



**Meeting the Buddha Face to Face:
A Pith Instruction on Realizing the Fortress, Ravine, and View
of the Practice of Vajrakilaya:**

by Guru Chökyi Wangchuk

Blessed Glorious Vajrakumara, embodiment of all the buddhas, to you I pay homage!:

I, Pema Tötrenq of Uddiyana, taught the Lady Kharchen Yeshé Tsogyal the practice of Vajrakilaya in six essential points. This profound and vital instruction is known as “*The Instruction to be Carried into Samsaric Life, Not Practiced for Individual Liberation,*” and “*The Practice of the Kila of All Phenomenal Existence.*” It consists of six essential points::

1. Setting the boundaries through the view:
2. Bringing forth heat through meditation:
3. Enhancement through conduct:
4. Granting confidence through empowerment:
5. Not transgressing the samayas:
6. Perfecting the fruition:

1. View:

**From the essential state of the vajra-dharmadhatu,
Arises the embodiment of unbearable, blazing wrath:**¹

This present-moment experience is the unceasing display of awareness, the wisdom of all-encompassing space. Appearances in all their variety are wisdom; therefore, they are perfect as the mandala of the symbolic deity. The very moment they arise, their essence is the all-encompassing space of emptiness—the ultimate dharmata. Remaining free from all complexity, the indivisibility of these two, experience and emptiness, is the child of great bliss: the great bliss of the awakened mind. This “view of the indivisibility of all-encompassing space and wisdom” is the final “view of the Atiyoga.”

2. Meditation:

**It becomes the gateway to the life force,
Visualized in the centre of the heart.**²

And also:ॐ

**Let existence become the deities of Vajrakilaya:ॐ
And actualize the wisdom wrath!ॐ³**

For the *samadhi of suchness*, meditate undistractedly upon the wisdom that emerges from the great bliss of the indivisibility of all-encompassing space and wisdom, which was explained above.ॐ

For the *samadhi of universal manifestation*, compassion arises for all sentient beings who have not realized this wisdom. This compassion causes one's awareness to take on a five-coloured light. Meditate unceasingly upon this luminosity.ॐ

After that comes the *causal samadhi*. Meditate on your awareness as a single blazing blue hum syllable, from which light radiates out, transforming the experience of the five outer elements into the unceasing display of wisdom. The immeasurable palace of the deity appears externally as the shape of a kila, and internally it appears like a palace. The third section of *The Tantra of the Display of Wrath* explains this kila as follows:ॐ⁴

The kila's tip comprises the ten abodes of samsara's three lower realms.ॐ

At its lower knot are the twenty abodes of the desire realm.ॐ

On the lower part of the handle appear the seventeen abodes of the form realm.ॐ

Above it are the gods of the fourfold spheres of perception of the formless realms.ॐ

At its upper knot is the palace of the sugatas.ॐ

Here the nature of the great mandala resides.ॐ

First, there is the meditation for training in radiating and reabsorbing. Visualize the three-thousandfold world system as the kila. Its upper knot has nine triangles. In the centre of the knot mandala, visualize yourself as the most supreme deity within the wrathful palace. On the upper part of the handle are the gods of the fourfold spheres of perception of the formless realms. On the lower part reside those of the four concentrations. At the lower knot are the twenty abodes of the desire realm.⁵ Visualize these clearly.ॐ

Then, evoke the compassion of the assembly of primordial wisdom wrathful deities from the all-encompassing space of dharmata. There is no need to invite them, but meditate on the dazzling appearance of the deities of wrathful wisdom. There's no need to request them to take their seats, but meditate that their nature is inseparable from the samayasattva. There's no need to perform prostrations, but feel devotion from within this unchanging state. There's no need to make

offerings, but do not interrupt the display which is free of attachment. There is no meditation to accomplish, but strive effortlessly to cultivate an undistracted mind.ᑭ

The light rays from reciting the mantra cause the wisdom of the body, speech, and mind of the wisdom wrathful ones to flow forth. The negativities and obscurations of all sentient beings of the three realms are cleansed and purified in their entirety. Resting in the luminous, self-appearing wisdom of the undefiled nature of mind, say: “om vajrakili kilaya sarva-vighnan bam hum phat | jah hum ah ||.” All sentient beings of the three realms are thus transformed into the form of glorious Vajrakilaya. Appearing yet empty, empty yet appearing, their bodies are the inseparability of appearance and emptiness.ᑭ

In order to transcend the extremes of externalism and nihilism, occasionally meditate on everything dissolving into yourself. At other times, meditate on everything radiating out again. It is not permanent, because naturally luminous wisdom illuminates itself. It is not singular, because it is inseparable within the great bliss of the great natural state. The appearances of the three realms are primordially awakened in nature: meditate upon the recognition of this fact. By meditating like this you will be undisturbed by others’ experience, so meditate undistractedly upon the nature of your experience as wisdom.ᑭ

3. Conductᑭ

With skilful means and beings’ benefit in sight,ᑭ

With loving kindness and compassion tame anyone who should be tamed.ᑭᑭ

Clearly visualize all appearances—outer and inner—as the body-mandala of the most supreme deity. All sounds become kilaya, the natural reverberation of dharmata. All thoughts are the natural radiance of wisdom. Understand this, and the ten non-virtues cannot exist—all conduct becomes an enactment of the ten virtues. Understand appearances to be divine, and attachment and anger, dualistic grasping cannot exist. Understand all sounds to be mantra, and you will be freed from being pleased or displeased by sounds. Understand all thoughts to be wisdom, and you won’t be disturbed by any of the thoughts of the eight consciousnesses. Everything therefore appears as the inexhaustible adornment wheel of wisdom. Whatever you do, act from within this state, without slipping into distraction. The conduct is the cultivation of compassion for sentient beings who have not realized this, and the practice of emanation, reabsorption, and resting.ᑭ

4. Empowermentᑭ

So that the buddhas’ enlightened activity may be brought to completion,ᑭ

Please bestow your blessings and confer the empowerment!:⁷

These lines refer to seeking the confidence of empowerment. By directly applying the view, meditation, and conduct explained above to your own mental continuum, the enlightened activity of all the buddhas will be perfected in a single instant. Visualise your three doors to be the nature of the deity, and they will be perfected as the dharmata. Perfection within the indivisible great bliss is the supreme of all empowerments—it is the empowerment of the great bliss of dharmata. This is the epitome of the empowerments received externally from a master.:

5. Samaya:

The samaya of compassionately liberating...:⁸

The realization, as explained above, should be connected with a compassionate mind. Therefore cultivate bodhicitta, thinking: “I will liberate all sentient beings by bringing them to the level of buddhahood. Moreover, this is not killing out of anger, nor suppressing out of ignorance. Meditate on all their aggregates being transformed into the vajra body and their consciousness becoming the unfabricated dharmadhatu, completely unchanging like a vajra. The supreme of all samayas is not to allow your three doors to transgress this point.”

6. The Fruition:

Let existence become the deities of Vajrakilaya: And actualize the wisdom wrath!:⁹

All appearances are primordially perfect as the mandala of the deity. They arise as all the pure lands, pristine appearances of wisdom. All phenomena are the luminosity of naturally arising wisdom; this is the nirmanakaya. While illuminating, it is devoid of its own luminosity: the dharmakaya. The great bliss of their indivisibility is the sambhogakaya. Their primordially unfabricated nature is the svabhavikakaya. That this exists within the mental continuities of all sentient beings without ever changing is the vajrakaya. Bringing this to culmination through realization and habituation is called “fruition.” One does not place one’s hope for fruition outside oneself as in the outer tantras.

I, Padma Tötreg, who holds the empowerment of self-awareness’ display, entrust you—the dakini, the secret consort of the supreme vajra family, emanation of the white goddess,¹⁰ Lady Tsogyal of the Kharchen clan—with this supremely secret, quintessential heart advice, few in words and clear in meaning, small in effort yet great in significance. It is the awakened vajra path, the pith instruction on the vajra-fortress and ravine, the essence of the oral transmissions.

I have written down Padma's pith instruction of the whispered lineage. If it contains any faults or errors, I ask for forgiveness from the gurus, devas and dakinis. I offer my heartfelt confession and request the siddhis. By whatever virtue may have arisen from this composition, may all sentient beings attain the level of Vajradhara. This "Instruction on the Vajrakilaya of the Self-Liberation of Phenomenal Existence" is Padma Tötreng's heart essence, for it accomplishes unborn awakening!ᄇ

Samaya! Seal! Seal! Seal!ᄇ

The kila, or *phurpa*, is the union of phur, unborn all-encompassing space, and pa, unimpeded wisdom.¹¹ Thus all phenomena are awakened, the nature of Vajrakilaya. First, you need to realize the view. Secondly, you need to visualize and meditate via the samadhi of this realization. Then by enhancement through the conduct, finding confidence in the empowerment, not transgressing the samayas, and resolving the fruition, which is non-dual wisdom, you will attain perfection.ᄇ

Without possessing these six wish-fulfilling-jewel-like profound and vital essential points, you will not be able to join the ranks of the great lords of yogins. If your disciple yogins gain confidence in these six key points, great lord of yogins, know that as vidyadhara who have fully ripened their body, speech and mind, you will traverse the ten bhumis. You will realize that the three-thousandfold world system, the three realms and the planes of existence, are awakened as Vajrakilaya.

May this essential heart's advice, which introduces the utmost root of Vajrakilaya practice, encounter one who is wise, learned and compassionate. This practice of the fortress and ravine of the innermost secret razor, a condensation of the Vajrakilaya Tantra of Supreme Knowledge¹² I have given to my heart children, those fortunate disciples of future generations who keep their samaya. Apart from them, it should not be seen by anyone else.ᄇ

Seal! Seal! Seal! May this encounter one who is wise, learned and compassionate!ᄇ

This most secret heart treasure was bound by the nine-headed naga demon with a golden necklace at his heart, and hidden in Namké Chen.¹³ This special instruction for raining down siddhis is for Guru Chökyi Wangchuk.



Translation Origin

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Toh. 439: *Rdo rje phur pa rtsa ba’i rgyud kyi dum bu*, *Rgyud, Ca* 43b7–45b6. Jam dbyangs chos kyi blo gros. “rdo rje phur pa rtsa ba’i rgyud kyi dum bu” in *Jam dbyangs chos kyi blo gros kyi gsung ’bum*. 12 vols. Bir: Khyentse Labrang, 2012. W1KG12986. Vol. 5: 311–320

Secondary Sources

A Section of the Vajrakīla Root Tantra. Translated by Samye Translations, 2021.

Boord, Martin. *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*. Berlin: Khordong, 2002.

- 1 This is a variant on part of the fourth root verse of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section.
- 2 This is the last part of the first root verse of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section, on the arising of the mandala. The previous lines of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section, not quoted here, make it clear that the object to be meditated upon is the syllable hung.
- 3 This is a variant on part of the third root verse of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section.
- 4 The Tantra of the Display of Wrath (rgyud khro bo rol pa).
- 5 The Tibetan text at this point reads seventeen (bcu bdun), instead of twenty (nyi shu). Following the tantra cited above, the number of abodes should be twenty rather than seventeen.
- 6 This begins the fifth root verse of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section.
- 7 This completes the fifth root verse of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section.
- 8 This begins the second root verse of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section.
- 9 This repeats the variant of part of the third root verse of the Vajrakilaya Root Tantra Section.
- 10 That is Pandaravasini.
- 11 These lines are a variant of lines in the root tantra, the Phur bu myang 'das.
- 12 Vajrakilaya Tantra of Supreme Knowledge (phur pa rig pa mchog gi rgyud).
- 13 Namkhé Chen (gnam skas can) is in Lhodrak (lho brag) in south Tibet bordering Bhutan.