

༄༅། །དབལ་ནག་པོ་ཆེན་པོའི་རྒྱུད།

---

## The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla

---

*Śrīmahākālatantra*

*dpal nag po chen po'i rgyud*

· Toh 667 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 91 (rgyud 'bum, ba), folios 199.a–201.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

· Amoghavajra · Phurbu Ö ·



Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee  
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2023

Current version v 1.0.10 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.26.1

*84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha* is a global non-profit initiative to translate all the Buddha's words into modern languages, and to make them available to everyone.

**Warning:** Readers are reminded that according to Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition there are restrictions and commitments concerning tantra. Practitioners who are not sure if they should read this translation are advised to consult the authorities of their lineage. The responsibility for reading this text or sharing it with others who may or may not fulfill the requirements lies in the hands of readers.



This work is provided under the protection of a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution - Non-commercial - No-derivatives) 3.0 copyright. It may be copied or printed for fair use, but only with full attribution, and not for commercial advantage or personal compensation. For full details, see the Creative

Commons license.

This print version was generated at 9.54pm on Thursday, 28th November 2024 from the online version of the text available on that date. If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time. For the latest online version, with bilingual display, interactive glossary entries and notes, and a variety of further download options, please see <https://84000.co/translation/toh667>.

co.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ti. Title
- im. Imprint
- co. Contents
- s. Summary
- ac. Acknowledgements
- i. Introduction
- tr. The Translation
  - 1. The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla
    - Chapter 1: The Introduction
    - Chapter 2: The Worship Rite and Sādhana
    - Chapter 3: Severing the Life Force from the Body
    - Chapter 4: The Concluding Rite
    - Chapter 5: The Enhancing Rite for When the Rite Does Not Work, and the Mending Rite
    - Chapter 6: A Series of Signs of Accomplishment
    - Chapter 7: Hailstorms
    - Chapter 8
- c. Colophon
- ab. Abbreviations
- n. Notes
- b. Bibliography
  - Tibetan Sources
  - Reference Works
  - Secondary Sources
- g. Glossary

s.

## SUMMARY

- s.1 *The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* opens with Hayagrīva summoning Mahākāla from his abode in the palace called Joyous, located in a sandalwood grove in the great southeastern charnel ground, Aṭṭahāsa. This prompts the great king Virūpakṣa to request that Hayagrīva teach the rites and practices related to Mahākāla. Hayagrīva then delivers a series of instructions on the propitiation and worship of Mahākāla and rituals for destroying the enemies of the Buddhist teachings.

ac.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the supervision of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche. The translation was produced by Adam C. Krug and edited by Ryan Conlon.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

## INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* opens with a description of the deity Mahākāla, surrounded by a retinue of nonhuman beings in a palace named Joyous located in a sandalwood grove in the great southeastern charnel ground Aṭṭahāsa. Then, in the western world system, the deity Hayagrīva, or “The King of Horses,” enters into absorption, utters a Hayagrīva mantra, and summons Mahākāla before himself and the Four Great Kings. The great king of the western quarter, Virūpakṣa, then supplicates Hayagrīva and asks him to teach the secret practices related to the deity Mahākāla.

i.2 Hayagrīva then provides instructions on Mahākāla’s sādhana and wrathful rites as well as instructions for when the rite does not work, a description of the signs of success, and a rite for generating hailstorms. As Hayagrīva notes, the enemy that is designated as the target of these rites is anyone who seeks to destroy the Buddhist teachings or create obstacles for yogins.

i.3 It is not clear how popular the eight-chapter *Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* may have been in India and Nepal prior to its translation into Tibetan. We are not aware of any surviving Sanskrit version of the text, or any Indic commentary.

i.4 *The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* does not appear in the Denkarma or Pangthangma royal Tibetan catalogs of translated works. Thus, based on the information from the translators’ colophon, the first Tibetan translation of the text was likely completed in the eleventh century by the Indian preceptor Amoghavajra and the Tibetan translator Phurbu Ö. The text also does not appear to have been translated into Chinese.

i.5 George Stablein notes in his study of the fifty-chapter *Mahākālatantra* (Toh 440) that the eight-chapter *Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* is mentioned by Khedrub Jé (mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, 1385–1438) in his survey of tantras devoted to Mahākāla.<sup>1</sup> The eight-chapter *Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* also appears as the opening work in the cycle of texts on Mahākāla in Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé’s (*‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas*,

1813–99) nineteenth-century publication of *The Indian Works of the Five-Part Dharma Corpus of the Glorious Shangpa Lineage* (*dpal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor nam lnga'i rgya gzhung*), which survives in a reprinted edition published and annotated by the late Kalu Rinpoche (karma rang byung kun khyab, 1905–89). In his short note on the text, Kalu Rinpoche tells us the following:

i.6 “This tantra is in most collections of offering rituals, and in most of the catalogs of past masters, which present the common tantras, it is classified as a *kriyātantra*. Hayagrīva is the one who taught the tantra, [F.8.b] and given that he is of Avalokiteśvara’s family, the tantra is counted among those of the lotus family.”<sup>2</sup>

i.7 It is thus clear that the eight-chapter *Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* was relatively well known in Tibet, perhaps even more than the twenty-five chapter (Toh 416) and fifty-chapter (Toh 440) *Mahākālatantras*.

i.8 This translation is based on the recension that appears in the Tantra Collection (*rgyud 'bum*) of the Degé Kangyur in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace Kangyur.

# **The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla**

1.

## The Translation

[F.199.a]

1.1 Homage to the body of Enthralling Paramāśva.

### CHAPTER 1: THE INTRODUCTION

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. At the southeastern charnel ground Aṭṭahāsa, in the sandalwood grove called Joyous, the vināyaka Glorious Mahākāla was present in the palace where a multitude of male and female nonhuman beings gathered. At the time,<sup>3</sup> in the midst of a retinue of cruel beings, he was known as “Mahākāla Who Controls the Life Breath of Living Beings.”  
[F.199.b]

1.3 At the same time, in the western world system, the King of Horses, Bringer of Death, was surrounded by an assembly of the Four Great Kings and the rest. He entered the absorption that tames arrogant beings while using the hook mudrā and reciting the mantra *oṃ vajrakrodha hayagrīva hūṃ hulu hulu hūṃ vaṃ*. Powerless to do otherwise, Mahākāla appeared before the King of Horses, Bringer of Death, from his abode in the Aṭṭahāsa charnel ground.<sup>4</sup>

1.4 “What can I do for you?” he asked, and politely offered his own mark, the essence of his life force, *oṃ vajramahākāla kṣiṃ kṣetraviḥnān vināyaka hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ*.

1.5 *This is chapter 1 in “The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla,” the “Introduction.”*

### CHAPTER 2: THE WORSHIP RITE AND SĀDHANA

- 1.6 Then King Virūpakṣa supplicated the King of Horses, Bringer of Death, with the following verses:
- 1.7 “O Wrathful Lotus Lord,  
Please explain the secret practice  
For the terrible form of Mahākāla.  
Regarding the acts for practicing the Lord,
- 1.8 “Great Supreme Horse, please tell us about  
Killing and severing the life force and the body,  
Instructions for when the rite does not work, and the place of death,  
The Lord’s signs, and casting hailstorms.”
- 1.9 Wrathful Lotus then gave the following teaching  
On the Black One’s sādhana:  
“For a mantrin who holds the samayas  
To protect the teachings of the Buddha,
- 1.10 “They should gather the accumulation of merit  
During an auspicious planetary conjunction and lunar day  
In a place with a single tree such as a charnel ground  
And perform Mahākāla’s sādhana.
- 1.11 “Construct a square altar using  
Soil from a mound or black soil, and  
Sprinkle it with perfume, incense, and blood.<sup>5</sup>  
In the middle, draw a triangle with a half moon
- 1.12 “Surrounded by a lotus with eight petals.  
There should be a large skull<sup>6</sup> in the middle of that, containing  
A bali offering and offering cake one cubit high,  
Adorned with the five meats and various bodily essences.
- 1.13 “One should insert an arrow and a dark red cloth into it,  
Along with a knife, a heart, and a small image of the deity.  
Set this out as the Lord’s seat.  
Write the Lord’s [F.200.a] life-force mantra
- 1.14 “On the inside of the skin of the ḍamaru.  
Roll it up with a soul stone and place it inside.<sup>7</sup>  
Present an offering of incense and the daily bali.  
Set out the common offering to the Three Jewels.
- 1.15 “Visualize oneself on a lotus,  
Imagine light rays radiating from the *hṛīḥ* at the heart,

- Make the guru, the Buddha, and so forth  
Appear right before oneself,
- 1.16 “And offer them five offerings.  
After the sevenfold purification rite,  
Meditate on the four immeasurables, beginning with  
Equanimity and so forth, and the syllables *vaṃ*, *raṃ*, and *tri*.
- 1.17 “Out of the syllable *hūṃ* on top of the lotus  
Emerges Mahākāla with a black face and six arms,  
Holding a hooked knife, rosary, ḍamaru,  
Skull, spear, and noose
- 1.18 “In his right hands and left hands respectively.  
He is adorned with snakes and jewelry.  
He wears a multicolored garment on his lower body  
And a lower garment made of a tiger’s skin.
- 1.19 “He has three fierce eyes and bares his fangs.  
His forehead is adorned with a drop of filth.  
Akṣobhya’s emanation body sits on his crown.  
Visualize him clearly before oneself while
- 1.20 “Performing the invitation, offering, and mantra recitation.  
Present gifts to Mahākāla using the  
Bali offering, offering ceremony, and the like.  
The syllables of the vitality mantra emerge from
- 1.21 “The *hūṃ* at the Lord’s heart and circle clockwise as one  
Recites the following mantra in continuous rounds:
- 1.22 *oṃ vajramahākāla kṣiṃ kṣetraviḥnān vināyaka hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ |*
- 1.23 An excellent recitation practice will result in signs  
That one has accomplished the Black One’s siddhi.”
- 1.24 *This is chapter 2 in “The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla” on “The Worship Rite and Sādhana.”*

## CHAPTER 3: SEVERING THE LIFE FORCE FROM THE BODY

- 1.25 “Now I will teach the following:  
If one wants beings who destroy the Buddhist teachings

- Or create obstacles for yogins  
To be liberated by Mahākāla,
- 1.26 “Make a square altar again and place  
The skulls of a man and woman with no descendants  
With wax effigies inside of them  
Inside of a fierce triangular diagram.<sup>8</sup>
- 1.27 “Affix their name and clan name and  
Add the word ‘kill’ or ‘infect’ as appropriate.  
Set up the image of the Lord and the samaya substances,  
And place some in each of their mouths.
- 1.28 “Place powerful substances in a boar’s skull  
And set the continual and daily bali offerings [F.200.b] on the left and right.<sup>9</sup>
- 1.29 “Perform the killing rite with the following mantra:
- 1.30 *oṃ vajramahākāla kṣiṃ kṣetravighnān<sup>10</sup> vināyaka hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ | oṃ  
mahākālāya<sup>11</sup> śāsanopakāriṇi<sup>12</sup> eṣa apaścimakālo ‘yam idaṃ ratnatrayāya apakāriṇaṃ  
yadi pratijñāṃ<sup>13</sup> smarasi tadā idaṃ duṣṭaṃ kha kha khāhi khāhi | māra māra |  
ghṛhṇa ghṛhṇa | bandha bandha | hana hana | daha daha | paca paca | dinam  
ekena māraya hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ | hūṃ vināyakavilāsa<sup>14</sup> traṃ vi tri hūṃ ja si ma  
bu vināyaka create obstacles for the life force of so-and-so whose name has  
been written ja māraya I implore you! |*
- 1.31 “Recite the fierce mantra while pelting them with the powerful substances.  
Do not speak for an entire week.  
At that point, the signs will be directly apparent.”
- 1.32 *This is chapter 3 in “The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla” on “Severing the Life Force  
from the Body.”*

## CHAPTER 4: THE CONCLUDING RITE

- 1.33 “Now I will explain the end of the rite,  
Which is concluded with a fire offering.  
Generate Mahākāla with his retinue in the middle  
Of a triangle of sarala pine branches.<sup>15</sup>
- 1.34 “Place the effigy, bali offering,  
And ritual substances in Mahākāla’s mouth.  
Recite the mantra while performing the fire offering,  
And finish with the phrase *agne jvala raṃ*.

- 1.35 “Let the ashes be taken away by a strong wind.  
The target of the rite will quickly come to ruin.”
- 1.36 *This is chapter 4 in “The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla” on “The Concluding Rite.”*

## CHAPTER 5: THE ENHANCING RITE FOR WHEN THE RITE DOES NOT WORK, AND THE MENDING RITE

- 1.37 “Next, I shall teach the following:  
If one performs the practice but it does not work,  
Generate it in earnest once or twice more.  
If one does that and it still does not work,
- 1.38 “Make an image of the Black One out of  
The three soils, three bloods, and three types of poison  
That is one cubit tall, and place it atop two switches<sup>16</sup>  
So that it hovers over the middle of the triangle.
- 1.39 “The painting, samaya substances, and soul stone  
Are placed beneath one’s own triangular cushion  
And should be covered with poison and thorns.  
Pelt it with powerful substances while reciting this mantra:
- 1.40 *oṃ vajrakrodha hayagrīva hūṃ hulu hulu hūṃ phaṭ | phaṭ hūṃ hūṃ akayānīv  
nānghivarteṣk miṣk alākāhamarjav oṃ |*<sup>17</sup>
- 1.41 “Signs that the rite has worked will become fully apparent while  
One is pelting it with powerful substances and reciting the mantra.  
After that, one should perform the mending ritual.  
Wash the painting, [F.201.a] soul stone, and samaya substances
- 1.42 “With perfumed water and recite this mantra:
- 1.43 *oṃ vajramahākāla kṣiṃ kṣetraviḥnān vināyaka hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ mend mend  
svāhā |*
- 1.44 “Wash the statue of the Lord with perfumed water  
In the location where you have recited the mantra.  
Remove it from the middle of the triangle and
- 1.45 “Place the enemy’s name and clan name in the heart.  
Perform this practice for seven days, bring it to the enemy,  
And it will quickly destroy the designated target.”

- 1.46 *This is chapter 5 in "The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla" on "The Enhancing Rite for When the Rite Does Not Work and the Mending Rite."*

## CHAPTER 6: A SERIES OF SIGNS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

- 1.47 "Now, I will teach the following:  
A raven will take flight and circle,  
And tribal people, mendicants,  
Spiritual friends, venerable ones, and masters
- 1.48 "Will all perceive the Lord's light, sound,  
Walled palace, and body before them.  
The being leading the enemy's army will be killed.  
Ordinary people will gain confidence.<sup>18</sup>
- 1.49 "Lepers and beggars will arise, as will  
Ravens that have alighted in a field."
- 1.50 *This is chapter 6 in "The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla" on "A Series of Signs of Accomplishment."*

## CHAPTER 7: HAILSTORMS

- 1.51 "Next, I will teach the following:  
To perform a rite to make it hail,  
Draw a wheel with four spokes  
In the skull of a tribal person or a leper.
- 1.52 "Inscribe it with the seed syllables of the five classes of nāgas.  
The large spokes should bear the name and family names of the hail  
protectors  
And have the phrase 'fall in this country' written on them.  
Write the mantras of the arrogant spirit beings
- 1.53 "On a wheel with nine spokes outside of that.  
Write the name of the country and  
The wind heart mantra on the back side.  
Visualize yourself as Wrathful Lotus
- 1.54 "And strike their vital points using this mantra:<sup>19</sup>

- 1.55 *oṃ vajramahākāla kṣiṃ kṣetraviḥnān vināyaka hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ* | torment the  
nāga's mind | *phu* create obstacles *ja khroṃ śar hril bhyo*<sup>20</sup> |
- 1.56 “Recite that mantra while  
Pelting the skull with white and black  
Mustard seeds, blood, and poison.
- 1.57 “If a gust of wind carries off the harvest, it is a sign  
That hail will fall in the enemy's country.  
If it does, it will bring ruin to the people.” [F.201.b]
- 1.58 *This is chapter 7 in “The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla” on “Hailstorms.”*

## CHAPTER 8

- 1.59 Then he gave the following definitive instruction:  
“Marvelous ones gathered in this assembly,  
In the future, when samaya holders perform this sādhana,  
They should maintain the samayas, uphold the vows,
- 1.60 “And diligently perform the bali offerings.  
They should wear the samaya substances and soul stones on their body.”
- 1.61 After he said that, King Virūpakṣa along with the rest of the assembly  
rejoiced, promised to maintain Mahākāla's teaching, and then vanished.
- 1.62 *This concludes chapter 8<sup>21</sup> in “The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla.”*

c.

## Colophon

c.1 This text was translated by the Indian preceptor Amoghavajra and the Tibetan translator Phurbu Ö.

ab.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- C Choné (*co ne*)
- D Degé (*sde dge bka' 'gyur*)
- H Lhasa (*lha sa/zhol*)
- J Lithang (*li thang*)
- K Kanxi (*kang shi*)
- N Narthang (*snar thang*)
- S Stok Palace (*stog pho 'brang*)
- U Urga (*phyi sog khu re*)
- Y Yongle (*g.yong lo*)

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 Stablein 1976, p. 5. Here, Stablein is citing Lessing and Wayman, trans. 1968, p. 123.
- n.2 'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, karma rang byung kun khyab, folios 8.a–8.b. Tibetan: *rgyud 'di rgyud 'bul phal che ba na yod/bla ma snga ma rnams kyi rgyud sde spyi'i rnam zhag dkar chag phal che ba bya rgyud du byas/de yang rgyud gsung ba po rta mgrin yin pa dang / de spyan ras [F.8.b] gzigs kyi rigs yin pa la bsam nas pad+ma'i rigs kyi rgyud kyi nang du bgrang bar byed do.*
- n.3 Following D: *de'i tshe*. S does not include this.
- n.4 Following N, H, and S: *dur khrod ha ha drag tu rgod pa'i gnas nas*. D: *dur khrod ha ha drag tu rgod pa'i gnas*.
- n.5 Following D and S: *dri spos khrag gis chag chag bya*. This translation is tentative. It is entirely possible that this phrase should simply be translated as “perfume, incense, and blood,” as it is here. However, it seems more likely that the first two members of the Tibetan compound *dri spos khrag* would also refer to bodily substances or their substitutes. The Tibetan *dri* may be a shortened form of *dri ma*, which can refer to any bodily excretion or excrement. The term *spos* might be translated here as “sulphur” (Skt. *gandha*), a coded term commonly used for either vaginal secretion or, in the case of mercury sulfide, an alchemical preparation that corresponds to the combined male and female sexual fluids in Buddhist and, particularly, Śaiva tantric and alchemical literature.
- n.6 Following D and S: *de dbus thod chen nang du ni*. The Tibetan *thod chen* literally translates as “a large skull” but might also be interpreted as a coded term for “a human skull.” Given the size of the bali offering it contains here, the former is more likely the primary reading.

- n.7 Following D and S: *ldo yi nang du bla rdos dril*. This translation is tentative. Here it is assumed that the mantra is rolled with a “soul stone” (*bla rdo*), and then placed inside the bali offering. The Tibetan *ldo yi nang du* might be amended here to *lto yi nang du*, which would translate “inside the abdomen,” and could refer to placing the soul stone wrapped in a life force mantra inside an effigy of some sort.
- n.8 Following D and S: *drag po e yi nang du ni*. The literal translation of this line is “inside of a fierce e.” This refers to the fact that the Sanskrit syllable *e* is depicted as a triangle in a number of Sanskrit scripts.
- n.9 Following Y, K, N, C, H, and S: *rtag gtor rgyun gtor g.yas dang g.yon*. D: *rta gtor rgyun gtor g.yas dang g.yon*.
- n.10 D: *k+She tra ya big+h+nAn*. S: *k+She tra big+h+nAM*. This transliteration is amended based on the way this mantra has been rendered previously in the Degé Kangyur, which is confirmed by the transliteration in the Stok Palace Kangyur.
- n.11 Following N, H, and S: *ma hA kA lA ya*. D: *ma hA kA la ya*. The reading in the Narthang, Lhasa, and Stok Palace Kangyurs reflects the correct Sanskrit declension.
- n.12 D: *shA sa na u pa ka ri Ni*. S: *shA sa na u pa ha ri Ni*. This transliteration amends the reading in the Degé Kangyur to reflect the correct vowel sandhi and spelling of this compound.
- n.13 D: *pra ti dz+nyA*. S: *prati dzraM*. This transliteration amends the reading in the Degé Kangyur to the correct Sanskrit declension.
- n.14 Following S: *bi la sa*. D: *pi las*. This transliteration amends the reading in the Stok Palace Kangyur to the correct Sanskrit spelling.
- n.15 D and S: *gru gsum dbus su gdug pa'i shing*. This translation amends the reading in the Tibetan witnesses to *bdug pa'i shing*, which is an attested translation of the Sanskrit *dhūpavṛkṣa*. The literal reading of *gdug pa'i shing* translates as “poisonous wood,” though the Negi dictionary also notes that the spelling *gdug pa* is attested as a synonym (or perhaps scribal error) for *bdug pa* and is an attested translation of the Sanskrit term *dhūpa*.
- n.16 D and S: *spyi tshar dag tu lding du gzhug*. This translation is tentative. The phrase *spyi tshar dag tu* is relatively obscure. In this translation, the term *tshar* is read as *tshar rgyug*, which can refer to any switch of bendable wood made from a young tree branch or shoot.

- n.17 D: *phaT hUM hUM ka ya nA vi nA n g+ha vi tra kShe kShiM la kA hA ma badz+ra oM*. This is the reverse recitation of the Mahākāla mantra *oṃ vajramahākāla kṣiṃ kṣetraviḥnān vināyaka hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ*. The vowel and consonant order have been altered here somewhat to properly transliterate this reverse mantra using an English alphabet system.
- n.18 Following N, H, and S: *mi nag dag la snying stobs dang*. D: *mi nag bdag la snying stobs dang*.
- n.19 D and S: *gsang sngags 'di yis gnad la bor*. The antecedent to the pronoun “their” is not clear here, but it most likely refers to one or all of the beings that have been inscribed in the mantra wheel.
- n.20 D and S: *khroM shar hril bh+yo*. This transliteration is tentative.
- n.21 The text does not provide a title for this chapter.

b.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### · Tibetan Sources ·

*dpal nag po chen po'i rgyud (Śrīmahākālatantra)*. Toh 667, Degé Kangyur vol. 91 (rgyud 'bum, ba), folios 199.a–201.b.

*dpal nag po chen po'i rgyud (Śrīmahākālatantra)*. bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma) [Comparative Edition of the Kangyur], krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang (The Tibetan Tripitaka Collation Bureau of the China Tibetology Research Center). 108 volumes. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House) 2006–9, vol. 91, pp. 726–34.

*dpal nag po chen po'i rgyud (Śrīmahākālatantra)*. Stok Palace Kangyur vol. 105 (rgyud, pha), folios 175.b–178.a.

'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, karma rang byung kun khyab. *dpal nag po chen po'i rgyud*. In *dpal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor rnam lnga'i rgya gzhung*. Sonada, West Bengal, vol. 1 (ka): folios 2.a–9.a. BDRC WA23922.

### · Reference Works ·

*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*. Pe cin: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003.

Edgerton, Franklin. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2004.

Lancaster, Lewis R. *The Korean Buddhist Canon*, accessed June 11, 2019, [http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive\\_catalogue/index.html](http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/index.html) ([http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive\\_catalogue/index.html](http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/index.html)).

Monier-Williams, Sir Monier. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2005.

- Negi, J.S. *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary (Bod skad legs sbyar gyi tshig mdzod chen mo)*.  
Sarnath: Dictionary Unit, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1993.
- Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies*, Universität Wien, accessed June 11,  
2019. <http://www.rkts.org> (<http://www.rkts.org/>).
- The Buddhist Canons Research Database*. American Institute of Buddhist Studies  
and Columbia University Center for Buddhist Studies, accessed June 11,  
2019. <http://databases.aibs.columbia.edu>  
(<http://databases.aibs.columbia.edu/>).
- Yoshimuri, Shyuki. *bka' bstan dkar chag ldan dkar ma/ dbu can bris ma*. Kyoto:  
Ryukoku University, 1950.

· Secondary Sources ·

- Lessing, Ferdinand D. and Wayman, Alex, trans. *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals  
of Buddhist Tantras*. The Hague: Mouton, 1968.
- Stablein, William George. "The Mahākālatantra: A Theory of Ritual Blessings  
and Tantric Medicine." PhD diss., Columbia University, 1976.

## GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·  
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 absorption that tames arrogant beings

*dregs pa can 'dul ba'i ting nge 'dzin*

རྫོགས་པ་ཅན་འདུལ་བའི་ཉིང་འཛིན།

—

The name of a particular absorption.

g.2 Akṣobhya

*mi bskyod*

མི་བསྐྱོད།

*akṣobhya*

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Lit. “Not Disturbed” or “Immovable One.” The buddha in the eastern realm of Abhirati. A well-known buddha in Mahāyāna, regarded in the higher tantras as the head of one of the five buddha families, the vajra family in the east.

g.3 altar

*stegs bu*

སྟེགས་བུ།

*vedikā*<sup>AD</sup>

g.4 Amoghavajra

*a mo g+ha badz+ra · don yod rdo rje*

ཨ་མོ་གླ་བཟླ། · དོན་ཡོད་རྡོ་རྗེ།

*amoghavajra*

The name of an Indian preceptor and abbot of the Vajrāsana at Bodhgayā who lived sometime in the eleventh–twelfth century and was responsible for translating a large number of works found in the various recensions of the Tengyur.

g.5 arrogant spirit beings

*dregs pa*

དྲེགས་པ།

—

A class of malevolent spirit beings.

g.6 Aṭṭahāsa

*ha ha drag tu rgod pa*

ཧ་ཧ་དྲག་ཏུ་རྒོད་པ།

*\*aṭṭahāsa*<sup>RS</sup>

The name of the great southeastern charnel ground.

g.7 bali offering

*gtor ma*

གཉིང་མ།

*bali*<sup>AD</sup>

g.8 Black One

*nag po*

ནག་པོ།

*kāla*

An epithet for the deity Mahākāla.

g.9 Black One's sādhana

*nag po'i sgrub thabs*

ནག་པོའི་སྐྱབ་ཐབས།

—

A term for the Mahākāla practice (*sgrub thabs, sādhana*).

g.10 bodily essences

*snying sna*

སྤྱིང་སྒྲ།

—

The exact identification of these substances is not explicitly stated in *The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla*. The *Suśrutasaṃhitā* refers to seven “bodily essences” (Skt. *sāra*). These are vital fluid (Skt. *sattva*, perhaps signifying the amniotic fluid), semen (Skt. *śukra*), marrow (Skt. *majjan*), bone (Skt. *asthi*), lymph (Skt. *medas*), flesh (Skt. *māṃsa*), and blood (Skt. *rakta*). It is entirely possible, however, that these “bodily essences” correspond to the various bodily fluids that often accompany offerings of the five types of meat in the performance and maintenance of *samaya*.

g.11 Bringer of Death

*mthar byed*

མཐར་བྱེད།

*antaka*

An epithet for the deity Hayagrīva.

g.12 concluding rite

*las mtha' brtul ba*

ལས་མཐར་བརྒྱུལ་བ།

—

A term for the ritual that is performed at the conclusion of a rite, most often in the form of a fire offering (*homa, sbyin sreg*).

g.13 create obstacles

*hur thum*

ཧུར་ཐུམ།

—

A command that appears in the Mahākāla mantra. The *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* notes that this is the equivalent of the syllable *dzaH* (Skt. *jah*) and that it is a type of attracting mantra syllable (*dzaH zer ba ste drag las skabs kyi dgug sngags gras shig*).

g.14 ḍamaru

*Da ma ru*

ཌ་མ་རུ།

\*ḍamaru <sup>RP</sup>

A hand-held double-sided drum.

g.15 drop of filth

*dri yi thig le*

དྲི་ཡི་ཐིག་ལེ།

—

A term for the forehead mark worn by the protector deity Mahākāla.

g.16 enhancing rite

*spogs pa'i cho ga*

སྤོག་པའི་ཇོ་ག།

—

This term refers to rites to enhance the performance of specific ritual action when the initial attempt has failed or when one has not received any clear sign that the ritual was successful.

g.17 Enthralling Paramāśva

*dbang gi rta mchog*

དབང་གི་རྟ་མཚོ་ག།

—

A form of the deity Hayagrīva.

g.18 equanimity

*btang snyoms*

བཏང་སྟོབས།

*upekṣā* <sup>AD</sup>

One of the four immeasurables.

g.19 fire offering

*sbyin sreg*

སྤྱིན་སྲེག།

*homa* <sup>AD</sup>

g.20 five meats

*sha lnga*

ཤ་ལྔ།

—

g.21 Four Great Kings

*rgyal po chen po bzhi*

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི།

*caturmahārāja* <sup>AD</sup>

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Four gods who live on the lower slopes (fourth level) of Mount Meru in the eponymous Heaven of the Four Great Kings (*Cāturmahārājika*, *rgyal chen bzhi'i ris*) and guard the four cardinal directions. Each is the leader of a nonhuman class of beings living in his realm. They are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, ruling the gandharvas in the east; Virūḍhaka, ruling over the kumbhāṇḍas in the south; Virūpākṣa, ruling the nāgas in the west; and Vaiśravaṇa (also known as Kubera) ruling the yakṣas in the north. Also referred to as Guardians of the World or World Protectors (*lokapāla*, 'jig rten skyong ba).

g.22 four immeasurables

*tshad med bzhi po*

ཚད་མེད་བཞི་པོ།

*caturapramāṇa*

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The meditations on love (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekṣā*), as well as the states of mind and qualities of being that result from their cultivation. They are also called the four abodes of Brahmā (*caturbrahmavihāra*).

In the *Abhidharmakośa*, Vasubandhu explains that they are called *apramāṇa*—meaning “infinite” or “limitless”—because they take limitless sentient beings as their object, and they generate limitless merit and results. Love is described as the wish that beings be happy, and it acts as an antidote to malice (*vyāpāda*). Compassion is described as the wish for beings to be free of suffering, and acts as an antidote to harmfulness (*vihimsā*). Joy refers to rejoicing in the happiness beings already have, and it acts as an antidote to dislike or aversion (*arati*) toward others’ success. Equanimity is considering all beings impartially, without distinctions, and it is the antidote to both attachment to pleasure and to malice (*kāmarāgavyāpāda*).

g.23 Glorious Mahākāla

*dpal nag po chen po*

དཔལ་ནག་པོ་ཚེན་པོ།

—

The name of a vināyaka who is present in the charnel ground palace where this tantra begins.

g.24 Great Supreme Horse

*rta mchog chen po*

རྟ་མཚོག་ཚེན་པོ།

—

An epithet for the deity Hayagrīva.

g.25 implore

*rbad*

རྩད།

—

A term for the imperative commands that appear in a mantra.

g.26 Joyous

*rab tu dga' ba*

རབ་ཏུ་དགའ་བ།

—

The name of a sandalwood grove in the charnel ground Aṭṭahāsa.

g.27 King of Horses

*rta'i rgyal po*

རྟའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

An epithet for the deity Hayagrīva.

g.28 life-force mantra

*srog sngags*

སྲོག་སྲུགས།

—

The name of a particular type of mantra.

g.29 lower garment made of a tiger's skin

*stag lpags shing gi zham thabs can*

སྐྱག་ལྷགས་ཤིང་གི་ཞམ་ཐབས་ཅན།

—

An article of clothing that is commonly associated with the deity Mahākāla as well as a number of wrathful forms of Buddhist tantric deities.

g.30 Mahākāla

*nag po chen po · mgon po nag po*

ནག་པོ་ཆེན་པོ། · མགོན་པོ་ནག་པོ།

*mahākāla*

Mahākāla is a wrathful Buddhist protector deity. In Tibetan, the name Mahākāla was mostly translated literally with *nag po chen po* (“Great Black One”) but on occasion it was rendered *mgon po nag po* (“Black Lord”). In Toh 440, for which the Sanskrit is extant, we have an attested example of this. Hence we have rendered both Tibetan terms in this text as Mahākāla. Outside the Buddhist tradition, Mahākāla is also a name for a wrathful form of Śiva.

g.31 Mahākāla Who Controls the Life Breath of Living Beings

*skye 'gro sems can rnams kyi srog dbugs la dbang byed pa'i nag po chen po*

སྐྱེ་འགོ་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྲོག་དབུགས་ལ་དབང་བྱེད་པའི་ནག་པོ་ཆེན་པོ།

—

An epithet for the deity Mahākāla.

g.32 mending rite

*gso ba'i cho ga*

གསོ་བའི་ཚོག་

—

In the eight-chapter of *The Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla* (Toh 667), this ritual includes washing off the painting and other ritual implements one has used in the performance of a killing rite.

g.33 Phurbu Ö

*phur bu 'od*

ཕུར་བུ་འོད།

—

The name of a Tibetan translator who lived during the eleventh century.

g.34 planetary conjunction

*skar*

སྐར།

*nakṣatra*<sup>AD</sup>

g.35 powerful substances

*thun rdzas*

ཐུན་རྫོགས།

—

A term for the substances that are used for casting mantras and performing a number of ritual actions directed at a particular target.

g.36 rite to make it hail

*ser ba dbab pa'i las*

ཤེར་བ་དབབ་པའི་ལས།

—

A ritual that is performed to bring hail down on an enemy's lands or country.

g.37 samaya substances

*dam rdzas*

དམ་རྫོགས།

—

A term for the substances that are offered to a deity as part of the propitiator's fulfillment of the samaya vow.

g.38 sarala pine

*gdug pa'i shing*

གདུག་པའི་ཤིང་།

—

*gdug pa'i shing* is an alternate spelling for the Tibetan *bdug pa'i shing*, which translates the Sanskrit *dhūpavṛkṣa*—one of many names for the sarala pine or *Pinus roxburghii*, but the literal meaning of this term (“a tree that gives off aromatic smoke”) might apply to a number of different trees such as juniper, which is commonly used in Tibetan smoke offering rites.

g.39 so-and-so

*a mu ka*

ཨ་མུ་ཀ་།

\**amuka*<sup>RP</sup>

A term that appears in mantras to indicate where the practitioner should insert the name of the target of the rite. The term is often translated into Tibetan as *che ge mo*.

g.40 soul stone

*bla rdo*

བླ་རྡོ།

—

A stone that is said to be tied to the life essence and vitality of a particular being, and can thus act as an iconic representation of that being's life essence and vitality in the performance of a rite.

g.41 spear

*mdung*

མདུང་།

—

g.42 syllables of the vitality mantra

*srog gi yi ge*

སྲོག་གི་ཡི་གེ།

—

g.43 Tantra of Glorious Mahākāla

*dpal nag po chen po'i rgyud*

དཔལ་ནག་པོ་ཚེན་པོའི་རྒྱུད།

\**śrīmahākālatantra*<sup>RP</sup>

The name of a work in the various recensions of the Kangyur detailing a number of rites for the deity Mahākāla.

g.44 three bloods

*khrag gsum*

མལ་གསུམ།

—

The exact identity of these three is unclear and may in fact change from one ritual to the next.

g.45 three soils

*sa gsum*

ས་གསུམ།

—

The exact identity of these three is unclear and may in fact change from one ritual to the next.

g.46 three types of poison

*dug gsum*

དུག་གསུམ།

—

The exact identity of these three is unclear and may in fact change from one ritual to the next.

g.47 tribal person

*mon pa · mon*

མོན་པ། · མོན།

*kirāta*

The Sanskrit *kirāta* can refer to a specific tribe, but it can also signify any “tribal” people.

g.48 venerable one

*ban+de*

བཞེ།

—

g.49 vināyaka

*bi nA ya ka*

བི་ནཱ་ཡ་ཀ།

*vināyaka*

A term for a “leader” of any group of beings, such as a teacher or guru, or a term signifying any being who “removes” obstacles.

g.50 Virūpakṣa

*mig mi bzang*

མིག་མི་བཟང་།

*virūpākṣa* <sup>AD</sup>

The name of the great king who presides over the western direction.

g.51 western world system

*nub phyogs kyi 'jig rten gyi khams*

ནུབ་ཕྱོགས་གྱི་འཛིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

—

This likely refers to the world system of the Buddha Amitābha, Sukhāvātī. Hayagrīva, referred to here as the “King of Horses,” is a member of the lotus family and the wrathful emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

g.52 Wrathful Lotus

*pad+ma khros pa*

པདྨ་ལྗོས་པ།

—

An epithet for the deity Hayagrīva.

g.53 Wrathful Lotus Lord

*pad+ma khros pa'i bdag*

པདྨ་ལྗོས་པའི་བདག་།

—

An epithet for the deity Hayagrīva.

g.54 write the name

*a mu ka bri*

ཨ་མུ་ག་མོ།

—

A command that appears in the Mahākāla mantra. Half of this command is in Sanskrit and half is in Tibetan. The Sanskrit term *amuka* (Tib. *che ge mo*) means “such and such a person or thing.”