

Development of a Tantric Meditation Practice: Three Generations of Tibetan Lamas¹

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Abstract: This paper traces the development of a tantric meditation practice across three generations of Tibetan lamas considered to be linked by reincarnation. The focus is a visualisation practice on the popular tantric deity, Vajrakīlaya (also called, Vajrakumāra). Meditative traditions relating to Vajrakīlaya are ubiquitous in Tibetan sources, including root tantras, transmitted instructions, and fresh revelations. Key passages, such as the verses for the meditative build-up of the maṇḍala, are shared in many sources, but there are also variants characterising different traditions of practice. Exactly how such a tradition of practice is developed over time is explored in the works of the seventeenth century Dudul Dorje (*bdud 'dul rdo rje*, 1615-1672), the nineteenth century Dudjom Lingpa (*bdud 'joms gling pa*, 1835-1904), and the twentieth century Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (*bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje*, 1904-1987). Dudjom Lingpa, who produced three sets of Vajrakīlaya ritual meditations within his larger revelatory cycles, trained in Dudul Dorje's tradition and became seen as his emanation. Dudjom Lingpa's recognised immediate incarnation, Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje Rinpoche, was one of the main lineage holders who contributed to new textual compositions for a number of different revelatory traditions, including his work on editing and advancing the revelations of his predecessor, as well as revealing new scriptures himself. Comparisons between the Vajrakīlaya productions of the three lamas show continuities giving the lineage of practice its stamp of identity, while we also witness significant re-working, elaboration, systematisation and codification of the liturgical material and meditative instructions.

Vast quantities of Tibetan religious literature belong to the Tibetan tradition of "Treasure" Revelation (*gter ma*), believed to have been deliberately concealed long ago by an enlightened being, for future rediscovery by a specifically prophesied uniquely qualified visionary, employing mystical (although strictly specified) revelatory processes. Historically, some Indian and Chinese Mahāyāna and Tantric scriptures were revealed by broadly similar methods, but in Tibetan Buddhism, such traditions remain vibrant, despite extreme conservatism, embodied in the ideal of an unbroken unchanging transmission of teachings from master to disciple over immense time periods. The tantric meditative instructions and liturgies which feature in these texts seek to present a blueprint for spiritual progress resulting in Enlightenment, and thus, the emphasis is on how this miraculous expression unmistakably communicates the Buddha Word of previous ages. There is little explicit celebration of the creative genius of the revealer, although new Treasure texts are lauded for their short lineages, bringing the direct blessings of the buddhas or tantric deities, free of the taint of imperfect lamas in the line of transmission or of textual corruptions through generations of copying. In this article, I explore a meditative revelation focused on the tantric deity, Vajrakīlaya, considered fresh in its presentation by the two Dudjom lamas of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although it relates closely also to the works of the seventeenth century lama who was their predecessor.

Authorisation to practise any specific tantric meditation tradition is transmitted following empowerment, by a ritualised reading of the text by the lama. Moreover, the foundation of the meditation is the correct recitation or chanting of the liturgies, accompanied by the appropriate

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rituals. That is, the sacred words of the liturgy are a necessary basis for establishing the tantric vision and the meditative experience in the student. In the case of revelations, they are not merely instructions or intellectual teachings to be communicated, but words of sacred power, uttered by the Buddha, Guru Rinpoche. They are considered to have been imprinted within the mindstream of his enlightened student and recovered by the lama who is the reborn student, at the uniquely appropriate time when they have the greatest potential to trigger realisation in the recipients of the teachings. In these revelation traditions, it is generally assumed that recitation of the sacred words, whether or not fully understood, is a prerequisite to progress in the meditative states. Thus, the focus here is the exact wording of the verses for recitation.

To establish a new Treasure Revelation as authentic, it needs to be demonstrable that the textual productions are entirely in line with the established scriptural corpus. In the case of texts connected with the tantric deity, Vajrakīlaya, this implies that a core of important tantric verses found in all the Vajrakīlaya tantras and early commentarial works must be included, even if slightly re-phrased or expanded. Moreover, many of the details of the visualisations can be expected to conform largely to previous generations of practice on Vajrakīlaya. If a new Treasure does not appear to be in line with such established tradition, it is more likely to be questioned as a possible false revelation, a mistaken production resulting from the negative aspirations of evil beings, with the intention of leading faithful Dharma students astray. Thus, new Treasures will invariably incorporate substantial passages of known tantric liturgies, as well as paraphrasing meditative instructions well-established in the practice tradition.

Besides the wording of the texts themselves, the main key to the establishment of authenticity is the status of the revealer: whether or not his claim to be the rebirth of the enlightened student of the past, and to have recovered the genuine teachings, is accepted. In the case of the three lamas under discussion here, the first two had some difficulties in establishing their reputations, but were eventually successful, while the third was seen as their successor from an early age. The three are linked by reincarnation: the nineteenth century Dudjom Lingpa (*bdud 'joms gling pa*, 1835-1904) came to be accepted as a rebirth of the seventeenth century Dudul Dorje (*bdud 'dul rdo rje*, 1615-1672), while the twentieth century Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (*bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje*, 1904-1987, hereafter, Dudjom Rinpoche) was formally recognised as Dudjom Lingpa's rebirth. All three are seen as emanations of their mythological predecessor, Drokben Khye'u-chung lotsawa (*'brog ban khye'u chung lo tsā ba*), who was a student of Guru Rinpoche and features in the accounts of the early transmission of Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century. He is especially connected with wrathful deity practice. In many depictions, he is shown holding or seated beside a bird. This is associated with his successful accomplishment of the Vajrakīlaya practice, when, as related in Dudjom Rinpoche's account, he demonstrated the miraculous ability to summon birds from the sky simply by looking and making the pointing forefinger gesture.²

Dudul Dorje was from the sDe dge area in Eastern Tibet, and he became an important lineage lama for the Kaḥ thog tradition. His student, another highly productive revealer, Longsal Nyingpo (*klong gsal snying po*, 1625-1692), became the Head Lama of the old Nyingmapa establishment of Kaḥ thog Monastery and conducted major renovations there.³ However, Dudul Dorje himself spent very little time at Kaḥ thog. For most of his career, he travelled in the Powo (*spo bo* or *spu bo*) region, where he brought forth his major revelation cycles, and he is also famous for opening up the sacred "hidden land" of Pemako (*padma bkod*), where Dudjom Rinpoche was born and raised. He even produced spiritually inspired revelations from afar. For instance, he apparently miraculously visited the holy site of Samyé (*bsam yas*), the first monastery in Tibet, to collect Treasure Revelations, including a precious statue and relics, and

² ལྷ་འཕྱུལ་གྱིས་ནམ་མཁའི་བྱ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ལྷ་ལྷངས་དང་ཐེགས་མཛེབ་ཙམ་གྱིས་འགྲུགས་པར་རུས་ (Dudjom Rinpoche, Volume Tha: 61.)

³ Jann Ronis (2009: 43-84) discusses Dudul Dorje's and Longsal Nyingpo's activities at Kaḥ thog at length.

when the temple's guardian deity, Pehar, challenged him, he retorted that the items had been given to him by Guru Rinpoche.⁴

Dudjom Lingpa spent much of his life wandering through the nomadic areas of his homeland of Golok (*mgo log*) in Amdo, north-eastern Tibet (located in the south-east of contemporary Qinghai), undertaking meditative retreats and experiencing visions which guided his life. He revealed a large new tantric ritual corpus and gradually established his reputation as an enlightened master. Although he had teachers who introduced him to the practice traditions he mastered and developed in his own revelations, including those of Dudul Dorje, the most significant transmissions he received apparently came through his visionary encounters, both with the great spiritual figures of the past, and with buddhas and tantric deities. His autobiographies, even the main "outer" biography, trace his spiritual journey and experiences, and apart from a grudging acknowledgement of the need to provide some information on his family background in the opening chapter (Traktung Dudjom Lingpa 2011: 3; equivalent to Dudjom Lingpa DL¹, Volume Dza: 3), we are told very little about the contexts for these experiences, the development of his teaching career, and the production of his textual corpus.

In much of his work, Dudjom Rinpoche emphasised the role of his various teachers, inspiring him to reach understanding, but he too reported mystical encounters associated with his revelatory production, including reminders of his identity as a direct disciple of Guru Rinpoche and a predestined revealer of teachings.

Thus, the question of how to account for both continuities and developments in the texts of the three lamas is complicated by their apparent identification, and the fact that all three are envisaged as embodying the heritage of their renowned predecessor of the early mythological accounts.⁵

An important feature of the Tibetan tantric tradition is the vast extent of the meditative liturgies. Generally the most time-consuming responsibility for monastics is to become familiar with numerous tantric practices performed at their monasteries, while lamas must often master a huge array of materials. An individual practitioner may choose to focus on a rather narrow range of practices, but a lama is expected at the very least to be able to teach on a number of tantric deity cycles, even if he does not have aspirations to add to the textual corpus himself. Even in the case of a single tantric deity, a lama's repertoire may include multiple alternative practice transmissions. In the writings of the Dudjom lamas, there are several different Vajrakīlaya deity cycles. Dudjom Lingpa produced more than two volumes of three Vajrakīlaya revelations, while Dudjom Rinpoche produced some thousands of pages, including his own Vajrakīlaya revelation, as well as work on those of Dudjom Lingpa and of several other lamas. Here, I focus on his two and a half volume cycle on, *The Meteoric Iron Razor Vajrakīlaya which Vanquishes Māra* (*rdo rje phur bu bdud 'joms gnam lcags spu gri*), known in short as *The Meteoric Iron Razor* (*gnam lcags spu gri*). Its extensive rites and commentarial manuals have helped to establish it as the primary Dudjom Vajrakīlaya practice, especially in the context of monastic practice, where long elaborated rituals are preferred. Its maṇḍala is one of just ten considered most representative of the Dudjom tradition as a whole, which were painted on the ceiling of the

⁴ This and a number of similar accounts are given in sTag ras pa kun bzang padma blo ldan (35-36).

⁵ I am writing elsewhere about the issues of reincarnation and personal identity ("Reincarnation and personal identity in the lives of Tibetan masters: linking the revelations of three lamas of the Dudjom tradition", paper presented to the conference, *Beyond Biography: New Perspectives on Tibetan Life-Writing*, Wolfson College, Oxford, September 2012; now forthcoming in the conference proceedings edited by Ulrike Roesler and Charles Ramble, to be hosted on *The Treasury of Lives* website <<http://www.treasuryoflives.org>>), so here I simply acknowledge this dimension of the textual development. There is a short biography of Dudul Dorje in Dudjom 1991: 813-817. Further information on Dudjom Lingpa can be found in the "Translator's Introduction" to Traktung Dudjom Lingpa 2011, especially xxxi-xlii. Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal 2008 gives more on Dudjom Rinpoche.

assembly hall of the Zangdok Palri monastery. Following Dudjom Rinpoche's move into exile, he founded this monastery in Kalimpong, and it became his main seat until the late 1970s.

Now, this *Meteoric Iron Razor* cycle is frequently said to be Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation,⁶ but this statement may obscure a more complex situation, in which *The Meteoric Iron Razor* can be said to embody Dudjom Lingpa's revelation, but its texts are not identical. Almost all Dudjom Lingpa's and Dudjom Rinpoche's texts have different structure and content and they bear different titles. In fact, the very name of the cycle, *The Meteoric Iron Razor*, is not found in Dudjom Lingpa's text titles, where the cycle is instead called, *The Sealed Secret Heart Practice* (*thugs sgrub gsang ba'i rgya can*). Most of Dudjom Rinpoche's texts have colophons specifying that he composed or compiled them, and often adding the circumstances in which they were produced. The name, *The Meteoric Iron Razor*, derives from the empowerment text title for Dudul Dorje's Vajrakīlaya Revelation. By attaching a label associated with Dudul Dorje, Dudjom Rinpoche was drawing attention to a literal continuity between the texts of the three lamas, and also acknowledging his reintegration of aspects of Dudul Dorje's work which had not appeared in Dudjom Lingpa's revelation.

The main practice text of *The Meteoric Iron Razor* is a seventy-six page Ritual Manual, supplying the liturgy and mantras used in the practice performed today, and I focus here on the actual liturgies in this manual, as compared with the manuals of the previous lamas.

Continuities between the three Ritual Manuals

There is considerable continuity between Dudul Dorje's and Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation. It would be a mistake, however, to see such reproduction as a form of copying or plagiarism in the modern sense. Tibetan scholarly work typically involves compiling previous material, and even revelations are expected to be in line with the established corpus. It should also be appreciated that reproduction of long passages within a new revelation need not always involve the copying of written text. Tibetan religious training involves internalisation of long textual liturgies. They are generally written in verse form and regularly recited or chanted, and in some cases, deliberately memorised. The verses are associated with specific tantric imagery, which is visualised as the verses are outwardly intoned, so that the meditative experience comes to incorporate the associated words (and vice versa). Thus, a new revelation may flow naturally from the visionary, and may have its own distinctive qualities, but features of the traditions in which he is trained will often leave their mark on the new production.

In this case, we need to bear in mind that Dudjom Lingpa's primary training was in Dudul Dorje's tradition, and frequent reference is made in Dudjom Lingpa's Autobiography to his performance of rituals and retreats focused on Dudul Dorje's works. Secondly, Dudjom Lingpa clearly identified himself with Dudul Dorje. There are many references within his

⁶ The late Lama Tharchin Rinpoche sums it up as follows: *Namchak Putri* (普巴伏魔天鐵利刃) is *Dudjom Lingpa's earth treasure (sa-ter)* from the *Zab-Sang Khandro Nying-Tik cycle* (from circular dated June 2008 <http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/jw!LB.nPgiWChh5w1NtyxYrJ_IZ/article?mid=11006&prev=11110&next=11004&page=1> accessed 3/6/2011). Lama Tharchin Rinpoche was a direct student of Dudjom Rinpoche and of his son, Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, he focused his practice and teachings almost exclusively on the Dudjom tradition, and he is considered a key lineage lama. Similarly, the lineage lama, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, a son of Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche and a high lama in his own right, is recorded on publicly bestowing the Dudjom transmissions in 2010, as saying, *Dudjom Rinpoche, his previous incarnation has Namchak Putri and Dudjom Rinpoche himself has Putri Repong* <<http://www.sangnagcholing.com/events-with-dzongzar-khyentse-rinpoche/dudjom-tersar-empowerments-from-the-jigdral-yeshe-dorje-cycle-upcoming-teachings/treasure-teachings-by-djkr>>. The comments of these important lamas are in this instance representative of the understandings of many of Dudjom Rinpoche's disciples, and the tradition as it continues to be taught and practised.

Autobiography both of his own self-recognition as Dudul Dorje's rebirth, and to confirmations of this status which he received in his visions.⁷

Furthermore, in writing up a revelation, there is an established tradition of an initial period when the revealer is meant to keep the revelation secret. Thus, it is quite usual for the texts to be written down some years after the revelation, and the circumstances in which they are produced may *in practice* not be so different from the circumstances in which a lama may compose a commentary or other type of religious text.⁸ Key texts of Dudjom Lingpa's Vajrakīlaya Revelation – the Ritual Manual, the *tshogs* Tantric Feast, and the source revelatory text – are said in their colophons to have been "sealed" for seven, eight, and four years respectively, before they were written down.⁹

Many of Dudjom Lingpa's sections for recitation incorporate entire verses or passages word-for-word the same as in Dudul Dorje's Revelation, or with slight re-wordings. Most strikingly, Dudul Dorje's very distinctive expansion of a famous series of verses which always take centre-place in Vajrakīlaya texts,¹⁰ is reproduced unchanged in Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation, and continues in Dudjom Rinpoche's *Meteoric Iron Razor*.¹¹ Our research team have rather light-heartedly compared this form of reproduction to a "DNA sequence", which can be traced through a specific spiritual lineage.

⁷ See, for instance, Traktung Dudjom Lingpa 2011: 7, 9, 13, 33, 80, 128, 137, 206, 209-211, 245.

⁸ Of course, lamas writing works other than revelations might also rely on their memorised versions of previous material they wish to draw on: in pre-modern circumstances, it was not always easy to consult all the books a scholar needed to use.

⁹ For the colophon of the Ritual Manual (*las byang*), see Dudjom Lingpa, DL¹ Vol. Ca: 56; for the *tshogs* Tantric Feast (*tshogs mchod*), Vol. Ca: 117; and for the Secret Practice for the four Ritual Actions (*rdo rje gzhon nu'i gsang sgrub: las bzhi lhun grub*), Vol. Nga: 490. In all three cases, the wording used is, *bka' rgyas btab* (*the sacred words were sealed*).

¹⁰ These verses open the famous short *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu* found in the *bKa' 'gyur*, and can also be found (with various textual variants slightly amending the meaning) in all the major Phurpa tantras as well as in virtually every Phurpa sādhanā. The *bKa' 'gyur* version was translated and edited by the Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182-1251), and thus, alone of all the Phurpa tantras, it is included in the main tantra sections in the editions of both the Tshal pa and Them spang ma *bKa' 'gyurs* (see the Bibliography for its location in several sources), and neither relegated to a separate *rnying rgyud* section nor excluded altogether, as was the case with the great majority of rNying ma tantras. Parallel lines to the opening verses and often to other parts of the text will be found by browsing the Phurpa tantras in the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*. See for instance, a discussion and edition of the *rDo rje khros pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* (based on all available *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* versions) in Cantwell and Mayer 2007: 32-36, 244-249, 251, 268, 275. The major Sa skya Phurpa sādhanas integrate much of the *bKa' 'gyur* version (see, for instance, the *Sa skya Phur chen*). rNying ma sādhanas frequently follow variants found more broadly in the rNying ma tantras, although each tradition may have its own particular version of the root verses. Examples from the *gter ma* literature include the seminal tradition of the thirteenth century Guru Chöwang's (*chos kyi dbang phyug*) *Ultra Secret Blazing Razor* (*yang gsang spu gri 'bar ba*; see the compilation of Terdak Lingpa), and that of the fifteenth century Ratna Lingpa's (*ratna gling pa*) *Incomparable Ultra Secret Vajrakīlaya* (*phur pa yang gsang bla med*; see the compilation of Kongtrul³). Examples from the transmitted (*bka' ma*) traditions include the Rong lugs Vajrakīlaya (associated with Rong zom pa), such as the *rong zom rdo rje phur pa'i las byang chog khrigs* (*bDud 'joms bKa' ma* Volume Nya 8: 116ff; see especially 347-348); and the famous *'Bum nag* commentary (Dudjom *bka' ma*, Volume Tha; see below), which gives detailed instructions on the root verses.

¹¹ It is quite possible, even likely, that Dudul Dorje may have inherited this wording from a tradition in which he was previously trained. However, I have not so far identified the phrasing in any other source, despite searching. It is worth noting that neither Dudjom Lingpa's nor Dudjom Rinpoche's other Vajrakīlaya revelations employ this distinctive phrasing; it seems confined to this specific strand inherited from Dudul Dorje. The task of finding such parallel passages in previous sources will become very much easier when searchable computer input of a wide range of Tibetan texts has been achieved. Currently, the work has to be done purely by the browsing of texts (mainly) in pdf format, and doubtlessly some parallels are missed.

The first verse is as follows - here with the additions/amendments from the standard seven syllable metre given in bold, and the minor variants between the versions of the three lamas in brackets¹²):

ཧཱུྃ རྩོམ་ཐུག་པའི་ལྷ་མོ་མཆོད་པའི་ལྷ་མོ་

"Hūṃ! The vajra wrath cuts off **all** hatred **totally**;

མཚན་ཆ་སྤྲོད་པོ་རབ་ཏུ་འབར་བ་ནིུ་

The blue **weapon really** blazing **immensely**; {*ni*: DD¹ p.81, DD³ p.372, *yis*, but DD² p.262 and DD⁴ give *ni*}

མཁའ་དབྱིངས་སྤྲོད་ནས་ཐིག་པ་རྟིག་གིས་གསུང་

arises as a **vividly clear** creative seed, from the **expanse** of the sphere of space. {*nas*: DL¹ and DL² p.56, *na*; *thig*: DJYD *thigs*}

སྤྱི་གོ་གོ་ཏུ་སྤྲོད་གསལ་ཆུ་རེ་བུ་

As the environment of the life force, **the ligament binding together emptiness and clarity**;

སྤྲོད་གོ་དབྱིངས་ཏུ་འཛིན་མེད་སྤྲོད་མེད་ལྷན་ལྷན་ལྷན་ལྷན་

Meditate on (it) in the middle of the heart, **free of fixation, clear and serene**.

Now, this series of verses occur at the start of the section on the visualisation of the deities of the maṇḍala, and are associated with the standard mahāyoga set of the three meditative absorptions (*samādhi*), which are the basis for the arising of the tantric deities.¹³ In this case, the focus on "vajra wrath" relates to the classic justification for wrathful deities: where negative defilements cannot be pacified by peaceful means, more violent and direct methods can overcome the afflictions. Thus, a wisdom display of violence, springing from the ultimate nature of emptiness, imbued with enlightened compassion, can be most effective in destroying hatred and discursive thoughts involving any of the five emotional afflictions. So enlightened aggression destroys aggression. The three meditative absorptions start with the state of thusness, and progress through the universal arising of compassion, and its coalescing in the tantric seed-syllable from which the deity and maṇḍala are generated. There is some slight variation in the different Vajrakīlaya traditions in how the words of the root verses precisely relate to the three meditative stages, but all are agreed on the basic meaning.¹⁴ The question

¹² DD: Dudul Dorje's *phur pa'i las byang phrin las kun khyab dgra bgegs kun 'dul* (DD¹ Volume Cha p.81-82, DD² Volume Cha p.262-263, DD³ p.372-373, DD⁴ p.224 [incomplete]); DL: Dudjom Lingpa's *thugs sgrub gsang ba'i rgya can/ dpal chen phrin las kyi sgrub pa/ rdo rje gzhon nu'i las byang ye shes sgyu 'phrul gyi gsang mdzod* (DL¹ Volume Ca: 42 and DL² Volume Ca: 56-57); DJYD: Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje Rinpoche's *Meteoric Iron Razor* (Collected Works Volume Tha: 90-91).

¹³ These samādhis are: 1. the samādhi of thusness {དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཉིང་ལ་འཛིན་}; 2. the universally appearing samādhi {ཀུན་གྱི་སྤྲོད་པའི་ཉིང་ལ་འཛིན་}; 3. the causal samādhi {རྟུན་ཉིང་ལ་འཛིན་}.

¹⁴ Kongtrul² (79-80) sums up the samādhi of thusness as follows: "The first [samādhi] is shown by saying, *vajra wrath*. The essence of the samādhi of thusness is that the essential natures (of) all dharmas, comprising (those of) form up to omniscient consciousness, are primordially non-existent, (they are) unfabricated emptiness, endowed with great bliss, supreme in all aspects." {དེ་ལ་དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཉིང་ལ་འཛིན་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་ནི། གཟུགས་ནས་རྣམ་མཁྱེན་གྱི་བར་གྱིས་བསྐྱེད་པའི་ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡེ་གདོད་ནས་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་མ་བྱུང་པའི་སྤྲོད་ཉིད་སྤྲོད་པའི་བཅའ་པོ་རྣམས་ལ་ཀུན་གྱི་མཆོག་དང་ཐུན་པ་དེ་ལ་བྱ།} (Note that the phrase, *dharmas... (of) form up to omniscient consciousness* indicates the abhidharma lists of the components of existence, covering all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.) Paraphrasing the '*Bum nag* commentary (Dudjom *bka' ma*, Volume Tha: 305; equivalent to Boord 164), Kongtrul continues, "Through understanding that (all dharmas) primordially have the natural quality of being empty, the practitioner's (own) mind can thus realise this *thusness*." {ཡི་ནས་སྤྲོད་པའི་རང་བཞིན་ཡིན་པ་ལ་ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་པས་སྤྲོད་པ་ཤིའི་སྤྲོད་ཉིད་ཉིད་བཞིན་ཏུ་རྟོགས་པར་བྱ་བའི་དོན་ཡིན་པས་སོ།} In explaining the wording of the verse, Kongtrul writes succinctly: "Here, [*vajra*] indicates the ultimate vajra which is birthless. For *wrath*, who is wrathful? It is this ultimate vajra which is birthless, unfabricated emptiness, which is wrathful." {འདི་སྤྲོད་མེད་དོན་གྱི་རྩོམ་པ་ལ་ཞུས་པ་ལ་གང་ཞོ་ན། སྤྲོད་མེད་དོན་གྱི་རྩོམ་པ་ལ་སྤྲོད་པ་ཉིད་དེ་

here is what the additional syllables add to the verse. Firstly, they clarify an ambiguity in the standard wording of the second line (*mtshon chen*), which can either suggest "great symbol" or "great weapon". Commentarial traditions vary, so an effect of making it explicit that "weapon" (*mtshon cha*) and not "symbol" is intended, is to align the practice with one of these two long-standing traditions. In either case, the specific meditation is on the seed-syllable, the letter, *hūm*, out of which the deity will arise. It is possible that the further variants in the verse are drawing attention to the orientation in this practice tradition towards the highest of the inner yoga tantras in the rNying ma system, the atiyoga or *rdzogs chen* traditions. The terms, *vividly clear* (*hrig ge*) and *clear and serene* (*lhan ne*) are especially used in atiyoga contexts, although not exclusively so. In any case, the Vajrakīlaya traditions, while rooted in the Mahāyoga tantras, are nonetheless considered to integrate all three of the inner yoga tantras,¹⁵ so the impact of the elaboration may be merely to emphasise one aspect or to bring out a particular flavour within the Vajrakīlaya practice traditions. Beyond whatever conceptual nuancing the variants might encourage, the main force of the variants in the three verses is simply to affirm a symbolic stamp of identity to the practice. Many of those performing this ritual generation of the maṇḍala of deities will be familiar with the seven syllable version of the verse from other Vajrakīlaya practices, and thus aware that the Revelation is playing with and extending the well-established verse. The same considerations apply also to the second and third verses, which also expand a seven metre to a nine metre verse form.

There is not space in this article to give a full comparison of the further continuities and the differences between Dudul Dorje's and Dudjom Lingpa's Ritual Manual. Suffice it to say that many of the sections for recitation have parallel passages, some giving similar wording but with re-ordering and expansion or contraction of the description, while some are virtually identical. At the same time, there are significant differences. Some sections are altogether different, and most of all, there are differences in the group of deities to be visualised. In Dudul Dorje's text,¹⁶ the central male deity has nine faces, eighteen arms and six legs, while the central female has three faces and six arms. In contrast, Dudjom Lingpa's central deity is the three-faced, six-armed form with a two-armed consort, which is more common in Vajrakīlaya practices.¹⁷ There are also differences in the immediate retinue of the central deity. Thus, while Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation incorporates material from Dudul Dorje's and they are closely related as part of one tradition, they are far from identical. It is also clear that Dudjom Lingpa must have had familiarity with other Vajrakīlaya traditions, since he draws on the broader heritage for some parts of his texts.

ཐུགས།} (Kongtrul² p.81, equivalent to Dudjom *bka' ma*, Volume Tha: 74; this is derivative of the passage in the '*Bum nag*, Dudjom *bka' ma* Volume Tha: 308; equivalent to Boord: 166.)

¹⁵ The '*Bum nag* commentary (Dudjom *bka' ma*, Volume Tha: 268-269; Gangtok edition: 36; equivalent to Boord: 140), expresses this as follows: "*There will be no error when the Vajrakīlaya conduct is in accordance with (Gangtok edition + tantra {rgyud}) mahāyoga, the view is realised as in atiyoga, and meditation is performed as in anuyoga.* (རྫོགས་པ་འདི་སྐྱོད་པ་ནི་མ་རྩ་ཡོག་དང་མཐུན། ལྷ་བ་ནི་ཨ་ཉི་ཡོག་ལྷ་རྟོགས། རྫོགས་པ་ནི་མ་རྩ་ཡོག་ལྷ་རྟོགས་པས་གོལ་ས་མེད་པ་འོ།)

¹⁶ For the visualisation of the main deities, see DD¹: 84-96. Dudjom Lingpa's descriptions are not found in a single text, but occur in various parts of the texts of his cycle discussed below.

¹⁷ Dudul Dorje also includes a variant of the more usual three-faced and six-armed Vajrakumāra form in a ritual manual for all three deities in the cycle, which is specific for the attainment of longevity and siddhis, and in which the longevity deity is central (*snying thig tshe yang phur gsum gyi phrin las rang gzhung rdo rje'i rdzong sgrom dngos grub kun 'byung*, DD¹ p.19-42; DD² p.161-179; DD³ p.139-154; DD⁴ p.139-154). There are also differences in the immediate retinue of the central deity. Dudul Dorje gives a further nine-faced, eighteen-armed group of four in the cardinal directions. The four family kīlas are placed at the intermediate directions. For Dudjom Lingpa, the immediate retinue is simply the four or five family kīlas, placed in the cardinal directions.

Dudjom Rinpoche's contributions witnessed in *The Meteoric Iron Razor's Ritual Manual*

དཔལ་དོ་མེ་ཕུར་བུ་ཐུགས་གྱི་རྒྱུ་ལ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་བདུད་འཛོམས་གནས་ལྷགས་སྤྱི་ཁྱེད་ལས་བྱང་ཁྲག་འབྱང་མངོན་པར་རོལ་བའི་དགའ་སྟོན་ (Collected Works of Dudjom Rinpoche, 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, Vol. Tha: 77-153)

- Integration and structuring of material from at least five different texts of Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation, including some re-ordering and re-working of text;
- Integration of material from Dudul Dorje's Treasure Revelation, not found in Dudjom Lingpa's texts;
- Additional material, some elaborations, but also including crucial meditation instructions and recitations conveying further teachings;
- A number of sometimes small yet significant amendments to the Revelation, seemingly to bring greater consistency to the meditative visualisations, and clearing up apparent discrepancies.

Dudjom Rinpoche's *Meteoric Iron Razor* is ostensibly a compilation of Dudjom Lingpa's *Sealed Secret Heart Practice* and not a new revelation or mystically inspired, yet it is no simple copy.¹⁸ Dudjom Rinpoche has integrated material from different parts of Dudjom Lingpa's cycle, from Dudul Dorje's Revelation and also from the Transmitted literature (*bka' ma*), to create a more complete practice manual than is found in Dudjom Lingpa's original texts, and moreover, the new text has a very clear ordered structure, with explicit section titles in some cases lacking in the earlier versions.

1) The integration and structuring of material from at least five different texts of Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation, including some re-ordering and re-working of text.

Firstly, *The Meteoric Iron Razor* integrates material from several texts in Dudjom Lingpa's cycle.

The Principal source texts from Dudjom Lingpa's Treasure Revelation for Dudjom Rinpoche's *Meteoric Iron Razor Ritual Manual* {གནས་ལྷགས་སྤྱི་ཁྱེད་ལས་བྱང་}

The Sealed Secret Heart Practice of Dudjom Lingpa {ཐུགས་རྒྱུ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་} (Collected Works of Dudjom Lingpa, DL¹ Volume Nga, and Volume Ca: 1-230)

- *The Great Glorious (Heruka) Action Practice of the Sealed Secret Heart Practice*, The Ritual Manual of Vajrakumāra called, *Treasury of the Secret Primordial Wisdom Miraculous Display* {ཐུགས་རྒྱུ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་དཔལ་ཆེན་ཕྱིན་ལས་གྱི་རྒྱུ་པུ་དོ་མེ་གཞོན་ནུའི་ལས་བྱང་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱ་འཕུལ་གྱི་གསང་མཛད་} Volume Ca: 33-56;
- *The Great Glorious (Heruka) Action Practice of the Sealed Secret Heart Practice*, Vajrakumāra's Assembled Feast (*Tshogs*) Offerings rite, *The Key to A Treasure-House of Siddhis* {ཐུགས་རྒྱུ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་དཔལ་ཆེན་ཕྱིན་ལས་གྱི་རྒྱུ་པུ་དོ་མེ་གཞོན་ནུའི་ཆོགས་མཛད་དངོས་གྲུབ་བང་མཛད་གྱི་ལྷེ་མཁུ་} Volume Ca: 95-118;
- *The Great Glorious (Heruka) Action Practice of the Sealed Secret Heart Practice*, *Vajrakumāra's Secret Accomplishment Practice*, *The Four Ritual Actions Spontaneously Performed* {ཐུགས་རྒྱུ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་དཔལ་ཆེན་ཕྱིན་ལས་གྱི་རྒྱུ་པུ་དོ་མེ་གཞོན་ནུའི་གསང་རྒྱུ་ལས་བཞེ་ལྷན་གྲུབ་} Volume Nga: 43-492;

¹⁸ In several of the other sections of *The Meteoric Iron Razor's* two and a half volumes, Dudjom Rinpoche brings his extensive scholarly knowledge to bear on the tradition, and this results in further kinds of influences on the practice, but here, I concentrate purely on the evidence from the Ritual Manual.

- The Manual for the Concealed practice which has proceeded from the Source (Revelatory) Texts of the *Sealed Secret Heart Practice* {ཐུགས་སྒྲུབ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་གྱི་གཞུང་ལས་འཕྲིན་པའི་གཤམ་བྱ་བ།} Volume Ca: 57-67;
- *The Great Glorious (Heruka) Action Practice of the Sealed Secret Heart Practice*, Vajrakumāra's Inner Accomplishment practice, *Conglomeration of the Sun and Moon* {ཐུགས་སྒྲུབ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་དཔལ་ཆེན་ཕྱིན་ལས་ཀྱི་སྒྲུབ་པུ་རྩོམ་གཞིན་ནུའི་ནང་སྒྲུབ་ཉི་ཤེད་ཆོས་བྱུ་བ།} Volume Ca: 79-94.

The overall structure of *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual is formed by combining Dudjom Lingpa's Ritual Manual for his *Sealed Secret Heart Practice* together with his text for the tantric *Tshogs* Feast (= *tshogs kyi 'khor lo*, equivalent to Sanskrit *gaṇacakra*). However, Dudjom Lingpa's Ritual Manual, even together with his *tshogs* feast text, is considerably shorter than the *Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual, and there are some crucial sections of the practice which are undeveloped in Dudjom Lingpa's original. In particular, Dudjom Lingpa's Ritual Manual lacks detail in the visualisation of the deities, and for the meditation during the mantra recitation. In other words, the two central meditative components on which the entire practice depends are given little attention in Dudjom Lingpa's Ritual Manual, but they are developed at length in *The Meteoric Iron Razor*. Dudjom Rinpoche provides detailed description of the celestial palace and its deities, where Dudjom Lingpa's Ritual Manual has only a single verse, stating that the deities arise but not even listing those deities.¹⁹ Dudjom Rinpoche has taken the deity descriptions from a quite different text of Dudjom Lingpa's cycle, one which opens the texts for *The Sealed Secret Heart Practice* in Volume Nga of Dudjom Lingpa's Collected Works, following the initial text of *The Treasure Prophecy List* for the cycle.²⁰ Dudjom Rinpoche has drawn on detailed deity descriptions from various sub-texts within this section, slightly re-working, re-ordering and integrating them into a single long passage. But even this lacks some components included in Dudjom Rinpoche's version, which are spelt out more fully in other sections of the Dudjom Lingpa's collection, particularly the two short Manuals for the Concealed practice (*gab byang*) and the Inner Accomplishment practice (*nang sgrub*), along with the text for the Empowerment rite (*dbang chog*).²¹

Furthermore, Dudjom Lingpa's Ritual Manual ends rather abruptly with the mantras for recitation, but no accompanying verses to recite in order to establish the necessary visualisation. He does include some commentarial instruction on the right approach to the meditation, but no actual specific details of what the meditation consists of in this case. In contrast, *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual gives an Invocation enjoining the deities' heart vows, followed by five sections of specific visualisations to recite for the sessions of mantra recitations (p.122-125). In Dudjom Lingpa's texts, the Invocation is found in full as the first section of a differently titled Invocation within Dudjom Lingpa's Inner Accomplishment practice text (DL¹ Volume Ca: 91).

¹⁹ Above a throne of a lotus, sun, and a corpse (of) the (tendency) to grasp at attributes, the primordial wisdom deity, appearing yet empty, inseparable means and wisdom, the buddha body of the non-abiding primordial wisdom, Vajrakumāra, arises in the circle of the miraculous display of awareness's creativity (བད་ཉི་མཚན་འཛིན་བཅུ་གྱི་ཁྱེད་དུ་སྒྲུབ་སྒྲོང་ཐབས་ཤེས་དབྱེར་མེད་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལྷ་མི་གནས་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྩོམ་གཞིན་ནུའི་སྐུ་རིག་ཆལ་འལ་བའི་སྒྱུ་འཕྲུལ་འཁོར་དུ་གར་བ། DL¹ Volume Ca: 43).

²⁰ ཐུགས་སྒྲུབ་གསང་བའི་བྱ་ཅན་དཔལ་ཆེན་ཕྱིན་ལས་ཀྱི་སྒྲུབ་པུ་རྩོམ་གཞིན་ནུའི་གསང་སྒྲུབ་ལས་བཞི་ཕྱུན་གྱུ་བུ།, DL¹ Volume Nga: 43-492. This is the main root Revelation source. There is nothing in the title to indicate this status, but I acknowledge the advice of Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin, with whom I worked on the text in 2011. Such a source text will often consist of the revealer's initial decodings, and may not be neatly structured, nor contain complete practices. In this case, it gives a number of sub-texts, many of which are incomplete. There are at least three parts of the text where extensive deity descriptions are given.

²¹ The Empowerment Rite, the *All-pervading Lord of the Circle* {དབང་ཆེག་འཁོར་མའི་ཁྱབ་བདག་ལྷ།}, DL¹ Volume Ca: 1-22, gives short descriptions of the deities in the course of introducing the initiates into the maṇḍala.

2) Integration of material from Dudul Dorje's Treasure Revelation, not found in Dudjom Lingpa's texts.

In *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual, the distinction between Revelation text, and material which was not part of the Revelation, is indicated by the use (or absence) of the special punctuation mark (the *gter shad*) which is given at the end of each line of a Treasure revelation. Many marked Revelation lines not found in Dudjom Lingpa's *Sealed Secret Heart Practice*, derive from the earlier Dudul Dorje Revelation.²² Dudjom Rinpoche also gives the seventeen syllables as the main root mantra for *The Meteoric Iron Razor* rather than the fourteen syllables, which are favoured by Dudjom Lingpa, and he can be seen as in continuity with Dudul Dorje in this respect too.²³

For the most part, *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual follows Dudjom Lingpa's *tshogs* feast section. However, key components of Dudul Dorje's quite different practice are taken up by Dudjom Rinpoche in a separate short *tshogs* text for *The Meteoric Iron Razor* (*rdo rje phur pa'i tshogs mchod grangs gsog nyer bsdu*, DJYD Vol. Tha: 177-178). The integration of Dudul

²² In particular, the identified parallel passages come from Dudul Dorje's main Vajrakīlaya Ritual Manual (*yang gsang mkha' 'gro'i snying khrag las: snying thig tshe yang phur gsum gyi: phur pa'i las byang phrin las kun khyab dgra bgegs kun 'dul*, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 73-114; DD² Vol. Cha p.255-288, DD³: 445-472, DD⁴: 248-259), and from his separate *tshogs* tantric feast section (*snying thig tshe yang phur gsum gyi tshogs mchod mi zad gter gyi rgyan 'khor*, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 141-158; DD² Vol. Cha p.289-302; DD³: 349-409, although this includes also an insert, p.357-369; DD⁴: 224-247, although this is incomplete, and includes an inappropriate insert, p.225-232). Parallels are found in the Confession section (DJYD Vol. Tha: 85, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 80-81); the titles for the root verses on the three meditative absorptions (DJYD Vol. Tha: 90-91, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 81-82); lines opening and closing the section on the Celestial Palace visualisation (DJYD Vol. Tha: 92, 94, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 83); lines within the section for Generating the Deity (DJYD Vol. Tha: 94-95, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 83-84); lines on the Ten Wrathful Deities in the retinue, even though the actual appearance of these emanations appears to differ (DJYD Vol. Tha: 103, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 95); lines in the visualisation of the twenty-one Supreme Son emanations (DJYD Vol. Tha: 104, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 95-96). Dudjom Rinpoche also follows Dudul Dorje in including a nine metre variation on the fifth root verse of the *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu* as part of the empowerment section (DJYD Vol. Tha: 105-106, DD¹ Vol. Cha: 97). It is possible that some of the additions I have not yet identified either Dudjom Lingpa's or Dudul Dorje's texts may be found in Dudjom Lingpa's *Sealed Secret Heart Practice* (see note 11 above on the difficulties of exhaustive comparison). In particular, the longest as yet unidentified sections marked as Revelation are: (i) *The Inner Enjoyable Charnel ground Destructive Offerings*, (*nang dur khrod drag po'i nyer spyod kyi mchod pa*, Vol. Tha: 112-114); (ii) the offerings following the mantra session, together with the request for siddhis (Vol. Tha: 126-127); (iii) one lengthy passage of the "final portion" section in the *tshogs* feast (Vol. Tha: 131.3-133.4), although within this section, one verse (Vol. Tha: 131.5) is from Dudjom Lingpa's *las tshogs dgra bgegs kun sgrol* (Vol. Ca: 180), and this is followed immediately by the second verse of the famous short *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu* found in the *bKa' 'gyur*, on this occasion, with the standard 7 syllable metre (Vol. Tha: 131.5-6); (iv) a section following the Excess offering on, *Enjoining and Entrusting* the deities (*bcod bskul bya ba*, Vol. Tha: 136-138). It is moreover plausible that some of the passages I have found in Dudul Dorje's Revelation might also come to light elsewhere within Dudjom Lingpa's texts. However, I have not identified them in any part of his *Sealed Secret Heart Practice*, nor within his second quite different Vajrakīlaya Revelation, the *Vajrakīlaya Sugata-essence* or *Vajrakīlaya Tathāgatagarbha* (*phur pa bde gshegs snying po*). Even if they do occur somewhere in Dudjom Lingpa's corpus, they appear to have been omitted from the recitations which are most obviously central for *The Sealed Secret Heart Practice*'s principal meditative ritual, while on the contrary, they are found in the appropriate sections of Dudul Dorje's works. The obvious conclusion is that Dudjom Rinpoche has taken them from Dudul Dorje's and not from Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation.

²³ *The Meteoric Iron Razor* specifies the seventeen syllable mantra as the root mantra (*rtsa ba'i sngags*, DJYD Vol. Tha: 125, and 283), as does Dudul Dorje (DD¹ Vol. Cha: 110). In contrast, the fourteen syllable mantra is given in Dudjom Lingpa's main Ritual Manual (*las byang* section, DL¹ Vol. Ca: 54), in the Inner Accomplishment (*nang sgrub* section DL¹ Vol. Ca: 91, and repeatedly during the main Revelation source (*gzhung*) text in Volume Nga (DL¹ Vol. Nga: 209 and elsewhere), although he does give the seventeen syllables also there in a special ritual section (DL¹ Vol. Nga: 212).

Dorje's *tshogs* recitations is a clear indication of Dudjom Rinpoche's decision to incorporate Dudul Dorje's practice into *The Meteoric Iron Razor*'s everyday rites.²⁴

3) Additional material, some elaborations, but also including crucial meditation instructions and recitations conveying further teachings.

Dudjom Rinpoche adds many additions which lack the special Revelation punctuation mark (*gter shad*), and which are apparently his own contributions, including commentarial comments and some elaborations drawn more widely from the Vajrakīlaya traditions, such as the non-revelatory transmitted traditions (*bka' ma*).²⁵ There are an additional two pages of description of the visualised celestial palace, which is summed up in a single four line verse in Dudjom Lingpa's main Ritual Manual (DL¹ Volume Ca: 43). Dudul Dorje (DD¹ Volume Cha: 83) gives just two verses. I have identified a parallel passage of eleven lines within this section, within a Ritual Manual for the *Rog lugs* Vajrakīlaya tradition (*rdo rje phur bu rog lugs kyi sgrub thabs las byang dngos grub char 'bebs*). This text, from a transmitted rather than a revelation source, was compiled by Lochen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717) of the great Central Tibetan Mindroling (*smin grol gling*) Monastery. Dudjom Rinpoche included it in his own Transmitted Teachings compilation (Dudjom *bka' ma*, Volume Ta: 457-537) and composed a Lineage Supplication to accompany it (*rog lugs kyi phur pa'i brgyud 'debs, bdud 'joms bka' ma*, Volume Ta: 453-455). Mindroling teachers were important in Dudjom Rinpoche's training, and one well-known aspect of his scholarly contributions was to help universalise the traditions for which he was responsible, by bringing them into line with Mindroling ritual conventions. In this case, he has relied on a Transmitted Vajrakīlaya tradition associated with Mindroling.

4) A number of sometimes small yet significant amendments to the Revelation, seemingly to bring greater consistency to the meditative visualisations, and clearing up apparent discrepancies.

Where Dudjom Rinpoche integrates passages from different sections of Dudjom Lingpa's texts, slight changes of wording, re-ordering and omission of words or lines may have little impact on the meaning. Nonetheless, even minor amendments demonstrate a willingness to re-work the sacred words.²⁶ Sometimes, apparently small re-wordings may bring greater consistency and

²⁴ Dudjom Rinpoche's colophon to the text appears to acknowledge that he has drawn on Dudul Dorje's as well as Dudjom Lingpa's Revelation here: he writes that he has "extracted" the text, "from within the earlier and later main Revelation source(s)", ཞེས་པའང་གཏིར་གཞུང་གི་འོག་ལས་བདུས་པ་ལྟེ་འཛིགས་བྲལ་ཡི་ཤེས་རྟོག་སྟོན། (DJYD Vol. Tha: 178). It is also possible that throughout *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual, Dudjom Rinpoche not only supplemented his presentation with passages from Dudul Dorje, but that he checked his readings of Dudjom Lingpa by consulting Dudul Dorje, and edited accordingly. On at least one occasion of a passage shared by all three lamas (in the build-up of the elements which form the basis for the Celestial Palace visualisation), where a variant reading is found in the two copies of Dudul Dorje which we have (*mām sa'i*, as opposed to *gser gyi*), one variant (*gser gyi*) is followed by Dudjom Lingpa, while the other – that found in the copy of Dudul Dorje's works which comes from Dudjom Rinpoche's own library – is followed by Dudjom Rinpoche (DD¹: 82; DD²: 263; DL¹: 43; DL²: 58; DJYD: 92). It seems unlikely that the reading *mām sa'i* would have been introduced accidentally, so it is quite possible that Dudjom Rinpoche followed Dudul Dorje. We need caution here, however. Dudjom Rinpoche may simply have been using an earlier version of Dudjom Lingpa's text, while the copyist of the current edition of Dudjom Lingpa's *Collected Works* might possibly have corrupted the reading *mām sa'i*, into the more clichéd, *gser gyi*.

²⁵ As explained below, I have identified parallel text for one passage, but not yet for others. Searchable computer input of Tibetan texts would greatly help (see note 11 above). I have reviewed the four volumes of Vajrakīlaya texts within Dudjom Rinpoche's *bka' ma* compilation (Volumes Ja – Tha), and a number of other possible sources.

²⁶ It is necessary to add the caveat that in cases of very small amendments and spelling corrections etc., we cannot always be certain that deliberate amendments have been made. We are now unfortunately in the position that we have access only to a single version of most of Dudjom Lingpa's works. The Bhutanese version of his *Collected Works* appears merely to represent a copy of the hand-written version from Dudjom Rinpoche's own library, which he had printed in Kalimpong. Where the readings of *The Meteoric Iron Razor* differ from this edition, we cannot be certain that Dudjom Rinpoche was in fact copying and emending this source. Even if Dudjom Rinpoche only succeeded in bringing this version from Tibet, he had written most of *The Meteoric Iron Razor* texts many years

clear up apparent discrepancies. A tantric deity may be depicted in various forms for different ritual purposes, so there may be good reasons for variations, but Dudjom Rinpoche has standardized or chosen a specific set of visualisations and amended or simply not used alternatives. The main consort in *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual carries a tantric staff in her right hand, conforming with the description in some of Dudjom Lingpa's texts (DL¹ Volume Nga: 48, 60, 67), but not with others (DL¹ Volume Ca: 83; DL¹ Volume Ca: 60), where she is said to hold a blue lotus (*utpala*). Dudjom Rinpoche gives a peaceful cross-legged Vajrasattva as the inner wisdom deity within the heart, in continuity with one of Dudjom Lingpa's texts (DL¹ Volume Ca: 67), but again, not with others (DL¹ Volume Ca: 91; DL¹ Volume Ca: 76), where the deity is wrathful, standing with the legs stretched apart, the right hand brandishing a meteoric iron phurpa, and the left hand making the threatening gesture.

A most striking case is that of two deities within the central maṇḍala, which Dudjom Lingpa's texts do not always include. One is the second consort, E-ka-dza-tī, the consort for violent 'releasing' into the Buddha fields, as opposed to the first consort who unites with the central deity. The other is Buddha Kīla, the first of the Kīla deities of the Buddha families who form the immediate circle around the main deity. In *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual's Generation section, E-ka-dza-tī and Buddha Kīla are described as positioned to the left and right of the central deity respectively. The other four Kīla deities then surround the central deities and are placed in the four cardinal directions. In Dudjom Lingpa's source Revelation text, no mention is made of either of these deities, and the lines for recitation speak of the four family Kīla deities (DL¹ Volume Nga: 68). Where *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual repeats these lines, the word four has been changed into five (Volume Tha: 97), and similar amendments are also made elsewhere in the text.²⁷

The two deities *are*, however, found in various other parts of Dudjom Lingpa's collection.²⁸ The texts mentioning Buddha Kīla sometimes describe him as white, while Vajra Kīla is blue (DL¹ Volume Ca: 60-61), but elsewhere, give Buddha Kīla as blue and Vajra Kīla as white (DL¹ Volume Ca: 84), the colour scheme of *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual (Volume Tha, 95-96). In short, Dudjom Lingpa's texts do not give these two deities at all in some sections, and where they are given, there is variation in the colour scheme for Buddha Kīla and Vajra Kīla. Dudjom Rinpoche, then, included them and settled on one version for the visualisation, bringing the families of Kīlas into line elsewhere in the texts.

before while still residing in Tibet (for example, he wrote *The Meteoric Iron Razor* Ritual Manual and its Commentary in 1932-1933). Dudjom Lingpa's Collected Works were compiled by Sera Khandro (*se ra mkha'* 'gro, 1892-1940; see Jacoby 2007: 62-64) but we have no idea how many copyings were done before the single witness we now have available. Moreover, it is quite possible that other compilations of Dudjom Lingpa's Works may have been made by Dudjom Lingpa's family: Sera Khandro did not have a good personal relationship with many of them, and she might have been working independently. (If they did make a separate Collected Works, it is no longer available, yet given the difficulties in Eastern Tibet during the Chinese occupation and the Cultural Revolution, this would not be altogether surprising.) Furthermore, there must once have been versions of the individual texts, and it is quite likely that some of them would have remained in circulation even after the Collected Works had been compiled. Thus, it is possible that Dudjom Rinpoche may have had access to a copy of Dudjom Lingpa's *Sealed Secret Heart Practice* with quite different readings from those of the current edition.

²⁷ Moreover, the earlier four has been changed to five even in Dudjom Rinpoche's version of Dudjom Lingpa's own Fulfilment supplement (Volume Tha, 157-162), which retains the original colophon identifying it as Dudjom Lingpa's. Although, as explained above, the immediate retinue in Dudul Dorje's Revelation is rather different, it is worth noting that he too has the four and not the five Kīla deities (apparently consistently in his case). The circle of eight in his maṇḍala include the four Kīla deities in the intermediate directions (see note 17 above).

²⁸ They are found in the Concealed practice Manual (DL¹ Volume Ca: 60-61), the Empowerment rite (DL¹ Volume Ca: 6-7) and the Inner Accomplishment text (DL¹ Volume Ca: 84), while Buddha Kīla is mentioned in the Destructive Expelling ritual (*drag zlog*, DL¹ Volume Ca: 207-208). One of the Fulfilment texts (DL¹ Volume Ca: 120-121) speaks of E-ka-dza-tī, but omits Buddha Kīla.

I end this discussion with a further speculative reflection. If we can assume that Dudjom Lingpa's original revelation contained alternative versions of the deities, and that for some contexts, the figures of E-ka-dza-tī and Buddha Kīla were not present, then perhaps the earlier structure of the maṇḍala which supports the deities did not fully take account of these additional deities. In *The Meteoric Iron Razor*, E-ka-dza-tī and Buddha Kīla are simply said to be placed to the left and right of the central deity. Deities are generally represented in maṇḍala diagrams by small dots. Some representations fit the two on the two corners of the central blue triangle, while others position them on two of the red semi-circles made by the circle enclosing the central triangle. It now occurs to me that perhaps such uncertainty might be a result of the inclusion of two deities who were not earlier accounted for in depictions of the maṇḍala.

Conclusion

It is often assumed that Tibetan tantric revelations represent a single act of visionary composition. Yet continuity within lineages of tantric traditions may mean that a "new" revelation follows in the tracks of previous texts, and may incorporate much earlier material. The writing of revelatory texts may also take place over many years and the creation of full texts for recitation may take even longer. But even after this, further lamas of the tradition may have a responsibility to develop the revelation further. This might mean simply light editing, but where the successor has a great stature, contributions may include re-arrangement, editing and re-ordering, and even changing the sacred words, or re-introducing words from a previous revelation, as well as adding commentarial clarifications and expansions. The modifications may result in significant re-working, codifying or amending the central visualisations and meditation instructions.

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Sarah Jacoby 2007 "Consorts and Revelation in Eastern Tibet: The Auto/biographical Writings of the Treasure Revealer Sera Khandro (1892-1940)", unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Virginia.

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Kongtrul²: 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *dpal rdo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu'i 'grel pa snying po bsdu pa dpal chen dgyes pa'i zhal lung*, in Volume Ga of Kong sprul's *rGya chen bka' mdzod* in 20 volumes, 1975-1976, Paro: Ngodup, reproduced from the dpal spungs xylographic blocks at the order of Ven. Dingo Chhentse Rimpoche: pp.27-213 (TBRC W21808; there is also a version in the Dudjom *bka' ma*: Volume Tha: 15-213).

Kongtrul³: 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *phur pa yang gsang bla med kyi las byang phrin las spu gri kha 'phangs rnams dkyus su bkod pa*, in *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, 111 volumes, 1976-1980, Ngodrub and Sherab Drimay, Volume 49: 505-553 (TBRC W20578).

Sa skya Phur chen: dPal rdo rje gzhon nu sgrub pa'i thabs bklags pas don grub, by Sa skya pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312 - 1375), dPal sa skya'i chos tshogs, Rajpur, India (Tibetan date given: 992). (Note that two different electronic editions of the *Sa skya Phur chen* are now available. One is included in Volume 18 of the *dpal chen kī la ya'i chos skor phyogs bsgrigs* [si khron zhing chen mi rigs zhib 'jug su'o, bod kyi shes rig zhib 'jug khang, khreng tu'u 2002 (http://tbrc.org/#library_work_Object-W24051), p.137ff, and one included in the *rGyud sde kun btus*, Volume 16. This itself has two available versions: Lungtok & Gyaltzan, Delhi 1971-1972 [TBRC W21295]: 427-505; and Sachen International, Kathmandu 2004

[TBRC W27883]: 479-568. Both are apparently based on the Derge blocks, although the Sachen International version is an entirely remade computer input version edition rather than a photographic reproduction.)

Terdak Lingpa, (*gter bdag gling pa*) *rdo rje phur bu yang gsang spu gri'i las byang kun bzang rol mtsho*, compilation of Guru Chöwang's *Ultra Secret Razor Vajrakīlaya*, in *smin gling gter chen rig 'dzin 'gyur med rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, 16 volumes, 1998, Dehra Dun, D.G. Khochhen Tulku (TBRC W22096), Volume 9: 275r-301.

Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal 2008 *Light of Fearless Indestructible Wisdom: The Life and Legacy of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche*. Samye Translation Group. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications.