailing evils are burned up (within it). (15)
Stabbing the kīla into the ten directions, above, below and all around,
(The yogin) should meditate by means of the ultimate (truth)
upon the absence of self-nature in the triple world. (16)
Meditation concerning the non-truly-existent is neither meditation nor non-meditation.
Thus, existence being not (truly) existent, meditation may not be achieved. (17)²⁴²

These final verses denote the ‘higher activities’ (stod las) in which enlightenment is the chief aim, as opposed to the more widespread ‘lower acts’ (smad las) in which the kīla is employed predominantly for the destruction of demons. All of this, I think, clearly indicates the importance of the kīla doctrines in their own right. Their independent status is further evidenced by the discovery in Nepal of a number of Sanskrit manuscripts, such as those in the library of the IASWR which include the Kīlanacāryā and Kilanavidhi (each 24 folios in length), as well as a long text on the construction of mandalas and the

²⁴². L. de La Vallée Poussin, Pañcakrama, 1–2.
bestowal of empowerment entitled *Kilanadikṣākrama* (65 folios). Although these texts still await detailed investigation, they stand as eloquent testimony to the emergence of a *kīla* cult prior to its flourishing in Tibet.

The GST goes on to say that, “By means of *vajra* meditation even a Buddha will certainly be stabbed (*kīlayate*). When Vajrasattva, the great king, strikes with the *kīla* he will quickly die.” And thus a paradigm of ritual *kīla* activity is ensconced.

This basic exemplar is amplified in the verses which follow where it is said that, in order to destroy the body, one recites the *mantra* *OM CHINDA CHINDA HANA HANA DAHA DAHA DĪPTAVAJRACAKRA HŪM PHĀṬ* and strikes the *vajrakīla* into the head (“the dwelling of Vairocana”) of (an effigy of) the victim. Death will occur as soon as he is struck.

It is pertinent to note that the *mantra* given here corresponds in several particulars to that of Vajrakīla’s consort Trīptacakra or Dīptacakra, whose seed syllables in the rNying-ma school under consideration in this work are *HANA HANA HŪM PHĀṬ*.

In order to destroy the speech, one recites *OM HRIH BHUR BHUVĀH* and “inserts the *vajra* finger into the open (*vikasita*) lotus of wisdom”. There one strikes with the *vajrakīla* and, once again, the victim is destroyed as soon as this is done.

The mind is destroyed with a *mudrā* of five prongs (*pañcaśūlāni*) and the *mantra* *OM VAJRARĀJA HŪM*. One imagines the *vajrakīla* to be filled with sparks of light as he plunges it into the heart of his enemy and thus his victim immediately dies. Fremantle’s translation reads:

“If the rite is correctly performed with the *yoga* of body, speech and mind, one can transfixed the whole extent of the *vajra* realm of space, of this there is no doubt. Thus spoke the Bhagavan, the Mahāvajrakīla.”

According to Candrakīrti, the ‘correct performance’ of this rite involves the sādhaka entering the centre of a shining red mandala where he arises in wrathful guise with his fangs slightly bared in a grimace (*iṣaddamstrākaraḷālavadana*). Surrounding him in their proper places are the ten krodharājas whose bodies have the nature of the triple *vajra* and who are described as exhibiting the form of Sumbha. The passage in the *mūlatantra* closes with a eulogy delivered by the Buddha’s retinue who thrill with joy at the boon just bestowed for the sake of living beings:

“Oh, best abode of secrets!  
Oh gathering of essence!  
Oh peaceful dwelling of Dharma!

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244. F. Fremantle’s translation.

245. Employing the *mudrā* noted above from the *Susiddhi-tantra*.

246. This *mantra* is to be found in the MMK (p. 395) where it ends *DĪPTACAKRA HŪM* and is called the *mantra* of the dharmacakra. It is said to destroy all *klesās* and so on and, most significantly, to fulfill the desires of the yogin by allowing him to “un-nail” them (*utkilayati*) as he wishes.
Oh *vajra* vanquishing!
The transfixing of all the Buddhas
and famous *bodhisattvas*,
The transfixing of *vajra* body, speech
and mind has been taught.
This is the transfixing of all *mantras*,
born of truth,
Bestowing body, speech and mind,
The gathering of the truth of *mantras*.”

This particular half-chapter of the GST is evidently of considerable historical value to our study. Throughout the passage it is Mahāvajrakīla himself who propounds the ritual teachings, within which the emergence of his consort Trptacakra may also clearly be discerned. The *kīla* is placed within the *mandala* and assigned quite a specific iconography: one half wrathful deity and one half nail. There is, furthermore, an elaborate advance in the ritual use of the *kīla* upon all previous citations, with instructions being given to stab the effigy in the head, throat and heart in order to subdue specifically the body, speech and mind. Despite its brevity, the text describes a highly sophisticated Vajrakīla rite in very clear terms. We must conclude, therefore, that the ritual technique of slaying with a *kīla* was already well established by the time of its redaction.

The lamentable paucity of relevant literature in support of this view I suppose to result from the subsequent loss of much material including, perhaps, contemporaneous Vajrakīla *sādhanas*, *tantras* and *āgamas*. Sanskrit Buddhist literature, in general, has largely disappeared from the land of its origin and Indian history affords no shortage of examples of religious cults whose traces have all but vanished. Such an apparently tendentious hypothesis is supported by the Vajrakumāra texts translated into Chinese by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra in advance of the assumed date of the GST,247 not to mention the many volumes dedicated to Vajrakīla in the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* (NGB)248 and other Tibetan collections. Nor is there anything odd in the fact of its intrusion here into the text of the GST. Kurukullā, for example, is an independent deity having no obvious connection with Hevajra and yet her sādhanā is to be found at HT I, xi, 12–15.

On the other hand, of course, it is conceivable that this passage reflects a penultimate stage in the evolution of Vajrakīla as a deity, immediately prior to the formulation of *tantras* and other texts specifically dedicated to his name. On the testimony of both the Tibetan and Sino-Japanese traditions, however, I advocate the view proposed above. The rite of killing, demonstrated so succinctly in this extract, is raised almost to the level of an obsession in the Vajrakīla *tantra*. The entire genre of *Anuttarayogatantra*, in fact, displays an atavistic predisposition towards the antinomian features of the earliest Kriyātantra accompanied, however, by a marked change in philosophic outlook. Whereas we might suppose the earlier strata of tantric literature to reflect the mundane preoccupations of village sorcerers whose methodology it apparently incorporated without discrimination, it

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247. Although the problem of dating all such material is as yet unresolved, the general consensus supports this view.
248. Regarding the NGB see below, note 252.
is clear that in the middle period (epitomized by the Yogatantra) such wholesale perfidy of Buddhist ideals was abandoned only to re-emerge as ‘vajra wrath’ and so on in the Anuttarayoga tantra of the final period.

An important feature noted in the Guhyagarbha-tantra is the placement of a kīla within each of the four Families (kula) for the performance of ‘the four magical rites’ (catvāri karmāṇi). The ‘orthodox’ nature of these rites (and thus the establishment of the kīla as a part of that orthodoxy) is hinted at by relating them to the four syllables which ubiquitously serve as introductions to canonical literature: “Evam mayā…” (“Thus, by me …”). Guhyagarbha XX (amplified by the commentary of Klong-chen-pa) specifies that an iron Vajrakīla of indestructible reality is to be used with an attitude of wrath within a triangular (E) maṇḍala to destroy the body; a copper Padmakīla of desire is to be used with an attitude of attachment within a semicircular (VAM) maṇḍala in order to subjugate all speech; a golden Ratnakīla of pride is to be used with an attitude of joy within a square (MA) maṇḍala to increase one’s indestructible brilliance and enlightened attributes; and a silver Buddhakīla of lustrous radiance is to be used with an attitude of mental clarity within a circular (YĀ) maṇḍala to pacify all fury.

The paradigm of a Vajrakīla maṇḍala is now complete. Vajrakīla as the maṇḍalādhipati has been joined by his four ‘supreme sons’ (as they become known in the Byang-gter literature discussed below), through whom he becomes lord of the five families with his own Karmaṇa as the fifth. His retinue of daśakrodha kings has been established and to his original purely apotropaic role have been accrued all those activities appropriate to a Samyaksambuddha.

The collected tantric texts revered in Tibet as translations of works brought from India during the eighth century include many volumes devoted to the worship of the kīla as just such a Samyaksambuddha together with his retinue although today, regrettably, no Indian redaction of any of these texts is known to western scholarship. Indian Buddhists, although aware of Vajrakīla, seem to have taken little interest in this ‘central deity’, preferring to focus their attention instead upon his retinue of ten wrathful kings who may be called upon to surround and protect the maṇḍala palace of any chosen deity.

Thus, according to Abhayākaraṇa’s vighnakīlanavidhi, compiled in the twelfth century from such sources as outlined above: In order to establish all beings on the stage of Vajradhara the yogin should rise at dawn determined to destroy all obstacles. Following the contemplation of voidness he should visualize the syllable RAM and mentally transform it into the disc of the sun. Resting upon that sun disc is a syllable HOM which, in turn, transforms into a viśvavajra upon which stands a HUM. Blazing vajras born of the

251. cf. the Japanese tradition of single-pronged vajras bearing the various emblems of the kulas upon their heads.
252. eg. the NGB. Of the edition in 36 volumes published in Thimbu in 1973, vols. 27–9, are devoted to Vajrakīla.
253. cf. Lessing & Wayman, Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems, 283, where the nature of the central deity is explained.
light rays of that syllable HŪM spread out in all directions to form a seamless wall and tent with a canopy composed of a network of arrows, above, and a blazing foundation of unbearably bright viśvavajra, below. Transforming himself in an instant into the quintessential vajra being (Vajrasattva) who is utterly victorious over the three worlds (Trailokyavijaya) named Vajraḥūṃkāra, the yogin stands in the centre of that area upon a sun and multicoloured lotus in the alīḍha posture with right knee advanced and left leg drawn back. Very angry and blazing like the fire at the end of an aeon in a mass of rays of light, his two feet trample upon Bhairava and Kālarātri and he takes as his food the entire multitude of interrupting worldly demons.

He has three faces: yellow on the right, green on the left and his central face is dark blue. Each face has immense fangs and a lolling tongue, wrinkled eyebrows, a projecting forehead and three bulbous red eyes. Possessed of the six mudrās, across his brow is a row of five skulls and a garland of dripping heads oozing blood dangles from his neck. He wears a belt of human heads and is clothed in tiger skin. The flaming reddish brown hair of his head streams upwards encircled by the dark blue nāga king Ananta and he is adorned with Takṣaka and the rest of the nāga kings. With his two main hands holding vajra and bell he makes ‘vajra fists’ pressed back to back, linked together with the two little fingers while the ‘threatening’ forefingers remain outstretched. Standing thus with the gesture of conquering the triple world he is established in self-radiant wisdom. His two hands on the right hold an iron hook and noose and those on the left, a skull and khatvāṅga. With his fanged face roaring the sound of HŪM, from the HŪM in his heart spread out rays of light that gather up all the hindering demons from the ten directions.

The yogin should then consign those demons to the ten wrathful ones who have poured forth from the syllable HŪM.

In length those wrathful deities should be either eighteen or twelve or eight inches, in that order, and to be effective they should be six, four or three inches thick. Made of acacia wood or bone or iron, they should be placed in new containers and worshipped, smeared with white mustard seed and red sandalwood and wound with threads of five colours. Holding them in one’s hands they should be empowered with the mantra of three syllables. Then, one at a time, those ten kīlas should be bound with a garland of red flowers. Below the navel each kīla has the form of a single spike, above which they are to be contemplated in one’s own (three-faced, six-armed) image, blazing like the fire at the end of an aeon.

Meditating thus and binding the vajra fist with his left hand, the yogin with his right hand takes the chief of all symbols, the averting hammer (parāvṛutta-mudgara) tied with a garland of flowers and, uttering a long drawn-out sound he strikes the ten HŪM-born krodhas as they pierce the obstructors. OM VAJRĀKĪLĀ KĪLAYA SARVAVIGHNĀN HŪM or else OM GHA GHA GHĀṬAYA GHĀṬAYA SARVADUŚṬĀN PHAT PHAT. KĪLAYA KĪLAYA SARVAPĀPĀN PHAT PHAT HŪM HŪM HŪM. VAJRĀKĪLĀ VAJRADHARO ĀNĀPAYATI SARVAVIGHNĀNĀM KĀYĀVĀKCIṬṬĀM KĪLAYA HŪM HŪM PHAT PHAT. With the first recitation he should fix the kīla on the head (of the victim) and then, muttering OM VAJRAMILDDGARA ĀKŌṬAYA HŪM, he should beat it (with the hammer). In this way the yogin should begin in the northeast corner and, moving clockwise around the outside of
the mandala, should fix and strike the kilas of the eight directions within the ‘circle of light’ (prabhāvali) that surrounds the vajra circle.

This should be done first of all by the ācārya and then, when the demons have been rendered powerless, by his assistants.\(^{254}\) The kila for the zenith should be pegged to the east of the eastern spike and that for the nadir to the west of the western one. Otherwise, as stated in the STTS and other sources,\(^{255}\) “One should peg (the kila) within the outer circle of light”.

Abhayākaragupta then states that, in accordance with those (authoritative texts), ācāryas of his day, having fixed the spikes around the outside of the mandala house, make mounds of earth upon those ten places and there gratify the wrathful ones whose form is the kila with flowers and so on and with parasols and gifts of food and the rest. By doing that, they say, all that is wished for is attained in the most excellent manner without any hindrance, even that pertaining to the gods. The yogin should meditate upon the host of obstructors attaining the blissful “single taste of the natural condition” (tathātākarasam) due to being transfixed and hammered in that way, while the remaining hindering demons flee far away. Thus all beings above, below and across the world, everywhere out as far as the limit of the universe, are to be set free—firmly established in the absence of obstacles. This is the first method.

Alternatively, by reciting OM ĀH HŪM YAMĀNTAKRT SARVADUŚTENDROPENDRĀN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM PRAJNĀNTAKRT SARVADUŚTAYAMĀN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM PADMĀNTAKRT SARVADUŚTANĀGĀN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM VIGHNĀNTAKRT SARVADUŚTAKUVERĀN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM ACALA SARVADUŚTĒŚĀNĀN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM ṬĀKKIRĀJA SARVADUŚTĀGNĪN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM NĪLADANDA SARVADUŚTANAIRĪRTĪN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM MAHĀBALA SARVADUŚṬAVĀVYŪN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM CAKRAVARTIN SARVADUŚTĀRKA&CANDRAPITĀMAHĀN SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, OM ĀH HŪM SUMBHA SARVADUŚṬAVEMACITRIＰṬHIVĪDEVATĀH SAPARIVĀRĀN KILAYA HŪM PHAṬ, all the obstructors in the guise of Indra and the rest who dwell in the east and other quarters are to be transfixed and beaten by means of those mantras, just as has been described above. This is the second method.

And if someone were to say that four kilas should be embedded in the four corners, (we reply) “Just in the (four) doorways!” Furthermore, the colours and forms and so on of the wrathful deities and of Indra and the rest may be known from established tradition. When it is the case that one wishes to meditate upon the vast circle of protection and yet possesses no spikes made of acacia wood and so on; during the performance of the ritual meditations of transfixing and hammering just described, the yogin should turn his hand over onto its back and, saying OM VAJRA HŪM, should wave it in the air and strike it on the ground thinking that by so doing he ‘liberates’ them.\(^{256}\)

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254. These are the four dvarācāryas mentioned by Kuladatta, above.
255. I have been unable to trace this citation.
256. Vajrāvali, 33–7. Abhayākaragupta in his final injunction seems unaware of the kilamudrā to be found in the Susiddhi-tantra.
The foregoing etiology of the divine nail has perhaps raised more questions than it has answered. The evolution of the dasakrodha kings within the literature of the tantric Buddhists, for example, is a topic worthy of a thorough investigation that must be neglected here for want of space. The myth of the subjugation of Rudra, barely touched upon in this chapter, is another. Thirdly there remains the whole question of the interaction between the Buddhist and Hindu tantras and, in particular, the role of the kila in the rites of non-Buddhists. 257 That which I hope has been achieved here, however, is a fairly clear and comprehensive image of the magic nail as it evolved and became established within the Vajrayāna.

The next chapter explores the concept and iconography of the nail as expressed in the literature of Vajrakīla, an apotropaic god of supreme wrath. Although material for the present chapter has been consciously selected as far as possible from Indian sources, iconographic data and definitive evidence of a Vajrakīla cult are conspicuously absent from all such documents presently available. This situation, however, may be radically overthrown as Sanskrit material currently emerging from Nepal begins to be investigated. The literature of Tibet, on the other hand, is replete with such details. The magic peg evidently struck a sympathetic chord deep in the Tibetan psyche 258 and I propose, therefore, to close this chapter by noting briefly the widespread prevalence of the kīla as an instrument of high religion and popular sorcery within the numerous traditions of that country.

Among the many legends that have accumulated around the earliest introductions of Buddhism to Tibet is a tale concerning two of the wives of emperor Srong-btsan sgam-po (early seventh century). A princess from Nepal and another from China, both of whom were Buddhists in possession of sacred images, apparently rivalled each other in determination to become the first in Tibet to have a temple erected in honour of her own particular Buddhist statue. No temple could successfully be built within that country, however, until the ‘demoness of the soil’ had been subdued. Through the geomantic expertise of the Chinese princess Kong-jo, the appropriate locations for the required subjugation were determined on the ground and then the spread-eagled form of the demoness was rendered immovable by transfixing her limbs. Thirteen shrines and stūpas were built in order to effect this. One of these pressed down upon her heart and then an inner circle of four transfixed her shoulders and hips, an intermediate group held firm her

257. For example, kilas are linked with the exorcism of evil influences in a rite of healing described by Eberhard Fischer & Haku Shah, “Treatment Against Ghosts and Spirits: The bhagtaī Ceremony of the Chodhri Tribe in Gujarat.” German Scholars on India, II, Delhi, 1976, 51–60.

258. R. A. Stein notes that the sacred mountains with which the country of Tibet abounds are popularly regarded as either yul lha (“deities of the country”) or gzhi bdag (sa bdag, “lords of the locality”). In particular they are thought of as the “pillars of the sky” (gnam gyi ka ba) and “kīla of the earth” (sa yi phur bu), exactly the functions originally performed by the Indrakīla. R. A. Stein, Tibetan Civilisation, 203.
elbows and knees, and a final set pinned down her wrists and ankles. As a result of that subjugation, it is said, the land of Tibet was tamed in readiness for the introduction of the Buddhist Dharma.259

With regard to the building of the temple in the centre that pressed down upon the heart of the demoness, Erik Haarh260 quotes the rGyal rabs gsal ba’i me long (160.149r) as saying; “The pillars were fashioned in the form of kilas and the tantrics rejoiced.” Once more, therefore, we note the intimate association of the kila with architecture in general and with pillars in particular.

The scheme of subduing the land depicted in this tale has an obvious parallel in the system of fixing kilas into the four corners of the site, discussed at length above. Indeed, Kuladatta’s system actually included both inner and outer concentric rings of nails. Compare this with the religious procedure involved in the seemingly simple act of erecting the tent which is to serve as dwelling for the yogin during periods of isolated retreat. According to a popular Tibetan tradition, the yogin should imagine all the dangerous demons of the area to be spread-eagled on the ground beneath his tent and, as he hammers in the tent pegs, he visualizes kilas of meteoric iron (gnam lcags)261 being driven through their limbs.262 Such meditations are cast in specifically Buddhist terminology in these rites by calling upon the dākinīs of the pañcakula to bring the kilas of the four brahmavihāras263 from the four directions together with the kila of bodhicitta which holds centre place.264

At a far social remove from the itinerant yogins who must beg their way from one charnel ground to the next for the performance of such rites, is the powerful hierarch, the Dalai Lama. A recently published esoteric manual by the Fifth Dalai Lama specifies the use of kilas in more than a dozen rites in addition to those focussing on the deity Vajrakila. These include not only rituals for the subjugation of demons but also rites for the promotion of long life and prosperity.265

Further examples can be found in Nebesky-Wojkowitz’s Oracles and Demons of Tibet, a perusal of which quickly reveals the popularity of the hand-held kila as a weapon of magic among minor Tibetan deities. The power of the kila, however, may be

259. M. Aris, Bhutan, ch. 1, offers an in-depth analysis (with variants, etc.) and historical appraisal of the fascinating legend so crudely outlined here.


261. “Sky-iron”, a ubiquitous tantric image thought to embody the paradox of śūnya (the “sky”) with functional manifestation (“iron”).

262. cf. the poorly translated description given in the rite of gcod edited by W. Y. Evans-Wentz in Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, 324.

263. maitrīkila, karuṇākila, muditākila, upeksākila.


265. S. Karmay, Secret Visions, plates 23, 42, 43, etc. and page 33, plate 4, etc.
iconographically incorporated in more ways than one. Amrtakundalin, for example, became a 'kila-deity' not by the iconographer's gift of a spike to his hand but by the incorporation of the deity into the substance of the spike itself. Such a process resulted inevitably in some artistic modification of the form of the spike, usually vague but occasionally quite specific. Thus it is that a large number of ritual kilas show three faces at the top, for an overwhelming majority of the gods who are invoked to dwell within the kilas are of the three-faced variety. Other kilas, however, are clearly designed as the abode of a single, recognizable divinity. Hayagriva with his horse’s head, for example, is often to be found in the form of a spike and the list is surprisingly long.266

In the sixteenth century, the Tibetan polymath Taranātha assembled a large collection of sādhanas from various sources among which, in a section devoted to Jñānamahākāla, is to be found a certain Garuḍapakṣavat Kīlapāda Pañjara Mahākāla (sic.) depicted in his published icon267 as a single-faced, two-handed deity holding a kartrkā and skull in front of his chest. Clothed and adorned with all the usual attributes of a heruka he has a pair of wings (an important element in the iconography of Vajrakila) and his two (!) feet are implanted like nails into the heart of an enemy who lies supine within a fierce triangular prison (also an important element in the iconography of Vajrakila). With the icon is his karma-mantra: OM MAHĀKĀLA HŪṂ PHĀṬ! MAHĀKĪLA TRI YAM JAH JAH. MAHĀKĪLA TRI YAM dgra bo MĀRAYA. MAHĀKĪLA TRI YAM thum ril rbad. KĪLAYA sha rbad. dgra bo NR MĀRAYA HŪṂ PHĀṬ! SAMAYA HŪṂ PHĀṬ! SARVAVIGHNĀN BĀṂ HŪṂ PHĀṬ! (I have replaced the impossible syllable Ni, written with reversed gi gu in the published text, by NR.) Note here especially the reduction of the word bandhaya, as found in the earlier mantras, to the seed syllable BĀṂ, as found in all Vajrakīla mantras within the rNying-ma traditions.

These few examples of the kīla as an abiding concept in Tibetan thought are merely the tip of an iceberg. It is difficult, indeed, to find any general work on Tibetan religious art and culture that fails to mention the ubiquitous magic spike. The popularity of the kīla in Tibet, especially (but by no means exclusively) among the rNying-ma-pa, is an undoubted legacy of Padmasambhava, a charismatic figure who played a central role in the propagation of kīla rituals in Tibet. The history of the Vajrakīla doctrines, according to the view of its own sacred tradition, will be looked at as soon as the iconography of Vajrakīla has been dealt with in the following chapter.

266. J. Huntingdon, The Phur-ba: Tibetan Ritual Daggers, depicts a number of nails that are also gods.
267. L. Chandra, Buddhist Iconography of Tibet, I, 324.
Chapter Three
Iconography of the Kila

High aspirations and low activities
Ultimately, the Vajrakīla is said to be the nail of essential meaning (nīṭārtha) and whoever takes hold of it is capable of destroying all dualistic grasping, thereby attaining the bliss of eternal nirvāṇa. Inwardly, this is achieved by meditating on the so-called bhavakīla in which the entire universe, with all of its confusing dualistic contradictions, is contemplatively united within the single image of a nail. This is symbolically expressed through the use of small ritual nails, some few inches long, made of metal or wood which are held in the hand of an ‘exorcist’ as he stabs at the ‘demons’ (dualistic thoughts) that are causing trouble to himself or his sponsor. In Chapter Nine of the Byang-gter mūlatantra known as The Black Razor (BRT) it is said:

“With regard to meditational equipoise (samāhita-samādhi); the special activity is the enlightened mind (bodhicitta) that arises from the unmistaken and uncontrived dharmatā with the speed of a dreadful flashing thunderbolt in order to subjugate the vicious beings of the three realms. This bodhicittakīla which is fully accomplished in controlling the traidhātuka is called ‘The Killer of the Three Realms Without Exception’.”

And in Chapter Ten of the same tantra we read:

“By means of the bodhicittakīla, penetrate perfect knowledge for your own benefit (and then) destroy the ignorance of all sentient beings in the traidhātuka without exception by means of Vajrakīla!”

The tantra then goes on to explain the mystical significance of the nail, offering various interpretations of the term kīla:

“Ki” implies that all and everything is the mind of enlightenment.
“La” means that (the enlightened mind) pervades all things.
“Ki” indicates the supreme lord of all phenomena.
“La” shows that all beings are within his retinue.
“Ki” indicates that all dharmas are unoriginated.
“La” shows the unceasing nature of playful creativity (līlā).
“Ki” indicates unity within the enlightened mind.
“La” shows the attainment of multiplicity within that.

268. For a critical edition of this text (A2, etc., analysed in Chapter Five) see below, Appendix II.
Thus the magic nail, which in the previous chapter was employed to pin down nāgas, vetālas and other demonic forces, is here called upon to serve its cultic initiates in the higher function of leading to enlightenment. The explanatory Drag sngags zab pa'i lo rgyus\textsuperscript{269} describes the kila from several points of view, presenting it as a multi-layered symbol capable of simultaneously sustaining a variety of interpretation:

“As for the real essence of the Vajrakila, it is just the dharma-bhāja wisdom of natural awareness within which are the two rūpakāyas having a similar meaning. Kila’s nature is the great bliss of bodhicitta and, as a focal point for living beings, all trees and forests arise as kilas. As for the words of truth of Vajrakila, they are naturally abiding from the beginning in the dharma-bhāja. This is the kila of secret skilful means (guhyapāya).”\textsuperscript{270}

Thus the ‘ultimate truth’ of Kila (the apotheosized kila) is nothing less than the trikāya of Buddhahood having wisdom and bliss as the nature of Mind (the dharma-bhāja), ‘naturally abiding words of truth’ as the nature of Speech (sambhogakāya) and trees and forests as the manifestation of the Body (nirmāṇakāya). The artificial wooden stake that we have seen ritually employed as an instrument for stabilizing the earth has its natural counterpart in the living tree which is everywhere known to protect the soil from erosion as well as to participate in the kila’s function of weather control. Numerous citations from Buddhist scriptures could be called upon here to illustrate the popular motif of the tree\textsuperscript{271} as a stable, long-suffering and ‘compassionate’ refuge from the fierce heat of the sun (the kleśa) or a heavy downpour of rain (less threatening than drought to the Indian mind). Trees also serve as sources of the ‘naturally abiding words of truth’ in many a ‘pure land’ (buddha-kṣetra) image. In the Amītābhavyūha-sūtra, for example, it is said that the sounds of the trees as their leaves rustle in the wind bring all beings to a state of mindful awareness of the Dharma,\textsuperscript{272} and in the previous chapter we noted a wooden kila that, having grown into a living tree, proceeded to preach the Dharma. Throughout the world, furthermore, trees commonly serve as boundary markers and protectors of the border.

The tree, with its roots piercing deep into the earth and its branches stretching up to the heavens, is often linked in mythological imagery to the cosmic Mount Meru. Also the column or pillar known as the indrakīla, to which reference has been made above, is regularly associated with either Mount Meru, ‘the tree of life’ or the bodhi tree.\textsuperscript{273} It is no surprise, then, to find in Byang-gter literature several descriptions of the kīla cast in terms of the macrocosmic imagery of Mount Meru. The Byang-gter text A33, for example, describes the sharp point of the kīla as a ferocious striker issuing from the jaws of a makara, above which saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are incorporated within the ‘vast knots’

\textsuperscript{269} B30, etc.
\textsuperscript{270} B30, 140.
\textsuperscript{271} For a study of the popular motif of the tree in Indian thought see Odette Viennot, Le culte de l’arbre dans l’Inde ancienne, Annales du Musée Guimet, Paris, 1954.
(mahākanda) at either end of the handle. The eight-sided handle itself is said to radiate with the splendour of all creation.\textsuperscript{274}

In a more elaborate description, the arising of this ‘cosmic kīla’ (bhavakīla) follows the traditional abhidharma paradigm for the unfolding of the universe.\textsuperscript{275} Thus, on a foundation of the ferocious\textsuperscript{276} elements of space, wind, fire, water and earth, the receptacle universe (bhajanaloka) emerges. The enclosing cakravāla has the form of a dark pair of interlocking triangles (dharmodaya), one red, the other blue,\textsuperscript{277} within which swirls an ocean of blood. From the centre of the blood ocean arises the majestic Mount Sumeru in the form of a nail. The sharp tip of this nail presses down upon the hells and the kāmadhātu is enclosed within the great knot at the base of the shaft above. The lower half of the eight-sided shaft of this nail encompasses the rūpadhātu and its upper half comprises the realm of the ārūpyadhatu. The realm of the Buddhas is symbolized by the great knot on the very top of the shaft. Thus the nail itself encompasses both the lowest depths of samsāra and the ultimate peaks of nirvāṇa and this is the nail which is rolled between the palms of the almighty deity Vajrakila whose icon is to be described in this chapter: “The great trichiliocosm resides within just such a kīla as this and any kīla manufactured in accordance with this design has great power.”\textsuperscript{278}

Thus the manifest kīla ranges in form from the inch-long thorn of the acacia tree, through the various man-made spikes of wood and metal, to the pillar, the tree, ‘the tree of life’, ‘the tree of enlightenment’ and, ultimately, to the axis mundi and the entire universe.

The Drag sngags zab pa’i lo rgyus continues with an explanation of how the three kāyas of the kīla are brought into existence and how they function for the benefit of beings. Beginning with the dharmakāya, the text explains:

“The substance of the kīla of all-pervading wisdom (omniscient understanding) is the wisdom of natural awareness (vidyājñāna). The place in which it is implanted is the dharmadhatu. The extent of this understanding is infallible knowledge of the inseparability of wisdom and the dharmadhatu. The defect of not knowing this is that infallible wisdom is impossible to gain.

The substance of the kīla of the secret mind of enlightenment is the bodhicitta of Mahāśriheruka and the place of its implantation is the bhaga of his consort. When this has been fully understood, true sons and daughters

\textsuperscript{274} A33, 235.
\textsuperscript{275} A36, 258–9.
\textsuperscript{276} The five elements in the imagery of the wrathful tantras are terrifying space, a violent wind, the fire of doomsday, an ocean of blood and a foundation (earth) of flesh and bone.
\textsuperscript{277} Male and female are represented in peaceful tantric imagery by the white colour of semen and the red of menstruation, the very essences of life. In the wrathful tantras, however, the male colour is the blue or black of poison and that of the female is the red of blood spilled in slaughter, the very essences of death.
\textsuperscript{278} A33, 236.
Chapter Three

can take birth from the Mother's bhaga. The defect of not understanding this is that birth is not possible.\(^{279}\)

As for the substance of the kīla of limitless compassion, this is the arising of compassion within the ālaya. The place of its implantation is all living beings of the six realms. The measure of this realization is the ability to benefit beings by means of unhesitating, unbiased compassion and the defect of not understanding this is the inability to benefit beings.\(^{280}\)

Those three verses relate the three kāyas to their corresponding moments: death, the intermediate state (antarābhava) and rebirth,\(^{281}\) all spoken of in terms of driving a spike into the appropriate ‘ground’. Such meditations focus upon the kīla in its ultimate aspect (as paramārthakīla) and form part of the ‘superior activities’ (stod las) leading to enlightenment. They constitute the highest level of Vajrakīla praxis as stated in the texts themselves and are said to result in the morally praiseworthy ‘achievement of the universal nail (bhavakīla)’. Initiates in the cult of Vajrakīla, however, also perform a large number of violent rites of a type akin to witchcraft or black magic (called smad las, ‘lower activities’)\(^{282}\) and frequent references to such rites are found in the documents analysed in section three of the present work. The manufactured or ‘conventional’ nails (samvrtikīla) pertaining to these lower activities of exorcism and destruction are described in the aforementioned text as follows:

“...The substances of the material kīlas with their signs and characteristics are silver, gold, copper and iron, together with the various woods that have an (occult) affinity with these metals. The places in which they are planted are the enemies, obstructors, trouble-makers and vicious ones. The measure of this understanding is the ability to destroy (‘liberate’) the enemies and obstructors. The defect of not understanding this is that the enemies and obstructors are not disciplined or converted.”\(^{283}\)

The four kinds of metal mentioned here are considered characteristic of the kīlas of the four families (kula) and the four rites (karma).

At the end of the rTsa ba dril sgrub, a sādhana said to have been taught to Padmasambhava by Śṛiśimha, are mentioned three varieties of kīlas. Those which are manufactured from either five or seven types of iron are praised as the best; those which are carved from acacia or other hard wood (drag po'i shing, which could also be translated ‘ferocious wood’), cut when the stars and planets are calculated to be in favourable

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279. This verse is a typical example of the sandhyābhāṣā in which so many tantric teachings are expressed. Simultaneously it refers (a) to the union of wisdom and means with the resultant arising of Buddhahood and (b) to the process of empowerment that purifies the sambhogakāya. For a discussion of this ‘twilight language’ see A. Wayman, The Buddhist Tantras, 128–35.


281. For a full discussion of these correspondences see Lati Rinbochay & Jeffrey Hopkins, Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth.

282. The ‘lower’ activities consist of the catvāri karmāni; the three “gentle” (mañju) rites of pacification, increase and control, and the “dreadful” (raudra) rite of slaying.

283. B30, 141.
positions,284 are said to be successful in any rite; and those which are not prepared in such ways are said to be ineffective.285 The theme is further elaborated in another text in which the attributes of various kilas are outlined during the course of a conversation between Padmasambhava and King Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan. This text confirms that the kilas of the four activities (karma) and so on are characterized in their own individual ways, whereas the violent kila that quells disturbances (bar chad 'dul, subdues interruptions) must be made of either wood or iron. If made of wood, then either red acacia or black rosewood should be used (although for the ‘messenger’ kila any kind of thorny wood is recommended) and if made of iron then, again, the kila made of five or seven types is praised as preeminent.286

The authors of these texts take it as axiomatic that the rite of slaying enemies by piercing their effigies with a material kila of metal or wood is merely the visible outer expression of a subtle inner meditation on the trikāyakīla directed towards enlightenment.

“That which makes the implantation of the kila necessary is the requirement to subdue the interruptions of Māra. In so doing one spontaneously accomplishes the four rites and, as a result of this, the trikāya (ie. Buddhahood). As for the manner in which these hindrances arise: in particular they become manifest for those vow-holders who are on the very verge of the attainment of siddhi. They do not arise for lesser beings. When obstacles really arise for a superior being, they may turn his mind away from his guru and his vajra brothers and sisters, away from the Dharma and his personal deity (iṣṭadevatā), away from the view (darśana) and his religious practice, away from the cultivation of samādhi and the performance of enlightened activity. Hindrances may also arise in the guise of enemies and thieves, the downfalls of broken vows, evil gossip, slander, disputes and all those things which destroy one’s wealth and Dharma practice. All of these hindrances are obstructions due to Māra and, with regard to their subjugation, there is no method superior to that of Vajrakīla.”287

Māra and Rudra: Embodiments of evil

The above reference to Māra, the standard epitome of evil in Buddhism, is rather unusual in the context of the Kila literature where his place is everywhere taken by Rudra. I suppose this to be a conscious attempt on the part of the author of the text (said to be Padmasambhava) to represent the Kila doctrines, which contain a large number of elements undoubtedly incorporated from a non-Buddhist milieu, in thoroughly orthodox manner.288

284. Acacia wood should be cut beneath the constellation Śravaṇa. E. W. Marasinghe, The Citrakarmaśāstra, 9.
288. Klong-chen-pa, commenting on Guhyagarbha-tantra XV, asserts that Rudra, Māra, and even the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, are one. With regard to such commentaries it has been
Chapter Three

Traditional Buddhist cosmological theory supposes mental defilements (kleśa)\textsuperscript{289} to be the fundamental cause of samsāra, the nature of which is distress (dukkha). The ‘Desire World’ (kāmaloka), in which these kleśas are particularly prevalent, is considered to be populated by a vast range of gods and demons of all kinds (as well as men, animals, etc.) and yet, while Indian mythology in general tended to enlarge the list of demons and demonic types, Buddhism incorporated them all within the character of Māra. Later developments such as Māra’s daughters and his demonic army and so forth, all derive their identity from this single figure, the sole demon of early canonical Buddhism.

The Pāli suttas describe Māra as the Buddha’s arch enemy. He is said to be the ruler of the kāmadhātu and thus to hold the human realm entirely under his sway. His powerful degenerative influence subtly pervades even the rūpa- and ārūpyadhātu so that the sphere of Buddhahood alone stands outside his reach. In an attempt to retain control of his subjects, then, Māra consistently opposes any religious endeavour that tends toward enlightenment, the sole means of escape from samsāra. He is the supporter of Vedic sacrifice through which the gods are nourished and sustained and a keen proponent of all false views. Continuously he seeks to disrupt meditation and to destroy insight. As the supreme obstacle to Buddhahood he represents all that must be conquered before enlightenment is won and victory over Māra, the Evil One, is said to be the crucial event leading to sambodhi.\textsuperscript{290}

Victory over Māra is traditionally attained through ‘passive resistance’ alone. The Pāli suttas teach unwavering commitment to right view (samyagdrṣṭi), right application of mindfulness (samyaksmṛti) and, above all, single-pointed absorption of the mind in samādhi as appropriate means of defense against his onslaughts. In the Vajrayāna, however, is developed the notion of wrathful compassion as Buddhism adopted the stance exemplified by the doctrines of Vajrakīla, and in the next chapter we will see how Padmasambhava is said to have overcome the obstacles to his own enlightenment as a result of his practice of Vajrakīla, emulating the paradigm of Indra versus Vṛtra.

Conquest of evil and the birth of Vajrakīla

The received mythology of Vajrakīla, however, describes the archetypal conquest of evil in terms of neither Māra nor Vṛtra. The epic struggle here is that of the Buddhas versus Rudra. An early version of this myth is to be found in the fundamental text of the Yogatantra class,\textsuperscript{291} with more developed portrayals in the later texts of Cakrasaṃvara and

\textsuperscript{289} Chiefly ignorance (moha), lust (rāga) and hatred (dveṣa).

\textsuperscript{290} For further details see T. O. Ling, Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil, passim.

other heruka manifestations.\textsuperscript{292} The premier account, however, is the one to be found in the \textit{mDo dgongs pa 'dus pa XXII-XXXI}.\textsuperscript{293}

According to this myth, during a previous aeon of moral decline when Rudra, the arch demon of pride or egoism, held sway over the entire triple world, all the Buddhas of the cosmos, unable through peaceful means to convince Rudra of the error of his ways, empowered a manifestation of great wrath in order to destroy him. At the time of his downfall, all the males in the retinue of Rudra were killed and all the females were raped. This is given a wholesome interpretation in the symbolic philosophy of the \textit{tantra} where the masculine element is equated with creative imagination which, when perverted in the form of false views, must be destroyed. The feminine element is said to be the ‘empty’ (\textit{sūnya}) nature of all manifestation and this is to be penetrated by the \textit{vajra} mind (\textit{vajra} = penis) in search of wisdom. The rape of Rudra’s wife by the Buddhas’ wrathful manifestation resulted in the immediate birth of a son called Vajrakumāra (\textit{Vajra Youth}), half heruka Buddha and half rākṣasi. This ‘Son of Heruka’, also known as Vajrarāksasa in remembrance of his maternal line, was the first earthly embodiment of Vajrakīla.\textsuperscript{294} He was both ugly as a demon and beautiful as a Buddha. Outwardly violent and inwardly tranquil, he was noble, base, arrogant and loving, a divine mystery as full of contradictions as his Vedic namesake. The \textit{Drag sngags zab pa 'i lo rgyus}\textsuperscript{295} states:

“As for his name \textit{Vajra}, this signifies the unborn \textit{dharma}tā. His name \textit{Kumāra} signifies freedom from old-age and decrepitude. That itself is the unconstrained and unmistaken truth which is impartial and does not fall to any side.”

And the BRT says:

“This is the form of the wisdom manifestation of all the Buddhas, the unbearable configuration of blazing wrath that emanates from the very nature of the \textit{vajradhvarmadhātu}.”

When the monstrous body of the demon Rudra was conquered and hurled from the peak of Mount Mālaya it was scattered into the eight directions. His head, heart, intestines and genitals (the four divisions of his trunk) landed in the cardinal quarters and his four limbs fell down in the intermediate directions. These areas are renowned in the myths as the eight great charnel grounds (\textit{aṣṭamaḥāśāsaṇa}) and in each one of these a special tree grew up. In the light of the above tradition in which all trees are viewed as living \textit{kīlas}, it is interesting to note that the eight

\textsuperscript{292} The relevant chapters have, unfortunately, been omitted by S. Tsuda from his 1974 edition of the \textit{Samvarodaya-tantra}.

\textsuperscript{293} NGB, 160. Accounts in English are to be found in Douglas & Bays, \textit{The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava}, V–VI, and G. Dorje, \textit{The Guhyagarbha-tantra}, XV.

\textsuperscript{294} \textit{bKa' thang gser phreng}, VI. The Tibetan text with an English translation is to be found in Lama and Low, \textit{The Origin of Heruka and the Twenty-four Places}, published privately in Kalimpong (no date).

\textsuperscript{295} B30, 139.
types of kilas listed in the *Kālacakra-tantra* exhibit a remarkable similarity to the eight types of tree said to stand in these burning grounds. 296

**The nature of the conqueror**

Thus Vajrakila, whose methodology is declared the foremost means of overcoming Māra in the present aeon, is considered the son of the heruka(s) who slew Rudra in an aeon long gone. This paramount conqueror of the present age is now a full grown samyaksambuddha in his own right having his own set of ‘supreme sons’ (see Part Three) and a lineage that includes the initiated yogin as the present ‘son of heruka’ on the throne of Buddhahood. The *Drag snags zab pa’i lo rgyus* describes the nature of this deity in some detail, opening with an evocative picture of the successful practice of his rites as a preamble to the commentarial material. This preamble is calculated to inspire faith in the minds of cultic initiates and I include it here for the sake of the poetic glimpse that it affords us as observers of the Kila cult. The motif of flying kilas to which we are introduced here is one that recurs repeatedly in the chronicles of the cult.

In Seng-ge-rdzong in Bhutan, Padmasambhava of Odjiyäna and his consort Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal are said to have been practising the rite of rolling the Razor of fierce root mantra, which is the very essence of Kila. Signs of success having become manifest in vastness, the meditation kila began to shake, tremble, fly up in the air and caper around. The painted images were laughing and the drums and cymbals played their own music. Natural awareness blazed forth as wisdom and vows of aspiration became attainments in reality. The eight classes of local gods and demons offered their own insignia and life essence and, making promises, they took oaths to act as protectors of the Kila doctrines. The whole sky was filled with vidyādharas and dākinīs and their hermitage was pervaded by sounds, bright lights and coloured rainbow rays. At that time, Padmasambhava of Odjiyäna said to Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal:

“Varakila is the manifestation of heroic power. The son of the non-dual union of the mother Samantabhadrī with the most mighty all-pervading excellent heruka whose form encompasses all the Buddhas. During times of peace he manifests as Vajrasattva and his mind abides in tranquility. As for his family lineage: his is the Activity Family of Karmaheruka. During times of activity he manifests as *Ativināśanavajra (Vajra of Total Destruction)* and when manifesting as a bodhisattva, he is Vajrapāni. Thus he takes on whatever form is appropriate for the conversion of living beings. His manifestations are inconceivable and all Buddhas are embodiments of Vajrakumāra. Within the dharmakāya which is the essential nature of all the Buddhas are all the infinite possibilities that could be wished for. One should meditate unwaveringly upon that dharmakāya, viewing it as the assembly of Buddhas. All deities are complete within the form of Vajrakumāra and the purpose or meaning of Vajrakumāra is complete...

within the solitary bindu\textsuperscript{297} of the dharmakāya. Never at any time does he stray from the dharmakāya.\textsuperscript{298}

And in Chapter Two of the mūlatantra BRT it is written:

“In that place the bhagavat Mahāśrīvajrakumāra spoke these words: ‘Kyai! Pay attention to this, all you hosts here assembled! In the mighty charnel ground of the natural condition, reflected forms, like the images in a mirror or the moon in water, abide in the sphere of natural meaning without being covered by the stains of the afflictions. The teacher is like a miraculous display in the sky, teaching the Dharma of fierce mantra in the supreme charnel ground of the natural state.’ Thus he spoke.”

And in Chapter Three:

“(When it is said that) he is the supreme son of all Tathāgatas, the word ‘son’ means that he comes without birth from the dharmatā and ‘supreme’ means that he is the spontaneous fulfilment of enlightened activity. He is the son of all of them in order to destroy Rudra. The ‘son’ is the unborn vajra son.”

Thus our Byang-gtér sources present Vajrakila as a numinous aspect of vibrant enlightenment, a potent force in the struggle against evil, immanent in a variety of (essentially illusory) forms. As ‘the son of the Buddhas’, he is a contrivance of enlightened wisdom (prajñā) specifically brought forth as a method (upāya) in opposition to the forces of darkness. Moreover, just as the Māra of the Pāli canon remains invisible to all but the Buddha and arhats,\textsuperscript{299} and yet none can achieve that status without first recognizing and routing the demon, so Vajrakila embodies both the path and the goal of sambodhi. Successful meditation upon the Kīla that “destroys the enemies and obstructors” grants spontaneous liberation from samsāra.

Manifestation in the form of symbols

These numinous and powerful qualities of enlightenment are stated in the tantric texts to have appropriated the form and adornments of the conquered enemy. Thus Vajrakila is invariably dressed in the ‘spoils of war’, the grisly clothes and ornaments of the charnel ground that were originally stripped from the body of the defeated Rudra and have subsequently been worn by all herukas. His clothing includes a cloak of human skin, a cloak of elephant skin and a skirt of tiger skin (females wear leopard skin). Among his ornaments are the fivefold set made of bone (necklace, earrings, bracelets, apron and hairnet) associated with the five Buddha families, numerous snakes encircling his limbs and body, a crown of five dry skulls, a necklace of fifty freshly severed heads, a belt of splintered bones, and so on. He is also characterized by the ten attributes of glory (dpal

\textsuperscript{297} In the terminology of Atiyoga, with which the literature of Vajrakila abounds, the fundamental nature of reality (dharmakāya) is likened to an all-encompassing non-dual (“single”, “unique”) seminal point of light (bindu). See below, note 308.

\textsuperscript{298} B30, 138–9.

\textsuperscript{299} T. O. Ling, Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil, 49–50.
gyi chas bu) which demonstrate his magnificent power and authority\textsuperscript{300} and he paints his face with the three ointments (byug pa'i rdzas gsum), the dust of human ashes (thal chen thos bu) on his forehead, drops of blood (rakta'i thig le) upon his cheeks and a smear of fat (zha gi zo ris) across his chin. He is erotic and sensual. His captivating nine modes of dance (nava nātaka)\textsuperscript{301} are at once alluring and repulsive and his dwelling is a gruesome palace made of skulls.\textsuperscript{302}

All the texts describe him as sporting in non-duality with his spouse, holding in his right hands a nine-pronged vajra indicating his mastery of the nine yānas and the ten bhūmis, and a five-pronged vajra showing his possession of the five jñānas. In his left hands he holds a blazing mass of (wisdom) fire and a khātvānga proclaiming his mastery of all techniques of yoga. With his final pair of hands he rolls a kīla and the sky is filled with his vajra wings. The body of the monster Rudra in his final birth had three faces, six arms and four legs and this, therefore, is the basic form of Vajrakila. Dark blue in colour, representing the spacious nature of his primordially pure mind, the deity Vajrakila has a ferocious white face on the right side of his head that destroys the afflictions of anger. His left red face annihilates all impurities of desire and his central blue face vanquishes ignorance. Each face has an unblinking third eye in the centre of its forehead so that none of these mental defilements may pass by unnoticed.

According to the tradition of the Guhyagarbha-tantra,\textsuperscript{303} his three faces indicate the destruction of the three poisons and the attainment of the three kāyas. His six arms show the ability to liberate beings in the six realms and his four legs symbolize his four modes of activity (catvāri karmāṇi) as well as the liberation of beings from the four kinds of birth (egg, womb, moisture and miraculous). To this should be added that Vajrakila simultaneously tramples down the four Māras: Skandha, Klesha, Mrtyu and Devaputra. It is also interesting to note that the eight kinds of garb associated with the charnel ground are listed in the Guhyagarbha (p.1167) as: raw hides, snakes, skull garlands, sunlight, moonlight, dry blood, grease and ashes, thereby combining into one list the several given above. Within the term ‘skull garlands’ are included a crown of dry skulls, shoulder ornaments of rotting heads and a necklace of fifty-one freshly severed heads which

\textsuperscript{300} Makara heads worn as epaulets express his blazing glory, the sun and moon worn in his hair show the simultaneity of prajñā and upāya, his protruding fangs demonstrate the annihilation of birth and death, his vajra wings symbolize the fulfilment of all wishes, his upraised hair shows the reversal of samsāric tendencies, his vajra coat indicates absolute authority, his military jacket of rhinoceros hide symbolizes the invincibility of Buddhahood, his aura of flames burns up malevolent forces, his girdle of knives cuts through any opposing tendency and the vajra worn on the crown of his head shows his own immutability. Gega Lama, Principles a/Tibetan Art, 390.

\textsuperscript{301} These nine modes, originating in ancient Indian treatises on dance and drama, are interpreted in A. Wayman, Yoga of the GST, 327–8.

\textsuperscript{302} Every element employed in the composition of the Buddhas’ celestial palace, the divine mandala of jewelled light, finds its macabre counterpart in the Herukas’ charnel dwelling fabricated of mayhem, slaughter and pain. See, below, Chapter Seven and also my Mandala Meaning and Method.

\textsuperscript{303} G. Dorje, Guhyagarbha-tantra, 118.
indicate his total control of the past, present and future.\textsuperscript{304} This six-armed manifestation is widely known throughout the \textit{bKa' ma} and \textit{gTer ma} texts of the several rNying-ma canons. In the literature of the Byang-gter school, however, he is also recognized in the form of Mahottaradeva, an eighteen-armed variant so far not attested elsewhere. This manifestation is also dark blue in colour and, according to B11 & C4, his three faces on the right are pale yellow, red and blue-green. His three central faces are white, yellow and dark blue while those on the left are yellow-black, red and green. Otherwise, according to A4, one may view all the faces on the right as white, on the left as red and the central ones as blue. Because I believe this form to be unique to the Byang-gter and therefore of intrinsic interest, I give here the full text of a hitherto unpublished hymn in his praise:\textsuperscript{305}

\begin{verbatim}
HU1?1 dpal ldan che ba'i che mchog lha yi lha. dus gsum bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi. 'phrin las thams cad rdzogs pa'i dpal chen po. he ru ka dpal khyod la phyag 'tshal bstod.

HŪM The deity of the great and supreme
gods of great splendour,
The great glorious one who has perfected all
the activities of all the Sugatas of the
past, present and future.
Salutation and praise to you, Śriheruka!

'jig rten 'das pa'i dus na sngon byung ba. sku gsum rdzogs pa'i khro rgyal phur pa'i lha. srid rtsa bdag 'dzin ru dra sde gsum 'dul. rtsal chen 'phrin las rdzogs la phyag 'tshal bstod.

You who were primordially born,
in time which transcends the world,
Kiladeva, the ferocious king
with the perfect three kāyas,
Subduer of the three groups of Rudra\textsuperscript{306} that grasp
for an ego at the root of existence.
Salutation and praise be to you,
The perfection of expressive power and enlightened activity!

gtum chen brjid pa 'gying zhi gseg sgegs pa'i sku. bdud tshogs sde bcas 'dul ba'i dpa' bo che. mi srun srin po khros 'dra'i cha lugs kyis. srid gsum gdug pa 'dul mdzad khyod la bstod.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{304} Note that within the iconography of a peaceful deity such as the saviouress Tārā, the three times are indicated by lotus flowers; one still in bud, one currently blooming and another already withered.

\textsuperscript{305} From a manuscript in the private collection of C. R. Lama. The symbols stated in this hymn to be held in the deity's eighteen hands are compared in Table 1, below, with those listed in two of the texts from our published collections.

\textsuperscript{306} These are the demons of pride related to body, speech and mind.
Chapter Three

Praise be to you who is,
With a graceful body, savage, splendid and proud,
The mighty hero who tames the hosts of Māras
and their ilk
In the guise of a ferocious, unruly rāksasa,
The subjugator of noxious harm in the tribhava! 307
bshad sgra 'brug stong ldin 'dra'i gad rgyangs can.
drag shul chen pos ri rab thal bar brlag.
jigs rings tshul gyis khams gsum dus gcig sgrol.
dpal chen khro bo'i dbang phyug khyod la bstod.
Laughing a laugh with the sound of a thousand thunderclaps
(your) frightfulness reduces Mount Meru to dust.
In a single moment, by your terrifying manner,
the traidhātuka is liberated.
Praise be to you Mahāśrīkrodheśvara!
snying rjes bsgral ba'i dam tshig chen po yis.
'gro kun byang chub snying por 'dren mdzad cing.
thugs rje'i dbyings nas khros pa'i rngams stabs kyis.
'khor ba gtan nas brlag byed khyod la bstod.
Praise be to you who,
Through your great vow of ‘liberating’ by compassion,
leads all beings to enlightenment’s core.
Through your fiercely violent method within
compassion’s sphere
You demolish saṃsāra completely.
gdug can drag po 'dul bar nyer dgongs nas.
'bar ba'i khro tshul du ma'i gar mdzad kyang.
chos dbyings zhi ba'i ngang las mi gYo ba.
dpal chen mngon rdzogs rgyal po khyod la bstod.
Intending to subjugate the violent harmful ones
You perform many dances in a blazing,
wrathful manner and yet you never stray
from the peaceful disposition of the dharmadhātu.
Praise be to you, glorious great king of manifest perfection!
nam mkha'i khams kun yongs su khyab pa'i sku.
gling bzhi ri rab nyi zla gza' skar yang.
sku yi rgyan du che ba'i dpal chen po.
che btsan 'gran zla' bral ba khyod la bstod.

307. The tribhava (tribhuvana) are the three states of existence ruled by the devas, nāgas and men.
Svarga (the abode of gods), Martta (the abode of men) and Rasātala (the abode of nāgas and
demons) are situated above the earth, upon the earth and below the earth, respectively.
(You whose) form completely pervades
the whole sphere of space,
Mount Meru, the four continents, the sun, moon, planets
and even the stars
Are great in splendour as the ornaments of your body.
Praise be to you whose mighty prowess is without rival!
gnyen po ye shes gzhom gzhig mi mnga’ bas.
nyon mongs rtog pa’i bdud tsogs tshar gcod phyir.
bco brgyad phyag gi gYas kyi dang po bzhis.
ndo rje rtse dgu ’khor lo risib bcu dang.

In order to annihilate Māra’s hosts
of defiled thoughts,
(In the guise of) the unconquerable destroyer,
the wisdom ally,
You have eighteen hands:
With the first four on the right
You hold a nine-pronged vajra, a wheel with ten spokes,
ral gri dbal ldan be con ’bar ba yis.
ri rab chen po kun kyang thal bar rlog.
bdud dang ’byung po kun gyi glad pa ’gems.
srid pa’i ’gong po spun dgu rdul du rlog.
A sharp-pointed sword and a blazing club
With which even the whole great mountain Sumeru
is crushed to dust.
Confounding the brains of all māras and bhūtas,
You grind to atoms the nine ’Gong-po brothers
of phenomenal existence.
tha ma bzhi yi rdo rje rtse Inga dang.
gri gug tho ba chos ’byung ’bar ba yis.
’gro rnam s theg pa dgu yi lam la ’dren.
nyon mongs dug Inga gtan nas brlag byed cing.
don dam spros med byang sems rnam pa lngas.
rgyud Inga ’i sems can thar pa’i lam la sbyor.

With the five-pronged vajra, curved knife, hammer and
blazing dharmodaya of your lower four hands
You guide beings on the path of the nine yānas.
Utterly demolishing the five poisonous afflictions
with the five bodhi minds of highest truth,
free of mental fabrications,
You place the five families of sentient beings
on the path of liberation.
Of your eighteen hands: With the upper four on the left
You hold a skull full of blood, a mass of fire,
a khatvångä staff and a falcon which,
Aiming at the evil mära and dam sri demons,
completely pulverizes them all!

In your four lower hands you hold
a viśvavajra, an iron hook,
a battle-axe and a pot with an amulet on top.
Having completely eradicated with these
the harmful extremes of the tribhava,
You liberate the three poisons as
enlightened body, speech and mind
And utterly destroy the very army of saṃśāra.

The greatest of the great, glorious Mahottarakila,
Girding (yourself with) the energy of
the combined herukas without exception.
Irresistible as you radiate sparks of fire that burn up
a thousand worlds. If touched,
Even the wisdom gods would be reduced to ashes!

Enveloped in intermingling blazing chains of light,
You roll a kīla the size of Mount Meru
in your two lowest hands.
Praise be to you, great hero by whom the three realms
are completely liberated!
zhabs brgyad brkyang bskum gyad kyi 'dor stobs kyis.
dregs pa lha chen gnon mdzad khyod la bstod.
Lord of the dance with ever-changing form,
Fully adorned with the attributes of glory
and those of the charnel ground.
With the virile gesture of a champion your
eight legs are drawn in and flung out.
Praise be to you who thus
  trample down the arrogant great gods!
mche ba zangs yag gtsigs pa'i za byed che.
rab 'bar nyi ma 'bum gyi 'od zer 'phro.
khro gnyer glog stong 'khyug 'dra'i rngams stabs can.
mi bzad sku yi dngos po shin tu 'gyur.
Great devourer, snarling with sharp-pointed fangs,
Blazing and radiating the light of a hundred thousand suns,
Your wrinkling brows rage in a terrifying manner
  with the speed of a thousand bolts of lightning
As you assume the guise of irresistible form!
rngams pa'i nga ro 'brug stong ldir ba bzhin.
thug 'choms ri rab 'bum phrag bsnyil ba'i skad.
gad rgyangs drag pos 'jig rten go zhing 'debs.
sprug pa'i 'thor rhung kun tu gYeng la bstod.
With an awesome roar like the rumble of
  a thousand thunderclaps
The sound of your voice destroys
  one hundred thousand Mount Merus.
Your violent laughter sends the world into trembles –
A whirling, scattering wind that agitates everything.
To you be praise!
khro bo shes rab ye shes me bo che.
ye shes chen po'i 'od zer kun tu gsal.
'bar ba'i ye shes ma rig mun pa 'joms.
snying po ye shes thig le rnams la bstod.
Your fierce great fire of prajña-jñāna
  illuminates totally with rays of great wisdom light.
Your blazing wisdom destroys the darkness of ignorance.
Praise be to the bindus308 of essential wisdom!

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308. The solitary "great bindu" (see next verse) which is an Atiyoga term for the dharmadhātu
within which the mind is primordially enlightened, is defined as having six aspects: the bindu
of space (dhātu), the bindu of the utter purity of space, the bindu of the natural condition
(tathatā), the bindu of wisdom (prajña), the bindu of the “all-good” (samantabhadra) and the
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cyi 'khor bo 'i sprin chen po.
'phros pas dkyil 'khor kun gyi char chen 'bebs.
phyogs bcu 'i dkyil 'khor yid bzhin 'byung ba 'i gter.
cyi thig le che la bstod.

Your wisdom mandala is a great heruka cloud
and, as it spreads out,
The great rain of all mandalas falls.309
You are the wish-fulfilling treasure
of the mandala in the ten directions.
Praise be to you, great bindu of all wisdoms!

bdud rnams kun gyi bdud ste bdud chen po.
'jigs byed 'jigs pa 'i tshogs kyang 'jigs par byed.
srid zhi 'i 'ching ba thams cad 'joms mdzad pa.
dus mtha 'i me ltar 'bar la phyag 'tshal bstod.
The demon of all demons,
you are the great demon and
You terrify even the terrible hosts
of those who cause terror.
You are the one who breaks all the bonds
of becoming and quiescence.
Salutation and praise be to you who
blazes like the fire at the end of time!

Remaining verses are dedicated to the consort Tirtacakra: “Circle of Satisfaction”.

Hüm 'jigs pa 'i btsun mo 'khor lo rgyas 'debs ma.
kun tu bzang mo dkyil 'khor kun gyi 'phrul.
gdug pa 'dul phyir srin mo khros pa 'i gzugs.
srid pa 'i 'khor lo ye shes rgya yis 'debs.

HÜM Fearful queen, Tirtacakra!
Samantabhadri, emanation of all mandalas!
In order to subdue noxious beings you manifest
in the form of a fierce räksasi,
Impressing the wheel of existence with
the seal of your wisdom.

'jigs pa 'i sku la phyag rgya lnga yis spras.

bindu of spontaneous accomplishment. S. Karmay, The Great Perfection, 118. See also T. Thondup, Buddha Mind, 68, and note 297, above.
309. cf. the Sarvarahasya-tantra (A. Wayman, Buddhist Insight, verse 13) where the residents of the mandala are called “a cloud of Dharma” and “rain” refers to the emanation of these deities from the heart.
Rapturously embracing your consort,
signifying non-duality,
In your right hand is a khaṭvāṅga with which
Māra’s head and body are ripped apart.
And in your left, in a skull full of blood,
you hold samsāra and nirvāṇa under your power.
Your terrifying body is adorned with the five mudrās.310
drag po ’i nga ros ’jig rten gYo zhing ’khrugs.
rgyud lnga ’i sms can thugs rjes dbyings su sgrol.
srid gsum gDoor pa ’i tshogs rnams thal bar rlog.
mkha’ ’gro yongs kyi gtsos mo khyod la bstod.
The world is convulsed and shaken by your violent roar
As you liberate through compassion the five families of beings
Into the (dharma)dhiitu and grind to dust
the hosts of noxious beings in the tribhava.
Praise be to you, queen of all dākinīs!

And thus we have the basic iconography of Vajrakumāra and his consort, a terrifying form
with violent speech and blazing mind. Three kāyas of horrendous power for the
subjugation of all evils. In particular, the male is associated here with upāya (expressed in
his epithet Karmakīla) while the female, as made clear in the first of her verses above, is
the bliss (‘satisfaction’) inherent in prajñā. Less obvious is the manner in which
Trptacakra complements her spouse’s function of pegging down demons. In the previous
chapter we noted her developing association with the notion of unpegging, freeing that
which has been obstructed, and this theme comes to maturity here as she liberates all
beings within the dharmadhiitu. He performs the skilful function of nailing down
obstacles while she simultaneously offers blissful release through wisdom.

Embodiments of paradox
The Dionysian dance in the flames of wisdom that consume the appearances of the world
is to be taken here as symbolic of the bodhisattva’s passionate commitment to the vow of
universal salvation. Nirvāṇa was thought of by the early Buddhists in terms of the
individual extinction of a flame but the image employed here is that of the doomsday fire
which brings an end to the system of samsāra altogether. “So singing and dancing the
yogin always acts.”311 It is an incestuous image of the union of pleasure and pain which
arise in mutual dependence. Vajrakīla and his erotic playmate are ‘simultaneously born’
(sahaja) brother and sister, a fact of some significance in the symbolic system of tantra
where praxis aims to bring about the consolidation of complementary poles on the
theoretical premise that “there is not the slightest difference between samsāra and
nirvāṇa”.312 The passionate embrace of the couple, paradoxically, is to be read as a
symbol of chastity.

310. The fivefold set of bone ornaments.
311. HT, I, vi, 13, explained at II, iv passim.
312. HT, I, x, 32.
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It is an image of desire fulfilled, not one of lustful yearning. Hinting at the yogic technique of coitus reservatus, Vajrakila’s perpetual union with the “Circle of Satisfaction” marks the end of desire, just as their wild dance in the doomsday fire signifies the end of the tormenting heat of kleśa. The most striking feature of the icon, however, is surely the fact that it purports to represent the life-enhancing qualities of wisdom, serenity, freedom of activity, long life and so on (yogic attainments to be met with in Part Three of the present work), in the ghastly guise of an utterly terrifying killer. The elemental interplay of sex and death is depicted here in an icon of extreme violence, the most powerfully destructive element of which is described in the BRT as the pounding thrust of their conjoined sexual organs.

This image of Vajrakila incorporates traits of both god and demon. As an expression of the human psyche, then, it squarely addresses the problem of what Jung has called the ‘shadow’ side of the personality, consisting of those unpleasant aspects that elsewhere may receive only reluctant acknowledgement. The portrait is horrible in the extreme and yet is said to be alluring, magnetic, compulsively attractive. Vajrakila is the embodiment of the absolute truth of the human condition, the unbiased, unflinching presenter of the best and the worst in a single icon accessible to the yogin through his meditative training. The demonic is here fully accepted as an aspect of the divine.

The divine retinue

Surrounding the central couple are the ten ferocious gods known as the daśakrodharājās (the ten krodha kings): (Vajra)Hūmkāra in the zenith, Krodhavijaya to the east, Niladaṇḍa (SE), Yamāntaka (S), Ārya-Acala (SW), Hayagrīva (W), Aparājita (NW), Amṛtakunḍalin (N), Trailokyavijaya (NE) and Mahābala in the nadir. Each of these wrathful kings is united with his queen and accompanied by a pair of particularly violent animal-headed, flesh-eating female spirits (piśācī), of whom the ‘devourers’ (za byed) stand to the right and the ‘slayers’ (gsod byed) to the left. The names of neither the ten queens nor the twenty piśācīs have so far been traced to any Sanskrit source so I am obliged here to tabulate the forty deities of the primary Vajrakila pariśanmandaṇḍala employing an admixture of Sanskrit and Tibetan nomenclature. Such Sanskrit names as have been added in parenthesis are provisional equivalents culled from the Niṣpannayogāvalī.

313. W. D. O’Flaherty notes the use of ashes smeared on the bodies of a couple engaged in rites of tantric intercourse (as in the icon of Vajrakila and his consort) as a remedy for the fever of love. Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva, 246.

314. The term krodha (“anger”) is defined in the Krodhabhairava-sūtra as “that by virtue of which one becomes genuinely one-pointedly intent on removing whatever obstacles there may be to liberation”. Mark Dyczkowski, The Canon of the Śāivagama and the Kubjikā Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition, 108.

315. Similar groups are to be found in several tantras, their names and specific iconographies varying slightly from one tradition to another. For further examples (taken from the GST, etc.) consult Abhayākaraṇagupta’s Niṣpannayogāvalī or the Sādhanaṃalā, etc.

316. Known various as “witches” or “shape shifters” (phra men ma), “speedy ones” (mgyogs mo), “emissaries” or “messengers” (mngag mo), such servants have been associated with the krodha kings since at least the period of the Yogatantra as evidenced by SDPT, 313.
Iconography of the Kīla

In the zenith, on cushions of Brahmā and his consort is the dark blue krodharāja Ḫūṃkāra in the embrace of sGra-'byin (Śabdavajrā). To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a pig and the killer with that of a lizard.

In the east, on cushions of Indra, lord of the gandharvas, and his consort is the white krodharāja Vijaya in the embrace of rNam-snyems (? Šauṇḍinī). To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a tiger and the killer with that of a vulture.

In the southeast on cushions of Agni, the great rṣi, and his consort is the pale (skya, 'tawny') krodharāja Niladāṇḍa in the embrace of rDo-rje sder-mo. To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a yak and the killer with that of a crow.

In the south on cushions of Yama and his consort is the black krodharāja Yamāntaka in the embrace of Dur-krod bdag-mo (Śmaśānikā). To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a stag and the killer with that of an owl.

In the southwest on cushions of the king of the rākṣasas and his consort is the blue-green krodharāja, the noble Acala in the embrace of rDo-rje gtum-khung (Vajramūśikā). To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a leopard and the killer with that of a raven.

In the west on cushions of Varuṇa, lord of the nāgas, and his consort is the red krodharāja Hayagrīva in the embrace of rDo-rje gtum-mo (Vajracañḍā). To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a cat and the killer with that of a hoopoe bird.

In the northwest on cushions of Vāyu and his consort is the tawny-red krodharāja Aparājita in the embrace of rDo-rje mda'-snyems. To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a wolf and the killer with that of a hawk.

In the north on cushions of the yaksas and his consort is the dark green krodharāja Amṛtakunḍalin in the embrace of rLung-'byin-ma (Vāyuvegā). To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a lion and the killer with that of a bat.

In the northeast on cushions of the powerful Īśāna and his consort is the tawny-yellow krodharāja Trailokyavijaya in the embrace of gSod-byed-ma. To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a red bear and the killer with that of a weasel.

In the nadir on cushions of the bhūmipati and his consort is the smoke coloured krodharāja Mahābala in the embrace of rDo-rje bskul-byad (Vajrävesī). To their right and left stand the devourer with the head of a tawny bear and the killer with that of a rat.

317. The colours given here are those found in our text A6, 50ff. Alternative schemes are depicted in A49 and B11. The krodharājas in all these Mahottarakīla sources are described as having three faces and six arms. The upper pair of hands carry a vajra in the right and a skull full of blood in the left while between the palms of the lower pair of hands each deity rolls a kīla. Thus the specific attributes of each krodha king are held in the central pair of hands. According to A49, the dark blue Ḫūṃkāra carries a vajra and bell. The dark blue Vijaya carries an iron hook and fly whisk (cāmara). The (colour missing) Niladāṇḍa carries a staff (danda) and heap of fire. The dark green Yamāntaka carries a staff and battle axe. The dark blue Acala carries a sword and noose. The dark red Hayagrīva carries a lotus and snake. The white Aparājita carries a vajra and discus (cakra). The dark green Amṛtakunḍalin carries a viṣṇuvajra and club. The yellow Trailokyavijaya carries a vajra and trident and the smoke coloured Mahābala carries a hammer and wooden pestle. A49, 518–29. See also below, Chapter Seven, Table 2.
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Variations on a theme

The Byang-gter scholar 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms, in his introduction to the Northern Treasures Kila cult (B4), identifies three discrete systems of Vajrakīla as practised in this school: the Kila as a multicoloured deity, the Kila as a black deity and the combined deity Kila system.

The system of the multicoloured deity was taken from the golden southern cache which contained the Mahottarakīla teachings within which the main deity has nine faces and eighteen hands and the daśakrodha deities each have three faces and six hands. Each of the deities in this scheme has a different colour.\(^{318}\) The black deity system came from the northern cache of iron and this is the category of Mantrabhīrakīla. The lord of the maṇḍala in this system has three faces and six hands and the daśakrodha deities each have one face and two hands. All of the deities have the same blue-black colour. As it says in the mūlatantra BRT:

> "The daśakrodha couples and all of the messengers have dark blue ferocious forms. They have single faces and roll kilas in their two hands.\(^{319}\)

The lower halves of their bodies are sharp-pointed, three-edged nails. They have vajra wings and (are adorned with) the artifacts of charnel grounds. With cries of "Hūm!" and "Phaṭ!" they terrify the world and subjugate all vicious beings without exception."

Vajrakīla himself may also be described in this system as having the shape of a nail below the waist. Whatever form he takes, however, beneath his unshakeable weight squirm the demons of ego, helplessly pinned to the primordial ground of being from which they erroneously arose. The combined deity system is made up of teachings taken from both the northern and the central caches and goes by the name of Phur pa dril sgrub (‘the kīla rolling sādhanā’). In this system, all the gods of the maṇḍala are arranged within the body of the main deity.\(^{320}\)

The maṇḍala as it is described in the Kila manuals, however, is generally far more complex than this simple paradigm of the emperor Kila and his court of ten wrathful kings. Vajrakīla and Trpačakra in the centre may be accompanied by the one-eyed queen of the mātris, Ekajati, and the king of the oath-bound protectors, Vajrasādhu. They in turn are surrounded by three, four or five kulakīlas and then, around them, the daśa-krodhabājās with their queens and animal-headed assistants. Outside that circle stand the twenty-one supreme sons (an epithet regularly applied to any important subordinate of the chief Kila) consisting of the groups of body, speech and mind manifestations (seven in each). In the four directions there are then the four guardians of the gates.\(^{321}\) Around the maṇḍala

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319. The twenty piśācis are to be imagined brandishing iron hooks in their right hands and kilas in their left.
320. B4, 203.
321. In the east is the goddess Vajrayakṣā with the head of a hoopoe bird holding in her hand an iron hook. In the south is Vajrabhairavi with the head of a magpie, holding a noose. In the west is Vajrāṇŕtā with the head of an owl holding fetters in her hand and in the north is *Ghātakā (gSod-byed) with the head of a hawk holding in her hand a bell.
Iconography of the Kila

perimeter stand the various oath-bound protectors of the Kila doctrines, chief among whom are the twelve sister goddesses led by the dog-faced Śvanmukhā, their twelve brothers and the group of twenty-eight fierce dākinīs of the four classes. Countless minor protective deities may be added to the retinue and these are arranged in circles ever further from the mandala epicentre. 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms goes on to add that:

“Nowadays empowerments should be given from these three cycles in such a way that the Mantrabhūtra mandala is raised up to fill the sky by the addition of the Mahottarakila. This is the manner in which the vidyādhāras received those empowerments and the manner in which they should bestow them.”

A handful of nails

In order to assist the meditator in the daunting task of visualizing such a vast and complicated pattern of nails, it is proper for him to lay out a ritual mandala as a focal point for his devotions. This may be drawn in coloured sand or any suitable medium with pegs of wood or metal arranged upon it in the proper positions of the deities. In a short text appended to the Drag sngags zab pa'i lo rgyus it is written:

“As for the measurements of vajrakīlas: The chief nail measures eighteen inches. The great nails measure twelve inches. The speedily moving nails are twelve inches. The struck nails are eight inches and the nails of the four rites are also eight inches. The messenger nails are eight inches long and the protecting nails are six inches. The averting nails are four inches and the outer nails are just three inches long. The body of the chief peg is in yuganaddha form and the daśakrodha great nails are also in yuganaddha like the lord. The speedily moving nails are the twenty messengers that devour and slay. The struck nails are the sons and these are like weapons. The four nails at the gates are the pegs of the four activities. Then there are the circles of the twenty-one struck pegs and the twelve nails around the border. The supreme laying out of the Vajrakila mandala involves the use of a thousand nails. The middling is prepared with one hundred nails and the lowest form is set out with either five or eleven nails.”

Here; ‘chief’ refers to Vajrakila and his consort, ‘great’ means the nails of the five families and the ten krodha kings and queens, the ‘speedily moving’ ones are their animal-headed assistants, the ‘struck nails’ are the twenty-one sons and the ‘nails of the four rites’ are the guardians of the four mandala gates. The ‘messengers’ are the twelve major protectors while the ‘protecting’, ‘averting’ and ‘outer’ nails are the various (optional)

322. For descriptions of these twelve see below, Chapter Nine.
323. Comprising the three groups of Rosewood, Iron and Conch. (See below, Chapter Nine.)
324. B4, 203.
325. Illustrated in T. Marcotty, Dagger Blessing, 30–1.
326. B30, 143.
groups of minor protectors. In this way the mandala of meditation is to be set out on the ground by means of coloured powder and a handful of wooden or metal spikes.

Five nails are the Kilas of the five families and this is the most basic of all Vajrakila mandalas. Eleven nails are the lord Vajrakila together with his primary retinue of ten krodha kings. The expressions 'one hundred' and 'a thousand nails' indicate that the size and complexity of the Kila mandala is potentially without limit. A number of kilas that were supposed to have been used by Padmasambhava in just such mandala rituals are said to have been discovered among the artifacts in the Byang-gter cache. The powerful nature of these kilas as objects of religious awe places them firmly in the category of magical fetishes. We have seen above how success in the rite of invocation is thought to empower these ritual pegs with the actual presence of the deity, so that the pegs themselves become animated and extremely potent occult instruments. The motif of the living nail is repeatedly encountered in Tibetan literature dealing with the Kila cult for every handheld nail may be thought of as the embodiment, not only of a specific deity (primarily, of course, Vajrakila himself) but also of the entire mandala of violent spikes. As an occult weapon, then, the significance of the kila is both more specific and more flexible than its rather abstract counterpart, the vajra.

Whenever a ritual vajra is taken up into the hand by man or god, it must be held in the right because the vajra symbolizes the male energy of appropriate activity (upāya) or compassion (karunā) which, in the symbolic system of the Vajrayāna, is located primarily on the right hand side of the body. It is never held in the left (female, prajñā) hand. The kila, however, may represent either the wrathful male activity of compassionate killing (in which case it is held in the right hand, perhaps with a skull full of Māra's blood as its feminine counterpart in the left), or it may be held in the left hand as a symbol of the perfection of wisdom (prajñāpāramitā) which it demonstrates by annihilating all the confused appearances of ignorance. In the latter case its partner in the right hand may perhaps be a hammer (with which to pound down the nail), a vajra (emblematic of power) or an iron hook (with which to drag forth the victim to be impaled). Most often it is seen to be held in the right hand by male deities and in the left by females so that each may use it in accordance with his or her own nature, but this is not an invariable rule. As we have seen above, the ultimately non-dual power of the kila is most effectively employed by solemnly rolling it between the palms of both hands (or the foremost pair of hands in the case of a multi-armed deity).  

327. The Phur pa drag sngags kyi 'phrin las, for example, invokes three hundred and sixty male and female messengers in six groups of sixty: the Dung (conch) from the east, lCags (iron) from the south, Zangs (copper) from the west, gYu (turquoise) from the north, gSer (gold) from the nadir and bSe (rosewood) from the zenith. C24, 264-5.
328. A. David-Neel, in her Magic and Mystery in Tibet, 104ff, relates the way in which she came to possess "a fine piece of ancient Tibetan art" belonging to a deceased lama, a supposedly animated kila that few Tibetans would willingly touch.
329. See A29, 199-200, as detailed above in the Introduction.
330. The solemn rolling of the kila between the two palms accompanies the higher rites aimed at enlightenment. During the lower rites aimed at the subjugation of hostile forces, however, if a symbolic nail is employed it will most often be held in the left hand whilst being beaten into the ground with the aid of a vajra hammer held in the right (as is done in 'earth subduing'
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<th>Table 1: The Eighteen Arms of Mahottarakila</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>uppermost pair of arms</strong></td>
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<td>9-pronged vajra skull full of blood</td>
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<td><strong>second pair</strong></td>
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<td>10-spoked wheel mass of fire blazing wheel mass of fire</td>
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<td><strong>third pair</strong></td>
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<td>sword khatvāṅga sword khatvāṅga</td>
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<td><strong>fourth pair</strong></td>
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<td>club falcon club falcon</td>
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<td><strong>fifth pair</strong></td>
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<td>5-pronged vajra viśvavajra viśvavajra kila viśvavajra of Buddha activity</td>
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<td><strong>sixth pair</strong></td>
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<td>kartrikā iron hook amulet vase</td>
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<td><strong>seventh pair</strong></td>
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<td>hammer battleaxe iron hook kartrikā</td>
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<td><strong>eighth pair</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>dharmodaya pot with amulet hammer A: secret sky B: blazing mortar</td>
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<td><strong>lowermost pair of hands</strong></td>
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<td>roll Mt. Meru kīla battleaxe blazing jewel</td>
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Derived from the unpublished manuscript reproduced above in Chapter Three, the Phur pa ’i zur ’debs (A28) and the rDo rje phur pa che mchog gi ’phrin las (B11).

1 & 2 Verse missing in A28. 3 Personified as Hūṃkāra. 4 Personified as Amṛtakundālin.
Chapter Four
The Religious Chronicles:
A History of the Vajrakila Cycle from Cultic Sources

The texts
Within the three collections of Byang-gter Kila treatises are to be found five texts of the lo rgyus ('history') genre. Two of these, A26 (B51) & B30 (B55, C18), deal with the Mantrabhiru (black deity) system and one, B13, deals with the origin of the Mahottara (multicoloured deity) system. Then there is the Gong khug ma331 (found in all collections, A27, etc.) and the useful commentary B4, written by 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms as an introduction to the history and doctrines of Vajrakila for the benefit of his own disciples on the occasion of their ritual abhiṣeka. One further text is B40 which styles itself nidāna or introductory preamble outlining the circumstances in which the Vajrakila cycle was initially revealed. Rather than historical records in the modern sense, these Kila chronicles that inform the present chapter are accumulations of religious myth, products of an oral tradition of pious hagiography. Their view of the genesis and transmission of the Vajrakila doctrines naturally diverges substantially from that outlined above in Chapter Two.

The revelations of Mahāyoga
The Byang-gter commentator 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms, using as his sources the traditional tantras and āgamas, describes the origin of Mahāyoga doctrines in the symbolic language of Buddhist mysticism:

"In the dharmadhatu palace of Akaniṣṭha, Samantabhadra, the dharmakāya teacher, acting within the unceasing state of the inseparable nature of form and wisdom transcending all words and syllables, emanated the circle of his own radiant awareness in the form of the five Jinas of the sambhogakāya shining clearly within his heart, stainless and naturally arisen. Having the spontaneous energy of great compassion, the various playful forms of peaceful and wrathful activity were made manifest. With an ocean of melodies of words, beyond speech or expression, these set into motion the wheel of the Dharma vehicle of the original meaning for the vast numbers of

Chapter Four

vidyādhāras and dākinīs and the male and female bodhisattvas established on the tenth bhūmi. ³³²

Such, then, is the cultic (emic) view of the origin of these doctrines which are regarded as the bearers of absolute truth, inseparably participating in a play (līlā) of divine reality. As such they remain essentially inexpressible, abiding forever in the natural condition of the dharmadhātu so as to be accessible only to those most spiritually advanced beings whose minds have already attained a cognition of highest truth. Their origin remains, therefore, permanently unoriginated and the sound of the tantra being promulgated is said to be the natural sound of the dharmadhātu.

In order to display these truths in a more relative way, however, some movement had to occur that broke away from the relentless self-absorption of the primordially enlightened state. 'Phrin-las bsdud-'joms speaks of this outward movement in terms of a compassionate radiation from the heart of the supreme being:

“In particular the teacher Vajrasattva,³³³ arising in the form of Vajraheruka, emanated from his heart the supreme son of all the Buddhas by the name of Vajrarākṣasa or the heroic Vajrakumāra. This wrathful manifestation destroyed the great demon Matraṅgara Rudra and all the other māras, rākṣasas and unruly demons of pride. Having ground their bodies down to dust, he bound their consciousnesses under oath and established them as protectors of the doctrine.³³⁴

Upon the peak of Mount Meru which was the place of subjugation³³⁵ of Māra (Rudra), having produced the mind of great wrath, he turned the wheel of the doctrine of fierce mantras for all the worldly arrogant ones and for the mātris and dākinīs who had achieved siddhis by virtue of their wisdom and conduct. In this way all of his disciples became matured into Buddhahood and this is known as the rGyal ba'i dgongs rgyud, the direct transmission of the Buddha’s understanding.”³³⁶

This myth is a close variant of the one outlined in the preceding chapter. Here, however, Vajrakila is produced in order to subdue Rudra—not as a result of that subjugation. Thus is established the first lineage of Vajrakila doctrines, ‘the lineage of the Buddha’s understanding’. The place is the peak of Mount Meru, the time follows the overthrow of

³³². B4, 178.
³³³. Vajrasattva is here to be understood as the sambhogakāya of Samantabhadra.
³³⁴. The Phur pa gleng gzhi says that Vajrarākṣasa arose as the wrathful embodiment of all the gods who had been unable to subdue Rudra by peaceful means. In this guise he overthrew Rudra and turned all the demons into his servants. B40, 272.
³³⁵. bKa' thang shel brag ma, VI, gives the place of subjugation as Mount Malaya.
³³⁶. B4, 178–9. According to the Phur pa gleng gzhi, the teachings were transmitted to the Buddhas of the pañcakula, to the bodhisattvas known as “the three lords” (Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi), to “the maroon dākinī with topknot” (which may refer to either Ekajati or Karmendrāni) and to the three-faced Brahmā. They were then transmitted to the vidyādhāras of the gods (Indra), nāgas (Taksaka) and men (King Indrabhūti who, having learned the eighteen tantras of the Mahāyoga from Vajrapāṇi, disseminated them widely in the human realm). B40, 272–3.
Rudra, the teacher is Vajrakila himself and the retinue consists of male and female ‘arrogant worldly gods’. 337

"After that the yakṣa Vajrapāni, keeper of the secret treasures of all Tathāgatas, gathered together the instructions in the great vehicle of secret mantra and, upon the blazing iron peak of Mount Mālaya, he taught those doctrines again and again to the vidyādharas who had assembled there. 338

In particular he gave instructions to the five vidyādharas who were the leaders from the realms of devas, nāgas, men, yakṣas and rākṣasas. 339 The vidyādharas of the rākṣasas, Matyaupāyika by name, having gathered together the words and syllables of the teachings produced bound volumes of books in verse.

Later, as a result of his beatitude, the fortunate king Indrabodhi of Avartamu in the country of Zahor, a monarch of much merit, saw seven special omens in his dreams: 1) Symbols of perfected body, speech and mind melted into his body. 2) There was the gathering of a religious assembly. 3) Precious volumes of teachings fell down from the sky. 4) All people upheld vows of religious discipline. 5) There was the celebration of a great religious offering ceremony. 6) Jewels and precious objects fell down like rain. 7) He received the prediction of his enlightenment.

After that it really happened that some texts written in ink of beryl upon sheets of golden paper landed on the top of his house, perfectly in accordance with the oneiric indications. At that time the king was unable to understand even a single syllable of those volumes and so he offered up his prayers to Vajrapāni, the master of secret teachings. As a consequence of his devotion he met Vajrapāni face to face, receiving blessings and empowerments, and Vajrapāni taught to the king the general eighteen classes of Mahāyogatantra." 340

This episode of the myth brings the teachings into the human realm. The name of Indrabodhi (or Indrabhūti) is deeply embedded in the early history of Buddhist tantra but, unfortunately, the man behind the name remains something of an enigma. So many legends are told about him that all scholars agree there must have been at least two (possibly three) persons so designated. Keith Dowman asserts that the king Indrabodhi who revealed the Vajrakila doctrines and taught them to Dhanasamkṛta (who transmitted them to Padmasambhava) is not the same as the one mentioned here upon whose palace

337. The place, teacher, time, doctrines and retinue are the “five invariables” (pañcāniyata) of all Buddhist teachings.

338. Other texts in the Byang-gter tradition, however, say that Vajragarbha was the one who gathered together all the teachings of the primordial Buddha. bsKal-bzang padma dbang-phyug, Autobiography, 373.

339. “The god’s name was Grags-ladan phyogs-skyong, the yakṣa was sKarb-mda’-gdong, the rākṣasa was Blo-gros thabs-ladan, the nāga was Klu-rgyal ’jog-po and the human was Dri-med grags-pa.” Thinley Norbu, The Small Golden Key, 10. For Sanskrit reconstructions see NSTB, I, 454.

roof the texts were originally said to have fallen. Clearly, however, our present author thinks otherwise.

What we may conjecture from the myth in its present form is that a certain wealthy man (“king”, kṣatriya?) somehow or other came to possess manuscripts of an esoteric nature which he was unable to comprehend. The texts themselves could have come from anywhere, for magical teachings have enjoyed a wide circulation in India since prehistory. Perhaps his own interest in the mysterious contents of these manuscripts prompted him to copy the words (or have them copied) in gold and to ponder on their meaning. Eventually, no doubt, a wandering yogin would have been found who could assume the mantle of Vajrapāṇi and instruct the king in their religious significance. ‘Indrabodhi’ is as much an epithet as a name and it is not difficult to imagine a wealthy patron of these doctrines, through whose help they were first propagated on any significant scale, being awarded such a title.

Whatever the historical veracity behind the legends, however, it is stated in all the religious chronicles that the eighteen categories of Mahāyogatantra were received simultaneously by the king Indrabodhi. These include the mūlatantra Guhyagarbha-Māyājāla and the seventeen explanatory tantras consisting of the five of Body, Speech, Mind, Good Qualities and Enlightened Activities, the five tantras of sādhanas, the five concerning aspects of conduct plus two additional tantras. Teachings of Vajrakila are to be found within those eighteen categories under the headings ‘tantra of Enlightened Activities’ and ‘the five tantras of sādhanas’, the fifth of which is the “Kila-tantra in twelve sections”.

In particular the Kila chronicles, such as the Concise History written by gTsang mkhan-chen and the gNam lcags spu gri lo rgyus chos 'byung by bDud-'joms Rinpoche, say that these Vajrakila doctrines were taught by Indrabodhi to Dhanasamskṛta who then passed them on to Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and the Nepali Śilamāṇju (see below) who extensively revised and commented upon them whilst in retreat at Yang-le-shod (present-day Pharping, Nepal).

342. Some sources cite Vajrasattva as the king’s preceptor.
343. Tulk Thondup, Buddha Mind, 30–1, lists the Sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor as the tantra of the Body, Zla gsang thig le as the tantra of Speech, gŠang ba ’dus pa as the tantra of Mind, dPal mchod dang po as the tantra of Good Qualities and Karmamālā as the tantra of Enlightened Activities. The Heruka rol ba, rTa mchod rol ba, sNyin rje rol ba, bDud rtsi rol ba and the Phur pa rol ba (Phur pa bcu gnyis) are the five tantras of sādhanas. The Glang chen rab ’bog, Ri bo brtsegs pa, Ye shes rtag glog, Dam tshig bkod pa and the Ting ’dzin rtsi gcig are the five tantras of karma. The two supplementary tantras are the rNam snang sgyu ’phrul drva ba and the Thabs kyi zhags pa. All of these cycles of texts are to be found in the NGB.
344. NGB, 325, the Karmakila-tantra, attests in its colophon to an affinity with the Karmamālā of vol. 17.
345. Phur pa bcu gnyis, NGB, 220.
346. The Phur pa’i chos ’byung bs dus pa is to be found in gTsang mkhan-chen, rDo rje phur pa’i chos ’byung, 161–96.
The Religious Chronicles

Apportionment of the śādhanas

The Mahāyoga treatises in general are divided into two sections: the eighteen tantras (as above) and the eight classes of śādhana.348 Concerning this second division of the Mahāyoga, our author 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms comments:349

"As for the very special eight great heruka-śādhanas, the general tantras concerned with these as well as the very necessary oral instructions and so on, these were entrusted to the hand of the dākinī queen, Mahākarmendrāṇī. Having placed each one of these eight cycles of teachings into its own individual jewelled casket, she sealed them all up as treasure within the body of the Śāmkarakūta stūpa in the fearful charnel ground Śitavana. Later they were taken out and distributed amongst the eight great vidyādharas, themselves the emanations of supreme beings.

With regard to this, it is written in the Vajrakīla text known as the Cittaguhyakāya-tantra ..."

He then cites a ‘prophesy’ from the second chapter of our text A3, B10, C1—see below, Chapter Five—concerning the eight great vidyādharas and goes on to say:

“As it was prophesied in that quotation, eight incarnate vidyādharas came to be born in the world and each of them spent a considerable period of time engaged in strict ascetic discipline in the charnel grounds. After a while, when the time had come to bring forth those eight tantras, they gathered together at the great stūpa of Śāmkarakūta and stood before the queen of the dākinīs. “What is it that you want?” she demanded. “We want the tantras” they replied. And at that the dākinī queen entrusted one of the eight great cycles to each of the ācāryas gathered before her and the sky was spontaneously filled with music.”350

Despite the fairy tale trappings of this episode I believe that here, too, we may profitably search an historically valid core. All traditions of the rNying-ma school in Tibet351 assert this cycle of eight meditative practices to have been among the volumes of teachings compiled and arranged by a celestial bodhisattva352 and subsequently entrusted to the

348. The tantra section, however, includes many śādhanas while the śādhana section also contains tantras. According to bDud-'joms Rinpoche the śādhana section has the two traditions of (a) the transmitted precepts and (b) the revealed treasures. He rationalizes others’ conflicting views by claiming Prabhahasti as the inheritor of the first tradition of Vajrakīla and Padmasambhava as the inheritor of the second (revealed from the Śāmkarakūta stūpa by Karmendrāṇī). NSTB, I, 475–3.
352. T. Thondup, op. cit., 17, identifies this bodhisattva as Vajradharma. Other sources say either Vajrasattva or Vajrapāṇi. It is interesting to note here that Vajradharma is the foremost bodhisattva in the retinue of Amitābha, the Buddha most adored by followers of the rNying-ma school because he is lord of the Lotus family (Padmakūla), whereas Vajrasattva (Vajrapāṇi) is the foremost of those in the circle of Akṣobhya. See the Sarvarahasya-tantra (A. Wayman,
Mahakarmendra, she is said to have divided the teachings into three groups under the headings ‘General’ (phyi rgyud), ‘Special’ (dgos rgyud) and ‘Particular’ (bye brag gi rgyud). In this regard, Yukie Matsunaga points out that the eighth century Indian commentator Buddhaguhya categorized tantric texts into the two divisions: Kriyā and Yoga. Kriyātantras were further subdivided into the ‘General’ (spyi’i cho ga) and ‘Particular’ (bye brag) classes. Legend then says that the dākinī queen put the five General tantras together with the ten Special tantras of the bDe gshegs ‘dus pa into a casket made of five precious jewels. The eight Particular tantras were placed into eight different caskets and all of these teachings were concealed in the Śāmkarakūta stūpa.

Tarthang Tulku says that, with regard to the Buddha’s teachings, the sūtras were preserved by Ānanda and the outer tantras by Vajrapāni. The inner tantras which were taught by the ādibuddha Samantabhadra were received by Candavajrapāni who passed them on to Mahākarmendrāni who hid them away in the Śāmkarakūta stūpa in Śitavana cemetery. In the base of the stūpa she hid all the texts belonging to the sGyu ‘phrul cycle. In the middle she concealed the bDe gshegs ‘dus pa, in which the aṣṭamahāsādhanas (sgrub chen bka’ brgyad) are taught within a single mandala. The bye brag sgos rgyud texts were hidden in the entrance gates, the gSang ba yongs rdzogs in the flute, the Rang byung rang shar in the rim of the spire and the Sangs rgyas mnyam sbfony in the middle of the spire. All of these texts contain teachings pertaining to the practices of Mahāyoga (upattikrama) and Anuyoga (sampannakrama). The Ātyoga teachings of Yang gsang bla med yang ti nag po were hidden at the very top of the stūpa spire and then guardians were appointed to protect those precious texts until their appropriate time of withdrawal.

Tāranātha, in a more general way, confirms the sealing up of the tantras “into eight great gold coffers which were put into silver vessels which, in turn, were put into vessels made of the seven precious gems” and concealed within a stūpa in the Śitavana channel ground, a favourite meeting place of tantric yogins.

When, in later times, eight of the foremost siddhācāryas of India gathered together at this stūpa, the dākinī queen is supposed to have appeared before them and distributed the aṣṭamahāsādhanas teachings among them. The casket containing the tantras of Yamantaka she entrusted to Mahāyusrimitra and the casket of tantras pertaining to Hayagrīva she gave to Nāgarjunagarbha. The casket of Cakrasamvara she entrusted to Hūmkāra, Amṛtaguṇa to Vimalamitra, Vajrakila to Prabhahasti, Māṭr to Dhanaśamskrīta (holder of the earlier...
lineage of Vajrakila), Lokastotrapūjā to Rambuguhya Devacandra, and the Mantrabhūri tantrās she gave to Śāntigarbha. Each of these eight ācāryas, having successfully accomplished supreme siddhi by means of the particular doctrines that had been revealed to him, subsequently entrusted those doctrines to his own disciples and in this way the aṣṭamahāsādhanas became known in the world.

The Sino-Japanese tradition tells of tantrās being taught by Mahāvairocana (another name for the ādībuddha) to the bodhisattva Vajrasattva (whom David Snellgrove equates with Vajrapānī) who kept them for several hundred years before sealing them in an iron stūpa in South India. There they remained for several further centuries before being taken out by Nāgārjuna. This account, because it so clearly parallels the Tibetan version of events, raises several interesting issues. According to the Tibetan version, all eight cycles of Mahāyoga sādhanas arose in India simultaneously although it is quite clear from historical sources that only three of the cycles were then widely spread in India by those who received them. The other five seem to have been largely lost in the Subcontinent although all eight were transmitted to Tibet where their lines of transmission have remained unbroken to the present day. Whether the stūpa within which the doctrines had been concealed (i.e. the place of origin of the tantrās) was in the north or the south of India is a question over which many scholars have been vexed. The esoteric school itself, of course, is not concerned with such problems and we find the equation stūpa = caitya = citta which indicates that the place of origin is the stūpa (repository of Buddhahood) in the mind. The Tibetan tradition of the dākinī queen can also be interpreted in this way if for ‘dākinī queen’ we read ‘muse’. Is the Tibetan account a later elaboration of a former tradition? Or has the legend of Nāgārjuna been abstracted from a fuller account by those who have a vested interest in that one person? If these two tales are mere fiction, how do we account for their similarity and for the fact that Nāgārjuna plays a prominent role in both?

The Tibetan tradition claims that at the time when the eight great sādhanas were first revealed, the moment was not opportune to open the casket containing the ten Special tantrās of the bDe gshegs 'dus pa in which the eight are taught within a single maṇḍala and therefore that casket was replaced within the stūpa. It was later taken out when the stūpa was reopened by Padmasambhava who is also said to have received the sādhanas in their individual forms directly from the eight siddhas to whom they had originally been entrusted.

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360. Not to be confused with the kilamatraḥbhūri.
363. Yamāntaka, Hayagrīva and Cakrasaṃvara, the sādhanas of Body, Speech and Mind.
364. A. Snodgrass, op. cit., 112. The Japanese tradition emphasises this ‘inner interpretation’ of the legend of the stūpa, for an elaboration of which see Taiko Yamasaki, Shingon: Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, 88–9.
365. Some sources (see above, note 359) include Padmasambhava among the original eight.
Chapter Four

In the light of this rather confusing mass of conflicting details, all that may be said with any confidence is that, according to Tibetan sources, the Vajrakila doctrines were taught in India within the general context of the Anuttarayogatantra revealed in arcane fashion to a select group of prominent Buddhist yogins thought to have been active at some time during the eighth century AD. That particular tantra, āgama and upadeśa transmission is known in Tibet by the name ‘the vidyādhara’s lineage’ or ‘the lineage of symbols’ (Rig ’dzin brda’ brgyud).

Although the chronicles distinguish clearly between the separate transmissions of the earlier corpus of Vajrakila doctrines, said to have arisen at the time of the enigmatic king Indrabodhi, and this later tradition derived from the stūpa, the transmitted precepts themselves are accorded no differentiating characteristics.

Another figure mentioned in several of the early chronicles is Mi-thod-pa-can, the kāpālika brahmin. gTsang mkhan-chen cites this mysterious personage as the originator of a line of Vajrakila teachings and even goes so far as to say that it was he who gave the teachings to Karmendrāṇi which she then hid in the Śāmkarakūṭa stūpa.366 Such statements appear tacitly to admit the non-Buddhist origin of many of the kila doctrines. More will be said about the kāpālikas below when we come to deal with the provenance of the Mahottarakāṇa cycle, but let us look first at two further historical puzzles: the teacher Padmasambhava and the huge cycle of Vajrakila doctrines refered to in Tibetan chronicles as the ‘Vidyottama-tantra in one hundred thousand sections’.

Ācārya Padmasambhava

An important variant in the many biographies of Padmasambhava has been highlighted by Anne-Marie Blondeau,367 on the basis of which they may be classified into two groups. The factor is mode of birth and the two categories of biography are those that propose a womb birth (jarāyujā) and those that speak of a miraculous birth (upapādūka) from the heart of a lotus. The miraculous birth stories, which are common in gter ma literature, are the most widely known368 but the bka’ ma texts which are supposed to have come directly from India unanimously agree on a womb birth.369 Of particular interest to us is the fact that the Vajrakila chronicles support the notion of womb birth.370

366. gTsang mkhan-chen, rDo rje phur pa’ichos ’byung, 163. See also K. Dowman, Sky Dancer, 350, n. 32.
367. A. M. Blondeau, “Analysis of the Biographies of Padmasambhava According to Tibetan Tradition”.
368. Many of these gter ma accounts have been translated into English. K. Douglas & G. Bays, The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava; W.Y. Evans-Wentz, Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation; K. Dowman, Legend of the Great Stūpa; etc. Interestingly the womb birth story of Śantaraksita is found in the Padma bka’ thang, IX, as a previous incarnation.
369. With regard to the siddha’s life in India, Tāranātha is said to have compiled his rNam thar rgya gar lugs relying “on Indian oral traditions inherited from his (Indian) masters”. A.M. Blondeau, op. cit., 47.
370. Although styled a nidāna for the Vajrakila cycle, the gter ma text B40 (said to have been copied out three times and hidden in Mon-kha sprang-yag gi bag, sPa-gro stag-tshang and Zang-zang lha-brag) adopts the standard gter ma position of miraculous birth. Viz: Following the nirvāṇa of Śākyamuni, all the Buddhas of the ten directions consulted together in order to prevent the decline of the doctrines and from the paradise of Sukhāvatī in the west the Buddha
Phrin-las bdud-'joms outlines the biography of Padmasambhava as it is told in the Kila tradition by saying that king Manusiddhi of Odāiyana, the son of gTsug-phud rigs-bzang, had a son by the name of Šāntarakaśita. The boy had a red and white complexion and bore the marks of one who belonged to the Padmakula. He was fully accomplished in all arts and sciences. Knots were to be seen at the top and bottom of his spine and his torso had eight sides to it (like the handle of a ritual kila). The lower portion of his body was triangular in shape and his face and eyes were like half moons. With his red hair, abundant signs of Vajrakila were evident at his birth.

“When he grew up he went to India with his two best friends and became known by the name of Šākyasimha (one of the eight names of Padmasambhava) after being ordained as a monk by the teacher Šākyabodhi.”

This teacher is most likely to be Šākyaprabhā (= Prabhahasti), as will be confirmed below. Although our author is not specific on this point, it seems as if Padmasambhava’s ‘two best friends’ (later identified as Vimalamitra and Šākya bshes-gnyen (really one name in two languages)) were also ordained at this time and given the religious names Šākyamitra and Šākya bshes-gnyen (really one name in two languages). Louis de La Vallée Poussin, in his introduction to the Pañca krama, places Šākyamitra in the eighth century as a pupil of Šākyaprabhā, an expert in the vinaya. Šākyamitra is said to have come from Kośala, to have written a commentary on the STTS and then travelled north to the Himalayan regions during the later period of his life where he worked extensively for the propagation of the Buddhist Dharma. In The Blue Annals he is counted among the four most prominent recipients of the GST in the line of Saraha and Nāgarjuna, belonging to the fifth generation after King Indrabodhi. Šākyamitra’s historicity and awareness of kila rites is therefore beyond doubt.

Following that, Phrin-las bdud-'joms tells of the meeting in Zahor of Padmasambhava and the acārya Prabhahasti, under whose guidance he is supposed to have received the secret Anuttara empowerments of the Māyājāla cycle and heard in full the

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Amitābha directed his thoughts towards Śākyamuni’s ksetra, the southern continent of Jambudvipa. There, for the sake of all beings, Padmasambhava was spontaneously produced with neither cause (hetu) nor condition (pratyaya) in “the playful Sindhu ocean” (the Indus valley). He was endowed with the blessings of all the Buddhas of the dharmakāya, the empowerments of all the Buddhas of the sambhogakāya and the active instructions of all the Buddhas of the nirmanakāya. B40, 273-4.

372. The bKa’ thang shel brag ma calls him prince Buddhasikha, which is possibly the name of his father (cf. following note). K. Douglas & G. Bays, op. cit., 64.
374. A.M. Blondeau cites several variants of this name including Rakṣantara, Rakṣanta and Šāntarakaśi.
375. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Pañca krama, ix.
376. The lineage is given as: Indrabodhi to an unnamed yogini, to Viṣukalpa, to Saraha, to Nāgarjuna, to Śākyamitra. G. Roerich, The Blue Annals, 359.
377. Our text C36, in which the blessings of Vajrakilla are invoked from the various sites sanctified by their importance in the Kila chronicles, invites Śākyaprabhā the bhikṣu (Prabhahasti the vajrācārya) from the land of Zahor.

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doctrines of the one hundred thousand sections of the Kila Vidyottama-tantra. It must be presumed here that these were the Vajrakila teachings obtained by Prabhahasti from the stūpa in Śitavana charnel ground. When speaking of the opening of that stūpa, however, our author claims Padmasambhava himself to have been the original recipient of the Kila doctrines. Whatever their origin, the teachings of Vajrakila have by this time supposedly grown in bulk (or metaphysical importance?) to the famous ‘one hundred thousand sections of the Vidyottama-tantra’.

In another, better known version of this legend, Padmasambhava is supposed to have received the Vajrakila doctrines from Prabhahasti (said to be a hierarch of Nalanda) in response to his plea for help in subduing the obstacles to his final enlightenment (referred to by the tantric term mahāmudrā) that had arisen during a period of meditative retreat in Nepal. In terms of religious mythology, this latter story is far more potent for it correlates the teacher Padmasambhava with the Buddha Śākyamuni who subdued the demon Māra on the eve of his own enlightenment. It also serves to highlight in dramatic fashion the chief value of the Vajrakila doctrines in the eyes of its cult (to subdue all obstacles to omniscience) and to inspire faith in those doctrines as the supreme method for this task. Interestingly, also, the demonic force in this legend is embodied in the form of a gigantic serpent that “held back the waters of life” (rain) so that the process of creation (spring growth and reproduction) could not occur. Few of the cult initiates in Tibet, however, would be aware of the parallel between this legend and the earlier Vedic myth of Indra versus Vṛtra.

The earliest extant redaction of this episode from the life of Padmasambhava is in the document from Tun-huang classified as ‘Pelliot tibetain 44’. This small but historically significant text, scrutinized by F.A. Bischoff and Charles Hartman in 1971, is “possibly the oldest document in existence referring to Padmasambhava” and was considered by G. Tucci as “a major proof of the historicity of the siddha”. It is also a major piece of evidence concerning Padmasambhava’s transmission of the kīla doctrines from India.

According to the later gter ma tradition, Padmasambhava was accompanied on that occasion by the Nepalese maiden Śākyadevi whom he had met at the ancient vihāra of Śaṅkhū in the northeast corner of the Kathmandu valley. She apparently suffered from a slight physical deformity (recognized by the saint as omens of wisdom and virtue) and had been abandoned by her father following the death of his wife in

378. F. A. Bischoff & C. Hartman, “Padmasambhava’s Invention of the Phur-bu”.
379. TPS, 88.
380. In the opinion of Samten Karmay, the Kīla doctrines are the only teachings among the many said to have been transmitted by Padmasambhava for which there exists reliable historical evidence. S. Karmay, The Great Perfection, 6.
384. Her fingers and toes were webbed like the feet of a duck, a characteristic traditionally associated with a mahāpurusa.
childbirth. No mention is made of her in the early chronicles of the bka’ ma tradition (such as the Pelliot 44 manuscript) but it is said by some today that she continues to emanate in the person of the Rāja Kumāri of Basantapur, one of the ‘virgin goddesses’ of Kathmandu.

Our author ‘Phrin-las bdud-’joms says that Padmasambhava made his journey to Nepal with the express intention of gaining the siddhi of a mahāmudrā-vidyādhara. This resolve on final enlightenment is clearly intended as a correlate to the Buddha’s similar resolve as he made his seat beneath the bodhi tree. There, in a rock cave at Pharping (yang le shod kyi brag phug), Padmasambhava (and his tantric consort Śākyadevi?) engaged in the sādhana of the ‘Nine Lamps of Heruka’. In response to that, says ‘Phrin-las bdud-’joms (again a clear allusion to Mara’s response to Śākyamuni’s resolve), “the vicious nāga of that vicinity known as Gyong-po (*Nāgakhara, ‘Cruel Serpent’) caused the earth to quake and no rain to fall from the sky for three years”. All sources speak of this prolonged period of severe drought during which the crops were dessicated and large numbers of people died. The vicissitudes of drought and famine proving an insurmountable obstacle to his realization of supreme bodhi, Padmasambhava dispatched two Nepalese messengers to India with a measure of powdered gold and a request for help to the paṇḍits and siddhas of Nālandā university, an institution renowned for the ritual expertise of its inmates. The Tun-huang manuscript names the two messengers as Shag-kya (Śākya?) Yur and I-So, whilst the Lha ’dre bka’ thang identifies them as Ji-la ji-sa and Kun-la kun-sa-zhi. The biography of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal confirms the association of Jila Jisad (Jila Jipha) with Śākyadevi and the cave at Yang-le-shod but makes no reference at all to Kun-la kun-sa-zhi. While the Lha ’dre bka’ thang refers to Jila Jisad as “a practitioner of medicine”, the biographer of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal thought of him as “a king of Nepal”, hardly a likely candidate for the post of messenger boy. Although not mentioned here by our author ‘Phrin-las bdud-’joms, the Byang-gter tradition generally names one of the messengers as Jina Mitra. This tradition believes, furthermore, that Jina Mitra, having fulfilled his task in Nepal on behalf of Padmasambhava, promptly died and was reborn in Tibet as sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms in time to act as the messenger dispatched by king Khri srong-ide’u-btsan to India to fetch Padmasambhava from Bodh Gayā.

The Kila Vidyottama-tantra

The assistance said to have been offered to Padmasambhava by those most knowledgeable Buddhist experts of his day took the form of ‘the Kila Vidyottama-tantra in one hundred thousand sections’, a set of teachings so massive that his two messengers “could barely

385. Her story forms the subject matter of the Padma bka’ thang, LIII.
387. Yang dag mar me dgu. “Yang-dag-thugs” being the rNying-ma-pa appellation of the heruka Cakrasāvara.
carry it". 391 A text by the name of *Vidyottama-tantra* (Āryavidyottama-mahātantra) is found in all editions of the *bKa' 'gyur* (P.402) but this is not the one referred to here. If there ever was in India such a text or collection of texts bearing this name and focussed on the doctrines of Vajrakīla, then it was lost long ago. More probably, however, the name is intended generally as *locus ascriptus* for the store of ideas pertaining to the deity without reference to a particular presentation of precepts. It may thus serve as a generic term for the vast conglomeration of individual treatises such as those currently found in Tibet (the title pages of many of which proclaim their descent from such a matrix) as well as to the oral tradition that accompanies them. 392 Also, it is not necessary to assume that this huge volume of teachings was ever written down on paper, for mystics the world over have always been capable of reading volumes into a few key words or sentences. The staggering weight of the doctrines conveyed at this time may simply be a metaphor for their great importance. The ambiguity of the various Kīla chronicles tends to confirm this hypothesis, for the title occurs as an article of faith in almost every Vajrakīla lineage, despite an acknowledgement of their discrete inceptions and the absence of any such named text.

Certainly it seems that Padmasambhava introduced a very large body of Vajrakīla teachings to Tibet, as practised to this day within both the rNying-ma and Sa-skya schools. 393 In the *rNyin ma'i rgyud 'bum* (NGB) alone are more than forty-one major treatises filling three entire volumes. 394 The popularity of these doctrines was such that countless gter ma have subsequently been brought forth by 'revealers of hidden treasure' to supplement those originally taught.

The doctrines of Vajrakīla were at one time rejected as spurious by various teachers of the new schools (gsar ma) on the grounds that no original Sanskrit texts could be produced in evidence of their authenticity. All such opposition is said to have been crushed, however, when the Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (1182-1252) discovered in Shangs sreg-zhing a Sanskrit text which was supposed to have belonged to Padmasambhava himself. The Sa-skya Paṇḍita's translation of this *Vajrakīla-mūlatantrakahāṇḍa* (VKMK, rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu) is included in the *tantra* section of the Tibetan canon (TTP 78) and in our analysis of Byang-gter Vajrakīla

thasti as the actual donor of the teachings at that time, thus confirming him as the personal preceptor of Padmasambhava. NSTB, I, 481, says that Padmasambhava studied the Kīla doctrines eighteen times under Prabhahasti’s tutelage.

392. Still to be analysed are the Sanskrit treatises of Buddhist kīla rituals noted above (Chapter Two) and the many minor texts of mixed Hindu/Buddhist ritual recently brought to light in Nepal by the NGMPP.

393. The large cycle of Vajrakīla doctrines adhered to by the Sa-skya school is said to have been taught by Padmasambhava to 'Khon klu-dbang srung and subsequently transmitted from generation to generation within the 'Khon family. 'Khon dKon-mchog rgyal-po (1034-1102) eventually abandoned the rNying-ma tradition in disgust at its later degeneracy, founding his own school at Sa-skya in 1073.

394. According to the catalogue of this collection prepared by E. Kaneko, Tokyo, 1982, vols. 27, 28 & 29 consist entirely of Kīla texts.
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literature in Part Three of the present work the contents of this short text will be shown to have tremendous relevance for the cult as a whole.

In the light of the huge number of Vajrakila texts held in great esteem by followers of the rNying-ma school in Tibet, it may be considered curious that no recension of the bKa’ ’gyur includes any Kila tantra other than the VKMK. This is despite the fact that Bu-ston (1290–1364) himself, one of the foremost compilers of the canon, informs us in his Chos ’byung (History of Religion) that his teacher, the lo tsā ba Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan, had seen “parts of the Vajrakila-tantra” in Nepal.395 The marked absence of such texts from the official collection of Buddhayacana, then, cannot reasonably be attributed to hostility on the part of the compilers. The rNying-ma-pa explanation for their absence is that the initiated holders of these highly esoteric doctrines deliberately maintained their secrecy in accordance with tantric ordinance, never permitting them to become widely known.396 Thus they have never been included in the published lists of canonical works, even the earliest catalogue of translations carried out at bSam-yas monastery.397

The existence of a Kila cult among the Buddhists in eighth century India, however, must now surely be accepted as established despite any uncertainty adhering to the title Vidyottama-tantra. Whatever texts were sent to Padmasambhava on that occasion and whether or not they actually came from the prestigious monastic university of Nālandā, all the chronicles proclaim that, as soon as the teachings arrived in Pharping, the hindrances and obstacles that had disturbed the guru’s meditations were successfully overcome. “Invoking Vajrakila”, says our commentator ‘Phrin-las bdud-joms:

“Padmasambhava beheld a glorious vision of the bhagavat Vajrakumāra that filled the sky like the cosmic Mount Meru and he obtained from the deity unprecedented empowerments of wrathful activity. Then, rolling the ritual kila between his palms, the ācārya sang this song:

‘Oh Trptacakra (and) the Kila-god,
Dark blue in colour, naked,
and with long dishevelled hair.
The upper part of your body
is a great wrathful form
With three faces and six arms.
Below the navel you are a
sharp-pointed nail
Of great strength, ferocious,
brightly blazing.
Like the blue petals of
an upala flower,

397. The bKa’ ’gyur dkar chag ldan dkar ma compiled in the ninth century by sKa-ba dpal-brtsegs and Nam-mkha’i snying-po. See Marcelle Lalou, “Les textes bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri srong-lde-btsan”.

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With a radiant aura of
intense light.
When touched by you
even the gods are destroyed.
What need is there to speak
of those who cause trouble?'

While the guru sat in meditation singing this song, there came to him in the
evening the four Śvanmukhā goddesses and then, at midnight, the four
Mahātmādevis (bDag-nyid chen-mo). In the morning he was approached by
the four Bhūmipati (Sa-bdag) sisters (called here bSe-mo mched-bzhi) and
all twelve of these local spirits offered him their vital life essence. In
accepting their gifts, the guru established each one of them as a protectress
of the doctrines of Vajrakila.”

These dozen goddesses have become very well known in the Kīla cult, with a large
number of texts being devoted to their worship (dealt with in more detail in Chapter Nine,
below).

The first group consists of goddesses in the guise of wild dogs. Throughout India dogs
are thought of as the most unclean of all animals, polluted scavengers and the very
epitome of evil. They are also regarded as the companions of the outcaste kāpālika Śiva
during his wanderings as the god beyond the pale of orthodox Vedism. The Hindu
tantric text Mahākāla-saṁhitā instructs the yogin to worship such creatures as
manifestations of Śiva’s spouse by proceeding at midnight on the fourteenth (darkest)
night of the waning moon, naked and with dishevelled hair, to a lonely, fearful spot such
as a charnel ground. There, bali should be offered to the jackals who are then requested to
slay the yogin’s foes. Since this ritual is exactly as we find it in the Buddhist Kīla cult,
it may be that this episode in the chronicles simply reflects the historical incorporation of
kāpālika imagery and myth. The second group corresponds to the Rtudevis, ‘goddesses of
the four seasons’, whose mythology I have so far been unable to trace. (See below,
Chapter Nine, for details of their iconography.)

It is only to the final group of four sisters, the bSe’i lha-mo-bzhi (translated by Bischoff
& Hartman as “the tetrademoness of Bse”) that reference is made in the Tun-huang
manuscript (folio 7a). Nebesky-Wojkowitz suggests that this group may derive from the
Bon demons of that name (also spelled bSve) and he notes that “numerous bSe are to be
found among the sa bdag”. Our text B33 (C24), on the other hand, invokes a group of
sixty male and female bSe from the uppermost reaches of the sky!

Interpreting this passage, then, as an allusion to the assimilation into the Kīla cult of
minor deities from local traditions, an air of historical credibility is bestowed upon what

398. B4, 186. The song is translated from gTsang mkhan-chen, rDo rje phur pa’i chos ’byung, 168.
400. T. Goudriaan & S. Gupta, Hindu Tantric and Śākta Literature, 80–1.
401. René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet, 15, 310.
402. See above, Chapter Three.
would otherwise seem to be a fantastic episode in the unfolding drama. Such an understanding is supported by gTsang mkhan-chen who says that the goddesses came seeking consecration on that occasion although they had long ago been bound under oath to serve the cause of living beings.\footnote{gTsang mkhan-chen, \textit{rDo rje phur pa'i chos 'byung}, 169.}

All sources go on to say that the next task to be completed was the thorough revision of the texts of the collected doctrines. The translators of the Tun-huang manuscript describe this as the work of Padmasambhava alone but 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms and other sources make it clear that “Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Šilamañju conferred together”. In fact the Tun-huang manuscript (folio 6a) adds Prabhahasti (Pra-be-se) to the list and it is difficult to believe that his disciples would have “worked extensively on the \textit{sādhana}s, commentaries and thirty-two root \textit{tantras} of Vajrakila, such as the \textit{Vajrakīla-guhyatantra} and the rest”\footnote{B4, 186–7, and gTsang mkhan-chen, \textit{op. cit.}, 170. A text frequently cited in this regard is the \textit{Phur 'grel 'bum nag} said to have been written by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Šilamañju on the basis of the \textit{Vidyottama-tantra} (A46, 462–3, etc.).} in his absence. Although it is not possible to identify these “thirty-two root \textit{tantras} and the rest”, the early chronicles at least make it clear that the accumulated wealth of Kīla doctrines incorporated inconsistencies and was therefore in need of revision and also that the first attempt at rationalization took place in Nepal on the basis of texts received from India during the first half of the eighth century AD.

Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Šilamañju\footnote{The Tun-huang manuscript names them Ser-po (the Nepalese) and In-tra (Indra) Shu-gu-tu (or Śrī 'Gugs-ta, folio 8a). It also says that they were not alone but fails to identify their assistants (with the exception of Prabhahasti, mentioned above).} are then said to have performed the rite of Vajrakila in “the rock cave of the \textit{asuras}” (only a short walk from Yang-le-shod).\footnote{For a description of these sites see K. Dowman, “A Buddhist Guide”, 249–54 & 255–8.} 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms, who actually places this event prior to the rationalization of the \textit{Vidyottama} texts, tells us that “One of their \textit{kīlas} exhibited the supreme sign of flying through space. One \textit{kīla} showed the middling sign of leaping and dancing above the \textit{maṇḍala} and a third \textit{kīla} showed the inferior sign of laughing and smiling.” He then continues:

“The \textit{ācārya} Padmasambhava took hold of that \textit{kīla} that had flown through space and he stuck it into the ground in an area where there was a teacher of heretical doctrines who was causing trouble for the \textit{Buddhadharma}. In so doing he utterly annihilated that area, including the teacher, his house and the surrounding forest. As soon as he had done so, however, a new forest arose even grander than the one that had previously been there. The \textit{ācārya} Vimalamitra took hold of that \textit{kīla} that had danced upon the \textit{maṇḍala} and he put it into the River Ganges. By this action he was able to destroy a certain \textit{nāga} who had been supporting the lives of heretics. The Nepali master Šilamañju took the \textit{kīla} that had laughed and he thrust it into the \textit{mKhar-gong} rock, reducing it to rubble and dust. In this way, as foretold in
prophesy, he destroyed all heretics that were staying in that area, up as far as their leader. So the doctrines of the Buddha were enabled to flourish."\textsuperscript{407}

This threefold theme, although encountered in all the chronicles, is variously recorded by the different authors. 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje\textsuperscript{408} confirms the events but omits many details while the Tun-huang manuscript, dealing with the matter very briefly on folio 8, exchanges the protagonists who overcame water and rock.

\textit{gTsang mkhan-chen} in his \textit{Concise History}, however, relates a parallel narrative set in India. According to his version, Padmasambhava, together with his consort and one assistant, performed the rite of Vajrakila in Vajrásana (modern Bodh Gayā) until the signs of success became manifest as above. Padmasambhava is then said to have taken the \textit{kīla} representing the wrathful Trailokyavijaya from the \textit{mandala} and to have caused the conflagration of a sandalwood forest near Trilīṅga (Trimala) in south India where heretics who worshipped a \textit{svayambhūlinga} were "practising the evil art of black magic, bringing about a virulent infectious disease". The fire was started as he stabbed his \textit{kīla} into the trunk of a tree near the \textit{linga}. His consort (said to be "just like Vajrayogini") took from the \textit{malJrjala} the \textit{kīla} of Amrtakul and travelled east to Bengal where an evil \textit{nāga} who was well disposed towards heretics dwelt in a lake. "When those \textit{tīrthika} made just so much as a simple \textit{bāli} offering to the serpent they were rewarded with many precious jewels and much harm was done to the followers of the Buddha through the miracle powers of the snake." The \textit{nāga} and his retinue were destroyed when she plunged her \textit{kīla} into that lake. "Within a week the lake was dry and all those heretics were dead." A \textit{yogin} by the name of Ratnaśīla, who had acted as assistant in the rite, took one of the minor \textit{kīlas} from the \textit{mandala} and went to Rājāgrha in the country of Magadha. There, beside a huge boulder of crystal, a family of brahmin heretics had established their residence around a certain teacher who taught that the powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience were to be obtained without the necessity of undergoing ascetic privations. With a single thrust of his \textit{kīla}, the boulder was reduced to fragments and their evil power destroyed.\textsuperscript{409}

We may never know the personalities and local events that underlie such legends for, although the common themes are clearly discernable, the tales themselves present too many variants. Until the Sanskrit sources which have only recently come to light are analysed, however, these Tibetan texts remain the only testimonies we have of events surrounding the development and spread of a Kīla cult in India and Nepal prior to the transmission of the Vajrakila doctrines to Tibet.

Having established a consistent body of knowledge relating to the worship and ritual praxis of Vajrakila on the basis of the \textit{Vidyottama} collection, Padmasambhava is said to have transferred to the rock cave at gYā’-ri-gong in the border area between India and Nepal in order to continue his meditations. All sources speak of this as a twelve year

\textsuperscript{407} B4, 184–5.
\textsuperscript{408} NSTB, I, 714.
\textsuperscript{409} \textit{gTsang mkhan-chen}, \textit{rDo rje phur pa’i chos ‘byung}, 164–6.
period of retreat focussing on the hundred thousand sections of the Vidyottama-tantra and a number of the Byang-gter sādhanas (see below, Part Three) claim to encapsulate the meditations in which Padmasambhava was engaged at that time.

Thus far we have looked at two lines of Vajrakīla doctrine, one stemming from Indrabodhi and the other said to have been received by Prabhahasti at the opening of the stūpa in Śitavana. Both teach procedures for meditation upon Vajrakīla in his three-faced, six-armed form, known in the Byang-gter school as ‘the black deity’ system. We have seen above, however, that the Byang-gter also recognizes the Kila with nine faces and eighteen arms, a ‘multicoloured deity system’ having a separate genesis.

The Mahottarakīla cycle
In the biography of Padmasambhava known as the bKa’ thang gser phreng, the story is told of the ‘scorpion guru’ who imparts to Padmasambhava the doctrines of Vajrakīla in the charnel ground of Śitavana near Bodh Gayā. In the bKa’ thang shel brag ma, this episode receives a brief mention without, however, making any reference to Vajrakīla. The teachings that the scorpion gave on that occasion are simply said to be “the Dharma”.

The Vajrakīla Concise History by gTsang mkhan-chen places the episode, not in Śitavana in line with the other sources, but in Yang-le-shod following the successful performance of the Kila rites by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Śilamañju. According to this text a gigantic iron scorpion fell down upon the roof of the cave in which the three were meditating and appeared before them, mocking and jeering. The ācārya (presumably Padmasambhava) transformed himself into a pig in order to eat that scorpion which promptly metamorphosed into the deity Vajrakumāra, from whom they all received the “unassailable empowerments for the ferocious rites”. The Byang-gter cycle includes an entire text, the Phur pa che mchog gi lo rgyus (B13), devoted to the episode of the scorpion. As betokened by its title, the scorpion is herein said to be the source of the Mahottarakīla teachings which nowadays appear to be known only within this tradition. According to the text, Padmasambhava went to visit the guru Dhanasamskṛta in order to request Dharma teachings and, having received from him all the various dharmas on the path of secret mantra, became victorious over debaters and followers of heretical doctrines. He was henceforth renowned as Simhanāḍa, “He who roars with the voice of a lion”.

410. Our text C23, for example, begins with the oft quoted verse: O rgyan padma 'byung gnas kyi, phur pa bi to ta ma la, 'bun sde'i rgyud la blo sbyang nas, gYa' ri gong gi brog phug tu, mi lo bcu gnyis bar du bsgrub.
411. A similar “black deity system” is said to have been devised by Ya-'brog-pa gu-rub yang-dag on the basis of the rDo rje phur bu chos thams cad mya ngan las 'das pa'i rgyud chen po (NGB, 336, a text cited several times in the Byang-gter commentaries of Padma 'phrin-las, e.g., A46, 418). G. Roerich, The Blue Annals, 156.
414. gTsang mkhan-chen, rDo rje phur pa'i chos 'byung, 168. The author states that the deity chose to manifest in this way “in order to examine the attainments” (of the practitioners).
415. Another of the famous “eight names of the guru”.

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After giving the teachings the guru Dhanasamśkṛta announced to his disciples, “We all, master and retinue, should go to the lake island Jalandradvipa in order to perfect the rite of producing amṛta nectar”, and having said this, they all departed. They made their home on that island in a cave of blue rock and this angered the bhūmipati, nāgas and pestilential local spirits who then caused the great lake to overflow. The planets and constellations of stars above also became furious and threw down repeated storms of hail and lightning, violent winds and blizzards of snow. Because of all this, the yogins were achieving no results from their sādhana practice and so they went off in search of a doctrine that could put a stop to the interferences.416

Arriving at the great charnel ground of Śitavana they found a black iron scorpion with nine heads living there in a cave, holding aloft a golden sword in his right hand and expounding the Dharma to himself. “I am the lord of all those in the world who have no lord. I am the defender and friend of all those who have no protector” he said. Because this iron scorpion was very angry, the teachings on that occasion consisted of instructions on bringing anger onto the path. His having nine heads was a sign of his having reached the highest peak of the nine yānas and his sword was a sign of his having cut through the klesas with his perfect wisdom (śamyakprajñā). A great light like the glow of the setting sun was always shining at the place where he stayed.

The guru said: “In this place there will arise either a jewel of Brahmā or a great demon of destruction.” After he had spoken they dug down and unearthed a casket of maroon leather within which was this fundamental commentary on the root tantra, inscribed in letters of gold upon dark blue paper. At that time neither the acārya Dhanasamśkṛta nor the teacher Padmasambhava was able to comprehend it and, even though it was shown to five hundred other scholars, it could not be understood. They therefore attached it to the tip of a victorious banner and, circumambulating it, they worshipped it with offerings.417

Then Padmasambhava said: “If we ask the iron scorpion for the meaning, he will either refuse to explain or he will speak.” So they prepared for the scorpion a six-legged throne of jewels and, inviting him to sit upon it, they circumambulated him, presented him with offerings and prayed to him fervently with devoted minds. In an instant that scorpion of iron transformed himself into the bhagavat, the glorious Vajrakumāra with nine heads and eighteen hands pronouncing in his own language the sounds KiLAYA HOṭyf PHAT from the dGongs rgyud (Tantra of the Ultimate Intention).418 It was by means of this utterance that the miraculous transformation with nine heads and eighteen hands arose from the sphere

416. Note that once again the motif of harassment to meditation is cited as the reason for seeking the Kila doctrines.

Both the gSer phreng ba and the Shel brag ma say that Padmasambhava was originally meditating alone in a cave at Phūllaha when Vajrapāṇi appeared to him and instructed him to visit the charnel ground “near Rāja-grha” where it was foretold that he would attain siddhi.

417. Both the gSer phreng ba and the Shel brag ma say that the scorpion withdrew the teachings from beneath a triangular stone and as soon as they were seen they were immediately understood. gTsang mkhan-chen also says that by showing these sūstras to the five hundred panditas, “the borderland between Nepal and India became like a wellspring of bodhi”.

418. Possibly the rDo rje phur pa gsang ba’i dgon gyud chen po, said to be derived from the Vidyottama-tantra. NGB, 353.
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of non-arising, so it is said. Then he taught the tantra known as *Svayambhū-svodaya (Spontaneously Generated, Self-Arising) from the section “Anger is destroyed by means of vajra wrath” up as far as the words “KATHAM KATHAM”, together with instru-ctions concerning its means of attainment. “This was the manner in which the mūlata tantra of vajra wrath arose as authoritative, generally indestructible adamantine speech.”

As far as can be judged from the few words cited here, this ‘mūlata tantra of vajra wrath’ exhibits a remarkable similarity to the VKMK. Indeed, the entire text of the VKMK is probably to be found scattered among the various works that style themselves as ‘root tantras of Vajrakila’. Many of its verses, for example, are to be found in the Byang-gter BRT analysed in the following chapter, thus lending weight to the idea that perhaps there never were large numbers of Vajrakila texts in Sanskrit, despite persistent references to the fabulous ‘one hundred thousand sections’ of the Vidyottama-tantra. Our chronicle, in fact, goes on to state that the Vidyottama-tantra was taught in order to elucidate the meaning of the mūlata tantra, which suggests that the bulk of Vajrakila texts may have been redactions of an oral tradition centered on only a few root texts. In the words of the chronicle:

“In order to make that clear, the teacher (presumably the scorpion but possibly Dhanasamskṛta or Padmasambhava) taught the continuation tantra called Vidyottama in one hundred thousand sections. At that place he propounded the introduction (nīdāna) in which the five excellent ‘invariables’419 are set forth and then he taught the hundred thousand verses. In order to clarify the meaning of the fundamental Vajrakrodha-tantra (‘the mūlata tantra of vajra wrath’), five explanatory tantras were taught which are the tantras of the Body, Speech, Mind, Good Qualities and Perfect Activities. The mother tantra is the Heruka-mūlata tantra (from which are derived?) the five tantras of the five supreme sons, ten tantras of the ten wrathful kings and twelve tantras of the twelve oath-bound guardians. The nīdāna itself is a tantra called the Rasp Razor of Life (Srog gi spu gri se brdar) and for all of the samaya deities there is a *Samayasamāja-tantra. In that way, twenty-seven tantras have been taught.420

In the cycle of treatises there are the eight treatises in the eight directions and there are six classes of āgama in the cycle of āgamas. The philosophical viewpoint of the adhiṣṭhāna Vidyottama-tantra in one hundred thousand sections is complete and perfect in every respect. The small heart text is a clear guide to the perfect activities of the deity Vajrakumāra and for higher activities there is the Guhyakila-tantra (our

419. See above, note 337.
420. If the tantras of Body, Speech, Mind and the rest are identified as “the five supreme sons”, I suppose the twenty-seven referred to here comprise the listed groups of five, ten and twelve. This leaves the Vajrakrodha-mūlata tantra, the nīdāna and the Samayasamāja-tantra excluded from the reckoning. NGB, 338–47, are Vajrakila tantras concerning the ten wrathful kings but the firm identification of any text is problematic.
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text A3) which is an accomplished yātudhāna or demonic means for the complete eradication of all trouble-makers."\(^{421}\)

The chronicle concludes with the proclamation that, having successfully attained all of these teachings, Dhanasamskrta and Padmasambhava contemplated the instructions and took them fully to heart. Then, when they thrust a kila into the lake they were able to subdue all vicious trouble-makers from among the eight classes of gods and demons and they gained the two types of siddhi of Vajrakīla.

Thus, according to this source, doctrines relating to Mahottarakīla were initially divulged in India to both Padmasambhava and Dhanasamskrta. Considered chronologically, they are among the final revelations of Vajrakīla and if these teachings then went straight to Tibet in the hands of Padmasambhava, tantra texts relating to the deity in this guise may never have circulated in the land of their origin. Sceptics, of course, would question their supposed Indian provenance and their doubts may be increased when it is noted that such doctrines did not appear in Tibet either until much later for I have been unable to locate any citation of the eighteen-armed Mahottarakīla in the bka’ ma material translated in the eighth century. Paradoxically, however, the Byang-gter Mahottarakīla texts (dealt with below, Part Three) exhibit primitive features that would seem to indicate their greater antiquity.

None of the known Kīla chronicles deals further with the aetiology or dissemination of the Kīla cult in India, a knowledge of which may perhaps be derived in the future from sources in Sanskrit. All Tibetan authors dealing with subsequent events turn their attention towards Tibet.

The invitation of Padmasambhava to Tibet during the reign of Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan is too well known to be elaborated here. There are just two points in this episode of specific interest to the present study. The first of these is that the leader of the messengers dispatched by the king to escort the guru from India was the king’s uncle and life-long companion, sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms, whom the chroniclers call “preeminent among the practitioners of Vajrakīla”.\(^{422}\) Revered as the founder of the Byang-gter tradition, he is said to have mastered the teachings under the guidance of Padmasambhava in the eighth century and subsequently revealed them to the world as ‘treasure’ in 1366 when reincarnated as Rig-’dzin rgod-Idem. This has been dealt with above, in Chapter One.

The second point upon which the Kīla chroniclers insist is that the rites employed by Padmasambhava for the subjugation of the local ‘gods and demons’ and the conversion of Tibet were specifically the rites of Vajrakīla. Buddhist tantric praxis, moreover, posits the identity of the sādhaka with the presiding deity of his chosen sādhana and thus whenever

421. Normally the “higher activities” are the meditations that lead to Buddhahood (the supreme siddhi) while the “demonic means for the complete eradication of all trouble-makers” are considered to be lower activities. The meaning of this entire paragraph is obscure. In a ritual of the Yajurveda we read yātudhānebhyaḥ kanṭakakārāṃ, “to the yātudhāna demons (should be sacrificed) trouble-makers”. R. Mitra, “On Human Sacrifice in Ancient India”, 76–118. See also H. G. Tüstig, “The Indian Sorcery Called Abhicāra”, 78–81, on yātudhāna rites.
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Padmasambhava ritually invoked the presence of Vajrakila he was himself transfigured as ‘the lord of the nails’.

*Iconic scorpions and kilas*

The wealth of legends accruing to the (largely mythological) figure of Padmasambhava has led to his renown in Tibet as the *aṣṭānāmaguru* (gu ru mtshan brgyad) ‘the teacher with eight names’. These eight names are taken from the hagiography of the *guru* and relate to the various episodes in his life and the ways in which he was regarded by different people at different times, mainly in India.423

Raised as the adopted crown prince of king Indrabhūti he was known first of all as the royal Padmarāja (Padma rgyal-po). Committing murder, he was banished to the wilderness where he underwent the *mahāvrata* penance of a *kāpālika* and became known as the *yogin* Sūryaraśmi (Nyi-ma ’od-zer).424 As a lay Buddhist scholar of great learning he is said to have been acclaimed as Mativat Vararuci (bLo-ldan mchog-sred) and, being ordained as a *bhikṣu*, was revered as an actual Buddha and celebrated as Śākyasimha (Shākya seng-ge). As a tantric priest he was renowned as the *ācārya* Padmasambhava (Padma ’byung-gnas) and glorified as Simhanāda (Seng-ge sgra-sgrog), the ferocious debater who defeated all heresy. During the bestowal of *abhiṣeka* he was honoured as the lord of the *maṇḍala*, the divine Saroruha Vajradhara (mTsho-skyes rdo-rje-’chang) and being invited to Tibet he became the wrathful rDo-rje gro-bo-lod, subjugator of Himalayan *genii loci*.

His Indian names are included in the *mantras* through which he is invoked in religious ceremonies425 and the episodes from his life are recounted in detail in his many biographies. The sole exclusively Himalayan form of the *guru*, then, is the one known as rDo-rje gro-lod, and this is the form in which he wields the ritual *kila*. According to the religious traditions of Tibet he is said to have appeared in this guise specifically in order to “bind under oath all the high and low non-human spirits of the land and thus convert the whole country to the *Dharma*”. Mounted upon a pregnant tigress capable of flight, Padma-

423. The miraculous birth, royal upbringing, renunciation of the palace, years of asceticism and study, etc., are all motifs through which hagiographers of Padmasambhava sought to identify him as “the second Buddha”.

424. Hindu law codes teach a penance known as *mahāvrata* (great vow) involving voluntary exile to the forests or cremation grounds, etc., for a period of twelve years to be observed by the slayer of a brahmin. There the penitent must dress in animal skins and carry a skull bowl for food and a skull staff (*khaitvāṅga*) as the emblems of his crime, entering villages only during the day for the purpose of begging alms. The tantric *kāpālikas* of a later period took up these practices, smearing their bodies with ashes and adorning themselves with bones. They devoted themselves to ritual sacrifice of a more or less scatological type and the worship of Śiva in his wrathful guise as Bhairava through which they sought to attain mundane *siddhis* and ultimate union with the deity. They also practised *yoga* involving the *nāḍīs* and *cakras*. D. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, 73-95. Similar practices were performed by itinerant Buddhist *yogins* known as vajra*kāpālikas* and the *Samputi-tantra* refers to the vow as either *vīracyāvṛata* (vow of heroic conduct) or *yauvarājavrata* (the vow of a crown prince). Abhayakaragupta, *Vajravālī*, 219.

425. Such as those found in the *Yang gsang rig ’dzin yongs rdo-gsugs kyi bla ma gu ru mtshan brgyad bye brag du sgrub pa ye shes bād rtsi’i sbrang char zhe bya ba*, a manuscript of which was brought to India from east Tibet by C. R. Lama in 1985.
sambhava is supposed to have visited thirteen separate locations throughout the Himalaya as rDo-rje gro-lod, each of which subsequently became known by the appellation ‘Tiger’s Nest’ (sTag-tshang).426

Tibetan icons depicting this form of the guru show him in the conventional robes of a Buddhist bhikṣu but with the long hair and bone ornaments of a kāpālika yogin.427 This image may well provide another clue to the non-Buddhist origin of many kīla doctrines as it seems to suggest that the precepts of the Buddha as upheld by the bhikṣu saṅgha became somehow overlaid with the cult of the kīla. Indeed, the demon upon whom the guru in this guise is seen to trample has the form of a Buddhist monk! The icon exists in several well-known variants and of particular interest to us here is the fact that the hastacihna held in Padmasambhava’s left hand may be either an iron scorpion or a kīla, indicative of an iconic equivalence. The guru himself is often depicted from the waist down in the form of a kīla428 and in the biography of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal he is said to have manifested as rDo-rje gro-lod at the end of a session of ritual practices focussed on Vajrakīla. The passage in question is remarkable for the graphic account it contains of a Vajrakīla abhiṣeka in which, coincidently, sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms is also said to have participated.429 Two initiation rituals published in 1961 by Muses & Chang430 through which the empowerments of ‘the fierce guru’ are to be bestowed, point specifically to the identical nature of the guru and ‘the Buddha Vajrakumāra’. Both texts list a nine-headed iron scorpion among the symbols of the deity while the second text alone describes the lower part of the guru’s body in the form of a kīla, “the weapon that kills the evils, agonising and tormenting them”. In the mandala of the deified rDo-rje gro-lod, iron scorpions stand guard in the four gateways and innumerable scorpions encircle the mandala periphery, forming the protective enclosure typically associated with kīlas. All of this makes it clear that, iconographically, the scorpion and the kīla are readily interchangeable. Did this situation arise as a result of legends concerning the scorpion as a teacher of the Vajrakīla tantra? Or were the legends derived in order to explain an iconic convention of uncertain origin?431

426. T. Thondup, The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa, 144, in which he also states that gier ma were later recovered from several of these sites.
429. K. Dowman, Sky Dancer, 90. It is also interesting to note that the purpose of the ceremony was to be the subjugation of the “gods and demons” of the “barbarian borderlands and beyond” which brings us back to the simābandha rites noted above in Chapter Two as the single most important element in the evolutionary history of the kīla.
430. C. A. Muses, ed., Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra, translated by Chen Chi Chang, 3-47. On pp. 19-20 the scorpion is said to have nine heads, nine mouths, nine eyes and nine stings. “The right sting (pincer?) touches the top of the universe, the left one touches the bottom of the earth. The body flames with the fire of hell.” It is then said that all demons, obstacles and enemies of the past are hungrily devoured by the scorpion while those of the future will all be subdued through its power.
431. Perhaps a clue to this may be found in the belief that the bites and stings of serpents and scorpions have their origin in Rudra, for in Chapter Three (above) we have shown that the iconography of Vajrakīla derives from the form of Rudra. J. L. Shastri, ed., Garuḍa-purāṇa, II, XXXII, 121.
In the kāyamāṇḍala of the combined āstamahāsādhhanas, the deity to be contemplated within the secret (genital) centre (guhyacakra) is Vajrakila. Here, however, within the kāyamāṇḍala of the canonized Padmasambhava in his kīla-wielding form, the guhyacakra is said to be the abode of Yakṣa Me-dbal in the form of a demonic blacksmith. This yakṣa has a wrathful, snarling face with all the usual attributes of a terrifying deity and in his two hands he holds a vajra hammer and a lasso of fire (me yi shags). In Tibet, blacksmiths are thought of with fear and awe. Their work is seen to be akin to magic and, naturally, they are the ones whose task it is to fashion the iron kilas. The hammering of white hot metal on an anvil in the groin is a powerful meditative image and the sharp, non-dual spike that is forged in this secret place when hammer and fire are brought together is the impetuous and powerful nail that can pin down all demonic urges in a moment. Is it mere coincidence that the kīla once used to slay the coiled serpent Vṛtra is now found in just that place where the coiled serpent Kuṇḍalini resides? Even more curious is the fact that, in esoteric astrology, the dominion of the constellation Scorpio in the human body is the groin.

Scorpio, a fixed water sign, is associated in western mythology with the river Styx that separates the living from the dead (echoes of the vedi at the threshold?) which is guarded by the three-headed Cerberus (highly suggestive of images associated with Śvāmukhā as well as with the two-headed dogs of Yama), ruled by Pluto (lord of the underworld, the special domain of nāgas) and with all that pertains to death and its mysteries. An accepted alternative image for the scorpion in astrological symbolism is the eagle and we note that from the navel of Vajrakila shoots forth a mighty garuḍa eagle. Garuḍa is the sworn enemy of all serpents and serpents are regularly depicted entwined along the lower parts of ritual kilas. It is also pertinent to note here the mention of a protective circle of eight khadirakilas in the Garuḍa-purāṇa. Further investigation is clearly required in order to determine the debt owed by the Buddhist system of Vajrakila to ancient Indian myths of the scorpion and Garuḍa (Pakṣirāja). The Kila doctrines having been compiled, however, they were then transmitted to Tibet.

The transmission to Tibet

Our chronicler 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms sums up the well-known amalgam of religious myth and history concerning this period by telling us that, while Padmasambhava himself was active in India and Nepal.

432. Kuṇḍalini is thought of by Hindu tántrikas as a coiled serpent that lies sleeping at the base of the spine. A. Avalon, The Serpent Power, 347, verses 10, 11.

433. The emanation of Garuḍa from Vajrakila’s navel is described in the deity’s sādhana (e.g., A32, 226) but in Vajrakila icons this fabulous bird is usually depicted as flying over his head. With the beat of his wings, Garuḍa is said to be capable of forcing the entire triple world to a standstill. V. Fausboll, Indian Mythology, 79.


435. Unfortunately it seems as if all the original Gāruḍa-tantras (the primary concern of which was the magical production of counteragents to poison and snakebite) as well as the Bhūta-tantras to which they were closely affiliated (primarily dealing with the exorcism of malevolent ghosts and spirits) have long since been lost to posterity. M. Dyczkowski, The Canon of the Śaivāgama and the Kubjikā Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition, 41.

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"An incarnation of the ārya Mañjuśrī had taken birth in Tibet in the person of the dharmarāja Khri Srong-lde’u-btsan who held in his mind the wish to establish there the doctrines of the Buddha. He therefore invited the bodhisattva abbot (Śāntarakṣita) from the land of Zahor and, having determined the site and drawn up plans for a temple, in the year of the female fire ox (AD 797) the foundation stones were laid and the walls were built up of wood and stones. All that was built up by the workers during the day, however, was destroyed during the night by the wild unruly gods and demons of Tibet. When the king asked the abbot just why that should be so, the abbot instructed the king to invite the ācārya Padmasambhava."436

The king therefore “dispatched sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-’joms and his three companions to India, each endowed with a measure of gold pieces and a golden bowl.” These messengers met Padmasambhava in Vajrāsana where he is said to have been acting as preceptor to king Suryasimha and they presented him with their invitation.

’Phrin-las bdud-’joms makes no mention of the journey from India to Tibet but all other chroniclers stress the guru’s role in subjugating a large number of local gods and demons en route, converting all of them to Buddhism and binding them under oath to protect the Buddhist Dharma.437 gTsang mkhan-chen, having given the details of several major battles with local demonic forces, winds up by saying that “in general, all of the harmful ’dre and srin were subdued by means of Vajrakīla”.

Upon his arrival in Tibet, Padmasambhava is said to have performed the earth rituals (bhūmivīdhiḥ) for the temple of bSam-yas in accordance with the tantra of Vajrakīla so that all obstacles to its construction were dispelled. Thereafter, the assembled scholars of India and Tibet began their programme of translating the various śūtras and śāstras into Tibetan and, in particular, “special teachings were given by Padmasambhava in the retreat house at mChims-phu.”439

When he taught the mandalas of the astamahāsādhanas, Padmasambhava granted empowerments to ‘the king and the twenty-four subjects’440, and we also learn that:

“The lady Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, having cast her flower onto the deity Vajrakīla, was given all the individual teachings of the Vajrakīla tantras, āgamas and upadeśas and, having put them into practice, she beheld the deva’s face. She then had the ability to raise a human corpse to life again, the powers of mystic union (sbyor ba) and liberation (sgrol ba), the capacity to nourish the dead and care for their welfare and so on. She attained powers that reached to the limits of the extreme.”441

437. A long list of these subjugations is to be found in K. Dowman, The Legend of the Great Stūpa, 82–6.
438. gTsang mkhan-chen, rDo rje phur pa’i chos ’byung, 175.
439. B4, 188.
441. For the events of mTsho-rgyal’s life see K. Dowman, Sky Dancer.
"Furthermore", continues 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms, “from the ruling king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan, from the lady Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, from sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms, from Shud-pu dpal-gyi seng-ge, mChims Sākyaprabhā, lCog-ro gza', 'Khon klu-dbang sprung, and from Rong-ban yon-tan arose the various lineages of teachings known as 'the king’s tradition’, ‘the tradition of the lady’, ‘the sNa-nam tradition’, ‘the Shud-pu tradition’, ‘the mChims tradition’, ‘the lCam tradition’, ‘the 'Khon tradition’ and ‘the Rong-zom tradition’. All of these are lineages of Vajrakīla teachings and each one of them has demonstrated its miraculous powers.”

Our earliest record of the propagation of the Vajrakīla lineages (the Tun-huang manuscript) exhibits almost no obvious relationship to this account by 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms. The first in Tibet to be instructed in the Kīla doctrines are there said to be Ba-bor be-ro-ca (Ba-gor Vairocana), the Kashmirian Nya-na si-ga, Dre Tathāgata (could this be Dre rgyal-ba blo-gros, a minister of the king and one of the first Tibetans to receive ordination as a Buddhist monk?), 'Bu-na a-nas, mChims Sākyaprabhā (as above), rDo-rje gnyan (a place name?), sNa-nam (presumably our sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms), Byin ye-shes-brtsegs, gNyan rNyi-ma btsan-ba-dpal, lDe-sman rgyal-mtshan and the abbot (upādhyāya) 'Bum-tang-kyis.

Later commentators, however, agree more closely with 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms’ list. 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje, for example, repeats it almost verbatim with the curious exception that, in his view, the sNa-nam tradition and the Rong tradition are identical. gTsang mkhan-chen simply asserts that the chief lineages founded at that time were those of the King, Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms and his messenger companions. He also asserts that an entirely separate lineage of Vajrakīla doctrines was introduced to Tibet by Vimalamitra. All chroniclers make much of the miracle powers said to have been demonstrated thereafter by the recipients of these Kīla doctrines. 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms continues:

“The dākinī Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, for example, thrust her kīla into a raging forest fire that had gone out of control at mChims-phu and put a stop to it. Immediately after that a new forest grew up even bigger than the one before it. On another occasion she made the tarjanīmudrā with her kīla towards crows that were flying high overhead and they fell down upon the ground. As for sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms, he quelled a raging fire at Has-po-ri with his kīla and showed miraculous kīlas in the sky. Shud-pu dpal-gyi seng-ge thrust his kīla into the green faced mountain of 'On and buried it in the rock as if he had sunk it into mud and mChims Sākyaprabhā, with the

442. B4, 188.
443. Vairocana is also held to have learned the doctrines of Vajrakīla in India from Śrīśimha. S. Karmay, The Great Perfection, 25.
445. NSTB, I, 710, 712.
446. gTsang mkhan-chen, rDo rje phur pa'i chos 'byung, 176, 189.
recitation of only a few kilamantras, caused the heart of a ferocious blue wolf to become separated from its skin and ejected from its body.\textsuperscript{447}

Later lineages of practice

"From among those lineages of practice listed above, the Kila tradition of the lady was given by the dākini Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal to Ngam-'dre, otherwise known as ācārya gSal-le. He lived for a thousand years before going to the sky realm of Khecara. From him the tradition passed to the great kilavidyādhara Lang-lab byang-chub rdo-rje. While Lang-lab was still a youth his uncle and other relatives rose up against him as enemies and he asked Ngam-"dre to present a petition on his behalf to the local ruler. Seeing this as an opportunity for great compassion, Ngam-'dre gave him the doctrines of Vajrakila. As a result of having put them into practice Lang-lab saw the face of the deva and put a stop to all his enemies. Although he became widely renowned as a man of great power, he never abandoned poverty.

At one time while Lang-lab was working as a shepherd, Rva lo-tsā-ba rDo-rje grags-pa together with a large retinue of his followers came to the place where Lang-lab sat with his disciples. Now, Rva lo-tsā-ba was very famous on account of his great powers and wherever he went all the important people of Tibet felt that they had to offer him their salutations and respect for they feared that those who failed to show him reverence would be killed by his samādhi of Yamāntaka. If it is asked, What kind of things were said about him?, it was said that he had killed thirteen bodhisattvas who were established on the bhūmis, including the venerable Marpa’s son Dar-ma mdo-sde, as well as translators who were related to him and others who were their equals. Even so, Lang-lab did not bow down in reverence before Rva lo-tsā-ba. Upon seeing this the people all thought, ‘Is this a really stupid man, or what?’ And then the people began to wonder whether he was also a man of (occult) power due to his knowledge of Vajrakila. ‘Perhaps he is the most powerful man of all! And yet, although he knows the doctrines of Vajrakila, he has no wealth and is forced to act as the guardian of others’ sheep.’ So they discussed the matter among themselves.

As for Rva lo-tsā-ba, he thought to himself, ‘Ah ha! Well if this fellow is so swollen up inside with pride that he fails to prostrate himself to me then just wait! He will not live beyond this evening!’ And that evening Rva lo-tsā-ba sat absorbed in meditation on Vajrabhairava and, summoning Lang-lab in his imagination, he performed the rituals for the fourfold yoga of slaying while the venerable Lang-lab stayed taking care of sheep in the fields. In the place where Rva lo-tsā-ba sat performing his invocations, at first there fell down from the sky like rain all the kilas of thorny wood from the outer edges of the Vajrakila mandala so that his disciples all fled in terror.

\textsuperscript{447} B4, 188–9.
Secondly, the forty herukas consisting of the devourers, slayers and the dasakrodhakilas all rained down as iron spikes causing his disciples to huddle together in panic. Thirdly, the sky became filled with a mass of fire and the sound of roaring and above the head of Rva lo-tsā-ba appeared the ‘accomplishment of activity’ (karmasiddhi) manifestation of Vajrakumāra made of meteoric iron. The upper part of his body was in the form of a wrathful deity and the lower part terminated in a sharp spike which rested on the crown of Rva lo-tsā-ba’s head. Terrified out of his mind, Rva lo-tsā-ba prayed for forgiveness and prostrated himself on the ground with ever increasing faith. When he promised to behave himself, the miraculous apparition disappeared and the next day he sent an invitation to Lang-lab and offered him enormous veneration and praise.448 Due to that the people have a saying: ‘He who knows Yamāntaka must bow down before Vajrakila.’ And this has become a well known expression.

Thus it was that the acārya Lang-lab byang-chub rdo-rje gained his four most important disciples, chief among whom was the man from Mon-dgu known as sKyi-nag gyang-gyel, ‘The One Who Caused the Wall of sKyi-nag to Tumble’.449 Because the people of his district had robbed him of his wealth, livestock, dwellings and lands, that man of Mon-dgu went to Lang-lab and requested the teachings of Vajrakila. Having accepted him as a disciple, Lang-lab bestowed upon him the empowerments and taught him the tantras and upadeśas, and instructed him to invoke the deity for nine months. ‘After that you must practise the sādhana of the protectors of Rosewood, Iron and Conch (Crystal) for a further two months’ he told him and gave him the necessary instructions.450 Due to practising in that way, the disciple experienced a measure of success (‘gained the stage of heat’) and then he went away. While he was walking along a steep narrow path one day, he came across a number of people who were strolling nearby, warming themselves in the sunshine. Suddenly, without exception, they all turned upon him in hostility. Taking a kīla from his breast pocket, he threw it down upon the rock which exploded into fragments like house bricks, killing all those who had risen up against him. Because of this feat, that disciple subsequently become known as ‘The One Who Caused the Wall of sKyi-nag to Tumble’ and the succession of lineage holders through which his tradition of Kila teachings have been transmitted remains famous to this day.

448. B4, 189–91. Despite this apparent conversion, however, gZhon-nu dpal says that Rwa lo-tsā-ba eventually murdered his hated enemy Lang-lab byang-chub rdo-rje. G. Roerich, The Blue Annals, 156.

449. The other three are identified by ‘Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje as sNa-nam shes-rab tshul-khrims, sKrang phur-bu-mgo of Rong and Nyang-nag of ‘U-yug rol-po. NSTB, I, 714.

450. Our text B28, etc. The protectors of Rosewood, Iron and Conch include three groups of four brothers that accompany the twelve “sisters” (Svanmukhā and the rest) introduced above. See below, Chapter Nine.
Now, with regard to the 'Khon tradition: This passed from 'Khon klu-dbang srung-ba to his younger brother rDo-rje rin-chen and then it continued to be passed down within the family which produced an unbroken succession of fully accomplished practitioners for eight generations. This lineage continues up until today and it is now known as Sa-phur or Sa-lugs (the Sa-skya-pa Kila or the Sa-skya-pa lineage).

The lCam tradition originated within the family of the lCogs-ro queen (one of the consorts of king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan). Within this family was born a princess of fierce mantras known as 'The One With the Dark Red Face’ and from her the lineage was passed on to lHa-rje gnub-chung. This lCam tradition is also said to be the cycle of teachings that gave the venerable Mi-la ras-pa his magical power. It is impossible to relate the whole story because, apart from the ones already mentioned, there are records and accounts of an inconceivable number of vidyādhāras from the three countries of India, Nepal and Tibet who have gained siddhis through practising the sādhana of this god of gods.”

With this remark 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms lightly dismisses a problematic area of Vajrakīla historiography. Tibetan chroniclers are unanimous in declaring the Vajrakīla doctrines to have been widespread in both India and Nepal but, unfortunately, the proclaimed ‘records and accounts’ of the early practitioners are meagre. Having thus outlined the various lineages of Vajrakīla teachings in the bka’ ma tradition, 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms goes on to explain how these doctrines became integrated into the lines of gter ma. He illustrates his chronicle with numerous citations of ‘prophecy’ from Byang-gter canonical works in order to show the supreme importance of the Northern Treasures as an authentic source of Vajrakīla empowerment. In one of the texts that he quotes (our document A33), king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan interrogates Padmasambhava concerning the kila made of iron that he perpetually kept about his person. Padmasambhava replied:

"Listen to me well, your royal majesty. This is a very important matter and if I were to explain it to you at length it would be beyond all comprehension. I will therefore say that, in a nutshell, its purpose is simply to quell all disturbances. Although I myself have no fear of the four māras, in order to bring my disciples up to final liberation in the Buddhakṣetra it is necessary to display the skilful methods of overcoming all hindrances as they arise. If the teachings of these skilful methods are not made available to the yogins of the future who wish to engage in the practice of secret mantras and to the royal patrons such as yourself who protect the Dharma, they will be overpowered by the obstructions of Māra. Therefore you must

451. B4, 191–3. The transmission of the doctrines in the human realm is known as Gang zag snyan khung brgyud tsul, “the ear-whispered tradition of mundane individuals”.

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earnestly apply yourself to these doctrines for the sake of your children and future generations."\(^\text{452}\)

Again the king asked him:

“Oh, mahācārya! In accordance with what you have said about the great importance to all beings of practising the path of Vajrakila, I pray that you will grant the blessings of the *Vajrakila-tantra* and full cycle of teachings for the benefit of people of the future.”

Padmasambhava replied:

“Just as you have requested, oh king. I, Padmasambhava, having collected together many weapons in the form of *kilas* have blessed them all through *sādhana* practice and hidden them as treasures for the future in a multitude of different places. In particular, in the country of Tibet I have had one hundred and eight iron *kilas* prepared by Tibetan blacksmiths, another one hundred and eight iron *kilas* crafted by the most excellent blacksmiths of Nepal, one hundred meditation *kilas* of acacia wood made by outcaste artisans amidst the terrible screams in the charnel grounds and one hundred *kilas* of black rosewood fashioned by Chinese craftsmen. Then, having absorbed myself in meditation at bSam-yas mchims-phu, the blue hermitage at Lho-brag, the tiger’s nest at sPa-gro, the lion’s fortress at ’Bum-thang, the crystal cave at Yar-lung, the great fortress of sGrags and at the white rock in gLo-bo, I blessed all of those places and hid important treasures within them. In particular I concealed three hundred consecrated *kilas* in the most important places: bSam-yas mchims-phu, the white rock mountain at mKhar-chen and at Zam-bu-lung in Shangs. Each one of those *kilas* is destined to be of benefit to future generations of your royal family and to all those people who are holders of the doctrines of secret *mantra*”. Thus he spoke.\(^\text{453}\)

The guru then added:

“During the final five hundred year period of the Buddha’s doctrines, future members of your royal line will be born in upper Mang-yul in the district of Gung-thang for whom many demonic obstructions will arise and, as a direct result of your dynasty being cut, a time of great trouble will come upon the people of Tibet. Therefore, in order to save that situation and rescue people from those troubles, there is a special treasure for the protection of the kings of Gung-thang. This has been hidden inside a mountain of rock that looks like a heap of poisonous snakes which is situated in the land of the black stone cairn to the north. Contained within this treasure there is a *kila* the

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452. A33, 232–3. At this point the original text discusses in detail the “absolute” and “relative” natures of the *kila* (233–6) along lines similar to those followed in our previous chapter. Omitted in B4.

453. B4, 194–5. At this point in A33, the king, disturbed to hear of his family’s future decline, requests knowledge of that period when the *kila* would be required and wishes to know how the *kila* will help. A33, 238.
Chapter Four

length of my handspan, forged of iron by the most skilful of Nepalese blacksmiths. It has been consecrated as a karmakila and so, merely by brandishing it in the air, all the mischief of enemies and obstructors will immediately be averted. The name of that kila is *Tribhuvanamāravānaya, ‘The Controller of Demons in the Three Worlds’, and its activity is such as to quell all demonic interferences. There is also a kila which has the blessings of Krodhamājaśri (Yamāntaka) which was carved by Chinese experts from black rosewood. It is eight of my finger-widths in length and is for use in meditation. The name of this kila is *Jvalanuttara, ‘Supreme Radiance’, and whoever continues to hold it will very quickly see the face of the deity Vajrakumāra. There is yet another kila in that treasure which was made by an Indian expert from five different kinds of iron. The length of it is five of my finger-widths and it goes by the name of *Pāttragālasurya, ‘The Sun(shine) of a Multitude of Sons’. Its activity is such that the family lineage of its owner will run for many generations.” So spoke the guru.454

According to the Gong khug ma (A27, etc.), three master craftsmen from the border regions, working together in ’Bum-thang (Bhutan), fashioned three boxes of black leather and four of maroon within which were placed eight sets of twenty-one kilas made from seven kinds of iron. Later, having spent three months practising the sādhana of Vajrakila in Seng-ge-rdzong, Padmasambhava is said to have included those boxes of kilas among the treasures secreted for the welfare of future generations in seven different places: the ‘places of virtue’455 and auspiciousness’ in ’Bum-thang, the lion’s fortress of Bhutan (Mon-kha Seng-ge-rdzong), the ‘place of the iron kila’ in Lho-brag, the tiger’s nest of sPa-gro, the white rock of mKhar-chen and Zang-zang lha-brag. In all, seventy-eight Vajrakila tantras, twenty-three sādhanas and three hundred and twenty-one upadeśas were hidden in those places together with eight nīsevanakilas, ten kilas for the attainments and one hundred kilas for striking. Having been sorted out into various groups they were hidden away in their separate locations.456

As for the particular treasure hidden away in Zang-zang lha-brag, this was stored in one of the maroon leather boxes secreted deep within a rock cavern of triangular shape like a wrathful homakunda on the eastern face of the mountain. It contained everything that a future king would need in general and, in particular, it contained the instructions known as Gong khug ma.457 “Of equal importance”, said Padmasambhava, “are the nīsevanakilas,

454. B4, 195–6. I suppose the three kilas mentioned here to be those found wrapped in maroon silk in the central compartment of the Byang-gter treasure chest. B4 hereafter cites no more of A33 which continues stressing the immense value of the Byang-gter to the royal lineage of Tibet.

455. “The Precious Place of Virtue” (Rin-chen dge-gnas) in Bum-thang is a temple in the village of Zung-nge in the Chu-smad valley. Regarding this and the other Bhutanese locations see M. Aris, Bhutan, 7 and passim.


457. See notes 78 & 331.
sādhanakīlaṣ and the karmakīlaṣ that I myself concealed within that treasure after having gained in full the signs of siddhi through my practice in the lion’s fortress.”

The Byang-gter cache is also said to have contained “the niṣevaṇakīla made of acacia wood that was used by the lady Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal in the rock cavern of Chu-bo-ri when she killed the seven demons of the extremities as they flew overhead in their magical transformations as crows.” Also, “the niṣevaṇakīla made from the thorny wood of king Ge-sar’s land of Khrom that had been used by rDo-rje bdud-’joms in putting a stop to the raging fire on the mountain at Has-po-ri”. Of particularly great importance, however, are said to be “the upadeṣaṣ for the protection of the king and subjects of Tibet during the future age of degeneration and strife”.

“As for the one who would be born in accordance with the predictions, having the empowerments and authorization to take out the heart of this treasure of Lha-brag, it was written in the prophetic treasure of Myang-ral: ‘Nearby the black rocks to the north of this place, the blessed incarnation of the wonderful deeds of rDo-rje bdud-’joms will arise to protect the kings of mNga’-ris.’ And also in the Svayambhūsvodaya-tantra: ‘The noble being, the tāntrika rDo-rje bdud-’joms, having fully taken to heart the three abhiṣekas, the three tantras and the three upadeṣaṣ will conceal them as treasure in front of the mountain called bKra-bzang which is to the north of the direction in which the sun sets from here. There they will rest upon a rock in the shape of a tortoise for a period of seven hundred years from now. Then, six hundred and twenty years after my departure from Tibet, there will come a yogin of good karma by the name of Rig-’dzin rgod-kyi ldem-’phru-can who will be like my own heart’s son. He has been fully entrusted with the profound empowerments of that treasure and he will engage it before he reaches twice twenty years of age.”

All of that, however, has been dealt with above in Chapter One. Having been born in fulfillment of these ‘prophecies’, then, the gter ston Rig-’dzin rgod-Idem unearthed the casket of Byang-gter treasures within which the texts concerning Vajrakīla were found principally in the compartments made of gold and iron, and, “having taken out the material kilas, he blessed them as deities”.

Our commentator then proceeds to narrate the way in which these sacred treasures came to be transmitted to the present day. In brief: the son of the gter ston was rNam-rgyal mgon-po and the writings on the scrolls of yellow paper that had been entrusted to him by his father were subsequently transmitted to the mantradhara rDo-rje mgon-po. From him they were passed on to Nga-dbang grags-pa and then to the incarnation of the gter ston’s son, Sangs-rgyas dpal-bzang, from whom they went to the great teacher of Se, Nam-mkha’ rgyal-mtshan. Thence to the Grang-so gter ston Śākya bzang-po from whom they were transmitted to bDud-’joms’ own incarnation Legs-ldan bdud-’joms rdo-rje. Next in

460. B4, 198.
line were 'the incarnation of the Dharma king Khri-sde', bKra-shis stobs-rgyal dbang-po'i sde, and Legs-l丹-rje's further incarnation, Rig-'dzin ngag gi dbang-po. Then came the incarnation of Gung-btsan called Rig-'dzin stobs-l丹 dpa'-bo followed by Zur-chen chos-dbyings rang-grol who was himself recognized as the incarnation of gNyags Jñānakumāra. He then transmitted the lineage to 'the omniscient lord of all Tibet', the fifth Dalai Lama, rDo-rje thog-med-rtsal whose own disciple, Rig-'dzin padma 'phrin-las, was considered to be the reincarnation of the original vulture-feathered gter ston. From him the line was passed to 'the most excellent incarnation of Khams', Rig-'dzin padma gsang-sngags, the teacher from gNyags.462

The doctrines of Vajrakila that were transmitted along this line, said originally to have come from India in the eighth century and to have been revealed as the Northern Treasures in 1366, are now to be looked at in Part Three.

PART THREE

THE NORTHERN TREASURES KĪLA
Chapter Five
The Byang-gter Vajrakīla Tantras

When Rig-'dzin rgod-ladem opened the casket of Northern Treasures he found within it only two small tantras relating to Vajrakīla.463 From the golden southern chamber of the casket he took out the Cittaguhākāya-tantra in ten chapters (A3, B10, C1), which opens with a description of Māra Kālarudra. This evil being is said to have arisen in the world during the period of darkness between the appearances of the Buddhas Dipākāra and Śākyamuni and to have become lord and master over all creatures. Because his reign was causing havoc throughout the three realms of living beings, the compassionate minds of all the Buddhas were moved to act due to the force of their former vows. From the heart of the supreme Buddha Samantabhādra in non-dual union with his consort arose the Buddha Vajrasattva and his spouse. While the heart of this non-dual Vajrasattva couple remained at peace within the dharmadhātu, their form arose as Mahāśrīvajraheruka and his consort Krodhesvari and from their union was born a son, Vajrarākṣasa, emanation of the heroic power of Vajrakumāra.

At that time, the Māra Kālarudra and his entire retinue of male and female rākṣasas, māras and arrogant ones were all destroyed. Their flesh was eaten, their blood was drunk and their bodies reduced to dust.464 Their consciousnesses were bound under oath and they were established as protectors of the Dharma.465

Then (Chapter Two), on the summit of Mount Meru which was the place of subjugation, the uncompromising intention (drag po'i dgongs pa) of all those Buddhas brought forth a son from the heart of Vajraheruka called Caṇḍavajrapāṇi466 who was praised as the Buddhas' representative and entrusted with the secret doctrines. From the mouth of the mother Trptacakra was emanated Krodhakāli467 and she was consecrated as his consort.

463. He is also supposed to have discovered the twenty-first chapter of the Kila Garland of Flames Tantra (A31, C13) which is discussed below, Chapter Eleven.
464. This is the basis of the fierce rites of slaying which seek to re-enact that primal deed. It is also remembered during the celebration of the community feasts which are dealt with below, Chapter Twelve.
466. The rNying-ma-pa regard this deity as a previous incarnation of Padmasambhava. The Byang-gter school in particular devotes an entire cycle of teachings to the guru in this form (Thugs sgrub drag po rtsal).
467. Another name for the well-known Vajravārāhi.
From the mother’s nose issued forth the consciousness of Māra Kālarudra and he was bound as a guardian of the teachings and blessed with the name Mahākāla.

Thus the scene is set and the lineage of the Vajrakīla doctrines established. The son Vajrapāṇi now begins to question his father the mahāśriheruka Vajrakumāra with regard to those doctrines.

The first instruction he receives is to carry the knowledge of the destruction of Rudra into the world after the coming teacher Śākyamuni has passed into parinirvāṇa. He is told to set up a series of eight teachings and to manifest eight teachers who will master those doctrines and practise them in the eight sacred places. These eight supreme and eight secondary emanations are to be produced from Vajrapāṇi’s Body, Speech, Mind, Good Qualities, Enlightened Activities, Ferocity (raudra), Manifestation (nirmita) and supreme Awareness (vidyā). The appearance of these manifestations in the world of Jambudvīpa is said to be Vajrapāṇi’s method of converting all beings to the doctrine of the secret Mantrayāna. His form as the ferocious Cāṇḍavajrapāṇi, totally free of all fear and apprehension, is the emanation of the heart of Vajrakumāra which subdues all that is to be subdued in the body. All that is to be subdued in the speech is to be controlled by the samādhi of fierce HŪM and by the repetition of HŪM, which is the miraculous power of the Speech of all Tathāgatas without exception. All that is to be subdued within the mind is tamed by the innermost essence of the Mind of Samantabhadra, which is shown to be naturally arising and spontaneously present.

For those who delight in emanation, the root mandala of heruka is shown. For those who possess mind and intelligence (blo dang mig ldan), the mahottara Vajrakumāra is shown. For those who delight in extreme brevity, the heart practice of the supreme son is shown. For the holders of the awareness of fierce mantras, thirteen upadeśas of attainment are shown. For those who delight in the practice of nādiś and prāna within the body, the method of Krodhakāli is taught and in order to protect the teachings the invocation of Mahākāla is shown.

These six topics then form the subject matter of the next five chapters of the tantra. First of all Vajrapāṇi asks for an explanation of the method through which one generates the herukamandala and Chapter Three is entirely devoted to answering this question.

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468. The aṣṭamahāśādhanas and the eight ācāryas who are said to have been the original disseminators of those doctrines are discussed above, Chapter Four.

469. The charnel grounds that arose in the eight directions marking the sites where Rudra’s scattered body fell.

470. According to STTS, VI, HŪM is the “vajra syllable” of Vajrapāṇi by means of which Rudra himself was first subdued.

471. This is a vague honourific title which, in the present instance, refers to Cāṇḍavajrapāṇi, the son of Vajrasattva. Elsewhere the term is generally used to denote either Vajrakīla himself (as the supreme son of heruka) or his own supreme sons who may be either the four known as Buddhakīla, Ratnakīla, Padmakīla and Karmakīla (Viśvakīla) or the twenty-one known as the seven supreme sons of the Body, seven of Speech and seven of Mind. We have also met with the term used to denote the three deities Amṛtakundalīn, Hayagrīva and either Yamāntaka or Mahābala.


473. Exactly what is meant by “the thirteen upadeśas of attainment” is unknown.
The yogin is instructed to retreat to an isolated forest grove in the mountains. There he should make offerings to the peaceful local spirits (bhūmipati) and generate the Great Kings (caturmahārāja) in the four directions around his chosen site. He should then draw the mandala, square and with four doors, by carefully laying down the lines and colours. A sanctified kīla (tshangs pa’i phur bu) is placed in the centre as the abode of the devatā, with a retinue of twenty-one triangles around it, and then all the lesser gods are established in their proper places.

The yogin then sets out the essential offerings of nectar, blood and sacrificial cake (sman rak gtor gsum) and, with his face turned towards the north, he should gradually absorb his mind into the samādhi of the rite, performing the activities in a state of non-agitation.

Four times per day the yogin should make offerings and recite the deity’s mantra. He should visualize himself in the form of the six-armed Vajrakīla, just as has been described above, and recite the mantra until this form is stable and clear. He should then recite it while meditating upon the sphere of the deity’s mind, after which he should abide in the state beyond conception. In that way, during the cycle of day and night, he performs the recitations in proper succession until six thousand million recitations have been completed. When success in the practice has been achieved the yogin will directly perceive the face of the deity, the ritual kilas in the mandala will jump up and dance around, and the offerings of blood and semen will come to the boil.

474. A general explanation of these techniques is to be found in my Mandala Meaning and Method.

475. Our text C32 explains the intention of this Vajrakīla mantra in terms of the enlightened perception of dharmatā. Thus OM is said to be the supreme of all foundations or primary causes (gzhi rtsa), the instigator of all Tathāgatas. It is the syllable that manifests all Jinas. It stands for the underlying reality (dharmatā) of nirvāṇa beyond suffering and the mind of enlightenment itself. By VAJRA is indicated the mudrā that seals the body, speech and mind of the countless sentient beings that arise from within the sphere which is not limited by either depth or circumference. Those beings are recognized as not abiding anywhere and this is the truth of the nirvāṇa of the enlightened mind. As the yogin recites KLIKILA, all beings are “liberated” by means of the rays of light that emanate from his body, speech and mind and yet they are not cut off within the truth of the nirvāṇa of enlightenment. YA indicates the great passion of the enlightened mind of dharmatā and the compassion that remains until both heaven and hell are emptied. In this way all beings are established in the non-abiding dharmatā of the enlightened mind. SARVA indicates the vast number of forms of living beings that arise from the sphere of the Mother on account of bodhicitta. They are known as non-abiding by the wisdom of the utterly pure enlightened mind. By means of the bodhicitta arising from the mouth of the Father, the enlightened mind manifests limitless skilful means as a cause for all births and this is signified by the word VIGHNA. In that way, by BAM, the enlightened mind of dharmatā beyond all sorrow is the non-dual union of wisdom and means. HOM is the enlightened mind of dharmatā beyond all suffering, the pure offspring of the five kulas, the spontaneously accomplished five kāyas that reach to the limit of the absolute. By PHAT, the spontaneously accomplished perfect activities that are achieved entirely without effort are the enlightened mind of the ultimate truth of nirvāṇa. The single-pointed kīla of such understanding is known as the svabhāva vehicle of the past and future. C32, 341, said to have been taken out as a treasure from the black iron cache in the north.

In Chapter Four, Vajrapāni is taught the method of meditating upon Mahottarakiśa, which is a practice to be engaged in by those who have gained the signs of success in the six-armed Vajrakilā outlined above.

Going to a terrifying spot where both sky and earth have ferocious forms, the **yogin** draws the complete **maṇḍala** adorned with courtyards, doors, gateways and so on, in the centre of which is the triangular abode of the deity with a half-moon at each of its three corners. He should close the boundaries to obstructing forces and implant the deity’s **niṣevanakīśa** in the centre, surrounded by the three **kīlas** of Body, Speech and Mind. The **kīla** of Body is to be implanted on the half-moon in the east, with those of the Speech and Mind on the moons to the south and north respectively. In the courtyards are placed twelve **kīlas** for the three red and black groups and the four **kīlas** of the activities are arranged in the four doorways. The threelfold offerings of nectar, blood and cake are set out together with the other fierce offerings and in the inner courtyard of the **maṇḍala** are placed four kinds of milk, black blood and melted butter.

When all is ready, in an instant of thought the **yogin** transforms himself into the supreme form of the deity with nine heads, eighteen hands and eight legs that trample the arrogant worldly gods. At his head, throat and heart he should imagine **jñānasattvas** like himself in form but white, red and blue respectively in colour. All should be seen as a unified appearance of clarity and emptiness (bhaṣvarāśūnyasambheda). Around him are the three supreme sons: the white Mahābala in the east, red Hayagrīva in the south and dark green Amṛtakuśalā in the north. The red and black **mAtr** in the courtyard are thought of as messengers that listen attentively to one’s orders and immediately carry them out. Four

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477. A36 (A48) describes three stages of **sīmābandha**. In the first (“outer”) stage, with himself clearly visualized as the deity Vajrakīśa, the **yogin** summons all the obstructors and misleaders and warns them to depart. He then recites the well-known **mantra** of four **HUMs** which is said to have great magical power, effective in all rites (SDPT, 76, 91–2). The “inner” boundary is closed by the daśakrodha kings who emanate from the heart of the **yogin** and immediately proceed to annihilate the ten non-virtues, thus closing the border to all impurities. The “secret” boundary consists of an awning of **kīlas** above, from which rain down **kīla** missiles, descending like thunderbolts, and a foundation of **kīlas** below, from which **kīlas** dart out, rising and falling like flames in a blazing fire. All around stands a latticework of **kīlas** from which more **kīlas** spark out like shooting stars. In this way the entire site is protected by an impassable barrier of violently active nails. The area, furthermore, is patrolled by an army of ferocious deities who kill all enemies and obstructors with a variety of weapons. A36, 254–5.

478. The term **dmar nag sde gsum** occurs frequently in the Byang-gter Kīla literature as a referent for the male (black) and female (red) protectors. In the present case, however, it clearly refers to the twelve females, Śvanmukha and the rest. Precedents are to be found in Indian literature where **kṛṣṇarakita** is taken to mean “delighting in darkness” and to refer to those who roam abroad at night (**rātrau caramināh**). Such a term (which could also be taken to mean “delighting in evil”) is entirely appropriate to this class of subjugated protectors but the play on word-meanings is not carried over in the literal Tibetan translation. Alexis Sanderson, “Evidence of the Textual Dependence of the Buddhist Yogānuttaratantras on the Tantric Śaiva Canon”, 24.

479. All the regular “peaceful” tantric offerings have their “wrathful” equivalents. Thus: **arghyā** and **pāḍyā** are bowls of blood, **puspa** is a flower-like arrangement of sense-organs, **dhūpa** is the stench of smouldering flesh, **dīpa** is a lamp with wick of human hair fed by human fat, **gandha** is bile, **naivedya** is a plate of human meat and **śabda** is provided by thigh-bone trumpets and skull drums.
The Byang-gter Vajrakila Tantras

wrathful goddesses stand as guardians in the gates. With the divine pride of himself as the deity, the yogin recites the various mantras of accomplishment while he sees himself standing between the sun and moon, encircling Mount Meru with his arms and trampling the great trichiliocosm (trisāhasra-mahāsāhasralokadhātu) beneath his feet. In a single gulp he drains the great ocean of existence.

The signs of success are that the yogin truly sees the maṇḍala deities and that they carry out his orders, either in reality, in visions or in dream. After that, by the recitation of the activity mantra, he will have the ability to summon people and wild animals from afar to act as his servants and the sacramental articles become empowered. His kīla will then truly slay demons as it is stabbed into an effigy made of parched barley flour.

When practising the rite in order to gain the supreme siddhi of Buddhahood, the yogin performs these activities in the guise of the deity himself. If, however, he simply desires to perform the fierce activities in an ordinary way, he should incite the three classes of red and black protectors to act.

Chapter Five explains the practice of Caṇḍavajrapāṇi, ‘the supreme heart son’ (thugs sras mchog), for which the external supports of a maṇḍala and ritual articles are not required. The yogin, remaining established in the unwavering bliss of spontaneous sāmādhi, is instructed to transform himself into the deity in a single instant of mindful awareness. The form of the deity is described in some detail in the text and it is said that his mind abides in a fearless equanimity of naturally arising ferocity. When his awareness moves from that state, then, like a thunderbolt falling from the centre of the sky, the yogin should build up a wall of sound by reciting the ferocious syllable HŪṂ.

A single HŪṂ is explained as the intentionality of dharmatā, two are said to include skilful means, three are the heart sound of the trikāya, four are the four immeasurables for the benefit of living beings, five symbolize the five jñānas, six possess the six letters, seven are speech with the melodies of Brahmā, eight are the harmonious sounds of the wrathful ones, nine bring the tribhava under control and ten grind to dust those who mislead the world.

These HŪṂS are to be imagined springing forth from the yogin’s body of divine pride like sparks from a fire, pervading the entire bhājanaloka so that all appearance is purified. The yogin should contemplate with clarity all phenomena as HŪṂ, bright like the stars and planets in the sky. One thousand million world systems reverberate with the sound of

480. Specifically, women (bud med) are mentioned.
481. Curiously, the deity named in the text is Caṇḍavajrapāṇi.
482. A3, 26–9.
483. Text B. A says they are the sound of Body, Speech and Mind.
484. The six syllables (sadaksara) are OM MANI PADME HŪṂ.
485. Seven kinds of harmonic pitch or musical tones (glu dbyangs kyi nges pa bdun) are listed in the Mahāvyutpatti.
486. The eight great deities of Mahāyogatantra.
487. Presumably the three realms are controlled throughout the three times in order to bring the total to nine?
488. The daśadikpālas.
489. Text B says that all appearances arise as the luminous clarity of the mind.

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HūM like the thundering roar of a turquoise dragon and he should abide in the sphere of awareness which is the union of clarity and emptiness, as if watching the sun rise brightly in the sky.

Without wavering from that samādhi, the yogin should recite the ten HŪMs either three, seven or twenty-one times. The signs of success for the yogin are that he becomes free of desire and loses all mundane attachments, the world appears as if filled with the light of the sun and moon rising simultaneously in the sky, the yogin’s own inherent wisdom shines forth in all its nakedness and whatever accomplishments he thinks of (‘the siddhis of the heart’) will be attained. 490

In Chapter Six, the sādhana of Vajravarahi is explained for the benefit of one who desires to experience the reality of voidness. Such a yogin should go to an extremely isolated place and meditate upon his body as having neither flesh, blood, bones nor internal organs. Like an illusion, it is a body made only of light and he should meditate upon it as being red, shining and clear. Then, on a sun disc situated below his navel, the yogin should visualize the body of Vārāhi arising from the syllable MA, red in colour and as small as a grain of mustard. She is said to be the embodiment of the yogin’s own inherent wisdom and thus he is supposed to generate an awareness of emptiness and form. 491

The seventh chapter of the tantra is devoted to an exposition of the sanguinary ‘wrathful’ rites to be carried out in an isolated and terrifying charnel ground on the edge of a precipitous ravine. There the yogin should build up a triangular mandala492 in three tiers, which he smears with the blood of vultures or wild beasts containing an admixture of powdered iron, copper and bell-metal. The mandala is then encircled by a series of twenty-one rāksāsī, small triangles made of poisonous wood.

An effigy is prepared, into which the consciousness of the enemy is to be summoned, and it is bound with green and red threads and placed in the centre of the mandala. Then, maintaining the samādhi of himself as the mahottaradeva, the yogin recites the mantra which summons the three groups of oath-bound protectors and puts them to work: OM VAJRAKĪLI KĪLAYA DHADDHI MAMA KARMA ŚRĪKRAMA KĀRAYE SARVA VIGHNĀN BĀM HŪM PHAT. After three thousand recitations, the oath-bound ones should really appear and then the yogin should perform the ritual of dragging forth the enemy.

This he does by imagining twenty-one ferocious beings493 to emanate from the depths of dark blue triangles,494 which themselves are thought of as having arisen from the syllable E. These violent gods are then imagined to truly drag forth the consciousness of the enemy to be subdued. Reciting NR and TRI as many times as necessary, the yogin adds VAJRĀNKUSĀ JAH at the end and it is by means of this wild mantra of five heroic syllables that the enemy is truly held captive in the effigy. This will certainly be achieved if the

491. This symbolic meditation thus aims to achieve a result identical in nature to that of the more prosaic Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya-sūtra. A3, 31–4.
492. B & C. A3 says it should be square.
493. Unnamed but most likely to be the twenty-one supreme sons of Vajrakila.
494. Presumably the previously laid out circle of twenty-one triangles.
mantras are recited for three whole days. The yogin slays (the living effigy) by saying “So-and-so TRIG NAN” and piercing the kīla into the centre of the skull. “So-and-so NYAGS THUM RIL” at the base of the neck. “HUR THUM rBAD” on the life vein. “NĀŠAYA rBAD” on the navel and “MĀRAYA rBAD” on the four limbs.495

Signs of success in the rite are (the appearances in a dream) of living beings dying of disease or being slain in a hunt, or the destruction of a town from fire or the yogin hearing the sound of laughter. (Following the arising of these signs) the effigy should be divided into three pieces,496 one of which is burned in a fire of poisonous wood, one of which is entrusted to the black nāgas and one of which is to be cast out and trampled underfoot.497 Finally the yogin should present offerings of thanksgiving to the dharma-pālas.498

Chapter Eight is very short and merely confirms that the demon Rudra, following his defeat by the Buddhas, was instructed in the doctrines of secret mantra and initiated as a powerful protector of the Vajrakīla teachings. He is worshipped as Legs-Idan-bdud (*Sadhumara, ‘the Good Demon’) by waving a black silk tassel and reciting his mantra, thus causing him to be present in the samaya article of shaggy yak’s blood.499 During the time of his invocation he should be generated in wrathful guise, wearing a long black gown and standing in the posture of a champion. During the time of the attainment of siddhi he is generated as one of great energy, like a king mounted upon a lion. When he is being summoned to carry out the magical deeds he is generated as a hero, mounted upon a tiger in the manner of a messenger. He is a deity through whom all activities may be realized. Due to the fact that in the ancient past this protector was once the direct adversary of Vajradhara himself, his sādhana is said to be very profound.500

The non-dual unity of the teacher and the doctrine is presented in Chapter Nine as the special characteristic (lakṣaṇa) of tantra. Mahāśrīvajrakumāra announces that he himself is the body of Vajrakīla and that this is the tantra of his mind (citta-tantra) which must be kept secret from those of no merit. Outwardly it is due to the existence of his body (called the kāya-tantra) that this secret tantra of his mind can exist. What it teaches as sādhana is the spontaneous self-arising of all the wrathful ones from the vajra HOMs (reverberating in his own heart). Because it is a doctrine of ferocious self arising, this Vajrakīla tantra is known as Svayambhūsvodaya.501

Chapter Ten is merely a brief colophon. It tells us that this secret tantra of the kilakāya was taught by the bhagavat to Vajrapāni for the purpose of subduing all those who are to

495. The text instructs the yogin to “dissolve the mantra” into those specified parts of the effigy.
496. Text B, in common with all recensions of the BRT and the sādhana A44 etc., says that a single effigy should be divided into three pieces but A & C say that three effigies are required.
497. These three activities are discussed below, Chapter Ten.
499. This means that a bowl of yak’s blood is to be placed upon the altar as the life support of the deity and he is imagined to be present within that.
501. A3, 36–7. Curiously, this appellation is the one given in the chronicle looked at, above, in Chapter Four dealing with the mythical origin of the tantra. What is strange is that the words quoted therein come not from this tantra but from that belonging to the black deity cycle (scrutinized below).
be converted. It names the special protector of the doctrine as Mahākāla and tells us that
he will subdue all enemies and obstructors who cause interference to this tantra, wherever
a copy of the text is to be found. By entrusting the doctrine to Mahākāla in this way, its
stability is ensured so that it may remain in the world for a long time to come. 502

The second tantra to be found in the three collections is the BRT (Śrīvajrakīlāapotri-
halā-tantra, sic). 503 This is said to have been discovered by Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem in the
black iron compartment in the northern section of the treasure chest. Its internal structure
is much better organized than that of the previous tantra and I take it to be a later
composition. The former text seems to me to be a very early Vajrakīla tantra indeed, or at
least to include primitive elements. 504 We have seen that it was delivered as a discourse by
the main deity to his interlocutor Caṇḍavajrapāṇi and this is the normal pattern in the
earliest texts for the pronouncement of both sūtras and tantras. The following tantra,
however, claims to have been ‘self proclaimed’ in a manner that is typical of the eighth
century texts followed by the rNyin-ma-pa school. That is to say, it was taught by the
lord of the mandala to a retinue of his own emanations and, instead of being taught in a
‘recognizable’ place 505 it was taught in the Akaniśtha heaven (here employed as a
synonym for dharmadhātu) that has neither centre nor circumference. In other words, its
locality is not to be located anywhere.

Furthermore, while the second tantra displays a clear and well established Vajrakīla
mandala, the first was abbreviated and vague. The retinue of twenty-one ferocious deities
found in the above tantra is rarely encountered in the extant Kila literature and the fierce
rituals taught therein, as shown above in Chapter Two, can be historically established as
forerunners of the deified nail.

Finally, the contents of the first tantra are not all of relevance to the cult of Vajrakīla.
The sādhanas of Vajrapāṇi and Vārāhi, for example, although still popular as
Anuttarayoga practices, no longer form a part of this cult. The teachings of the second
 tantra, on the other hand, are all of prime significance and this leads me to conclude that
the text was written down at a time when the cult doctrines themselves had already
become well-ordered and systematized.

The nidāna (Chapter One) of this second tantra describes a ferocious charnel ground
within which abides the mandala of deities having Mahāśrīvajrakumāra and his consort
Trptacakra in the centre. Around them are arranged the daśakrodha kings with their
consorts, the twenty pīśācīs who are their emanated messengers, the supreme sons who

503. A2, B31, C19. Page references will not be given among the notes for this text as the entire
tantra is to be found below as Appendix II to the present work.
504. According to this Mahottarakīla cycle, Rudra was subdued by Vajrapāṇi which accords with
the earlier teachings of the STTS etc. but is at variance with the later doctrines of Mahāyoga
in which the credit is given to Hayagriva. This cycle also maintains the early very close
association of Vajrakīla with Amṛtakunḍalin, an identity that was gradually resolved in the
later tantras such as the BRT where the two deities are separated entirely.
505. The summit of Mount Meru may be far away but in Buddhist cosmology it is still reckoned to
be a physical abode.
fully accomplish all \textit{karma},\footnote{I suppose the four Kilas of the activities to be meant here.} and the further emanations and countless tertiary emanations of which their retinue is comprised. All of these deities are said to abide there “in their natural state” and this is explained by likening them to reflected forms, like images in a mirror or the moon in water, which rest in the sphere of natural meaning without ever being covered by the stains of emotional afflictions. The teacher is said to be like a miraculous display in the sky, teaching the \textit{Dharma} of fierce \textit{mantras} without ever straying from this natural condition.

The second chapter emphasizes the importance of practising the \textit{sādhana} of unsurpassed enlightenment and the lord of the \textit{mandala} urges his retinue to arise from the profundity of their rapture in order to demonstrate it for the sake of those to be converted.

“This chief of families is the \textit{Vajrakula}. The light of wisdom is the destroyer of darkness which overcomes the afflictions of \textit{samsāra}. The Conqueror (Buddha) is the sole complete friend of sentient beings. For the sake of all beings the throne of the teacher must be magnificently displayed!” Thus he spoke.

In Chapter Three it is specified that the Akaniṣṭha palace within which these deities abide is really the \textit{dharmadhātu}, an association already made evident by the way in which it had been described but not one endorsed by earlier Buddhist teachings on cosmology.\footnote{Akanisṭha heaven is described in early \textit{Abhidharma} works as the most subtle (“highest”) of abodes within the \textit{rupadhātu}. The \textit{dharmadhātu}, on the other hand, is an all-encompassing concept that is beyond the defining limitations of any of the three “worldly” \textit{dhātus}. \textit{Yogatantra} texts cite Akanisṭha-ghanavyūha, here associated with the \textit{dharmadhātu}, as the site of Śākyamuni’s enlightenment.} The lord of the \textit{mandala} then arose there in bodily form. He is described as having three faces, six arms and four legs spread wide apart. His right face is white, the left red and his central face is blue. In his right hands he holds a nine-pronged \textit{vajra} and a five-pronged \textit{vajra}. In his left, a blazing mass of fire and a \textit{khañña\mathring{g}a}. With his final pair of hands he rolls a \textit{kila} and the sky is filled with his \textit{vajra} wings. His body is adorned with the articles of the charnel ground and he remains sporting in non-duality with his spouse.

\textbf{“HOM} Anger must be destroyed by means of \textit{vajra} wrath! Within a blue blazing circle of sharp weapons, the essential point arises from the centre of the sky. It enters the door of the life force and one should meditate upon it in the centre of the heart.”\footnote{This establishment of the \textit{mahābindu} within the yogin’s heart is highly reminiscent of Hindu teachings concerning the \textit{puruṣa} or “inner man”. The \textit{Śāradātilaka}, XXV, 58, says that the \textit{puruṣa} residing in the heart is pure consciousness (\textit{caitanyamātra}) and that it abides upon a sun disc (\textit{ravima\mathring{n}dalaśtha}) as “the primordial seed” (\textit{ādībīja = mahābindu} in Buddhist terminology). Other texts indicate the \textit{puruṣa} as all-pervading like the sky and composed of radiant light. B. Baumer, “\textit{Puruṣa}” in K. Vatsyayan, ed., \textit{Kalīśattvakosa}, 23-40. The \textit{Vāstuśūtra-Upanisad}, IV, 1, describes this inner man as standing “like the post of a \textit{yūpa}” (\textit{yūpasya daṇḍa iva}) which, as noted above, may be identified with our \textit{kila}. The \textit{Brahma-samhitā}, V, 3, places a \textit{vajrakila} in the heart as the \textit{mahāyantra} (“great device”) which is the only non-Buddhist reference to a \textit{vajrakila} that I have encountered. That great device, situated in the pericarp of a lotus in the heart, is surrounded by a protective circle of ten spikes (\textit{sūla}) situated in the ten directions and thus corresponds to the teachings given here.} Thus he spoke.
This same verse opens the VKMK. It also occurs in Chapter Seven of the Phur pa bcu gnyis and elsewhere, thus confirming my thesis that this tantra was compiled at a time when the doctrines of Vajrkila had already become fully formulated. Furthermore, these words are said to have been spoken by the nine-headed scorpion when he taught the Vajrkila tantra in the Sitavana charnel ground, as recounted in our text B13.

The etymology of the epithet 'supreme son' (this time applied to Vajrkila as the supreme son of all Tathāgatas) is then explained: the word 'son' being said to mean that he comes without birth from the dharmatā and 'supreme' that he is the spontaneous fulfilment of enlightened activity. He is the son of all the Buddhas in order to destroy Rudra, where 'son' means the unborn vajra son.

The dasakrodha couples and all of the messengers are then described as having dark blue ferocious forms. They have single faces and roll kilas in their two hands. The lower halves of their bodies are sharp-pointed, three-edged nails. They have vajra wings and (are adorned with) the artifacts of charnel grounds. With cries of “Hūṃ!” and “Phaṭ!” they terrify the world and subjugate all vicious beings without exception.

Now follows the second verse of the VKMK:

“HŪṃ The sacred oaths of killing by compassion and never to harm or oppress are gathered together in the form of a vajra and one should meditate upon it as the vajra of the mind.”

The next three verses (with minor variations in wording) are also to be found in the VKMK, but the order of the first and second verses is reversed in the Peking edition:

“HŪṃ. Meditating upon oneself as the wisdom embodiment of all the Buddhas, one should arise in the unbearable form of blazing wrath that emanates from the essential nature of the vajradharmadhātu.

HŪṃ. All those who hold the awareness of Vajrakumāra must bring into effect the universal vajra. The deities of the bhavakīla must fulfil wisdom’s wrath!

HŪṃ. Empowerments and blessings must be bestowed in this place so that the activities of Buddhahood may be fulfilled and, through the practice of skilful means for the sake of sentient beings, they may be disciplined by means of love and compassion.”

The VKMK then calls forth all the deities of the mandala by means of their individual mantras before continuing with the following six-line verse of general invocation which, in our tantra, follows immediately:

of the Vajrkila mandala in the heart. That this is the intended meaning here is made explicit in the abhiṣeka text outlined in the following chapter of the present work. See also below, note 518.

510. This line in the VKMK reads: phung po rdo rje'i bdag nyid de.
511. The VKMK reads 'khor ba rdo rje instead of srid pa'i rdo rje throughout.
512. This verse occurs many times in the various Vajrkila texts at our disposal, usually with the phrase given here (thabs kyi spyad pas) but sometimes reading thugs spyod pas (“through the heart practice”).
“HOM. In order that the empowerments, realizations (siddhi) and successful accomplishment of the universal kila may be attained, you deities of wisdom wrath must please come here! When the gods of great wrath have arrived, the signs and symbols of success must be shown and the siddhi of the Kila be bestowed!”

As this is said, the exceedingly ferocious ones are imagined to come forth from the depths of the charnel ground and to pulverize all the enemies and obstructors in the ten directions.

Then, in Chapter Four, all the arrogant worldly demons who have become terrified at the wrathful might of the heruka Buddhas, together with the mātris who have developed power through wisdom, speak to the mandala deities and offer their essential life force, pledging themselves to act as servants. Having taken the pledge, they are then given a stern warning by the lord of the mandala never to transgress their oaths. These words of warning are found in the VKMK immediately after they are summoned to take their places around the periphery of the mandala. Our tantra, however, explains the reason for their invitation by telling of the occasion on which they originally took their oaths.

“Whichever evil being shall transgress these secret vajra oaths shall have his skull drawn out in one hundred splinters by the mahāherukas of great power. Listen here, you hosts of trouble-makers and misleaders, do not deviate from my instructions!”

The conversation then continues with the frightened worldly gods submitting fully to the authority of the mandala deities and affirming the sincerity of their pledge. They seek refuge in the compassionate deities of the mandala and offer their help in the fulfilment of all desired activities.

In Chapter Five these oath-bound ones are taken at their word and put to work. The pattern of calling their names in order to invoke their presence is almost identical to the pattern found in the VKMK:

“HOM. The time has come for the mahāsamaya! The time has come for the great emanation! The time of the mighty messengers has come! The time has come for the Śvanmukhā (sisters)! The time of the Mahātmādevīs has come! The time has come for the great Bhūnipatis! The time to fulfil your sacred oaths has come! The time has come to bring forth your powerful skill!”

They are then ordered to catch, beat and securely bind all those hindering demons who interrupt the attainment of siddhi. They are told to identify the interrupters by their

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513. They are summoned by means of the mantras that they originally offered as their “essential life forces”. The holder of these “life forces”, the one who knows their mantras, can then summon these oath bound ones at will.

514. This name is translated into Tibetan in the VKMK.

515. Line omitted here in the VKMK but inserted much further on, at the end of the section, in slightly different wording.

516. The VKMK reads: “The time to liberate has come!”
vicious, angry minds and not to confuse them with friends. Finally they are instructed to pull them in forthwith, cast them down and drive them mad (or make them silent) so that they become utterly subdued. The deity Vajrakīla then turns his attention to the captives brought in by his speedy messengers and warns them to pay careful heed to his admonitions.

All of this has its parallel in the VKMK where the same sentiments are found but expressed in different words. With the closing verses of this chapter, however, we return to a more exact correspondence:

"HUM All you vicious ones with angry minds, whether you be gods or demons, any that obstruct me must be deprived of their magic power and witchcraft. You must be thrashed! Such is the diligence of the blazing vajra.

All evil ones who transgress my orders will have their hearts burnt up on the pinnacle of vajra fire. Your body and speech will be reduced to ashes for, in the blazing mortars of the wrathful mothers, when pounded by the vajra hammers even the gods are destroyed!"

And that brings us to the close of Chapter Five. In Chapter Six the method of becoming one with the deity (āsevita) is shown. Arranging the ritual bali in an isolated place, the yogin should clearly visualize himself in the form of the great glorious deity. In his heart he should imagine the jñānasattva, unadorned and similar in appearance to the main deity, and he should meditate upon him as being the size of his thumb tip. In his heart is his emblem, a nine-pronged vajra, the size of a grain of barley. In the centre of that is a blue syllable HŪM, the symbol of speech, as fine as if drawn by a single hair. Around the outside of that revolves the Kila mantra, golden in colour and extremely fine.

When the yogin has perfected that visualization within his heart, he should imagine rays of light spreading out from the mantra, pervading the whole trichiliocosm and filling it with radiance. By that light the vicious beings of the three realms are subdued. The mantra itself should be recited thirty million times in the state of clarity and emptiness, until the signs of success have arisen.

Now, in Chapters Seven and Eight, the method of propitiating the deity is shown in a manner that is almost identical to the fierce rite described in Chapter Seven of the Cittaguyakāya-tantra above. Whereas, however, the former tantra described those whose task it is to drag forth the enemies and obstructors as a series of twenty-one ferocious beings radiating from dark blue triangles, the present text says that these ferocious helpers are innumerable. Also, while the above tantra instructs the yogin to place various syllables of the ‘destructive activity mantra’ upon the four main cakras

517. The yogin’s task is to recognize his own emotional defilements as the true enemy and not follow them as if they were his friends.

518. This description of the jñānasattva corresponds to the description in the Upaniṣads of the purusa or inner spirit of man. The Kathopanisad, IV, 13, says aṅgusṭhamātrah puruso jyotir ivā-dhumakah; “(Shining) like a light without smoke, the purusa is the size of one’s thumb tip.” See also note 508, above.

519. The DHADDHI mantra.
and the four limbs of the effigy to be destroyed, the present tantra gives no such instructions and the mantra itself is much longer. Finally, the present tantra naturally enough does not instruct the yogin to visualize himself in the eighteen-armed mahottara form of the deity whilst engaged in the rite.

Following that, Chapter Nine teaches meditational equipoise (samāhitasamādhi), clearly emphasizing the essentially compassionate nature of the wrathful rites. In order to subjugate the vicious beings of the three realms, it explains the special activity of samādhi to be the arising of the enlightened mind from the unmistaken and uncontrived dharmatā with the speed of a dreadful flashing thunderbolt. This is the bodhicittakīla which is fully accomplished in controlling the triadhātuka and it is called ‘The Killer of the Three Realms Without Exception’. Having ground the bodies of the demons down to mincemeat, the yogin should imagine the triple world filled with flesh and blood. This is the secret requisite, the vital juice of the oral commentaries that slays the lustful ones by means of compassion. In a single moment of enlightenment exists nirvāṇa beyond comprehension, nirvāṇa that transcends the world. This enlightened mind that cuts through doubt is the unchanging bodhicitta. Free of sin it is perfectly liberated, free of exertion it is spontaneously fulfilled.

The exegesis of the wrathful rites in terms of an inner meditative experience which does not contradict the essential tenets of Buddhadharma is continued in Chapter Ten where the samādhi of secret mantras is explained under four headings. The first thing to be shown is the non-dual mind of enlightenment. Secondly, the various awarenesses (vidyā) are taught. Third is the intentionality of violent mantra recitation, and fourthly, body, speech and mind are explained.

(1) Upon the production of a thought one should meditate upon it as the utter purity within the very nature of perfect purity and, in this way, if a pure thought arises great happiness is attained. If the mantra is recited many times, anything can be attained and if the samaya vows are protected, the siddhi will quickly result.

(2) Employing the bodhicittakīla the yogin should penetrate perfect knowledge for his own benefit. Then, for the benefit of others, he should destroy the ignorance of all sentient beings in the triadhātuka without exception by means of Vajrakīla.

(3) For the sake of beings who are lacking in awareness, the skilful yogin should bring about the results of pacification (śāntika), increasing prosperity (pauṣṭika), overpowering (vaśya) and destroying (abhicāra), as required, by means of the appropriate rites.

(4) To the mind of enlightenment, oneself as well as all gods and demons are free of both birth and death. Cutting the vital breath of the afflictions, death is cast aside and one’s span of life is prolonged. (We shall have occasion to return to these four overarching themes during the course of our continuing study of Northern Treasures Vajrakīla literature.)

This chapter then continues with a religious etymology of the word ‘kīla’, as outlined above in our Chapter Three:

“Kī” means that all and everything is the mind of enlightenment.

“La” means that the enlightened mind pervades all things.
And so on ... These are indications of the nature of the deity and therefore, it is said, it is exceedingly important for the yogin to engage himself in the praxis of Vajrakīla.

Chapter Eleven is really just a colophon. Within it we learn that this “supremely secret blazing Black Razor Tantra” is taught by all Sugatas of the three times and ten directions within the unborn sphere of the dharmatā in order to slay those sentient beings with perverse views. It is to be entrusted in its entirety to one whose thoughts have been purified, who has sharp (penetrating) wisdom, is diligent in perseverance, who has attained a realization of the Mahāyāna, who possesses an excellent mind and is of good karma. Finally, we are told, this tantra is protected by the (unspecified) oath-bound dharmapālas.

Thus we see that this particular tantra exhibits a very clear and well ordered structure. The mandala of deities is clearly defined at the beginning and then the rites associated with those deities are set out in a logical manner. We are reminded, however, that such appearances and activities are no more than the illusory play of compassionate wisdom that arise merely in order to counteract delusion. The ultimate nature of the entire ‘wrathful’ manifestation, then, is actually not other than the blissful peace of nirvāṇa. In subsequent chapters we shall see how the fundamental teachings of these two tantras form the basis for the entire cycle of Vajrakila texts at our disposal.
In his general introduction to the Byang-gter Kīla cycle (B4), 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms mentions five topics to be discussed with regard to empowerment: 1) The characteristics of the ācārya who is to bestow the empowerment, 2) The nature of the disciple who is to receive it, 3) The benefits to be derived from the bestowal of empowerment, 4) The disadvantages of not being initiated and 5) The reason why it is necessary.

He then deals with each of these topics in turn by citing pertinent passages from various Mahāyoga tantras to be found in the NGB and elsewhere. Thus, with regard to the characteristics of the ācārya who is to bestow the empowerment, he quotes a verse from the Māyājāla-tantra (NGB 222) thus:

“The teacher (is like) a copious river
abundant with treasure.
Having heard all the oral commentaries
And being skilled in the performance of ritual
he keeps warm the vital secrets.
Upon a yōgin of such ability
(The disciple) should wholeheartedly rely.”

As for the nature of the disciples who are to be initiated, they are described in the same tantra as being:

“Fully purified through the trainings
of listening, contemplation and absorption.
Those who have acquired the wisdom eye
are said to be acceptable recipients,
Having dedicated completely
themselves and all they possess.”

The benefits to be derived from the empowerment itself are described in the dBang rin po che’i rgyud (unidentified) as follows:

“If the complete ritual of empowerment is bestowed
in proper stages in accordance with tradition,
In this very life one will become the equal
of the mighty Vajradhara.”
The disadvantages of not being initiated are described in the Guhyagarbha-tantra X.8 (NGB 190):

"Failing to satisfy the teacher and
so failing to receive the empowerments,
Even though one studies hard with diligence
no result will arise and destruction will come."

And also, in the rDzogs pa rang 'byung (unidentified) it is said:

"Lacking the support of empowerment in secret mantras
no siddhi will ever arise.
Just as one cannot prevent wild unmarked sheep
from escaping across the river."

And why is empowerment necessary? As it says in the Nyi ma 'khor lo'i rgyud (unidentified):

"Just as on a good field of fertile land
that has not been carefully cultivated
No harvest will grow to mature. Just so,
on (the fertile ground of) dharmatā
without the ripening empowerments,
How will the siddhi of yoga arise?"520

We have already noted above that the Northern Treasures Vajrakīla teachings include rites pertaining both to a black deity (mantrabhīru and kṣura cycles) and a multicoloured deity (the mahottara cycle). According to 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms,521 these various systems were united into one by Rig-'dzin padma 'phrin-las whose method of empowerment within a single maṇḍala subsequently became the standard for this school. Padma 'phrin-las' own seventy-folio text is to be found in collection B immediately following 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms' introduction to it but is included in neither A nor C. 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms' slightly shorter reworking of that text, dated 1766, is found as C40. With regard to the original gter ma material that is of primary concern to us here, however, there are two important texts included alike in all three collections and these deal with the black and multicoloured deities separately.

From the golden southern section of the treasure cache, Rig-'dzin rgod-ladem is said to have taken out the Che mchog gi dbang chu (A8, B12, C5) pertaining to the ‘water consecrations’ (udakābhīṣekā) of the eighteen-armed mahottara form of the deity. These rites, said to have arisen spontaneously, "were written down for the benefit of vidyādhāras on the path of secret mantra in order that their inner strength (ātman) may become fully developed and to enable them to bestow the blessings of the empowerments on others". Although this ritual is designed to bestow the consecrations of the Mahottarakīla cycle, the internal structure of its contents conforms to the paradigm of the BRT and VKMK and it includes in its liturgy many verses from those two texts. This is surprising because those texts belong to the kṣura cycle of the black deity and thus we have, once again, an

521. B4, 203.
overlapping of the traditions for which it is difficult to account. It is possible that the
different iconic forms of the deity were not originally associated with distinct bodies of
religious doctrine or it may be that the separate traditions of Vajrakīla were conflated long
ago, either in India or Tibet.

Other than the fact that it seems to quote from texts of the wrong tradition, however, the
general scheme of the rite is perfectly logical in its methodology. It utilizes the root tantra
as a basic framework for generating the outer and inner manḍala of the deity and, as the
ritual proceeds, the guru explains to the neophyte the significance of the various
meditations involved. In this way the neophyte is ‘initiated’ and, by the blessings of his
teacher, ‘empowered’ to perform those meditations on his own. Subsequent to his
empowerment the disciple is expected to devote his time and energy to mastering
meditation on the Vajrakīla manḍala in order to achieve the bhavakīla for the benefit of
all living beings. He commits himself to maintain the tantric vows in general and to enter
a covenant (samaya) with the major and minor deities associated with the Vajrakīla
doctrines. In short, he becomes responsible for maintaining the purity of the Vajrakīla
lineage and for its enrichment.

Of the three redactions at our disposal, B is most helpful thanks to the inclusion within it
of interlinear notes at various points (A also includes a few notes towards the end of the
text) and C is particularly corrupt with several lacunae and a wealth of misreadings.

As for the rite itself, the text begins by stating that one within whom great love and
compassion have been born and who possesses a knowledge of the weapons that protect
against harmful enemies and obstructors, should gather up ‘the three essential articles’ for
the practice of the bhavakīla and go to an auspicious and isolated place of ritual power
gnas chen). Taking all the ingredients for the medicine that conquers disease and
generous quantities of offering articles, the vajra master should carefully perform the
rites of purifying the chosen site. Having received permission for the manḍala from the
local bhūmipati and having presented a bali offering to unfriendly trouble-makers, the
master should then take possession of the site and mark out its boundaries by placing piles
of stones in the four corners (tho bzhi brtṣigs). He then performs the ritual that protects the
site in exactly the same way as it was performed above. The master now lays out the
great blue-black manḍala, in the centre of which is placed a drawing of the demon Rudra.
This effigy is to be transfixed with a spike that is meditated upon as being the actual deity
Vajrakīla himself.

While the manḍala is being drawn, with a ferocious voice the vajrācārya should recite
words (partly culled from the tantras noted above) to the effect that: “Having given birth
to the supreme mind of enlightenment, we vidyādhāras are the representatives of the
Buddhas of the three times and now, for the sake of perfecting the bhavakīla, we
contemplate that a shining bindu arises in the centre of the sky and enters the door of life

522. I suppose these to be the sman rak gtor gsum.
523. Text A says: "articles that support life".
524. See above, Chapter Five, where the sīmābandha rite is given in note 477.
525. A8, 68.
in our hearts.” Thus the drawing of the mandala is undertaken by the ācārya whose mind is absorbed in the ferocious samādhi of the blazing great blue weapon in his heart.

As the ācārya mutters OM LAM HŪM LAM STAMBHAYA NAN VAJRASTAMBHAYA NAN KATHAM, from the twenty-one fierce gods in union⁵²⁶ radiate rays of light of the five wisdoms⁵²⁷ that melt into the world and into the hearts of all sentient beings so that all phenomena, both animate and inanimate, are blessed as wisdom.⁵²⁸

Then, on a piece of cloth taken from a corpse in the cemetery, the ācārya should draw the arrogant figure of Rudra and, separating him from the gods who would assist him,⁵²⁹ he summons the consciousness of that demon and causes it to dwell within the drawing. That drawing is then placed in the very centre of the mandala and around it are arranged four stones (or skulls) which are visualized as four Buddhas. The Buddhas are invited to abide in those stones and they are presented with offerings and so on. Then, in a powerful voice, the ācārya warns all who would attempt to obstruct the work of the vidyādhara within whom has been born the mind of supreme enlightenment that they are about to be rendered powerless even if they be gods, let alone demons. OM VAJRAKĪLĪ KĪLAYA SARVA ANAYA HŪM.⁵³⁰

Then the body of that proud Rudra should be slain by means of the fierce ritual. On the place of consciousness (the heart), which should be marked on the drawing with a syllable HŪM, the ācārya stabs the nail at the very junction of good and evil (dkar nag mithams su). During the performance of that action he should contemplate the truth of dharmatā and the power of Buddhahood for it is the very essence of the wrathful rite. Muttering, “Now is the time for the great act of sorcery (abhicāra),” the ācārya abides in the sphere of the dharmakīya, free of mental fictions.

As the external (symbolic) mandala is being drawn upon the ground the ācārya is instructed to open his heart and guard the door of his life by placing upon it the seed-syllable of Hayagrīva. This is said to be the true meaning of the words found in the Vajrakīla Svayambhū-mūlatantra:⁵³¹ “One should meditate upon it arising in the portal of life (srog gi sgo ru shar) and being present in the door of the heart (snying gi sgo ru).” Thus the ācārya meditates upon the eight-petalled cakra of his heart, which is the naturally present mandala, as he draws upon the ground the eight-petalled lotus of the symbolic mandala for the empowerment. Contemplating this drawn mandala as composed

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⁵²⁶. It would seem logical to associate this figure with the twenty-one supreme sons of body, speech and mind but the text makes it clear below that the reference is to the central yuganaddha deity (counted as one) and his retinue of ten yuganaddha wrathful kings (counted as twenty).

⁵²⁷. Blue, white, yellow, red and green.

⁵²⁸. The bhājanaloka is transformed by this blessing into the wisdom “mandala of residence” and the sattvaloka into the wisdom deities.

⁵²⁹. See below, Chapter Nine.

⁵³⁰. A8, 69-70.

⁵³¹. Our text A3, within which, however, the quoted words (from a verse found in several Vajrakīla tantras, including the BRT) are not to be found. See above, Chapter Five, and below, Appendix II.
of the five nectars and so on,\textsuperscript{532} the ācārya should bless the lines and colours as they are put down with melodious prayers. Having sprinkled (the earth) with blood from the heart (citta khrag, sic),\textsuperscript{533} the four shining lines (of the maṇḍala border) are marked in place.

Then the deity Hayagrīva is generated in the centre, surrounded in the primary directions by his retinue of four wives (gsang yum). HAYAGRĪVA HULU HULU GRHNA GRHNA HŪM PHAT. In the four intermediate directions, from the syllables KĀṬANKATE, are generated the goddesses of the earth\textsuperscript{534} riding upon yellow sows. Inviting the deities to abide within the maṇḍala, the ācārya should present them with offerings. They are then reminded of the former occasion when the bodies of those who obstructed the Dharma were ground to dust and of the promises that they themselves made at that time. The protectors are instructed to listen carefully to the orders of the present vajra master and faithfully carry out their duties of rendering his enemies powerless. When these orders have been successfully accomplished, the ācārya should present the deities with a further series of offerings.

Following that, a skull and a vase are purified with the smoke of black frankincense (gugguladhūpa) and a sprinkling of nectar. They are both then filled with ‘ambrosial water’, the essential nature of which is blessed as wisdom by the recitation of the mantra of Amṛṭakūṭalin, and the skull is placed on top of the vase. Muttering BHŪM, the vase and skull are transformed into the maṇḍala palace of the gods and, by reciting the mantras of the deities over seeds of white mustard, each grain is transformed into a deity and these are poured into the vase. In this way the ācārya fills the palace with its divine residents, generating all the wrathful gods down to the four goddesses who guard the gates.\textsuperscript{535}

A drawing of the maṇḍala with all of these gods is then to be placed over the top of the skull and sealed with a symbolic blazing vajra. The neck of the vase should be tied with rags from the charnel ground and, as the ācārya recites ŚIKRIN VIKRIN HŪM, a twig from a cemetery tree should be inserted into its mouth. The vase should then be entwined with intestines.

Following that, the vajrācārya holds the vase aloft in his hand and, loudly beating on the great drum, he calls the deities to be present in order to bestow the empowerments upon his disciples and to bless them. They are then offered the five kinds of spontaneously arising nectars, the sacrificial cake possessing six varieties of taste and the flesh, blood and bones of the liberated enemies and obstructors.\textsuperscript{536} The purificatory mantra of one

\textsuperscript{532} The nectars (semen, blood, excrement, urine and flesh) stand for the five “naturally arising” Buddhas within the physical body. Meditating in this way, the ācārya harmonizes the outer maṇḍala that he draws upon the earth with the inner maṇḍala spontaneously present in his heart.

\textsuperscript{533} Replacing the perfumed water employed for sprinkling the earth when the peaceful maṇḍala is to be drawn.

\textsuperscript{534} Called here bse yi lha mo. See above, Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{535} A8, 70–2.

\textsuperscript{536} These offerings stand for the five skandhas, the six spheres of sensory experience and the three primary klesas respectively, all of which are henceforth to be recognized by the initiate in their own true nature and dedicated for the sake of all sentient beings to the wrathful maṇḍala of Vajrakila deities. Further details regarding the nature of these offering articles are to be found below, Chapter Twelve.
hundred syllables (the mantra of Vajrasattva) is then recited, after which the deities are once again urged to be present in the vase. The words to be recited at this juncture have already been noted above as occurring in both the VKMK and the BRT: “HŪM. Empowerments and blessings must be bestowed in this place ...” etc. and as they are recited now, the deities melt into the centre of the vase. In that way the preliminary rites establishing the mandala of deities within the vase are completed and this is immediately followed by the establishment of the deities within the body of the disciple.

This section begins with a verse in which the krodharāja Hūmkāra together with his consort sGra-byin and their assistant emanations with the heads of a pig and a lizard are invited to be present in order to bestow blessings and empowerments upon the assembled disciples who are to be the Kila vidyādharas of the future. These four deities are all urged to perform the great deeds of skilful means for the sake of the world. The text then instructs the reader to repeat the verse ten times, changing just the names of the deities, so that all the gods of the mandala may be summoned from the ten directions in their groups of four. The deities are then established within the body of the disciple as he is purified with nectar. As the vajrācārya pours water from the vase (on to the head of the disciple), the disciple salutes both his master and the deities of the mandala and makes this plea:

“HŪM. Gods of the Universal kila! Please turn your minds of supreme enlightenment towards us vidyādharas who must act as representatives for the Buddhas of the three times.”

In that way the disciple takes refuge in the deities and binds himself under oath. The acārya then enters the samādhi of Amṛtakundalin and recites his mantra whilst tying a protective cord as an amulet around the disciple’s left arm. (This ritually purifies all the defilements of the disciple’s body. The purification of his speech and mind then follow.) As the disciple takes refuge in the deities, he makes a vow to adhere firmly to the mind of enlightenment and then, meditating upon the fierce king Hayagriva, he purifies all the defilements of his speech and promises never to commit them again. Finally, sipping a little of the sacred nectar water and meditating upon the deity Aparājita, he purifies all the past defilements of his mind. In that way the rites for the preparation of the disciple are completed and there now follows the ritual of the mandala which is the main part of the empowerment ceremony, likened in the text to “a storehouse of precious jewels”.

At first the sādhana which calls forth the deities should be performed (see next chapter) until the signs of success have arisen and then the stages of empowerment should proceed, beginning with a nectar water ablation. The disciple should be blindfolded with red cloth and the guru should ask:  

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537. A8, 72–3.
538. Line missing in both B & C.
539. A8, 73–4. There is often a break at this point, the adhivasana ceremonies being performed on the evening of the first day and the main empowerment rituals throughout the following day, determined to some extent by the nature of the disciple’s dreams during the intervening night.
540. There are large gaps in the text of C during this conversation between guru and disciple.
“Oh, fortunate son of a noble family. You who wish to enter the door of the mandala of profound empowerment, how much faith and diligence do you possess? How much wealth and merit do you have as gifts to offer?”

To which the disciple replies:

“In order to stand close to the vajra master I offer this, my body, and even my very life. As a fee for the empowerment I offer all my wealth and merit.”

The next section concerns the oath-water. As the master stirs the nectar (in the skull) with a vajra he says:

“May your life force and body remain firm! HŪM. Now is the time to take the great vow! From today onwards you are the son of myself, Vajrapāni, and you must do just exactly as I say in every detail. You must never act disrespectfully towards me for if you should ever abuse me then the elements of your life will decay and you will fall into the vajra hell. Oh, fortunate son of a noble family, if you guard well these vows and do not abandon your guru or the gods of the mandala or your vajra brothers and sisters, if you do not sever the continuity of the mantra and mudrā and do not disclose the secrets to outsiders, then, if you are able to maintain your root vows of body, speech and mind this water of sacred oaths will definitely cause you to become Vajrasattva himself.”

And as the vajrācārya recites the mantra of Amṛtakundalin he places some of the nectar upon the tongue of the disciple. Then the mandala deities are caused to descend into the heart with the words: “HŪM. Anger must be destroyed by means of vajra wrath!”, and so on (noted above as occuring within both the BRT and the VKMK). The guru should explain the importance of this to his disciple by saying:

“Oh, son of good family. Due to this absorption of the jñānasattva within your heart, you will at all times remain in the state of unshakeable samādhi.”

The guru then opens the eastern door of the mandala and, standing within it, he prays to all those who maintain the awareness of Vajrakumāra to reveal the universe as the ferocious wisdom mandala of Vajrakīla, thereby manifesting the Universal kilā. He summons the actual visible form of unbearable blazing wrath, the deity Vajrakīla who is the embodiment of the wisdom of all the Buddhas, to arise from the dharmadhiitu. Then from the body, speech and mind of the guru and devatā, fierce rays of light shine out

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541. Varuṇa, the god of water whose name is etymologically linked to the word vrata (vow, solemn oath), is represented in the Rgveda as the deity whose function is to preside over such oaths. He separates truth from falsehood and watches over all oaths and promises (traditionally solemnized with water), protecting and rewarding the faithful and punishing the perfidious (often by infecting them with the watery disease, dropsy). Paul Thieme, “King Varuṇa”, German Scholars on India, 1, Varanasi, 1973, 333–49.

542. To see all appearances as the mandala, to hear all sounds as mantra and to recognize all thoughts as the play of divine wisdom.


544. The guru meditates upon himself as the devatā at this point.
which burn up the residual karmic body of the disciple, causing the consciousness abiding within it to melt down and flow out like pure liquid gold. The disciple is instructed to imagine that the pure liquid of his consciousness is absorbed into the heart of the guru from where it descends to the guru's vajra. It is then ejected into the womb of the guru's consort so that he may be reborn from there as a true son of the Buddha. Completing the stages of entry in that way, the disciple is born into the mandala and he should imagine himself in the form of an eight-year old youth. 545

Now, inside the mandala, he receives the consecrations. Taking up the vase, the guru repeats the verse cited above from the BRT and VKMK: "HUM. Empowerments and blessings must be bestowed in this place ..." and he recites the heart mantras of all the deities, adding to the end of each the words: "The consecration that purifies the ten non-virtues is bestowed!"

Imagining himself to be Hayagriva, the guru binds the mudrā of 'the Assembly of Precious Ones' (rin chen 'dus pa)546 on a level with his disciple's ears and says: "TRAM. The supreme secret empowerment that transcends suffering ..." etc. With such words as these the guru explains the meaning of the secret teachings to his disciple and the disciple, having heard them, should not proclaim them abroad. As he recites the mantra at the end of this section, the ācārya pours out some water from the vase which his disciple should drink. Binding the mudrā of 'the Assembly of Lotususes' (padma 'dus pa) on the tongue of his disciple, the master says:

"HRII: By the eighty melodies of clear discrimination, all the wishes of living beings are satisfied. The object of wisdom (shes rab don) is beyond imagination and yet it abides in the signification (don) of all things great and small."

Then, as both guru and disciple meditate upon themselves as the deity Amṛtalakālin, the master places into the hands of his disciple a vajra and bell held together in the form of a cross and says to him:

"HOM. For the sake of all beings you must perform the skilful deeds of disciplining them by means of love and compassion. Fully perform the deeds of a Buddha!"547

Absorbing himself into the jñānasattva in his heart, the guru recites the deity's mantra of invocation, twenty-one times, followed by the closing lines of the oft-quoted verse that opens the VKMK: "It enters the door of the life force and one should meditate upon it in the centre of the heart." The guru then holds aloft the vase548 and, placing it upon the crown of his disciple's head he proclaims:

545. A8, 75–6.
546. Notes describing these mudrās are given in B.
547. These lines are part of a verse already noted above in both the BRT and VKMK, beginning: "Empowerments and blessings must be bestowed in this place ..."
548. An interlinear note in text A adds the word gtor ma here.
Rites of Empowerment

"HÔM. The blessings and empowerments of all those who hold the awareness of Vajrakumāra, the representatives of the Jinas of the three times, are now bestowed upon you!"

The entire lineage of those who hold the awareness of Vajrakila are then called forth from their natural abodes, beginning with the Buddhas of the three kāyas headed by the dharmakāya Samantabhadra:

"HÔM. Supreme heruKa Samantabhadra! For the sake of all beings arise now from the dharmadhātu and, speaking with the naturally ferocious sound of the dharmatā, bestow the vidyādhara blessings!"

Then the five wisdom Buddhas of the sambhogakāya are exhorted to arise from their spontaneously perfected pure kṣetras and the nirmāṇakāya Vajrapāni is called from Alakāvati. His consort, the dākinī Karmadāni is summoned from the great abode of bodhisattvas which is identified by a note in text A as “the spontaneously arising great charnel ground of the dharmatā”. Then the three-faced Brahmā, the first of the gods to have heard these teachings, is summoned from his abode above the peak of Mount Meru. He is followed by the vidyādhara teachers from the realms of gods, nāgas and men: Indra Satakratu from his excellent palace of Vijaya, the nāgarāja Takṣaka from his refuge in the depths of the Sindhu Ocean and the meritorious king Indrabhūti from his abode on the summit of Mount Mālaya. Then the learned Śākyaprabhā is called forth from Zahor and Padmasambhava is invoked from his rocky cave at Pharping. Vimalamitra is summoned from the banks of the River Ganges and the Nepali Silamafiju from his retreat hut in the forest of Manḍala. The princess Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal is summoned from the lion’s fortress of Bhutan, and sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms is called forth from the red rock ‘treasury’ cave in Rong.

In this way the lineage holders of the Vajrakila doctrines up until the time of their concealment in the eighth century are called forth from the various locations with which they are especially associated. As their blessings and empowerments are received they are urged to “speak with the naturally ferocious sound of the dharmatā”. Our texts A & C say that this completes the series of five outer empowerments but text B continues to invoke the holders of the lineage by calling forth the gter ston Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem from the peak of Mount bKra-bzang, his son rDo-rje mtshan-can from the household of great blessings, Gang-chen sangs-rgyas bstan-pa from the sacred place of Mount dPal-'bar, the kind master Sangs-rgyas dpal-bzang from the abode of impartial activity for the benefit of others, the tántrika Chos-rGyal sems-dpa’ from his hermitage in Nge-lung, the vidyādhara Sansg-rgyas bstan-pa from the pure display of the dharmadhātu and the holder of secret mantra, Śākya bzang-po, from the sun and moon throne on the crown of the (author’s own) head. As for the inner empowerments which follow, the first essential is for the disciple to enter the three samādhis. Thus he first of all absorbs his mind in the state of tathatā, within which he generates great compassion for all beings. Projecting this com-

549. Equated by a note in text A with Vajravārīhi.
551. Text B, then, is updated to the sixteenth century by a disciple of Śākya bzang-po who places the latter on the crown of his head. B12, 575.
passion in the form of ‘the causal seed-syllable’ (rgyu'i yi ge), the disciple proceeds through the stages of building up the divine mandala palace. Having generated the palace complete with all adornments, he meditates upon himself in its centre upon a lotus throne with cushions of piled up Rudras, the sun and moon. Reciting: “HŪM. Anger must be destroyed by means of vajra wrath ...”, and so on, he imagines himself to be the deity Vajrakila.

He is then consecrated with the deity’s crown of skulls as the ācārya recites:

“HŪM. This is the precious jewel of all the Buddhas, shining with immeasurable light. It bears upon it the symbols of the five supreme kulas and with it you are crowned master of the trađhātuka. HŪM OM SVA AM HĀ. HŪM In this realm where birth and decay are the natural conditions applying to sentient beings and all phenomena, you, oh son of noble family, are consecrated today with the spontaneously arising ineffable empowerment. A A VAJRAKĪLAKILAYA. HŪM. You yourself are the vidyādhara king with the jñānaśattva abiding in your heart. The portal of your life vein is guarded by the wrathful king Hayagriva who enforces his commands with vajra sparks. Now you must arise as that very king, for you are invested with power as the Master of the trađhātuka. HAYAGRIVA HŪM JAIH NĀN.”

Then the consecration of non-dual bodhicitta is bestowed by the yuganaddha deity in the secret yoni of the mother with the words: “HŪM. The sacred oaths of killing by compassion ...”, and so on, as noted above in the BRT and VKMK. And, by that recitation alone, the secret inner consecration is bestowed.552

Following that, the ten beneficial consecrations553 are bestowed. Due to the placing of the five-lobed crown upon the top of his head, the disciple receives the empowerment of five wisdoms. Due to the consecration at the place of the heart554 the empowerment of the seed syllable is obtained. Due to being entrusted with the vajra and bell, the fundamental empowerment of the hand symbols (hastacihna) is gained. Due to the generation of the jñānaśattva within, the power of the body of Mahāśāriheruka is gained. Due to being consecrated with dangling earrings, the power of the speech of Hayagriva is obtained. Due to being consecrated with a beautiful umbrella (chattra), the wrathful empowerment of the body is gained. Due to being consecrated with a garland of flowers, the wrathful empowerment of speech is gained. Due to the consecration of all the hairs on his body, the power of vajra armour is gained and, due to being consecrated with food and drink, the power of wealth and enjoyment is obtained.555

Now follows the empowerment of twenty-one jñānakilas556 in the heart. Having anointed the disciple and purified the temple with incense and so on, the guru recites the

552. A8, 79-81.
553. All manuscripts list only nine consecrations.
554. The texts do not specify what is used to empower the disciple’s heart. Some gurus touch the spot with a vajra or a kīla while others choose to anoint it with either drops of nectar water or powdered vermillion, etc.
555. A8, 81.
556. Actually forty-two deities including the animal-headed emanations. See above, note 526.
Rites of Empowerment

eight-line prayer: “HŪM. All those who hold the awareness of Vajrakumāra …”, and so on, thus bestowing the empowerment of the lord of the maṇḍala.557 Then he holds his kīla up in the air and invokes the lord of the zenith Hūmkāra and his consort sGra-‘byin-ma together with their pig- and lizard-headed assistants.

“The activities of Buddhahood must be fulfilled and, through this skilful method for the sake of sentient beings, all must be disciplined by means of love and compassion. The consecration of mastery of the Dharma is bestowed! ŌM VAJRAKRODHA HŪMKĀRA HŪM! GARJA GARJA PHAṬ! ŌM ĀH HŪM SVĀHĀ. VAJRAHŪMKĀRA A Ā ĀVEŚAYA!”

The master then holds his kīla towards the eastern direction and invokes Krodhavijaya and his group, who are urged to bestow upon the disciple the empowerment of mental ability (citta).

In like manner he turns to face the southeast, the south, southwest and so on, invoking in turn all the krodharājas of the ten directions together with their consorts and animal-headed emanations and he establishes them all within the body of the disciple.558 Due to their blessings the disciple receives, in due order, the consecrations of supremacy (vaśītā) in knowledge (jñāna), life span (āyus), pure birth (upapatti), joyful aspiration (adhikārakāra) and miracle power (rddhi).560 Thus those secret consecrations are bestowed.561

Now the empowerments for the fierce rites of slaying are bestowed. As the ācārya entrusts into the hands of his disciple all the various wrathful substances and weapons that cause death, the discus (cakra) and the fiery pit (agnikūlā),562 he recites the next verse from the BRT ending with the words: “... the signs and symbols of success must be shown and the siddhi of the kīla be bestowed!” He then adds: “JAH HŪM VAM HOH. NR TRI ŚATRŪN MĀRAYA rBAD!”, and summons the speedily-moving messengers with the words, “HŪM. The time has come for the mahāsamaya! ...”, etc., as in Chapter Five of the BRT.

557. B notes that the ācārya should roll a ritual kīla between the palms of his hands as he recites this prayer, after which he uses it to bless the crown of the disciple’s head.

558. Text B specifies the points of the body to be touched with the ritual kīla during the consecrations. The gods from the zenith enter via the crown of the head, those from the east enter the heart (centre of the chest), those from the southeast via the right breast, south through the upper right arm, southwest the right shoulder blade, west between the shoulder blades, northwest the left shoulder blade, north the upper left arm, northeast the left breast and those from the nadir enter the disciple’s body via the base of his spine.

559. All manuscripts repeat dharma here.

560. Definitions of these ten vaśītās are to be found in the Daśabhūmika-sūtra, 70, 8–18, where they are said to be acquired by a bodhisatvā on the eighth stage. They are listed again, below, within the present text and once more in the text that follows but, despite their evident status as a category of sacred dharmas, their presentation here is neither consistent nor complete. Apotheosized in feminine forms, the ten are joined by Tathātā and Buddhabodhiprabhā to form a retinue of twelve goddesses in the Dharmadhātu-maṇḍala as described by Abhayākara-gupta, Nispannayogāvali, 19.

561. Only text C makes this point, the line is missing in the other two manuscripts. A8, 81–4.

562. In Tibetan ritual this pit does not necessarily contain a lighted fire but may simply be a triangular iron box regarded as an inescapable prison.
Chapter Six

These speedy messengers are incited by means of the DHADDHI mantra to drag forth the enemies and obstructors so that they may be slaughtered. The ācārya holds aloft the ‘transfixing nail’ (gdab phur) and addresses the demons thus:

“HŪM. Because the supreme mind of enlightenment has arisen within us, we vidyādharas are the representatives of the Jinas of the three times. All you arrogant, trouble-making enemies and obstructors who interrupt us, steal our siddhis, persecute us and shorten our life-spans, are now dragged forth here in an instant due to the blessings of the mahākrodha Vajračāla. Now you must really be killed and experience the pain of your bodies being ground down to dust! OM LAM HŪM LAM STAMBHAYA NAN. MOHA GHAYA BHAGAVAN. ŚIKRIN VIKRIN VAJRAHŪMKĀRA HŪM HŪM PHAT PHAT. OM VAJRAKILI KILAYA JAIH HŪM VAM HOH SARVAVIGHNĀN VAJRAKILI KILAYA HŪM HŪM PHAT PHAT. VAJRAHŪMKĀRA HŪM A.”

Thus the empowerment for the fierce rite of destruction is bestowed upon the disciple. As the ācārya flings a mixture of white, red and black mustard seeds, iron and copper filings and the ashes of a corpse towards that poisonous effigy (dug gi ngar glud) he recites the long mantra of incitement and instructs the ferocious deities thus:

“HŪM. Those obstructors who interrupt our siddhis, those vicious beings with vindictive minds, must be seized, beaten and securely bound! They must be recognized and separated from friends! Drag them forth immediately and make them silent! They must be thrown down and oppressed! Having come under my power, they must listen to my commands!”

Then, taking up the kīla of the oath-bound ones, the ācārya says:

“HŪM You host of servants and messengers who are obedient to your orders! You who took your oaths in former times should come here now in fulfilment of those vows and quickly demonstrate the accomplishment of your tasks!”

Then the disciple is entrusted with the curved flaying knife (karttari) of the ‘killers’ (ghātaka).

“HŪM. Whatever evil being there may be who violates the secret orders of Vajra(dhara), that one will have his skull smashed to a hundred splinters by the powerful might of the mahākrodharāja! Listen well, you hosts of obstructors and misleaders, and do not transgress my orders!”

Then the effigy is smeared with blood and poison and the enemy is warned that, whether he be god or demon, any arrogant being with vicious mind who causes trouble for the Dharma will immediately be deprived of his power and skill. “SARVA ANAYA HŪM PHAT

563. A8, 84–6.
565. The karttari is not a weapon normally associated with these animal-headed emanations of the dasakrodha kings, generally described in the texts and depicted in art as wielding ankuśa and kīla.
There then follows the empowerment of the vajra hammer and ladles for the sacrificial fire (homadarvi). As those implements are placed into the hands of the disciple the ācārya recites:

“Beat! You blazing vajras, beat! Having had their hearts burnt up on the pinnacle of vajra fire, all those evil-minded ones who transgress my orders must have their bodies beaten down to pulp! HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAT PHAT PHAT!”

Then the empowerment of union. The disciple should go through the stages of self generation, as outlined in the adhivāsana section above, until he arises as the ferocious vajra couple (rdo rje drag po ’i zung). He should complete the essential part of the ritual activities, performing the sādhanā until he comes to the section of offerings (gaṇacakra) and the presentation of bāli. He should generate the dasakrodha kings clearly within his own body and their ten wrathful queens within the body of his consort TrPūtacakra. Outwardly he should meditate upon the visible forms of the deities whilst inwardly he concentrates either upon the subtle nervous system of the nādis or upon the mantras in their hearts. In that way the disciple generates the maṇḍala of union (sbyor ba ’i dkyil ’khor) and he purifies the outer world and all living beings with the radiant rays of light that emanate from his body as he recites the mantra.

Now, in order to receive the empowerments within that maṇḍala, the disciple should visualize himself very clearly in the form of the yuganaddha deity Vajrakila. Then, as (the ācārya) murmurs BHAGAVAN, the disciple should imagine the syllable OM at the base of the father’s five-pronged vajra, HŪM at its midsection and PHAT at the tip. In the centre of the mother’s eight-petalled lotus the red syllable A should clearly be seen. Muttering ŚIKRIN causes the union of the father to expand and VIKRIN, the bliss of the mother to increase. As (the ācārya) says ŚIKRIN ANAYA, the couple engage in the non-dual play of great enjoyment and from the sound of that union arise the syllables JĀH HŪM VĀM HOH. Saying KĀTHAM, the twenty-one deities all unite and thus the disciple experiences bliss.

“As the heart burns up on the pinnacle of vajra fire, from the centre of the sky arises the bindu which enters the door of life and one should meditate upon it in the centre of the heart. May the achievement of the Universal vajra be attained! By means of the blazing great blue weapon, great wisdom spontaneously arises.”

With these words (derived from three separate verses of the BRT), bodhicitta is brought forth and implanted.
Chapter Six

"HŪM. In the blazing yonis of the wrathful mothers, the pounding of vajra hammers destroys even those who are gods! KATHAM KATHAM KATHAM HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAT PHAT PHAT …", etc.

Reciting thus, bodhicitta is increased. Eventually the seminal fluid is reabsorbed from the secret yoni of the consort. Being drawn back into the father’s vajra, it ascends the central nādi to the skull. Finally the mother herself dissolves into light and is absorbed into the mūlacakra of her lord. The disciple is then instructed to meditate upon the whole assembly of gods in the mandala of Vajrakila who are such that the reality of their forms can never be expressed (anabhilāpya), shining with brilliant light. Their speech is the spontaneous sound of the dharmatā beyond the limits of expression and their minds are settled in the natural sphere which cannot be described, free of all objectifying thoughts (’dzin rtags). As he abides in this contemplation, he should recite this prayer of ultimate truth (yang dag don kyi bden pa):

“The truth of dharmatā! The blessings of secret mantra! The power of the Buddhas! Now is the time for a display of violent sorcery for those are the very actions which are necessary!”

The master then dispatches the offerings to their natural place and dissolves the created mandala to its pure state. Finally the guru sprinkles the disciple with water from the vase and thus he is consecrated as a representative of the Jinas (rgyal tshab). This empowerment of self-arising spontaneous appearance which is an initiation into the uncreate, a treasury of precious consecrations taken from the wrathful Svayambhūsvodaya-tantra, is completed.

Text C finished several pages ago and A finishes here. Text B, however, goes on to rejoice in the great virtues of this series of consecrations and to explain that, through the power thus bestowed upon the disciple, his body, speech and mind are purified so that he will arise as a Buddha in the pure land of Vajrasattva. A benedictory prayer (pranidhāna) is appended which is said to have been spoken by the great guru Padmasambhava for the benefit of his disciple Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal at the time when she herself first received this very empowerment. Later, in the lion’s fortress of Bhutan, it was repeated for the king and twenty-four disciples on the occasion of their empowerment after which it was written down and hidden away in Ri-bo bKra-bzang in the white treasury of conch within the triangular rock cave that is shaped like a fire pit.

“Due to receiving the empowerments of Hūmkāra, his consort, and their assistant piśācis, the faults of sexual misconduct are abandoned and one gains mastery of the process of birth. May the pure understanding of the

573. By means of this verse from the root tantra and the pounding mantra, the disciple is urged to experience such bliss that he will no longer incline toward lower yānas.

574. A8, 88–9.

575. By which is meant śūnyatā in both cases. The balis are placed upon the temple rooftop for the birds to eat and the coloured powders of which the mandala was composed are swept up and entrusted to the care of the nāgas inhabiting the nearest river or lake.

576. A8, 89–90.

577. The standard list of ten wrong deeds (daśa duśkaritāni) begins here.
perfection of jñāna arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Krodhavijaya and his retinue, the faults of taking what was not given are abandoned and power over material possessions is gained. May the perfection of wisdom (prajñā) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Niladanda and his retinue, the faults of wrong view are abandoned and mastery of wisdom is gained. May the perfection of skill in means (upāya) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Yamantaka and his retinue, the faults of taking life are abandoned and the power to prolong one’s lifespan is gained. May the perfection of meditation (dhyāna) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Arya Acala and his retinue, the faults of speaking lies are abandoned and the power of prayer is gained. May the perfection of patience (ksānti) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Hayagriva and his retinue, the faults of slander are abandoned and mastery of Dharma is gained. May the perfection of enthusiastic perseverance (vīrya) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Aparajita and his retinue, the faults of foolish prattle are abandoned and supremacy of mental ability is gained. May the perfection of generosity (dāna) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of AmrtaKut;la and his retinue, the faults of abusive speech are abandoned and mastery of ritual activity is achieved. May the perfection of prayer (pranidhāna) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Trailokyavijaya and his retinue, the faults of malice are abandoned and mastery of miracle power is gained. May the perfection of strength (bala) arise! Due to receiving the empowerments of Mahābala and his retinue, the faults of conceit are abandoned and the power of joyful aspiration is gained. May the perfection of morality (sīla) arise!

Due to the empowerment of the body as a deity, all the sins of the body are purified. May the power of meditation upon the body as a maṇḍala of gods arise! Due to the empowerment of speech as mantra, all the sins of speech are purified. May the power of the full potential of speech arise! Due to the empowerment of mind with the symbolic kīla, all evils of thought are overcome. May the understanding of one’s own mind as the dharmakāya arise!

Due to this empowerment within the maṇḍala of the profound Vajrayāna, may all virtues gain the power of the wish-fulfilling jewel! Due to these consecrations with the symbolic articles of the gods, may the power to slay all the haughty enemies and obstructors be gained! Due to the empowerments of the three supreme sons, the three root kleśas are

578. The standard list of the ten perfections (daśapāramitā) begins here although the order in which they are presented is unusual.
579. The text reads rlom sems (conceit) but, according to the list in the Mahāvyutpatti, it should read brnab sems (covetousness).
580. All manuscripts repeat pranidhāna and ksānti here, the power and perfection already allocated to Arya Acala.
581. In this text: Aparājīta, Hayagrīva and Amṛtakundalin.
abandoned. May the siddhis of body, speech and mind arise! Due to the
empowerments of the twelve oath-bound protectors (in three groups of
four), may the power to annihilate the four māras, the tirthikas and the
groups of misleaders, enemies and obstructors arise! Due to the
empowerments of the four goddesses who guard the gates, mental habit
patterns (vāsanā) are purified as the four boundless minds. May the four
rites be achieved without limit!

Oh, you fortunate disciples. You vajra brothers and sisters who have today
received all these empowerments of secret mantra within the profound
mandala of Vajrasattva. As a result of these empowerments, the ten non-
virtues which act as causes for rebirth in the states of woe are all purified.
You must therefore perfect the nature of Vajrasattva and reach the stage of
a samyaksambuddha. May you protect the oaths and commitments with
your life! Thus the ten pāramitās are attained. Through the complete
attainment of the mandala of the Vajrayāna, may you quickly ascend the
thirteen bhūmis of Vajradhara!

The text finishes here with a final note to the effect that, as he makes this prayer for the
benefit of his disciples, the guru should scatter flowers upon their heads.582

Now, with regard to the rite of empowerment into the black kṣura cycle of Vajrakīla,
Rig-'dzin rgod-'Idem is supposed to have found in the black iron cache to the north the
considerably shorter text known simply as the sPu gri nag po'i bdang chog (A14, B63,
C20), according to which the empowerment itself serves three primary functions. The first
of these is the consecration of the mind as awareness, the second is the consecration of the
symbols as personal emblems, and the third is the consecration of the yogin’s own
emanated form as the resultant fruit of Buddhahood. With regard to the first of these, the
self empowerment (svādhīṣṭhāna) through which the mind becomes known as ‘the king of
awareness’ (vidyārāja) is established by means of the mandala of eleven kīlas embedded
in the ground of all-pervading light. The consecration of the mudrās as personal tokens
has three parts: the consecration of symbolic articles, the consecration of the hand
symbols (hastacihna) and the consecration of the five qualities of desire. The text goes on
to explain that the symbolic articles are white mustard seeds, amṛta nectar, the sacred
crown, the vajra and bell, the vase and the eight articles of the charnel ground. The hand
symbols are eleven kīlas.583 Nothing further is stated at this point with regard to the
consecration of the five qualities of desire, nor are any comments made at any stage with
regard to the third purpose of the rite: the consecration of the yogin’s own body as the
resultant fruit. The rite itself is said to consist of five main stages: 1) Drawing the
mandala, 2) Gathering the requisite articles, 3) Invoking the deities through the various
steps of sādhana, 4) Actual bestowal of the empowerment and, 5) Prayers of benediction
when all else has been completed.

1) Firstly, as for the drawing of the *maṇḍala*: within a square, one armspan across, should be drawn a circle and, within that, a triangle. Around the edge of the circle should be drawn a wheel (*cakra*, but usually drawn as an eight-petalled lotus) with eight spokes, which should then be adorned with eight semicircular moons. Within each moon should be placed a triangle. Then the courtyards and doorways and so on of the enclosing palace should be drawn on all sides.

2) The indispensable articles required for the rite are said to be eleven *kilas*, a skull with auspicious markings, some white mustard seed, a *vajra* and bell and a five-lobed crown.

3) The rite begins with the purification of a ritual vase and its transformation into the divine palace of the gods by means of the syllable *BHRUM*, just as in the rite above. Then the individual grains of white mustard are transformed into deities and so on, as before, until the *maṇḍalas* of residence and residents are established within the vase and offerings have been presented to them. Almost the same words are used to describe this process in both ritual texts but the *mantras* given are different. In this case, however, atop the vase is placed neither skull nor drawing of the *maṇḍala*.

The text then discusses the procedure through which the major deities of the *maṇḍala* are to be established within symbolic *kilas* arranged upon the diagram on the ground. Each of those eleven *kilas* should be blessed eight times by performing the ritual of inviting the god to be present within it. Each invited deity should then be presented with offerings and praise and so on in the manner explained in the *sādhana* texts (looked at in our next chapter). It is said that the power of the *kilas* to bestow the blessings of empowerment upon the disciple arises during that period while the *mantras* that cause the deity to approach are being recited.\(^584\)

Then there follows the ritual of the disciple’s entry into the *maṇḍala*. First of all the disciple should bathe (a sprinkle of water on the head from a ritual vase is all that is generally deemed necessary by Tibetans with respect to this function). Then, reciting the *mantras* of the *daśaṅgridha* kings, the *ācārya* should expel the *vighnas* and meditate upon the *rakṣācakra*. The disciple should then offer the fee for his empowerment and the ‘*maṇḍala* of offering’ in which he renounces all attachment to this world.\(^585\)

A note in the margin of text A says that the eyes of the disciple should be blindfolded at this point (symbolic of his current unenlightened state). Nowhere in the subsequent text, however, does it ever say that the blindfold should be removed.

The disciple then takes refuge in the Vajrakila *maṇḍala*, generates *bodhicitta* and promises to adhere to the general pledges of the five families.\(^586\) After that he makes this plea to his *guru* in words taken from the BRT:

\[\text{"Kyai! Vajrācārya, please listen to me! I pray that the deities of the Universal } \text{kīla} \text{ and you } \text{vidyādharas} \text{ who are the representatives of the Buddhas of the three times will bestow upon me the empowerments and } \text{siddhis}."\]

\(^{584}\) A14, 125-6.


\(^{586}\) See S. Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā*, 406 or SDPT, 102, for the pledges of the five families.
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There then follows exactly the same conversation between guru and disciple as found in the previous rite except that, in this case, the guru explains to his disciple that, if he is able to keep his vows pure, sipping the water of sacred oaths will cause him to become the jñānasattva (instead of Vajrasattva, as said above). An interlinear note in text A adds that, as the disciple swallows the drops of nectar placed upon his tongue at that time, the blessings of all the mandala deities descend into his body.587

Then the disciple, in a state of perfect mindfulness, should recite the mantra of the deity and instantaneously arise in the form of the glorious Vajrakīla with three faces, six arms and four legs spread wide, etc. Texts B and C describe him as standing in non-dual union with his consort but A has two lines in which Tīptacakra is mentioned by name and in which she is described as the great consort whose right arm embraces her lord and whose left presses a skull full of blood to his lips.

The great bindu from the depths of the sky then enters the disciple’s door of life and so on, and the text goes on to describe the deity’s ferocious retinue in verses taken from Chapter Three of the BRT, as above.

Then, from the OM, ĀH and HUM in the forehead, throat and heart of himself clearly visualized in the form of Vajrakīla, rays of light radiate out to invite the mandala of jñānasattvas and the disciple says: “HUM. In order to receive the siddhis and empowerments ...”, and so on, as before. Summoning the wisdom deities, the disciple should contemplate that his ordinary body, speech and mind truly become the actual Body, Speech and Mind of the bhagavat Śrīvajrakumāra.588

4) In the guise of the deity, the disciple then receives from his preceptor the various cult articles beginning with the grains of white mustard. As the guru hands these over he says:

“HUM. These grains of white mustard are the most potent of magical substances. They grow in the land of the heroes (vīra), their aspect is that of the bhagavat, their mantra is that of Vajrapāni (HUM) and their activity is the subjugation of enemies and obstructors. Due to the empowerment of this potent article, oh fortunate disciple, you yourself gain the strength to overthrow all enemies and obstructors.”

Then, as the disciple accepts from him a few drops of nectar, the ācārya recites:

“HUM. This sacred substance of swirling nectar is greatly enjoyed by those who have gathered the three worlds under their sway. This fivefold powerful nectar arising from desire annihilates the five families and renders them free of birth and death. The empowerment of this swirling nectar is now bestowed upon you. OM ĀH HUM VAJRĀMRTA-ABHĪŚĪNCA AM OM ĀH HUM SVĀHĀ.”

Next is the consecration of the five-lobed crown which is bestowed with the same verse as found in the empowerment rite of the mahottara cycle above but for which the mantra given here is RATNAMUKUTA-ABHĪŚĪNCA MĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM TRĀM.

Then the disciple is entrusted with the *vajra* and bell as the master explains to him that it is the great empowerment of wisdom and means (*prajñopāya*) and that, whoever maintains the awareness of *vajra* and bell, transforms *samsāra* into *nirvāṇa* by purifying it of all faults. OM VAJRAPRAJÑĀBHAVA-ABHIŚIŅCA HŪṀ.\(^{589}\)

Following that, as the disciple is given sips of water to drink from the vase, the guru recites the verse cited in the previous ritual: "The activities of Buddhahood must be fulfilled ..., etc.", and, as he recites the combined *hrdaya* of all the *maṇḍala* deities, he bestows the various powers of those deities upon the disciple. The difference here is that, whereas in the previous ritual the consecrations were bestowed by a touch of the *kīla* at various points on the disciple’s body, here the deities enter with the drops of vase water through the mouth.

Then the disciple is consecrated with the hand symbols which are the insignia of the gods, beginning with the *kīla* of Vajrakumāra and his consort. The guru takes it from the centre of the *maṇḍala* before him and, as he places it between the palms of his disciple’s hands, he says:

"HŪṀ. From the centre, this is the spontaneously accomplished great deity, the *bhagavat* Vajrakumāra with his supreme consort Trīptacakra. He has three faces, six arms and stands in a posture of pride. At the midpoint of this *kīla* is a great knot containing the entire *maṇḍala*\(^{590}\) and its three-sided blade tapers to a sharp pointed tip. With this very *kīla* of *yugenaddha* Buddhas I empower you, oh fortunate one!"

He then recites the root mantra of Vajrakīla, adding KĀYAVĀKCITTA-ABHIŚIŅCA HŪṀ ĀḤ, and thus the empowerment of the lord of the *maṇḍala* is bestowed.

Then, one by one, the *kīlas* standing in the ten directions are taken up from the *maṇḍala* and entrusted to the hands of the disciple. As he does this, the guru explains the nature of the gods that reside within that particular nail and the nature of the empowerment that is bestowed by means of it. As in the previous ritual, these ten deities are associated with the ten *vaśitās* but once again their order is jumbled. At the conclusion of each empowerment, the disciple is urged to use it as a skilful method to promote the welfare of all living beings and the mantras of the individual deities are recited to invoke their presence.

Following the empowerments of the *maṇḍalādhipati* and the *daśakrodha* deities, the text goes on to say that the empowerments of the four gate-guarding goddesses are to be bestowed. By means of these empowerments of the goddesses from the east, south, west and north, the faculties of love (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*pramuditā*) and equanimity (*upekṣā*) are said to be gained.\(^{591}\)

Now the disciple is consecrated with the eight articles of the charnel ground in order to adorn those *herukas* of the ten directions abiding within his body. The first adornment is a cloak of freshly flayed wet elephant skin, through which the empowerment of the

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590. In the meditation of the *bhavakīla* it is the knot at the top of the *kīla* that contains the *maṇḍala* of the gods.
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dharmadhātu is gained. A skirt of tiger skin is said to provoke terror. Dangling bunches of snakes are the revolving ornaments.\textsuperscript{592} An upper garment of full human hide bestows the power to brighten the darkness of ignorance (by removing the veil of the five skandhas). A necklace of severed human heads bestows the power of control over the traidhātuka (severing all past and future rebirths. Text C says that it bestows the power of controlling the three poisons.) Spots of blood on the cheeks bestow the empowerment of passionate compassion. A smear of grease under the chin bestows the empowerment of the essence of truth and lines of cemetery ash upon the forehead empower the yogin to subjugate enemies and obstructors.\textsuperscript{593}

Then there is the consecration of the five qualities of desire:

"HŪM. All that is required in the way of food and drink and all that could be desired of the objects of the five senses, these are the articles which are offered to the hosts of gods of the Vajrakīla maṇḍala (which now reside within the body of the practitioner) and thus the empowerment of the five qualities of desire is gained!"

Then the consecration of the offerings of food and drink is bestowed:

"HŪM. This meat has the qualities of the five jñānas and, through the power of its blessings, your own body, speech and mind are consecrated with those five wisdoms and the power of vajra life (vajrāyus) is gained!"

Then all the foodstuffs that have been set out as offerings upon the altar are blessed so that they become divine food (naivedya) and, as it is distributed among all those present (gaṇacakra) in accordance with the method outlined in the sādhana texts, the disciple should once more present an offering maṇḍala and extensive gifts to his teacher.

5) As the maṇḍala is dismantled and the various ritual objects are gathered up and put away, elaborate prayers dedicating the merit of the ceremony to the welfare of all beings (punyaparināmana) should be offered as the final stage of the ritual.\textsuperscript{594}

\textsuperscript{592.} A play on the word āvartana in which the winding motion (āvartana) of a snake is likened to the turning away (āvartana) of the enemies and obstructors. Text C, however, says that this consecration gives one the power of coiling with the consort in a mutual embrace.

\textsuperscript{593.} A14, 134–6.

\textsuperscript{594.} A14, 136–7.
Chapter Seven
The Activities

Being received into the cult as a member through the foregoing rites of empowerment, devotees of Vajrakila are expected to assist in the work of manifesting the universal bhavakila through regular propitiation of the deity, the importance of which is reflected by the large number of sādhanas to be found within the three collections.\textsuperscript{595} Indeed, the sādhana is a paradigm for almost all subsequent cultic activities, the various aims of which are put forward by shifts in emphasis of its different parts and/or by the addition of new parts.

In the Byang gter phur pa’i ’phrin las rgyas pa, a lengthy manual in one hundred and ten folios by ’Phrin-las bdud-'joms, the main ritual is prefaced by prayers of a general Buddhist nature (the taking of refuge and generation of bodhicitta, etc.) as well as liturgy for the invocation of the lineage holders of the Byang-gter Kila tradition and verses of self-consecration for the yogin’s own speech, his rosary, wajra, skull-damaru, kila and the various offering articles collected for worship of the deity. ’Phrin-las bdud-'joms evidently based his work upon several of the short gter ma documents to be found within the three collections currently under consideration and it exemplifies the manner in which the ritual performance of a sādhana may be elaborated at will.

Among the gter ma documents themselves are to be found both Mahāyoga and Atiyoga texts, those of the Mahāyoga being devoted either to the multicoloured maṇḍala or to the maṇḍala of black deities. Later liturgical works included within the collections tend to a synthesis of these various approaches.

We may take as example the Phur pa thugs kyi ’phrin las, ‘ritual activities that pertain to the heart of the Kīla’ (A45, B42 & C35), in which the stages of meditation for the performance of the black deity’s sādhana are briefly summarized. This rite is considered to be of such fundamental significance to the cult that, of all the texts in the three collections, it is unique in having been carved onto xylographic blocks for printing and wide distribution.\textsuperscript{596} Unfortunately the printed edition bears no colophon to indicate when, where or by whom the blocks were carved.

\textsuperscript{595} At least twenty-one texts may be thus categorized, the majority of which are to be found in more than one collection. Outside the three collections, of course, there also exist many such sādhanas in the possession of initiates who require no other text for their purposes.

\textsuperscript{596} It seems, however, that the distribution of printed copies did not reach the compilers of collections B & C, for they include the text in manuscript form only.
The sādhana revealed in this text conforms typically to a standard ritual pattern: 1) Simābandha (outer purification), 2) Confession of sins (inner purification), 3) Blessing the offerings (secret purification), 4) Contemplation of the three samādhis (commencement of the main practice), 5) Generation of the maṇḍala, 6) Invitation of the deities, 7) Welcoming the deities as they arrive, 8) Uniting the jñānasattvas with their samaya counterparts, 9) Praising the divine qualities, 10) Recitation of the mantra in order to stabilize the bhavakīla, 11) Presentation of offerings to the maṇḍala deities in three parts: a) the presentation of primordial purity represented by the upper portion of the bali, b) the presentation of that which has been purified, in which a second portion of the bali is offered with a confession of sins, and, c) the presentation of impure flesh, blood and bones of slain demons. Following this, 12) the left-overs are taken outside and given to the lesser gods and spirits to whom they were promised in ages past and from whom oaths of fealty may be demanded. 13) The deities are dismissed and the merit of the rite is dedicated to the future enlightenment of all sentient beings.

The actual wording of the text is very simple. Each meditative stage is listed in due order and, for most of the stages, one or two verses are given in which the meditation is described. These verses may be recited by the yogin as they are found in the text or they may be amplified from other sources and elaborated as desired. Most sections conclude with a mantra through which the meditation is supposed actually to be put into effect.597 The ultimate success of the rite is entirely dependent upon the yogin's ability to effectuate these magic spells and therefore the text states at the outset that it is to be practised only by those who have formerly completed their preliminary tantric training (sngon 'gro, purvayoga).598 Only the Atiyoga texts (A32 & 35, etc.) stress the worship of the guru as the essential factor in the rite that quickly leads to the attainment of siddhi.599

At the beginning of the rite the yogin should turn his face toward the north and meditate upon himself with unwavering concentration as the actual deity Śrivajrakumāra. He then establishes a protective circle around himself by imagining the ten krodharaṇīs issuing forth from his heart and spreading out into the ten directions. These ferocious deities completely bar the way to all impurity and annihilate the ten wrong deeds in order to establish living beings on the path of liberation. While engaged in such contemplation, the yogin recites their bijamantras.600 In order to confess his failings and bless the offerings, the yogin recites:

"HUM. Mahāśriheruka and your retinue, please listen to me! Previously, throughout beginningless samsāra, I have accumulated causes for rebirth in

597. These mantras are for the most part omitted here as they add nothing to our understanding of the ritual.
598. The pūrvayoga practices of the Byang-gter tradition are elaborated in a text known as gZer Inga, “The Five Nails”, an edition of which was published in 1970 from blocks preserved in the mTho-mthong Monastery, Solu Khumbu, Nepal (no further publication data given). It is also to be found with an English translation as vol. 16 in the Byang-gter series by C. R. Lama and James Low.
599. A32, 222; A35, 248.
the states of woe due to falling under the power of the five *kleśas*. This I confess in the presence of the host of wisdom deities. Please grant the *siddhi* of purifying appearances! Be present here in this *maṇḍala*. Bless the offerings and bestow the empowerments!"\(^{601}\)

In the *Che mchog gi ’phrin las* (B11 & C4), a parallel text from the cycle of Mahottarakila, blessings and empowerments are received in the form of light rays originating from the foreheads, throats and hearts of all the *maṇḍala* deities. As these rays enter the *yogin*’s body, speech and mind he imagines that all the vows of the three *kāyas* are fulfilled and his sins are purified.\(^{602}\)

The Mahottarakila text then deals at length with the establishment of the ‘natural’ foundation of the *maṇḍala* within the body of the practitioner. This is composed of a central area of faeces with swirling white semen to the east, a heap of flesh like a mountain to the south, foaming red blood to the west and a lake of urine to the north. Above this the *yogin* should mentally construct an awning as he binds the tent *mudrā* and around the outside he should visualize an encircling lotus wall.

Placing his hands together, the *yogin* should imagine Vajrakila between his palms and the *daśakrodha* kings upon his fingers. Seated with his consort upon his lap, the *yogin* should concentrate upon her *yoni* and visualize the syllable *AH*, red and shining brightly in its centre. He then imagines rays of white light streaming forth from the *OM* at the base of his *vajra*, bright red light shining from the *HUM* at its midsection and blue light radiating from the *PHAT* at its tip. His ardent desire for the bliss of her ‘secret cavity’ is said to annihilate all worldly attachments.\(^{603}\)

Gradually the *yogin* extends this contemplation until he is able to visualize the entire *traidhātuka* united in non-dual bliss. Then the white *bodhicitta* of that union falls down like rain and he imagines the *maṇḍala* base to become a great lake of nectar. Muttering ACITTA APARACITTA HUM, the *yogin* imagines all the *mudrā* deities to shimmer and dissolve into light which is then absorbed into the centre of the nectar and, as he recites the *mantra* of Amṛtakūṭa, the *yogin* imagines that lake of nectar to seethe and swirl. In the centre of the lake stands a lotus throne with the corpses of demons heaped upon it as cushions. Reciting HAYAGRIVA HUM, the *yogin* imagines the snarling red-black figure of Hayagriva holding sword and *kila* and around him in the four directions, from *HULU HULU HUM PHAT*, arise his four wives. In the east is the white rGyas-‘debs, wielding an iron hook. In the south is the yellow Za-byed, holding aloft a noose. In the west is the red rMongs-byed, wielding fetters and in the north is the green Tshe-‘phel who holds a bell.\(^{604}\)

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600. The VKMK specifies exactly which seed-syllable corresponds to which deity but in the present text the *mantras* are simply presented as a group at the end of the instructions for meditation. A45, 404–5.
604. The four wives spring forth from *hulu hulu*, explained in the lexicons as the inarticulate sound of pleasure uttered by women. A red-black Hayagriva holding lotus and *viśvavajra* is depicted with four goddesses conforming to this description in L. Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography of Tibet*, 1, 132–3. Their names, however, are not those given here.
Chapter Seven

As these four goddesses embrace their lord, the nectar drops of their union fall slowly downwards causing the goddesses to dissolve into light from the feet upwards. As this light is absorbed into the lake of nectar, Hayagrīva himself descends and melts into it until only his upper half remains there as its guardian.

Reciting PHAT PHAT PHAT, the yogin should flick a little of the nectar with his finger. As it touches his own body it is absorbed into himself so that he gains the siddhis of body, speech and mind. Touching the offering articles, it is absorbed into them so that they become free of blemish and any defect in their preparation is purified and made good. Touching the bodies of the obstructors and demons, they crumble to dust so that victory over them is won.

The carcasses of those slain enemies and obstructors are imagined to have the outer form of a dish of precious offerings while inwardly they have the nature of a corpse full of nectar. Placing a great heart in the centre of that dish of precious offerings, as the yogin recites a binding mantra he winds a length of wool around the heart reminding himself of the samaya that binds his own heart to the deity. The heart is then adorned with the flesh of ignorance and the bones of anger, sprinkled with the bile of pride and immersed in a pool of the seething blood of desire. Imagining the whole of phenomenal existence to be incorporated within that offering, the yogin raises it up as a gift to the deities. Outwardly, the text says, he imagines his gift to be presented by the six goddesses of all sensual pleasure while inwardly meditating upon it as consisting of the five wisdoms derived from the purification of the five poisons. Thus all grasping desire, which is the single cause for transmigration throughout the six gatis, is utterly destroyed. Binding the mudrā called ‘blazing’, the yogin as Vajrakīla gathers together the eightfold consciousness of the slaughtered universe which he establishes within the nādi of his heart from where he then radiates a mantra causing the world to become flooded beneath a tidal wave of blood. That which is visualized outwardly as an ocean of blood, it is said, is inwardly the truth of no-birth and secretly the fecund drops of the mother.

The yogin then immerses himself in the three samādhis of the upattikrama which rid his mind of mundane conceptions concerning the material world and serve as a basis for the arising of the divine mandala. The first samādhi is the contemplation of tathātā, epitomized here as the dharmakāya (dharmatā), the second is the arising of an all-pervading compassion and the third is the production of the causal syllable HŪM. Thus, from the sky-like dharmakāya which encompasses all sentient beings with its compassion, the yogin should imagine the spontaneous appearance of the syllable HŪM. From this HŪM spring forth the five elements which pile up, one above the other, and upon this foundation rests a Mount Meru made of bones with the mandala palace of the gods upon its summit.

This ‘ferocious palace’ is briefly described in the Black deity text as dark blue in colour, square, with four doors and festooned with ornamentation. Encircling the mandala perimeter are a vajra fence and a mass of fire that blazes like the conflagration at the end of an aeon. In the Mahottarakīla text, however, the entire process is described in a

606. cf. T. Thondup, Buddha Mind, 38.
manner that emphasizes both the inner nature of the mandala (as composed of the yogin’s own body) and the identification of the yogin with the cosmos. Furthermore, it specifically structures the universe in the form of a kīla. According to this text, five lights radiate out from a blue syllable HūM and as they gather back together they cause that great HūM to shine as bright as the sun and moon.\textsuperscript{508} As the yogin recites PHAT PHAT PHAT HŪM LAM, the HŪM spontaneously explodes into the five directions so that within the sphere of nondual appearance and emptiness it is as if five syllables had suddenly landed upon an open plain in the formation of a mandala. Deep space is born from the dark blue PHAT and in the centre of that, from a dark green PHAT, arises a churning mass of crossed wind. From a dark red PHAT arises a blazing great fire like that at the end of an aeon, and from a bright red HŪM comes a swirling seething ocean of blood. Rising up from the centre of the ocean is a shining Mount Meru of bones, metamorphosed from a white syllable LAM. Then all those syllables unite into a single couple and, as dark maroon light shines forth from OM and LAM, the whole universe of phenomenal appearance is transformed into the threesided bhavakīla, the sharp tip of which pierces the very depths of hell. Its lower great knot envelops the kāmadhātu of gods and men. The lower half of its octagonal handle encompasses the rūpadhātu, comprising the seventeen heavens of the brahma-loka, while the upper half comprises the formless realms of the gods of the four infinities. Within its upper knot is the palace of the Tathāgatas around which is established the great circle of the mandala. Thus the universe assumes the clear appearance of a kīla.

The ferocious palace of the Tathāgatas within the upper great knot consists of nine blue-black triangles, around the central one of which stand three semicircles of control and a circular border of skulls. The eight pillars inside the palace are composed of purplish human corpses set upon pedestals of tortoise with the planets as their capitals. The great gods Brahmā and the rest are laid across the tops of these pillars to form the sixteen golden beams of the ceiling. Large numbers of corpses of adults and children are spread over the beams to form the rafters and these are plastered over with a mixture of faeces and urine. Wings of birds are then laid across that to form the roof. Looking up, one sees awnings and decorative projecting mouldings, parasols fashioned from corpses, dangling flags of human skin and a thirteen-tiered spire with the heart of Rudra himself upon its peak. Small golden bells hanging from every corner resound with the sound of the Mahāyāna Dharma. Looking down upon the ground, one sees that the four sides of the outer perimeter of the central palace are painted green as a sign of the total accomplishment of the four classes of magical activity. Outside this stand the remaining eight dark blue triangles and everything is enclosed within a courtyard, the whole area of which is filled with a swirling agitated ocean of blood.

The walls of the palace are built up of tightly packed dry human skulls with projecting ornaments of freshly severed heads. From the mouth of each skull blazes fire, from each

\textsuperscript{508} Buddhist thought in general and especially Vajrayāna thought posits radiance as a fundamental quality of mind. The Pañcakrama, I, 43, for example, defines consciousness as luminosity (vijñānam ca prabhāsvaram) and thus the creative syllable HŪM which is the compassionate energy of the enlightened mind produces, maintains and manipulates all phenomena by means of radiance. Equating this radiance with the lights of sun and moon symbolizes its nature as the indivisible unity of wisdom and means.
nostril issues smoke and rivulets of blood gurgle down from the eyes. The projecting end of every beam is fashioned in the form of a lion’s face, from the great jaws of which dangle tangled bunches of writhing poisonous snakes. All around the walls are hung garlands of intestines with pendant hearts, livers, lungs, eyeballs and so on. From the open windows shine the lights of sun and moon and the inside of the palace is filled with goddesses offering all manner of red articles gratifying to the senses. Around the outside of the palace runs a decorative golden frieze hung with dark blue chains and green half-chains. It has an upper apartment that glitters white and a triumphal archway is situated at the approach to each of its four doors. The four doorways in the four directions are each enclosed within a vestibule and each has a threshold made of tortoise and a lintel of makara. The individualdoorways are distinguished by the caste of snakes whose corpses are employed in their manufacture, fixed at the feet with nails of meteoric iron and at the head with vicious nails of the eight great planets. Rays of light spread out from the glorious mandala to a radius of ten million yojanas and it is enveloped in wreaths of powerful incense from piles of smouldering corpses. The entire edifice is without distinction of outer and inner.

Both texts go on to explain that in the centre of the palace there is a great vajra rock and a lotus throne supporting the discs of the sun and moon with the eight classes of demons piled up like cushions upon which rests the syllable hOM. Upon the transformation of this syllable into a vajra, rays of light radiate out. When the lights return to the vajra the yogin himself arises in its place in the form of the deity Vajrakumāra with three faces, six arms and four legs spread wide. Standard iconographic descriptions of the deity follow, the essential difference between the black and the multicoloured systems being that in the latter tradition the deity is said to reside in the yogin’s heart and to be no bigger than his thumb tip.

The Mahottarakila text then goes on to describe the actual body of the yogin which here assumes the eighteen-armed form described above in Chapter Three. Within the head, throat and heart of this vast body reside jñānasattvas of his body, speech and mind. United with his consort, the yogin makes the sacred oath of ‘killing by compassion’.

The dasakrodha kings that comprise the deity’s retinue are described as single-faced in the Black deity text and as triple-faced in that of Mahottarakila. The rest of the mandala comprises the supreme sons, the four goddesses who guard the gates and the circles of the twelve oath-bound protectors, the kimkāra servants and the countless messengers and

609. The door to the east is made of white snakes of the kṣatriya caste, the southern of yellow vaisya snakes, the western of red brāhmaṇa and the northern of black śūdra. Cf. Gega Lama, Principles of Tibetan Art, 389-390.


611. A45, 406-7; B11, 534.


613. A45, 407; B11, 538-42. The latter text provides a separate description for each krodha king, delineating the colours of the three faces and the attributes held in the six hands. The piśāci emanations are also described and the unique feature of this text is that each emanation is said to wield the very weapons carried by her krodha lord in his central pair of hands. See below, Table 2.
assistants. By visualizing them all clearly just as they are described, the yogin is instructed to cause them actually to be present before him.614

The next two verses in which the intention of the rite is declared, beginning with the words “HUM. All those who hold the awareness of Vajrakumāra must bring into effect the universal vajra ...” have been noted above in Chapter Five as occurring in both the BRT and the VKMK. They are followed here by a mantra not found in those texts that serves to bestow the consecrations of Vajrakīla’s enlightened body, speech and mind: OM VAJRA-KILI KILAYA KĀYAVĀKITTWA-ABHISĪNCA HUM ĀH.615

With a verse that continues to follow the wording of the tantras very closely, the wisdom deities are invited to approach the samayamaṇḍala:

“HUM JAḤ. In order that we may accomplish the bhavakīla and receive the empowerments and siddhis, you unchanging host of wrathful jñānasattvas please come here! And, having arrived, may you great gods of wrath please accept these outer, inner and secret offerings. Please bestow on us the Kīla siddhi and may the signs and symbols of success appear!”

The Mahottarakīla text states that this verse should be recited in a most plaintive tone with a voice like thunder.616 As before, the descent of blessings is accomplished by means of mantra and then the jñānadevas are honoured with salutations:

“With single pointed mind we salute Vajrarākṣasa and his retinue in order to maintain divine pride and to subdue the violent conduct of the three classes of beings”.617

The jñānadevas then merge as one into the samayamaṇḍala and in this way the yogin becomes united with the body, speech, mind, good qualities and enlightened activities of all the Buddhas. Offerings of cooling water for the feet, flowers, incense, lamps, perfume, food and music are then presented, together with all objects of the six senses and the essential medicine, blood and ornamented bali. Flesh, blood, bones, the inner organs and gall bladder are offered together with a continuous stream of nectar which is the non-dual mind of enlightenment. In that way, the text claims, all the outer, inner and secret offering articles without exception are presented to the maṇḍala deities who are requested to accept them and bestow empowerments and siddhi.618

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615. A45, 407–8. The Mahottarakīla text says that by KAṬANKATE YETA KARA OM the blessings of the body melt into the crown of the head. JAYE VIAYE ĀH, the blessings of the speech melt into the throat. ACITTA APARACITTA HUM, the blessings of the mind melt into the heart. The ability to slay the three realms simultaneously is the siddhi of the body. The sound of the dharmatā Vajrakīla is the siddhi of speech. Self-clarifying meditation on spontaneously arising wisdom is the siddhi of mind. B11, 545.
616. B11, 546, which then goes on to describe the minor deities of the maṇḍala in some detail. B11, 547–8.
617. A45, 408. The Mahottarakīla text reads: “SRĪVAJRA NAMĀḤ. In truth all dharmas and oneself are free of duality. In the state of absolute truth we salute the maṇḍala of deities and present these offerings.” B11, 548.
618. A45, 408–9. The Mahottarakīla text reduces the long list of offering articles mentioned here to the three essentials of medicine, blood and bali. These, however, are presented in elaborate fashion with their symbolism fully examined. B11, 548–9. Cf. below, Chapter Twelve.
Chapter Seven

The Black deity sādhana continues by honouring the body of the lord Vajrakīla, praising it as the quintessential splendour of all Tathāgatas of the three times without exception.619 His consort is honoured as the glorious clarity of unoriginated pure consciousness. The ten krodharājas are praised as the ones who bestow liberation through mastery of the ten bhūmis, while their ten consorts are honoured as possessing the ultimate meaning of the ten pāramitās which purify the ten non-virtues. The assembled host of supreme sons are praised as those who, through the strength of their compassion, ‘liberate’ all vicious trouble-makers and the twenty animal-headed emanations are honoured as the ones who liberate the twenty kleshas in their own place. The four fierce goddesses who guard the gates are praised for their enthusiasm in protecting against outer and inner obstacles. Finally, respects are paid to the host of minor protectors around the mandala periphery who have taken solemn pledges in the presence of the Jinas. The instruction in the text at this point is to recite the hrdayas of all these deities as much as possible.620

Following that, offerings are presented to the entire assembly (gaṇacakra)621 from the highest gods to the lowest. To begin with, the offerings are purified by fire, air and water622 and blessed by the syllables OM ĀH HŪM, symbolic of enlightened body, speech and mind. Incited by the sound of HŪM, the wisdom mandala of wrathful ones is invited to be present at the feast in order that the bhavakīla may be accomplished and empowerments and siddhis received. The offerings that they are asked to accept are as before but on this occasion they are referred to in Sanskrit with the prefix vajra (vajrārghya, vajrapuspā, etc.). They are described as consisting of the purest ingredients, “an unsurpassed array of offerings from which rays of light of the pañcajñānas radiate out, adorned with the excellent sensual qualities of all that could be desired” and the bliss that they bestow is said to fulfil all broken vows.

The actual presentation of these marvellous offerings is in three parts. The first part623 is offered to all the mandala deities with the request that, upon accepting it, they avert all disruptions of enemies and obstructors and bestow both supreme and ordinary siddhis. The second part624 is offered with a confession of such breaches of sacred obligation that may have been committed by the yogin with either body, speech or mind due to

619. The Mahottarakīla text equates the nine heads of the deity with nine wisdoms of the radiantly clear dharmatā. The upper three heads are said to gaze with love and compassion upon all those who are to be converted. The middle three are said to bestow the blessings of empowerment and siddhi while the three lower faces purify the body, speech and mind. The text then goes on to identify the symbols held in his eighteen hands, equating many of them with lines from the mūlatantra. B11, 554–5. See above, Table 1.


621. Time permitting, Tibetan lamas generally begin the gaṇacakra section with often extremely lengthy liturgies inviting large numbers of dharmapālas to the feast. The two recensions of the Mahottarakīla text (B11 and C4) diverge at this point. Although both texts cover the same ground, their wording is completely different from here on.

622. The outer appearance of the offerings is dissolved into emptiness by burning etc., just as the universe is destroyed at the end of an aeon.

623. In the performance of the ritual, the karmācārya would at this point divide the main bali cake horizontally into two parts, the uppermost portion of which is now presented to the chief deities of the mandala.

624. The first half of the lower portion of the cake.
The Activities

carelessness and ignorance and the forgiveness of the ‘lords of great compassion’ is requested for all such errors:

“HŪM. The confused minds of all ignorant sentient beings sink under the power of the delusions of discursive thought. Vows are transgressed even when standing at the very door of the great mandala of secret mantra. Therefore, whatever confusions, errors, lapses and breaches have been committed with regard to either the primary or secondary samaya are now confessed in the presence of the trikāya-guru and any impurities in the presentation of the assembled offerings and sacred balis are confessed in the presence of the dākinīs and Dharma-protectors.”

Calling out to attract the attention of Vajrakumāra and his retinue, the yogin confesses to those ‘embodiments of the Kiīḷa whose nature is divine activity’ all the mistakes he has made due to grasping at (illusory) objects as real. Having failed to perceive the fundamentally pure wisdom nature of the five kleśas and having thus been overpowered by confusion, the yogin confesses that he has created for himself a dualistic nightmare in which phenomena are either accepted or rejected on the purely arbitrary basis of personal desire. All this is confessed.

For the offering of the third part,625 having prepared an effigy of the enemies and obstructors, the yogin should contemplate the truth very carefully626 and separate the victim from his protector gods.627 He then dispatches messengers to summon the minds of the demons and forcibly install them within the effigy. While the messengers spread out in all directions in pursuit of their quarry, the yogin should continuously recite E RAM PHAT RAM JVALA RAM TRI YAM JAH NR TRI VAJRĀṆKUṢA JAḤ VAJRAPĀṢA HŪM VAJRAṢPHOTĀ VAM VAJRAGHANTĀ HOḥ PRAVEŚAYA A TRI YAM JAH HUR THUM JAH MĀRAYA PHAT. When the effigy has truly become the embodiment of demons it is offered to the wisdom deities with the words:

“HŪM. Mahāśrīvajrakīla and your retinue, open your mouths! Your mouths are like the blazing pit of a sacrificial fire with teeth arranged like firewood and tongues like sacrificial ladles. This corpse of the liberated enemies and obstructors is pressed to your mouths. May you reduce every atom of it to dust! OM VAJRA-YAKSHA KRODHAVIJAYA KHĀHI!”628

The offerings are then shared out for the enjoyment of the gathered assembly. After they have been distributed the remnants are collected together, sprinkled with nectar and offered to the servants and assistants from the mandala periphery who are reminded of their former vows and instructed to act upon them, fulfilling the tasks that they promised to per-

625. The remaining portion of the bali is offered here, together with an effigy of the sacrificial victim. Jan Gonda notes that grain offerings have been used to represent animal sacrifices since the Vedic period, with the various parts of the grain standing for flesh, blood and bone. Rice and Barley Offerings in the Veda, 23.

626. That is, he should begin this section with a recitation of a “prayer of truth” (satyavākya), which Edgerton (BHS Dictionary) describes as “a solemn statement of truth as a means of magic control of events”.

627. See below, Chapter Nine.

628. A45, 410–12.

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form of protecting the doctrine and the doctrine holders.\textsuperscript{629} The liturgy for this section of the rite is particularly interesting in our text B11 in which many new iconographic details of the minor deities are to be found. There we read that the \textit{yogin} should imagine the offering dish to be a ferocious \textit{maṇḍala} containing an ocean of blood, a mountain of bones and a great heap of human flesh. The deities are then invited as follows:

"HŪM. From the \textit{maṇḍala} of human flesh piled up like a mountain, you thirty-two wrathful \textit{dākinīs} please come here! From the palace with walls built of skeletons, you twenty-eight \textit{iśvarīs} please come here! From the charnel ground of piled-up hearts old and new, you seven mothers and four sisters all bound under oath please come here! From the \textit{maṇḍala} composed of fresh and decaying bones, you three hundred and sixty messengers please come here! DĀKINĪ HŪM HŪM JAH SARVA-PĀ NCĀMRITA KHĀHÌ.

HŪM. Why was the first portion of the offering not given to you? That was presented to the wisdom deities from whom empowerments were received for the benefit of beings. Why was the middle portion of the offering not given to you? That was presented to the mother goddesses and \textit{dākinīs} of high rank from whom the \textit{siddhis} of the four magical activities were requested. Why have these remains not been touched by our mouths? They are presented to you servants and obedient messengers as reminders of your former vows. Without mixing everything up into one, you must each perform your duties in accordance with your rank. In the sphere of the \textit{dharmatā}, however, all things are equal!

HŪM. In the red semicircular \textit{maṇḍala} of control, the remainder of the offerings are piled up like Mount Meru and the four continents. Waves of the blood of lust and desire are bubbling, heaps of the bones of anger rattle and chunks of the flesh of ignorance quiver. The sensuous delight of the fivefold nectar is beyond imagination. You thirty-two oath-bound worldly \textit{dākinīs}, receive this offering of Mahāśrī’s orders and perform your tasks as promised on behalf of we \textit{yogins}.

You \textit{vajrakīmkāras} of great wrath whose ferocious breath pervades the three realms, \textit{vajrayakṣas}, \textit{vajrarākṣasas}, \textit{vajrabhūtas}, \textit{vajraśvānas}, \textit{vajrayamas}, \textit{vajravelālas}, \textit{vajra} lords of death, \textit{vajrakālarātris}, the great ones who catch the breath with an iron hook, the obedient ones who carry away calumny, you who move like the formless wind, you who push back trouble as if moving in a dance, you who delight in the acquisition of a thousand skulls, who cast beckoning gestures to the triple world, the great ones who liberate the threefold world with compassion, you great \textit{mudrās} of the assembly and so on, together with all your retinue of \textit{vajra} sons and daughters, the eighteen great \textit{kimkāras} who liberate the triple world—the sensuous delight of the fivefold nectar is beyond imagination. Receive this offer-

\textsuperscript{629} A45, 412–13.
ing of Mahāśri’s orders and perform your tasks as promised on behalf of we yogins.

Displaying demonic forms utterly impossible to bear, you twenty-eight powerful īśvarīs—the sensuous delight of the fivefold nectar ..., etc.

Daughter of Indra,⁶³⁰ shining goddess whose noose is composed of rays of sunlight; daughter of the ṛṣi Agni, shining goddess with the lustre of fire whose garland is composed of lightning; daughter of Yamarāja, blazing ferocious daughter, she of the vajra mortar; daughter of the rākṣasa king, shining goddess of death wielding a sword; daughter of king Varuṇa, great blazing one attached to scent; daughter of Vāyu, king of the wind, you shining goddess with an eagle overhead; daughter of the yakṣa king, all-pervading shining goddess whose face is a shooting star; daughter of the king of obstructors, great shining goddess with the ears of an ox (elephant?), to all you eight great blazing goddesses—the sensuous delight of the fivefold nectar ..., etc.

She who dessicates the triple world in an instant, she who brandishes a sword and she who wields a net, she with a corpse, she who summons and she who bestows sensual experience, to all you mātrs⁶³¹—the sensuous delight of the fivefold nectar ..., etc.

In the east is the swiftly moving one, princess of the gandharvas; in the south is she who hurries, princess from the realm of Yama; in the west is the swiftly moving one, princess of the nāgas; and in the north is she who hurries, princess of the yakṣas. To you four great sisters who have taken oaths with sincerity—the sensuous delight of the fivefold nectar ..., etc.

Messengers in the eastern direction, you sixty women in the family of Conch moving faster than the wind, you must perform your task of slaying the enemies and obstructors! Messengers in the southern direction, you sixty women in the family of Iron moving faster than the wind, you must perform your task of slaying the enemies and obstructors! Messengers in the western direction, you sixty women in the family of Copper moving faster than the wind, you must perform your task of slaying the enemies and obstructors! Messengers in the northern direction, you sixty women in the family of (there appears to be a hiatus here. According to C24 the family of the north is called Turquoise. This should be followed by Gold from the nadir and then, from the zenith, those in the family of) Rosewood moving faster than the wind, you must perform your task of slaying the enemies and obstructors! Each of you three hundred and sixty messengers has four faces and four arms, wings, fangs and claws. You grasp at the life force and slay the enemies; to all of you—the sensuous delight of the fivefold ..., etc.

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⁶³⁰ Textual hiatus omits Indra’s daughter. This group is known as the eight blazing goddesses (car rna brgyad).

⁶³¹ One mother goddess appears to have been omitted for there should be seven in this group.
Chapter Seven

MAHĀMĀMSA-RAKTA-CITTA-BASUTA-GOROCANA-SARVAPŪJĀ KHĀHI. Thus they are entrusted with their duties.”

The last group to be called are the twelve bsTan-ma whose sacrificial bali is described as excessive and powerful (lhag la dbang ba). In accepting this cake they reaffirm their oaths and are instructed to fulfil their appointed tasks. Going outside and scattering the offerings, the yogin takes the dish upon which they were gathered and, turning it upside down, he suppresses beneath it the vow-breaking demons. Invoking Vajrakila and all the deities of the mandala by calling upon their former vows, the gods are asked to trample these demons down to dust:

“The dance of pleasure of the glorious great herukas stomps upon the hearts of vow-breaking demons. The dance of pleasure of their ferocious consorts stomps upon the hearts of enemies and obstructors. By the pounding thrusts of the wrathful males, their ferocious consorts are filled with pleasure.”

Finally, returning inside the temple or place of meditation, the yogins gather up the sacrificial articles and recite auspicious prayers as a general benediction for all beings. The Atiyoga rites said to have been taught to Padmasambhava in India by Śrīsirīśa dispense with the bulk of that discussed above. The emphasis in these short texts is placed upon the mind of the yogin who is instructed to abandon mental weariness and contemplate the purity of all dharmas that by nature lack any objectivity. Having generated an all-pervading compassion that reaches to the limits of space, in a state of blissful awareness that is free of discursive thoughts he should meditate upon the mandala of black deities (described in these texts in orthodox manner) and thus all demons are overthrown.

The rTsa ba dril sgrub (A32), however, also presents interesting sidelights on the nature of the Kila cult. It includes, for example, a detailed description of the magical kavaca that may contemplatively be ‘worn’ as a protective charm. Arising in the vast form of the deity, the yogin should imagine each pore of his body to be protected by a miniature wrathful guardian brandishing aloft a fearsome weapon and that, all together, these tiny emanations cover him completely as a protective suit of armour. On his navel stands the ferocious Vajragaruḍa who takes as his food all dangerous beings. Conch shell white in colour, this eagle has iron wings, rolling yellow eyes, an indestructible body and should be clearly visualized grasping a serpent in his iron beak and claws. This text is also unique in offering guidance to the yogin with regard to the problem of demonic possession. All other texts scrutinized in the current study treat demons as (symbolic) outer phenomena, teaching methods for their subjugation requiring the meditator to reach out into the ten directions in order to “drag them forth and slay” them. The present text, however, also considers the necessity of dealing with an offending demon that has taken residence

633. The Mahottarakila text adds here that after the twelve bsTan-ma who dwell on the periphery of the mandala have received their offerings, the mandala itself gradually dissolves from the edges until all surrounding deities are absorbed into the central figure. B11, 562; C4, 61.
634. A45, 413.
635. A32 & 35, etc., found in all three collections. Vairocana, also, is said to have studied the doctrines of Vajrakila in India under Śrīsirīśa. S. Karmay, The Great Perfection, 25.
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<td>Hümkāra (zenith)</td>
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<td>Trailokyavijaya (northeast)</td>
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Derived from the *rDo rje phur pa che mchog gi 'phrin las* (B11), 538–42

1 These columns refer to the central pair of hands. Each deity wields a *vajra* and skull in his upper pair of hands and rolls a *kīla* between the palms of the lower. Note that in this text the animal-headed emanations to the right and left of each *khroda* king are also said to carry the attributes listed here.

2 Also found as *kha trom*, *kha dong* and *kha tong*. 

within the yogin's own body. In that case, it is said, one should meditate very deeply upon fire and, with the demon held clearly in mind, burn him up where he stays.
Chapter Eight
Gaining the Power of the Deity

Having mastered the stages of utpattikrama and accomplished the mental transformation of the universe into the vast mandala of Kila deities (bhavakīla), the yogin’s next task is to manifest perfect enlightenment within that ideal theatre through the process of sampannakrama.

The Northern Treasures Kila text presented as the ultimate “guide to the attainment of unsurpassed enlightenment” is the dKar po lam gyi sgron ma, ‘The Lamp of the White Path’ (A9, B15, C6), which is said to be like a lamp illuminating the procedures through which the power of Vajrakila may be gained. The colophon of the text claims it to be a quintessential instruction derived from tantras, taught to Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal by Padmasambhava, and within it are found details of the three cakras of body, speech and mind. Certainly the basic structure of the meditation, based upon the three vajra syllables (OM AH HUM) residing in the yogin’s forehead, throat and heart, is fundamental to tantric methodology but its special application here in combination with the condensed DHADDHI mantra of the Vajrakila cycle is most unusual. Innumerable variants of the DHADDHI mantra are taught in the texts of the Black deity cycle with the sole purpose of inciting the servants of the Vajrakila doctrines to set about their violent tasks of attacking the enemy. Within this Mahottarakila text, however, the mantra is internalized and applied directly to the goal of enlightenment. In the absence of any parallel or similar instruction for meditation to be found within the root tantra of Mahottarakila (A3) analysed above, we are unable to determine whether this commentary derives from the personal insight of the teacher637 or from some other, as yet unnoticed, traditional source.

The text begins with a salutation to “the wisdom embodiment of spontaneously arisen great vajra wrath” and the statement that this teaching is the quintessence of all the combined upadeśas of Vajrakila within a single succinct explanation. The yogin who wishes to practise this meditation, it is said, may either engage the assistance of a samaya partner or perform the task alone “in the manner of a lion”. Collecting together the requisite ritual articles he should retire to an auspicious place, blessing and purifying the site in the usual manner. Setting out the mandala in its elaborate form, he should arrange upon it the necessities of worship. He should meditate upon the raksācakra and purify all

637. A similar teaching is to be found in brief in the Mahottarakila sādhana (B11, 536–7) also said to have been taught by Padmasambhava.

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the sins of his body and speech. He should bless the three essential offerings of medicine, blood and bāli and generate the bijas of the elements from the sphere of appearance and emptiness. Then, constructing in his mind the divine residence of the gods, he should visualize himself clearly as the deity Vajrakila seated upon a throne in the non-dual embrace of his consort. Around him he should see the dasakrodha kings and their queens together with their retinues of assistants and so on, all generated in accordance with the procedures outlined above. Before him and to his left and right stand the three supreme sons of his body, speech and mind, said here to be the life force of the essential purity of ‘liberation’. Having thus established the samayamandala, this should be blessed as wisdom by the descent of the jñānadevas and the yogin, his own nature perfected as skilful means, should present all the deities with offerings and praise. In this way, applying himself assiduously to the yoga of approaching and becoming one with the deity, the yogin establishes his mind in divine pride and accomplishes through mantras an attitude of supreme bodhicitta, utterly free of all worldly hopes and fears.638

Clearly visualizing himself in the form of the great glorious Vajrakila, the yogin should see upon the crown of his head a white wheel with nine spokes upon which is arranged the body mantra consisting of nine syllables which bar the doors of nine moral downfalls. In the centre of the wheel stands the syllable OM and around its rim are arranged the letters of Vajrakila’s hrdaya called “the mantra of violent suppression and repulsion” and the whole wheel blazes with light.

The combined mantra to be arrayed upon the crown of his head is given in the text as OM VAJRAKIL KILAYA KĀYAVAJRA KAṬANKATE YA YETA KARA IMĀN SARVAVIGHNĀN BĀM HŪM PHAT, explained as follows: The eight seeds of violent suppression (OM VAJRAKIL KILAYA) are the luminous body (KĀYA) marked with the triple VAJRA. By KAṬANKATE sins are purified and by many repetitions of YA, the nirmānakāya is attained. All other beings are purified by YETA KARA (? yeṣṭhakāra). Moral downfalls of the body are purified in their own place by IMĀN and all sins of the body are gathered together by SARVA. The heads (of the demons of sin) are crushed by the yoga of VIGHNĀN, and by BĀM the manifestation of dharmatā is accomplished. By HŪM, indivisible reality is contemplated and by PHAT the yogin’s body is liberated as the nirmāṇakāya. This is the ultimate goal (abhiprāya) of the body on the path of secret mantra.

Remaining in a state of ecstatic fixation upon this wheel, the yogin recites the mantra and imagines the wheel to revolve in an anticlockwise direction as rays of white light stream out to pervade the entire trichiliocosm. As they rise upwards, the light rays summon the hearts of all Tathāgatas and present them with offerings. Spreading out in every direction they strike the bodies of all beings in the six classes, purging them of sin, and gathering back together again those rays of light are absorbed into the wheel which then becomes exceedingly bright. As it revolves, each and every defilement within the yogin’s body is drawn into the light and burned up like feathers in a bonfire.

At the completion of the mantra recitation, the wheel melts into the all-pervading mahābindu until it remains like a solitary white pearl, the emblem of the yogin’s natural

638. A9, 92–3.
purity, upon the crown of his head. The notion of a material body made of flesh and blood is turned aside and the yogin’s clearly visible appearance is known to be devoid of inherent nature (svabhāva). This is the attainment of bodhi, the great secret of the secret Mantrayāna.639

The wheel at the throat is red in colour and also has nine spokes. At its centre is the syllable ĀH which has the blissful nature of the enjoyment of six tastes and the mantra of violent suppression is arrayed around its rim. Upon its spokes are the nine syllables that are the essential means of accumulating siddhis which, the text explains, become ineffective if seen by those who have no vows.

The mantra of this wheel is given as OM VAJRAKI LI KI LAYA VĀKVAJRA JAYE VĪJAYE KURU KARA IMĀN SARVAVIGHNĀN BĀM HŪM PHAṬ, about which it is said that the unstoppable eight seeds (as above) arise as the mantra of divine speech (VĀK) which is the second VAJRA. JAYE is the speech of utter purity. VĪJA indicates victory over mundane speech and YE purifies all defilements of the speech of others. By KURU KARA wisdom arises and by IMĀN is shown the ultimate truth640 of the natural condition. SARVAVIGHNĀN purifies sin. BĀM is the sphere of speech that pervades the dharmatā. HŪM contains within itself the nature of unstoppanility and PHAṬ is the liberation of speech as the sambhogakāya. Such is the ultimate goal of speech on the path of secret mantra.

As the yogin begins his recitation of the mantra, the wheel flares up in a bright blaze of light which completely envelops his body and purifies him of sin. Radiating outwards, the rays of light delight the Tathāgatas of the ten directions who purge away all defilements of speech of the six classes of living beings. Returning to the wheel, the red light is absorbed within it and all defilements of the yogin’s speech are washed clean as if by water so that both outwardly and inwardly he becomes radiantly pure as if permeated by the light of sun and moon.641

The cakra of light at the heart is blue in colour and has either nine spokes and rim, as before, or else it may be visualized in the form of a śrīvatsa with eight corners.642 In the centre of that diagram in the heart is located the syllable HŪM which is the bindu of the indestructible life force itself, the very essence of the wisdom mind. By just this syllable are all worlds emptied and śīnyātā made manifest. The eighteen bijamantras are said to abide in purity and around them is arrayed the mantra of violent suppression.

The secret mantra for that profound state is OM VAJRAKI LI KI LAYA CITTA VAJRA ACITTA APARACITTA MAMA VAŚAM HŪM MATAM MYAK KARA IMĀN SARVAVIGHNĀN BĀM HŪM PHAṬ, about which it is said that the eight seeds of violent suppression are the self-secret

639. A9, 93–5.
640. C says it shows the two truths.
641. A9, 95–6.
642. Although Sir Monier-Williams in his Sanskrit-English Dictionary says that this emblem looks like “a cruciform flower”, in Tibetan art it is always depicted as an endless knot (usually having ten loops) and it is very difficult to see how it could be arranged “with eight corners”. B11, 536, speaks of an eight-faceted jewel in the heart with a three-pronged vajra in its centre. dPal be’u may therefore stand here for some kind of gem. In any case, the mantra given here has ten divisions (also called “eighteen” by a curious process of reckoning) and yet the wheel that contains it is still said to have nine spokes.
of the mind (CITTA) which is the third VAJRA. ACITTA (inconceivable) is the mind free of faults. The five syllables APARACITTA (unsurpassed mind) is the vajra mind which cannot be overthrown by another and the five syllables MAMA VAŚAM HŪM are the five jñānas which spontaneously arise when all mental fabrications of ignorance are abandoned. MATAM blocks the door to becoming and rebirth. By MYAK KARA, consciousness is purified and by IMĀN the door to the lower realms is closed. SARVAVIGHNĀN purifies all defilements of mind and BĀM is the mind's self-luminous wisdom. HŪM is the uncontrived understanding of reality and by PHAT the mind is liberated as the dharmakāya. This is the ultimate goal of the mind on the path of secret mantra.

As he performs the recitation, the yogin imagines the wheel to blaze with light so that as it revolves it burns away all the defilements of mind. The rays of light that spread out from that wheel make offerings to the hearts of all Tathāgatas and as they return they purify all sins of the six classes of living beings. They then gather together and melt back into the wheel. All sins of mind everywhere are cleansed so that the mind becomes like a highly polished mirror within which the yogin confidently views all appearances as the natural clarity of wisdom spontaneously arising from the dharmatā sphere of emptiness.643

The yogin should practise the three goals in that way until the stage of ‘heat’ (ūsman)644 is attained in body, speech and mind. Until then, the text insists, the yogin should keep these three wheels as his inexhaustible ornaments and thus purify the habitual patterns (vāsanā) of holding to the duality of appearances in terms of subject and object. Ignorance will thereby become illuminated as a state of wisdom and he will attain the perfect three kāyas. By means of these meditations the wisdom mind will become clearly manifest and the state of omniscience quickly gained. This upadeśa is a ‘tree of life’ (srog shing) composed of unchanging crystal and the yogin should know that by putting these instructions into practice, all obstacles will be cleared away so long as he recites these syllables of the condensed DHADDHI mantra.


644. Heat or warmth is a stage associated in the sūtras with the path of yoga, the second of the five paths (mārga). In this context, however, the term refers to the attainment of a satisfactory climax in meditation.
Chapter Nine
Gaining Control of the Mischievous Spirits

Having attained the highest degree of occult power through total identification with the
deity, the yogin is now in a position to demonstrate his mastery of the phenomenal world
in the fulfilment of his Mahāyāna pledge to liberate all beings from saṃsāra. The way in
which he honours that commitment forms the subject matter of both this and the following
chapters.

In particular, the yogin at this stage should be capable of bringing under control those
mischievous spirits who formerly swore an oath of allegiance to support and protect the
Vajrakila Dharma and its practitioners and which, if properly coerced, may greatly assist
the yogin in the execution of his religious duties. Although such occult mastery is often
much admired by a largely superstitious public, Buddhist hierophants since the sage of the
Śākyas himself have denounced these practices as improper and unsuitable for those
whose minds are seriously set on enlightenment. Tāranātha, for example, says that the
attainment of power over worldly dākinīs is really a hindrance to spiritual progress and
bDud-’joms Rinpoche warns that the practice of black magic is like playing with a sharp
weapon that may easily cut off the practitioner’s own life. The popularity of such rites
with both yogins and laymen alike, however, is evident throughout Tibetan culture at large
and amply testified to by the number of treatises dealing with the subject to be found
among the material presently under consideration.

The bKa’ nyan lcags kyi ber ka, ‘Iron Cloak of Obedient Servants’ (A10, B19, C7), is
one of the rites specifically mentioned in our them byang through which the yogin may
seek to gain control over those ‘elemental spirits’. Referred to in its colophon as ‘the
central heart of yoga’, it is said to have been taught by Padmasambhava to Ye-shes mtsho-
rgyal in the lion’s cave at sPa-gro stag-tshang before being hidden away as treasure for the
benefit of future generations. The bSe lcags dung gsum srog gi citta (B28) indicates it as
the means through which Lang-lab byang-chub rdo-rje gained his remarkable occult
power although, it may be remembered, the service rendered him by the protectors proved
ultimately insufficient to prevent his untimely demise by black magic. B28, in which

647. An account of Lang-lab rdo-rje is to be found above, Chapter Four.
the pith teachings described here are much elaborated, proved invaluable in determining
the meaning of the present text.

A drawing of the three concentric maṇḍala circles\textsuperscript{648} and so on and the arranging of
ritual articles is said to be unnecessary for the practice of this rite\textsuperscript{649} but the yogin must
have a clear recollection of enlightened intention (abhiprāya, the subject of our previous
chapter) and be established in the state of tathātā. Thus mentally prepared, the yogin
summons all the servants (bran), messengers (pho nya) and obedient ones (bka’ nyan) and
tells them that the time has come for the fulfilment of their oaths. Maintaining his position
of authority over them through mindfulness of the sādhana of Vajrakila (referred to
throughout this text as Vajrayakṣa), the yogin recites the hrdaya of the deity (“the mantra
of suppression and control”) and the individual mantras of his wrathful entourage. He
then recites “the mantra of twice eighteen syllables that pertain to the mātras”\textsuperscript{650} and thus
the oath-bound ones are summoned by hooking their hearts with their hrdayas.
Overpowering them with the fierce sādhana of HŪM, the yogin should recite the vital bijas
of the messengers on the day of the full moon and, when they have come, he should
remind them of their former vows.

Keeping them suppressed, the yogin should recite seven times the mantras of the fierce
kings Yamāntaka, Hayagrīva and Amṛtakūṇḍalin followed by the words which entrust
them with their sacred duties, twice. Those deities then seize the servants by the life force
of body, speech and mind and place them before the yogin like standing statues.\textsuperscript{651} With
himself clearly visualized as the god, he should fix his gaze upon the oath-bound ones and
strike them with rays of light emanating from the mantra revolving in his heart.\textsuperscript{652} As the
rays turn around and gather back together, those spirits let out wailing cries of misery.
Tormented by suffering, they are guided to the samaya and, being thus affirmed in their
oaths, they are given their instructions. The signs of success that arise in the awakened

\textsuperscript{648} The inner circle consists of the maṇḍalādhīpati and his consort, the intermediate circle is that
of the daśakrodha kings and the outer circle is the assembly of oath-bound protectors. C32,
340.

\textsuperscript{649} B28, however, describes in detail a mandala which may be drawn specifically in order to
accomplish this rite. At the heart of the diagram is a six-pointed star, the points and inter-
mediate spaces of which serve as seats for the twelve chief protectors. B28, 124.

\textsuperscript{650} The division of the DHADDHI mantra (referred to here) into groups of nine, nine and eighteen
has already been noted (Chapter Eight, above). It is met with again (this chapter) below.

\textsuperscript{651} The text at this point offers a short alternative to the full invocation of those three deities in
which it is said that, in order to incite them to act, the yogin should recite BANDHA, IVALA,
CHINDA and with a crazed mind (yid smyo ba) he should imagine a blazing weapon upon his
tongue and three times he should cast a violent curse against his enemy so that the enemy's
head is burst assunder.

\textsuperscript{652} B28 describes this meditation as follows: Whenever those oath-bound goddesses become
rebellious or angry and refuse to obey their orders, the yogin should clearly visualize himself
as the glorious Vajrakila with those twelve protectors imprisoned in front of him within a
triangular box of iron. Then, from the deity’s heart, countless red-black JAḥ syllables should
be sent out to strike those mischievous dākinīs on the syllables MA in each of their own hearts.
Those MA syllables are attracted to the JAḥ syllables like iron needles to a magnet and thus the
dākinīs are robbed of all self control and summoned helplessly before the yogin. Only after
they have submitted to his authority and offered up their life essence (srog snying) should the
yogin re-empower them and bind them under oath. B28, 126.
mind are like the experience of carnal pleasure with a woman, the appearance of ferocious carnivores, treasure or the miracle powers of the leprosy nāga (mdze can klu). All defilements vanish as quickly as shadows on the sky but until then the mantras should each be recited hundreds of times.

The nectar on the altar should be replenished with a mixture of the finest ingredients and the offerings of nectar, blood and bali should be presented. The yogin should recite the mantras that invoke and incite the helpers and then enjoy the assembled offerings. The secret mantras themselves may either be recited separately on that occasion, piling them up like weapons as each one is recited a hundred times, or else all three may be amalgamated into a single long mantra: Oṃ VAJRĀKĪLĪ KĪLAYA ACITTA APARACITTA MAMA VAṢAM TRAG MATAM MYAG KARA A IMĀN ŚIKRAM STAMBHAYA NAN CHINDA CHINDA HŪM PHAṬ. Oṃ VAJRĀKĪLĪ KĪLAYA JAYE VIJAYE KURU KARA IMĀN JA JA VAṢAM JA NAŚ ŚIKRAM STAMBHAYA NAN JVALA JVALA HŪM PHAṬ. Oṃ VAJRĀKĪLĪ KĪLAYA KĀṬANKAṬE YA YETA KARA IMĀN KA KA VAṢAM KA NAŚ ŚIKRAM STAMBHAYA NAN BANHDA BANHDA HŪM PHAṬ. All this is to be recited seven times. Then the abbreviated version, IMĀN VIGHNĀN STAMBHAYA NAN, which is said to be the body, speech and mind of all the deities, followed by DHADDHI MAMA KARMA ŚRĪKRAMA KANKA KĀRAYE Oṃ LAM LAM HŪM LAM LAM IMĀN VIGHNĀN STAMBHAYA NAN.655

The text then gives a mantra which, it claims, will effectuate the stages of nourishment and healing (gsa ba): Oṃ VAJRĀMRTAKUNḌALI HŪM VAJRAŚAMAYAM IDAM TENA RAKṢAM KĀYAVĀKITTAVAJRA SVABHĀVĀTMAKO 'HAM SAMAYA IMĀN beat on the life force of So-and-so BHYO. Thus, supposedly, the yogin refreshes his vows with nectar and unites himself fully with divine body, speech and mind. So doing, the oath-bound ones are deprived of their personal power and put to work as his servants.

This concise, cryptic text ends with an apologia in which it is claimed that the true purpose (artha) of secret Mantrayāna, clarified at length in other teachings, is here condensed into ‘the triple essence of Vajrayāsa’. Thus, his white face on the right is said to be the real Yamāntaka, who stirs up the brain blood in the skulls of the four bSe-mo goddesses. His red face on the left is the powerful Hayagrīva, who cuts to pieces the base of the tongues of the four Śvanmukhā sisters. His blue central face is Amṛtakunḍalin, who confounds the heart cakra of the black dākinīs. This triple essence is a curse through which the oath-bound servants may be kept under control. Calling them hither with force, they may be incited to attack the enemy and the yogin should lavishly offer them the assembled foodstuffs and bali. Other than this there is no secret instruction that can act as an iron cloak of obedient servants.

With regard to these three groups of protective goddesses, said above (Chapter Four) to have offered their services to Padmasambhava in Nepal as he meditated upon the Vajrākīla doctrines sent to him from Nālandā, B28 informs us that the white group (called

653. Oneiric indications listed in B28 include the appearance of a well-dressed noble lady, a black yak, black birds and carnivorous beasts.
654. A10, 100.
656. A10, 102.
the family of Rosewood) consists of those who have transcended *samsāra* and who move like wild animals in the evening twilight. They are the life force of speech (more usually associated with the colour red) and their correspondence in the body is a white syllable *MA* in the centre of an eight-petalled lotus on the tongue. There they dwell supported upon a white wind (*prāṇa*), going in and out like the repeated attraction of iron to a magnet. The black goddesses (the Iron family) with hair of matted blood locks hover between the transcendent and the mundane and move like *rākṣasa* demons in the dead of night. They abide in the heart as the life force of the mind upon a black syllable *MA* in the centre of an eight-sided sun and they are attracted to anything black just as bees are attracted to flowers. The worldly class of red goddesses (the Conch family) are most potent just before dawn, a characteristic they hold in common with medicine. They are the life force of the body (more usually associated with the colour white) and abide in the ‘conch ocean’ (skull) upon a red syllable *MA* in the centre of an eight-spoked wheel between the eyebrows (“on the *ūrṇā*”). They depend upon blood in the way that children depend on mother’s milk.657

These three groups of goddesses, hitherto called Śvanmukhā and the rest, are internalized here in a manner typical of doctrines from the Mahottarakīla cycle. Clearer descriptions of the twelve are to be found in our texts A7 (60–6), A28 (193–5), A44 (356–8), A53 (677–81 & 704–6), B36 (230–4), etc. and in a lengthy commentary by Padma ’phrin-las not found within the three collections.658

Śvanmukhā herself is described in these texts as being dark blue in colour with the head of a wolf (*spyang*). Her mount is a female nine-headed wolf of iron and she wields in her hands a skull-topped staff and a *kīla* of iron. Her sister Sīra (the meaning of which is unclear) is yellow in colour and has the head of a wild dog. She wields an iron hook and a golden *kīla* and rides upon a wild yellow bitch with eight tongues. Stretching out her tongues in the eight directions, this mount is said to bring the eight classes of local demons under control. *Srgāla*659 is red and has the head of a fox. Her weapons are a *vajra* and a *kīla* of copper and her mount is a three-legged vixen. Kukkura (*Ku-ku*) is green in colour and has the head of a dog. She waves a banner made from the skin of a child and has a *kīla* of turquoise. She rides upon a turquoise-coloured bitch with long hair. These are the four Śvanmukhā sisters in the Rosewood family, also known as ‘the goddesses of evening’.

The next group are the four Mahātmādevīs (*bDag-nyid-ma*):660 Remati (*Re-ti*)661 is dark blue in colour and her long black hair pervades the *traidhātuka*. She carries “the supreme

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658. I have in my possession the relevant pages of a third generation photocopy of this text (lacking the title page) which I obtained from C. R. Lama in 1989, who informed me that it is known as the *bKa’* *’brgyad rnam nges*.
659. Orthographic variants of this name include Śaṇa, Śriṇga and Srīla.
661. A goddess Revati is described in the *Yogini-tantra* XIII as the consort of Śiva who is forced to remain in exile in the barbarian (*mleccha*) borderlands where her children are appointed to be
kila fashioned from a human leg" and a khatvānga, wears a cloak of human skin and rides upon a three-legged mule. Remajā (Re-dza) is dark yellow, carries a golden sickle and a turquoise box, wears a rainbow cloak of peacock feathers and rides upon a doe. Remajū (Re-dzu) is dark red, carries an iron hook and a skull cup full of blood, wears a belted cloak (re le’i lwa ba) and rides upon a blue water buffalo. Remaji (Re-dzi) is dark green, carries a notched stick (khram shing) and a ball of thread (gru gu), wears a water-patterned cloak of black silk (chu dar lwa ba) and rides upon a camel. These are the four ‘midnight goddesses’ in the family of Iron, also known as queens of the four seasons (Rturajñī, sometimes with Remati as their chief and fifth member of the group) and occasionally as ‘the Śrīdevī group’.

The final group of four consists of the Conch family Bhūmipati sisters (Sa-bdag-ma), also known as ‘the bSe-mo goddesses’ and ‘the goddesses of morning’. Of these Ya-byin, ‘the daughter of the bdud’, is dark blue in colour and she carries an iron hook and a kila for striking (gdab phur). She wears a long-sleeved gown of blue silk and rides upon a ‘horse of Mára’ (bdud rta) or turquoise dragon. De-byin, ‘the daughter of the planets (gza’)’, is yellow in colour and carries a golden kila (or lasso) and a porcupine. She wears a gown of black silk and rides upon a ‘horse of the planets’ (gza’ rta) or sea monster (makara). bSe-byin, ‘the daughter of the btsan’, is dark red in colour and carries an iron chain and an excellent kila (mchog phur or bse phur). She wears a trailing robe of red silk and rides upon a red ‘horse of the btsan demons’ (btsan rta) or noose of lightning (glog zhags). Phag-byin, ‘the daughter of the klu’, is dark green in colour and carries a bell and turquoise kila. She wears a long gown of blue silk and rides a blue-green ‘horse of the nāgas’ (klu rta) or sea horse (chu rta). For an account of the manner in which these twelve goddesses were first elected to become protectors of the Kila doctrines (phur pa’i bsrung rna), see Chapter Four, above. Compare also below, Chapter Twelve, where their Rosewood, Iron and Conch brothers are discussed.

The next text in all collections and the one specified by name in the them byang as a partner to the above is the Nag po dug gi ‘khor lo (A11, B19, C7), also said to have been the guardians of local shrines to the goddess Kāmākhyā. Schoterman’s comments about her seem pertinent here in the light of our findings above (Chapter Four) when he says: “The story of Revati in the Yogini-tantra can be regarded as an illustration of a common phenomenon ... the embedding of a foreign/local deity into an established religious system”.

662. According to the bDud ’joms phur pa cycle, this goddess carries a mirror. 663. The notched stick has been shown to be an incised wooden record of sin and thus a tally of punishment due. A. Rena Tas, “Tally-stick and Divination Dice in the Iconography of Lha-Mo”, Acta Orientalia Hungarica, VI.1–2, 1956, 163–79. In his article, Tas points to the association of the four goddesses currently under discussion (in their guise as queens of the four seasons) with “midnight” but does not account for it (pp. 174, 177). The association, therefore, may have been brought into the myth of their subjugation by Padmasambhava so that the latter was not its original source. 664. For their icons see L. Chandra, Buddhist Iconography of Tibet, 154–8. These five are again depicted in the same collection within a single icon in both 899 and 905 where Remati has garuda wings. As an independent deity, Remati is depicted wielding a kila in icon 900 where
taught by Padmasambhava to his consort Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal in the lion’s cave at sPa-gro stag-tshang. In this text the oath-bound servants, having satisfactorily been brought under control, are incited to perform their violent task of attacking and slaying the enemy, here specifically said to be “the ten kinds of beings who must be killed” (bsgral ba’i zhin bcu). As before, it is stated that this rite may only be performed by one who has successfully mastered the Vajrakila sadhana and is capable of maintaining an imperturbable attitude of divine pride. Such a yogin should take up his dwelling in a charnel ground with all the appropriate characteristics and there, during the period of the waning moon, this rite of ‘the transference of consciousness’ should be performed.

she is called Svayambhū-devi, and as the subduer of nāgas in 903 she is shown with a makara-headed Kila as her companion.

These are: (1) Those who cause harm to the Buddhist religion, (2) Who bring dishonour to the triratna, (3) Who embezzle the property of the sangha, (4) Who slander the Mahāyāna, (5) Who place the life (body) of the guru in danger, (6) Who sow discord among the vajra brothers and sisters, (7) Who prevent others from attaining siddhi, (8) Who are without love and compassion, (9) Who abandon the sacred samaya and samvara vows, and, (10) Who have perverted views concerning karma and its retribution.

mda’ 'phen, “shooting the arrow”, refers to the slaying of an enemy whose consciousness is then “transferred” to the realm of bliss.
The yogin should construct the violent mandala an arrow’s length in width and anoint it with poison and blood of various kinds. In its centre he should build a triangular pit (‘brub khung), one cubit deep and one cubit long. The first of the three tiers of this ‘iron house’ should be daubed with black paint, the second with red paint and the third with white. A kīla of thorny wood (rtsang phur; but C has gtsang phur, “a pure kīla”) should be enclosed within a circle (“bound with a garland”) of skulls, the area within which is then smeared with blood and charcoal from the funeral pyre. The mandala should be constructed with a red half-moon in its centre, a white border around the outside and a yellow courtyard in between. Upon it should be placed an effigy of the enemy made in the form of a rag doll with cloth from the one to be attacked (dri ma’i gos, “cloth having the scent” of its owner) stuffed with kuṣa grass from the charnel ground.

A piece of shroud taken from a corpse in the cemetery should be prepared as an artist’s canvas by smearing it with a paste of chalk (sa dkar) and it should be anointed with human flesh, poison and blood. Using as ink a preparation of blood, poison and charcoal from a cremated body that have been stirred with a sharp pointed weapon, an image of the enemy should be drawn upon that canvas using a knife or an arrow as a pen. The head, tongue and heart of that image should be marked with cakras having the form of four concentric circles. In their centres should be written the three bijas of “the life support of blackness”: HAM as the support of the lifespan (āyus), ŚA as the support of the breath (prāṇa) and NB. as the support of the life force (jīvita). On half-moon seats should be drawn the Mother God (ma Iha), the Life God (srog Iha) and the Enemy God (dgra Iha). Finally that image of the enemy is to be enclosed within a series of six concentric triangles, expressed in the text as six bewildering (‘khrul mig) iron houses.

667. This line is unaccountably varied in the three texts. A adds ashes to the list of substances with which it should be anointed, B says that it should be anointed skilfully, and C says that it should be anointed all the way out to its edges.

668. These half-moons could equally well be intended as seats for the three bijas just listed. The text is ambiguous.

669. Tucci in his The Religions of Tibet (p. 193) writes of the group of five personal gods known as the ‘go ba’i lha who are born together with the person they protect. Throughout that person’s life they reside on his or her body from where they function as guardians of the vital forces of life and well-being. The mo lha resides in the pit of the left arm, the srog lha in the heart and the dgra lha upon the person’s right shoulder. These, then, are presumably the places that the yogin should select when drawing those gods upon the image of his enemy. All Tibetans are probably familiar with the oft told tale concerning the death of the last of the line of early “sky descended kings” as recounted in the rGyal rabs gsal ba’i me long. The assassination of this king was made possible by a subterfuge that caused him to wear the highly impure article of a fox’s corpse upon his right shoulder. Offended by the corpse, the dgra lha (whose special function it is to protect one from enemies) abandoned his position and thus left the king vulnerable to attack. This, of course, is exactly the purpose of its inclusion within the present ritual and, presumably, is a uniquely Tibetan contribution to the rite.

G. Tucci (TPS, 741) says “the mythology of the dgra lha is very complex” and he lists the names of a group of nine dgra lha, both male and female, some of whom “represent atmospheric phenomena” while others “have the aspects of birds”. He concludes that they are clearly a legacy of the Bon tradition with no discernable Indian ancestry. Elsewhere (The Religions of Tibet, 194), Tucci describes the dgra lha as the god who materially protects one from his or her foes throughout that person’s lifetime and then goes on to act as “counsel for
With his own body clearly visualized in the form of the deity Vajrakila, the yogin should meditate upon the six secret mantras in due order, as they are given in the bKa’ nyan lcags kyi ber ka text above. The mantras on his forehead and throat are to be arranged upon nine-spoked wheels and those in his heart upon a wheel with eighteen spokes. Around the outside of the wheels run powerful mantras of sorcery (thun sngags) with forty syllables, thirty-two syllables and thirty-one syllables respectively.\textsuperscript{671} Rays of light radiate out from those mantras and accumulate within the sharp weapons that the yogin has on the table before him for use in the rite. Thus those weapons are empowered.\textsuperscript{672}

As the yogin recites NR he transforms the rag doll into the actual presence of the enemy and meditates that the enemy’s consciousness is absorbed within it. That effigy is then imprisoned within the triangular pit by sealing its opening with an eight-spoked cakra.\textsuperscript{673}

A second red half-moon should be drawn, divided into six parts: On the first part is placed frankincense that separates good from evil (dbye ba’i gu gul) and this should be offered in the morning (zhogs). On the second part is placed the white mustard seed of absorption (stim pa’i yungs dkar). On the third part is placed a bundle of green and red strings for the deeds to be done (bya byed sngo dmar phung). On the fourth part are placed the poisonous substances of sorcery that lead to madness (smyo ba’i dug rdzas thun). On the fifth part are placed weapons consisting of the three nails that strike (gdab pa’i phur gsum mtshon). On the sixth part is placed the glorious bali which is to be hurled (btab pa’i dpal gtor).

\textsuperscript{670} The term ‘khrul mig may also refer to a lattice-like structure, usually prepared of sharpened poison sticks. A11, 104–5.

\textsuperscript{671} I presume that these three sets of mantras are to be derived from those given later in the text but can find no satisfactory correspondence between the mantras given there and the numbers of syllables required here.

\textsuperscript{672} A short text found in all three collections (A16, B57, C32) explains the meditation to be performed at this time: Having become one with the deity by sealing his body with the mudrā, the yogin should radiate from his heart a syllable MA which transforms into a sun marked with a blue-black HUM. From this causal syllable arise the letters of the mantra OM VAJRAKIL KILAYA SARVAVIGHNAN BUM HUM PHAT, and this should be recited. At the outset of the recitation, from the chief nijevanakila emerges an emanation of the deity who summons the threefold Kila mandala and all Sugatas. As soon as the oath-bound protectors arrive they offer their life essence and are ordered to fulfill their task of “liberation”. The wrathful emanation then returns to the kila on the altar, causing it to glow with exceeding brightness. A16, 141.

\textsuperscript{673} A fierce weapon in the form of a heavy metal discus with (eight) sharp blades that the ancients used to hurl at one another during times of warfare. Clear illustrations of their use in such rites as those currently under consideration are to be found in S. Karmay, Secret Visions, especially plates 20(1), 22D, 36, 40, 47, 55.
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Upon the platform around the outside of the imprisoned effigy, the yogin should arrange all the articles required for the invocation and worship of the deity as well as those required for the fulfilment of his vows. Magical necessities include the hrdaya of the three groups, sprinkled with amrta and wrapped up inside a skull, butter, oil, fat, honey, milk, blood, black pebbles, a child of incestuous union, a child of a young girl, the skull, heart and blood of a chicken and the flesh and blood of a dog, wolf, fox and wild dog. To the sides and in front should be placed three castles adorned with arrows to which silk ribbons have been attached and victory banners made from the hides of humans, dogs, crocodiles and birds. Small morsels of food should also be placed within those castles.

The gods of the mandala should be clearly visualized and summoned until they are actually present. The yogin then offers them gifts of food and so on and, remaining firm in his resolve, he should focus his attention upon the sharp weapons that he will use in the destruction of his enemy. The first task to be completed is the separation of the enemy from his protector gods (the dgra lha and the rest). The consciousness of the enemy is dragged forth by the yogin’s ferocious assistants and cast down into form by causing it to be absorbed within the effigy. It is held there by binding it with the weapons of green and red thread and, as the yogin hurls poisonous substances of evil magic (dug thun) at it, the protector gods flee and the enemy is driven insane. Those four deeds are to be accomplished by means of the substances arranged on the first four parts of the red half-moon, as above.

As for the actual rite of defeating the one to be subjugated (which euphemism is glossed by an interlinear note in A as ‘killing the enemy’); this the yogin does by adding the mantra of summoning and slaying to the secret mantra of the deity. Thus: OM VAJRAKILI KILAYA, So-and-so must be dragged forth JAH HŪM VAM HOH. MĀRAYA VAŚĀM KURU HAPARAYA HATANAYA HŪM PHAT. AVEŚAYA AVEŚAYA HŪM PHAT. ŚIKRIN ANAYA ŚIKRIN ANAYA HŪM PHAṬ. JALAPAYA JALAPAYA HŪM PHAṬ. OM VAJRAKILI KILAYA ACITTA APARACITTA MAMA VAŚĀM TRAG MATAM MYAG KARA IMĀN JAYE VIJAYE KURA KARA ĪNAN KAṬAŅΚATE YA YETA KARA IMAN DHADDHI MAMA KARMA ŚRĪKRAMA KAŅKA KĀRAYE MĀRASENAPRAMARDANIYE the enemy called So-and-so must be dragged forth JAH HŪM VAM HOH. MĀRAYA CITTA NAN NR JAH JAH TADYATHĀ TADYATHĀ HŪM PHAṬ.

These mantras are explained as follows: OM is the reality of the five jñanas and vajra is the mulamantra of oneself as the deity. KILAYA is the assembly of krodharājas in the ten directions and KILA stands for their ten wisdom consorts. YA is the supreme nail son.

674. The personal accoutrements of a yogin such as the skull drum, thigh bone trumpet, bone ornaments, khayvāṅga, vajra and bell, and so on.
675. I understand that brass pots are normally used here. (Verbal communication from C. R. Lama.)
677. As a collective term covering all unwholesome moral states, the term mārasena is enumerated in the Pāli Suttanipāta, 436–8, as passion, aversion, hunger, thirst, craving, sloth, torpor, fear, doubt, self-will, cant and various forms of self-exaltation. T. O. Ling, Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil, 59. The epithet mārasenaśamaddino, “the crusher of Māra’s host”, as applied to the Buddha is frequently met with in the Pāli canon. See, for example, Dīghanikāya, III, 196.
Chapter Nine

These eight bijas of the secret mantra of blackness (nag mo'i gsang sngags) draw forth the heart and suck in the heart's blood.

By MAMA VAŚAM the four arteries are chopped to pieces. By TRAG the great Lord of Life (srog bdag) is summoned and with MATAM he enjoys the samaya offering of life force.679 Reciting MYAG, the yogin presses the offering of flesh and blood to his lips. Taking up the sword with KARA, the yogin slays the enemy with IMĀN. By means of this eighteenfold secret mantra of the Mahātmādevīs (on the spokes of the blue wheel in the heart), cuts are made that slice up the four arteries in the heart of the enemy.680

By JAYE the messengers are instigated to action and VIJAYE indicates victory over the foe. By KURU KARA he is quickly 'liberated'. By means of these nine bijas of fierce spell belonging to the Śvanmukhā sisters in the nine-spoked red wheel, the centre of the enemy's throat is cut to pieces.

By KATANKAṬE the bSe-mo goddesses are incited and by YA their brothers are called to devour the life force. Reciting YETA KARA, the blood of the brain is churned to a frenzy. By means of these nine syllables of secret mantra on the nine spokes of the white wheel in the centre of the brain, the body of the enemy is hacked to bits.681

In brief: by means of the six syllables DHADDHI MAMA KARMA, the assistants are summoned to act and, with ŚRĪKRAMA, they are entrusted with their duties. These mantras apply equally to all the deities. Then there are the five syllables for the males (pho'i 'bru) KANKA KĀRAYE, nine for the 'butchers' MĀRASENAPRAMARDANIYE, the four of summoning JAH HŪM VAM HOH, the three of slaying MĀRAYA, the six syllables that drag forth the enemy's consciousness CITTA NĀN NĪR JAH JAH, and the eight that grind him to dust TADYATHĀ TADYATHĀ HŪM PHAṬ. If all these secret mantras are recited with strength then the result will be attained, as surely as fat is drawn forth from a side of mutton.

Becoming proficient in this practice of the life force of the oath-bound protectors, the yogin may speedily press them to his service. These evil wheels of mantras, which have the nature of sharp weapons, throw into total confusion the cakras in the three places of the enemy upon whom he meditates, severing the nādis and causing the life-sustaining prāṇa to cease. The first group are those in the brahmācakra which split open the head and confound the brain. The second group belong to the cakra in the throat and they drive their victim insane and cause him to vomit blood. The third group are associated with the cakra in the centre of the heart and they sever the four arteries and separate purity from pollution. This, in brief, is their function. If one merely wishes to scatter one's enemies, this can be achieved within three days by means of the eight syllables of fierce subjugation (OM VAJRĀKĪLI KīLAYA).

679. The samaya pledge of the yogin is to draw out this evil life force and dedicate it to the great Dharmā protector known as "Lord of the Life Force". Thus all "demonic energy" is consumed and transformed into that which is of service to the Dharmā and all living beings.

680. This section as given, however, contains only twelve syllables. In the previous chapter we noted the eighteen syllables upon this cakra to be ACITTA APARACITTA MAMA VAŚAM HŪM MATAM MYAK KARA.

Thus, it is said, the *yogin* gathers together the protectors of the *mandala* and immediately entrusts them to their various tasks. He who turns these wheels of secret *mantras* a thousand times each, both day and night, will achieve thereby the activities of sorcery (*thun gyi las*). Urgently performing the invocations at both dusk and dawn, the *yogin* should hurl the enchanted substances against the effigy and thus strike down his enemy. Calling upon the irresistible force of the oath-bound ones, the *yogin* can gather together all the haughty gods and demons and slay them. He can then appropriate their personal splendour for himself and make a feast of their flesh and blood.

Thus the ritual concludes, but the text itself continues in the same vein with a shorter alternative rite designed to achieve the same purpose. According to this second rite, a *yogin* who wishes to perform these violent acts of sorcery should place together the male ingredient of poison and the female ingredient of blood in a skull taken either from a border tribesman (*kiräta*) or from a person who is the last member of his family line. He should then take three of Mära’s arrows with poisoned tips and a mixture of ingredients that cause insanity and a curse should be placed upon those articles by means of evil spells. The victim should be summoned during the hours of daylight and slain in the dark of night. At the twilight times of dawn and dusk the *yogin* should summon the male and female active messengers who will quickly fulfil the tasks allocated to them by whoever recites this long *mantra* completely free of distraction: OM ..., etc.

The long *mantra* which follows in the text contains a number of indecipherably corrupt passages, apparently written in a mixture of languages. The three separate manuscripts present us in several instances with entirely disparate readings, with even the interspersed Tibetan phrases being so garbled that it remains impossible to determine whether or not they were ever intelligible. Some, perhaps, are Tibetanizations of earlier Sanskrit or Prakrit forms now irretrievably lost, for there is about the entire passage a definite aura of antiquity. One notable feature of this *mantra* is the application of the epithet Gañëśa (lord of the *gana*) to the deity Mahäkäla. In Hindu mythology, Gañëśa is the master of obstacles (*vighna*) and may be responsible either for their cause or removal. The *gana* over which he rules are especially those inferior deities or demigods considered as Śiva’s attendants. Śiva, furthermore, is said to be Gañëśa’s father. In terms of Buddhist mythology, however, Mahäkäla himself is considered the manifest consciousness of the arch demon Rudra (Śiva) bound under oath to act as defender of the Buddhist faith and entrusted with the specific role of lord of the troops ( *gana*). His function is to rule over those inferior and often mischievous deities or demigods now included among the attendants of Heruka, many of whom were formerly in the retinue of Śiva. Both the current text as a whole and the previous *bKa’ nyen lcags kyi ber ka* are concerned with the *yogin*’s status, whilst meditating upon himself in the form of Vajrakila, as supreme

682. Listed as blood and poison and so on, but usually just mustard seeds.
684. The *gana* are *pramathas*, *bhūtas*, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, etc., all that are deformed or ugly and “conceived of as *vighna*”; V. S. Agrawala, “The Meaning of Gañapati”, 1–4. According to STTS, XI (trilokacakra mahämanḍala), outside the circle of *krodha* kings are to be found *ganapatis* (leaders of the troops), *dūtas* (messengers) and *cētas* (slaves).
commander of those unruly troops. It is interesting to find here yet further confirmation of
an Indic origin for these myths and doctrines in their most primitive form.

Towards the end of the text we meet with the pun so often encountered in this literature
in which it is said that “this rite of power which entwines the three classes of oath-
bound messengers” should be used to arouse them to action during periods of inertia. As
they are imagined to descend upon the enemy, the yogin should see the belly of that rākṣasa
donmon deluged beneath a welter of poison, blood and sharp weapons, his life
force burned to ashes by tongues of fire. The three Kilas (‘the three supreme sons’) that
bring about this total annihilation are the body, speech and mind of wrath to whom the
final verses of the text are addressed:

“Oh Lords! You who wear the armour of blessings,
Strike from on high with the hand that holds the hammer!
Hurl your sharp pointed arrows from above!
Yamāntaka, hurl yourself against the enemy’s crown!
Purify the place of the body and
Hack at the vein of Brahmā!
Hayagrīva, attack the throat!
Purify the place of speech and
Sever the arteries of blood!
Amṛtakundalin, descend upon the heart!
Purify the place of the mind and
Slice through the vein of life!”

The yogin should then appropriate for himself the remaining lifespan, vital force, charisma
and power of the conquered enemy but his ‘essence’ should be released into the bliss
of the dharmadhātu. The impure sediments of flesh and blood are to be enjoyed by the
unruly troops of assistants who hacked it to bits with their terrifying swords and the
glorious bali is presented to the assembly of krodha kings.

This wheel of ferocious sharp weapons, belonging to the three groups of red-black oath-
bound protectors, terrifies even the king of the gods. So what needs to be said about its
effect on others? (A note in A obligingly informs us that by “others” is meant the enemies
and obstructors.) Only B tells us that this text was taken from the golden southern
section of the Byang-gter treasure cache at Zang-zang lha-brag.

685. The word used here is 'dril ba, “to entwine, envelop, roll up” and this rite which “entwines”
the three classes of unruly messengers is brought about by “rolling” (‘dril ba) the three kilas
between the palms of the hands.


687. Although the lower yānas teach the karmic result of killing to be a short and miserable
lifespan, the Vajrayāna presents this as a skilful means through which the yogin’s life force is
enhanced. Cannibals and head-hunters in primitive societies all over the world also hope to
appropriate just such intangible qualities of heroic prowess from their victims.

688. dwangs ma, rasa, “juice”, in this context can only mean “consciousness” (rnam shes, vijñāna).

689. A11, 111.
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Although those two are the sole texts specifically named in the them byang, intended as a guide exclusively to the literature of the Mahottarakila cycle, several other documents present similar instructions for the incitement of the fierce protectors. It seems pertinent, then, to deal briefly with those texts of the Black deity cycle from the iron cache in the north which are also to be found in common within each of the three collections.

The short Drag po'i bzlas pa (A16, B57, C32) deals with only two topics: the contemplation appropriate to the radiating and gathering of light, and the appropriate contemplation for the moment of slaying. The first of these topics has been dealt with above in note 672. With regard to the act of slaying, the text states that while the fierce mantra is being recited the yogin should visualize an imaginary kila flying out from the material kila in his hand and attacking the enemy in his own place. Thus, while the material kila is being stabbed into the head of the effigy, the imaginary kila enters the victim’s crown and travels down through his body until it reaches the soles of his feet. When it finally re-emerges from the top of his head, the enemy’s body is dead. It then lands on the tongue and enters the throat. Having buried itself in the windpipe, when it re-emerges from the tongue the speech is dead. Finally it sinks into the heart until it revolves within the “cavity of life” (srog khong). As it re-emerges from the heart, all the subtle traces (vāsanā) are known to be destroyed. Thus, as the material kila is stabbed into the head of the effigy and along the entire length of its body, the victim is surely killed. “This meditation should roll forth like an unimpeded wave rolling on a vast ocean.”

In the Las thams cad kyi don bsdius pa (A20, B60, C23) the yogin finds further guidance for the preparation of a ritual effigy. The existence of an effigy is apparently taken for granted in redactions A & B for only C23 begins with the instruction to “create or draw an effigy of the enemies and obstructors and place it upon a cakra.” Details said to be derived from the Vidyottama-tantra are then given concerning the mantra of wrath to be inscribed upon the effigy. Thus: OM VAJRAKILĪ KILAYA snying khrag shad JAṬ ACITTA APARACITTA are the nineteen syllables of the mātrīs and butchers which should be inscribed upon the head of the effigy and recited. MA RAKMO YAKMO KĀLARŪPA snying rtsa la YAM YAM THIB THIB are the sixteen syllables which should be inscribed upon the right hand of the effigy and recited. CITTA srog la THUNG THUNG srog la YAM YAM JAYE VIJAYE myags myags sod sod CAKRASENA btubs are the twenty-four syllables of the male and female haughty ones which should be inscribed upon the left hand of the effigy and recited. sNying phril phril srog la CHUM CHUM KĀṬANKAṬE snying rtsa la YAM YAM snying kha rak dun TRĪ are the twenty-one ferocious syllables of the Śvānmukhā sisters which should be inscribed upon the left leg of the effigy and recited. MAMA VAṢAM KURU DHADDHI MAMA KARMA IMĀN ŚRĪKRAMA TAM NYA KĀRAYE MĀRASENAPRAMARDANĪYE HŪM PHAT are the thirty-three syllables of the male and female confusion-mongers which should be inscribed upon the right leg of the effigy and recited. If the yogin then strikes with the iron kila, the mantras and the magic articles (thun rdzas), it is said that the enemies and obstructors will die at that very moment.

691. A20, 163.
Within the short *Man ngag rtsa thung* (A37, B56), Padmasambhava explains that when the three groups of goddesses came to him during his period of meditation and offered these *mantras* of their life essence, they promised that their fierce spells would act for the benefit of *yogins*, “like butchers of the life force or a burning fire against all trouble-makers”. Consequently, it is said, any *yogin* who wishes to practise the rites of Vajrakila without knowledge of these *mantras* is like a dog chasing a bird in the sky (with no chance of catching it). OM is to be understood as Vajrakila and VAJRA, his consort Trptacakra. KIL represents the *dasakrodharajas* and KILA their ten fierce wives. YA indicates the supreme son. SARVA means ‘all together’ and VIGHNÂN are the oppressive enemies and obstructors. BAM means that they should be bound with iron fetters. HUM is the heart essence of the deity and by PHÂT the emanations are sent forth. JAH calls in the *siddhis* and HUM means that they are gathered to oneself. AHIR establishes those *siddhis* firmly in the mind-stream of the yogin. MA RAKMO refers to the Mahâtmâdevis, YAKMO to the Bhûmipati sisters and KÂLARûPA indicates the Śvanmukhâs. sNYING rtsa la YAM YAM stands for the four brothers of Rosewood and srog la YAM YAM for the long-armed butchers. sNYING la khril khril stands for the male and female killers. Srog la CHUM CHUM indicates the life force of the enemy while CITTA srog la THUNG THUNG is the Lord of Life (Srog-bdag) himself. sNYING khrag shad indicates the Master of Activity (Las-mkhan) and thum ri li li stands for the form of the enemy. sNYING rtsegs rtsegs ur ur is sound and light while by shig shig gul gul are indicated the ‘devourers’. MYAGS myags sod sod DHADDHI MAMA is the black host (of Mahâtmâdevis) and KARMA ŚRÎKRÂMA KÂRAYE stands for the bSe-mo goddesses. MÂRA SESNA is the rgyal po and btsan mo demons, and by PRA-MARDANIYE PHÂT is meant Śvanmukhâ and her sisters.692 With this in mind, the yogin should bless the iron *kila*, transform his body into the *mandala* of gods, place the effigy of the enemies and obstructors within the *cakra* and slay it.693

The final text of this category to be found within all three collections is again reputed to be based upon the experience of its author Padmasambhava as he “bound the eight classes of gods and demons under oath” to act as protectors of the Buddhist doctrines. Called the *sDe brgyad bsrung bzlog* (A30, B58, C29), this text explains that, as well as being (a) the means of commanding the unruly hosts of oath-bound protectors, these ferocious *mantras* and their attendant rites may also be used (b) in rites of consecration (*pratisthâ*).

(a) Their first function is discussed under the three familiar rubrics: (i) outer, (ii) inner and (iii) secret (*phyi nang gsang gsum*). ‘Outer’ refers to an amulet to be worn upon the body, ‘inner’ refers to offerings to be presented to the protectors and the ‘secret’ aspect is the inner meditation associated with recitation of the *mantras*.

(i) For the purpose of outer protection, the yogin should draw the magic *cakra* on a piece of Chinese paper (*rgya shog*) or human skin, using as ink either burnt horn, filth scraped from the skin or fingernails (*rta bon*) or sulphur. A drawing (*dpe chung*) of the enemy should be prepared with poison and blood and within the belly of Vajrakumâra should be written the *mantra* of ferocious averting. All of these articles should then be smeared with

692. Final two attributions reversed in text.
693. A37, 280–2.
Gaining Control of the Mischievous Spirits

frankincense, solidified cattle-bile, elephant musk,\(^{694}\) sandalwood, \textit{Acorus calamus} \(^{695}\) and realgar.\(^{696}\) 

(ii) The section dealing with the ‘inner protection’ consists simply of an obscure list of requisite magical substances, including \textit{Costus speciosus} (\textit{ru rta}), \textit{ya dha} (\(?\)), magnolia (\(?\, \text{ka li for ka li ka}\)), umbilical cord (\(?\, \text{lte bur}\)), areca nuts (\(?\, \text{kra ri}\)), clay (\(?\, \text{ider po}\)), water (\textit{chu}), fat (\textit{tshil}) and \textit{asafoetida} (\textit{rtsi bo}) etc. “All of these should be collected together on the \textit{cakra} and fumigated with black \textit{guggul} incense.” It must be supposed that such substances are considered to delight the eight classes of spirits and that their presence within the rite therefore increases its magical potency.

(iii) Secret protection is afforded by the \textit{mantras} met with above, which the \textit{yogin} should inscribe upon a \textit{cakra} and set down in front of a standing nail honoured as the \textit{nisevanakila}. He should then imagine a \textit{vajra} arising from the syllable \textit{HOM} which is his own mind and this, in turn, transforms into the deity Vajrakumāra. Keeping the visualization clear, the \textit{yogin} should recite the deity’s \textit{mantra} and the long razor spell (\textit{spu gri’i sngags ring}, the \textit{DHADDHI mantra}), all the while imagining rays of light to radiate out from the \textit{kīla}. Whirling around like a mass of sharp weapons, those light rays strike the \textit{cakra} and, as they are absorbed into it, the \textit{cakra} begins to emit ferocious sparks (“like sharp weapons”) which circle around in a clockwise direction and hack the enemies and obstructors to pieces. This done, those sparks become \textit{vajras} which whirl around in an anticlockwise direction and create a great blazing wall of fire. The \textit{yogin} then imagines himself standing in the centre of that mass of flames in the form of a golden nine-pronged \textit{va- jra}, grinding all trouble-makers to a pulp. When his meditation has reached the stage of heat, the \textit{yogin} should assume the divine pride of the deity beyond imagination (\textit{mi dmigs}).\(^{697}\)

(b) When the \textit{cakra} is to be used within a rite of consecration, upon its reverse side should be inscribed the three syllables (\textit{OM ĀH HŪM}) and the ‘formula of dependent origination’.\(^{698}\) These should each be recited aloud one hundred and twenty-one times and the \textit{mantras} (on the obverse) of the \textit{cakra} should each be read out twenty-one times. Flowers should be scattered and a prayer of benediction offered. The \textit{yogin} then invites the \textit{jñānasattvas} by means of his \textit{samādhi} and offers them praise and gifts. If the article to be consecrated is solid he should imagine that, with the twirl of a silk tassel, rays of light are

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\(^{694}\) All manuscripts read \textit{glang rtsi} at this point. But see below where all read \textit{gla rtsi}.

\(^{695}\) An aromatic root described as being bitter in taste and “useful in the treatment of insanity, epilepsy and afflictions by \textit{rākṣasas}.” Vaidya Bhagavan Dash, \textit{Materia Medica of Indo-Tibetan Medicine}, 38.

\(^{696}\) Said to cure poisoning, affliction by evil spirits and skin diseases. Vaidya Bhagavan Dash, \textit{op. cit.}, 407.

\(^{697}\) A30, 206–8.

\(^{698}\) \textit{YE DHARMA} ..., etc. This well-known verse summary of the Buddha’s doctrines formulated by the sage Asvājit is said to have been spoken to Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, resulting in their conversion to Buddhism. First recorded in the Pāli \textit{Vinaya}, i, 40, 28–9, it was repeated in the \textit{Mahāvastu} and is even included in the closing passages of the \textit{Kūlacakra-tantra}.
transferred from the *cakra* to the material or object. Otherwise the *cakra* itself may be enclosed within an iron amulet or concealed within the chest cavity\(^{699}\) of a statue, etc.

Finally the text states that, in order to maintain the continuity of protection, whatever path of action the *yogin* follows (such as the prescribed path of *mantra* recitation and *samādhi* four times per day) he should at all times continuously maintain the divine pride of himself as the deity. If he does this without a break, all the unruly ‘*dre* and *srin* will be subdued. “Even an army of gods will certainly be repelled. This *upadeśa* on the protective method of keeping the arrogant ones at bay is a piece of paper that acts as a castle for the life force of *yogins*. Vows. Triple seal.”\(^{700}\)

Appended to the end of the text is a brief commentary supposedly taught by Padmasambhava concerning the outer, inner and secret three *cakras*. From what has been written above, however, it seems that a hiatus in the text may have resulted in a conflation of the outer and the inner here, for items listed in the two groups, above, are combined within a single list and the text itself jumps directly from the outer to the secret.

Describing the material *cakra*, this commentary says that the letters of the ‘secret name’ (*gsang ba’i ming*) should be clearly inscribed in substances that are known to possess a special occult affinity with the eight classes of demons. For the *btsan* demons one should use burnt horn (*rva gshob*) and filth (*rla bon*) for the *rgyal po*. For the ‘*chi bdag* one uses sulphur (*mu zi*) and musk (*gla rtsi*) for the *gza*. *Acorus calamus* (*shu dag*) is suitable for the *klu* and wolf dung (*sphyang brun*) for the *ma mo*. For the *gnod sbyin* one uses frog flesh (*sbal sha*) and for the *bdud*, wood (*shing*).

As for the secret *mantra* protection, this is achieved by means of the spell that is taught in the texts for the worship of the deity: OM *VajraKili Kilaya SarvaVighnān Bam Hūm Phaṭ Jahn Hūm Ah Ma Yakmo Rakmo Kālarūpa dregs pa’i snying rtsa la Yam Yam snying la Khril Khril srog la Chum Chum Citta srog la btung btung snying khrag srog la shad shad la thum ri li lt sde brgyad kyi snying tsegs tsegs ur ur shig shig gul gul myags myags sod sod Dhaddhi Mama Karma Śrīkrama Karaye Mārasenapramardaniye gnod byed che ge mo Māraya Hūm Phaṭ VajraKili Kīlaya Vajrayamarāja Māravajra Ya Tri Kot Nāga Rakmo Yaksagrīvāya Mahā Ram Yam Kham Kṣataśatrūn Māraya Māraya sod bzlog BHyo. Reciting this secret *mantra* four times per day with the god held clearly in mind, the *yogin* should strike the effigy of whatever trouble-makers there are with the purified iron *kīla*, the invocation of the god and the *mantra*. In times of great trouble, this superior method provides more effective protection than the rites of *simābandha*, hurling the magic weapon (*zor*) or imprisoning within the triangular iron box. By this recitation alone, all arrogant ones are kept under control. “These are the words of the *guru* taken out as treasure from the iron cache in the north.”\(^{701}\)

\(^{699}\) *mChan khung* usually means “armpit” but in this context I take it to mean any cavity within the body of the statue or image being consecrated.

\(^{700}\) A30, 208.

\(^{701}\) A30, 208–10.
Chapter Ten
Displaying the Activities

Chapter Three of the root BRT makes it clear that the function of the Vajrakila mandala is to “pulverize all the enemies and obstructors in the ten directions” and, accordingly, the Byang-gter texts in our three collections include a number of violent rituals calculated to bring this about. The them byang proclaims ‘the heart of the fierce rites’ to consist of three primary aspects: scattering (zor),702 burning (sreg) and trampling down (mnan), activities mentioned in the eighth chapter of the root tantra and elaborated in virtually every ritual text thereafter. In particular, the essential features of these three activities are clarified in the tripartite text mNan bsreg ’phang gsum (A13, B20, C11)703 as follows:

Scattering

Prior to commencing the rite of scattering,704 the yogin should fill either “a skull with evil signs” (thod pa mtshan ngan)705 or the horn of a yak that twists to the right (gYag ru gYas pa’i skyogs) with various kinds of poison and blood. The text also says that poison and blood should be mixed with the seeds of white mustard to be thrown (yungs kar thun brabs) and then a ‘golden libation’ (gser skyems) should be offered to the local gods and demons. Detailed instructions for this libation are to be found in the dance manual (’Cham yig) by the present sTag-lung-tse sprul-sku who explains that, as the liturgy of invitation and praise to the various deities and demigods is recited, dancers wearing the garb of ‘black hat sorcerers’ whirl around in a circle so that goblets held in their hands are caused to scatter their contents of alcohol and grain (‘gold’) over a wide area. These libations being enjoyed by the invisible inhabitants of every direction, the yogins appeal to the

702. This activity is variously known in the texts as zor (“magic weapon”), ’phang or gtor (both of which mean “scatter” or “cast”). The noun gtor ma indicates “that which is scattered”, which, in the context of these rites, refers to the zor, which is hurled against the enemy. The result of such rites is called bzlog pa (sometimes log pa) “turning away”, “reversing” or “averting” evil influences.

703. This text was taken from the golden southern section of the treasure casket and thus belongs to the Mahottarakila cycle. Incorporated into that three-part text is A39 (A40).

704. The mandala for this rite of scattering is described in the Khro bo rol pa’i gtor bzlog as a yellow cakra with ten spokes, drawn within a black border and surrounded by a vajra fence and fire wall, etc. A43, 306.

705. The skull of a murder victim is considered to have the greatest occult power. The skull of one whose life was cut short by disease or violent accident is said to possess medium power but
deities for their help in the subsequent main section of the rite. Proceeding with the magic weapon to an unobstructed site on elevated ground (which is an occasion of much splendour and pomp when the ritual is performed by an entire monastic assembly), the participants should clearly visualize the form of Vajrakila holding in his hand a freshly severed head, “streaming with blood and beautiful with long hair”. The role of the deity is assumed in the rite by an appointed expert (zor mkhan or ’phen mkhan) who should be fully adorned in the attire of the deity. As the liturgy of invocation and the root mantra of the deity are recited “in a melodious voice of wrath”, the weapon (the severed head) is hurled in the direction of the enemy. Being flung like a stone from a sling (’ur rdo brgyab bzhan), it whizzes through the air against the array of inimical forces. The oath-bound protectors are summoned with the chant: “BHYO. Don’t be idle, don’t delay, you who are bound under oath!” (ma gYel ma gYel dam can rnams), and they are urged to arrest and bring before the court all malicious wrong doers. The Triple Gem are exhorted to be present as judge and jury, final arbiters in the trial that distinguishes gods from demons. Thus the good elements are carefully separated from the bad (legs nyes srid pa’i lha ’dre brtsis) and the three groups of red and black protectors are incited to rain down pestilence and disease upon the households of the enemy and avert their power.

Much of the imagery employed in this text is similar to that of the Nag po dug gi ’khor lo above but, whereas the former document concerned itself primarily with the inner aspects of the rite, the present readily lends itself to dramatic interpretation. Indeed, within Buddhist communities this imagery is regularly put to spectacular effect for the edification of the lay faithful, the rite being annually performed as a masked dance in which the participants present a gorgeous pageant of lavishly attired divine beings. The ’Cham yig cited above quotes the liturgy for every section of the rite as it is given in the Khro bo rol pa’i gtor bzlog (A43), a text far more elaborate than the one being dealt with here. That liturgy is then broken down into its component parts and for every syllable there are instructions for both dancers and musicians. In accordance with these ‘stage directions’, the entire rite may be performed by a large company of players (normally the assembly of monks in any given monastery) who thus dramatically bring these difficult symbolic teachings to life as they annually reenact the enduring religious motif of the triumph of good over evil.

Burning

Instructions for the homa rite are found in several of the texts in the three collections. Each of the original gter ma texts (A12, A39, B21) outlines in brief the wrathful (raudra) rite and it is only in the long and detailed liturgy by Padma ’phrin-las (A46) that instructions are given for the three ‘gentle’ (mañju) attainments. In performing the fierce rite of

that of a person who passed away peacefully in old age is ritually powerless. Oral communication from C. R. Lama.

706. The Khro bo rol pa’i gtor bzlog names the weapons as gtor ma, arrow zor, blood zor and mustard zor. A43, 307.


708. The fifth Dalai Lama prepared an elaborate choreography for the entire Vajrakila sādhana, the text and translation of which are to be found in René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Tibetan Religious Dances.
burnt offerings, all sources state that a pile of wood with thorns should be arranged within a triangular hearth and kindled with fire taken from the house of a widow. The specifics of the hearth, however, are variously described in the several texts. Neither A12 nor A13 (A39) give any details but B21 and Padma 'phrin-las' long commentary are quite explicit.
B2l deals with a homa rite dedicated to ‘the solitary hero Kila’ (ekalavīra, a term meaning ‘without consort’), said to have been taken from the black northern treasure of iron. This very clear text discusses the ritual under three rubrics: 1) the fireplace and fuel, 2) the collection of articles for burning, 3) the generation of deities.

1) With regard to the fireplace and fuel: The hearth should be triangular in shape with each side measuring one cubit in length, standing one handspan in height. It should be painted black with charcoal from a funeral pyre and in its centre should be placed an effigy of whichever enemies and obstructors one wishes to kill. It is constructed with three borders, each four inches wide, which rise up like steps. On the first step one should draw vajras, on the middle step should be depicted a multitude of weapons and on the top step one should sketch a mountain of fire. Then a pile of thorny firewood should be built up in a triangle, the shape of which is maintained by binding it with the hair of a widow.

2) Next, as well as general offerings for the enjoyment of the assembly (gañacakra), the following articles for burning are required: Various kinds of flesh and blood, poisonous oil, an article belonging to the enemy (ming byang) that has been smeared with blood, an effigy chopped up into pieces, a pair of sacrificial ladles and specially prepared lengths of firewood (yam shing). All of these must be gathered together.

3) With regard to the generation of deities, this has two sections: The generation of the yogin himself as a deity and the generation of the gods in front. Having generated himself as the solitary hero, the yogin brings the articles to be burned near to the hearth and blesses them all as the flesh and blood of the enemies and obstructors. Purifying the fireplace with nectar, he blesses it as the triangular symbol of tathātā.

He then generates the deities in front and these are threefold: Agni, Vajrakīla, and the retinue. For the generation of the fire god the yogin imagines a brown billy goat arising as the transformation of the brown seed syllable TRI within the fireplace. He imagines the sun...
Displaying the Activities

as a cushion placed upon that goat and a blue syllable RAM upon that cushion. Then, as he mutters AGNIDEVARŚI RAM HŪM, the fire god arises with a blue body having one face and two hands. He has three eyes. In his right hand he holds a trisūla and with his left he counts the beads of a rosary. He is seated upon his mount, the brown billy goat, and is adorned with the bone ornaments of Karmaheruka. His body, speech and mind should be consecrated with the three syllables (OM ĀH HŪM) and thus the samayasattva Agni is produced.715 The jñānasattva is then aroused with the prayer:

"HŪM. Oh mighty sage, god of fire. In former times you consumed the offerings burned for the gods. Now we invite you here and present you with gifts and, as a result of our faith and commitment, you must come here. Oh, great element, come! You must come through the power of our bond. AGNAYE SAMAYA JĀH."

And the text instructs the practitioners to snap their fingers while reciting this. He is then invited with the words:

"HŪM. Through faith and commitment, you must come here. Oh, great element, come! King of the fire gods, supreme among sages, we pray that you will come here to this place in order to accept the food offered with the sacrificial ladies and, having come to this very place, we pray that you will happily stay firm. AGNIDEVARŚI JĀH A."

And the text instructs the practitioners to beckon with the thumb while reciting this. Now the practitioners should imagine the inner offering of human flesh to be clearly visible before them and, muttering JĀH HŪM VĀM HOH, they should merge the jñānasattva and the samayasattva into non-duality. Following that, respectful salutations are offered to the deity:

"HŪM. The long hair of your head is wound up in a bun, your teeth are showing like a great white rose and the light of fire is in your eyes. We pay homage to you, great sage. AGNIDEVARŚI ATIPŪHO."

Then the offerings are poured onto the fire. First the oil and then, one by one, the other articles are burned:

"HŪM. Oh, mighty sage, this ambrosial food arising through the power of samādhi is like nothing ever offered before. Being purified, it is prepared as an offering of sanctity and therefore, moving your mind by wisdom and compassion, we beg you to accept it. AGNIDEVA HAVYA KAVYA STAVYA KHAHI KHAHI So-and-so must be killed HŪM PHAT!"

Next, singing his praises:

"HŪM Son of Brahmā, lord of the world. King of the fire gods, supreme among sages, incarnate through the power of compassion for the sake of protecting all beings. Greatest of the rṣis who have mastered the spells and

formulae. Burner of defilements,\textsuperscript{716} wisdom light\textsuperscript{717} that blazes like the mass of fire at the end of an aeon. Mounted on a goat that is the emanation of skilful means, you bear a vessel containing the essence of nectar and with the nectar of Dharma you soothe (all troubles) completely. Holding a rosary as you count the recitations of mantra, you are the compassionate one made lovely by tranquillity. You abide in the world and yet you have transcended misery. Salutations, offerings and praise be to you.”

Then Agni is requested to fulfil his function in the rite:

“Ho! Agni, great sage. Please remain here as one with the blazing fire and convey to the mouths of the wisdom gods all the foodstuffs offered in this burnt sacrifice.”\textsuperscript{718}

Following which, the assembly of deities should be generated either in his stomach or heart. Muttering BHRM CAKRAMANDALA, the yogin imagines a dark blue triangular mandala with four doors. In its centre is a sun, moon and eight-petalled lotus upon which is the syllable HŪM from which the lord Vajrakila arises as his mantra is recited. The yogin then generates the remaining deities of the retinue, including the four supreme sons above the four doors and the twelve oath-bound protectors around the periphery. The liturgy for this is to be taken from the sadhana discussed above in Chapter Seven and the deities are to be consecrated with the power of body, speech and mind.

The wisdom deities are then called forth with the well-known verse: “HŪM. In order that empowerments, siddhis and the successful accomplishment of the bhavakīla may be attained, you deities of wisdom wrath must please come here …, etc.” ending SAMAYA HO JA H HŪM VAM HOH, by means of which they are inseparably united.

Muttering OM VAJRAKŁI KILAYA and the rest and adding ATIPŪHO they are saluted and then the outer and inner offerings are presented by means of mantras. Pieces of the effigy are offered and then the practitioner offers in succession all the remaining articles to be burned. Finally he presents the ming byang with mantras after stabbing it with the kīla. Casting it into the fire, the yogin recites:

“HŪM. From within the depths of such fire
as blazes at the end of an aeon,
upon piled-up cushions of haughty great gods,
overawing the enemies and obstructors
with the heroic mode of his stance
is the lord Mahāśrīvajrakumāra
with three faces, six arms and adorned with
apparel from the charnel ground.
From his heart blazes forth a mass of

\textsuperscript{716} Agni, traditionally, has been “generally regarded and worshipped as the mighty protector against demons, goblins, sorcerers, hostile magic and any other evil influences”. J. Gonda, Rice and Barley Offerings in the Veda, 195–6.

\textsuperscript{717} Citing the Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa, Gonda says that the light of fire counteracts evil: “Agni, the brightly flaming ... light, purifying drives away the demons”. J. Gonda, op. cit., 196.

\textsuperscript{718} B21, 47–9.
wisdom fire like that at the end of the world.
Into this swirling pit of fire
within the vastness of wisdom
are offered the sacred articles of
slaying the enemies and obstructors.
Accept them!
Burn the trouble-makers!
The demons must blaze!
Kill the vow-breakers!
Enemies and obstructors MĀRAYA!
OM VA JR AKI LI KI ŁAYA KHĀHI KHĀHI!
So-and-so MĀRAYA HŪM PHAT!
HŪM Within the four doors
of the divine mandala palace
are the four wrathful emanations from the heart,
the four door-keepers that perform the violent activities.
Into this swirling pit of fire ..., etc.
Enemies and obstructors MĀRAYA!
VAJR AKI LI KI ŁAYA JA H HŪM VAM HOH
KHĀHI KHĀHI!
So-and-so MĀRAYA HŪM PHAT!
The three classes of vow keepers emanated from your body, speech and mind and the many further emanations must kill the enemies and obstructors without remainder!
Into this swirling pit of fire ..., etc.
Enemies and obstructors MĀRAYA!
OM VA JR AKI LI KI ŁAYA
REMA TI REMAJA REMAJU REMAJ
(and so on ... )
ŚVAN MUKHĀ SRIRA SRGĀLA KUKKURA
(and so on ... )
KUMADARI ŚULACAMUDARI KANKADARI 719
So-and-so MĀRAYA HŪM PHAT!”
With these words he burns the ming byang. 720

719. By position in the text it is apparent that the names given here are intended to refer to the Bhūmipati sisters but such appellations are unattested elsewhere.

720. B21, 49–51.
Chapter Ten

When all the articles have been offered, five pieces of thorny wood should be cast into the fire with the curse “May So-and-so be reduced to dust!” Then offerings should be made to the lower classes of servants and they also should be given their orders. When the ritual is over, all participants should circumambulate the Kila *mandala* in the hearth⁷²¹ and perform the dance of pacification whilst muttering the SUMBHA-NISUMBHA mantra.⁷²²

This “*homa ritual of the solitary hero*” is said to have been composed on the basis of the *Vidyottama-tantra* by PadmasAMBhava in the ‘Upper Yak’s Horn Cave’ (gYag-ru-gong) for the protection of the teachings and assembly of Nālandā monastery.⁷²³

**Pressing down**

One who wishes to press down the enemies and obstructors in order to arrive at the end of the fierce activities should mix the ashes of the wrathful *homa* rite with black clay and fashion from it an effigy in the likeness of the enemy and a model of a camel. He should then insert the heart (the name *mantra*) of the enemy into the effigy⁷²⁴ and securely bind it with lengths of green and red string. Loading the effigy upon the camel’s back, he should place it within a skull of evil portent and, separating the enemy from his protector gods, he should summon his consciousness to be bound within the effigy’s form. Imagining the camel to be real, the *yogin* places it to the north bearing the burden of the enemy upon its back.⁷²⁵

He should then take a *bali* offering for the local nāgas and bhūmipatis and so on and go either to a great charnel ground or to a place where gods and demons reside (*lha 'dre gnas pa'i sa*, usually crossroads). At that place he should dig a triangular pit in the ground, one cubit deep, and bury that skull and its contents within it. Making the gesture of the sword (*khadgamanudra*) and muttering VAJRATKSAKHAHOM, the *yogin* strikes the ground and imagines it rent assunder as a mass of black fire comes bursting forth. In the midst of that fire, arising from the *mantra* OM KṚṢṆAYAMĀRI ᴨＵＭ JAH, the *yogin* is instructed to imagine the sudden real appearance of the black Yama of *karma* (Karmayama).⁷²⁶ It should be noted here that Kṛṣṇayamāri is not normally Yama but rather his adversary, ‘the enemy of Yama’, a form of the Buddhist deity Vajrabhairava (a wrathful emanation of Māñjuśrī) who subdued the Vedic Yama and bound him under oath to protect the

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*721. This ritual circumambulation is to be performed in an anticlockwise direction in the case of the fierce rite. A46, 434. Other minor points mentioned by Padma 'phrin-las as appropriate to the fierce rite are that it should be performed during the dark of night (419), in the winter (419), using a rosary of bone or *rudrākṣa* seeds (429), with the left leg extended (429), with the little finger outstretched (439), and so on. Other times, seasons, rosaries, body postures and the rest are indicated for the three gentle rites and it is explained that whatever omens are considered inauspicious for those three rites are deemed excellent in the case of the fierce rite. A46, 440.*

*722. See above, Chapter Two, note 241.*

*723. B21,51-2.*

*724. C reads snying kha gtsugs (“tear out the heart”) here for snying khar bcug.*

*725. Although the north is the quarter generally associated with rites of destruction, the way to Yama’s abode lies to the south and this is the direction we should expect here.*

*726. The Vimalaprabhā says that the nature of Karmayama is threefold: as a ghost (*preta*) he inhabits a plot of earth, as the lord of death (*mṛtyu*) he dwells in the body of living beings and as defilement (*kleśa*) his abode is the mind. A. Wayman, “Studies in Yama and Māra”, 126.*
Buddhist Dharma. Originally, however, the epithets Yamāri and its virtual synonym Yamāntaka were indeed applied to Yama himself who was known as ‘Death, the enemy’ or ‘Death, the ender’. These terms were later reinterpreted to mean ‘the enemy of Death’ and ‘the ender of Death’ when applied to the overthrower of Yama who succeeded in crushing his power. The question then arises: does our Byang-gter text have its roots in a time when Kṛṣṇayamāri was actually an epithet of Yama, or did the author of the text (said to be Padmasambhava) simply confuse their (current) discrete identities?

The invited god is then to be presented with a bali offering and requested to fulfil his task as follows:

“HUM. You who dwell in a doorless iron house in the dense wind beneath the dark depths of the great ocean below the mighty foundation of the king of mountains (Sumeru). You, the black-bodied one with coarse, stunted limbs from whose mouth issues forth the foul vapour of death. Mounted upon your black buffalo steed you hold in your hands a skull club and noose. Your land is known as ‘the World of Black Blemish’ (Jig-rten rmen-nag) and for those who are born there it is a place of no escape. Oh lord of death, king of the Dharma (Dharmarāja), you who have the power of great insight (abhiṣiṣṣa) and the performance of miracles (rddhi). Discriminate now between virtue and vice. This enemy is entrusted to your hands, oh Yama. Oh lord of death who maintains the samaya, do not release the entrusted enemy!”

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727. B. Siklos, The Vajrabhairava Tantra, 38.
728. These and other epithets of Yama are listed in the lexicon Amarakośa. A. Wayman, “Studies in Yama and Māra”, 44–5.
731. The pretakāṇḍa of the Garuda-purāṇa devotes Chapter XXXIII to a description of Yama’s realm and XXXXVII to a description of the river Vaitareṇi which lies at the threshold of Yama’s city.
732. According to the Vajrabhairavākhyāṇa-kalpa, Yama’s city (named there as Galava) contains sixteen gateless iron dwellings, thirty-two houses, etc. B. Siklos, The Vajrabhairava Tantra, 177.
733. The character of Yama is thought to exhibit two clearly distinct facets. As the god of death he is the much feared destroyer of life whose retinue consists of dreadful diseases and whose messengers drag the deceased through barren lands devoid of shade and water towards his realm in the south. Within his wondrous palace, however, Yama is the wise and just judge of the dead, the righteous king of Dharma whose laws and nature have their roots in the karma of the one who stands before him to be judged. V. Fausboll, Indian Mythology, 136.
Chapter Ten

Then, muttering once more the name mantra of the black Yama, the yogin imagines himself pressing food to his lips and inviting him to eat the flesh of the enemy, to drink his blood, devour his heart and consume the entrails and sense organs.734

After that the yogin should recite the DHADDHI mantra as he imagines that wind camel (rlung gi rnga mo)735 travelling to the land of Yama with the enemy upon its back. Muttering IMĀN VIGHNĀN STAMBHAYA NĀN, the yogin meditates upon a kīla as the actual Amṛtakunḍalin and nails it into the effigy. Then a slab of stone upon which have been drawn Mount Meru and the four continents of Buddhist cosmology is placed over the burial chamber and this presses down upon the enemy with the whole weight of the universe. This stone slab should be covered over with earth so as to make it invisible and the celebrants perform dances of the four activities upon its surface. Finally, as a benediction for the site, a golden Mount Meru should be visualized upon the road and there, in a ritual vase, one should meditate upon the lord Amoghasiddhi736 in the company of his inconceivable retinue.737

735. The consciousness after death is carried upon the back of a very subtle life-bearing wind which, in this ritual, is replaced by a camel. See Jeffrey Hopkins & Lati Rinbochay, Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth, 49. In Chapter Two of the Mahāvajrabhairava-tantra we read: “Then, if the mantrin wants to drive someone away, he should make a camel out of earth from the seven places and should then imagine on its back a wind maṇḍala in the shape of a half-moon transformed from the syllable YAM. Above it he imagines the victim and on his back he imagines the form of Yama holding a staff in his hand. He thinks that the victim is beaten with that staff and is lead off facing south.” B. Siklos, The Vajrabhairava Tantra, 100.
736. The Tathāgata who presides over the northern quarter of the maṇḍala, the peaceful equivalent of the wrathful Amṛtakunḍalin.
Chapter Eleven
Activities For the Benefit of Yogins

Those yogins who have accomplished the rite of the bhavakīla and wish “to postpone the termination of either their own or another’s lifespan” are instructed in the process of this achievement by A18 (B22, C12), a longevity ritual (tshe sgrub) apparently based upon the twenty-first chapter of the Vajrakīla Garland of Flames Tantra (Me lce'i 'phreng ba) (A31, C13).738

Opening with a homage to Vajrakīla as “the deity of vajra life” (rdo rje tshe'i lha), this ritual instructs the sādhaka to assemble the necessary articles such as the long-life vase (tshe'i bum)739 and the various life-prolonging medicines740 and perform the Kīla sādhana in a solitary place, inserting the rite of longevity in the section devoted to the assembled offerings (gañacakra).741 There the yogin should contemplate that from the syllable

738. Chapter Twenty-one alone appears extant of this otherwise unknown tantra, originally supposed to have been taught by “the bhagavat heruka king” (bcom ldan 'das khrag 'thung gi rgyal po) in response to a request made by the deity Vajrakīla. It is possibly also the primary source for the Tshe dbang found as A19 & B23.

739. The Garland of Flames says that this jewelled vase should contain five kinds of gem, five kinds of medicinal herb, five sorts of grain, five fragrances, five essences (not listed individually but see A. Wayman, The Buddhist Tantras, 81), the three sweet substances (sugar, honey and molasses) and white mustard, “the supreme seed” (bru mehog). It should be filled to the top with water, covered over with a red half-moon and richly adorned with ornaments before being placed in the very centre of the maṇḍala. The text then gives the mantras required in order to invoke the presence of the Kilas of the five kulas which are imagined to take up residence within the belly of the vase. They are said to be generated and invited “in accordance with former rites” (see Chapters Five–Seven, above). Once present, those deities are honoured with incense and flags and the maṇḍala itself should be surrounded by the necessities (yo byad) of the ritual. A31, 213. The Tshe dbang text fills the vase with beer instead of water, closes its mouth with “a long-life teat” (tshe'i 'brang rgyas), seals it in four places around the outside with HRLJ:I and finally binds it with five-coloured thread. A19, 154.

740. Unspecified in the text. Generally, however, Tibetan lamas collect together an assortment of ingredients both sacred (relics of diverse sorts) and medicinal (herbs, minerals, etc.) which are ground to powder, bound together with roasted barley flour and moulded into pills. These pills are then consecrated in the process of the ritual to become “long life medicine”.

741. In this regard it is interesting to note the explanation given by the Garland of Flames in which it is said that, in a superior practice such as this, the activities of presenting offerings to the deity and so on are perfected by maintaining an awareness of utter purity. This text also glosses “the radiating and gathering of the recitation syllables” (normally imagined internally in the form of light) as “right speech (samyagvāk) within which neither confusion (for others)
BHRIYM arises a jewelled *mandala* palace, square with four doors and replete with all adornments. In its centre, arising from the transformation of the syllable HRİH, Buddhāmitāyus rests upon cushions of lotus and moon. He is white in colour and holds a long-life vase on his lap. In front of him, to the east, is the blue Vairocanāmitāyus with the yellow Guṇāmitāyus to the south, the red Amitābhāmitāyus to the west and the green Karmāmitāyus to the north. All of them hold long-life vases upon their laps and are held in non-dual embrace by the leading ladies of the five *kulas*. Surrounding them are the eight offering goddesses: Lāsyā, Mālā, Gitā, Nṛtyā, Dhūpā, Puṣpā, Ālokā and Gandhā, and the four gate-guardian goddesses holding the hook, noose, fetters and bell. The yogin is instructed to visualize all of these deities clearly so that no confusion arises in his mind concerning their colour, form or insignia. Each of them is said to be adorned with all the usual attributes.

When the visualization is stable, the wisdom counterparts (*jñānasattva*) of those deities should be invited, praised and presented with offerings and their *mantras* recited. For, it is said, it is precisely by means of standard meditative procedure that the attainment of long life is gained.

That this *siddhi* of longevity is considered a natural corollary of orthodox yogic praxis is then demonstrated in the text as it goes on to cite from the *Garland of Flames Tantra* the adage: “One should perform the acts of devotion (*sevā*), secondary devotion (*upasevā*), evocation (*sādhana*) and great evocation (*mahāsādhana*) for long life”. The yogin is

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742. Instead of generating the *pañcakula* Amitāyus in front, the *Garland of Flames* describes self-generation in four-armed form. According to this *tantra*, the yogin should imagine rays of light streaming out from the syllable A in the centre of a *vīśavājra* in his heart. As those light rays gather together and return to his heart he himself becomes Amitāyus, shining white like a snow mountain with one smiling face and four arms. In his two right hands he holds a *vīśavājra* and a bag made of mongoose skin. In his two left hands he holds a bell and a vase of nectar. He is adorned with strings of jewels and seated in non-dual embrace with his consort.

743. The *Garland of Flames* and the *Tshe dbang* list only four of these eight goddesses. Lāsyā to the east is white and she carries a vase of crystal. In the south is the blue Mālā (all mss: Lāsyā) who has a garland of turquoise and a jewelled vase. In the west is the red Gitī, goddess of song who has a vase of coral and in the north is the green Nṛtyā, goddess of dance whose vase is made of beryl. All are said to summon the lifespan and to contain within their vases the essence of the five nectars with which they nourish life force and vitality, restoring the weak.

744. Details of colour, form, attribute, position in the *mandala*, *mudrā*, *mantra*, etc., of the minor deities mentioned here are to be found in SDPT (*passim*), where Vajraghātta is called Vajravesa. For their icons see Lokesh Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography of Tibet*, 177–84.

745. A18, 146.

746. *tshe bsnyen dang ni yee bsnyen dang, tshe sgrub dang ni sgrub chen bya*. The verse in the *tantra* ends: *las mnams yongs su rdzogs par bya*. “(Thus) one fully accomplishes all activities”. A31, 213. These four categories of praxis, within which are included the stages of both *uptattikrama* and *sampamnakrama*, are discussed at length in Alex Wayman, *Yoga of the GST*, (*passim*), where the term *upasevā* is replaced by *upāśadhana*.
then instructed to imagine that the entire animate and inanimate world dissolves into light and is absorbed into himself and into the ‘long life substances’ upon the altar before him.

Now, as for summoning the lifespan, calling HRlj the yogin contemplates Buddhāmitāyus in the non-dual embrace of his consort Caṇḍāli\(^{747}\) and invokes the siddhi of long life and glory (śṛi) from the mandala of their non-dual heart. Then he calls to Vairocanāmitāyus and his consort from the eastern direction, Ratnāmitāyus and his consort from the southern direction, Padmāmitāyus and his consort from the western direction and Kārmāmitāyus and his consort from the north. He calls to the goddesses Lāsyā, Mālā and the rest, to Vajrānkuśā, Vajrapāśā, Vajrasphoṭā and Vajrāghanṭā. He imagines that all of these deities hold ‘life silks’ (tshe dar, arrows festooned with silks of five colours) in their right hands which they wave in all directions and ‘life vases’ in their left which are filled with the nectar of immortality. By means of these articles they bestow the blessings of long life upon the fortunate ones (those of meritorious karma).

“HRlI. Oh lord Mahāśrīvajrakumāra and the great divine mother Trītacakra, bestow the attainment of long life upon us fortunate ones!”

The yogin then proceeds systematically to appropriate for himself the lifespans and attractive qualities (‘glory’) of the denizens of the universe. This he achieves through the agency of the daśakrodha kings and their consorts, the rulers of all who dwell in the ten directions:

“HŪM. The span of life that pertains above in the realm of Brahmā must be brought forth by the krodharāja Hūmkāra. His consort sGra-‘byin must preserve the glory.”

With such words as these, the krodha couples of the ten directions are urged to bring forth the lifespans and merits of the gandharvas from the east, of the retinue of Agni from the southeast, of Yama from the south, of the rākṣasas from the southwest, of the nāgas from the west, of the wind gods from the northwest, of the yaksas from the north, of Īśāna from the northeast, and of the bhūmipatis from below. OM ĀH HŪM NR BHRŪM VAJRĀYUSE HŪM.\(^{748}\)

The text continues in this manner with a further series of ten verses exhorting the animal-headed ‘devourers’ and ‘killers’ to gather in the lifespans and protect the glory that are to be found in the sky, in the southern forests, on rocky mountains, on open plains, in the borderland of snow and slate (the snowline), in areas of farmland, within the shadows

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\(^{747}\) The Garland of Flames presents the rite of the consort as a backup technique to ensure the attainment of siddhi. If the signs of success are not fully attained by means of the previous rite, it says, the yogin should invoke the white goddess Caṇḍāli from the heart of Amitāyus by muttering OM VAJRAČANDĀLI HA JA HŪM. Blazing in a mass of fire she appears with one face and four hands within which she holds a vajra made of gems, a precious vase of nectar, a jewel and a casket. She has jewels in her hair and from her body radiate countless emanations which fill the ten directions of the six destinies and grind to dust all those who hold false views. A31, 216.

\(^{748}\) A18, 147–8. According to the Tshe dbang, the mantra given here is to be added in turn to that of each individual deity in the mandala. A19, 154.
on the western face of forests, in the wild regions of snowy mountains, upon the northern plains and within the depths of the great oceans. 749

"The goddesses with the hook, noose, fetters and bell—those four goddesses who guard the mandala gates—must gather in the lifespans and all the oath-bound protectors must preserve the glory." 750

The Garland of Flames explains that whatever demons there are in the ten directions of the world are subdued and annihilated by the recitation of the mantras and that their lifespan is to be drawn in with the syllable NR. It is also said that the yogin may use this technique in order to gather the 'essential nectar' (rtsi bcud) of the elements or the bodhicitta of all the Buddhas in the ten directions which he then either unites with himself or dissolves into the vase (or sacred food and drink) upon the altar so that it becomes "like the wish-fulfilling gem", supreme among jewels. Thus, the text says, "the excellence of the vase is that it contains the auspicious qualities of the lifespans of others and makes them immediately available for the benefit of the yogin."

In order to reap the maximum benefit of this appropriation, the yogin should absorb the lifespan and other qualities into himself in the form of enlightenment, visible either as the three syllables OM AH HŪM or as the five syllables OM on the crown of his head, AM on the top of the tongue, HŪM on the heart, TRAM on the navel and A on the soles of both feet. This absorption may be completed either successively or simultaneously and then the yogin should protect the attainment and keep it hidden "in the blissful dance of natural awareness". 751

The yogin having thus vastly enriched the store of longevity abiding within his life vein (jīvitanādi), the texts then deal with the method of hiding away that lifespan so as to conserve it. The Garland of Flames says that the essential vitality (snying po bcud) is to be sealed by means of a vajra weapon within the closed container of a viśvavajra (presumably within his heart), 752 whereas the tshe sgrub instructs the yogin to visualize a green syllable NR (the syllable that attracts the life force of humans) and imagine that the entrance to his life vein is guarded on the outside by Hayagrīva and on the inside by Amṛtakundalin, both of whom arise from HRIH and stand like soldiers with their feet together. 753

749. These forty-two deities of the Vajrakila mandala are to be visualized holding iron hooks in their right hands (with which to capture the lifespan) and vases in their left (containing the stored nectar of immortality). From the three places of each deity radiate innumerable "Lords of Boundless Life and Wisdom" (Aparimitāyurjñānanātha) so that the entire world is filled with wrathful wisdom beings who, having taken the best of all things, restore whatever is impaired, distorted, dissipated or unstable for the yogins and their sponsors. Otherwise, the captured lifespan of all worldly gods and demons is dissolved into the vase in the form of the syllable A and the vase is seen to glow with light. A19, 154–5.

753. These two deities are to be imagined holding clubs in their right hands and making the tarjanimudrā with the left. The Tshe dbang has them standing guard over the lifespan contained within a "wisdom palace" arisen from the syllable HŪM on the forehead, not within the heart. B23, 66–7 (page missing in A).
Alternatively, that ‘lifespan with excellent qualities’ may be concealed within the dharmadātu where even a Buddha will not perceive it. In either case, this ‘precept of longevity’ is said to be an excellent activity which possesses the unexcelled armour (kavaca) of mahāśūnyatā, armour with the seal (mudrā) of protection against perverted views. The Garland of Flames says that, of all armours, knowledge of śūnyatā is supreme for it destroys all objective weapons. The yogin should therefore conceal his acquired lifespan within the sphere beyond imagination where obstructors and misleaders can do it no harm.754 “By donning the indestructible vajra armour (one) is protected from the demons of mistaken ideas.” OM VAJRAKA VACA HŪM.

“HOH. The hosts of gods of deathless vajra life must take up and gather in the lifespans of we yogins here and straighten out whatever is crooked, replace that which has broken off, renew whatever has become worn out and nourish that which has become weak. Please bestow upon us the blessings of a lifespan that has never been born, a lifespan which is the nectar of immortality, an undying lifespan, a lifespan which is a banner of victory that never droops, a lifespan of unchanging great happiness and all the good fortune of long life, power and merit.”755

The Garland of Flames concludes with a few lines that indicate the normal significance of ‘immortality’ in this world—the begetting of children so that the name (and especially the religious tradition) of the yogin may live on after death.756

The text claims that, through the proper performance of the ritual, even a hermaphrodite or a barren woman or a decrepit old person will receive the empowerment of life and their family lineages will be increased, so what more need be said? Either the family line will be increased with unending virtue757 or, if the results are not applied in that (mundane) way, the yogin who practises this rite will blaze like Bhairava in the mandala of ferocious deities. From such a one will emanate various hand symbols and weapons that will spread out and cut down all demons in the ten directions of the world and the glorious attributes of Hayagriva will drag them forth from whichever place they stay. The various weapons such as the vajracakra will ‘liberate’ the powerful gods, even those long-lived gods of the higher heavens, and thus the yogin will gather the lifespans of the five classes of beings under his power.758 By means of the ploughshare and other such weapons that till the fields and overturn the world beneath the surface of the earth, the yogin subjugates Yama, the nāgas and other (subterranean) troublesome beings and, ‘liberating’ them, he gathers them under his power. By means of the iron hook and the discus, etc., the unimaginable weapons of the dangerous ones filling the whole of the sky, the eight classes of bhūtas759 are liberated in an instant.760

754. A31, 220.
755. A18, 150.
756. A31, 220.
757. Text A reads: “virtue will increase”.
758. Text A reads: “will gather it up in the form of light”.
759. Enumerated in the text as “btsan, bdud, the’u rang and the rest”.
760. A31, 217.
It is also stated in the *Garland of Flames* that this method of enhancing longevity should be practised “in accordance with the stages of secret Vajrayāna” by the yogin joining in a *samādhi* of union with a youthful woman whose body possesses the appropriate signs and symbols. Then the precepts and *siddhis* of this rite should be transmitted to any children born of that union, to whom also should be given the empowerments of the five *Tathāgatas*, the crown consecration and the wisdom consecration and the rest.\(^{761}\)

In the case of these *siddhis* of long life being bestowed by a *guru* upon his disciple at the time of the latter’s *abhiṣeka*, the *tshe sgrub* instructs that the various preliminaries such as the expulsion of obstructing demons and so on be completed first. Then the disciple should take a purificatory bath, present the *mandala* of offerings to his teacher, take refuge in the *triratna*, generate bodhicitta, vow to protect the *samaya* and *samvara*, and respectfully request his *guru* for the great method of prolonging his lifespan. “These preliminaries should all be performed in accordance with the authoritative texts of Vajrakila.”

The disciple then makes a request for empowerment by reciting the well-known verse from the Vajrakila *mūlatantra* met with so often above: “HŪM. Empowerments and blessings must be bestowed in this place …” etc. He then recites the *mūlamantras* of Vajrakila and his retinue, adding the words ABHISĪNCA MĀM (consecrate me) at the end. And for the vase consecration he recites BUDDHA-VAJRA- RATNA- PADMA- KARMA-KALAŚA-ABHISĪNCA BHRŪM.

“HRIH. Glorious lord, Vajrāmitāyus, the sovereign whose form extends to the limits of space, we pray that you will bestow the empowerment of the lifespan of the *vajra* heart and the enjoyment of dominion with the all-pervading *vajra* body.”\(^{763}\)

Thus, says the text, the empowerment of all the good qualities and enlightened activities of the various *kulas* are received in unity. Also the empowerments of ‘the seven precious things’ (*saptadhanāni*)\(^{764}\) and ‘the eight auspicious symbols’ (*aṣṭamaṅgala*)\(^{765}\) are gained.

Then the *guru* and disciple imagine the *siddhi* of long life being gathered in from the sacred field (*kṣetra*) of Lotus Light (Padma-’od) in the west. As they contemplate

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761. A31, 220.

762. A reads brnyes pa (prāpta), ‘got, received’. B & C read mnyes pa (toṣita), ‘delighted’.

763. The longevity of the *trikāya* alluded to here is bestowed in three separate verses in the *Tshe dbang*. A19, 161.

764. A wealth of faith (*ṣraddhā*), a wealth of moral conduct (*śīla*), a wealth of shame (*hrī*), a wealth of modesty (*apatrīpya*), a wealth of learning (*śrūta*), a wealth of renunciation (*tyāga*) and a wealth of wisdom (*prajñā*). These spiritual attributes are symbolized in ritual consecrations by seven jewels or “the seven attributes of a cakravartin” which are his magic wheel (*cakra*), elephant (*hasti*), horse (*āsva*), jewel (*maṇi*), queen (*strī*), home minister (*grhapati*) and military general (*parināyaka*). Cf. SDPT, 79, n. 11.

765. Regarding these, Buddhaghūya says: “Yoga displays itself as the eight emblems on the true nature of body; the endless knot (*srivatsa*) which is lotus-like, the wheel (*cakra*) which is frightening, the banner (*dhvaja*) which is victorious, the umbrella (*chattra*) which is dignified, the lotus (*padma*) which is luminous, the flask (*kalasha*) of acute mind, the conch (*sankha*) of purity and the golden fish (*matsya*) of auspicious mind.” A. Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras*, 108.
Activities For the Benefit of Yogins

Vajrāmitāyus arisen from the syllable HRIJ, they imagine that from the amulet of half-moon and śrīvatsa in his heart flows the bodhicitta of longevity in the form of red light. By means of this, “all those present here must receive the siddhi of long life and be blessed with this great secret of longevity.” Thus the siddhis are gained. 766 When the ritual is over, whether or not it had been the occasion of a disciple’s abhiṣekā, the usual benedictions (mangala, svastika) and distribution of merit (parināmana) should be performed.

So much for the magical enhancement of the lifespan. According to the them byang, however, the Vajrakīla cycle should also provide for the benefit of yogins the means of enhancing wealth.

In the Garland of Flames it is said that the ten krodha kings, their queens and animal-headed assistants are to be visualized brandishing vajras in their upper right hands (with which all those who hold false views are overthrown) and iron hooks in the left (by means of which their lifespans are drawn forth). In the right hands below those the gods hold bags full of gems from which wealth is bestowed upon all the poor and needy; while from precious caskets held in the left, glory and lordliness are dispensed to all whose merit is exhausted. “Especially the glory and splendour of the threefold world is to be bestowed upon virtuous yogins.” 767 Apart from this, however, no text devoted specifically to the enhancement of wealth (nor sgrub) is to be found.

The collections do, however, provide for the enhancement of the yogin’s food and drink in a number of texts. 768 Of these, the only title to be found in all three collections (A23, B24, C14) gives merely the briefest outline of the steps in the ritual procedure, leaving the liturgical details (if required) to be supplied from elsewhere. Opening with a salutation to Śrīvajrakumāra, this short text, said to have been written by Padmasambhava, styles itself “the samādhi within which the yogin should dwell on all occasions when eating (or drinking)”. It begins with a general outline of the ritual procedure for the blessing of food and drink and then adds those details deemed to be specifically appropriate for practitioners of the Kila cult. In general, it is said, the yogin should gather all his food and drink together within ‘the great vessels’ (snod chen) 769 without indulging in mental discriminations of ‘pure’ and ‘defiled’. Imagining himself to be in the presence of the lord, he should generate the mind of enlightenment 770 and meditate upon himself in the form of the deity. Purifying and blessing the food by means of the three syllables, it should be offered. The yogin may then entrust the deities to perform the four activities (karma), gather from them the siddhis and enjoy the food in the nature of truth. Finally the leftovers are presented, the deities are dismissed and prayers are dedicated to the welfare of all beings. So it is said.

767. A31, 218.
768. According to ‘Jigs-med gling-pa, the technique of taking food and drink (“the objects of enjoyment”) as the path to enlightenment is a special characteristic of Vajrayāna. T. Thondup, Enlightened Living, 132.
769. By this is indicated the yogin’s imaginative transformation of his own ordinary plates and utensils into the divine vessels of the gods.
770. This line is missing in B.
Chapter Eleven

Having thus outlined the topics to be discussed, the text goes on to elaborate only very slightly. We are now told that those yogins who are accomplished in the practice of Vajrakīla should, on all occasions gather their food and drink on a plate and recite RAM YAM KHAM\textsuperscript{771} so as to render it pure. By OM ĀI HŪM the six goddesses of all desirable qualities infuse it with their blessings and then the guru\textsuperscript{772} and the host of divinities are invited and the food and drink is presented to them as an offering with the words OM VAJRĀKĪLĪ KĪLAYA KRODHA KHRODHĪ HA HE PHĀṬ DHADDHI MAMA KARMA KĀNKA KĀRAYE KHA KHA KHĀHI KHĀHI. Making prayers to those deities, the yogin should imagine that they bestow siddhis upon him so that he becomes full of satisfaction and joy.

After eating, he presents a feast of the remainders with the words SARVĀPŪJA KHĀHI and then entrusts the remains-taking guests with the four activities by adding ŚĀNTIM PUSṬIM VAŚAM MĀRAYA PHĀṬ. They are then dismissed under oath to protect the doctrines. Finally, the yogin should recite a benediction:

"Ho! Salutation to the hosts of joyful gods. With a wealth of benefit and vast in blessings, enjoying permanent blessings, having purified the two obstructions and amassed the two accumulations of merit, may all things (beneficial) without exception be increased! A LA LA HO."\textsuperscript{773}

In that way, initiates in the cult of Vajrakīla transform the everyday act of eating and drinking, uplifting it from the mundane so that it becomes, in miniature, a sacred rite along the lines of the ganacakra discussed above in Chapter Seven. Such a procedure is the logical corollary of the yogin's self-transformation into the deity. Further demonstration of its importance is to be seen below in the final chapter of this work.

\textsuperscript{771.} These are the seeds of fire, air and water respectively. Cf. above, Chapter Seven, note 622.
\textsuperscript{772.} Text B says "oneself".
\textsuperscript{773.} A23, 175-6.
Chapter Twelve
Rites to Make Good Deficiencies in Yogic Praxis

The first text in this category (A24, B24, C14) is a brief outline of the meditations to accompany the preparation of śācchas. The extraordinarily corrupt condition of the text in all three redactions seems indicative of a general disinterest in this procedure on the part of Kila initiates. Although the orthographic standard of the entire corpus of material presently being studied is generally low, this particular text seems to have been written out with a singular lack of attention. Said to be an original gter ma, the text bears neither attribution of authorship nor any reference to its sources.

Following the homage to Śrīvajrakumāra, it is said that an area of sanctified ground should be sprinkled with fragrant perfumes and upon it should be arranged the various necessities (unspecifed) for offering to the deities. The yogin should then generate himself in the form of the god and recite the hrdaya of Vajrakila as many times as possible. He should prepare a mixture of clay using mud, (powdered) gemstones, sandalwood and perfumed water and he should bless this lump of clay by placing upon it the three syllables OM ĀH HŪM which he radiates out from his heart. Then, muttering OṀ DHARMADHĀTU OṀ ĀH HŪM A, the yogin imagines rays of light to stream forth from those three syllables upon the heap of clay. Gathering in the rays of light and returning them to their source, the yogin imagines that the syllables dissolve into light and he contemplates the void nature of the clay.

Imagining his own body to be marked with the syllable BHRŪM, the yogin visualizes light rays emanating from that syllable and then, as he mutters BHRŪM VIŚVAVIṢUDDHE VAJRAṆĀṆĀCAKRA BHRŪM, he imagines the light returning to the syllable and his body transformed into a palace of the gods (vimāna). He then recites the deity’s hrdaya OṀ VAJRAṆĪLĪ KILAYA OṀ ĀH HŪM and is thereby further sealed with the mudrā.

774. Śācchas (Tib. tsha tsha) are small relief images prepared by impressing clay into a metal mould. See Li Jicheng, The Realm of Tibetan Buddhism, 170–6, for clear photographs of śācchas being stamped out with a metal mould, a brief description of the process and close-ups of the finished articles.
775. A surprising omission from this list is ashes belonging to a deceased guru or other holy person for these śācchas are regularly manufactured in Tibet as reliquaries of the dead.
776. This section is missing in B.
777. This line is found only in A. I take it to mean that the presence of the deity is installed within the palace of the yogin’s body.
At this point both the yogin and the clay have been fully prepared so that the manufacture of the sācchas can begin. The text, however, gives no instructions concerning either the form or the quantity of sācchas to be made in order to fulfill the purpose specified in the them byang of restoring broken vows and making good any defects in yogic praxis. It seems natural to assume that the clay will be stamped in the likeness of the deity Vajrakīla but the text is not specific on this point and its instructions undoubtedly hold good for sācchas modelled in other forms such as miniature stūpas, etc. Indeed, the texts are particularly corrupt at this point with text A having four lines more than either B or C. The only instruction given for the actual manufacture of the sācchas concerns the non-dual unity of wisdom and means which the yogin must recognize as inherent within both himself and the small lumps of clay that are to be moulded into shape, “all forms arising from the sphere of the dharmadhātu”.

Once the sācchas have been manufactured, however, they should be consecrated (pratiṣṭhā) as divine palaces, each inhabited by a host of gods. Thinking thus, the yogin should hold flowers in his hand and recite seven times the formula YE DHARMA., etc. He should then cast the flowers onto the sācchas and imagine that all aspects of cause and result have been fully perfected. Following that he may worship the sācchas in whatever manner he deems suitable.

“Ho! Whatever (Buddhas) there are who are desirous of passing into nirvāṇa, I implore you compassionate ones not to pass beyond this realm of sorrow so long as samsāra abides.”

Saying this, the yogin should scatter flowers and imagine that (the compassionate Buddhas) remain until samsāra has been emptied. This is the means of manufacturing sācchas with the purpose of obtaining the complete enlightenment of oneself and others. Vows. Triple seal.

The final text to be found in all three collections is a summary of votive rites for those initiated into the maṇḍala of Vajrakīla, simply referred to as ‘the Appendix’ (zur 'debs) (A28, B25, C16). Described in its colophon as a treasure from the golden southern cache, this document commences with the deity’s hrdaya and informs us that the body of the glorious Mahottara Vajrakumāra is dark blue in colour with nine heads and eighteen hands. His three faces on the right are pale yellow, red and blue. Those on the left are dark yellow, maroon and green while his central three faces are white, yellow and dark blue. All are wrathful with gaping mouths, eyes that stare in opposite directions (spyan bzlog) and beards that bristle like fire. The long brown hair on his head is described as twisting upwards and the implements said to be held in his eighteen hands have been given above in Chapter Three, Table 1. With his eight legs in the pratyālīḍha posture he advances to the left and tramples upon Rudra, the enemies and obstructors. His form is fully adorned with the eight articles of the charnel ground and, with his vajra wings, he overawes the tribhava. The great mother Trptacakra is blue in colour, with a single face and two hands. She holds a vajra in

778. A24, 177.
780. cf above, Chapter Three.
Rites to Make Good Deficiencies in Yogic Praxis

her right hand and, with her left hand, she presses a skull full of blood to the lips of her lord. The divine couple are vast with rough limbs and they emit terrifying roars.

The yogin’s awareness (vidyā) should instantly arise in that form without stages in the process of generation. Then, with a spontaneous sound of joy, the dasakrodha kings and their entourage, the supreme sons, the guardian goddesses of the gates and the rest, all arise as the unity of appearance and emptiness (prabhāsaśūnyatā) filling the ten directions and setting the wheel of Dharma into motion. Vast numbers of oath-bound messengers should be dispatched in pursuance of their tasks and the entire vision is seen to blaze with light like the raging inferno at the end of time.

Following this description of the mandala of Mahottarakila, the text continues with verses from the BRT and Thugs kyi 'phrin las (A45), two texts pertaining to the Black deity cycle. Thus, the intention of the rite is declared with “HŪM. All those who hold the awareness of Vajrakumāra ..., etc.” and “HŪM. Empowerments and blessings must be bestowed in this place ..., etc.” The section ends in the usual fashion with a mantra for the empowerment of the mandala: OM ĀH HŪM OM HŪM SVA AM AM HĀ KĀYAVĀKCI'TTAGUNA-KARMAŚIDDHI ABHISĪNCĀ HŪM.

The wisdom deities are then invited to enter this consecrated samayamanḍala with the usual “HŪM. In order that the empowerments, siddhis and successful accomplishment of the bhavakīla may be attained ..., etc.” and verses follow in which the deities are asked to accept offerings, bestow siddhis and remain firm until the two purposes are fulfilled. In that way the yogin should clearly bring to mind the mandala palace and its retinue of gods. With an understanding of non-duality he should then respectfully salute the deities with his body, speech and mind—ŚRĪVAJRA NAMAH—and present them with offerings. First there is the offering of bodhicitta nectar which is to be understood as the distilled essence of all consciousness, an effective counter-agent (medicine) for all wrong views, represented on the physical plane by semen virile:

“HŪM. Self-arising from desire and very pure, with eight major and one thousand minor ingredients, this offering of nectar medicine (bdud rtsi sman) is offered to Mahāstrī (Vajrakila) and his retinue. Please bestow the siddhis of body, speech and mind. MAHASARVAPANCĀMRTA KHĀHI.”

781. Not the khaṭvāṅga of Chapter Three.
782. A28, 184.
783. A45, 407/6–9/1.
784. The supreme siddhi of enlightenment for the benefit of the yogin and the various mundane siddhis of pacification, enrichment, etc. for the benefit of others.
785. A28, 185.
786. The eight major ingredients are the eight vijñānas while the term “one thousand minor ingredients” refers to the countless thoughts and sensations derived from these. By offering it to the deities in this way, all consciousness is purified. The Che mchog gi 'phrin las further characterizes this bodhicitta nectar as “the reality of the five samaya substances of the five kulas, the article of the total fulfillment of the five wisdoms”. It is said to be the nectar which clears away the five poisons and to be derived from the slaying of all sentient beings in the six gatis. B11, 548.
787. The Che mchog gi 'phrin las explains the absorption of the deity's siddhis thus: Having satisfied the gods with nectar, the yogin sees three syllables radiate out from the three places of
Next, the offering of bāli in which all manifest phenomena are included, produced by the union of semen and menstrual blood: 788

"HŪM. This amazing great bāli prepared with pure ingredients, emanating from the depths of the unborn dharmatā fully adorned with the five desired qualities 789 must satisfy the sacred hearts 790 of Mahāśrīvajrakīla and his retinue. OM VAJRĀKĪLĪ KĪLAYA MAHĀBALĪM TE KHAHĪ. 791"

The offering of blood (rakta) is the female counterpart to the male bodhicitta. It is the wisdom of śūnyatā that underpins the effective medicine of upāya:

"HŪM. The great red blood of sāṃsāra obtained by slaughtering the afflictions is swirling in the skull cup. 792 We press this to the lips of Mahāśrīvajrakīla and his retinue in order that the traidhātuka may be emptied. OM VAJRĀKĪLĪ KĪLAYA MAHĀRAKTA KHAHĪ."

Next is the offering of killing in which the primary klesas are destroyed: 793

"HŪM. Having slain all the enemies and obstructors, to the mouths of Mahāśrīvajrakīla and his retinue we offer ignorance as a quivering mound of great flesh, 794 desire as a shimmering ocean of blood, and hatred as a glistening pile of broken bones. MAHĀMĀMSA-RAKTA-KEMNIRITI 795 KHAHĪ. 796"

The offering of union is presented with the closing lines of BRT Ch.V:

all those satisfied deities and land in the form of light in the centre of the nectar. He then takes up the nectar and, muttering OM ĀH HŪM KĀYASIDDHI OM VĀKSIDDHI ĀH CITTASIDDHI HŪM, places a few drops upon his tongue and contemplates its absorption into his own three places. B11, 549.

788. Even in Vedic times the sacrificial cake was considered to have regenerative properties, the mixing of water and flour in its preparation being viewed as the uniting of male and female. J. Gonda, Rice and Barley Offerings in the Vedas, 5.

789. As the yogin presents the bāli offering he imagines all manner of sensual pleasure being offered to the mandala deities by beautiful goddesses who delight the six senses. B11, 549.

790. Thugs dam bskang, a term that refers to the fulfillment of vows. By this offering the deity is satisfied and the yogin’s broken vows are restored.

791. A28, 186.

792. Kapālas have been the designated vessels for sacrificial offerings in India since the prehistoric period. In the Vedas, however, the term referred to “pieces of pottery (not necessarily potsherds)”. J. Gonda, Rice and Barley Offerings in the Vedas, 4.

793. This great offering of the slaughter of the entire three realms arises as a result of the annihilation of all attachment and desire. Outwardly it is composed of the slaughter of the ten classes of enemy to be killed. Inwardly it is the symbolic form of the klesas, the greenish corpse of the overthrown Rudra. B11, 549.

794. Mahāmāmsa usually indicates human flesh but since the “enemies and obstructors” are deemed to be of both human and non-human types, I have chosen here to render the word more literally as “great flesh”.

795. This word is attested in all manuscripts. Unknown in the lexicons, it perhaps derives from a lost Prakrit for kakālā (skeleton).

796. As the effigy of Rudra is dismembered, so the yogin should liberate appearances and let go of the view of subject and object. In that manner he makes the highest offering of dharmatā. B11, 550.
“HŪM. Within the shining yonis of the wrathful queens are the blazing vajras of the krodha kings. The pounding of those vajra hammers is sufficient to kill even those who are gods! KATHAM KATHAM KATHAM HŪM HŪM PHAT PHAT PHAT VAJRAYAKṢA KRODHAVIJAYA KHĀHI KHĀHI KHĀHI HA HA HA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAT PHAT PHAT.”

The prayer of the proclamation of truth (satyavacana):

“Ho! Please listen to me. By the truth of dharmatā, the blessing of guhyamantra and the power of the Buddhas, the time for the wrathful act has come.797 The severe deed must be performed! By this method, through the power of the wonderful rites of secret mantra, I pray that I and all sentient beings will be blessed within the circle of the lord Śrīvajrakumāra to enjoy throughout the aeon (i.e., for all time) the inexhaustible body, speech, mind, good qualities and perfect activities of the deity himself.”798

Then praise:

“HŪM. Arise, all you who have attained knowledge of Vajrakīla! Arise from the dharmadhiitu and, by the truth of dharmatā, perfect the form that encompasses the wisdom of all the Buddhas! Manifest the clear light of dharmatā in the form of nine wisdom faces, the epitome of wisdom wrath! The upper three faces subjugate all those who are to be converted by means of love and compassion. The middle three faces bless all beings with the consecrations and attainments while the lower three faces purify body, speech and mind.”

The text then goes on to collocate Vajrakīla’s eighteen arms and the symbols that they hold with various powers and lines from the root text. Thus the first pair of hands are associated with the lines “Anger must be destroyed by means of vajra wrath” (right) and “The bindu arises in the centre of the sky” (left). For the second pair are “Arousing the mind of supreme bodhicitta” (right) and “Their hearts must be burned on the pinnacle of vajra fire” (left). The third pair hold “The blazing great blue weapon” in the right and the khatvānga of body, speech and mind in the left. Fourthly are “Must seize! Must pulverize!” which is represented by the hammer in the right hand while the great hawk (here called garuḍa) held in the left is the ABHICAṆA mantra. The viśvavajra in the fifth right hand is indicative of Buddha activity while the fifth left hand wields the bhavakīla. The sixth right hand is Hūmkāra who has the power of life while Amṛakundalin is represented by the vase in the left. The seventh pair of hands hold the iron hook of love and compassion (right) and the kartrikā which slays the misleaders (left). In the eighth pair are the pounding vajra hammer (right) and the blazing yoni of the wrathful mother (left). The ninth pair wield the battleaxe that chops to pieces (right) and the jewel that fulfils all desires (left). The eight legs spread wide are associated with the phrase “The time has come!”799

797. Line missing in C.
799. A28, 188–9. Cf. above, Chapter Three, Table 1.

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Chapter Twelve

The arising of this powerful figure, the very embodiment of the Kila tantra, immediately renders powerless all those who obstruct the progress of yogins, whether those troublemakers be gods or demons. Trampling them down, “the performance of skilful means for the benefit of all sentient beings is accomplished” and empowerments and blessings are bestowed upon the meditator. With the life force arising as the jñānasattva, Hayagrīva and his consort are established in the heart and, by means of light rays radiating from the heart mantra, the ten directions of space are filled with the ten krodharājas. The yogin should meditate upon his consciousness in the form of ‘the Wisdom Vajra’ adorned with the ornaments of universal accomplishment and blazing with unbearable wrath.

“Such is the form of the lord who is the embodiment of all the Buddhas, the chief of wrathful herukas, master of all mātris and dākinīs, the body, speech and mind of the assembly of Sugatas,800 the supreme emanated son who subdues all those to be converted, who dispatches the three classes of red and black emanations as his messengers. Great being, to you be praise!”

Saying thus, he is praised 801 Then ‘drawing in’ (bskul), beginning with the vidyādhāras:

“HŪM. The time has come for all you vidyādhāras who are heirs to the Buddhas of the three times to arouse the supreme mind of bodhicitta and descend!”

The text then invokes the early Vajrakila masters Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Śilamaṇju and Padmasambhava’s Tibetan disciples, each one being urged to come forth from a site where once he or she demonstrated some miracle power gained through Vajrakila praxis.

Then the summoning of the deities:

“HŪM Bhagavat Mahāśrīvajrakumāra, wrathful king who subdues through anger, arise from the dharmadhātu in the embrace of Trīptacakra! The time has come for you to perform your great deeds. Drawing forth the trouble-making demons and obstructers, immediately destroy them!

HŪM. From the blissful union of wisdom and means arise the ten krodha kings and their consorts upon cushions of the piled up bodies of enemies and obstructors, the lords of the ten directions and the sun and moon.”

With them are their twenty piśācī emanations and all of them are urged to act in accordance with their sacred oaths. The krodharājas, their consorts and emanated assistants are invoked by name, each one being summoned individually from the appropriate direction and told “The time has come for you to do your terrible802 deed!” They are followed by the supreme sons and the four guardian goddesses of the gates.803

The summoning of the oath-bound protectors: “BHYO. You oath-bound goddesses of the evening!” (There follows a description of the four Śvanmukhā sisters.) “BHYO. You oath-bound goddesses of midnight!” (There follows a description of two of the four

800. These epithets are omitted from B. Text C ends at this point although that collection does include a skul ba (C36) through which Padmasambhava is invoked in his eight names.
801. A28, 189–90.
802. This word is changed with each repetition of the line.
Mahātmādevīs. “BHYO. You oath-bound goddesses of the morning!” There follows a description of two of the four Bhūmipati sisters.\textsuperscript{804}

The text then calls forth their twelve brothers.\textsuperscript{805} The four skyes bu (puruṣa) are the brothers of Rosewood and they stand to the right of the four Śvanmukhā sisters. From the east comes Rākṣasa skyes-bu, the great champion of the rākṣasas, white in colour wielding a kīla of conch shell. From the south comes Yama skyes-bu, also known as Kālayama. He is black in colour and wields a kīla made of iron. From the west comes Ya-bdud skyes-bu of Mongolian descent (sog po mi rigs). He is red in colour and wields a kīla of copper. From the north comes Yakṣa skyes-bu the Mon-pa,\textsuperscript{806} blue in colour wielding a kīla of turquoise.

The four bdud po are the brothers of Iron and they accompany the Mahātmādevīs. In the east is the white māra who bites his lower lip and wields a kīla of conch. In the south is the blue māra with long hair wielding a kīla of turquoise. In the west is the black māra who wields a kīla and a noose. In the north is the green māra wielding a kīla and sword.

The four kiṃkāras (ging) are the brothers of Conch who stand to the right of the Bhūmipati sisters. The military commander of the east is Karmarāja, the kiṃkāra of the rākṣasas. He is white in colour and carries a kīla of conch. The military commander of the south is Yamarāja, the kiṃkāra of the yamas. He is blue in colour and carries a kīla and knife. The military commander of the west is Daśagrīva, the kiṃkāra of the māras. He is red in colour and carries a kīla and knife. The military commander of the north is Yakṣagrīva, the kiṃkāra of the yakṣas. He is yellow in colour and carries a kīla.

The yogin invites all those oath-bound protectors who guard the precepts of Vajrakīla to accept an offering of bali. He then commands them to drag forth the enemies and obstructors and slay them immediately. The text ends with the exhortation: “You must accomplish your tasks as you promised!”\textsuperscript{807}

\textsuperscript{804} For descriptions of these twelve see above, Chapter Nine. There is a lacuna in both manuscripts of the present text so that two goddesses of the morning follow immediately after the first two midnight goddesses. A28, 193–4.

\textsuperscript{805} These correspondences are clarified at A53, 679–80 (citing the authority of mNga’-ris paṅ-chen).

\textsuperscript{806} The term Mon is applied in Tibetan texts to “all kinds of groups throughout the Himalayas with whom the Tibetans came into contact”, a non-specific designation for any “southern or western mountain-dwelling non-Indian, non-Tibetan barbarian”. M. Aris, Bhutan, xvi.

\textsuperscript{807} A28, 194–5.
Conclusion

Within the earlier chapters of this work it was conclusively demonstrated that all the basic doctrines and rituals of Vajrakila had their origin in India. Sufficient Sanskrit material remains extant in that country to have facilitated charting the development of the deity from an aniconic wooden spike to the three-faced, six-armed god of great wrath exalted today. It is known that wooden spikes were employed from a very early period to 'secure the boundaries' of chosen plots of land, and that such spikes were considered in Vedic ritual to possess the power to ward off evil.

At some stage the general rite of simābandha, by means of which a sacred area is rendered ritually secure, was supplemented by (and, to a certain extent, replaced by) the specifically tantric procedure of kilana, in which the boundaries of the chosen area are pegged out so as magically to render them impregnable to such hostile forces as malignant spirits or demons. By the eighth century AD, knowledge of this technique seems to have been as widespread among the Hindu tāṇtrikas as among the Buddhists. Buddhism, however, having been eradicated from its homeland during the thirteenth century, presents us now with a legacy of burned books from which much vital information is missing. Sufficient literature remains, nevertheless, to enable us to collect together piecemeal 'one hundred thousand' snippets of knowledge such as may once have been honoured with the epithet 'Vidyottama-tantra in one hundred thousand sections'. Such a title I suppose to refer in a non-specific way to the entirety of accumulated magico-religious beliefs concerning the kīla, both documented and undocumented.

According to the chronicles of the Vajrakila cult as propounded by Tibetan historians, it was in Nepal during the eighth century AD that this entire corpus of early and medieval Indian kīla lore, including affiliated ritual technique, was codified and harmonised into a single unitary system of religious philosophy and procedure. This project having been undertaken by the three Buddhist scholars, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Śilamañju, their approach to the task at that time was probably simply to incorporate all of the kīla lore they could find into the general scheme of Vajrayāna Buddhism. We have seen that, already by the eighth century, Buddhist texts contained an enormous wealth of kīla lore, but I suppose that the three ācāryas also incorporated into their definitive résumé all details of cult and practice found acceptable to them—whatever their school of origin. All such lore was then tailored by them to fit neatly into the system of a Vajrakila mandala.

The probable effect of this ratification was actually to create a cult of Vajrakila where none existed before, and thus to divide all kila lore into two camps: Vajrakila cult and non-Vajrakila cult. Subsequent to this, the cult of Vajrakila having been propagated in Tibet by its originators, it flourished there and continued to evolve. Perhaps it also flourished in Nepal and India for some time, for Tibetan historians contend that it did so, but thus far we have seen no evidence to support this. Later Indian commentators, such as the peerless Abhayākaragupta, and later texts such as the Kalacakra-tantra, describe the rite of kilana without reference to the deity Vajrakila.

Among Tibetan texts, the Phur 'grel 'bum nag in 115 folios presents itself as the complete explication (bshad 'bum, 'the hundred thousand words of elucidation') of Kila lore, and claims to represent the thought or intention (dgongs pa) of the three ācāryas. It is said to have been transmitted by Padmasambhava to Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal who was entrusted with the dissemination of its knowledge. It is a bka' ma text, respected as authoritative by all Tibetan schools—both bka' lugs and gter lugs. This text, then, is held to stand at the turning point in the formation of a Vajrakila cult from the 'one hundred thousand ideas' concerning the ritual kila.

When discussing the Vajrakila maṇḍala, the Phur 'grel 'bum nag speaks of five supreme sons: Buddhakila, Vajrakila, Ratnakila, Padmakila, and Karmakila. The fundamental deities of the maṇḍala are thus fifty-one in number: Vajrakila and Trtptacakra in the centre, the five supreme sons, the dasakrodharājas and their consorts, their twenty animal-headed messengers, and the four goddesses who guard the gates. As we have seen above, however, the Byang-gter tradition presents the maṇḍala with an irregular number of supreme sons: often three, sometimes four or five, occasionally twenty-one. Our Byang-gter tradition thus appears to contain archaic elements, perhaps directly derived from Indic lore, representing earlier stages in the evolution of the Vajrakila maṇḍala, for it is only in the later commentarial literature of this school that we meet with references to Kīlas of the five kulas.

SDPT, 313, shows that within the Yogatantra, eight krodharājas are accompanied by eight animal-headed messengers: lion-, tiger-, owl-, crow-, bull-, snake-, stag- and pig-headed assistants. Thus we suppose that later Indian texts describing ten krodharājas may well have presented these kings together with an expanded series of animal-headed assistants. Eventually their number reached twenty. Early sources seem ambiguous with respect to the gender of these emanations. The Tibetan bka' ma tradition presents them in pairs; males to the right and females to the left. The Byang-gter tradition studied here presents them all as females. Such details, therefore, may well have remained still undetermined at the time of their original transmission to Tibet. Only through the continued study of Indic documents may we hope to develop a clearer picture of the evolutionary path trodden by these twenty gods.

As for the fundamental texts upon which the Northern Treasures tradition is said to be founded (especially the two root tantras analysed above in Chapter Five), we have seen that these contain a great deal of material in common with the VKMK, the sole root tantra to be included within the bKa' 'gyur. These texts, however, are unlikely to be known in schools other than the Byang-gter, for each of the many different Buddhist traditions of
Vajrakila in Tibet presents itself as stemming from separate root texts. Of particular interest in this regard are those Byang-gter documents dealing with the episode of the scorpion guru and the aetiology of the Mahottarakila cycle. It seems that this is one area of Kila myth that is dealt with only marginally in the literature of other traditions. According to the Phur 'grel 'bum nag, the mūlatantra of Vajrakila doctrines is the rTsa thung rdo rje khros pa (NGB 317, 17 folios).809 Elsewhere, also, a great number of other mūlatantras are cited, and all of them are supposed to have come from India.

Although there can be no certainty at this stage that the various mūlatantras of Vajrakila were actually written in India, there can surely be no doubt that their contents are of Indic origin. This mass of Indian material, however, may have been only partially systematized as it became transferred to Tibet. In many respects, the eighth century texts of the bka’ ma traditions appear better organized than the later gter ma discoveries of Rig-'dzin rgod-ladem. Since the overwhelming majority of documents in the Byang-gter school are said to have been delivered as oral instruction by the teacher Padmasambhava, it seems that we witness in these documents vital phases in the evolution of the cult of Vajrakila.

Many of the rites of Vajrakila, said to have been derived from these mūlatantras, are self-evidently modelled on paradigmatic norms of tantric Buddhist praxis. The rites of assembled offerings (ganacakra) and longevity (āyurvedhi)810 and so on, looked at above, differ in no fundamental fashion from their counterparts in the religious cycles of other Vajrayāna deities. I suppose, therefore, that the three ācāryas of India and Nepal took the basic fivefold pattern of the Anuttarayoga mandala as their starting point and carefully wove into that pattern all their combined knowledge of the kīla. Working this knowledge into a Buddhist framework must have involved some moral re-evaluation of the material to hand, much of which was possibly derived from village witchcraft of unsavoury character. Thus, the Buddhist yogin entering the mandala of Vajrakila takes a vow of ‘wrathful compassion’ and strives to master the rites of the kīla by means of which his vow will be fulfilled when the world is liberated from evil. Outwardly, the rites are explained for the slaying of wrath. Inwardly, for the destruction of desire. Secretly, for the destruction of ignorance. These, however, are merely rites on the level of mental construct (prapañca). Ultimately, the yogin strives for the nail of the trikāya which is free of any such fabrication and, piercing the dharmadhātu, he slays all characteristics in their own place and realizes unbounded Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.

809. This is possibly, also, the text referred to above on page 113 (‘the mūlatantra of vajra wrath’). Note, however, the caveat in footnote 420 concerning the firm identification of these texts.

810. Compare the longevity rites detailed above in Chapter Eleven with those explained by Tibetan physicians on the basis of Indian medical tantras. Yuri Parfionovitch et al., Tibetan Medical Paintings, plates 52–3.
Appendix I
Three Collections of Byang-gter Vajrakila Literature

Contents of the Phur pa dril sgrub (Collection A)

A1: Phur pa che mchog gi them byang rin chen gter mdzod (1)
A2: rDo rje phur pa spu gri nag po rab tu gsang ba'i rgyud (5)
A3: rDo rje phur pa thugs gsang ba sku'i rgyud (19)
A4: rDo rje phur pa'i bka' sgo (39)
A5: rDo rje phur pa'i 'dzab rig 'dzin chen po'i gter ma (45)
A6: rDo rje phur pa'i bstod pa (47)
A7: Phur bsrung gi bskul (59)
A8: Phur pa che mchog gi dbang chu (67)
A9: dKar po lam gyi sgron ma (91)
A10: bKa' nyan lcags kyi ber ka (99)
A11: Nag po dug gi spu gri (103)
A12: bCom ldan 'das 'phrin las phur pa'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga bskal pa'i me dpungs (113)
A13: rDo rje phur pa'i mnan bsreg 'phang gsum (117)
A14: rDo rje phur pa'i spu gri nag po'i dbang chog (123)
A15: rDo rje phur pa'i rgyun gtor gyi rim pa (139)
A16: rDo rje phur pa'i drag po'i bzlas pa (141)
A17: rDo rje phur pa'i chos nyid kyi bzlas pa (143)
A18: rDo rje phur pa'i tshe sgrub (145)
A19: rDo rje phur pa'i tshe dbang (153)
A20: rDo rje phur pa'i las thams cad kyi don bs dus pa drag sngags kyi rtsa ba (163)
A21: rDo rje phur pa'i za tshogs rgyas pa (165)
A22: rDo rje phur pa'i bza' tshogs rgyas pa (171)
A23: rDo rje phur pa zas tshogs (175)
A24: rDo rje phur pa'i tsha tsha (177)
A25: gSang ba'i rin po che'i dngos grub blang ba (179)
A26: Drag sngags kyi rdo rje phur pa'i 'di khyad par 'phags pa'i lo rgyus (181)
A27: rDo rje phur pa gong khug ma (182)
A28: Phur pa'i zur 'debs (183)
A29: Phur pa drag sngags kyi sgrub thabs rgyun khyer lha brag gter gyi yang bcud (197)
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A30: rDo rje phur pa'i lugs kyi sde brgyad bsrunz bzlog (205)
A31: Phur pa me lce'i 'phreng ba'i le'u nyi shu pa khol du byung ba (211)
A32: dPal rdo rje phur pa'i rtsa ba dril sgrub kyi sgrub thabs (221)
A33: Phur pa'i rgyu tshad dbyibs sbas tshul mnga' gsol dus tshod dang bcas bstan pa (231)
A34: rDo rje phur pa'i spyod lam rgyun gyi rnal 'byor (245)
A35: rDo rje phur pa drag sngags spu gri'i sgrub thabs (247)
A36: bCom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje gzhon nu'i 'phrin las thun mong ma yin pa (253)
A37: rDo rje phur pa'i man ngag rtsa thung (279)
A38: rDo rje phur pa spu gri'i bskul (285)
A39: rDo rje phur pa'i sbyin sreg (289)
A40: rDo rje phur pa'i sbyin sreg (291)
A41: rDo rje phur pa'i rgyun 'khyer gtor bsngos (295)
A42: rDo rje phur pa'i mnan pa'i las (301)
A43: Phur pa yang gsang gi khro bo rol pa'i gtor bzlog (305)
A44: Byang gter phur pa 'bring po spu gri'i bsnyen sgrub kha 'phral ba'i lhan thabs yang yig 'dod dgu'i gter mdzod (327)
A45: Byang gter rdo rje phur pa'i thugs kyi 'phrin las (403)
A46: Byang gter phur pa spu gri las bzh'i sbyin sreg 'phrin las kun 'grub (415)
A47: Byang gter phur pa'i brgyud 'debs (467)
A48: Khro bo bcu'i phur pa dril sgrub kyi las byang sbrul gyi chun po gnam lcags spu gri (471)
A49: Byang gter phur pa khro bo rol pa'i gtor bzlog bdud sdephyer 'thag (513)
A50: Rang bsrunz zab mo (561)
A51: Byang gter phur pa'i sri gnon gyis ngag 'don chog khrigs rdo rje'i lhun po (565)
A52: Phur pa'i sri chung bcu gsum mnon pa'i lhan thabs rab gsal me long (617)
A53: bCom ldan 'das rdo rje gzhon nu 'bring po spu gri'i sgrub chen gyi chog khrigs lag lan snyin po rab gsal (633)

Contents of Phur-pa Texts of the Byang-gter Tradition (Collection B)

Volume 1

B1: Phur pa dril bu thugs kyi 'phrin las ngag 'don bklags chog tu bkod pa (1)
B2: Phur pa drag sngags kyi smad las dgra bgegs sgrol byed drag po zor gyi man ngag rno myur las kyi mtshon cha (29)
B3: bCom ldan 'das rdo rje gzhon nu 'bring po spu gri'i sgrub chen gyi chog khrigs lag lan snyin po rab gsal (79)
B4: Byang gter phur pa'i dbang gi lo rgyus legs par bshad pa nor bu'i do shal (173)
B5: Byang gter phur pa spu gri'i dkyil 'khor du dbang bskur ba'i cho ga rin chen bum bzang (207)
B6: Byang gter phur pa lugs gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub las sbyor bya tshul bdud sde'i g.yul las mam par rgyal ba (347)
B7: Lha brag phur pa'i bsnyen yig gsal ba'i sgron me (379)
B8: 'Dod 'jo'i bum bzang gi nang dkyil sogs kyi dris lan (379)
B9: Byang gter phur pa spu gri las bzh'i sbyin sreg 'phrin las kun 'grub (447)
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B10: rDo rje phur pa thugs gsang ba sku'i rgyud (499)
B11: rDo rje phur pa che mchog gi 'phrin las (523)
B12: Phur pa che mchog gi dbang chu gter ma (563)
B13: dPal rdo rje phur pa che mchog gi lo rgyus (591)
B14: bCom ldan 'das rdo rje phur pa smad nag po dug gi 'khor lo rab tu gsang ba (597)
B15: rNam gsum srog gi 'khor lo (607)
B16: rDo rje phur pa che mchog gi dam can gnad stabs kyi man ngag 'khor lo bri lugs dang bcas pa (615)

Volume 2

B17: bCom ldan 'das rdo rje phur pa'i smad nag po dug gi spu gri rab tu gsang ba (1)
B18: Phur pa'i sri mnan (19)
B19: rDo rje phur pa'i sgrub chen bka' nyan lcags kyi ber ka (27)
B20: rDo rje phur pa'i mnan bsreg 'phang gsum (39)
B21: Rdo rje phur pa'zi shyin srog gi cho ga (45)
B22: rDo rje phur pa'i tshe sgrub (53)
B23: Phur pa'i tshe dbang (61)
B24: rDo rje phur pa zas tshogs dang tshva tshva (71)
B25: rDo rje phur pa'i zur 'debs (81)
B26: Phur pa rig 'dzin gyi bskul (95)
B27: Phur pa rig 'dzin skul (101)
B28: Bse lcags dung gsum srog gi tsitta (123)
B29: Phur pa byang gter gyi brgyud 'debs dpe grangs dang bcas pa (133)
B30: rDo rje phur pa'i drag sngags zab pa'i lo rgyus (137)
B31: rDo rje phur pa spu gri nag po rab tu gsang ba'zi rgyud (145)
B32: Thugs kyi snying po gsang ba phur gcig ma'i sgrub thabs rdo rje phur pa'i drag sngags spu gri'i sgrub thabs (159)
B33: Phur pa drag sngags kyi 'phrin las (173)
B34: rDo rje phur pa yang gsang spu gri phur gcig ma'i nams len rgyun khyer (213)
B35: dPal rdo rje phur pa drag sngags spu gri nag po'i bstod bskul (221)
B36: dPal rdo rje phur pa'zi srun ma'i bskul te dam can sgos bskul (235)
B37: rDzas kyi phur pa shin tu zab pa (243)
B38: Phur pa'zi bstod pa chen mo (249)
B39: rDo rje phur pa'zi bstod bskul (255)
B40: Phur pa rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs kyi gleng gzhi (271)
B41: dPal rdo rje phur pa'zi rtsa ba dril sgrub kyi sgrub thabs (279)
B42: bCom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje gzhon n'i thugs kyi 'phrin las (299)
B43: rDo rje phur pa'i 'dzab rig 'dzin chen po'i gter ma (308)
B44: (Untitled offering ritual.) (311)
B45: rDo rje phur pa skyed la bcang ba'zi man ngag (313)
B46: Lha brag phur bu'i brgyud 'debs byin rlaus gter mdzod (321)
B47: Lha brag gter byon gyi phur pa lcags khang drag sngags spu gri'i las byang 'jigs med rdo rje pha lam (327)
Appendix I

B48: Phur pa spu gri las tshogs rdzas kyi mthu chen bco brgyad (377)
B49: rDo rje phur pa’i spyod lam rgyun gyi rnal ’byor gyi man ngag brgyad pa (385)
B50: Ser ba dong bzlog (389)
B51: rDo rje phur pa spu gri drag sngags lugs kyi khyad par ’phags pa’i lo rgyus (392)
B52: rDo rje phur pa spu gri lha nag srog gi spu gri’i gsal byed (393)
B53: dPal rdo rje phur pa’i rtsa ba dril sgrub kyi sgrub thabs (397)
B54: rDo rje phur pa srog gi spu gri (413)
B55: rDo rje phur pa drang sngags zab mo’i lo rgyus dang rdo rje phur pa’i rgyu dang tshad bstan pa (417)
B56: rDo rje phur pa’i man ngag rtsa thung (423)
B57: rDo rje phur pa’i drag po’i bzlas pa (427)
B58: rDo rje phur pa’i lugs kyi sde brgyad bs rng bzlog (431)
B59: dPal rdo rje gzhon nu’i nyams len rgyun ’khyer (437)
B60: rDo rje phur pa’i las thams cad kyi don bsdus pa’i rtsa ba (441)
B61: rDo rje phur pa’i chos nyid kyi bzlas pa (445)
B62: Drag sngags kyi ti ka bse sgrom ma (449)
B63: rDo rje phur pa spu gri nag po’i dbang chog (453)
B64: Phur pa’i las mtha’ sri chung bcu gsum mnan pa’i lhan thabs rab gsal me long (589)
B65: Byang gter phur pa drang sngags kyi gtor ma’i dpe’u ris blo thog nas bris pa (605)

Contents of the Byang gter phur pa’i skor (Collection C)
C1: rDo rje phur pa thugs gsang ba sku’i rgyud (1)
C2: Dam can lto log gi ngan sngags (21)
C3: lCags srog ’khril ba’i man ngag (27)
C4: Phur pa che mchog gi ’phrin las (33)
C5: Phur pa che mchog gi dbang chu (63)
C6: dKar po lam gi sgron ma (rNam gsum sro gi ’khor lo (81)
C7: bKa’ nyan lCags kyi ber ka (87)
C8: rDo rje phur pa’i dam can gnad rem (97)
C9: rTsa gsum zang gyi sgo ’byed (101)
C10: Nag po dug gi ’khor lo’i spu gri (107)
C11: Phur pa’i mnan bsreg zor gsum (117)
C12: rDo rje phur pa’i tsho sgrub (123)
C13: rDo rje phur pa’i che mchog (129)
C14: rDo rje phur pa’i zas tshogs dang tsha tsha (139)
C15: rDo rje phur pa’i che mchog gi dbang gi brgyud rims them byang zab mo (143)
C16: Phur pa’i zur ’debs (147)
C17: rDo rje phur pa gsum kyi mla ’byor (155)
C18: rDo rje phur pa’i drag sngags zab pa’i lo rgyus (161)
C19: rDo rje phur pa spu gri nag po rab tu gsang ba’i rgyud (167)
C20: rDo rje phur pa spu gri nag po’i dbang chog (177)
C21: Shi ri Sing has gsang ba phur gcig ma thugs kyi snying po (189)

C22: Yang snying thugs kyi phur gcig ma (201)

C23: Phur pa thams cad kyi rtsa ba bsdus pa drag po snags kyi rtsa ba dang phur pa drag snags kyi rtsa ba dang phur pa bsam sgral ma dang phur pa srog gi spu gri dang phur pa lus la bcangs thabs mams (215)

C24: rDo rje phur pa drag snags kyi ‘phrin las (227)

C25: Phur pa lcags rkang nag po’i bstod pa (267)

C26: rDo rje phur pa’i spyod lam rgyun gyi rnal ‘byor (279)

C27: Drag po’i ‘dzab dgongs (283)

C28: Phur pa drag snags ‘dus pa (285)

C29: rDo rje phur pa gcig lugs kyi sde brgyad bsrung bzlog (305)

C30: Phur pa yang gsang spu gri’i las mtha’ sdung po sri nan pa (317)

C31: bDud kyi bar chad ‘dul ba’i thabs (325)

C32: rDo rje phur pa’i rgyun gyi spyod lam (335)

C33: rDo rje phur pa’i rtsa ba dril sgrub (343)

C34: rDo rje phur pa’i dril sgrub kyi ‘phrin las chen mo (361)

C35: bCom ldan ‘das rdo rje gzhon nu’i thugs kyi ‘phrin las phur pa’i dril sgrub gyi ‘phrin las (375)

C36: rDo rje phur pa’i bskul (383)

C37: Las tshogs rin chen khang bu las phya ‘phrin nor bu’i mchog rgyal bla dgu (389)

C38: Phur mchod dang ‘phrin brtsol sgrags pa (427)

C39: Phur pa’i snying thig yang gsang spu gri ‘bar ba’i bsgrub thabs (437)

C40: sPu gri’i dkyil ’khor du dbang bskur ba’i cho ga klags chog ru brkod pa’i Vaidūrya’i bum bzang zhes bya ba (461)

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Correspondences Between the various texts

Phur pa dril sgrub (Collection A)

A1: Phur pa che mchog gi them byang rin chen gter mdzod (2 folios. Included within the longer text C15)

A2: rDo rje phur pa spu gri nag po rab tu gsang ba’i rgyud [Srīvajrakilapotrihalatantra] (7 folios. Found also as B31 & C19)

A3: rDo rje phur pa thugs gsang ba sku’i rgyud [Vajrakilacittaguhyakāya-tantra] (10 folios. Found also as B10 & C1)

A4: rDo rje phur pa’i bka’ sgo (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)

A5: rDo rje phur pa’i ‘dzab rig ‘dzin chen po’i gter ma (Single folio. Found also as B43)

A6: rDo rje phur pa’i bstod pa (6 folios. Unique to this collection. Cf. B35 etc.)

A7: Phur bsrung gi bskul (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)

A8: Phur pa che mchog gi dbang chu (12 folios. Found also as B12 & C5.)

A9: dKar po lam gyi sgron ma (4 folios. Found also as B15 & C6.)

A10: bKa’ nyan lcags kyi ber ka (2 folios. This and the next text.)
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A11: Nag po dug gi spu gri (of 5 folios are both found also as B19 & C7, in which the two texts are placed together under a single title.) (Found also as C10)

A12: bCom ldan 'das 'phrin las phur pa'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga bskal pa'i me dpungs (Single folio. Copied out by different hands twice in this one volume but not found elsewhere.)

A13: rDo rje phur pa'i mnan bsreg 'phang gsum (3 folios. Found also as B20 & C11.)

A14: rDo rje phur pa'i spu gri nag po'i dbang chog (8 folios. Found also as B63 & C20.)

A15: rDo rje phur pa'i rgyun gtor gyi rim pa (Single folio. Found also as the first part of C32 which is a longer, more comprehensive text.)

A16: rDo rje phur pa'i drag po'i bzlas pa (Single folio. Found also as B57 and included in the compendium C32.)

A17: rDo rje phur pa'i chos nyid kyi bzlas pa (Single folio. Found also as B61.)

A18: rDo rje phur pa'i tshe sgrub (4 folios. Found also as B22 & C12.)

A19: rDo rje phur pa'i tshe dbang (5 folios. Found also as B23.)

A20: rDo rje phur pa'i las thams cad kyi don bsdu pa drag sngags kyi rtsa ba (Single folio. Found also as B60 and included within the “compendium of mantras” listed as C23.)

A21: rDo rje phur pa'i za tshogs rgyas pa (3 pages only. Written out twice in this volume but not found elsewhere.)

A22: =A21

A23: rDo rje phur pa'as tshogs (Single folio. Found also as B24 & C14.)

A24: rDo rje phur pa'i tsha tsha (Single folio. Found also as B24 & C14.)

A25: gSang ba'i rin po che'i dngos grub blang ba (Single folio. Found also as C15 and included as a preface to C1.)

A26: Drag sngags kyi rdo rje phur pa'i 'di khyad par 'phags pa'i lo rgyus (Single folio. Found also as B51.)

A27: rDo rje phur pa gong khug ma (Single page only. Quoted in B4 and included as an appendix to C21)

A28: Phur pa'i zur 'debs (7 folios. Found also as B25 & C16.)

A29: Phur pa drag sngags kyi sgrub thabs rgyun khyer lha brag gter gyi yang bcud (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)

A30: rDo rje phur pa'i lugs kyi sde brgyad bsrung bzlog (3 folios. Found also as B58 and included in C29.)

A31: Phur pa me lce'i 'phreng ba'i le'u nyi shu pa khol du byung ba (5 folios. A solitary chapter from a lost tantra. Found also as C13.)

A32: dPal rdo rje phur pa'rtsa ba dril sgrub kyi sgrub thabs (5 folios. A sādhana taught to Padmasambhava by the early Atiyoga master Śrīsimha. Found also as B41, B53 & C33)

A33: Phur pa'i rgyu tshad dbyibs sbas tshul mnga' gsol dus tshod dang bcas bstan pa (7 folios. Unique to this collection but extensively quoted in B4. Cf. B30 & 55.)

A34: rDo rje phur pa'i spyod lam rgyun gyi mal 'byor (Single folio. Found also as C26.)
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A35: rDo rje phur pa drag sngags spu gri’i sgrub thabs (3 folios. A sādhana taught to Padmasambhava by the early Atiyoga master Śrīsimha. Found as the first of several texts in the compendium B32, etc.)

A36: bCom ldan ‘das dpal rdo rje gzhon nu’i ‘phrin las thun mong ma yin pa (13 folios. Found also as A48.)

A37: rDo rje phur pa’i man ngag rtsa thung (3 folios. Found also as B56.)

A38: rDo rje phur pa spu gri’i bskul (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)

A39: rDo rje phur pa’i sbyin sreg (Single folio. Copied out twice in this collection. Found also as A40 and included in the 3-fold rite at A13, etc.)

A40: =A39

A41: rDo rje phur pa’i rgyun ‘khyer gtor bsgos (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)

A42: rDo rje phur pa’i mnan pa’i las (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)

A43: Phur pa yang gsang gi khro bo rol pa’i gtor bzlog (11 folios. Found as A49.)

A44: Byang gter phur pa ‘bring po spu gri’i bsnyen sgrub kha ‘phral ba’i lhan thabs yang yig ‘dod dgu’i gter mdzod (A long liturgical arrangement in 38 folios by Padma bun-bde. Unique to this collection)

A45: Byang gter rdo rje phur pa’i thugs kyi ‘phrin las (6 folios. A xylograph found also as mss at B42 & C35.)

A46: Byang gter phur pa spu gri las bzhi’i sbyin sreg ‘phrin las kun ‘grub (Written by Padma ’phrin-las in 1695. 26 folios. Found also as B9.)

A47: Byang gter phur pa’i brgyud ‘debs (Written by Padma ’phrin-las. 3 folios. Found also as B29 & B46.)

A48: =A36 (with added prayers by Blo-bzang mthu-stobs).

A49: =A43 (with extra liturgy by Padma ’phrin-las).

A50: Rang bsrung zab mo (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)

A51: Byang gter phur pa’i sri gnon gyis ngag ‘don chog khrigs rdo rje’i lhun po (26 folios. Unique to this collection)

A52: Phur pa’i sri chung bcu gsum mnon pa’i lhan thabs rab gsal me long (Written by Padma ’phrin-las in 1701. 8 folios. Found also as B64.)

A53: bCom ldan ‘das rdo rje gzhon nu ‘bring po spu gri’i sgrub chen gyi chog khrigs lag lan snying po rab gsal (This is a long work in 48 folios, written by Padma ’phrin las in 1686. Found also as B3.)

Phur pa Texts of the Byang-gter Tradition (Collection B)

Volume 1

B1: Phur pa dril sgrub thugs kyi ‘phrin las ngag ‘don bklags chog tu bkod pa. (Written by ’Phrin-las bdud-’joms. 14 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B2: Phur pa drag sngags kyi smad las dgra bgegs sgrol byed drag po zor gyi man ngag mno myur las kyi mtshon cha. (Written by ’Phrin-las bdud-’joms. 19 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B3: = A53.

B4: Byang gter phur pa’i dbang gi lo rgyus legs par bshad pa nor bu’i do shal. (Written by ’Phrin-las bdud-’joms. 16 folios. Unique to this collection.)
Appendix I

B5: Byang gter phur pa spu gri'i dkyil 'khor du dbang bskur ba'i cho ga rin chen bum bzang. (Written by Padma 'phrin-las. 70 folios. Unique to this collection. cf. C40.)

B6: Byang gter phur pa lugs gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub las sbyor bya tshul bdud sde'i gYul las rnam par rgyal ba. (Written by Dalai Lama V in 1660. 10 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B7: Lha brag phur pa'i bsnyen yig gsal ba'i sgron me. (Written by sTobs-ldan dpa'-bo. 6 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B8: 'Dod 'jo'i bum bzang gi nang dkyil sog sogs kyi dris lan. (A text unrelated to the Vajrakila cycle. Written by sMin-gling lo-chen Dharmaśri. 34 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B9: = A46.

B10: = A3 = C1.

B11: rDo rje phur pa che mchog gi 'phrin las. (20 folios. Found also as C4.)

B12: = A8 = C5.

B13: dPal rdo rje phur pa che mchog gi lo rgyus. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B14: bCom ldan 'das rdo rje phur pa smad nag po dug gi 'khor lo rab tu gsang ba. (5 folios. Unique to this collection.)


B16: rDo rje phur pa che mchog gi dam can gnad stabs kyi man ngag 'khor lo bri lugs dang bcas pa. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)

Volume 2

B17: bCom ldan 'das rdo rje phur pa'i smad nag po dug gi spu gri rab tu gsang ba. (9 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B18: Phur pa'i sri mnan. (4 folios. Unique to this collection. Commented upon by A51 & B64 and expanded into the long ritual found at A50.)

B19: = A10 + 11 (= C10), = C7.

B20: = A13 = C11.

B21: rDo rje phur pa'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga. (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B22: = A18 = C12.


B24: = A23 + 24, = C14.


B26: Phur pa rig 'dzin gyi bskul. (3 folios. Found also as C36.)

B27: Phur pa rig 'dzin skul. (11 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B28: bSe lcags dung gsum srog gi tsitta. (5 folios. Unique to this collection.)

B29: Phur pa byang gter gi bgyud 'debs dpe grangs dang bcas pa. (2 folios. Related to texts A47 & B46 but not identical.)

B30: rDo rje phur pa'i drag sngags zab mo'i lo rgyus dang rdo rje phur pa'i rgyu dang tshad bstan pa. (4 folios. Found also as B55 & C18.)

B31: = A2 = C19.

B32: Thugs kyi snying po gsang ba phur gcig ma'i sgrub thabs rdo rje phur pa'i drag sngags spu gri'i sgrub thabs. (7 folios. Includes A35 as the first of 7 short but seemingly unrelated texts. Found also as C21 & 22.)

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B33: Phur pa drag sngags kyi 'phrin las. (The longest of the gter ma texts. 20 folios. Found also as C24.)
B34: rDo rje phur pa yang gsang spu gri phur gcig ma'i nyams len rgyun khyer. (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B35: dPal rdo rje phur pa drag sngags spu gri nag po'i bstod bskul. (5 folios. Found also as B39 & C25.)
B36: dPal rdo rje phur pa'i srung ma'i bskul te dam can sgos bskul. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B37: rDzas kyi phur pa shin tu zab pa. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B38: Phur pa'ai bstod pa chen mo. (3 folios. Unique to this collection. cf. B35, etc.)
B40: Phur pa rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs kyi gleng gzhi. (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B41: = A32 = B53 = C33.
B42: = A45 = C35.
B43: rDo rje phur pa'i 'dzab rig 'dzin chen po'i gter ma. (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B44: (Untitled offering ritual.) (Single folio. Unique to this collection.)
B45: rDo rje phur pa skyed la bcang ba'i man ngag. (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B46: Lha brag phur bu'i brgyud 'debs byin rlabs gter mdzod. (Written by Padma 'phrin-las. 3 folios. Unique to this collection but cf. A47 & B29.)
B47: Lha brag gter byon gyi phur pa lcags khang drag sngags spu gri'i las 'byang 'jigs med rdo rje pha lam. (Written by Dalai Lama V in 1643. 25 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B48: Phur pa spu gri las tshogs rdzas kyi mthu chen bco brgyad. (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B49: rDo rje phur pa'i spyod lam rgyun gyi rnal 'byor gyi man ngag brgyad pa. (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B50: Ser ba dong bzlog. (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B52: rDo rje phur pa spu gri lha nag srog gi spu gri'i gsal byed. (2 folios. Found also as B54.)
B53: = A32 = B41 = C33.
B54: = B52.
B56: = A37.
B57: = A16.
B58: = A30, included in C29.
B59: dPal rdo rje gzhon nu'i nyams len rgyun 'khyer. (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B61: = A17.
B62: Drag sngags kyi ti ka bse sgrom ma. (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)
B63: = A14 = C20.
Appendix I

B64: = A52.
B65: Byang gter phur pa drag sngags kyi gtor ma’i dpe’u ris blo thog nas bris pa. (4 pages that must be placed side by side in order to complete the drawings thereon. Unique to this collection.)

Byang gter phur pa’i skor (Collection C)

C1: = A3 = B10.
C2: Dam can lto log gi ngan sngags. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C3: lCags sgrog ’khril ba’i man ngag. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C4: = B11.
C5: = A8 = B12.
C6: = A9 = B15.
C7: = A10 + 11, = B19.
C8: rDo rje phur pa’i dam can gnad rem. (2 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C9: rTsa gsum zang gyi sgo ’byed. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C10: = A11 (included in B19 & C7.)
C12: = A18 = B22.
C14: = A23 + 24, = B24.
C15: rDo rje phur pa’i che mchog gi dbang gi brgyud rims them byang zab mo. (2 folios. Unique to this collection but incorporating A1.)
C16: = A28 = B25.
C17: rDo rje phur pa gsum kyi rnal ’byor. (3 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C18: = B30 = B55.
C20: = A14 = B63.
C21: = B32 = C22. Includes A27 as an appendix.
C23: Phur pa thams cad kyi rtsa ba bsdus pa drag po sngags kyi rtsa ba la sogs pa. (A compendium of mantras including A20 & B60. 6 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C24: = B33.
C26: = A34.
C27: Drag po’i ’dzab dgongs. (Single page only. Unique to this collection.)
C28: Phur pa drag sngags ’dus pa. (10 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C29: Bears the same title as A30 & B58 but lengthened by the addition of many supplementary mantras, etc., 6 folios.
C30: Phur pa yang gsang spu gri ’i las mtha’ sdung po sri nan pa. (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C31: bDud kyi bar chad ’dul ba’i thabs. (5 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C32: rDo rje phur pa’i rgyun gyi spyod lam. (4 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C33: = A32 = B41 = B53.
Byang-gter literature

C34: rDo rje phur pa'i dril sgrub kyi 'phrin las chen mo. (7 folios. Unique to this collection but clearly related to A32, B41, B53 & C33.)
C35: = A45 = B42.
C37: Las tshogs rin chen khang bu las phya 'phrin nor bu'i mchog rgyal bla dgu. (19 folios. A Byang-gter tantra unique to this collection. Unrelated to the Vajrakīla cycle, this text describes a conversation between the gods Indra and Brahmā.)
C38: Phur mchod dang 'phrin brtsol sgrags pa. (5 folios. Unique to this collection.)
C39: Phur pa'i snying thig yang gsang spu gri 'bar ba'i bsgrub thabs. (8 folios. Followed by a commentary in 4 folios by Bla-ma mgon-po. Unique to this collection.)
C40: spu gri'i dkyil 'khor du dbang bskur ba'i cho ga klags chog ru brkod pa'i Vaiḍūrya'i bum bzang zhes bya ba. (58 folios. Unique to this collection. Written in 1766 by 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms. Modelled on B5, the previous ritual by Padma 'phrin-las called Rin chen bum bzang.)
Appendix II
The Black Razor Tantra (A2, B31, C19)

dpal¹ rdo rje² phur ba spu gri³ nag po rab tu gsang ba’i rgyud bzhugs⁴ so⁵ |
grya gar skad du | shri⁶ ba dzra kī la⁷ po tri⁸ ha la tan tra nā ma⁹ |
bod skad du | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po’i rgyud ces bya ba |
bc om ldan ’das¹⁰ dpal rdo rje gzhon nu¹¹ la phyag ’tshal lo¹² |
’og min gyi gnas mtha’ dbus med pa na | de bzhin gshegs¹³ pa thams cad¹⁴ til gyi gang bu |
bzhin¹⁵ bzhugs ste¹⁶ | bcom ldan ’das dpal¹⁷ chen rdo rje gzhon nu yab yum¹⁸ dang¹⁹ |
khro²⁰ bcu yab yum dang²¹ | sprul pa’i khra²² thabs nyi shu²³ dang | sras mchog ’phrin las²⁴ |
grub²⁵ pa dang²⁶ | yang sprul dang | gsom²⁷ sprul dpag tu med pa’i ’khor dang bcas nas

1. A syllable omitted.
2. All mss rdoe, throughout.
3. C gri’i.
4. B bzhudto, Final gs written as reversed da in all texts.
5. B inserts an indecipherable line in “the language of the dākinīs”, a gter ma code in “the script of the dākinīs” which is supposed to contain the condensed essence of the entire tantra.
6. All mss shri.
7. A kī lā ya, B ki la ya, C ki la yā.
8. B ti, C ri.
9. All mss na ma.
11. All mss gzhonu, throughout, B gzhon.
14. All mss thamd, throughout.
15. A bzhin du, B zhin.
17. A syllable missing.
18. All mss yunḥ, throughout.
20. A khrau = khro bo.
22. B khro.
24. All mss ’phris, throughout.
27. B sum.

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rang bzhin²⁸ gyis²⁹ bzhugs so³⁰ | de nas bcom ldan 'das³¹ dpal chen³² po rdo rje gzhon nus³³ 'di skad ces gsungs³⁴ so | kyai³⁵ 'khor tshogs thams cad tshur nyan cig | rang bzhin³⁶ dur khrod³⁷ chen po nas³⁸ | me long³⁹ gzugs bryant⁴⁰ chu zla 'dra | nyan mongs⁴¹ dri mas gos⁴² pa med | rang bzhin⁴³ don gyi dbyings na bzhugs | nam mkha'⁴⁴ cho 'phrul⁴⁵ ston pa ltar | rang bzhin dur khrod dam pa ru | drag po sngags kyi⁴⁶ chos ston 'gyur | ces⁴⁷ gsungs so⁴⁸ | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po'i rgyud las | gleng gzhis'i⁴⁹ le'u ste⁵⁰ dang po'o |
de nas dpal chen gtso bo⁵¹ des⁵² | 'og min dbyings nas sku bzhengs te⁵³ | 'khor tshogs rnams la 'di skad gsungs | kye kye⁵⁴ | dag pa dri ma med pa'i mchog | bla med⁵⁵ byang chub⁵⁶ sgrub pa'i thabs | 'khor ba'i rnams⁵⁷ rtogs⁵⁸ sbyangs⁵⁹ pa⁶⁰ dang | drag po'i⁶¹ 'gro ba sbyang⁶² pa'i²⁶ phyir⁶⁴ | mnyam⁶⁵ pa chen po'i don bstan nas⁶⁶ | gang la gang 'dul bstan⁶⁷
pa'i phyir\textsuperscript{68} | 'bar ba chen po'i klong nas bzhengs | rigs ni\textsuperscript{69} rdo rje'i\textsuperscript{70} rigs kyi gtso | mun pa 'joms\textsuperscript{71} pa'i shes rab\textsuperscript{72} 'od | 'khor ba'i nyon mongs\textsuperscript{73} 'joms mdzad pa | 'gro ba yongs kyi\textsuperscript{74} gnyen gcig\textsuperscript{75} po | rgyal\textsuperscript{76} ba'i\textsuperscript{77} 'gro ba'i don gyi phyir | ston pa'i bstan\textsuperscript{78} pa rgyas par bstan\textsuperscript{79} | ces gsungs so\textsuperscript{80} | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po'i rgyud las | gleng bslangs\textsuperscript{81} pa'i\textsuperscript{82} le'u ste gnyis pa'o\textsuperscript{83} |

'og min chos dbyings pho brang\textsuperscript{84} nas | dpal chen gtso bo sku bzhengs\textsuperscript{85} pa | dbu gsum phyag drug zhabs bzhi bsgrad\textsuperscript{86} | g.yas dkar g.yon dmar dbus mthing zhal | rdo rje rtse dgu rtse lnga g.yas | me dpung 'bar ba kha twang\textsuperscript{87} g.yon | tha ma'i phyag gnyis phur pa 'dril\textsuperscript{88} | rdo rje khyung shog\textsuperscript{89} bar snang 'khyengs\textsuperscript{90} | dur khrod chas rnams\textsuperscript{91} sku la brgyan | yab yum gnyis med\textsuperscript{92} rol par bzhugs | hüm | rdo rje khros\textsuperscript{93} pas\textsuperscript{94} zhe\textsuperscript{95} sdang gcod\textsuperscript{96} | mtshon chen sngon po 'bar ba yis\textsuperscript{97} | nam mkha'i dkyil nas thigs\textsuperscript{98} pa shar | srog gi\textsuperscript{99} sgo ru shar ba

65. B mnyan, C snyam.
66. B stans.
67. B stan.
68. All mss pa’ir, throughout.
69. A ‘dzin, C kyi.
70. A & C rje.
71. B ‘jom.
72. All mss sheb, throughout.
73. All mss nyaungs, throughout.
74. B gyi.
75. All mss single digit numbers written as numerals throughout.
76. All mss dyal, (dya = rgya, throughout.).
77. A & B ba.
78. B & C stan.
79. B mdzad.
80. B cesyo, throughout.
81. A & B blang, C slang.
82. All mss ba’i.
83. B po.
84. All mss phrong, throughout.
85. A gzhengs.
86. B sgrad.
87. A ŭvām, C tam.
88. B sgril.
89. A gshog.
90. A & B khengs, C khyengs.
91. B brgyad.
93. B phros.
94. C pa.
95. B bzhe.
96. B bcod, C gtso.
97. B yi.
98. C thig.
99. All mss srogi, throughout.
dang | snying gi\textsuperscript{100} dkyil du bsgom\textsuperscript{101} par bya | ces gsungs te\textsuperscript{102} | yab yum gnyis med rol.
pa'i\textsuperscript{103} sras | ye shes\textsuperscript{104} khro bcu yab yum dang | khra thabs mgo\textsuperscript{105} gnyan\textsuperscript{106} nyi shu dang | sras mchog 'phrin las\textsuperscript{107} grub\textsuperscript{108} pa dang | sgo skyong khro mo bzhi rnam\textsuperscript{109} sprul | bde gshegs\textsuperscript{110} kun gyi sras mchog ni | sras ni chos nyid\textsuperscript{111} skye med las | mchog ni\textsuperscript{112} 'phrin las lhun gysis\textsuperscript{113} grub | ru dra\textsuperscript{114} sgral\textsuperscript{115} phyir kun\textsuperscript{116} gyi\textsuperscript{117} sras | sras ni skye med rdo rje'i sras | khro bcu yab yum khra thabs rnam | kun kyang sku mdog\textsuperscript{118} mthing\textsuperscript{119} nag rnung | zhal gcig phyag gnyis\textsuperscript{120} phur pa sgril\textsuperscript{121} | sku smad\textsuperscript{122} zur gsum phur bu'i\textsuperscript{123} dbal | rdo rje khyung shog\textsuperscript{124} dur khrod chas | hüm phat sgra sgrogs\textsuperscript{125} 'khor ba 'jigs | gdug pa ma lus\textsuperscript{126} 'dul byar\textsuperscript{127} byos | hüm | snying rjes\textsuperscript{128} bsgral\textsuperscript{129} ba'i dam tshig\textsuperscript{130} ni | bsad\textsuperscript{131} cing mnan pa ma yin te\textsuperscript{132} | phung po\textsuperscript{133} rdo rjer\textsuperscript{134} gtam\textsuperscript{135} byas nas | rnam par\textsuperscript{136} shes pa rdo rjer bsgom\textsuperscript{137}

100. B kha'i.
101. B sgom.
102. B so, C ste.
103. B ba'i.
104. All mss yais, throughout.
105. C sgo.
106. A brnyan, B rnyan.
107. All mss phris, throughout.
108. B sgrub.
110. A & B bdai<;l, throughout.
111. A nyi (faint, in margin).
112. A gi.
113. B gyi.
114. A & B tra, C ta.
115. A & C bsgral.
116. B kunyis.
117. C gyis.
118. A skuog.
119. B 'thing.
120. A & B phyagnyis.
121. A 'dril, B & C 'gril.
122. B dmad.
123. A & B pa'i.
124. B gshog.
125. A sgrog.
126. A & B mus, throughout.
127. A 'dulyr, B gdul byar.
128. A snyinges, C rje'i.
129. B sgral.
130. B dang with characteristic hook of the letter tsha above the ga, throughout.
131. B gsad.
132. A stams, C ste.
133. B pos.
134. B & C rjes.
135. C bstams.
137. B sgom.
The Black Razor Tantra

|hüm| sangs rgyas| kun gyi| ye shes sku| ngang nyid rdo rje chos dbyings las| 'bar ba'i kho bo| mi zad pa| sku'i dbyig tu| bdag skyed cig| hüm| rdo rje gzhon nu'i rig| 'dzin rnam| srid pa'i rdo rje bsgrub| mdzod| cig| srid pa rdo rje phur pa'i lha| ye shes kho bo grub par mdzod| hüm| thabs kyi spyod pas 'gro don du| byams dang snying rjes gang 'dul ba| sangs rgyas 'phrin las rdzogs| mdzad nas| dbang dang byin brlabs| 'dir stsol| cig| hüm| srid pa'i phur bu bsgrub| pa dang| dbang dang dngos grub blang ba'i phyir| ye shes kho bo gshegs su gso| khro bo chen po gshegs nas kyang| rtags dang mtshan ma bstan pa dang| k'i la ya| dngos grub stsol| ces gsungs te| dur khrod kyi klong nas rab tu khros te| phyogs bcu'i dgra bgegs thams cad brdul| lo| dpal| rdo rje phur pa sug nag po'i rgyud las| lha tshogs| thams cad drag po'i las la chas pa'i le'u ste gsum pa'o|
de nas 'jig rten| pa'i dregs pa can rnam| dang| ye shes las grub pa'i ma mo rnam kyis| dpal chen| 'khor dang bcas pa la| bdag cag rnam kyis| srog snying 'bul| ding nas

139. B kunyi.
140. B grau.
141. A bzad.
142. A sku yi, B sku yis.
143. A dbyig du, B dbyingsu.
144. A bskyed.
145. A & B rid (= rigs).
146. B snams.
147. A & B sgrubs.
148. B mod, with vestigial hook after ma.
149. B gcig.
150. A & C sjogs, sja for rdza, throughout.
151. B pas.
152. A riabs.
153. B brtsol, C bstsol.
154. B sgrubs.
155. C pa'i.
156. All mss gshegsuol, throughout.
157. B bstans kyang.
158. B & C ki.
159. A yis, B yi'i, C ya'i.
160. C rtsol.
161. B cesye, C ces gsungs ste.
162. C 'khros.
163. All mss dgred, throughout.
164. A btul, B gtul.
165. Syllable omitted from all mss until final chapters.
166. A & B lhod, throughout.
168. B thams cad.
170. A & B kyi.

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Appendix II

dpal gyi¹⁷¹ 'bangs su¹⁷² mchis¹⁷³ | dpal chen khyod¹⁷⁴ kyis¹⁷⁵ bzhes su gsol¹⁷⁶ | ka ḏang ka te¹⁷⁷ | dza ye vi dza ye | A tsi tse a ra pa ra tsi tse¹⁷⁸ | mā ra se na¹⁷⁹ | pra ma rda ni ye¹⁸⁰ hūm phat | hūm | rdo rje gsang ba'i bka' las ni | sdig can gang zhig¹⁸¹ 'da' byed pa | stobs chen khro bo chen po yis¹⁸² | klad pa tshal pa brgya¹⁸³ ru 'khos¹⁸⁴ | nyon cig¹⁸⁵ bgegs dang log 'dren tshogs¹⁸⁶ | nga'i¹⁸⁷ bka' las 'da' ma byed | kyi¹⁸⁸ | dpal chen thugs kyi dkyil 'khor du | bdag cag srog snying 'bul bar byi | bka'i¹⁸⁹ pham¹⁹⁰ 'babs¹⁹¹ stsal¹⁹² du gsol | hūm | ma ba sham¹⁹³ ku ru | ma trang ga ra¹⁹⁴ | I mān¹⁹⁵ dha ddhi¹⁹⁶ ma ma ka rma | shri kra ma kā ra ye¹⁹⁷ | hūm phat | dpal chen po'i spyan mnga¹⁹⁸ ru | srog gi snying po 'di 'bul gyi¹⁹⁹ | thugs rje²⁰⁰ can²⁰¹ gyis²⁰² gzig su gsol²⁰³ | 'jig rten 'das dang 'jig rten pa'i | 'khor dang bcas pa ma lus kun | dam tshig 'di la bstan pa yis | las rna s ma lus grub par gyis²⁰⁴ | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po'i rgyud las | dam can rna s kyis²⁰⁵ srog snying phul ba'i le'u ste bzhī pa'o |

171. B dpalyi.
172. A & B 'bangsu.
173. A mchi, B 'chi, C 'chis.
174. C khyed.
175. B kyi.
177. All mss kha tam kha te (A ye).
178. A a tsitta a pa ra tsitte, B a tsi te a pa ra tsi te, C a tsi te a pa ra tsi ta.
179. All mss ma ra sa ni.
180. A pra mar rda ni, B & C pra mar rda ni ye.
181. B gi.
182. B yi.
183. C dya (= rgya).
185. B gcig.
186. B tsho.
187. A nga yi.
188. A kye.
189. A bka' yi.
190. B pha.
191. A 'bogs, C 'bags.
192. B brtsal.
194. A & B ma tam nya ka ra, C ma tang nya ka ra.
195. A & C i nan, B ig nan.
196. A & C dha ti, B rda ri?
197. A shri tram kar nye ya, B shri kham tam karnye ya, C shri kram ka re ya.
198. A snga.
199. B gyi.
200. A rje'i.
201. A spyan.
203. All mss gzig suol, throughout.
204. B bgyi, C bgyis.
205. B kyi.

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de nas gnad la\textsuperscript{206} bor ba 'di gsungs so | hūm | dam tshig chen po'i dus la bab\textsuperscript{207} | sprul\textsuperscript{208} pa chen po'i dus la bab | phyag brnyan chen po'i dus la bab | shwa\textsuperscript{209} na mu kha'i dus la bab | bdag nyid\textsuperscript{210} chen po'i dus la bab | sa bdag chen po'i dus la bab | khyed kyi dam tshig\textsuperscript{211} dus la bab | mthu rtsal dbyung\textsuperscript{212} ba'i dus la bab | hūm | dngos grub\textsuperscript{213} bar chad\textsuperscript{214} byed pa'i bgegs | gdug cing sdang sms ldan pa rnam | zung cing\textsuperscript{215} rgyob cig\textsuperscript{216} rnam par 'chings\textsuperscript{217} | rtogs cing\textsuperscript{218} grogs dang bral bar gyis\textsuperscript{219} | rings\textsuperscript{220} par khug la smyo\textsuperscript{221} ru chug | phob cig rnam par gzir bar gyis\textsuperscript{222} | nga'i\textsuperscript{223} dbang du gyur nas kyang | sgo\textsuperscript{224} ba'i bka' rnam mnyan\textsuperscript{225} par gyis\textsuperscript{226} | hūm | gdug cing sdang\textsuperscript{227} sms ldan pa rnam | lha 'am 'on te bdud kyang rung | nga la bar chod\textsuperscript{228} byed pa rnam | mthu dang rdzu 'phrul\textsuperscript{229} med par\textsuperscript{230} gyis\textsuperscript{231} | brdung\textsuperscript{232} shig\textsuperscript{233} rdo jye 'bar ba'i brtun\textsuperscript{234} | bka' las 'da' byed sdig can rnam | rdo jye med bal snying bsregs cig\textsuperscript{235} | lus ngag rdul\textsuperscript{236} phran\textsuperscript{237} bzhin\textsuperscript{238} du rlog\textsuperscript{239} | khro mo 'bar ba'i gtun\textsuperscript{240} khung du | rdo jye tho bas brdungs\textsuperscript{241} byas nas | lha yang rung ste bsgral\textsuperscript{242} bar

\textsuperscript{206} C syllable omitted.
\textsuperscript{207} B babs, throughout these verses.
\textsuperscript{208} A omits next seven lines.
\textsuperscript{209} B & C sho.
\textsuperscript{210} B bdid, throughout.
\textsuperscript{211} B thya dam (= thugs dam).
\textsuperscript{212} B 'byung.
\textsuperscript{213} B dngorub, throughout.
\textsuperscript{214} C chod.
\textsuperscript{215} B gcig.
\textsuperscript{216} B gcig.
\textsuperscript{217} C chings.
\textsuperscript{218} B gcig.
\textsuperscript{219} B & C bgyis.
\textsuperscript{220} B ring.
\textsuperscript{221} All mss smra (amended by C.R. Lama, oral communication).
\textsuperscript{222} A & B bgyis.
\textsuperscript{223} A nga yi.
\textsuperscript{224} A & B bsgo.
\textsuperscript{225} A & C nyan.
\textsuperscript{226} B bgyis.
\textsuperscript{227} B bsdang.
\textsuperscript{228} A gcod, B chad.
\textsuperscript{229} A & C sjrul (= rdzu 'phrul), B sju 'phrul.
\textsuperscript{230} B mer, throughout.
\textsuperscript{231} B bgyis.
\textsuperscript{232} A rdungs, B brdungs, C gdungs.
\textsuperscript{233} B cing, C cig.
\textsuperscript{234} A gtun, C btun.
\textsuperscript{235} A shig.
\textsuperscript{236} B & C brdul.
\textsuperscript{237} C 'phran.
\textsuperscript{238} B 4n (4 = bzhi).
\textsuperscript{239} A brlag, C brlog.
\textsuperscript{240} B btun, C stun.

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bya’o | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po’i rgyud las | dam can gnad la bor ba’i le’u ste lnga pa’o |

de nas bsnyen pa’i thabs bstan pa | dben pa’i gnas su mchod gtor bshams | bdag nyid dpal chen skur gsal ba’i | thugs kar ye shes sms dpal n ii rgyan med yab dang tshul mthun pa | mtshon gang pa gcig bsam par bya | de’i thugs kar phyag mtshan gyi | rdo rje rtse dgu nas ’bru tsam | de’i lte bar gsung gi rtags | hüm sgon spu yis bris pa tsam | de yi mtha mar | gser mdog skra shad tsam gyis bskor | de ltar thugs kar bsgoms nas kyang | thugs kyi sngags las ’od ’phros pas | stong gsum thams cad ’od kyis bkang | srid gsum gdug pa can rnams btul | gsal stong ngang nas sngags ‘di bzlas | om ba dzra ki li ki la ya sarba bigh nän bam hüm phat | dzah hüm | grangs kyi bsnyen pa bye ba gsum | rtags bsnyen rtags ’byung bar du bzlas | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po’i rgyud las | bsnyen pa’i le’u ste drug pa’o |

241. B bsdungs.
243. B spu’i.
244. All mss gnasu, throughout.
245. B gtor ma.
246. B khar.
247. All mss semda’, throughout.
248. A nyid.
249. B & C thun.
250. B tshon.
251. A & C cig.
252. A bsgom.
253. A de yi.
254. B khar.
255. C gyis.
256. B rtsam.
257. A de yi.
258. B yi.
259. C de’i.
260. A tha.
262. B gyi.
263. A thur, B thu’dr, (All mss subjoined ya = ugs.)
264. B sgom, C bsgom.
265. B thya.
266. B & C kyi.
268. C brtlul.
269. A ki li ki la ya sarba bigh nan, B ki li ki la ya sarba bi ga nan, C ki li ki la yā sarba big nan.
270. A & B dza hüm a, C dza hüm ā.
271. All mss rtag (= rtags).
272. B brnyen.
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[^273]: A & C bsgrub.
[^274]: A grog, B grog (= grogs).
[^275]: B syllable omitted.
[^276]: B zang.
[^277]: A khar.
[^278]: C syllable omitted.
[^279]: B & C rgod.
[^280]: B sres.
[^281]: A la.
[^282]: A rtsangs, B rtsang.
[^283]: B nyre.
[^284]: C cig.
[^285]: A & B rnas.
[^286]: B tshang.
[^287]: A & B ba'i.
[^288]: B ka, C kha.
[^289]: A & C bri, B 'bri.
[^290]: B & C sngon.
[^291]: B brkud.
[^292]: B rnas.
[^293]: A kī li ki lā ya, B kī li ki la ya, C kī li ki la ya.
[^294]: A dha ti ma ma karma shri tram kam ka kar nye ya,
  B dha ti ma ma karma shri tram kam ka kar nye ya,
  C dha dhi ma ma karma shri tram kam ka kar nye ya.
[^295]: A sarba bigh nan, B & C sarba big nan.
[^296]: A dha ti, B ha ti, C dha 'di.
[^297]: B khrag.
[^298]: B pa.
[^299]: A bsgrub.
[^300]: B bsral.
[^301]: A byas te, B byaste.
[^302]: A bo.
[^303]: A ms corrupt.
[^304]: B bkub.
[^305]: All mss rṇr ti.
[^306]: B & C a gu.
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dza\textsuperscript{307} | dpa’ bo ’bru Inga’i sngags rgod ’dis\textsuperscript{308} | zhag gsum bzlas na khug\textsuperscript{309} par ’gyur\textsuperscript{310} | de nas drag po\textsuperscript{311} bsgral\textsuperscript{312} ba’i sngags | om ba dzra ki li ki la ya\textsuperscript{313} | sarba bigh nān baṃ hūṃ phat | dzaḥ hūṃ ā | ma ma rag mo yak mo\textsuperscript{314} | kā la rū pa\textsuperscript{315} | dgra bgegs kyi snying rtsa la yam yam | snying la khril khril | srog la chum chum | tsi tta\textsuperscript{316} srog la tung tung\textsuperscript{317} | snying khrag srog la shad shad | dza thum ri li li | dgra bgegs kyi snying tseg tseg | ’ur ’ur | shig shig\textsuperscript{319} | gul gul | myags myags\textsuperscript{320} | sod sod\textsuperscript{321} | dha ddhi ma ma karma shri kra ma kā ra ye | mā ra se na | pra ma rda ni ye\textsuperscript{322} | dgra bgegs mā\textsuperscript{323} ra ya hūṃ phat | rtsa\textsuperscript{324} ’thung\textsuperscript{325} gsang ba’i yang snying ’di | drag sngags srog gi chad pa yin\textsuperscript{326} | bsregs\textsuperscript{327} par byed pa’i me dpung ste | gnon par\textsuperscript{328} byed pa’i ri rab ’dra | gsal bar byed pa’i ti kā\textsuperscript{329} ’o | sngags ’di drag po’i rdzas\textsuperscript{330} la bstim\textsuperscript{331} | ling ga’i\textsuperscript{332} gnad la brdeg\textsuperscript{333} par bya\textsuperscript{334} | rtags dang mtshan ma ’di ltar yongs\textsuperscript{335} | ’gor dang lings\textsuperscript{336} byas sems can\textsuperscript{337} bsod\textsuperscript{338} | grong khyer\textsuperscript{339}

\textsuperscript{307}. B ja ja.
\textsuperscript{308}. A & B ’di.
\textsuperscript{309}. A khugs.
\textsuperscript{310}. B gyur.
\textsuperscript{311}. A pos.
\textsuperscript{312}. A sgrol, B & C bsgrol.
\textsuperscript{313}. A ms corrupt.
\textsuperscript{314}. A & C yag mo.
\textsuperscript{315}. A & C ka la ru pa, B ka la rus pa.
\textsuperscript{316}. C tsi ta.
\textsuperscript{317}. A & B dung dung.
\textsuperscript{318}. C inserts snying khrag srag (sic) la tung tung.
\textsuperscript{319}. B shing.
\textsuperscript{320}. B nyags nyags
\textsuperscript{321}. A saud.
\textsuperscript{322}. A dha ti ma ma karma shri tri kar nye ya mā ra sa ni pra mar dha ni ye, B ha ti ma ma karma shri tram karnye ya ma ra sa ni pra mar rda ni ye, C dha ti ma ma karma shri tram ka re ya ma ra sa ni pra mar rda ni ye.
\textsuperscript{323}. All mss ma.
\textsuperscript{324}. B tsa.
\textsuperscript{325}. A & C thung.
\textsuperscript{326}. B ’di.
\textsuperscript{327}. A sreg.
\textsuperscript{328}. B gnodr.
\textsuperscript{329}. All mss ti ka.
\textsuperscript{330}. All mss sjas.
\textsuperscript{331}. B & C stim.
\textsuperscript{332}. B ka, C ka or kha, throughout.
\textsuperscript{333}. B bsdeg.
\textsuperscript{334}. B bya’.
\textsuperscript{335}. A ’ong, B ’ongs.
\textsuperscript{336}. B ling.
\textsuperscript{337}. B & C semn, throughout.
\textsuperscript{338}. A & C bsad.
\textsuperscript{339}. B groengr.
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mi³⁴⁰ yis bchom pa dang | ha ha gad mos³⁴¹ 'debs gyur na | nges par bsgral³⁴² ba'i rtags yin pas | ling ga dum bu gsum du sgos³⁴³ | cha gcig dug shing me la bsregs³⁴⁴ | cha gcig gtor rdeg³⁴⁵ 'og tu mnan | cha gcig klu la gtad par bya | dam can mchod pas mnyes³⁴⁶ par bya | ces gsungs so | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po'i rgyud las | drag po'i las sbyor gyi le'u ste brgyad pa'o |

de nas mnyam pa'³³⁴⁷ ting nge³⁴⁸ 'dzin ni | ma nor ma bcos chos nyid las | srid³⁴⁹ gsum gduc pa 'dul ba'i phyir | tsham rngam³⁵⁰ gzi brjid glog³⁵¹ ltar 'khyug³⁵² | byang chub³⁵³ sms kyi khyad par³⁵⁴ las | kham gsum³⁵⁵ dbang bsgyur³⁵⁶ yang dag grub | byang chub sms sms kyi phur pa 'dis³⁵⁷ | kham gsum ma lus bsgral zhés³⁵⁸ bya | phung po brdal³⁵⁹ du bshig³⁶⁰ nas kyang | sha khrag³⁶¹ kham gsum gang bar bsam | thugs rjes³⁶² chags pa bsgral ba'i phyir | man ngag snying³⁶³ khun gsang ba'i rdzás | byang chub sms kyi skad cig³⁶⁴ la | bsam pa las kyang mya ngan³⁶⁵ 'das | 'jig rten las kyang mya ngan 'das | byang chub sms kyis 'go³⁶⁶ sa bcad³⁶⁷ | 'di ni³⁶⁸ mi 'gyur byang chub sms | sgrib pa med pa mthar phyin pa | rtsol ba med pa lhun gyis³⁶⁹ grub | ces gsungs so | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po'i rgyud las | byang chub sms kyis³⁷⁰ bsgral ba'i le'u ste dgu pa'o |
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de nas gsang ba sngags\textsuperscript{371} kyi tings nge 'dzin\textsuperscript{372} ni | dang po gnyis med byang sms bstan | gnyis pa rig pa so sor bstan | gsum pa drag po 'i 'dzab dgongs bstan | bzhi pa sku gsung\textsuperscript{373} thugs su bstan | yang dag nyid la yang dag bla\textsuperscript{374} | rtags par byas\textsuperscript{375} ste\textsuperscript{376} rnam par sgom\textsuperscript{377} | yang dag rtags na bde chen\textsuperscript{378} thob | mang po bzlaz na kun kyang 'grub | dam tshig brsung\textsuperscript{379} na dngos grub myur | byang chub sms kyi phur pa yis | bdag gi\textsuperscript{380} don du rtags par bgyi\textsuperscript{381} | kham gsung sms can ma lus pa 'i | rdo rje phur pas ma rig 'joms | ma rig pa yi\textsuperscript{382} sms can la | zhi dang rgyas dang dbang drag dang\textsuperscript{383} | so sor\textsuperscript{384} bsgrub\textsuperscript{385} pas 'grub par 'gyur | bdag dang lha dang dgra bgegs rnam | byang chub sms la skye 'chi\textsuperscript{386} med | nyon mong srog dbugs bcad\textsuperscript{387} pa yang | shi rgyag\textsuperscript{388} tshe 'thud lta bur\textsuperscript{389} 'gyur\textsuperscript{390} | phur ni thams cad byang chub sms | pa ni thams cad kun la\textsuperscript{391} khyab | phur ni thams cad gtso bo mchog | pa ni thams cad 'khor gyis\textsuperscript{392} tshul | phur ni thams cad skye ba med | pa ni rol pa 'gags\textsuperscript{393} pa med | phur ni byang chub sms su gcig\textsuperscript{394} | pa ni thams cad de ru 'grub\textsuperscript{395} | bsnyen pa bya ba rab tu gces\textsuperscript{396} | ces gsungs so | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po 'i rgyud las | rdo rje phur pa 'i dgongs pa bstan pa 'i le'u ste bcu pa 'o | a ho\textsuperscript{397} | phyogs bcu dus bzhi 'i bde gshegs\textsuperscript{398} rnam | skye ba med pa 'i chos nyid las | log lta 'i sms can bsgral slad du | spu gri nag po rab\textsuperscript{399} 'bar ba 'i\textsuperscript{400} | rgyud 'di gsang ba 'i

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{371} B gsngags.
\textsuperscript{372} C syllable omitted.
\textsuperscript{373} B gsungs.
\textsuperscript{374} B & C lta.
\textsuperscript{375} A & B bya.
\textsuperscript{376} B te.
\textsuperscript{377} A bsgom.
\textsuperscript{378} B bdain, throughout.
\textsuperscript{379} A brsungs.
\textsuperscript{380} B bdagi.
\textsuperscript{381} B bgyis.
\textsuperscript{382} C pa 'i.
\textsuperscript{383} A dang drag.
\textsuperscript{384} B saur, throughout.
\textsuperscript{385} A bsgrubs.
\textsuperscript{386} A & C shi.
\textsuperscript{387} A gcad.
\textsuperscript{388} B dyags (= rgyags).
\textsuperscript{389} A & B ltur, throughout.
\textsuperscript{390} B gyur.
\textsuperscript{391} A & C du.
\textsuperscript{392} A & B gyi.
\textsuperscript{393} A & B 'gag.
\textsuperscript{394} B & C cig.
\textsuperscript{395} B line duplicated, C bsgrub.
\textsuperscript{396} B bcas.
\textsuperscript{397} B om.
\textsuperscript{398} B bdaid (= bdeegs), throughout.
\textsuperscript{399} B syllable omitted.
\textsuperscript{400} B yi.
\end{footnotes}
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mchog du gsungs | skal ldan\textsuperscript{401} yang rab blo can dang | theg chen blo ldan rtags pa che | rtsol\textsuperscript{402} ba che zhing shes rab rnon\textsuperscript{403} | bsam pa dag par gyur pa la | rgyud 'di yongs su gtad par bya | dam can nams kyis\textsuperscript{404} rgyud 'di\textsuperscript{405} bsrungs\textsuperscript{406} | ces gsungs so | dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po 'i rgyud las | rgyud gtad pa'i le'u ste bcu cig\textsuperscript{407} pa'o |
dpal rdo rje phur pa spu gri nag po\textsuperscript{408} rab tu gsang ba'i rgyud rdzogs\textsuperscript{409} so\textsuperscript{410} | sa ma ya\textsuperscript{412} | rgya rgya rgya\textsuperscript{413} |

byang zang zang lha brag gi nang\textsuperscript{414} | brag ri dug sbrul spungs\textsuperscript{415} 'dra'i skyed\textsuperscript{416} byang lcags mdzod nag po nas | me pho rta'i lo | sa ga chen po'i\textsuperscript{417} zla ba'i tshes bzh\textsuperscript{418} la | rig\textsuperscript{419} 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru\textsuperscript{420} can gyis | gter nas gdan drangs pa'o | bkra shis\textsuperscript{421} |

\textsuperscript{401} A & B skaldn, throughout. 
\textsuperscript{402} C brtsol. 
\textsuperscript{403} A rno, B sno, C brm\textsuperscript{a}m? 
\textsuperscript{404} B kyi. 
\textsuperscript{405} B syllable omitted. 
\textsuperscript{406} B & C gsungs. 
\textsuperscript{407} B bceuig. 
\textsuperscript{408} B po'i. 
\textsuperscript{409} All mss sjod. 
\textsuperscript{410} B & C sho. 
\textsuperscript{411} B inserts line in "d\textsuperscript{ä}kini script". 
\textsuperscript{412} C yā. 
\textsuperscript{413} C adds mangalam and ends here, no colophon. 
\textsuperscript{414} A syllable omitted. 
\textsuperscript{415} B dpungs. 
\textsuperscript{416} A sked. 
\textsuperscript{417} A mo'i. 
\textsuperscript{418} B & C dgu. 
\textsuperscript{419} A rigs. 
\textsuperscript{420} A phru, B khru. 
\textsuperscript{421} B omits bkra shis, adds sa ma ya rgya rgya rgya.
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