

The perimeter beings of the Kālacakra maṇḍala

The Kālacakra Tantra commentary, the Vimalaprabhā, tells us little about the perimeter beings of the maṇḍala. There are said to be 35,000,000 of them arranged around the palace, above the perimeter of wind. Abhayākaragupta gives some details in his Niṣpannayogāvalī, the companion text to the Vajrāvalī, naming a few of them: the planets, Dhruva, Agastya, the 28 lunar mansions, the 12 signs of the zodiac, the 16 lunar phases, the worldly protectors of the 10 directions, Nandi (*dga' byed*), Mahākāla (*nag po chen po*), Ghaṇṭākarna (*dril bu'i rna ba can*), Hāriti (*'phrog ma*), Bhṛīṅgī (*nyam chung*), and large numbers of field protectors (*zhing skyong*, *kṣetrapāla*), messengers (*pho nya*, *dūtī*), and siddhas (*grub pa*).

In the Jonang tradition, these are considered to be so numerous that they are not usually represented in the maṇḍala in any specified form. However, they can be represented, and if this is done, they are placed in the outer half of the perimeter of wind the inner half is taken up by the charnel grounds. Out of the total of 35 million beings, one would place as many as appropriate, choosing them from the normal lists, such as given below, and giving them various forms, colours and hand-emblems.

However, there are two traditions in which a specific number of these beings are represented, with, in the usual case, three of them representing a collection of beings.

Gelug and Sakya traditions

The main tradition of this is used in the Gelug and Sakya schools, and originally comes from Buton, given in his work *dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i phyi'i khor yug gi lha 'god tshul*. This includes eighty-eight deities represented around the border between the fire and wind perimeters, eleven between each of the wheels of the praçaṇḍā goddesses. These are normally represented by their seeds, although many maṇḍalas in which these deities are depicted also show their forms. When the seeds are drawn, this is nearly always done in old Rañjana (decorative/ornamental) script.

The following list is based on the original work by Buton, the Kālacakra sādhanā by Kalzang Gyatso, the 7th Dalai Lama (*bcom ldan 'das dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i sku gsung thugs yongs su rdzogs pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs mkhas grub zhal lung*), a text on the arrangement of deities in the maṇḍala by Thubten Gyatso, the 13th Dalai Lama (*bcom ldan 'das dang po'i sangs rgyas dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i sku gsung thugs yongs su rdzogs pa'i rdul tshon gyi dkyil 'khor 'dri skabs lha tshogs rnams 'god tshul gsal bar bkod pa 'khri shing yongs 'du'i dga' tshal*), and also a Sakya text by Jamyang Loter Wangpo (*dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga spangs rtogs kyi yon tan kun nas 'byung ba*).

There are many minor variations between these texts (and painted maṇḍalas), and the majority of the seeds are intended to be the initial letters of the Sanskrit names of the deities concerned (although nearly all of the names are only given in Tibetan). Most of the inconsistencies in these texts in this respect have been resolved, although a couple still remain. In this list, and the one further down used in the Karma-Kagyū tradition, question marks indicate lingering uncertainties. The lunar mansions are indicated by LM. The list starts from the east, and continues clockwise:

Between east and south-east:

- | | | | |
|----|-----|--------------|---|
| 1. | im | yellow | Indra (<i>dbang po</i>) |
| 2. | cam | black | Candra, Moon (<i>zla ba</i>) |
| 3. | rem | light yellow | Revatī (LM) (<i>nam gru</i>) |
| 4. | um | yellow | Uttarabhādrapāda (LM) (<i>khrooms smad</i>) |
| 5. | mīm | red | Mīna, Pisces (<i>nya</i>) |
| 6. | sūm | black | Sūrya, Sun (<i>nyi ma</i>) |
| 7. | aṃ | red | Agni (<i>me lha</i>) |

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8.	dūṃ	green	Dūtī (<i>pho nya mo</i>)
9.	pūṃ	green	Pūrvabhādrapāda (LM) (<i>khnums stod</i>)
10.	śaṃ	yellow	Śatabhṛiṣā (LM) (<i>mon gru</i>)
11.	kuṃ	black	Kumbha, Aquarius (<i>bum pa</i>)

Between south-east and south:

1.	aṃ	green	Sixth lunar day (<i>tshes drug</i>)
2.	e	black	Seventh lunar day (<i>tshes bdun</i>)
3.	ar	red	Eighth lunar day (<i>tshes brgyad</i>)
4.	o	white	Ninth lunar day (<i>tshes dgu</i>)
5.	al	yellow	Tenth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu</i>)
6.	dhaṃ	black ?	Dhaniṣṭhā (LM) (<i>mon gre</i>)
7.	aṃ	light blue	Abhijit (LM) (<i>byi bzhin</i>)
8.	śraṃ	light yellow	Śravaṇa (LM) (<i>gro bzhin</i>)
9.	maṃ	green	Makara, Capricorn (<i>chu srin</i>)
10.	kṣeṃ	green	Kṣetrapāla (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
11.	aṃ	blue	Agastya, Canopus (<i>ri byi</i>)

Between south and south-west:

1.	yaṃ	red	Yama (<i>gshin rje</i>)
2.	buṃ	red	Budha, Mercury (<i>lhag pa</i>)
3.	uṃ	white	Uttarāṣādhā (LM) (<i>chu smad</i>)
4.	pūṃ	black	Pūrvāṣādhā (LM) (<i>chu stod</i>)
5.	mūṃ	yellow	Mūla (LM) (<i>snrubs</i>)
6.	dham	green	Dhanu, Sagittarius (<i>gzhu</i>)
7.	hāṃ	yellow	Hārītī (<i>'phrog ma</i>)
8.	maṃ	red	Maṅgala, Mars (<i>mig dmar</i>)
9.	naṃ	black	Nairṛiti (<i>bden bral</i>)
10.	jyeṃ	yellow	Jyeṣṭha (LM) (<i>snron</i>)
11.	brīṃ	black	Bṛiścaka, Scorpio (<i>sdig pa</i>)

Between south-west and west:

1.	aṃ	green	Anurādhā (LM) (<i>lha mtshams</i>)
2.	aṃ	blue	Sixteenth phase (<i>cha bcu drug pa</i>)
3.	naṃ	black	Nandi, Nandikeśvara (<i>dga' byed</i>)
4.	maṃ	black	Mahākāla (<i>nag po chen po</i>)
5.	ghaṃ	black	Ghaṅṭākaraṇa (<i>dril bu'i rna ba can</i>)
6.	bhṛiṃ	black	Bhṛiṅgi
7.	biṃ	black	Viśākhā (LM) (<i>sa ga</i>)
8.	śvāṃ	yellow	Svātī (LM) (<i>sa ri</i>)
9.	tuṃ	red	Tulā, Libra (<i>srang</i>)
10.	piṃ	blue	Viṣṇu (<i>khyab 'jug</i>)
11.	kāṃ	blue	Kālāgni (<i>dus me</i>)

Between west and north-west:

1.	vaṃ	white	Varuṇa (<i>chu lha</i>)
2.	keṃ	yellow	Ketu, comet (<i>du ba mjug ring</i>)
3.	siṃ	black	Siddha (<i>grub pa</i>)

4.	ciṃ	green	Citrā (LM) (<i>nag pa</i>)
5.	haṃ	white	Hastā (LM) (<i>me bzhi</i>)
6.	uṃ	green	Uttaraphalgunī (LM) (<i>dbo</i>)
7.	kaṃ	white	Kanyā, Virgo (<i>bu mo</i>)
8.	vāṃ	black	Vāyu (<i>rlung lha</i>)
9.	śaṃ	yellow	Śani, Saturn (<i>spen pa</i>)
10.	pūṃ	yellow-green	(LM) Pūrvaphalgunī (<i>bre</i>)
11.	siṃ	golden-yellow	Siṃha, Leo (<i>seng ge</i>)

Between north-west and north:

1.	maṃ	yellow	Maghā (LM) (<i>mchu</i>)
2.	ha	green	Eleventh lunar day (<i>tshes bcu gcig</i>)
3.	ya	black	Twelfth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu gnyis</i>)
4.	ra	red	Thirteenth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu gsum</i>)
5.	va	white	Fourteenth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu bzhi</i>)
6.	la	yellow	Fifteenth lunar day (<i>tshes bco lnga</i>)
7.	dhruṃ	green	Dhruva, Pole star (<i>brtan pa</i>)
8.	aṃ	white	Aśleṣā (LM) (<i>skag</i>)
9.	puṃ	light blue	Puṣya (LM) (<i>rgyal</i>)
10.	kaṃ	blue	Karkatā, Cancer
11.	yaṃ	yellow	Yakṣa (<i>gnod sbyin</i>)

Between north and north-east:

1.	śuṃ	white	Śukra, Venus (<i>pa sangs</i>)
2.	puṃ	yellow	Punarvasu (LM) (<i>nabs so</i>)
3.	āṃ	yellow	Ārdrā (LM) (<i>lag</i>)
4.	miṃ	blue	Mithuna, Gemini (<i>'khrig pa</i>)
5.	bṛiṃ	white	Bṛihaspati, Jupiter (<i>phur pa</i>)
6.	iṃ	white	Rudra (<i>drag po</i>)
7.	mṛiṃ	black	Mṛigaśiras (LM) (<i>mgo</i>)
8.	roṃ	light red	Rohiṇī (LM) (<i>snar ma</i>)
9.	bṛiṃ	yellow	Vṛiṣa, Taurus (<i>glang</i>)
10.	bhūṃ	green	Bhūta (<i>'byung po pho</i>)
11.	bhūṃ	green	Bhūtā (<i>'byung po mo</i>)

Between north-east and east:

1.	a	green	First lunar day (<i>tshes gcig</i>)
2.	i	black	Second lunar day (<i>tshes gnyis</i>)
3.	ṛi	red	Third lunar day (<i>tshes gsum</i>)
4.	u	white	Fourth lunar day (<i>tshes bzhi</i>)
5.	ḷi	yellow	Fifth lunar day (<i>tshes lnga</i>)
6.	kṛiṃ	light blue	Kṛittikā (LM) (<i>smin drug</i>)
7.	bhaṃ	green, yellow-green?	Bharaṇī (LM) (<i>bra nye</i>)
8.	aṃ	white	Aśvinī (LM) (<i>tha skar</i>)
9.	meṃ	white	Meṣa, Aries (<i>lug</i>)
10.	rāṃ	green	Rāhu (<i>sgra gcan</i>)
11.	braṃ	green	Brahma (<i>tshangs pa</i>)

Buton explains much of his reasoning behind this arrangement. The planets are arranged in directions similar to those in which they are located in the Kālacakra protective sphere meditation. (They also closely match the positions they are given in the Vajrāvalī.) The signs of the zodiac and the lunar mansions are placed around the perimeter in positions relative to their positions around the ecliptic, with the beginning of the ecliptic positioned in the east. This means that the first sign from the east in an anti-clockwise direction is Aries, the next Taurus, and so on. The lunar mansions are arranged similarly.

He places the sixteen lunar phases in groups according to their classifications: the first group of five associated with tamas are placed towards the east, the second group associated with rajas in the south, and the third group associated with sattva in the north. The sixteenth is in the west. He states that he has placed the phases associated with the elements of space and awareness in positions that are compatible with the positions of similarly classified deities in the mind palace. However, his comments do not quite match the actual placing of those deities, and there seems to be at least one mistake in the current version of this little text. He also mentions that deities such as Viṣṇu are placed in positions similar to those they occupy in the body palace.

Karma Kagyu tradition

The placing of the deities in the other main tradition is not explained in this way. This tradition is the one coming from the translator Tsami, passing through the Karma Kagyu school. In this method, instead of 88 deities around the perimeter, there are 112, 14 between each of the wheels of praçaṇḍā goddesses in the charnel grounds.

A somewhat similar logic has been applied to the placing of these deities as with Buton's method. The planets are certainly arranged similarly, but the zodiac signs and lunar mansions are placed more according to their categorization as deities, and placed in the appropriate directions.

Between east and south-east:

1:	kṣeṃ	black	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	pum	yellow	Punarvasu (LM) (<i>nabs so</i>)
3:	khaṃ	black	khadga, sword realization, (<i>ral gri grub pa</i>)
4:	bṛiṃ	black	Bṛiścaka, Scorpio (<i>sdig pa'i khyim</i>)
5:	e	black	Seventh lunar day (<i>tshes bdun</i>)
6:	uṃ	green	Uttaraphalgunī (LM) (<i>dbo</i>)
7:	haṃ	white	Hastā (LM) (<i>me bzhi</i>)
8:	sūṃ	black	Sūrya, Sun (<i>nyi ma</i>)
9:	saṃ	black	Vāyukṛitsna, Totality of wind (<i>zad par rlung</i>)
10:	ciṃ	green	Citrā (LM) (<i>nag pa</i>)
11:	ya	black	Twelfth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu gnyis</i>)
12:	śvāṃ	orange	Svātī (LM) (<i>sa ri</i>)
13:	aṃ	black	realization of inexhaustible treasure (<i>gter grub pa</i>)
14:	bāṃ	black	Vāyu (<i>rlung lha</i>)

Between south-east and south:

1:	kṣeṃ	black	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	naṃ	black	Nandi (<i>dga' byed</i>)
3:	maṃ	black	Mahākāla (<i>nag po chen po</i>)
4:	a	green	Sixth lunar day (<i>tshes drug</i>)
5:	dhaṃ	green	Dhanu, Sagittarius (<i>gzhu khyim</i>)
6:	dhrum	green	Dhruva, Polaris, Pole star (<i>brtan pa</i>)
7:	rāṃ	green	Rāhu (<i>sgra gcan</i>)

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8:	ṛi	red	Third lunar day (<i>tshes gsum</i>)
9:	kṛiṃ	blue	Kṛittikā (LM) (<i>smin drug</i>)
10:	pūṃ	blue	Puṣya (LM) (<i>rgyal</i>)
11:	mīṃ	red	Mīna, Pisces (<i>nya</i>)
12:	saṃ	red	Tejaḥkṛitsna, Totality of fire (<i>zad par me</i>)
13:	yaṃ	red	Yama (<i>gshin rje</i>)
14:	buṃ	red	Budha, Mercury (<i>lhag pa</i>)

Between south and south-west:

1:	kṣeṃ	red	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	maṃ	yellow	Maghā (LM) (<i>mchu</i>)
3:	pāṃ	red	pādukā, running realization (<i>rkang mgyogs</i>)
4:	tuṃ	red	Tulā, Libra (<i>srang khyim</i>)
5:	ar	red	Eighth lunar day (<i>tshes brgyad</i>)
6:	pūṃ	yellow-green	Pūrvaphalgunī (LM) (<i>bre, gre</i>)
7:	biṃ	black	Viśākhā (LM) (<i>sa ga</i>)
8:	maṃ	red	Maṅgala, Mars (<i>mig dmar</i>)
9:	saṃ	red	Tejaḥkṛitsna, Totality of fire (<i>zad par me</i>)
10:	pūṃ	green	Pūrvabhādrapāda (LM) (<i>khnums stod</i>)
11:	ra	red	Thirteenth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu gsum</i>)
12:	bhaṃ	green	Bharaṇī (LM) (<i>bra nye</i>)
13:	roṃ	red	rocana, invisibility realization
14:	aṃ	red	Agni (<i>me lha</i>)

Between south-west and west:

1:	kṣeṃ	red	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	ghaṃ	black	Ghaṇṭākarna (<i>dril bu'i rna ba can</i>)
3:	ḍāṃ	green	Ḍākinī (<i>mkha' 'gro</i>)
4:	ha	green	Eleventh lunar day (<i>tshes bcu gcig</i>)
5:	kaṃ	blue	Karkaṭa, Cancer (<i>karkaṭa</i>)
6:	biṃ	blue	Viṣṇu (<i>khyab 'jug</i>)
7:	saṃ	blue	Śūnyakṛitsna, Totality of emptiness (<i>zad par stong pa</i>)
8:	ḷi	yellow	Fifth lunar day (<i>tshes lnga</i>)
9:	āṃ	yellow	Ārdrā (LM) (<i>lag</i>)
10:	aṃ	white	Aśleṣā (LM) (<i>skag</i>)
11:	brīṃ	yellow	Vṛiṣa, Taurus (<i>glang khyim</i>)
12:	saṃ	yellow	Prithvikṛitsna, Totality of earth (<i>zad par sa</i>)
13:	iṃ	yellow	Indra (<i>dbang po</i>)
14:	keṃ	yellow	Ketu, comet (<i>du ba mjug ring</i>)

Between west and north-west:

1:	kṣeṃ	yellow	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	mūṃ	yellow	Mūla (LM) (<i>snrubs</i>)
3:	aṃ	yellow	Eye-medicine realization (<i>mig sman</i>)
4:	siṃ	yellow	Siṃha, Leo (<i>seng ge'i khyim</i>)
5:	al	yellow	Tenth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu</i>)
6:	pūṃ	black	Pūrvāśāḍhā (LM) (<i>chu stod</i>)
7:	śaṃ	yellow	Śatabhṛiṣā (LM) (<i>mon gru</i>)
8:	śaṃ	yellow	Śani, Saturn (<i>spen pa</i>)

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9:	saṃ	yellow	Prithvīkṛtsna, Totality of Earth (<i>zad par sa</i>)
10:	uṃ	yellow	Uttarabhādrapāda (LM) (<i>khnums smad</i>)
11:	la	yellow	Fifteenth lunar day (<i>tshes bco lnga</i>)
12:	reṃ	light yellow	Revatī (LM) (<i>nam gru</i>)
13:	guṃ	yellow	Pill realization (<i>ril bu grub</i>)
14:	yaṃ	yellow	Yakṣa (<i>gnod sbyin</i>)

Between north-west and north:

1:	kṣeṃ	yellow	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	bhṛiṃ	yellow	Bhṛiṅgi
3:	hām	yellow	Hārītī (<i>'phrog ma</i>)
4:	aṃ	blue	Sixteenth phase (<i>tshes bcu drug</i>)
5:	miṃ	blue	Mithuna, Gemini (<i>'khrig pa</i>)
6:	aṃ	blue	Agastya, Canopus (<i>ri byi</i>)
7:	kām	blue	Kālāgni (<i>dus me</i>)
8:	u	white	Fourth lunar day (<i>tshes bzhi</i>)
9:	roṃ	red	Rohiṇī (LM) (<i>snar ma</i>)
10:	aṃ	green	Anurādhā (LM) (<i>lha mtshams</i>)
11:	meṃ	white	Meṣa, Aries (<i>lug</i>)
12:	saṃ	white	Toyakṛtsna, Totality of water (<i>zad par chu</i>)
13:	saṃ	white	Samudra (= Varuṇa) (<i>rgya mtsho</i>)
14:	śuṃ	white	Śukra, Venus (<i>pa sangs</i>)

Between north and north-east:

1:	kṣeṃ	white	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	jiyeṃ	yellow	Jyaṣṭha (LM) (<i>snron</i>)
3:	aṃ	white	Nectar realization (<i>'bras grub</i>)
4:	kaṃ	white	Kanyā, Virgo (<i>bu mo</i>)
5:	o	white	Ninth lunar day (<i>tshes dgu</i>)
6:	uṃ	white	Uttarāṣādhā (LM) (<i>chu smad</i>)
7:	aṃ	blue	Abhijit (LM) (<i>byi bzhin</i>)
8:	bṛiṃ	white	Bṛihaspati, Jupiter (<i>phur bu</i>)
9:	saṃ	white	Toyakṛtsna, Totality of water (<i>zad par chu</i>)
10:	śraṃ	light yellow	Śravaṇa (LM) (<i>gro bzhin</i>)
11:	va	white	Fourteenth lunar day (<i>tshes bcu bzhi</i>)
12:	dhaṃ	black	Dhaniṣṭhā (LM) (<i>mon gre</i>)
13:	raṃ	white	Alchemical realization (<i>bcud len</i>)
14:	iṃ	white	Rudra (<i>drag po, dbang phyug</i>)

Between north-east and east:

1:	kṣeṃ	white	Kṣetrapāla, Land-protector (<i>zhing skyong</i>)
2:	dūṃ	green	Dūta, Messenger (<i>pho nya</i>) (original text: hūṃ ?)
3:	dūṃ	green	Dūtī, Messenger, female (<i>pho nya mo</i>)
4:	a	green	First lunar day (<i>tshes gcig</i>)
5:	maṃ	green	Makara, Capricorn (<i>chu srin</i>)
6:	braṃ	green	Brahma (<i>tshangs pa</i>)
7:	saṃ	green	Śūnyakṛtsna, Totality of emptiness (<i>zad par stong pa</i>)
8:	i	black	Second lunar day (<i>tshes gnyis</i>)
9:	aṃ	white	Aśvinī (LM) (<i>tha skar</i>)

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10:	mṛiṃ	black	Mṛigaśiras (LM) (<i>mgo</i>)
11:	kum	black	Kumbha, Aquarius (<i>bum pa</i>)
12:	saṃ ?	black	Vāyukṛitsna, Totality of wind (<i>zad par rlung</i>)
13:	naiṃ	black	Nairṛiti (<i>bden bral</i>)
14:	caṃ	black	Candra, Moon (<i>zla ba</i>)

The above list is compiled from just two texts: one on the meditation by the 8th Karmapa, Mikyo Dorje (*bcom ldan 'das dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i sgrub dkyil phan bde kun stsol*) and the other on maṇḍala drawing by the 14th Karmapa, Thegchok Dorje (*rgyud sde rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor gyi thig rtsa dang dri bya tshon gyi dbye ba sogs go bder bkod pa*). Unfortunately, both of these give incomplete lists. The first gives seed characters and deity descriptions, but only gives their approximate positioning and leaves out three deities; the second gives a full list with clear positions, but no seeds or colours, and truncates some of the names so that they read the same. For the ten kṛitsna deities of the elements, Mikyo Dorje only lists four pairs, and Thegchok Dorje only identifies the element for one of the ten – all the others are just given as kṛitsna (*zad par*). Mikyo Dorje also leaves out ḍākinī. For these reasons there are some assumptions in the above list, notably with the seed and colour of ḍākinī and the positions of most of the kṛitsna. At the time of writing, no third text that might clarify these assumptions and confirm other details has become available.

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