

## Re-presenting a Famous Revelation: Dudjom Rinpoche's Work on the 'Ultra Secret Razor Life- force Vajrakīlaya' (*yang gsang srog gi spu gri*) of Pema Lingpa (*padma gling pa*, 1450–1521)

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### ABSTRACT

This article considers issues of authorship and textual development over the generations, focusing on the contributions of the erudite scholar/lama Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (*bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje*, 1904–1987, hereafter, Dudjom Rinpoche), to the revelations of Bhutan's national saint, Pema Lingpa (*padma gling pa*, 1450–1521), on the tantric deity Vajrakīlaya. Dudjom Rinpoche compiled a number of ritual practice texts for this revelation cycle, also writing commentarial instructions on them. Here, two of his compilations are examined in detail, considering how they relate to the original revelation, what they add, and what they neglect, reflecting on what they might tell us about Tibetan approaches to continuing textual production in revelatory traditions. Much of Dudjom Rinpoche's 'Ultra Secret Razor Life-force' Framework text for the Major Practice session (*sgrub khog*) reproduces virtually unchanged his earlier Framework text for the Dudjom tradition 'Meteoric Iron Razor', which itself draws on Guru Chöwang's (*chos dbang*, 1212–1270) 'Ultra Secret Razor', as presented by Terdak Lingpa (*gter bdag gling pa*, 1646–1714), the founder of Mindroling Monastery in central Tibet. On the other hand, Dudjom Rinpoche's main Ritual Manual (*las byang*) for Pema Lingpa's cycle is more clearly rooted in the Pema Lingpa cycle, but there has been considerable re-working of the phrasing and even of some key visualisations. Some of the significant modifications were already present in an earlier Ritual Manual of the third Sungtrul (*gsung sprul*) or Pema Lingpa reincarnation, Tsultrim Dorje (*tshul khrims rdo rje*, 1598–1669), and Dudjom Rinpoche acknowledges this source. In assessing Dudjom Rinpoche's two texts, various aspects of the productive process are highlighted, such as: the 'blessings' of a current generation high status lama connected with the tradition; the needs of the ritual community for familiar textual structures

and liturgies; beautiful metrical verses for chanting; the integration of materials from the broader tantric heritage, but also the preservation of some highly individual elements of the revelation.

#### KEYWORDS

Tibetan Buddhist Revelations; compiling, authoring, editing Buddhist texts; Dudjom; Pema Lingpa

### 1. Introduction

#### The lamas and Vajrakīlaya texts discussed in this article

The question considered here is in what ways Tibetan compilers of revelatory texts reuse and re-work their sources, and how we can make sense of their procedures, considering the wider context of the communities of practitioners of their time, and the background of the specific lineage affiliations of the lama-compilers. I am taking the example of texts written or compiled by the twentieth century scholar/lama, Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, on a tantric cycle revealed by the national saint of Bhutan, the fifteenth to sixteenth century Pema Lingpa (*padma gling pa*).<sup>1</sup> Pema Lingpa was a prolific visionary, bringing forth a large number of revelations.<sup>2</sup> An edition of his *Collected Works* produced in the 1970s amounted to twenty-one volumes, of which three contain works and compilations by subsequent masters, but the other eighteen consist almost exclusively of his revelatory productions. Pema Lingpa's revelations, moreover, came to have an important place beyond Bhutan, within the broader heritage of the Nyingma (*nying ma*) revelatory tradition, practised extensively and preserved not only within the communities of Pema Lingpa's specific lineage descendants, but also in collections produced by famous Nyingma figures, such as the seventeenth century Terdak Lingpa (*gter bdag gling pa*) and the nineteenth century Jamgon Kongtrul (*'jam mgon kong sprul*).<sup>3</sup> The twentieth century Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe

1. For a discussion of Tibetan revealers as 'saints', with reference to Pema Lingpa and his particular significance for Bhutan, see Holly Gayley 2003, especially 1–4.
2. Technically, such texts in Tibetan are known as 'Treasures' (*gter ma*), the re-discovered teachings of Guru Padmasambhava or a buddha in a previous time, revealed to a re-born student who is considered to have made aspirations to do so in the presence of the Great Guru. His memory awakens in response to the appropriate auspicious conditions for the recovery. There may be a material basis ('yellow scrolls') which are recovered from the place they were said to have been hidden, but only the correct revealer (*gter ston*) can decode them. In any case, it is not necessary for any actual manuscript to be found; the important fact is that the teachings are considered to have been buried in the revealer's mental stream, and through his aspirations of the past, combined with inspiration from his encounters with enlightened beings in his later life, along with the auspicious circumstances for the recovery, the teachings take shape. Initially, the revelation may be only in a coded form, and it may be necessary for the revealer to absorb the practice for some years before any actual text is written down. Tibetans recognize the role of the revealer himself in the process, and classify such revelation texts under the name of the revealer, not under the name of the buddha or enlightened teacher whose teachings they are said to represent.
3. Gyurmé Dorje (*'gyur med rdo rje*), better known by his title of Terdak Lingpa (*gter bdag gling pa*, 1646–1714) was the founder lama of the Mindroling (*smin grol gling*) Monastery in Central Tibet, and together with his brother, Lochen Dharma Śrī (*lo chen dharma śrī*), had a important formative influence not only on his own tradition of the Southern Treasures (*lho gter*), but on the Nyingmapa of subsequent times more generally. Sponsored by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama,

Table 1: Vajrakīlaya textual cycles discussed in this article.

Revealer; associated lama	Title English	Title Tibetan
Guru Chöwang ( <i>gu ru chos dbang</i> , 1212–1270); as presented by Terdak Lingpa ( <i>gter bdag gling pa</i> , 1646–1714)	‘Ultra Secret Razor Vajrakīlaya’	<i>phur pa yang gsang spu gri</i>
Pema Lingpa ( <i>padma gling pa</i> , 1450–1521)	‘Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce Vajrakīlaya’	<i>phur pa yang gsang srog gi spu gri</i>
Dudjom Lingpa ( <i>bdud ’joms gling pa</i> , 1835–1904); as presented by Dudjom Rinpoche ( <i>bdud ’joms ’jigs bral ye shes rdo rje</i> , 1904–1987)	‘Meteoric Iron Razor Vajrakīlaya’	<i>phur pa gnam lcags spu gri</i>

Dorje, or Dudjom Rinpoche for short, was also a visionary revealer, but in addition, he was an erudite scholar, and he made it his main life’s mission to work on preserving and developing the legacy of previous generations, both the heritage of the revelations and that of the historically transmitted textual collections. Around only two and a half volumes of Dudjom Rinpoche’s twenty-five volume *Collected Works* consist of his own revelations. The rest are mostly compilations and commentarial writings relating to the revelations of previous lamas, along with scholarly works on other topics. One entire volume is devoted to Pema Lingpa’s revelation cycles, and Pema Lingpa’s legacy also features as one of the key elements in the main Lama Accomplishment (*bla sgrub*) Ritual<sup>4</sup> written by Dudjom Rinpoche and extensively practised by his students and in his monastic establishments. Later in life, at the request of the Bhutanese Royal family, Dudjom Rinpoche headed a team to edit a new edition of Pema Lingpa’s *Collected Works*, but for the purpose of this short paper, I will focus on his own presentations of Pema Lingpa’s cycle on the tantric deity, Vajrakīlaya, known as the ‘Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce Vajrakīlaya’ (*phur pa yang gsang srog gi spu gri*).

Vajrakīlaya (*rdo rje phur pa*) is probably the most popular Nyingma tantric deity; a large group of tantric scriptures are devoted to him, he features in tex-

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who was a student of Terdak Lingpa’s, Mindroling became one of the two important seats of the Nyingmapa in Central Tibet. Besides his work on the Nyingmapa collections of root tantric scriptures, *gter ma* revelations and transmitted texts, Terdak Lingpa held mass transmissions and major practice sessions at Mindroling, which attracted lamas from the Eastern Tibetan Nyingmapa centres, initiating a greater integration and coherency to the Nyingma tradition which continues today. Jamgon Kongtrul (*’jam mgon kong sprul*, 1813–1899) was famous for his extraordinary and productive scholarship, and his work preserving, re-producing, and writing extensive commentaries on a wide range of Tibetan Buddhist lineages. Amongst his many works, he compiled a massive multi-volume collection of Treasure revelations of both important and little known visionary lamas (the *rin chen gter mdzod*), so that the tantric initiations into many different tantric practices could be conferred at a single gathering lasting many weeks or months.

4. Lama Accomplishment (*bla sgrub*) texts are tantric sādhanas in which the practitioner visualises the tantric guru or lama as the Buddha Padmasambhava, receiving consecration and accomplishing identification with the lama. Dudjom Rinpoche incorporates sacred words from six previous revealers into his text, the ‘Embodiment of Seven Revelations’ (*gter kha bdun ’dus*), including the *Jewel Ocean* cycle (*nor bu rgya mtsho*) of Pema Lingpa.

tual collections of the transmitted teachings (*bka' ma*), and almost every major revealer includes at least one Vajrakīlaya cycle in his revelations. Pema Lingpa's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce' takes up one volume in his *Collected Works*, and Vajrakīlaya is also one of eight deities dealt with in his separate one volume revelation of the 'Mirror of the Ultra Secret Enlightened Mind' (*yang gsang thugs kyi me long*) for the Eight Sacred Transmitted Word deities (*bka' brgyad*). In Dudjom Rinpoche's case, he had his own Vajrakīlaya revelation and also worked on those of several previous lamas, so by the time he wrote on Pema Lingpa's Vajrakīlaya, mainly from his late forties up to his mid-fifties, he had received transmissions and lineages of a wide range of Vajrakīlaya practices and had written extensively on a number of them.

Now, we might wonder whether, if we witness an apparently ever expanding literature of revelations, with more and more cycles of Vajrakīlaya teachings being produced each generation, how much of this is actually original material and how much is in effect continued reproduction of the past legacy? Our research project has addressed this question, and the short answer is that, at least from our sample of Vajrakīlaya cycles, there is considerable conservatism within revelation traditions, and we find a great deal of overlap, including the reproduction of significant passages of text, especially within closely related lineages of lamas. In the case of Pema Lingpa's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce', there are clear continuities between his revelation and that of the thirteenth century Guru Chöwang's (*chos kyi dbang phyug*) 'Ultra Secret Razor Vajrakīlaya' (*yang gsang spu gri*), a continuity which appears to be acknowledged in the title of the cycle, with Pema Lingpa merely adding the word, *Lifeforce*. Moreover, there is an interesting reference in Dudjom Rinpoche's record of the transmissions he received. His account of the lineage through which he received Guru Chöwang's 'Ultra Secret Razor', notes its separate early descent through two separate lineages of lamas, which then became unified in Terdak Lingpa. One of these lineages was transmitted through Pema Lingpa. Now, although Dudjom Rinpoche's received the Pema Lingpa lineage through a quite different line of lamas and this is dealt with in a different section of his record of transmissions, he adds at this point that the Guru Chöwang lineage which passed through Pema Lingpa also mixed with Pema Lingpa's Vajrakīlaya, since the two Vajrakīlayas were brought together and carry, 'the same words and meanings'.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. How and why Dudjom Rinpoche contributed to Pema Lingpa's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce'

For the purpose of this paper, I wish to shift the main focus away from the initial revelation and production of the visionary lama's own texts, and how they may or may not be linked to other revelations, to what happens subsequently, and to look at the input of later editors and compilers. In our case study here, Dudjom Rinpoche contributed eleven texts on Pema Lingpa's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce', making up almost half a volume of his *Collected Works* (Volume Cha: 405–723), and forming what is by Tibetan standards a compact but reasonably comprehensive collection of ritual texts, covering most of the standard categories

5. *gter brgyud gnyis pa pad gling phur pa'i chos skor yang 'di dang tshig don mtshungs shing smin grol gyi chu bo gcig 'dres su bzhugs pa'i brgyud pa* (Dudjom *Collected Works* Volume Dza Om: 551).

which might be needed for a monastic community or group of practitioners to engage in a practice tradition. There is a Ritual Manual (*las byang*), which consists of the tantric visualisation of the group of deities, the mantra recitation and rituals for the main practice which can be performed individually, such as during a retreat, or communally in a monastic or group context. This Ritual Manual text will be discussed at length in the fourth part of this article. A Secondary Ritual text (*smad las*), generally performed communally, contains the applied rites for destroying evil spirits and expelling unwanted circumstances. A Commentary (*bsnyen yig*) explains the meanings of the practice tradition, and may be studied during retreat, while the Framework for the Major Practice Session (*sgrub khog*) gives a detailed description of the additional rituals needed for large communal practice gatherings over an extended number of days or weeks. This Framework for the Major Practice Session — referred to in short below as the Framework text — with its elaborations of how to set up the tantric maṇḍala in the temple and to perform the communal rites necessitating a complex division of labour, will be discussed below in the third part of this article. There are also a number of relatively short texts: a lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*) which always precedes the practice, a regular practice (*rgyun khyer*) to maintain a link with the deity on an everyday basis, a longevity practice, two burnt offerings rituals, generally performed in conjunction with other kinds of ritual practice sessions, a set of instructions on preparing the shrine for the rituals to overcome negative spirits, and a short subjugation ritual.

Now, the first question is why Dudjom Rinpoche should have written these texts, when Pema Lingpa himself produced an entire volume of revelatory texts, including his own compiled Ritual Manual, and other lamas of his tradition had added further works. It is important to realise that Dudjom Rinpoche did not write these texts entirely on his own initiative. On the contrary, it is specified in most of his authorial colophons that he was requested by the tenth Sungtrul (*gsung sprul*) or Pema Lingpa incarnation, when they wanted to establish new regular practices at the central community of the Pema Lingpa tradition at the Lhalung (*lha lung*) Monastery of Thekchok Rabgyé Ling (*theg mchog rab rgyas gling*).<sup>6</sup> The tenth Sungtrul lived only from 1930 to 1955, and thus, would have been a young man in his early twenties when his requests were made — and Dudjom Rinpoche must have fulfilled many of the requests only after the Sungtrul had passed away.<sup>7</sup> In some of the authorial colophons, Dudjom Rinpoche adds that he had delayed, but was later pressed by the Lhalung Monastery community. In short, the main impetus came from the Péling (*pad gling*, or Pema Lingpa) tradition itself, and

6. More information about the request is given in Tsewang Dongyal 2003, 70 (2008, 104). According to this account, the tenth Sungtrul had urged Dudjom Rinpoche to write the texts swiftly, so that they could be used in their intensive practice sessions and subsidiary rituals, and they were so pleased at the result that they had then made blocks for printing the texts (*pad gling phur pa'i phyogs su sngon chad ljags bsgrigs zhal gsal khyer bde zhiig gtan nas mi 'dug pas/rang dgon du sgrub mchod las sbyor dang bcas pa gsar 'dzug gngang bzhed la khyer bde'i chog khrigs 'dus gsal zhiig cis kyang 'phral du grub par gyis zhes bka' bskul nan tan chog khrig yig cha bsgrigs brtsams gyis phul ba dgyes rtser son te spar du bsgrun par mdzad/*).

7. Dudjom Rinpoche 1975 gives 1930 as the birth year (*rab byung bcu drug pa'i lcags pho rta'i lo*, p.617), and 1955 for his passing away (*dgung grangs nyer drug pa shing lug zla ba drug pa*, p.626). The current eleventh Sungtrul was born in 1968 (*rab byung bcu drug pa'i sa pho sprel lo*, p.627). (Thanks to Namgyal Henry for drawing my attention to this source).

I understand that Dudjom Rinpoche's texts are widely used in the Péling communities. From what I can tell, it seems that there are two kinds of reasons why new compilations and commentaries are called for and put into use, and both of these are pertinent here.

The first concerns the social context of relationships between lamas, their monasteries and communities of followers, and also relates to Tibetan ideas about the need for the consecrations of the lamas and the textual heritage to be fresh and vibrant. In Nyingma tantric circles, the emphasis on the importance of the freshness of a revelation, coupled with ongoing production of new cycles by charismatic lamas, means that some old revelation cycles may become less popular, and if a long-established tradition is to remain vibrant, the involvement of pre-eminent lamas of the current generation will be vital. There is also the idea that the *chos bdag* — or the master on whom the revealer bestows the lineage — may have a crucial role in the codification and dissemination of the revelation, and that subsequent lineage holders may also bear a responsibility for the tradition, including its texts. In this case, Dudjom Rinpoche was requested to contribute textual productions not merely because of his scholarship and interest in the Péling tradition, but above all, because of his extraordinary reputation and status as an enlightened master, and his particular connection with and place in the Péling lineage. He became a principal lineage holder of the Péling tradition in his generation, and gave transmission to all three of the major Péling tradition incarnations. Moreover, in Bhutan, he was apparently seen widely as a Pema Lingpa incarnation himself.<sup>8</sup> Thus, he would have been seen as having some responsibility for maintaining the tradition, and it would have been helpful to the monastic authorities to gain new versions of the texts carrying Dudjom Rinpoche's blessings.

The second reason why later lamas may be asked to create new compilations is that the original revelation text is frequently somewhat disordered, unclear, apparently inconsistent, and not structured to support ritual practice directly. Many of Pema Lingpa's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeorce' texts are such raw revelation. The collection includes one text which is a deliberately composed Ritual Manual for the practice, and this seems to give a clear indication of Pema Lingpa's own intentions for how the practice should be done, but some normally required sections are not well-developed, and there are even some apparent inconsistencies between the revelation text and the Ritual Manual. Yet it is not unusual for revealers to fail to produce practices considered adequate for monastic communal use — this can be seen as the job of the lamas who will be the successors. Even where the revelatory text may be well-written, if it was not given in metrical verse form, then it would not be so effective for integration into complex monastic ritual, where long hours of ritual are sustained by familiar styles of chanting and memorised recitation of verses, generally in metres of seven or nine syllables. In fact, I understand that one reason why Dudjom Rinpoche's compilations of Pema Lingpa's practices have become widely used is precisely because they are so beautifully constructed, and practitioners appreciate them.

8. To be clear, this view does not relate to any official *sprul sku* recognition, which was never at issue, but rather, a popular perception that Dudjom Rinpoche was actually, 'Pema Lingpa come back' (to use the words in English of Lopon P. Ogyan Tanzin who alerted me to this perception).



Beyond this need to make the sacred words easy to recite, there is an even broader issue of the requirements for the program of rituals in Tibetan monastic communities. In Nyingma monastic contexts, the typical schedule of rituals may involve a huge variety of complex tantric deity practices, each with its own complicated ritual structure and sequences of ritual performance, including specific recitations of many pages in length, lasting for many hours every day, and often for many days at a time. In such circumstances, if every different deity cycle performed were to consist of entirely unique rituals with completely different liturgies, it would be virtually impossible to maintain the expected schedule, especially considering the speed at which many of the rituals are normally performed. If there are sponsors involved, supplying donations to support the practitioners for particular practices over a set number of days, slowing down progress through the ritual would even have financial consequences. Essentially, the entire ritual system relies on the assumption that the practitioners have extensive familiarity with much of the performance, and that particular unique sections of the practice can be slotted into a framework of highly repetitive sequences. Thus, the Master of Ceremonies (*dbu mdzad*) has merely to recite the first line of a familiar liturgy for everyone to know exactly where they are in the ritual, and to be able to join in, even without consulting the text. A specific series of rites and costumed ritual dances are integrated into the regular afternoon performance of Major Practice Sessions, little changed from one deity cycle to another. If a monastic community is to feature a particular deity cycle in its schedule of intensive ritual practices on a monthly or annual basis, then the practice needs to be able to fit into this kind of familiar structure. In many of Dudjom Rinpoche's authorial colophons, he reiterates that he has written a text which is 'easy' or 'convenient' to practise (*'jug bde*). Now, when we consider that his productions are often longer and more complex than earlier versions of the practice texts, integrating various subsidiary rites, it is clear that he cannot mean that he has made the practice simpler. At first, I assumed that the phrase is connected merely to the creation of metrical verses, but now I realise that more is implied — that he is making the entire ritual 'easy' or 'convenient' by situating it in a familiar structure, and in his case, this implies the ceremonial protocols and structures of the universally well-known and extensively practised Mindrolling (*smin grol gling*) tradition.

### 3. Dudjom Rinpoche's Framework text for the Major Practice Session

The example of Dudjom Rinpoche's seventy page 'Framework for the Major Practice Session' (*sgrub khog*),<sup>9</sup> written for the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce', above all illustrates this point. The *khog dbub* ('framework') genre of practice texts provide a framework or structure for the communal rituals, supplying the instructions and liturgies for the various key rituals which structure the performance, into which are slotted the main deity practice texts, the regular Ritual Manual and all the specific additions needed, which vary according to the cycle and the event. These might include the self-empowerment text (*bdag 'jug*) and the text for making and consecrating medicinal pills (*smān sgrub*). In this case, Dudjom Rinpoche's Framework text begins with some lines on the 'Ultra Secret Razor

9. *dpal rdo rje phur pa yang gsang srog gi spu gri'i sgrub chen gyi khog dbub dngos grub 'dod pa 'jo ba'i za ma tog* (Dudjom Rinpoche Collected Works Volume Cha: 473–542).

Lifeforce', including an explicit citation from Pema Lingpa's root revelation concerning the order of elements in the practice. Following this acknowledgment of the specific cycle, the bulk of the text, with its ritual instructions and recitations for the various rites needed during a Major Practice Session, reproduces verbatim much of the corresponding sections found in the Framework text which Dudjom Rinpoche wrote twenty years earlier for the Dudjom tradition 'Meteoric Iron Razor Vajrakīlaya' (*phur pa gnam lcags spu gri*) cycle.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the introductory rituals for the Earth goddess and local spirits, the offerings to the Four Great Kings to enlist them to guard the ritual space,<sup>11</sup> the subjugation of the samaya breaking spirits, the invocation of Yamāntaka and Amṛtakundali at the temple doors to keep disturbances outside and the spiritual attainments inside, the invocation of the ten Wrathful Deities to guard from obstacles arising within the temple, the ritual destruction of an effigy of negative forces, and the purification of the sacred space for the maṇḍala, are all virtually word-for-word the same in the two texts. Now, Pema Lingpa includes a kind of Framework text<sup>12</sup> within his revelatory collection, and a number of the recitations parallel those in Dudjom Rinpoche's two Framework texts, but most of its sections are far less detailed than Dudjom Rinpoche's texts, sometimes merely mentioning that a ritual component should be done, rather than giving the recitations for it. It is also not ordered quite so clearly in temporal sequence, and it can be appreciated that the Péling community might have felt the lack of a single integrated text giving instruction for these rituals. Thus, Dudjom Rinpoche's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce' Framework text is heavily dependent on his 'Meteoric Iron Razor' Framework text, while making some use of the Pema Lingpa text, for instance, following its variant of a verse within the symbolic outlining of the maṇḍala's primeval lines.<sup>13</sup>

Occasionally, Dudjom Rinpoche's Framework texts both instruct that one must insert a certain section from the main Ritual Manual (*las byang*) and, of course, these texts will be from the different cycles, so the rituals will diverge at those points. Where specific aspects relating to the particular cycle are needed in the Framework text itself — such as in the description of making the outline for and colouring in the two-dimensional sand maṇḍala for the practice — these are substituted in the appropriate places, and the paralleling resumes with the next section. The section on establishing the ritual phurbus or daggers to represent the deities varies slightly in content and order, again due to the different layout of the maṇḍalas,<sup>14</sup> while some lines in the section on laying out the phurbus are omitted

10. There are several Dudjom tradition Vajrakīlaya cycles — besides Dudjom Rinpoche's own revelation, Dudjom Rinpoche's predecessor, Dudjom Lingpa (*bdud 'joms gling pa*, 1835–1904) included three cycles in his *Collected Works*. On the basis of the longest of these, Dudjom Rinpoche created the extensive 'Meteoric Iron Razor Vajrakīlaya', which takes up over two volumes in his *Collected Works*.

11. The 'Meteoric Iron Razor' text gives the words, 'tiṣṭha vajra!', at the conclusion of each of the mantras invoking the Four Kings, and these additional mantras are not included in the new *sgrub khog*, but apart from this, the sections are identical in the two texts.

12. *sgrub 'bum chen mo las bskol bar 'byung ba* (Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 177–204).

13. Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 186, Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 491; for the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' version, see Volume Tha: 244.

14. Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 494ff; Volume Tha: 249ff. The standard set of mantras for fumigating, pelting and anointing are given in all three texts, although the accompanying



for the same reason.<sup>15</sup> Within this section, however, there is a sizable addition to Dudjom Rinpoche's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce' text, a section of over ten pages to recite, on inviting the primordial wisdom deities from the dharmadhātu, to reside in the phurbus. This section, made up primarily of verses marked with the revelation punctuation,<sup>16</sup> is in fact mostly found in a separate text within Pema Lingpa's corpus, on consecrating one or more ritual phurbus.<sup>17</sup>

The two Dudjom Framework texts run parallel for the introductory sections on laying out the other ritual items, and then diverge somewhat, since the list of items is a little different. But the following detailed instructions on arranging the adornments and offerings are the same in both the Dudjom texts, followed by a verse given also in Pema Lingpa's text, although an added mantra is not included there.<sup>18</sup> The extended ritualised investiture of the practitioners in their roles for the practice session, including the symbolic donning of the wrathful tantric deity costume by all the practitioners, is identical in Dudjom Rinpoche's two texts, while a short parallel given in Pema Lingpa's texts is worded slightly different-

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instructions vary somewhat (Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 495; Volume Tha: 250; Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 187).

15. One verse is omitted on the Buddha family kīlayas, and two lines on the outer circle of protectors further down (Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 506, 507; Volume Tha: 251, 252). There is also a parallel for this sequence of verses in Pema Lingpa's text, Volume Ma: 188–190, although some additional verses on the individual Wrathful Deities given there are not included in Dudjom Rinpoche's version, while Dudjom Rinpoche's two texts also intersperse the verses on the maṇḍala arrangement with instructions.
16. The *gter tsheg* or *gter shad* (ྱི) is a punctuation mark used exclusively to mark each verse line or clause of a *gter ma* revelation text. Its presence indicates that the lines in question must be from the revelation, although in some cases, it may not be clear *which* revelation the lines have been taken from.
17. This text, called, *las dgu bkol ba* ('Employing the Nine Rituals'), is found in the Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 209–217. Part of the specific parallel passage given here is inserted in the middle of the section, running in the Dudjom text from Volume Cha: 496–506. Volume Cha: 496 lines 3–6 corresponds to Pema Lingpa Volume Ma: 209 lines 3–5; Volume Cha: 496 line 6 to 497 line 5 corresponds to Pema Lingpa Volume Ma: 210 lines 2–6; Volume Cha: 497 line 5 to 499 line 1 corresponds to Pema Lingpa Volume Ma: 211 line 2 to 212 line 4. Then a verse which is given in Pema Lingpa's Ritual Manual (*las byang*, Volume Ma: 327) — and indeed elsewhere — for requesting empowerment, is followed by two pages of explanatory visualisation instruction (Volume Cha: 501 line 4 to 503 line 4), without the revelation punctuation. Although unmetrical, it is in large writing and presumably to be recited. I have not identified any parallel for this section, which Dudjom Rinpoche has added here, on the sugatas in turn consecrating the body centres of the phurbus with seed syllables, so that they are bestowed with each of the five primordial wisdoms. The inserts from Pema Lingpa's *las dgu bkol ba* then resume, with 'generating splendour' (*gzi brjid*), Volume Cha: 503 line 4 to 505 line 2 corresponding to Volume Ma: 213 line 6 to 215 line 4; and praises (Volume Cha: 505 line 2 to 506 line 1 corresponding to Volume Ma: 215 line 4 to 216 line 1). Paralleling between Dudjom Rinpoche's two Framework texts resumes from Volume Cha: 506 (= Volume Ma: 251), but at the end of the section, there are a further two pages from the *las dgu bkol ba* (Volume Cha: 507 line 5 to 509 line 2 corresponding to Volume Ma: 216 line 4 to 217 line 5), consisting of a distinctive request relating to the characteristic features of the material phurbus — the upper and lower knots, the makara (sea monster or crocodile), the different types of blades — and requesting the siddhi of realising an aspect of enlightenment symbolically associated with each of them.
18. Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 510–511 and Tha: 253–254; Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 190.

ly.<sup>19</sup> The section for consecrating new students into the tantric maṇḍala is also the same in both Dudjom Rinpoche's texts, and rather different from the longer version given in Pema Lingpa's text.<sup>20</sup> The instructions on how to engage in the practice throughout the practice session, which include advice on practising the tantric meditation, is very similar in the Dudjom texts, although in this case, nine verse recitation lines marked by the revelation punctuation are added in the text for the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce'.<sup>21</sup> The sections on clearing hindrances during each afternoon session, before the daily consecrations are invoked, run parallel throughout.<sup>22</sup> The section on the signs of accomplishment and imbibing the siddhis at the culmination of the practice session is partially parallel, although the visualisation for imbibing the siddhis is more elaborate in the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce' text, and a different recitation from Pema Lingpa's parallel section is included, with lines taken from the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' punctuated by lines from the revelation, including one substantial passage of a page in length.<sup>23</sup> The concluding rituals, consisting of tormas offerings, the opening of the ritual boundaries, gathering up and disposal of the maṇḍala sands, the final aspirations, auspicious wishes, and closing celebrations, are virtually the same in the two Dudjom texts, although there is one additional section on burying a treasure vase, for which the recitation has been taken from Pema Lingpa's Framework text.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.1 Conclusions on Dudjom Rinpoche's Framework text for the Major Practice Session

To sum up, perhaps eighty percent of Dudjom Rinpoche's 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce' Framework text for the Major Practice session reproduces virtually unchanged his earlier Framework text for the 'Meteoric Iron Razor'. Amendments are made as necessary for the sections where differences in maṇḍala structure and so on are inevitable, given that the practice is related to a different cycle, and there are some elaborations or additions from Pema Lingpa's revelation. Occasionally, where Pema Lingpa's revelatory Framework text includes parallel verses, Dudjom Rinpoche may follow the variant phrasing given in Pema Lingpa's text, but does not invariably do so. It seems that this wholesale dependency on the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' text illustrates the points above, that it was useful for the Pema Lingpa community to gain a new practice text with Dudjom Rinpoche's stamp of identity on it, and that such a work should conform to practical monastic ritual needs. As Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin put it,<sup>25</sup> Dudjom Rinpoche was putting

19. Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 511–513 and Tha: 255–256; Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 190; see also 183–184.

20. Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 513–515 and Tha: 256–258; Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 180–183.

21. I have not identified these lines in the Pema Lingpa corpus, but they are most likely from this source.

22. Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 519–524 and Tha: 260–264.

23. Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 525–529 and Tha: 264–267; Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 199–201.

24. Dudjom *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 530–531; Pema Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume Ma: 202–203.

25. Personal communication, July 2014.

the old wine into a new bottle, thus blessing it for a new context, making it possible for practitioners to take part in major practice sessions on Pema Lingpa's Vajrakīlaya, re-invigorating the tradition. But it seems most likely that why he replicated the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' text largely unchanged, when he could have taken more from Pema Lingpa's revelation, was because so many Nyingma establishments have considerable familiarity with these ritual structures — even the particular phrasing of their recitations. If this is so, it rather raises the question of the derivation of the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' Framework text. I cannot go into detail about all the sources here, but I can say that most of its content owes little to the specific Dudjom Vajrakīlaya tradition. Rather, some sections are from well-known recitations and ritual practices common to the Nyingma tradition. For instance, the invocation to the female deity Kuntoop Gyelmo (*kun thub rgyal mo*) or Omniscient Queen, which is accompanied by a masked dance of the deity, is found in a ritual practice Framework text for the Eight Sacred Transmitted Word deities, produced by the thirteenth century Guru Chöwang (1979 Volume 1: 384–385), and widely used in the context of major practice sessions today. Other sections are a little more particular to the ceremonial traditions of the monastery of Mindroling in Central Tibet. Dudjom Rinpoche was trained in these conventions, and he worked on universalising practices of specific Nyingma traditions and making them more accessible, by integrating them with the influential Mindroling norms. Thus, the structure of Dudjom Rinpoche's Framework texts follows Mindroling,<sup>26</sup> and many of the recitations and instructions in the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' Framework text parallel quite closely those found in that for Guru Chöwang's 'Ultra Secret Razor', written by the seventeenth century founder of Mindroling, Terdak Lingpa.<sup>27</sup>

However, despite the integration of Pema Lingpa's practice into a broader scheme of rites, not all of Pema Lingpa's original revelation text for the Framework rituals is lost. Most strikingly, a long passage of a distinctive liturgy from a section of the revelation on consecrating ritual phurbus, is included in full. This is inserted into the important preliminary ritual for establishing the ritual phurbus representing the different deities, which are placed on the maṇḍala and visualised as actually embodying the deities and their wisdom. In the concluding rituals, additional verses from the revelation for imbibing the siddhis or spiritual accomplishments are interspersed with the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' text's recitations, and a treasure vase burial is added, also from Pema Lingpa's collection. Thus, the text retains some connection to the revelation cycle it is now linked to. It seems that there is an acceptance of and perhaps even a delight in a certain element of idiosyncrasy and original or distinctive material, but such elements must be contained within the structure of established familiar practice.

26. Dudjom Rinpoche makes this explicit in the first Framework text which he wrote as a young man; see Drakngak Lingpa (*drag sngags gling pa*) 2005, 414, 454–455.

27. *dpal rdo rje phur bu'i sgrub pa chen po'i rim pa gsal bar byed pa dngos grub kyi dga' ston*, in Terdak Lingpa *Collected Works*, Volume 9: 305r–332v. On Terdak Lingpa, see note 3 above. It is clear that Dudjom Rinpoche took Terdak Lingpa as a role model, perhaps even the primary role model for his textual productions, and he was keen to continue Terdak Lingpa's work on making early revelations known and practised more widely.

#### 4. Dudjom Rinpoche's Ritual Manual for the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce'

##### 4.1 The contributions of the third Sungtrul, Tsultrim Dorje

For the fourth part of the paper, I consider the slightly different case of Dudjom Rinpoche's main Ritual Manual (*las byang*) for the cycle. Here, the bulk of the text is more clearly rooted in the Pema Lingpa cycle, but there has been considerable re-working of the phrasing and even of some key visualisations. However, not all these changes were introduced by Dudjom Rinpoche. He acknowledges in his authorial colophon that, apart from the source revelation, he has based his work on the earlier Ritual Manual of the third Sungtrul or Pema Lingpa reincarnation, Tsultrim Dorje (*tshul khrims rdo rje*, 1598–1669). An examination of this source demonstrates that some of the significant modifications were already present at this stage. Although I am not in a position to investigate all the third Sungtrul's sources, it is probably safe to say that since he was clearly rooted in the early Péling religious community, at least some of these amendments to the practice may have been based on pith instructions (*man ngag*)<sup>28</sup> from the early masters, and perhaps also the emerging styles of ritual practice within actual communities of practitioners. Certainly, in his authorial colophon, he vigorously defends himself from any possible charge of having 'artificially contrived' (*bcos*) his phrasing, claiming that he has principally used the root revelation, all the recitations deriving solely from the Guru's liturgical formulations (*chog khrigs*)<sup>29</sup> and the root Vajrakumāra tantra, supplemented by his additional glosses which it is not necessary to chant.<sup>30</sup> Dudjom Rinpoche employs similarly defensive wording in the authorial colophon to his Ritual Manual, even here repeating some of the third Sungtrul's words, and claiming that the recitations are mostly from the unmodified revelation source and the Guru's liturgical formulations, that he has used the third Sungtrul's manual as the main basis, and otherwise, merely augmented the branch rituals which were undeveloped, and embellished the text where necessary with additions in accordance with general Vajrayāna conventions, and revelation words of closely related family type.<sup>31</sup> The fact that both of them draw

28. Pith instructions (*man ngag*) are quintessential tantric instructions or direct guidance on tantric practice. They are associated with oral instruction from master to student, but sets of written explanatory notes may also be classified as pith instructions.

29. This seems to indicate Pema Lingpa's wording.

30. *bse sgrom nag po'i gter du bzhugs pa las phebs pa'i las gzhung rtso ba sor gzahg/ lhan thabs zur bkol rnam gzhung du... nges pa ma gsung kyang/ yan lag tsho rang gi tshig 'gres dang mthun par 'ga' gtsug/ phal cher 'di ru 'di long zhes kha 'phangs/ gzhung tshig rnam spyir gu ru'i chog khrigs dang/ 'don bya thams cad rdo rje gzhon nu rtso ba'i rgyud tshig kho nar bzhugs pas bcas bcos ma song bar byas/ (Tsultrim Dorje, 26v–27r).*

31. *gter ston chen po nyid kyi ljags bsgrigs kyis mtshon rgyas bsdu 'dra min kha cig snang ba las/ kun mkhyen tshul khrims rdo rjes mdzad pa nyid gter gzhung gi dgongs par 'byor che bas de nyid gzhir bzung/ rtso ba'i sdom byang las gzhung kha skong dang bcas pa dang/ rang don byang chub nar mar sgrub pa'i mdo byang rnam gung bsdebs/ mngon rtogs rnam gu ru'i chog khrigs rgyud gzhung gi mchan bu kho na gyer sgom bde bar tshigs bcad du bsgrig /'don bya phal cher gter gzhung rtso ba'i rgyud tshig sha stag bcas bcos ma song bar byas/ cho ga'i yan lag med du mi rung ba 'ga' zhig gsang ba skyi'i 'gros dang bstun nas rigs mthun gyi gter tshig dang ngag rtso m ji ltar rig pas brgyan te 'jug bde nam gsal gtsang dag tu spel bar bgyis pa'o/ (Dudjom Rinpoche Collected Works, Volume Cha: 454–455).*

attention to their guiltlessness as innovators suggests that they were aware that some practitioners may notice the discrepancies between their texts and Pema Lingpa's revelation.

In brief, in first considering the third Sungtrul's manual, the most striking features which introduce apparent changes from Pema Lingpa are:

- extensive replacement of prose text from the revelation, with metred verse, using many of the same words, but not exclusively;
- selective use of Pema Lingpa's productions, apparently neglecting some of the interpretations found in some of the branch revelation texts and in Pema Lingpa's own Ritual Manual;
- insertion of some supplementary material.

I do not wish to exaggerate the extent or the impact of these modifications; clearly, the third Sungtrul is not dissembling when he tells us that he is essentially reproducing the source revelation. The work of a later lama in compiling a Ritual Manual will necessarily involve reviewing the different texts within the revelation collection, and taking up appropriate sections, integrating them into a single practice text,<sup>32</sup> often ironing out inconsistencies in the process. It may be that some aspects considered necessary for the typical tantric ritual practice do not feature at all in the revelation, and these will need to be supplied from elsewhere. It is fair to say that in this case, the third Sungtrul does not appear to have added substantial quantities of material which are not found in the revelation at all. His main input — that is, if he is himself responsible, rather than a previous lama who might have written a Ritual Manual for the tradition earlier<sup>33</sup> — is to integrate and to re-work the revelation material into metred verses, thus introducing some re-phrasing.<sup>34</sup> Often, the versification does little more than to

32. Here, the third Sungtrul has silently integrated material from at least four different discrete texts in the revelation collection: the *sgrub 'bum chen mo las bskol bar 'byung ba* (Volume Ma: 117–204); the *yang gsang spu gri 'bar ba'i gzhung* (Volume Ma: 219–255); the *las byang kha skong* (Volume Ma: 281–288); and the *ger ston gyis mdzad pa'i las byang nor bu'i phreng ba* (Volume Ma: 309–350). He has also mentioned a further four sections (the *mtshams gcod*, Volume Ma: 259–261; the *lhag chog*, Volume Ma: 289–303; the *phur pa'i dam can dbang mo nyer brgyad kyi bskul dang bcas pa*, Volume Ma: 351–355; and the *glo bur cog brdung las sbyor tshul du sgrub pa'i thabs*, Volume Ma: 357–367), which can be recited in the event of a longer practice.

33. If so, he does not mention this in his authorial colophon, and he would probably have done so if he had been very dependent on a *specific* earlier source, just as Dudjom Rinpoche draws attention to the third Sungtrul's text, but does not specify other sources. There is, however, no expectation that one's sources *should* be outlined, and it is only occasionally that a work will have a colophon which is as detailed as those written in this case by the third Sungtrul and Dudjom Rinpoche. Indeed, Dudjom Rinpoche includes one entire Pema Lingpa text in his own Vajrakīlaya cycle without any colophon or indication that it is from Pema Lingpa at all (see p.200 and note 55 below).

34. I make these comments on the basis of my analysis of the text, in comparison with the Pema Lingpa texts. The third Sungtrul himself makes a few comments on the process of producing the text in his authorial colophon at the end of the text. He elaborates a little on his statement noted above about his main reliance on the revelation source. Thus, he speaks explicitly about versifying the annotations given in the root texts, without introducing omissions or additions, such that the verses will remain trustworthy since they are wholly endowed with the enlightened intentions of the source tantra ('*dir rgyud gzhung gi mchan bu la gang yod tshigs bcad du bsdebs pas/ chad lhag dang 'dra min med par/ rgyud gzhung gi dgongs pa la 'byor che ba yod pas na yid [b]rtan du rung ba'o/*, f.27r–27v).

repeat the revelation words, simply breaking them up into metred lines. However, there are significant portions of the text where the wording of the verses has become quite different from anything I have identified in the revelation, and these include key passages of text dealing with the central visualisations of the maṇḍala. The effects of the re-working of these sections of the text are that some rather distinctive features of Pema Lingpa's revelation are played down or lost sight of, and the practice more closely resembles other Vajrakīlaya traditions without these elements.

In particular, there are four striking aspects of Pema Lingpa's descriptions of the deities which have disappeared in the third Sungtrul's text. The first is in the visualisations of the set of ten Wrathful Deities (*khro bo bcu*), which form a circle around the central deity pair in Vajrakīlaya practices. The third Sungtrul roughly follows Pema Lingpa's order in listing in turn each deity's name, main colour, heads, arms, lower body, the head colours, the five family diadem, the items held in the hands, the apparel, the consort's name, colour, her items, costume, and posture, the two attendants, their colour and items, the direction in which they reside, and the surrounding flames.<sup>35</sup> But the phrasing is quite different, and in particular, it loses the reference found in three of Pema Lingpa's texts of the Wrathful Deities having lower phurbu or dagger-like bodies.<sup>36</sup> This is an unusual feature: generally, other deities in the maṇḍala, such as the four or five family Kīlayas — where they occur — and the group of Supreme Sons (*sras mchog*), have lower phurbu bodies, but each of the ten Wrathful Deities have heruka deity appearance, with four legs in a fighting posture.<sup>37</sup> The third Sungtrul simply follows the one reference to four legs, which is found in one of the Pema Lingpa texts (although in that case, a lower phurpa body is added as well).

A second slightly unusual feature to the assembly of deities is the positioning of the group of Supreme Sons (*sras mchog*). Although Pema Lingpa has a full set of twenty-one, in three groups of seven, they are placed *within* the circle of the Wrathful Deities,<sup>38</sup> instead of situating them in a circle outside, as is more usual.

35. 9v–12v. See Pema Lingpa's description, Volume Ma: 234–238; and also the slightly re-arranged order in his versified Ritual Manual, Volume Ma: 318–323.

36. The clearest reference which specifies the lower body as an iron phurbu is in the separate revelatory text specifically on visualising the Wrathful Deities, Volume Ma: 263ff, where it clearly speaks of the lower body and its throne (*sku smad lcags phur nyi zla'i gdan la gzhuḡs*), and makes no mention of any legs. Pema Lingpa's Ritual Manual appears to imply this visualisation, shortening the line to fit it into a verse line (*lcags phur nyi zla'i gdan la gzhuḡs*), and similarly, says nothing of any legs. The third source is somewhat inconsistent — it only mentions the lower body in describing the first of the Wrathful Deities, Volume Ma: 234, and is briefer in describing the subsequent nine. In this first instance, it gives the rather unlikely combination of a lower body iron phurbu straddled by four stretched legs (*zhabs bzhi bsgrad pa'i sku smad lcags phur re*). The reading is confirmed also in the sGang steng edition of Pema Lingpa's *Collected Works* (Karma Phuntsho's photographs of the volume, image 105.3 line 3–4), but may have been in error. In any case, even this source mentions the lower phurbu body.

37. Although unusual, it seems that the ten Wrathful Deities with lower phurbu bodies do occur; *Himalayan Art Resources* feature one such instance of a painting (image number, 57053 <<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm?icode=57053>>, which they date to the eighteenth century. It is even possible that this painting might be from the Péling tradition; the *jñānasattva*, or wisdom deity in the heart, is shown as a white Vajrasattva, as in the Péling tradition, although it appears that the door-keepers in the painting are bird-headed, like the standard set used most frequently in Vajrakīlaya maṇḍalas, not like Pema Lingpa's set (see below on these).

38. This is made explicit in Pema Lingpa's Ritual Manual, by the description of their arising from



Now, in this case, there is nothing in the third Sungtrul's text to suggest any contradiction to this placement, but attention is perhaps distracted away from it by giving them in the standard order to visualise, after the Wrathful Deities' descriptions. It is usual for descriptions of maṇḍala deities to proceed from the centre to the outside, although this is not always done consistently, and it is also usual to order the Vajrakīlaya deities into three maṇḍalas of: (1) oneself as the central male and female deity couple;<sup>39</sup> (2) the circle of the Wrathful Deities; and (3) the material phurbu maṇḍala, which concerns the Supreme Sons. Thus, in one of the revelation texts, the Supreme Sons are given after the Wrathful Deities, and the third Sungtrul follows this rather more conventional ordering, although Pema Lingpa's own Ritual Manual had drawn attention to their central positioning by giving them before the Wrathful Deities (Volume Ma: 239–240; 317–8).

The third distinctive feature of Pema Lingpa's circle of deities is the inclusion of the twenty-eight Īṣvari (Tibetan *dbang phyug ma*) protectresses<sup>40</sup> in a relatively central position in the maṇḍala. Rather than placing them in the outer courtyard of the celestial palace, beyond the circle of the twelve special Vajrakīlaya protectresses, as is usual, Pema Lingpa's revelation puts them within the palace, in the four corners, while the Vajrakīlaya protectresses are outside this, in the courtyard (Volume Ma: 323; 324). Moreover, Pema Lingpa's revelation texts often draw attention to this placement by listing them before the Vajrakīlaya protectresses, and they are given their own separate invocation text of several pages, which gives detailed descriptions of them all (Volume Ma: 351–355). In fact, they even receive special attention in Pema Lingpa's Ritual Manual, where unusually, they are listed individually and described at some length (Volume Ma: 323–324). None of this interest is taken up in the third Sungtrul's text, in which all the guardians are merely mentioned briefly as a group (13r.2).

Fourthly, Pema Lingpa's Ritual Manual introduces a non-standard set of maṇḍala door-keepers, a tiger-headed, pig-headed, lion-headed, and wolf-headed (Volume Ma: 325, 344).<sup>41</sup> However, one of the revelation texts gives an annotation, specifying the door-keepers as, horse-headed, pig-headed, sun and moon, and pulveriser (*rta gdong*, *phag gdong*, *nyi zla*, *thal byed*, Volume Ma: 240). This group, although not the most common door-keepers, are not quite so unusual, and indeed, they are specified in Terdak Lingpa's compilation of Guru Chöwang's

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the *hūṃ* syllables radiating to the three semi-circles around the central maṇḍala triangle (*chos 'byung phyi rol zla gam gsum: ... mthing nag bdun dang ljang nag bdun: dmar nag bdun gyi hūṃ 'phros pas*, Volume Ma: 317), and implied also by their arising before the ten Wrathful Deities, Volume Ma: 317–8. Their placement is also clarified in the annotations to the revelation text, Volume Ma: 239.

39. As an inner tantric cycle, the practitioner visualises themselves as the central deity, surrounded by a retinue of emanations.
40. The stories linked to these protectresses in the Vajrakīlaya tradition gives them as the female retinue of Rudra, who were bound under oath and placed on the outskirts of the maṇḍala when Vajrakīlaya tamed Rudra.
41. In Volume Ma: 325, the first is given as *rta gdong* (horse-headed), but the sGang steng edition of the text gives, *stag gdong* (tiger-headed), and the Spiti manuscript gives *rtag*. Furthermore, Volume Ma: 325 shares with the Spiti manuscript an apparent error of repeating *phag gdong* (pig-headed) for the fourth in the list. The intention would nonetheless seem clear; where they are referred to a second time in the text, all three available editions give *stag gdong*, *phag gdong*, *seng gdong*, *spyang gdong*.

‘Ultra Secret Razor’, which, as mentioned above, is a closely related revelation cycle. In any case, the third Sungtrul does not spell out any details about the door-keepers at all.

I am uncertain how much significance to attach to the third Sungtrul’s apparent loss of some of the more distinctive features of Pema Lingpa’s revelation. It seems that later lamas writing compilations will often — deliberately or otherwise — bring the visualisations into line with more standard practices, perhaps as part of universalising a specific revelation and connecting it with the wider tradition.<sup>42</sup> However, such considerations would seem unlikely in the case of a Pema Lingpa incarnation, compiling texts of his own tradition, a tradition which soon became influential in the broader Tibetan-speaking regions. In any case, the third Sungtrul can hardly have been following a deliberate strategy to purge the texts of any unusual features. Indeed, he encourages practitioners to recite the whole of Pema Lingpa’s separate invocation to the twenty-eight Īśvarīs (24v), when they wish to perform a more elaborate version of the excess offering (*lhag ma*). It seems that any tendency to bowdlerise a tantric practice text to bring it into line with more common or mainstream versions is offset by another tendency, as we have seen above, to value special and unique aspects of revelatory traditions.<sup>43</sup> But above all, it is clear that when faced with the task of reducing a full volume of revelatory material into a manageable sized ritual manual, some of the imagery and unique features will have to be omitted.<sup>44</sup> So for our purposes here, we can conclude that in this case, although the third Sungtrul’s text may be almost wholly dependent on material stemming from the master, it has been at least to some extent transformed in the process.

42. Such universalising is in fact a major feature of Dudjom Rinpoche’s works, and perhaps especially prominent in his manuals for the works of lesser known revealers. I have discussed it elsewhere (Cantwell 2015, 257–258, 268, 272–273).

43. In this case, besides the advice to recite Pema Lingpa’s invocation to the twenty-eight Īśvarīs if there is extra time, other examples include the fact that he also draws attention at this point (24v) to two further separate sections of the revelation which can be inserted (the separate ritual for the Excess offering, Volume Ma: 289–303, and an invocation to the Vajrakīlaya protectresses, Volume Ma: 357–367). Moreover, in the Ritual Manual itself, he includes two other sizable passages of text from the revelation, which are very distinctive and rather memorable for their elegant composition. One is a lengthy Fulfilment and Expelling ritual (*bskang ba* and *bskang zlog*), given in two parts of the revelation (Volume Ma: 193–196; 285–287), and reproduced here in full, thus constituting almost three sides of the Ritual Manual (18r.4–19v.2). The second is a special invocation to the main maṇḍala deities, which includes a eulogy of various aspects of the deity’s fearsome costume. It is extracted from a separate section in the revelation, the *glo bur cog brdung las sbyor tshul du sgrub pa’i thabs*, Ma 364, line 5 to 366, line 3, and takes up over a side in the Ritual Manual (22r.6–23v.2). Neither constitute essential elements for the Ritual Manual, and indeed, they are not included in Dudjom Rinpoche’s later Ritual Manual (although notably, the poetic Fulfilment recitation is taken up by Dudjom Rinpoche for use in his collections of the two principal Dudjom tradition Vajrakīlaya cycles; see below).

44. I have described above in relation to Dudjom Rinpoche’s Framework text, how additional ritual sequences and familiar liturgies may be added to the revelatory materials — which are brief on the specific rituals concerned — to create a suitable text for an elaborate communal practice. Here, there are some similar examples of additions (see below), but the most striking feature of the third Sungtrul’s Ritual Manual is that of selective choice and omission. Often, a revelation cycle consists of numerous separate sections which can be used in rituals, but are not in themselves arranged or suitable for direct liturgical practice. Later compilations may focus only on a few key sections, which are extracted and elaborated upon.

## 4.2 Dudjom Rinpoche's use of sources in his Ritual Manual

The next question to address is what Dudjom Rinpoche's Ritual Manual, 'The Embellished Manifold Display of Ritual Action',<sup>45</sup> adds or subtracts. Its length is similar to the third Sungtrul's, and it reproduces some sections or sub-sections of it, but it is also not a simple copy. It re-visits the root revelation source, integrating further material from Pema Lingpa's texts, as well as shortening some sections as given in the third Sungtrul's Ritual Manual, removing the additional Fulfilment and Expelling recitation, and an invocation used by the third Sungtrul during the *tshogs* tantric feast.<sup>46</sup> While the third Sungtrul adds the occasional explanatory gloss to the text, what is perhaps most striking about Dudjom Rinpoche's version is that he has included some quite extensive comments, as well as some recitations from sources other than the revelation.

At the outset (Volume Cha: 407), Dudjom Rinpoche cites the revelation synopsis (*sdom byang*) to clarify the structure of the practice,<sup>47</sup> adding his own notes and commenting on preparations such as cleaning up the practice hut, and setting up the shrine and ritual items. He includes Refuge and Bodhicitta verses which do not appear to be from the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce',<sup>48</sup> as well as the well-established Vajrayāna version of the Accumulations or Eight Limbs (*yan lag brgyad pa*), given in many Vajrakīlaya sources.<sup>49</sup> A good deal of the main practice recitations either parallel the third Sungtrul's text, or one of the revelation texts, versifying root text where necessary, and slightly re-ordering or re-wording. He slightly shortens the ten Wrathful Deity visualisation lines (Volume Cha: 422–426), re-ordering and limiting the individual lines to the specific individual features, such as the items held in the middle two hands, while concluding with lines applicable to all — the items in their upper and lower hands, their posture and costume. Like the third Sungtrul, he describes them as each having four legs. He also follows the third Sungtrul in giving the Supreme Sons after the ten Wrathful Deities (Volume Cha: 426–427), and he too fails to highlight the more central position given to the twenty-eight Īśvarīs in Pema Lingpa's revelation. He gives more attention to the door-keepers than is found in the third Sungtrul's Ritual Manual (Volume Cha: 427–428), but specifies the more common set, mentioned in the annotations to one of the revelation texts, in contrast to that given

45. *dpal rdo rje phur bu yang gsang srog gi spu gri'i las byang phrin las rnam par rol pa'i rgyan*, Dudjom Rinpoche *Collected Works*, Volume Cha: 405–456.

46. See note 43 above. Dudjom Rinpoche notes (Volume Cha: 441.6) that a Fulfilment recitation can be done at the appropriate place; it is quite usual to insert such a recitation into the *tshogs* feast rituals.

47. Although marked off as a citation with the revelation punctuation given, Dudjom Rinpoche's quotation is not exact. It makes the original metrical, cutting out a few syllables, and adding one, similar to the kinds of re-working we see in the versification of the recitations by both Dudjom Rinpoche and the third Sungtrul.

48. I am not sure where these verses are from. They are marked by the revelation punctuation, but I have not found them in the Pema Lingpa revelation, nor anywhere else, despite looking through numerous sources.

49. For a commentary by Mipham (*mi pham*, 1846–1912), entitled *rdo rje theg pa'i dkyil chog gang la'ang sbyar chog pa yan lag brgyad pa'i 'bru 'grel nyung ngur bsdu pa*, see the *bDud 'joms bKa' ma* Volume Zha 21: 545–549, and for one by Jigmé Lingpa (*'jigs med gling pa*, 1729–1798), entitled *phur pa rgyud lugs las bka' ma'i yan lag brgyad 'grel rgyud don gsal ba*, see the *bDud 'joms bKa' ma* Volume Ja: 677–683.

in Pema Lingpa's Ritual Manual. As mentioned above, this set is found also in Guru Chöwang's 'Ultra Secret Razor', as represented by Terdak Lingpa's Ritual Manual, and consists of, the horse-headed, pig-headed, sun and moon, and pulveriser (*rta gdong*, *phag gdong*, *nyi zla*, *thal byed*, Volume Ma: 240).

Along with the selection, re-working and re-arrangement of appropriate recitations, there are additional recitations. In some cases, Dudjom Rinpoche supplies text for standard practices, which are undeveloped or absent in the earlier texts. Thus, in the text for the closing rituals, Dudjom Rinpoche inserts a thanksgiving offering and praise, and also auspicious wishes (*bkra shis*) at the end (Volume Cha: 252, 254). There are additional introductory visualisations to many of the verse recitations, and in parts, lengthy passages of instruction. This is particularly notable in the mantra recitation section, which is very brief in the third Sungrul's work, consisting of little more than the mantras and their labels. Pema Lingpa's Ritual Manual is similarly brief, as are most of the revelation texts, although one gives meditation instruction for the recitation session, and Dudjom Rinpoche's passage (Volume Cha: 436–437) uses the same structure and some of the same meditations, even if his wording is quite different.<sup>50</sup> For part of this section, Dudjom Rinpoche draws on his earlier work on the Dudjom tradition 'Meteoric Iron Razor' tradition, as he did with his Framework text, in this case repeating material from his 'Meteoric Iron Razor' Ritual Manual (Volume Tha: 123–125). The same is true also in various other sections of the text,<sup>51</sup> and in particular, for Dudjom Rinpoche's comparatively lengthy meditation instruction for the rite of destroying negative spirits and releasing them into the buddha fields, at the culmination of the tantric *tshogs* feast ritual (Volume Cha: 442–447). The corresponding section in Dudjom Rinpoche's 'Meteoric Iron Razor' Ritual Manual (Volume Tha: 130–134) details the visualisations for each stage of the rite, and these are repeated here. Some lines in both of these two sections are parallel to Terdak Lingpa's Ritual Manual for Guru Chöwang's 'Ultra Secret Razor' (Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 290v–291v; 296r–298r), and indeed, the application of material from this source is clearly a feature of Dudjom Rinpoche's Ritual Manual. Not only do many of the explanatory glosses which are scattered throughout the work exactly correspond to Terdak Lingpa's, but even for some of the recitations, Dudjom Rinpoche often follows Terdak Lingpa's version where the text runs parallel to Pema Lingpa's revelation.<sup>52</sup> Doubtless, Terdak Lingpa's compilation of the

50. Dudjom Rinpoche divides his discussion into five aspects, which are mentioned on p.246 of the main practice text given in the revelation (the *yang gsang spu gri 'bar ba'i gzhung*, Volume Ma: 219–255), but discussed at greater length from p.132 in the *phur pa'i yang gsang spu gri 'bar ba'i sgrub thabs* (Volume Ma: 127–146), which gives extensive instruction on the recitation practice.

51. Short instructions parallel to the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' text include the visualisation for the dissolution of the objects of Refuge (Volume Cha: 409; Volume Tha: 82); that for oneself as Vajrakīlaya, and the arising and offering of the tormas for the obstacles (Volume Cha 410; Volume Tha: 83); and the instruction for the ceremonial presentation of the *tshogs* feast foods (Volume Cha 447; Volume Tha: 134).

52. Explanatory glosses following Terdak Lingpa's text include the initial instructions on the three samādhis (Volume Cha: 416; Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 280v); two instructions in the Invitation to the primordial wisdom deities (Volume Cha: 429; Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 287v), and on them dissolving inseparably (Volume Cha: 430; Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 288r); as well as the structuring of the rites for the subsequent ritual (Volume Cha: 438; Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 292r). In the recitations, Dudjom Rinpoche's text more closely follows Terdak Lingpa than

‘Ultra Secret Razor’ was one of the main sources Dudjom Rinpoche surely had in mind when he noted in his colophon that he had supplemented the text using revelation words of closely related family.<sup>53</sup>

Overall, one cannot say that Dudjom Rinpoche has been radical in re-writing. Most of his Ritual Manual is clearly based on the Pema Lingpa and third Sungtrul texts, and there is no doubt that his supplementary comments and additions, drawn partly from sources such as Terdak Lingpa’s compilation of the ‘Ultra Secret Razor’, are entirely in line with the relevant traditional understandings of the Vajrakīlaya practices. Yet at the same time, if we add together the effect of the selective choices and changes made by the third Sungtrul, together with the further re-working of the material with supplementary additions by Dudjom Rinpoche, one can appreciate that over the generations, as further qualified lamas make contributions, the presentation of a revelation practice may undergo significant modification. Moreover, texts written by later lamas to support the practice, such as Framework texts for major practice sessions, may in some cases, as we have seen here, owe a good deal less to the particular revelation cycle.

## 5. Concluding reflections

Perhaps a modern cultural sensibility might find sympathy for the revealer, whose distinctive phrasing and visualisation sequences might become somewhat buried or lost as the practice is shortened and brought into conformity with wider ritual and meditative traditions. Yet the revealer may have much to gain by this system in which composition is not confined to a single named author, if the aim is the long-term vitality and continued utilisation of the creative work. For a start, no matter how much the texts may be re-written over time, it is the original revealer<sup>54</sup> who is primarily credited with producing the cycle. And even though the early revelation texts may in some cases be lost, having fallen into disuse, generally the religious authorities will seek to preserve the earliest versions of the texts, even if they are rarely consulted or used. There is also a limit to the extent that a cycle is likely to lose its specific character, since highly individual elements, especially those which are elegantly composed or poetically beautiful, may also be highly prized. The process of supplementing a tantric cycle with material from elsewhere may also mean that sections of the revelation may become detached

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the Péling or third Sungtrul texts for the first section of the medicinal cordial offering (*smam chod*; Volume Cha: 431–432; Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 288v). Dudjom Rinpoche’s text shares variants with Terdak Lingpa’s in the Praises section (Volume Cha 435–436; Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 290v; Tsultrim Dorje: 15v; Pema Lingpa Volume Ma: 245–246 and 331–332). His text is also closer to Terdak Lingpa’s for the classic verses relating to the excess offering (Volume Cha 447–448; Terdak Lingpa Volume 9: 298r; Pema Lingpa Volume Ma: 301–302; not given in the third Sungtrul’s text).

53. It is worth noting here that not only is there considered to be some family relationship between Guru Chöwang’s ‘Ultra Secret Razor’ and Pema Lingpa’s ‘Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce’, but Terdak Lingpa was deeply involved in both, and in fact, the third Sungtrul’s Ritual Manual was written at the request of Tsultrim Gyaltsen (*tshul khrims rgyal mtshan*, otherwise known as the Bonlung Lama (*bon lung bla ma* <<http://tbrc.org/#lrid=P2667>>), who was one of Terdak Lingpa’s teachers.
54. The revelation itself will generally follow previous textual traditions, as mentioned above (p.184), but the word, *original*, here, recognizes that a particular revealer has produced a particular set of texts at a particular time, no matter how derivative its materials may be.

and linked to other practices. Thus, Dudjom Rinpoche integrated Pema Lingpa's Fulfilment text for the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce' entirely unmodified into his two Dudjom tradition Vajrakīlaya cycles, without any written attribution.<sup>55</sup> Since the revelation punctuation is retained, the impression is given that the text derives from one of the Dudjom tradition revelations. It is also the case that in this cultural environment in which new revelations are ever-appearing, and fresh revelations are preferred, the best way to ensure the longevity and vibrancy of a revelation cycle is if new compilations or practices are written for it by one of the more charismatic and influential lamas of the time.

While only the important high status lamas are producing the ritual texts, we have also seen that they may be answering a need from the ritual community in creating new versions of the ritual texts, and their work consequently may integrate the revelation composition with any already standardised practice traditions, at least in the lama's own community. In effect, there could have been some influence from the specialist ritualists, such as maṇḍala masters taking charge of the design and construction of the sand maṇḍala, masters of ceremonies (*dbu mdzad*) taking charge of the order and styles of recitation, artists providing thangka paintings of the assembly of deities, and dance masters choreographing the ritual dances to accompany major practice sessions. In the case of Dudjom Rinpoche's main Ritual Manual for the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce', by the time we have gone through at least two lamas re-working the ritual manuals, we have witnessed what appear to be significant changes to the revelation texts, and possibly, some part of the earlier master's vision has been left aside, or at least, is no longer central to the ongoing transmission and practice. The modern concept of originality would not be the most appropriate term to sum up the way in which such modifications are being introduced, although we can speak of creative re-working taking place within a community of practitioners. The input of the 'compilers' in integrating varied materials from the original texts, glossing them with instructions from the broader tantric heritage, and creating beautiful metrical verses for recitation, is an important part of what might best be seen as a communal enterprise.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK, who funded the research project on which this paper is based (2010–2015). Besides myself, the research project at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, has involved Robert Mayer and Vesna Wallace. The project book is in preparation, under the title, *Dudjom Rinpoche's Vajrakīlaya Works: A Study in Authoring, Compiling and Editing Texts in the Tibetan Revelatory Tradition*. Feedback at the IABS Conference panel in Vienna in 2014 on an earlier version of the paper was helpful in preparing it for publication, and I would also like to

55. Pema Lingpa's Fulfilment text is included as a separate section in *The Razor Disintegration-on-Touch* collection (*bskang ba*; Volume Ba: 529–530), to be inserted into the *tshogs* tantric feast rite practised on a regular basis, while the full Fulfilment and Expelling text is given in the 'Meteoric Iron Razor' collection (*bskang zlog*; Volume Tha: 173–175). However, it seems that this is not used so frequently as in practices for *The Razor Disintegration-on-Touch*, since a short Fulfilment text produced by Dudjom Lingpa is available for the 'Meteoric Iron Razor', and this is mostly used.



thank Holly Gayley (University of Colorado, Boulder) for her helpful comments on a draft of this article. I owe a large debt of gratitude to Namgyal Henry of the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, and EPHE, Paris, who briefed me on the Pema Lingpa tradition in Spiti, and who supplied excellent photographic images of a manuscript from Spiti of the Ritual Manual by the third Péling Sungtrul, and also images of the Vajrakīlaya volume from a Spiti manuscript edition of Pema Lingpa's *Collected Works*. These sources have enabled a far more nuanced account of Dudjom Rinpoche's work on the Pema Lingpa Vajrakīlaya tradition than would have otherwise been possible. I have not found any other edition of the third Sungtrul's work. For ready convenience, I cite here the references to the relevant texts of Pema Lingpa's *Collected Works* from the most available edition, which was edited by a team led by Dudjom Rinpoche in the 1970s. However, my assessments have also been informed by consultation of the earlier manuscript editions. These include the Spiti manuscript version, and also the manuscript edition held at sGang steng monastery in Bhutan. Images of the relevant sGang steng volume was kindly supplied by Karma Phuntsho of the Shejun Agency for Bhutan's Cultural Documentation and Research. Finally, I would also like to thank Lupon P. Ogyan Tenzin Rinpoche, who acted as the research project's lama consultant, and with whom I have discussed the issues tackled in this article at length.

### Abbreviations

TBRC Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center, Cambridge, MA, USA <www.tbrc.org>

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