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IN THE ESOTERIC BUDDHIST
LITERATURE FROM KARAKHOTO**

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THE RITUAL USE OF HUMAN EFFIGIES IN THE ESOTERIC BUDDHIST LITERATURE FROM KARAKHOTO

HAORAN HOU

Abstract

Among the Tibetan Buddhist literature unearthed at Karakhoto, a number of ritual texts of the *liṅga* effigies have recently been identified. These texts describe how to make and use the *liṅga* effigies for ritual purposes such as healing, inflicting harm, and exorcism. The rituals involving the use of the *liṅga* effigies had their origin in India, passed through Tibet, and spread to the Tangut Empire (ca. 1038–1227, in Chinese sources known as Xixia 西夏) and into the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368, 元). So far, not much is known about the performance and transmission of the *liṅga* rituals in Eastern Central Asia. To fill this gap, this paper translates and annotates the ritual texts from the Karakhoto documents and in doing so illustrates how the *liṅga* effigies were made and used by people at the time, and further explores their transmission across Eastern Central Asia between the 11th and 14th centuries.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on a group of texts from the Karakhoto documents which deals with the rituals for the production and use of the human effigies known as ‘*li’e*’ (LMC 哩俄 *lji: ŋa*) or ‘*lin’ge*’ (LMC 蘭葛 *lǐēn kat*).¹ The Chinese words ‘*li’e*’ or ‘*lin’ge*’ are phonetic transcriptions of the Tibetan ‘*ling ga*’. This term derives from the Sanskrit term *liṅga*, literally meaning ‘sign, symbol or mark’. In Indian culture, the *liṅga* is the phallus of Śiva, a symbol of the ‘Great God’ (Skt. Mahādeva). In the context of Tibetan exorcism, the *liṅga* effigies represent demons or enemies that are to be destroyed in a rite of ‘liberation through killing’ (Tib. *sgrol ba*).² Both Bon and Buddhist traditions involve the use the

¹ Bernhard Karlgren, *Hanwendian* 漢文典, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, translated by Pan Wuyun 潘悟雲, Yang Jianqiao 楊劍橋, Chen Chongye 陳重業, et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1997), 3, 137, 437, 549.

² For the ritual of ‘liberation through killing’, see Carmen Meinert, “Between the Profane and the Sacred? On the Context of the Rite of ‘Liberation’ (Sgrol Ba),” in *Buddhism*



liṅga effigies. In the operation, the practitioner draws or sculpts an effigy that mimics the target, then casts the magic power he controls onto it and thereby achieves his purpose of affecting the victim.³

The ritual use of the *liṅga* effigies has its origin in India and was introduced to Tibet with the spread of Buddhism. References to the *liṅga* effigies are attested in Tibetan documents from Dunhuang, tracing back to the 10th century.⁴ The *liṅga* figurines inscribed on the horse skulls have been excavated from the mound of Kexiaotu (科岗图), a Tibetan-Tuyuhun burial site in present-day Dulan (Chin. 都兰, Tib. Tu'u lan) west of the Blue Lake (Tib. mTsho sngon po, also known as Lake Kokonor), dated from around the 8th to the 11th centuries.⁵ Textual and archaeological evidence suggests that the *liṅga* rituals circulated in Eastern Central Asia with the spread of Tibetan Buddhism, reaching the region as late as the 11th century.

Recently, a significant number of Tibetan Buddhist texts associated with the *liṅga* effigies have been identified from the Karakhoto documents. Most of the texts are written in Chinese or Tibetan, with others preserved in both languages. As with the majority of the Karakhoto

and Violence, ed. Michael Zimmermann (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2006), 99–130.

³ In 2011, Bryan J. Cuevas published an important paper on the *liṅga* effigies in Tibet. It focuses on the iconography of the effigies, illustrating their similarity to Tibetan anatomical figures and tracing the possible iconographic sources back to Greek anatomical science. The paper provides a brief overview of the spread of the *liṅga* in Tibet. It also translates a 15th century text on the *liṅga* ritual and gives an analysis of the basic structure of the ritual. See Bryan J. Cuevas, “Illustrations of Human Effigies in Tibetan Ritual Texts: With Remarks on Specific Anatomical Figures and Their Possible Iconographic Source,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21.1 (2011): 73–97; for the *liṅga* in the Bon tradition, see Charles Ramble, “The Volvelle and the Lingga: the Use of two Manuscript Ritual Devices in a Tibetan Exorcism Ritual,” in *Exploring Written Artefacts: Objects, Methods, and Concepts*, ed. Jörg B. Quenzer (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 1025–1042.

⁴ Jacob Paul Dalton and Sam van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Stein Collection at the British Library* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), 184–185, 318. Cited from Cuevas, “Illustrations of Human Effigies,” 75.

⁵ Amy Heller, “Archaeology of Funeral Rituals as Revealed by Tibetan Tombs of the 8th to 9th Century,” in *Ēran Ud Anērān: Studies Presented to Boris Ilich Marshak on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday. Transoxiana Webfestschrift, I*, ed. Gianroberto Scarcia, Matteo Comparesi, and Paola Raffretta (Venezia: Cafoscarina, 2006), 261–274; Xinguo Xu, “An Investigation of Tubo Sacrificial Burial Practices,” Susan Dewar and Bruce Doar ed. and trans., *China Archeology and Art Digest* 1 (1996): 13–21. Cited from Cuevas, “Illustrations of Human Effigies,” 74.

materials, these texts were compiled and circulated during the Tangut Empire (ca. 1038–1227, in Chinese sources known as Xixia 西夏) and the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368, 元). They are invaluable to our knowledge of the *liṅga* effigies and their transmission in Eastern Central Asia.

2. Annotated Translations of the Ritual Texts of the *Liṅga Effigies from Karakhoto*

Three Chinese manuscripts have been found in the Karakhoto documents that contain the rituals of the *liṅga* effigies: *Yuhushen qiuxiu* 欲護神求脩 [The Invocation of Yuhushen] (TK 321), *Ciwu dahei yaomen* 慈烏大黑要門 [The Quintessential Instruction of the Raven-headed Mahākāla] (A 7) and *Dahei qiuxiu bing zuofa* 大黑求修並作法 [The Invocation and Practice of Mahākāla] (B 59). All three Chinese ritual manuals are sized as small portable booklets. It is likely that they were handbooks that sorcerers carried with them to facilitate the performing of rituals among the local people. Apart from the Chinese sources, a Tibetan scroll labelled Dx 178 from Karakhoto carries the rituals of the same nature.⁶ To date, we have not found a text in Tangut script for the rituals of the *liṅga* effigies. Perhaps as research progresses, Tangut texts will be identified in the future. The Tangut Empire was a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual region, and besides the Tangut tribe, it was also inhabited by Chinese, Tibetans, Uyghurs and others. It is not surprising that Tangut people knew Chinese or Tibetan languages, or both. For example, Yuanhao (r. 1038–1048, 元昊), the founder of the Tangut Empire, is said to have been fluent in both Tibetan and Chinese. From the 9th to the 14th centuries, these two languages served as *lingua francas* along the Silk Roads, and they were also the most prominent languages for the translation of Buddhist literature. Tibetan Buddhist literature from Karakhoto includes a large number of Chinese and Tibetan texts in addition to Tangut texts, which

⁶ The Tibetan scroll Dx 178 was sent to St Petersburg in 1913 and first thought to be a Dunhuang document, but later it was identified to be from Karakhoto. On the Tibetan scroll Dx 178, see Alexander V. Zorin, “A Collection of Tantric Ritual Texts from an Ancient Tibetan Scroll Kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences,” *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies Vol. XVII* (2013): 119–128; Alexander V. Zorin, *Buddiyskie Ritualnye Teksty. Po Tibetskoy Rukopisi XIII v.* [Buddhist Ritual Texts Based on a Tibetan Manuscript in the 13th Century] (Nauka: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2015).



suggests that Tibetan Buddhism was mainly transmitted in these three languages in the Tangut Empire.

The main part of TK 321 namely *The Invocation of Yuhushen* begins with an entry: “Composed by Padmasambhava from India, who had achieved the Mahāmudrā accomplishment” (Chin. *Xitian dedashouyin chengjiu Banmasabowa zao* 西天得大手印成就班麻薩鉢瓦造), which attributes the authorship to the celebrated Indian adept Padmasambhava (ca. 8th–9th c.), the fountainhead of the Nyingma school (Tib. *mying ma pa*).⁷ A corresponding Tibetan text has not yet been found. Yuhushen is a female deity whose name translates literally as the ‘Protective Deity of Desire.’ The identity of the deity remains undetermined.⁸ The manuscripts A 7 and B 59 are devoted to practices and rituals associated with Mahākāla. Dx 178 is a collection of Tibetan tantric practices and rituals, including thirteen sets of texts centred on the cult of Mahākāla, among others. Previously I have studied the Mahākāla literature from Karakhoto and found that several Chinese texts in B 59 were parallel to those in Dx 178. The study has also shown that the lineage derived from Tsami Lotsaba Sanggye Drakpa (fl. 12th c., rTsa mi Lo tsa ba Sangs rgyas grags pa) and Ga Lotsaba Zhonnu Pel (1105/1110–1198/1202, Tib. rGwa Lo tsa ba

⁷ Jinbo Shi 史金波, Tongxian Wei 魏同贤, and E.I. Kychanov, ed., *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian* 俄藏黑水城文獻 [Karakhoto Texts Preserved in Russia], vol. 5 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 14.

⁸ Yuhushen may be reverted to Sanskrit with possibilities such as Kāmadeva, Kāmarāja, and Kāmapāla, whose respective Tibetan translations are ‘*dod lha*, ‘*dod rgyal*, and ‘*dod skyong*. These are linguistically possible equivalents for the name Yuhushen. The text reproduces the figure of Yuhushen appearing in the meditative state of the practitioner: “[The practitioner] visualises himself in one instant becoming the two-armed Yuhushen: Her body is blue-black, her head hair piled up, like ferrous metal in colour, and her feet resemble horse’s hooves. [She is] clad in a red upper garment, dangling a black noose from her waist, and holding a bow in her hands in a full [bow-]drawing posture. On the tip of the arrow is a ring of fire. She stands gracefully in a whirlwind, stretching out her left [leg] and curling her right [leg].” (一剎那間自身頓成一面二臂欲護神像, 身青黑色, 頭髮上豎, 猶如鐵色, 足似馬蹄, 穿紅背子, 繫皂腰繩, 手持弓箭, 作滿拽勢, 於箭頭上具一火圈, 於旋風中展左拳右, 窈窕而立). TK 322.5 describes the Protective Deity of Desire with the ferrous hair and the boar’s head (Chin. *Tiefa Hetou Yuhushen* 鐵髮亥頭欲護神). This provides us with two other characteristics of Yuhushen: her hair is the colour of rusty iron (Skt. *lohakeśa*, Tib. *lcags kyi skra*), and she has a boar’s head. Shi, Wei and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 5, 17–18.

gZhon nu dpal) played an important role in the dissemination of the Mahākāla literature in Karakhoto.⁹

From the four manuscripts introduced above, the ritual texts dealing with the *liṅga* effigies have been selected and are translated and annotated below, and their original texts are given in the footnotes.

2.1. Chinese Karakhoto Manuscript TK 321

TK 321 is a butterfly-bound booklet, incomplete, preserving forty-two sheets of paper.¹⁰ The text is written from top to bottom and right to left. The booklet is stitched in the middle, dividing one sheet of paper into two pages, one with six lines. The text is a practical manual that compiles useful material, including charms, incantations, ritual operations, and various other procedures focusing on attaining one's desired aims by invoking Yuhushen. In total, the text contains thirty-eight ritual items, and most of them are worldly-oriented. The compiler numbered the rituals and titled them with their functions.¹¹ The purpose of compiling these

⁹ Haoran Hou, "Mahākāla Literature Unearthed from Karakhoto," in *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, ed. Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 400–429.

¹⁰ For the images of TK 321, see Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 5, 14–32.

¹¹ In TK 321, the compiler laid out the titles of the thirty-eight rituals in sequence, which form a 'topical outline' preceding the main part of the text. Its function is similar to a 'table of contents', which enables ritualists to rapidly discern the structure and scope of the work, and to quickly navigate to the sections that they need. The thirty-eight rituals are: "(1) Entering meditation; (2) Subduing enemies and demons; (3) Building up the *maṅḍala*; (4) Making the cake offering; (5) For healing diseases, e. g. the 'wind' illnesses and malignant ulcers; (6) For binding thieves; (7) For inflicting harm on one's enemies; (8) For removing diseases; (9) For sowing discord between other people; (10) Quintessential Instruction for reconciling contradictions; (11) Quintessential Instruction for causing other people to get 'heat' illness; (12) For recapturing stolen objects; (13) For suppressing the wind; (14) For helping with prisonbreak; (15) For obstructing the trade of other people; (16) For prospering one's own business; (17) For facilitating one's purchases; (18) For causing others to contract 'heat' illness; (19) For causing others to get 'wind' disease; (20) For expelling others from their hometown; (21) For transforming medicine into poison; (22) Quintessential Instruction for developing swift feet; (23) For gaining clairvoyance; (24) For hooking and summoning spirits and demons; (25) For bringing in a good harvest; (26) For avoiding nightmares; (27) For curing 'heat' illness; (28) For pacifying contamination and disease; (29) For increasing livelihood and merit; (30) For coercing women into sex; (31) For making human effigies [to kill enemies]; (32) For restricting the liberty of other people; (33) For killing enemies by using human effigies; (34) For protecting others from harm; (35) For self-protection; (36.) To make an offering to placate a serpent deity (Skt. *nāgabali*);

materials is to facilitate quick access to the practitioners. Text (a) has been selected for its description of pictorial elements such as concentric circles and cross-shaped spells, which can be seen on the *liṅga*'s portraits. Since TK 321 does not include an image of the *liṅga* effigy, the following 19th century drawing (Fig. 1) may serve as an illustration of the 'cross-shaped spell' described in the Karahoto manuscript.



Fig. 1. The Liṅga Effigy, Buddhist lineage. Himalayan Region, 19th c. HAR 53744¹²

(37) For concealing a talisman; (38) For ferocity and subjugation.” (TK 321, fol. 4.10–6.7, Shi, Wei and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 5, 16–17: 初正明禪定, 二伏冤魔, 三建立中圍, 四應奉施食, 五截病加行, 六折伏盜賊, 七害冤法事, 八截諸疾病, 九樂憎法事, 十樂和要門, 十一生熱患要門, 十二追盜加行, 十三截風法事, 十四脫獄加行, 十五截買賣儀, 十六經榮利便, 十七買賣門通, 十八生熱患, 十九生風疾, 二十冤人離鄉, 二十一藥上加切, 二十二足疾要門, 二十三淨眼法, 二十四勾召神鬼, 二十五擁護田苗, 二十六迴避惡夢, 二十七截熱患, 二十八除放(方)惠本病, 二十九求資糧行, 三十勾攝勝惠, 三十一冤人哩哦行, 三十二班衣(扮依)緊行法, 三十三哩誡卒亡, 三十四自他擁護, 三十五惟他自擁護, 三十六龍王施食, 三十七慶輪法行, 三十八緊行勾攝法。)

¹² <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/53746>, accessed August 27, 2020.

Text (b) mentions the production of a two- and a three-dimensional *liṅga* and the merging of the two in one. Texts (a) and (b) are of the ‘fierce action’ class (Tib. *drag po*), aimed at killing, liberating, and subjugating. In contrast, text (c) uses the effigy to remove disease, a ritual practice of the ‘pacification’ (Tib. *zhi ba*) type:¹³

(a)

The seventh is the *dharma* practice of inflicting harm on one’s enemies. [The practitioner shall] use a piece of clothing, half a tael of beeswax, earth from the footprint of the enemy, and a pricking needle. [The practitioner shall] draw six concentric circles and write the cross-shaped spells¹⁴ in sequence. [The practitioner shall] mix the two materials (half a tael of beeswax and earth from the footprint) to manufacture a figure of the enemy with the length of four or eight finger-widths, lying in the center of the circle. If [the practitioner] nails a needle to the heart [of the figure], the enemy will surely die; if [the practitioner] nails it to the tongue, the victim will surely lose his voice, or if [the practitioner] nails it to the skin, the target will surely have acne.¹⁵

(b)

The thirty-first, the *liṅga* ritual for killing [the adversary]. On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, [the practitioner shall] collect earth from the footprints of the victim to sculpt a figure of a *liṅga*, four or eight finger-widths in length, with a triangular pit in the heart. [The practitioner shall] write the name of the victim and draw his portrait on birch bark, and then insert them into the triangular pit. [The practitioner shall] enter the meditation and recite the *mantra* a hundred and eight times. To perform the destructive rite, [the practitioner shall] face the sun, recite this *mantra* and add the name of the victim to the end: “*Māraya* [such-and-such] *hūṃ*

¹³ In the practice of Inner Tantras or Higher Tantras, the practitioner images himself as the tutelary deity (Tib. *yi dam*) and performed the rituals which can be classified into ‘Four Activities’ (Skt. *caturkarman*, Tib. *’phrin las mam bzhi*) according to their purposes: (1) Pacifying (Skt. *sāntika*, Tib. *zhi ba*) conflicts, sickness and calamities; (2) Increasing (Skt. *pauṣṭika*, Tib. *rgyas pa*) longevity and merit; (3) Magnetising (Skt. *vaśikaraṇa*, Tib. *dbang ba*) or exerting power over others; (4) Subjugating (Skt. *abhicāra*, Tib. *drag po*) enemies and hostile forces.

¹⁴ The term ‘cross-shaped spells’ is literally translated from the Chinese word *shizi zhou* (十字呪). Figurative elements resembling the cross-shaped spells can be seen in the drawings of some of the effigies, see Fig. 1.

¹⁵ TK 321, fol. 18.10–19.3, Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 5, 23: 第七害冤法事者, 用人衣一片, 黃腸半兩, 足印土, 有刺針一个, 畫六幅輪, 遞書十字咒, 二物相和, 造冤人像, 四八指量, 卧在輪心, 其針釘在心頭, 則其人定亡, 釘在舌上, 則定得失音, 或諸肤, 則定生瘡矣。



*phaṭ!*¹⁶ [The practitioner shall] stab the *vajrakīla* into the heart of the victim. [He shall] recite the *mantra* once and stab it once. By performing the preliminaries and practices every day, at the end of three days, [the practitioner] will achieve decisive attainment. When the ritual is finished, [the practitioner shall] throw the *līṅga* into flowing water and recite the *mantra* of liberation: “*Yati svāhā!*”¹⁷

(c)

The eighth is to suppress all illnesses. In order to eliminate all diseases, the practitioner shall make a human figurine of barley flour and place it in front [of the patient]. The practitioner seizes all the illness of the patient in his left palm and recites the *mantra* of Ge yu ru¹⁸ and so on. The disease and the *mantras* are blended together, and become the medicine of the nectar of healing. The practitioner fills the palm with clean water and pours it over the patient’s head. The water enters the latter’s head, all the illnesses will be dissolved [and washed away] like ink coming out of the toes. All the illnesses are absorbed into the dough figurine. [The practitioner shall] turn the figurine towards the patient, and then cease all doubts in his mind, and make expressions of anger and expulsion, and then discard it. When this is done, all kinds of illnesses and pains [of the patient] are invariably healed.¹⁹

2.2. Chinese Karakhoto Manuscript A 7

A 7 is a booklet bound in the butterfly-binding.²⁰ The text is written from top to bottom, left to right, seven lines on a page. On the right side of the

¹⁶ The Chinese *mantra* is written as *ma luo ye hong fa* (馬囉野吽發), a phonetic transcript of *māraya hūm phaṭ*, meaning: “Kill [such-and-such] *hūm phaṭ!*”

¹⁷ The Chinese is *ya di sha he* (啞諦莎訶), transcribed from the Sanskrit *yati svāhā*. TK 321, fol. 34.1–11, Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenzhan*, vol. 5, 31: 第三十一殘害哩俄儀者，於五月五日，采冤人足印土，造四八指哩俄像，心頭三角坑，於樺皮上書畫哩俄名像，入在三角坑內，入定，念咒心頭百八遍。次用四指量鐵金剛栓一個，法骨亦得。若臨壞時，其面向日，語誦本咒，尾添冤人名，馬囉野吽發。將金剛栓於冤人心中，一咒一刺。如是每日加行作法，至三日滿時，決定成就。法事畢時，將前哩俄棄流水中，念解脫咒：啞諦莎訶。

¹⁸ Ge yu ru is transcribed from the Chinese characters (割欲辱). The name is supposed to be transcribed from Sanskrit or Tibetan and seems to be an alternative name for Yuhushen.

¹⁹ TK 321, fol. 19.4–20.1, Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenzhan*, vol. 5, 23–24: 第八截諸疾病者，截一切病患，則以大麥麩中，作一人相，面前置之，其人有一切病患，攝在行人左掌之內，念割欲辱等咒，病咒相和，成治病甘露之藥，然先掌內入清淨水，灌患人頂，其水入患人頂上，則一切病，悉皆消殄，猶如墨汁，足指而出，一切病患，入麩人中，然以麩人向患人等，心所疑住，作怒駢遣相，而乃棄之。斯作則諸疾病等不无痊癒矣。

²⁰ For the images of A 7, see Shi, Wei and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenzhan*, vol. 5, 180–188. For a detailed manuscript description, see Hou, “Mahākāla Literature Unearthed from Karakhoto,” 413–414.

first page finds the title *Ciwu dahei yaomen* 慈烏大黑要門 [The Quintessential Instruction of the Raven-headed Mahākāla]. The text consists of instructions, ritual procedures, *mantras*, and diagrams that center on the Raven-headed Mahākāla. A ritual text is quoted from A 7 which uses the *liṅga* effigy to kill the adversary:

(d)

If the practitioner intends to commit a harmful act, [he shall] look for a dead man's cloth and grind around one *zhai*²¹ of the black sheep's blood with aconite as ink on an ink stone. [He shall use the ink to] draw the victim's image [on the cloth]. [He shall] recite the incantation to empower black mustard seed. [He shall visualise that] the seed syllable *HŪM* on the heart of the practitioner emits black light which exits through his mouth and enters the victim's right nostril. An iron hook appears on the head of the light, which hooks the heart of the victim. [The light] exits from the victim's left nostril and drags his heart in front of the practitioner. The image on the cloth remains unchanged and can be used for hooking seven times [...]. [The practitioner shall] recite the wrathful *mantra*²² vigorously, showing the expression of outrage. [He shall] scatter the black mustard seeds vigorously, recite the near-heart *mantra*²³ ten thousand times and add to the end [of the *mantra*]: "For the reason that he makes obstacles, *mārāya* [such-and-such] *jaḥ hūm pha!*"²⁴ The targeted person suffers a calamity. The practitioner achieves his goal.²⁵

2.3. The Chinese Karakhoto Manuscript B 59 and the Equivalent Part in the Tibetan Karakhoto Manuscript Dx 178

B 59 entitled *Dahei qiuxiu bing zuofa* 大黑求修並作法 [The Invocation and Practice of Mahākāla] is a collection of rituals and practices of

²¹ The term of *zhai* (寨) is a quantifier indicating capacity. However, it is unclear what specific capacity size the term refers to.

²² *Jin zhou* (紧呪) is translated from Tibetan word *drag sngags*, the 'wrathful *mantra*.'

²³ The Chinese term *qixin zhou* (親心咒) is literally translated from the Tibetan word *nye snying sngags* (Skt. *upahṛdayamantra*), the 'near-heart *mantra*' or the 'quasi-heart *mantra*'.

²⁴ The Chinese *mantra* is as follows: *ma luo ye zha hong fa* (麻囉野拶吽罷), meaning: "Kill [such-and-such] *jaḥ hūm pha!*"

²⁵ A 7, fol. 5.14–6.14, Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 5, 182–183: 修習人若惱害時，覓死人布衣，大小一寨黑羊血，草烏頭，執與種集墨同硯，畫惱害人形相。黑戒子念呪加持。此作法人心頭自種口出黑色光，從口中出，入惱害人右鼻中，光頭上現一鐵鉤，鉤取人心，左鼻中出，攝至面前。布上形狀無二，此能勾召七遭。上制本仏，念緊呪，發忿怒之相，黑戒子抱打，念親心呪一万遍，尾添作尋捺故。'麻囉野拶吽罷'。此人已發災難，修習人隨意。



Mahākāla.²⁶ Parts of B 59 correspond to the texts in Dx 178.²⁷ Three texts are chosen for the present study. Text (e) is rather long compared to the others in B 59 and describes a more complete ritual procedure for making and using a *liṅga* effigy. By way of contrast, text (f), a ritual for producing a paper effigy, is an abbreviated version, giving only the main points of the ritual practice. Text (g) is concerned with the production of an effigy in the form of *tsha-tsha* (Tib. *tsha tsha*). *Tsha-tshas* are sculptural votive offerings mass-produced from clay or rammed earth by means of moulds. They are in the shapes of images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, Buddhist deities, small clay tablets imprinted with *dhāraṇīs*, as well as miniature *stūpas*. They are used for a variety of purposes, including funerals, offerings, protection, etc.²⁸ Text (g) demonstrates another lesser-known function of the *tsha-tsha*, that of making an effigy. All three texts have been translated from the Chinese version with reference to their Tibetan counterparts:

(e)

Homage to Śrī Heruka! The practitioner, having completed the propitiation of the venerable Mahākāla and intending to proceed with the ritual activities, shall mix various types of inauspicious soils, such as the dirt trodden on by the victim, the soil at the confluence of large rivers,²⁹ the soil of an ancient citadel,³⁰ the soil from [the tracks of] those who died without offspring,³¹ the

²⁶ For the Chinese manuscript B 59, see Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 6, 42–59.

²⁷ Regarding the Chinese manuscript B 59 and its connection to Dx 178, see Hou, “Mahākāla Literature Unearthed from Karakhoto,” 415–416.

²⁸ Daniel Berounský and Lubomír Sklenka, “Tibetan *Tsha-Tsha*,” *Annals of the Náprstek Museum* 26 (2005): 59–72.

²⁹ In the Tibetan version, it is ‘the soil tamed by the river’ (Tib. *chu chen po ’dul ba’i sa*). The word *’dul ba* means ‘to be tamed’, ‘to be trained’. The Chinese version apparently is translated from ‘the soil of the conflux of great river’ (Tib. *chu chen po ’dus ba’i sa*). It is possible that the two words are close in glyphs and were misread by those who copied or translated them.

³⁰ The Tibetan version reads *grong mkhar*, ‘citadel’. The Chinese version reads *guchengtu* (古城土), ‘the soil of an ancient citadel’.

³¹ The Tibetan version reads *rab chad shul gyi sa* and the Chinese version is *juemenren tu* (絕門人土). The term *rab chad*, a misspelling of *rabs chad*, meaning ‘breaking the continuity of a family lineage’, corresponds to the Chinese *juemenren* (絕門人). The Tibetan word *shul* means: ‘tracks’, ‘trace’, ‘remains’. The Chinese text does not have an equivalent word.



soil from the burial ground as well as other inauspicious soils, together with the three medicinal herbs³² to make a *liṅga*.

Afterwards, [he shall] use poison, salt and black mustard seed as powder, and mix them with human blood [to make the pigment],³³ and use the shin bone of a human being or the quill of a raven as a pen to paint the victim's portrait on a rag from the cremation ground. At the heart of the portrait, [he shall] draw a circle in the shape of the laryngeal character [of *E*] and write a letter *OM* at the centre of the circle. Surrounding it, write the spell counter clockwise with the head of the letter outwards:³⁴ “*Om! Vajra Mahākālaye! Mārāya [such-and-such!] Hūṃ hūṃ pha!*”³⁵

From the heart of oneself [i.e., the practitioner] as the tutelary deity, and from the heart of Mahākāla visualised in front radiate forth countless wisdom protectors. [The practitioner shall] speak to the protective deity of the victim: “Protector of the adversary who destroys the Sublime *dharma*, listen here! The enemy has a vicious heart, disparages the Three Jewels and the master, is hostile towards the *dharma*, harms sentient beings, and annoys the *yogins*. He will fall a thousand *yojana* below the earth and suffer all the torments of hell. I will liberate him quickly. I present you the offerings of the deities of form. Do not intercede! Oh you sinful enemy, come here quickly!”³⁶

³² In a commentary on the *liṅga* ritual preserved in *The Invocation and Practice of Mahākāla*, the ‘three medicinal herbs’ are explained to be Piper longum, Piper nigrum, and Alpina officinarum (Chin. *sanreyaozhe bibo hujiao liangjiangye* 三熱藥者，萹撥，胡椒，良薑也). See Shi, Wei and Kychanov, *Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 6, 54.

³³ The Chinese omits to translate *snag tsha* or to copy the word *mo* (墨) for ‘ink’ here. Based on the Tibetan text, the Chinese text is supplemented.

³⁴ The section “[...] with the head of the letter outwards [...]” (Chin. *zhouwei zitou xiangwai* 周圍字頭向外) is not found in Tibetan. The Tibetan text reads: “Write *OM* in its centre [of the circle] and counterclockwise on the periphery [...]” (Tib. *de'i dbus su om bris pa'i mthar g.yon bskor gyis* [...]).” This indicates that the interpreter takes into account the differences between Tibetan and Chinese scripts and makes some contextual adjustments in the translation process.

³⁵ The *mantra* translates: “*Om! Vajra Mahākāla! Kill [such-and-such!] Hūṃ hūṃ pha!*” The Chinese version omits some important words. This *mantra* is reconstructed from the Sanskrit given in the Tibetan text. The *mantra* in the Tibetan transcription is: “*Om badzra ma hā kā la ya [che ge mo] mā ra ya hūṃ hūṃ pha!*” The Chinese transcription presents it as: “*hewei_{er}the ma ha ga la [mou jia] hong hong fa* 喝維_二摩訶葛_三 [某甲] 咩咩發” and omits the key word *ma lu o ye* 麻囉野 (Skt. *mārāya*), meaning ‘to kill’ or ‘cause to die’. This oversight makes the whole spell useless. In this formula, the Tibetan term *che ge mo*, corresponds to the Chinese *moujia* (某甲) [such-and-such]. It is the equivalent of leaving a vacancy to facilitate filling in the name of the person that the ritual performer wants to curse.

³⁶ The Chinese version does not translate the beginning of the paragraph in the Tibetan text: *bde mchog du sgogs nas rang gi snying ka nas bde mchog spros pas lha dang dbral*



After giving this command, the practitioner shall make an offering to the protective deity of the enemy. If the latter is a wisdom deity, the performer shall send the deity to his natural abode or absorb him into his own body. If he is a worldly deity, the practitioner shall bind him by oath and enjoin him to perform his duty. [The practitioner shall] imagine that all the victim's protective deities have been dispelled. He shall then chant the *mantra* vigorously: “*Om! Vajra Mahākālaye! Ākarṣaya* [such and such]! *Hūm hūm pha!*”³⁷ Countless emanations of Mahākāla radiate forth to hook the heart of the victim deprived of his protective deity with the iron hook and bind his neck with the noose, and to pound him with various weapons.³⁸ [The practitioner shall] visualise that the victim is powerless and absorbed into the portrait of the victim. He sprinkles the water consisting of poison, seeds and three medicinal herbs upon the portrait, enchanting: “*Om! Vajra Mahākāla! Māraya* [such-and-such]! *Hūm hūm pha!*” [Then he shall] wrap the portrait from the feet and cross-bind it with a black thread, fixing it within the heart of the *liṅga*. Visualising the arising of Mahākāla as before, [he shall] dip a thorn needle in the water of salt, seeds and poison³⁹ and stab the needle vertically on the extremities, head and joints [of the *liṅga*]. [He shall] burn bdellium to fumigate the *liṅga*, then sprinkle it with the water with poison, black mustard seeds and three medicinal herbs, and chant the *mantra* of Mahākāla. [He shall] present offerings, oblation praise to Mahākāla, and enjoin him to conduct the *dharma* activities. [He shall] practise in this way for six sessions of the day and night, for twenty-one days without interruption. The activity of killing is thus [to be completed].⁴⁰

ba la bsogs pa bya/ des mdun gyi mgon po'i thugs ka nas mgon po spros pas dgug gzhus bya'o/

³⁷ The *mantra* translates: “*Om! Vajra Mahākāla!* Attract [such and such]! *Hūm hūm pha!*”

³⁸ The Tibetan version translates as follows: “Countless emanations of Mahākāla radiate forth to summon and bind the heart of the victim deprived of his protective deity with the iron hook and noose, and to pound him with various weapons.”

³⁹ The Chinese version omits to translate *khrag*, ‘blood’, but adds an extra word ‘salt’ (Chin. *yan* 鹽).

⁴⁰ B 59, fol. 7.14–8.2, Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 6, 45: 敬礼吉祥形喇割! 夫修習人, 先已作大黑親念福足訖. 欲作法行時, 用冤人跡土, 或大水合流處土, 古城土, 絕門人土, 屍林等諸不祥土, 与三熱相和, 作一糞草藺葛, 然屍林布上, 用毒藥, 塩, 菜子作末, 并人血等相和為 [墨], 以人脛骨或鷓鴣翎筒內作笔, 畫冤人相. 彼相心頭, 仍依喉 (喉字) 字畫輪, 中央書一唵字, 周圍字頭向外, 左書八喝維二合摩訶葛粹某甲 [馬囉也] 吽吽發. 然自入所樂佛定心頭, 及面前大黑心頭, 出無數智大黑, 向冤人擁護佛神等處, 如是白云矣. 為毀滅正法, 護冤神汝聽, 彼具大毒心, 破懷三宝師, 滅法害有情, 惱諸修習人, 墮千閻那下, 極受地獄苦, 我今速遠離, 受色界天供, 汝者莫擁護, 具業人速捨, 依此委曲已. 於護神處, 真實供養. 若是智神者, 奉送於所依宮位, 或攝入自身. 若是忤問神, 則令折伏, 囑付法行, 將冤人想, 令神等捨離. 應如是緊誦: 唵八喝維二合摩訶葛粹也某甲阿葛唵折也拶吽吽發咒. 出無數大黑化身, 遠離護

(f)

If the practitioner intends to enchant a demon or spirit,⁴¹ he shall use a piece of paper to draw a *liṅga* and write the *mantra* on the heart of it: “*Oṃ Mahākālaye* [such and such] *māraya hūṃ pha!*” [He shall] put the *liṅga* in

神冤人。用鐵鈎鈎心繩索縛項，及種種器械中捶撻，想彼等不得自在。令勾攝入前畫相內，誦：八喝維二合摩訶葛粹也某甲馬囉也吽吽發咒。用毒藥，菜子，熱水將畫相洒潑已。然從足繫卷，以黑色線十字繫定蘭葛心頭。又依先出神等已，塩，菜子，毒藥水內蘸棘針，於五根及枝節上豎筍，安息香上令熏訖。復將毒藥，菜子，三熱水依前，誦大黑間名咒，洒潑。然与大黑伸供儀，讚嘆，囑付法行，如是晝夜六時，作二十一日。此者求修法行竟矣。

DX 178, l. 4a.41–5a.31, Zorin, *Buddiyskie Ritualnye Teksty*, 82–84: *dpal he ru ka la phyag 'tshal lo/nag po chen po 'i bsnyen pa sngon du song bas/ /las sbyor bsgrub pa 'dod na/ /bsgrub bya 'i rkang rjes pa dang/ chu chen po 'dul ba 'i sa dang/ grong mkhar gyi sa dang/ rabs chad shul gyi sa dang/ dur khrod la sogs pa 'i bkra mi shes pa 'i sa rnams dang/ /tsha ba gsum bsres pa 'i de 'i ling ka gcig byas la/ ro ras la sogs pa la dug dang tsha dang/ ske tse rnams myi khrag la sogs pa 'i snag tsha la myi rkang 'am bya rog gi sgro 'i snyug gus dgra'o 'i gzugs bris pa 'i snying kar/ e 'i dbyibs can 'khor lo bris la/ de 'i dbus su om bris pa 'i mthar g.yon bskor gyis/ om badzra ma hā kā la ya che ge mo mā ra ya hūṃ hūṃ pha/ zhes pa 'i 'go phyir bstan pa 'bri 'o/ de nas bdag nyid lhag pa 'i lha 'i thugs ka dang/ mdun kyi nag po 'i thugs ka nas ye shes mgon po dpag du med pa spros pas/ bsgrub bya bsrung bar byed pa 'i lha gang yin ba de la 'di skad ces/ bde mchog du sgogs nas rang gi snying ka nas bde mchog spros pas lha dang dbral ba la bsogs pa bya/ des mdun gyi mgon po 'i thugs ka nas mgon po spros pas dgug gzhus bya 'o/ bstan pa 'jig par byed pa 'i/ dgra'o srung bar byed pa 'i lha khyod tshur nyon/ gdug pa 'i sems ldan dgra'o yis/ dkon chog bla ma la smod cing/ bstan la sdang zhing sems can 'tshe / rnal 'byor pa rnams brnyas 'gyur nas/ dpag tshad stong du lhung ba 'i/ dmyal ba 'i sdug bsgal myong bar 'gyur/ bdag gis myur du bsgral nas ni/ gzugs kyi lha rnams mchod par bgyi / khyod kyis bar bar ma byed cig/ sdig can dgra' 'di myur du yongs/ zhes bka' bsgos bar bsams la/ de 'i lha yang dag par mchod cing ye shes pa yin na rang bzhin gyis gnas su gshegs pa la/ rang la sdu 'o/ 'jig rten pa yin na dam la btags la las bcol lo/ bsgrub byed lha de thams cad kyis sangs par bsams la/ de nas ngag du 'di skad ces/ om badzra ma hā kā la ya che ge mo ā kar sha ya dzah hūṃ hūṃ pha/ ces drag du brjod la/ sprul pa 'i mgon po dpag du med pa' spros pas/ skyabs dang bral ba de lcags kyu dang zhags pas snying la nas bkug nas bzungs ste/ mtshon cha sna tshogs kyis bdeg cing rang dbang med par bkug pas/ bris pa 'i ling ka la bstims la/ dug dang ske tse dang tsha ba 'i chus/ om badzra ma hā kā la che ge mo 'i mā ra ya hūṃ hūṃ pha/ ces pas brjod cing brab po/ de nas rkang pa nas dril la skud nag gis rgya gram du bskris la/ ling ka 'i snying kar bcug la/ yang sgnar bzhin spros pa la sogs pa bya ste/ tshigs rnams dam po rnams su dug dang khrag dang ske tse tsha 'i chus sbags pa 'i tsher ma btsugs la/ gu gul nag pos bdug cing dug dang ske tse dang tsha chu sngar bzhin du/ nag po chen po 'i sngags sbrel tshig dang bcas pas brab po/ de nas nag po chen po la mchod pa dang gtor ma dang bstod pa byad zhing/ las grub par gyis shig ces brjod do/ de bzhin du zhag nyi shu rtsa gcig du nyin mtshan du thun drug du bya 'o/ gsad pa 'i// 'phrin las/ a ti//.*

⁴¹ The Tibetan text reads: “If one wants to perform the fierce action of Mahākāla,” and prior to this sentence, the Chinese text omitted to translate the salute in the Tibetan version: “Homage to Ga Lotsaba!” (Tib. *dpal chen po rga lo la phyag 'tshal lo*).



the cake offering, recite the effective *mantra*, and then present the cake offering.⁴²

(g)

Homage to Śrī Heruka!⁴³ On birch bark or cloth from the cremation ground, the practitioner shall mix aconite, living human and animal blood, and animal horn ash [as ink], and use the quill of a raven to draw the image of the victim. The tongue [of the victim] is large enough to cover the navel.⁴⁴ On the top of the tongue shall be written: “*Om Mahākāla*[*ye*]! [Such-and-such] *stambhaya nan ku ru lam hūṃ hūṃ pha!*!”⁴⁵ He shall fold the image backward and use red threads or human hair to bind it in crosswise fashion. [He shall make] a mixture of the victim’s excrement, the dirt from his footprints, his shredded clothing and black soil, and put this in a *tsha-tsha* mould to form a *tsha-tsha*. He shall use an elbow-length ritual dagger made of black poisonous wood, or made of a blade for killing, or made of iron or made of acacia—to pierce the *tsha-tsha* from the bottom to the top [to make a hole]. The tip of the ritual dagger ought not to penetrate through [the *tsha-tsha*].⁴⁶ Then the practitioner shall insert the *liṅga* into the cavity of the *tsha-tsha* and conceal it with clay. [The practitioner shall] put the *tsha-tsha* under his bed where he sleeps. [He shall] place copper powder, iron powder, rape seeds, mustard seeds in front of it and arrange a cake offering. After performing the yoga of the tutelary deity, he generates Mahākāla in front of

⁴² B 59, fol. 11.14–16, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 6, 47: 夫修習人欲向鬼神等住作法者, 用紙畫蘭葛, 心頭書唵摩訶葛粹也某甲馬囉也吽發咒, 人在施食內, 應誦求修咒, 次奉施食矣。

Dx 178, l. 2a.23–26, Zorin, *Buddiyskie Ritualnye Teksty*, 59: *dpal chen po rga lo la phyag 'tshal lo/ nag po chen po 'i drag la las byed 'dod na/ shog gu de 'i ling ka bris la/ snying kar om ma hā kā la che gam o mā ra ya hūṃ pha/ zhes bris la/ gtor ma 'i nang du gzhug/ de nas sgrub bya dgug gzhug bya/ de nas sgrub sngags bzlas pa bya/ de 'i rjes la gtor ma gtang ngo/ a ṭi//*

⁴³ The Tibetan version reads: “Homage to Ga Lotsaba!”, Ga Lotsaba referring to Ga Lotsaba Zhönupel.

⁴⁴ The Chinese version is “*she guangda ke gai qifu* 舌廣大可蓋臍腹,” translating: “The tongue [of the victim] is large enough to cover the navel.” The Tibetan text reads: “[...]’*doms yan chod lces khebs pa*,” translating: “[...] the tongue [of the victim] covers the genitals.”

⁴⁵ Based on the transcriptions of the Tibetan and Chinese texts, I cannot completely revert this *mantra* to Sanskrit. The meaning of this *mantra* is roughly: “*Om Mahākāla!* Paralyse [Such-and-such] [...] *hūṃ hūṃ pha!*!”

⁴⁶ This section “[...] to pierce the *tsha-tsha* from the bottom to the top [to make a hole]. The tip of the ritual dagger ought not to penetrate through [the *tsha-tsha*] [...]” is translated from the Chinese version. It is not a strictly literal translation from the Tibetan, but with many explanatory additions. The Tibetan simply states: “[...] [the dragger] reaches the cone [...] (Tib. *bum pa slebs par*).”



himself. From the [practitioner's] heart, the seed syllable *HŪM* emits light, which comes out from his mouth and goes through the mouth of Mahākāla to his heart. From the heart of the deity, radiates forth a small angry [Mahākāla] holding an iron hook, a noose and a hammer. With the iron hook *mudrā*, [the practitioner] recites the *mantra*: “*Oṃ Mahākāla!* [Such-and-such] *ākaraṣaya jaḥ hūm hūm pha!*!”⁴⁷

After that, [the angry Mahākāla] ropes the victim by the neck, hooks his heart with his iron hook, and strikes him with a hammer. Being summoned, the victim dissolves into the *liṅga* inside the *tsha-tsha*. [The practitioner] shall imagine that the victim is emaciated and weak, and deprived of his protective deity, and recite the *mantra*: “The speech deity of [such-and-such] *stambhaya nan ku ru laṃ hūm pha!*!”⁴⁸ Having done this, [the practitioner shall] make the cake offering [to Mahākāla] and instruct him to do the *dharma* activity and then send him away and recite the Hundred Syllable *mantra*. [He shall] do it like this for four sessions a day for a full seven days. [He shall] choose the day and the hour and draw a Vajra-cross on a piece of stone at a crossroad and write the following *mantra* at the center of the crossed vajra: “*Oṃ Mahākāla!* [Such-and-such] *stambhaya nan ku ru laṃ hūm [hūm] pha!*!” Write *HŪM* on the four tips of the crossed vajra.⁴⁹ The crossed vajra will suppress the clever words. This is the ritual of suppressing the speech [of the enemy].⁵⁰

⁴⁷ The *mantra* means: “*Oṃ Mahākāla!* Attract [Such-and-such] *jaḥ hūm hūm pha!*!”

⁴⁸ The meaning of this *mantra* is not entirely clear and roughly translates to: “Paralyse the speech deity of [such-and-such] [...] *hūm pha!*!”

⁴⁹ The Tibetan reads: “Write the *HŪM* on each bend of the crossed vajra, for a total of twelve *HŪMs*.” (Tib. *rba rnam la hūm re re hūm bcu gnyis bris la*).

⁵⁰ B 59, fol. 7.14–8.2, Shi, Wei, and Kychanov, *E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*, vol. 6, 45: 敬礼吉祥形嚕葛! 夫修習者, 用樺皮或屍布上, 以草烏頭, 活人, 畜生血, 及諸般獸角灰相和, 於鷓鴣翎桿中窰人相, 舌廣大可蓋臍腹, 上書: 唵八囉二合摩訶葛粹也某甲廝擔二合懶孤嚕嚕吽發咒, 將相背疊, 以青紅線或人髮, 內十字繫已, 然用冤人大香, 足跡土, 破碎衣及黑土等相和, 无十二因緣咒, 摟摟罨子內印取塔, 然用一肘量具黑毒木 (沒浪紫是也矣) 概, 或法人釵, 或纏桃木并鐵概等, 可一个, 從塔底插至頂, 莫漏露栓尖, 將前蘭葛入在穴內湮合, 置於自宿卧鋪底, 仍置排銅鐵末, 菓子, 芥子并施食, 自作所樂佛定, 面前增長大黑, 自己心頭, 吽字發光, 從口中出, 去大黑口中, 頭至心, 從心種上, 頓出執鐵鉤罨索忿怒, 然自結鐵同常鈞印, 語誦: 唵摩訶葛粹車迦麼語及神阿葛折也吽摟吽發咒, 將冤人以罨索筋縛, 用鐵勾勾心, 鐵鎚打至面前, 攝入摟摟塔內蘭葛, 彼冤人想, 令護神遠離, 孤然一身, 念語神廝擔八懶孤嚕嚕吽發咒, 倦時奉施食, 囑付法行, 奉送, 誦百字咒, 如是每日四時, 作七日畢, 揀擇日辰, 於十字道等住, 以片石畫十字杵, 臍中書: 唵摩訶葛粹也廝擔八懶孤嚕嚕吽發咒, 四杵尖上, 各書一吽字, 令將坑口鎮壓, 此者絕語儀竟也。

Dx 178, 13a.16–31, Zorin, *Buddiyskie Ritualnye Teksty*, 67–68: *dpal chen po rgwa lo la phyag 'tshal lo/ 'badzra ma hā kā la las ngag gnan pa ni/ gro ba 'am ras la gson khrag dang bcam dug dang ra gzhob gsum gyis de 'i gzugs 'doms yan chod lces khebs pa/ lce la bya rog sgrors/ oṃ ma hā kā la che ge mo stam bha ya nan ku ru laṃ hūm hūm pha!*



3. Discussion: Procedure, Functions and Materiality of The *Liṅga* Effigies

The three Chinese manuscripts TK 321, A 7 and B 59 discussed in this paper are like handbooks that the sorcerers carried with them to facilitate their ritual practice. They deal with magical rituals focusing on attaining one's desired aims by provoking a tutelary deity. Among them, TK 321 indicates a strong mundane concern. The text contains a significant number of the magical operations for healing diseases, managing social relations, apprehending thieves, prospering commerce, promoting agricultural production, and transforming the natural environment, among others.⁵¹ This may suggest that the Tibetan tantric culture was popular in the Karakhoto area and influenced many aspects of the daily life of the local people during the Tangut Empire and the Yuan Dynasty.

Speaking of the ritual function of the *liṅga* effigies, most of them are used to subjugate demons and eliminate enemies. These rites can be categorised as 'fierce action' (Tib. *drag po'i 'phrin las*). They served as effective means for practitioners to remove obstacles and destroy hostile forces on the path to liberation and Buddhahood. The ritual of the *liṅga* effigies can be performed independently, as in the texts translated above. Besides, it may occur within a much larger ritual process. In this respect,

ces 'bri'o / de nas phyin ka log du bltas la/ skud pa sngon dmar ram/ myi yi skras rgya gram du bcings la/ bsgrub bya'i chu ngan dang/ gos dam dum dang/ rkang rjes kyi sa dang/ sa nag po rnam bsres la/ rten 'brel med pa'i skor phor du tsha tsha bya/ de dug can gyi shing rang chag gam/ myi bsad pa'i mishon 'am/ lcags phur ram/ seng ldeng gi phur pas bum pa slebs par phugs la/ sngar gyi ling ka bcug ste/ bsdams la mal 'og du gzhug/ lcags phye dang zangs phye yungs kar ske tse nams mdun du gzhag/ gtor ma bshams ste rang lha'i rnal 'byor du byas la/ mdun du mgon po bskyed la/ rang snying ka'i hūm las kha'i sgo nas 'od 'phros la mgon po kha nas thugs ka nas 'khro chung zhags pa dang lcags kyu dang tho ba thogs pa spros ste/ lcags kyu'i phyag rgya bcas la/ ngag du oṃ ma hā kā la che ge mo 'i lha ā kar sha ya dzah hūm hūm phaṭ/ ces brjod pas lcags kyu snying nas phug/ zhags pas ske nas bzung/ tho bas rgyab nas phul de bkug tsha tsha 'i ling ka la yang bstims la/ bsgrub bya rnam rid pa nyams chung ba mgon skyabs dang bral bar bsam la/ che ge mo yi ngag lha bcas pa stam bha ya nan ku ru lam hūm phaṭ/ ces bzlas pa bya/ 'jog tsa na mgon po la gtor ma dbul/ las bcol gshegs su gsol/ yi ge brgyad pa brjod do/ de lta bu thun bzhir bya/ zhag bdun them par bsgrub bo/ de nas dus tshod nag po dang sbyar la lam rgya gram la sogs par rdo rje rgya gram gyi lte ba la oṃ ma hā kā la che ge mo stam bha ya nan ku ru lam hūm phaṭ/ ces pa 'bri/ rba rnam la hūm re re hūm bcu gnyis bris la/ rdo rje rgya gram gyis kha gchang la gnan no/ ngag gnan po/ a ṭi/

⁵¹ The 'topical outline' of TK 321 lists thirty-eight rituals, most of which are for worldly purposes. For a translation of the 'topical outline,' see footnote 10.

the cycle of Vajrakīlaya is a good example. Among all the fierce activities associated with the deity Vajrakīlaya, most prominent is the rite of ‘liberation through killing’, which is symbolically performed by using the *phurpa* to stab an effigy made of dough representing the enemy, either human or demonic. In his latest study of *The Phurpa Root Tantra*, Dylan Esler translates and annotates parts of the text that involve the use of effigies. His research presents a detailed description of how to utilise effigies in ritual practice and shows how this procedure is organised and integrated into a much larger ritual programme.⁵²

A variety of forms of human effigies, both two- and three-dimensional, are described in the Karakhoto documents. The basic structure of the *liṅga* rituals is similar. Cuevas concludes the ritual procedure in six main steps:⁵³

- (1) drawing (Tib. *'bri*) an image or moulding a figure resembling the intended target;
- (2) summoning (Tib. *'gugs*) the target;
- (3) causing the target’s spirit to be absorbed (Tib. *bstims*) into the image or object;
- (4) separating (Tib. *dbye*) the target from its divine protectors;
- (5) cutting off its life-force (Tib. *srog chod*) to achieve the intended goal;
- (6) ‘liberating’ (Tib. *bsgral ba*) the spirit of the target.

Among the seven texts translated above, the ritual structure is evident in texts (e) and (g). The remaining five texts are abbreviated, indicating only the essentials of the rituals, and were probably intended for veterans rather than novices. Notably, some texts state that after the rituals are completed, the used effigies are to be buried in a charnel ground or at a crossroad, or discarded in the water, such as in text (a) and (g). The rituals make use of two- or three-dimensional *liṅga* effigies, and on some occasions, both are to be produced. For example, according to (b) and (e), the practitioner shall draw a portrait of the victim, a two-dimensional *liṅga*, and manufacture a doll (Skt. *puttala/puttalī*, Tib. *nya bo*) or a *tsha-*

⁵² Dylan Esler, “The Phurpa Root Tantra of Nyang-Rel Nyima Özer’s (1124–1192, Tib. Myang Ral Nyi Ma ’Od Zer) Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas (Tib. *Bka’ Brgyad Bde Gshegs ’dus Pa*) Corpus: A Thematic Overview and Philological Analysis.” *BuddhistRoad Paper* 7.1(2020): 29, 42–50.

⁵³ Cuevas, “Illustrations of Human Effigies,” 77.



tsha, a three-dimensional *liṅga*. Then, the practitioner shall insert the drawing into the heart of the doll or the cavity of the *tsha-tsha*, and meditate upon two-and three-dimensional *liṅgas* as one.⁵⁴ Afterwards, the practitioner shall use an implement to inflict harm on the effigy or destroy it.

The Karakhoto texts are sketchy in how to represent their graphic characteristics. In most cases this step is simply described as “drawing the figure of the victim” (Chin. *hua yuanren xiang* 畫冤人相), without further instructions. The only exception is text (f), a ritual employing a paper *liṅga* in which some pictorial details are described: the victim is portrayed as having a large tongue that covers the navel. This style falls into a type of paper *liṅga*, known as ‘*ar gtad kyi liṅgam*’, which refers to an effigy consisting of the drawing of a bound naked man whose tongue hangs out of his mouth.⁵⁵ In text (a), a set of six concentric circles is drawn, and the doll is to be stabbed at the centre of the concentric circles. The graphic component of concentric circles is also found in some diagrams showing how to make the *liṅga* effigies. As the Karakhoto manuscripts does not present an image of the *liṅga* effigy, the following 19th c. depiction from a Bön lineage might serve as a reference point of how to visualise the concentric circles described in text a.

⁵⁴ In his new book, Martin J. Boord briefly touches on the issue of the relationship between drawings and dolls in the *liṅga* rituals. According to him, the instructions for inserting the drawings into the dolls are normally not found in the texts but are passed down through the oral teachings of the masters. However, the Karakhoto documents may be exceptions to this point. See Martin J. Boord, *An Overwhelming Hurricane: Overturning Saṃsāra and Eradicating All Evil. Texts from the Cycles of the Black Razor, Fierce Mantra & Greater than Great. Vajrakīla Texts of the Northern Treasures Tradition, volume five* (Berlin: Wandel Verlag, 2020), 11.

⁵⁵ Other special types are, for example: “[...] a *liṅga* showing two entwined and fettered human bodies (Tib. *wa thod liṅgam*); a *liṅga* demonstrating a figure of a shackled man (Tib. *bkrad pa’i liṅgam*); a *liṅga* illustrating a human figure being boiled in a cauldron resting on a hearth (Tib. *’gong po me brdung ba’i liṅgam*),” and so on. See René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (Delhi: Book Faith India, 1996), 360.



Fig. 2. The Linga Effigy, Bön lineage. Himalayan Region, 19th c. HAR 53744⁵⁶

In terms of materiality, the *linga* effigies are primarily moulded in dough, earth, and clay. Other ingredients are sometimes mixed in with these materials, e. g. beeswax, spices, plants, urine, excrement, faeces, animal entrails, etc. In some of the rituals, special requirements for these materials are indicated, for example, in the Karakhoto documents, the practitioner should use the earth trodden by the target, as well as the targets's urine

⁵⁶ <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/53744>, accessed August 27, 2020.



and excrement to produce the *liṅga* effigies.⁵⁷ The materials are used in producing the pigments for painting the effigies, including poison, salt, aconite, human and animal blood, and ashes. The two-dimensional effigies are drawn on paper, birch bark or on cloth from the cemetery, using a pen made of human shin bone or a quill from a raven.

⁵⁷ The selection of materials reflects an important principle followed in making a *liṅga* effigy, that is, ‘contiguity’. This principle means that anything that once formed part of something continues to form part of it, and by influencing part of it, one can influence the whole. For the principle of ‘contiguity’, see Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 26–57.

Abbreviations

A	Chinese Manuscripts in the Karakhoto Collection of Koslov in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.
B	Chinese Manuscripts in the Karakhoto Collection of Koslov in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.
Dx	Dunhuang Manuscripts in the Petersburg Collection in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.
HAR	Himalayan Art Resources, https://www.himalayanart.org .
TK	Tangut and Chinese Manuscripts in the Karakhoto Collection of Koslov in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

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