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Reflections on the
Mahesvara Subjugation Myth:
Indic Materials, Sa-skya-pa Apologetics,
and the Birth of Heruka*

by Ronald M. Davidson

Perhaps one of the least examined topics in Buddhism is the
totalization of myth in service of clerical values. Myth, of course,
is intimately connected with all the variety of praxis, yet to
read many descriptive analyses of the Buddhist dispensation,
the non-specialist might rapidly come to the conclusion that
Buddhism has few concerns outside of doctrine. This impres­sion is reinforced by both the Eurocentric proclivity to see reli­
gion in doxographical terms and by the modern Buddhist
apologia—especially prevalent in the Theravāda world—that
Buddhism is in reality not a religion but a philosophy. Bud­
dhist specialists have frequently been seduced by either the
Judeo-Christian models, which continue to exert influence in
the quest for underlying unity in religious phenomena, or by
the modern Buddhist desire to appear outside the pale of the
set of behaviors subsumed under the term “religion.” Thus, the
exploration of Buddhist myth—along with ritual and other
forms of activity—has taken a back seat to doctrinal formula­
tions, many of which are recast in a twentieth century philo­sophical diction that can be quite misleading in its implication
of set and setting.

Myth, in fact, has been and continues to be extraordinarily
important to Buddhists. Yet the mythic functions are not pre­
cisely those found in the Near Eastern religions—Judaism,
Christianity, or Islam. Specifically, the ideology of an encapsu­
lated temporal sequence, involving a definite creation event, a
closed revelation, and an approaching millenium, are all for­
eign to Buddhist mythic processes, which verify an open-ended
spatio-temporal system wherein all phenomena continually participate in the expression of truth. In general, Buddhist myth does not reveal a cosmology of creation and judgement, with all the attendant personality issues of creator and soul. Instead, it seeks to focus the attention of the audience on paradigms exemplifying the potential for immanent rectification, irrespective of eschatology. Thus, as may be seen in most institutional religions, Buddhist myths partly reinforce and are partially informed by the doctrinal structure; for the Mahāyāna this frequently invokes mythic expressions of the interpenetration of the relative and absolute spheres.

Such an ideology lends a peculiar polyvalence to Buddhist myths. They tend to serve an astonishing variety of functions, and, perhaps in keeping with the doctrine of existence without essence, Buddhist myths freely float from one milieu to another, sometimes being caught in the act of simultaneously serving multiple masters. The myth under consideration here—the subjugation of Mahēśvara and the birth of Heruka—is one of these. We will see that it developed out of a source myth of Vajrapāṇi taming Mahēśvara in the Tattvasamgraha and was used in service of establishing authenticity for another body of literature, the Cakrāsāṃvara complex. It completed the cycle of hermeneutics in Tibet by affirming the authoritativeness of an entirely different system, the Hevajra, itself the scriptural base for the Lam-'bras system of Sa-skya-pa meditative praxis. The first part of this paper will examine these three forms of our myth, tracing the development from one form to the next, starting with the eighth century Indic locus classicus and finishing with fifteenth century Tibetan materials. The second part of the paper, Interpretive Strategies, will present an analysis of the Indic and Tibetan forms according to a tripartite consideration of history, literature, and doctrine, followed by final conclusions.

The Locus Classicus: Sarvatathāgata-tattvasamgraha

All three source traditions—Tattvasamgraha, Cakrāsāṃvara, and Hevajra—are members of the larger set of Buddhist systems known as the [Guhya-]Mantrayāna, the Path of Secret Spells, or the Vajrayāna, the Lightning Path, in turn considered an
extension of the Great Vehicle, the Mahāyāna. Like other facets of the Buddhist tradition in Asia, the Mantrayāna attempted to justify the inclusion of its scriptures into the open Buddhist canon. For acceptance as the "word of the Buddha," literature must verify that it represented the direct perception of absolute truth by the (or a) buddha, that it was preached by that buddha to a specific assembly, that it was collected by an authentic master of the dispensation, and that it was received by a current representative of the tradition through an authoritative lineage of Buddhist masters, however these latter are understood.\(^1\)

Frequently, the crux of the matter was the verification of the circumstances of a scripture's preaching and collection. Buddhist innovators commonly identified a narrow range of dramatic moments when a new scriptural genre was expounded to an assembly and ultimately compiled into an authentic pronouncement. One of the more curious facts of the Mantrayāna is that, unlike most other Indic Buddhist traditions, it came up with multiple scenarios which purported to identify the circumstances of the preaching of the system's scriptures—known as sūtra, tantra, mahākalpa, dhāraṇī, etc., depending on the genre or period of composition. Most of these scenarios are lineage-specific; they discuss the preaching of the great central scripture (in later literature known as mūla-tantra), often followed by a summary scripture (which is the received text) and the ancillary exegetical scriptures (ākhyāna-tantra) utilized by the members of a specific contemplative tradition. The lineages of the Guhyasamāja, for example, established the preaching of the tantras in conjunction with the myth of Indrabhūti, the legendary king of Uḍḍiyāna in the Northwest of India.\(^2\) The lineages of the Kālacakra maintained two traditions: that the primordial buddha preached the great scripture to King Sucandra of Sambhala at the stūpa of Dhānyaakaṭaka—thus tying the proclamation of the faith to the fabled land of Sambhala—or that the buddha preached the Mahākālacakra in Sambhala itself.\(^3\)

The most commonly employed Mantrayāna myth, however, is developed from various sections of perhaps the most influential text of esoteric Buddhism: the Sarvatathāgata-tattvasamgraha, the Summary of All Tathāgatas' Reality (abr. Tattvasamgraha), codified in the early eighth century. Traditionally,
the text is understood as the complex interweaving of myths and ritual, all under the directorship of the cosmic buddha, Vairocana. Of particular interest to those in the business of Mantrayāna apologetics are chapters one, six, and the epilogue. Chapter one delineates the culmination of the career of the bodhisattva Sarvārthaśiddhi. He has reached the apex of his natural ability to attain supreme awakening and has proceeded to the tree of awakening. All the buddhas then appear to him and break the news that he cannot achieve his goal through his current concentration: he needs the consecrations obtained by the contemplations transforming his body, speech, and mind into adamant (vajra). These he secures, and accordingly becomes the buddha Vajradhātu, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto. Subsequently, he follows all the tathāgatas back to the Adamantine Jeweled Palace at the summit of Mt. Sumeru to take his rightful place. The body of the Tattvasamgraha discusses the rituals and mystic circles (manḍala) focused on enlightenment and concludes, some twenty-six chapters later, with Vajradhātu turning the wheel of the dharma and returning to the tree of awakening to perform the acts of the Buddha in accordance with the worldly understanding of the Buddha’s progress. Most importantly for us, chapter six introduces what was to become perhaps the most influential myth of esoteric Buddhism—the subjugation of the god Śiva (Maheśvara).

Synopsis: Tattvasamgraha

On the peak of Mt. Sumeru, all the tathāgatas requested the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, the master of mysteries, to produce the divinities of his clan (kula) for the manḍala. Vajrapāṇi, however, declined, saying that there yet existed criminals, such as Maheśvara and other gods. So Vairocana uttered the mantra OM SUMBHA NISUMBHA HŪṂ... VAJRA HŪṂ PHAT, and forms of Vajrapāṇi issued forth from the hearts of all the assembled tathāgatas, coming together to create the body of Mahāvajrakrodha. Vairocana intoned the mantra OM TAKKI JJAH, which is known as the disciplinary ankus of all the tathāgatas. By this utterance the criminals, Maheśvara and the like, were all dragged to the Adamantine Jeweled Palace on Sumeru. Vajrapāṇi then commanded them to accomplish the Buddha's
teaching by taking refuge in the Buddha, the dharma, and the samgha, and by obtaining the gnosis of omniscience.

But Maheśvara replied to Vajrapāni, “Hey, you’re just a local spirit (yakṣa)! I’m the creator and arranger of the triple world, the master of all spirits, the highest God of gods. Why should I do as you, a local ghost, command?” So Maheśvara turned to Vairocana, “Just who does he think he is, giving orders to God?”

Vairocana responded, “I’d really do what he says, friend, and go for the refuges! Don’t make Vajrapāni, this cruel, mean, angry spirit, destroy the whole world with his flaming vajra.”

Maheśvara, however, decided to show Vajrapāni what fear is all about, so he displayed his great wrath and cruelty in the form of Mahābhairava, flames spurting out, with Mahāraudra’s laugh, together with all of his minions: “Hey, I’m the Lord of the Triple World! You do what I command!”

They then exchanged more mutual challenges and insults and Vajrapāni returned to Vairocana. “Well, Lord, he’s not paying homage to the teaching, being God and all. Now what do I do?”

Again Vairocana intoned the mantra OM NISUMBHA VAJRA HŪM PHAT, and Vajrapāni added his own adamantine HUM. Immediately, all the gods, Maheśvara, etc., fell down on their faces, uttering a cry of pain, and went for refuge to the Lord Vajrapāni. Maheśvara alone remained fallen on the ground, unconscious, and there he perished. Vairocana lectured the other gods about the virtues of the Buddhist perspective and they became entirely restored, happy and virtuous.

Then Vairocana addressed Vajrapāni: “If we revive His Deadness, he could become a real person.” So Vajrapāni intoned the correct VAJRAYUH, and Maheśvara was brought back from the dead.

He wanted to stand up but couldn’t, and demanded, “What are you trying to teach me?”

Vairocana responded, “You still haven’t done what he said to do. It’s his business, not mine.”

“But aren’t you supposed to protect criminals like me?” Maheśvara asked.

Vairocana replied, “I can’t. He is the Lord of All Tathā-gatas.”

Vajrapāni then intervened: “Why don’t you just do what I tell you?”
When Mahēśvara heard Vajrapāṇi, he again became incensed and violent, displaying his form as Mahāraudra, saying, "I can endure death, but I will not do as you command!"

With that Vajrapāṇi uttered the appropriate mantras, and while the world laughed, Mahēśvara and his consort, Umā, were both dragged stark naked feet first before Vajrapāṇi, who stepped on Mahēśvara with his left foot, while standing on Umā's breasts with his right. Then he uttered the mantra "OM VAJRĀVĪŚA HANAYA TRĀM TRĀT" and Mahēśvara started beating his own thousand heads with his own thousand arms, while all his minions outside the palace gave a great roar of laughter and said, "Look at our Lord being disciplined by this great being!"

Then Vairocana took pity on Mahēśvara and, with the mantra "OM BUDDHA MAITRĪ VAJRA RAKṢA HŪM", the touch of Vajrapāṇi's feet became the consecration which allowed him to obtain the level of the Tathāgata. Abandoning his form of Mahādeva, Mahēśvara passed beyond countless world systems and was reborn into the world known as Bhasmācchanna as the tathāgata Bhasmeśvara-nirghoṣa.7

At that point, Vajrapāṇi commanded all the other gods, "Friends, enter into the great circle of the adamantine assembly of all tathāgatas and protect that assembly!" And they replied in assent, "As you inform us, so we will perform!" Then all the gods and goddesses—Mahēśvara, Umā, and the others—were given new names and positions in the mystic circle.

This comical tale of direct competition between the Śaiva and Baudhā traditions recognizes the homogeneous nature of many of their rituals and symbols. As story, it was to prove extraordinarily successful: Mahēśvara became one of the great scapegoats of Buddhist Mantrayāna literature, an evil buffoon like Devadatta, the "gang of five bhikṣus" in early Buddhist literature, and Māra in virtually all strata of the literate tradition. Indeed, it is clear that Mahēśvara became the "Māra" of the Vehicle of Secret Spells, and the similarities between the Buddha's conduct with Māra and the treatment of Mahēśvara were quite explicit, as we shall see.
How Heruka Was Born—Cakrasamvara Mythology

The success of this myth is reflected in the multiple versions that spread almost as quickly as the Mantrayāna itself. Approximately the same stratum of the myth is found in the Trailokyavijaya-mahākalparāja, whose Chinese translation is ascribed to Amoghadajra (705–774). This version is more benign, ending with the submission of all the divinities; it completes the story with the assurance that the gods obtain amnesty from execution by their enunciation of a specific mantra. Alternatively, a longer rendering of the Tattvasamgraha version was added to the Vajraśekhara-mahāyoga-tantra, but without the frame story of Sāvārthasiddhi/ Vajradhātu. Presumably, these versions hearken back to an oral epic, which continued to develop in association with the written forms. Beyond this stratum was the rendition of the Candraguhya-tilaka-mahātantrarāja, which gives more prominence to sex and violence. Chapter six of the Candraguhya-tilaka identifies the protagonist as Mahāsamantabhadrā, who sends forth the wrathful Vajrabhrkutikrodha to subjugate all the worldly gods and steal their women, finally bringing the gods back to life through the production of divine nectar, while Vajrabhrkutikrodha laughs with Heruka’s voice. Clearly, this direction was mythically profitable, as the motifs were further accentuated in the Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya, where chapter fifteen has Mahēśvara spawned as one of the denizens of hell. Heruka, the cosmic policeman, seizes Mahēśvara and his entire retinue, rips out their internal organs, hacks their limbs to pieces, eats their flesh, drinks their blood, and makes ritual ornaments from their bones—a model of thoroughness. Having digested all these gods, Heruka excretes them into an enormous ocean of muck, which one of his henchmen, Ucchusmakrodha, drinks up. The gods are then revived. Properly grateful for what can only have been an extraordinary experience, Mahēśvara and his minions beseech Heruka and the divinities of his maṇḍala to accept their wives, mothers, and daughters as ritual consorts while they take their correct places as the seats of the divinities in the maṇḍala. Apparently, the very vital forms of the myth found in the mDo dgongs pa ’dus pa and the fourteenth-century Thang yig gter-ma cycles of
the rNying-ma-pa take their impetus from the branch of the story initially exemplified by the *Candraguhyatilaka* and the *Guhyagarbha*.

Yet another version of the myth verified the teaching of the most influential of the yogini-tantras: the *Cakrasamvara*. The birth of Heruka is taken in the *Cakrasamvara* system as the necessary antidote for instability in the world, and Heruka has preached the yogini-tantras specifically to convert all those addicted to perversity. Heruka intentionally imitates their behavior and espouses its practice to win their commitment to the Buddhist dispensation. The source for this version of the myth is actually quite curious; so far as I am able to determine, fully developed forms occur only in indigenous Tibetan language materials, and the text of a Tibetan author of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries appears to be the earliest version.

rJe-btsun rin-po-che Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1167–1216), the grandson of the founder of Sa-skya Monastery in south-central Tibet, is accounted by the standard Tibetan representatives the third of the “five great teachers of Sa-skya,” being the son of Sa-chen Kun-dga’ snying-po (1092–1158) and the younger brother of bSod-nam rtse-mo (1142–1182), the two prior litterateurs of the monastery. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan was also the codifier of much of the Sa-skya-pa understanding of Mantrayāna as a whole. *How Heruka Was Born*—his verification of the preaching and collection of the *Cakrasamvara-tantras*—develops a version of the cosmic drama very different from those seen above in the previous Indic sources. Heruka as the protagonist and Maheśvara as the antagonist are depicted in ways dissimilar from the prior images. The plot, too, unfolds in an entirely different manner, devoid of the fast dialogue of the preceding versions.

**Synopsis: How Heruka Was Born**

There are three parts to his story: I. the eulogy of the good qualities of the teacher Śākyamuni, II. the manner of the emanation of Śrī Heruka, and III. how the *tantra-rāja* has been uttered by him.

I. The *Bhadракalpika-Mahāyāna-sūtra* relates how the teacher Śākyamuni generated the thought of awakening and then per-
fected himself for three incalculable aeons through the accumulation of merit and knowledge. Overcoming the four Māras, he obtained complete awakening in the final reality (*nītārtha) of Akanisṭha, where he worked for the benefit of bodhisattvas of the tenth level. At the level of provisional meaning (*neyārtha), he emanated himself in different places and taught diverse teachings to beings of disparate capacities. In particular, there was his manifestation as Śrī Heruka.

II. At the beginning of this Kaliyuga, beings started contending with each other through their common animosity. As the bodies started piling up from their mutual slaughter, they were removed to the various directions and the eight great charnel grounds formed. From the corpses ran blood, and as its vapor rose into the sky, the eight clouds evolved. When the clouds gave off rain, the eight rivers developed, and in them the eight divine snakes (*nāgas) arose. Mists came from the rivers and the eight trees grew, each of them with its own protector.

Then, to the south of Sumeru, in the continent of Jambudvīpa, Maheśvara's emanation arose. Now in the various directions, there are twenty-four self-originated places. Within each of these, twenty-four ferocities (*bhairava) arose, each with his own consort:

A. The four chief gods (*deva) and four attendant gods were emanations from the mind of Maheśvara and came to operate in Jambudvīpa from out of the sky, thus identified as the eight sky-going ferocities (*aṣṭa-khecara-bhairava).* They were blue because they represented a predominance of anger and were located in specific self-originated places:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>Pullīra Malaya</td>
<td>Places of the four gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Jālandhara</td>
<td>In the language of the gods, these places are called <em>piṭha.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Odḍīyāna</td>
<td>The four attendant gods. In the language of the genii (<em>gandharvas</em>), these are called <em>upapiṭha.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Arbuda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Godāvarī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Rameśvari</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Devikota</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Mālava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. The two chief local spirits (*yakṣa), the two attendant *yakṣa, the two chief demons (*rāksasa), and the two attendant *rāksasa were emanations from the speech of Maheśvara and came to operate in Jambudvīpa on the surface of the earth, thus iden-
tified as the eight earth-going ferocities (*aṣṭa-bhūcara-bhairava). They were red because they represented a predominance of desire.

C. The two chief divine snakes (nāga), the two attendant nāga, the two chief demigods (asura) and the two attendant asura were emanations from the body of Maheśvara and came to operate in Jambudvīpa from below the surface of the earth, thus identified as the eight below-the-earth-going ferocities (*aṣṭa-pāṭāla-cara-bhairava). They were white because they represented a predominance of ignorance.

D. Following the emanation of these twenty-four bhairavas and their consorts, Mahādeva arose on the peak of Mt. Sumeru, having four heads, twelve arms, naked, black, with his hair tied up in matted locks and smeared with ashes. His consort, Umā Devī, was red with one face and two arms, and they were in sexual union.

E. In conjunction with Maheśvara, his four Umā and eight Māṭrkā emanated. The four Umā derived from the qualities (guna) of Maheśvara and were yellow because of a predominance of malignity.
THE MAHEŚVARA MYTH

F. The eight Mātrkā came from the activity of Mahādeva. They were variously colored because of a predominance of envy.⁷²

Front—*Nilarāhu (sGra gcna sngon mo)⁷⁰
Left—*Haritoparāhu (Nye ba'i sgra gcna ljang gu)
Behind—*Raktāndhikā (Mun pa dmar po)⁷¹
Right—*Pitopāndhikā (Nye ba'i mun pa ser po)

The four intermediate directions were occupied by the four *Ardha-manuṣya-mukha-rūpinī (mother having a half human-headed form?).

As a shrine (caitya) for each of these bhairavas, Mahēśvara gave them twenty-four līhgams in the forms of self-produced stones, each in different shapes, from the shape of the top of his head in Pullīra Malaya to the shape of his knee in Kulatā. Offerings were continually made to these bhairavas inhabiting the twenty-four līhgams.

Once established in Jambudvīpa, Mahēśvara and his minions began to conduct themselves in a most irregular manner. For food they ate human flesh and drank human blood as their drink. They made ornaments of human bone—circlets, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and belts—all smeared with the ashes of human bone. From human hair they wove their brahmīnical threads and fashioned garlands of human skulls.

Now in order to bring them under control, the “causal form of Vajradhara”—the experiential body (sambhogakāya) in Akaniṣṭha heaven—manifested sixty-two varieties of the emanation body (nirmanakāya) as the “resultant Vajradhara.”²³ In opposition to Mahēśvara and Umā Devī were Heruka and his consort. In opposition to the four Umā were the Mahāsukha-devī. In opposition to the twenty-four bhairavas and their consorts were the twenty-four pairs of heros and heroines, in physical, vocal, and mental grades (manovāk-kāya-vīrāvīra).²⁴ And in opposition to the eight Mātrkā were the eight Samayadevi. For each of these manifestations of Vajradhara, the color and number of heads and arms were in accordance with the demonic entity to be tamed.

The actual effecting of their conversion was brought about in three stages: behavior, absorption, and subjugation. First, Heruka and his retinue imitated the behavior of these fiends—
they began to drink human blood and eat human flesh in the ritual assemblies (ganacakra), thus securing them the epithet of Glorious Bunch of Blood-drinking Divinities (dpal khrg 'thung gi lha tshogs : *sr̥therukadevagaña). Then, stealing all the ornaments, Heruka and his retinue decked themselves out like Maheśvara and his minions, with garlands of human heads, dhotis of tiger skins, etc. They then suppressed Mahādeva and his minions by causing their consciousnesses to be absorbed into the clear light, so that in the future Mahādeva would become the tathāgata *Bhasmeśvara, as the Buddha had predicted. Then, in order to demonstrate their victory, Heruka and his retinue each took the cadaver of his opposite number as a platform, which is why it is said that they reside on a preta platform.  

Yet all these distinctions of subjugater/subjugated or converter/converted operate only in the realm of provisional meaning (neyārtha); according to the definitive meaning (niṭārtha), they are to be understood as non-differentiated.  

Thus the Guhyasamāja-tantra states:

As physically adamantine, he has become Brahmā;  
As the vocal teacher, he is Maheśvara;  
As the mental teacher, he is Viṣṇu.

So all the bhairavas and everybody else are emanations of Maheśvara, whereas Maheśvara himself is an emanation of Vajradhara. All the converting divinities are emanations of Śrī Heruka, who is himself an emanation of Vajradhara. Thus, according to the definitive meaning of this story, all the characters are essentially (svabhāvatas) Mahāvajradhara.

III. Finally, there is the teaching of the tantra-rāja and the unlocking of its intention by the lineage of exegetes. Having conquered Maheśvara, Vajradhara first preached to the five families of heroes and heroines a version of the scripture in one hundred thousand chapters. But during the time of the Kaliyuga, he summarized it into a version in one hundred thousand verses. Finally, because these could not be accomplished during this Kaliyuga, he preached a version of one hundred thousand letters, collected into fifty-one chapters. In addition there are thirty-two explanatory tantras and innumerable ancillary scriptures. All of these, Vajrapāṇi collected into texts and rendered into letters following their preaching. Eventually, the teaching survived in the literature of the four major systems of Cakrasamvara exegesis—those of Luhipāda, Ghantapāda, Kāṇ-
hapāda, and Śavara. Each of them has utilized the three principal scriptures of the system, the Tāntrarāja-Laghusamvara (To. 368), the Abhidhānoltara-tantra (To. 369), and the Yoginisahcarya-tantra (To. 375). This elucidation of the birth of Śrī Heruka was culled from the speech of the teacher.

Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan’s reporting of the myth in the Cakrasamvara arena is reflective of a number of concerns which will be explored below (Interperative Strategies) when the three applications of the myth will be discussed in conjunction with each other. In his framing of the narrative, we notice the decided lack of identified antecedents; it is simply “culled from the speech of the teacher.”²⁸ The only sense we get that his version follows a Buddhist textual format is in its reference to the Bhadrakalpika-mahāyāna-sūtra. While the use of frame and embedded story is similar to that in the classical versions, the plot structure follows meditative materials closely, giving the impression of an oral explanation of the maṇḍala praxis.

Lam-'bras and Ngor-chen’s synthesis

The tradition of the Path/Fruit was one of many extraordinarily fragile yogic systems that found their way into Tibet in the eleventh century. Ostensibly, the Lam-'bras was based on the Hevajra-tantra and its ancillary scriptures, the Samputodbhāva-kalpa-rāja (To. 381) and the Ğākini-vajrapañjara-tantra (To. 419). We have no sense, however, that the Lam-'bras enjoyed the popularly or prestige in India accorded to those meditative practices developed out of the scriptures of the Tattvasamgraha, the Guhyasamāja, or the Cakrasamvara—quite the opposite, in fact, since the Lam-'bras was a secret set of practices which purportedly passed through relatively obscure figures. Moreover, it was decidedly later than most of the widely disseminated systems and was initially not given in Tibet the esteem and acceptability granted those more popular traditions.

Accordingly, the Lam-'bras utilization of the Maheśavra subjugation myth followed a more tortuous path than did the Cakrasamvara version. Each of the Lam-'bras strata was verified by a systematic hermeneutic of authentication. Such hermeneutics marked the system’s movement into an increasingly
complex institutional milieu. The earliest Lam-'bras hermeneutic on the Hevajra was a minor work by Sa-chan Kun-dga’ snying-po, a primary exegete of the Lam-'bras. His Heruka’s Prior Epiphany is focused on the mythic explanation of the mandala, rather than an explicit justification of the preaching of the Hevajra-tantra.

Synopsis: Heruka’s Prior Epiphany

During the practice of generating the visualization of the mandala (utpattikrama), one should be aware of three specific teachings: the way that such visualization purifies the personality processes, how the goal is accomplished, and the manner in which that epiphany previously occurred. While the former two were explained elsewhere, this opportunity is now taken to explain the latter.

Within the three realms of existence, the formless realm had no master, whereas the realm of form was ruled by Brahmā, and the realm of desire by Kāma-Maheśvara. While Maheśvara’s minions executed his rule throughout, he stayed in Īśāna, overseeing his domain extending from the top of Mt. Sumeru to the four continents. Primary among his retinue were his eight “Big Worldlies” (jig-rten chen po bryad), each with his own consort and incalculable henchmen, all of whom jeered at and challenged the emanation body (nirmānakāya) of the Tathāgata. In order to subdue this ungodly army, the Lord manifested his wrathful form and the eight goddesses, these latter having the same names as the eight consorts of the “Big Worldlies”: Vetañ, Gauri, Cauri, Ghasmarī, Pukkasī, Śavari, Candañ, and Đombini. The major retinue of Maheśvara was overcome by Heruka while Maheśvara himself and the seven remaining “Big Worldlies” and their consorts were overcome by the eight Buddhist goddesses. The subsidiary minions were all finally collected into the eight great charnel grounds at the periphery of the mandala. This being done, each of the Buddhist goddesses had the title “Adamantine” prefixed to her name, so that they become Vajra-Gauri, and so forth. The goddesses’ names indicate their representative castes; Vajra-Ghasmarī was the actual subjugatrix of Īśāna-Maheśvara, while Heruka converted Indra, Brahmā, Māra, and the like: thus their positions as seats of the deities in the mandala. This arrangement is in accord with the explanations of the teachers of the tradition, and the chronicle is derived from the Tattvasamgraha, the Vajraśekhara, the Trailokyavijaya, and the Candraguhya-tilaka.
Missing from Sa-chen’s discussion are the many particulars which have made this myth powerful: there is no discussion of the preaching of scripture or its collection by a coterie of disciples; we lack any sense of a drama unfolding. Furthermore, the bifurcation into levels of reality, seen earlier in Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan’s version of the myth, is entirely absent. Into this hermeneutical breach stepped Ngor-chen Kun-dga’ bzang-po (1382–1456), the founder of Ngor E-wam chos-loden Monastery (1429) and the most influential Lam-'bras figure of the 15th century.

While still at Sa-skya in 1405, Ngor-chen wrote a short work which already displayed his penchant for harmonizing the exegesis of all his available sources, rejecting outright those which did not fall into the range of acceptable variation. In his usage, “acceptable” primarily denoted material reproduced by the great teachers of the early Sa-skya-pa: Sa-chen, bSod-nams rtse-mo, and Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan. The text Ngor-chen produced, the Amazing Ocean, delineates that aspect of the Lam-'bras tradition particularly concerned with the exegesis of its putative scriptural source, the Hevajra Tantra. Traditionally, Sa-skya-pa scholars have considered this the “Exegetical System” (’grel-lugs) of the Path/Fruit tradition; it relied on scriptural exegesis rather than on the meditative instructions (man-ngag) of the “root” text (Lam-'bras rtsa-ba, To. 2284) which properly belongs to the other branch of the Lam-'bras, the “Instructional System” (man-ngag lugs). Both, though, traced their lineage to the siddha Virūpa, the legendary source for the Lam-'bras. As a chronicle of the Exegetical System, the Amazing Ocean orders itself along the lines of traditional certifications of authenticity: it explores the circumstances of the preaching of the Hevajra-tantra, its collection, the transmission of its exegesis in India and Tibet, and the manner of its proper explanation. We will be concerned with the earlier sections of the work, since they preserve the mythic materials concerning Maheśvara.

**Synopsis: Amazing Ocean**

The absolute body of the Buddha (dharmakāya) is Hevajra (Heruka) who is the penetration of naturally occurring exalted gnosis into all aspects of reality, pure and impure. The *tantra* is the absolute, being preached by the absolute to the absolute
through the presentation and dissolution of all events within reality.

In the pure realm of Akaniṣṭha-Ghanavyūha, the experiential body (sambhogakāya) of Vajradhara known as *Candrakāntamaniṇiprabha resides, with eight heads and sixteen arms, surrounded by tenth-degree bodhisattvas like Vajragarbha, continually teaching them the holy scriptures of Hevajra.

Now Īśāna-Maheśvara is the lord of this realm of desire from the summit of Sumeru on down and has an inner circle of four principals (gtso-bo bzhi) and an outer circle of eight arrogant henchmen and sultry goddesses. Because they are so insatiable, they spend all of their time—walking, sitting, standing, or lying down—in sexual embrace. Because they are so perversely angry, they sport in killing humans, playing in their blood. They are utterly ignorant about the ethical law of cause and effect, and are entirely given to excess. They control all the people of this world system and spend their time touting their superior power.

Not willing to leave well enough alone, Heruka as the experiential body (as depicted above) entered into the contemplation of “Playful Adamant” in order to subdue Mahēśvara and his gang. From each of the pores of his body he emanated maṇḍalas of divinity into the four islands of a billion world-systems. In this Jambudvīpa, he especially manifested as the emanation body (nirmāṇakāya), the resultant form of Heruka: Hevajra with eight faces and sixteen arms.35 “Just as Sa-chen had explained,” Rudra himself was overcome by Ghasmari while the four worldly gods of his inner circle were overcome by Heruka, and the rest of the retinue were overcome by the other seven of the Buddhist goddesses.36 By assigning Mahēśvara’s incalculable retinue to the eight great charnel grounds at the periphery of the maṇḍala, Heruka overcame their anger. By kissing, fondling, and other forms of great bliss, he suppressed their desire.37 By mantras and all varieties of speech, he tamed their ignorance.

Then, immediately following this subjugation, the teacher Bhagavān Hevajra took residence in the palace found in the Vagina of Adamantine Women, and to his supramundane retinue he preached the Hevajra Tantra in 700,000 verses and in 500,000 verses, as well as the ancillary scriptures: the Mahā-mudrātilaka (To. 420), the Jñānagarbha (To. 421), the Jñānatilaka (To. 422), the Sampūṭa, and so forth. According to the commentary on the Dākārnavatāntara (To. 1419) there were preached six “root” tantras: the Ocean of Yoga, (yogārṇava) the Ocean of Gnosis,
(jñānārṇava) the Ocean of Discipline (sāmvarārṇava), the Ocean of Ritual (kriyārṇava), and the Ocean of Reality (tattvārṇava), these five being collectively equivalent in size to the large Dākārṇava (Ocean of Dakas) in 3,600,000 verses. The Hevajra-tantra in 500,000 verses was the text identified as the Ocean of Gnosis, thus being one of the vast scriptures revealed to the goddess Vajrarāhī and others.

Sākyamuni was the emanation body preaching all of these scriptures in a former time, later pretending to pass through the stages of a buddha in this world system to demonstrate the proper method for obtaining enlightenment. The great scriptures (Hevajra and the rest) were preached at the former time when the Buddha really obtained his enlightenment, and the received texts are but mere shadows of the source versions (mūlatantra). The process of collection was effected, naturally, by a supernormal being who was not subject to the little merit of this degenerate age: the Hevajra and Samputa-tantras were collected by the bodhisattva Vajragarbha, who acted as interlocutor, while the Vajrapaṇjara was brought together by Nairatmyā. These, of course, represent the extensive versions—at least for the Hevajra—which have not been revealed during this time when life spans are short and beings are addicted to study and consideration, but without ever arriving at the experience of the taste of deep contemplation. Thus, the source versions of the grand scriptures have remained hidden so that beings will not be seduced into scholarship without meditative practice.

Finally, all the ideas of who preached what, where it was preached, and so forth are details. From the perspective of reality’s direct expression (nītārthatas), all the beings—teacher, audience, gods, devils, ghosts and saints—are merely manifestations of the teacher Sākyamuni’s gnosis. Thus Hevajra II.ii.39:

I, the teacher; I, the teaching; I, the listener with fine retinue. I, the proposition; I, the instructor of the world; I am the world and the things of the world.38

Ngor-chen treats the episode in almost as offhanded a manner as Sa-chen. He is much more concerned with the entire cosmic relation among the various bodies of the buddha, and the tantra as a fragment of an oceanic text expressing innate gnosis. The formal myth merely serves as door for the manifestation of gnosis in the world.
Interpretive Strategies

Tucci, Stein, and Iyanaga have made contributions to our understanding of the various moments in the myth, whether in India, Tibet, or China and Japan. All three have rightly remarked on the theme of the transmutation of Mahēśvara’s hubris into the position of buddhahood. Both Stein and Iyanaga, however, have questioned the prima facie explanation that the story reflects the opposition of Buddhism to Hinduism and was developed to demonstrate the superiority of the Buddhist dharma. Furthermore, having maintained that extrapolating doctrinal significance based on a modern perspective appears impossible—and is in any case illegitimate—Iyanaga appears to subvert his own rule by maintaining that the characters depicted in the story are symbolic or allegorical representations, allegory also being a primary theme in Stein’s interpretive strategy. Iyanaga goes even further. He proposes that, as Mahēśvara passes through moments—from being an obstruction to the dharma to becoming a buddha—Mahēśvara’s submission graphically demonstrates the nonopposition of Buddhism and other religions. Following this approach, the Buddhist and the nonbuddhist, Māra and the Buddha, the passions and the wisdoms, are all fundamentally identical. Thus, far from being a tale of the irreconcilable opposition of the two, the myth demonstrates their essential equivalence.

While there is much in these explanations that appears justified by the data, I believe that the conclusions could be further refined and I would resist the assumption that modern assessments are illegitimate. I propose an analysis of the versions of the myth by milieu: I. the Tattvasamgraha in India and II. the Cakrasamvara and Lam-’bras systems in Tibet. In each case, the analysis considers the myths from three perspectives: a. socio-historical, b. literary, and c. doctrinal.

I. Indian Myth: Tattvasamgraha

a. There can be little doubt that the Indic story indicates the real tension between Buddhist and Śaiva factions. Buddhism in India has had a long history of weaving tales of the conversion of heretical leaders, beginning with Uruvilvā Kāśyapa,
the leader of five hundred mat-haired ascetics who performed the fire sacrifice.\(^{41}\) Furthermore, no one familiar with the hagiographic literature of India could doubt that Śaiva and Śākta ascetics—in particular, the Kāpālikas—were the primary targets of the Buddhists’ competitiveness.\(^{42}\) Buddhist monasteries at this period had become enormous landed institutions that controlled great economic resources but had a tenuous relationship to the wider society, somewhat like medieval Christian monasteries and modern universities. The literature of the Vajrayāṇa, however, does not reflect the values of these institutions, but stems from village and hermitage-based locales where wandering Buddhist ascetics were but another variety of sādhu found in many of the same environments as Śaiva and Śākta yogins. At this level of society, the perception of superiority is informed by oral literature, the ultimate source of the genres of written literature such as the avadānas, the purāṇas, the epics, etc. While the episode is clearly patterned after similar episodes in purāṇas such as the Devī-māhātmya—particularly noticeable in the mantric invocation of Durgā’s great antagonists, Śumbha and Niśumbha—the circumstances of the utilization of the myth are quite different. For example, the religious position of Mahēśvara is unlike that held by the foes of Devī.\(^{43}\) Thus, at the socio-historical level, we should understand the Mahēśvara myth in the Tattvasamgraha as a straight-forward defensive technique of the Buddhists to establish the superiority of their gods over Mahēśvara, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, etc., in an attempt to retrieve some of their lost position in unsophisticated circles in India, whether at Devī-koṭa, Vārānasi, Patna, or wherever. The noticably increased mythic and symbolic orientation of the Vajrayāṇa brought with it both the strength of dramatic images and the weakness of having to follow pre-established models of myth, which were often Hindu. Thus, this strategy vitiated Vajrayāṇists’ efforts at increasing their visibility and position, since they began to appear homogeneous with the more extensive Hindu mythic systems. We realize that they were ultimately unsuccessful in their endeavor and may appreciate the threat by considering either the displacement of Buddhist cave structures in Ellora by the more mythically-oriented Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava versions or the intrusion of Vaiṣṇava brahmans into the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgāya.
b. The literary techniques employed, as Iyanaga has rightly observed, include material from both the Devimāhātmya and the Buddha's subjugation of Māra. Like these, of course, the myth works at several levels, including a literal one. Essential to the Indian understanding of story is that it be predicated as real, not regarded as a spiritualized allegory. Indeed, one could make the case that traditional India does not recognize a strict distinction between ideals and reals, the supposition being, for example, that the Meghadūta and the Lokaprajñapti reflect the real landscape of the world, their cosmology indicative of the way things really are, despite appearances.

By the same token, events, in order to be real, must fall into certain ideological frameworks. Should events in the world not correspond to the ideology, then the world is out of balance and must be brought into harmonic resonance with the ideal. Concerns of this variety motivate mythic cycles of world renewal, and Hindu renewal myths—such as the Devimāhātmya—are devoted to the rectification of the imbalance among the demons, gods and humans. Differences, of course, abound, and we note that the Buddhist version, in which Maheśvara is included into the maṇḍala and eventually liberated, differentiates Hindu themes of naked power from Buddhist models of compassionate activity. Buddhist systems of reform, moreover, go back at least as far as the purāṇas, and the principle of economy would ask us minimally to examine Buddhist literature for prototypes.

The correspondence between Maheśvara and Māra can be seen from internal scriptural statements—as in the Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi-sūtra—and from later hermeneutics, which we will see when we turn to the Hevajra materials, below. However, the Māra story is that of the unenlightened Bodhisattva overcoming the threats and temptations of the Lord of Desire. “Mara,” of course, is derived from the root Vṝṣṇ, to die, so that the Bodhisattva becomes awakened by overcoming the potential for death and subsequent rebirth. Māra never becomes converted, and in Buddhist legend remains until it comes time for him to talk the Buddha into passing into final nirvāṇa. Conversely, early Buddhist literature is replete with examples of demonic individuals who became converted and who subsequently won either nirvāṇa or extraordi-
nary greatness—Angulimala, Aśoka, etc.—as opposed to Devadatta, who is like Māra in his intractability.

The Mahēśvara episode, in fact, sets up two levels of story. First, there is the frame story of the obtainment of enlightenment by the bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi, who needs the worldly gods integrated into the maṇḍala to complete his activity as a buddha and teach the world. Then, there is the conversion of Mahēśvara, who keeps the world out of balance by his activity. The first is brought to fruition by the resolution of the second, embedded, story. In a sense, the interrelation of the two—whatever their prototypes—is patterned after the episodes in the legend of the Buddha, and particularly those of the Vinaya, where teaching can only be effected following the dispersal of a behavioral aberration, in this case, Mahēśvara’s unattractive habits.

Just as important is the retention of struggle and resolution in the Vajrayāna context. The universalization of buddhaness (buddhatā) in the form of the cosmic buddha Vairocana obviates any immediate personal difficulties—Vajrayāna, with its concern for postulating an enlightened ground, could not include Mahāvairocana in an individual struggle against his own obscurations. He could, however, become involved in the elimination of other beings’ difficulties by reason of his great compassion, but his activity is mediated through Vajrapāni—Mahāvairocana does not himself subjugate Mahēśvara. Thus, the dramatic requirements of cosmic mythology are fulfilled in the Tattvasamgraha by the scripture’s refusal to depict Mahāvairocana as an abstract entity. Instead, he works through Vajrapāni for the salvation of beings from their own rude behavior—even if such behavior is as degenerate as that of Mahēśvara—insisting finally on their integration into the balanced array of reality’s maṇḍala.

c. Doctrinally, the Tattvasamgraha is not complex, and clearly does not invoke the multi-valued structure Iyanaga would have us believe. We get no sense from the text of a dual-truth structure, as is explicit in the exegesis of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan and Ngor-chen. The simple doctrine is that the dharmadhātu maṇḍala is the essential means for obtaining enlightenment, that any being—Mahēśvara included—may obtain the enlightened condition, and that the maṇḍala is the direct expression of
salvific reality, established by the eternally awakened Buddha himself. The means for their conversion is the extraordinary power of the living word, the mantra, which is the key to unlocking the palace of awakening. A subtext is that even those killed in the name of religion will be saved in the next life, an idea strictly accepted by early Tibetan religious, and one that may be inferred in India by the subsequent reembodiment of Maheśvara as the buddha Bhasmeśvara. Iyanaga was certainly correct in interpreting Maheśvara's death and resurrection as a dramatic symbol for the transformation of defilement into gnosis, but this, too, is a symbolic subtext to the main story line of world-reform through the maṇḍala display.

II. Tibetan Modification—Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra

a. We can detect two primary motives for the mythic exegesis of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan and Ngor-chen: the desire for cosmological and ritual closure at the textual level, and verification of scriptural-lineal authenticity that textual closure provides.

In the case of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, closure of mythic and ritual holes in the heritage of the 'Khon family was of primary importance. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan was instrumental in putting together much of what is now considered the orthodox Sa-skya-pa perspective on the Vajrayāna, and integrated many fragile meditative systems into the widely respected, if pugnaciously secretive, Lam-'bras. In this endeavor, he utilized the rule already established by other early teachers in southern Tibet, including his father and elder brother: orthodoxy is verified by a system's Indian antecedents. Where those antecedents were accepted or unassailable, he paid scant attention. Where the antecedents of his system might have been considered controversial, he takes some pains to demonstrate their validity. He did this in a quite systematic way for the Lam-'bras, and the development of the Maheśvara subjugation myth appears to have proceeded on similar lines. Clearly, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan did not invent the application of the myth to the preaching of the Cakrasaṃvara. Although not cited by him, commentaries by both Indrabhūti and Šūravajra make the subjugation of Maheśvara part of the lore surrounding the advent of
that tantra.\textsuperscript{46} Yet the jump from the paucity of Indic materials to the well-developed scenario evident in Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's text is comprehensible if we surmise that the Indic storytellers wove their tales on a speedy loom, for, as I have already indicated, the author declared that he received the story from his teachers. I believe that Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan—already removed by some decades from the Indic and Nepalese sources of his tradition—found himself in possession of an enormous quantity of cosmological, hagiographical, ritual, and meditative material, as did most lineage holders in southern Tibet at this time. The resulting textual production was a response to the fear for the imminent demise of the lore—Tibetans being quite aware of current Islamic incursions—the measure of its quantity, and the need to verify its authenticity.\textsuperscript{47}

This brings us to the second point: the validation of the system as a whole. Contrary to the stereotypes of popular literature, Tibetans have not always been benign, smiling mountaineers. Competition for economic resources traditionally has been intense, and the early Tibetan hagiographical literature clearly indicates an aspect of the culture obsessed with intrigue, black magic, challenges, occasional religious wars, and hostility between certain members of the Buddhist hierarchy. In such an environment, the myth of Maheśvara's subjugation was not, so far as I know, interpreted to allow the suppression of personal enemies—as it might have been, given Christian eschatology of the Antichrist—but was utilized to bolster the position of families and monastic institutions in specific ways.

There were, of course, no serious challenges to the organized monastic structure from devotees of Śiva in Tibet. The myth became instead a vehicle for verifying the greatest concern of institutional Tibetan culture: lineages of authority, a reflection of the extraordinary conservatism of Tibetan civilization. The actual mechanism of verification must appear bizarre. Each of the maṇḍalas implicated in the myths under discussion—that is, the Sa-skya use of the Luhipāda Cakrasamvara meditation and the Hevajra maṇḍala of the 'Khon-lugs of Lam-'bras—relate that the particular divinities are visualized trampling on Hindu gods and goddesses, in particular Maheśvara. Additionally, Tibetans had passed down oral materials taken from India and Nepal on the internecine strife among Bauddhas,
Saivas and Śāktas, including oral and written information on the mythology of Maheśvara's subjugation. Moreover, the apologia of the written myths of the scriptures' preaching certainly was communicated by the Indian and Nepalese source monasteries. Consequently, Tibetans understood quite well that the verification of their own lineage of meditative praxis was dependent in some measure on the utilization of this myth for the verification of a specific lineage of exegesis. For the exegesis of a scripture to be viable, the scripture itself must be tied to the great cosmic event of the tantra's preaching as a considered act of world reform. Tibetans thus quite handily made the jump from Hindu gods appearing in their mandalas as divine throw rugs to the verification of their familial and monastic institutions as designated heirs of cosmic renewal.

Challenges made from one lineage to another in Tibet were usually on exactly these lines: did the tradition in question draw from an authentic Indic Buddhist background or was it tainted with the pollution of heretical lineages through Hindu rather than Buddhist teachers? Tibetans were quite aware that well-meaning members of the Tibetan clergy fell victim to unscrupulous Indian and Nepalese teachers who represented themselves in areas beyond their authority. For example, Kāyastha Gayadhara is said to have misrepresented himself to Ḥos lo-tsa-ba Khug-pa lhas-tsas as being Maitripa in the flesh. Tibetans were equally aware that certain of their own compatriots were not above misrepresenting what they had learned and from whom. Nag-tsho lo-tṣa-ba was known to have challenged the claim that Mar-pa studied directly with Nāropa. Thus, the clergy in Tibet continued to question systems and lineages—a system might be authentic but the lineage of instruction questionable or fabricated, or the entire edifice might reflect non-Buddhist values. Moreover, the bickering evident between the Mar-lugs and the Rwa-lugs, between the Rwa-lugs and the Ḥos-lugs, or between such teachers as dGe-tshe Khyung-po grags-se and Zur-chung Shes-rab grags-pa, certainly must have presented the Sa-skya masters with the motivation to limit their own vulnerability.

Although we appear to have no record of a direct challenge to his Cakrasamvara lineage, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, did take some pains with
the Cakrasamvara materials at his disposal. He discussed the hagiography of the Indian teachers and their Tibetan followers at some length in three separate works, devoted respectively to the lineages of Kāñhāpāda, Ghantapāda, and Luhipāda. The result of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan’s mythic and hagiographic writings was mixed. While gZhon-nu dpal’s Blue Annals probably made use of his hagiographies, the mythic form of the origin of the Cakrasamvara explored by Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan was not the one to obtain widest currency in Tibet. Such currency derived from the textual and oral materials assembled and amplified by Bu-ston Rin-chen grub (1290–1364); his version was followed by many subsequent authors.

If closure was Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan’s primary concern, defense appeared to be Ngor-chen’s. The Sa-skya-pa had enjoyed a special position in Tibet since the middle of the thirteenth century, when Sa-skya Paṇḍita was designated the first monk-ruler of the Snowy Mountain. While the Sa-skya hegemony fragmented around 1358–59 and the Yüan Dynasty collapsed in 1368, the Sa-skya-pa still enjoyed a special position of power and wealth which attracted the criticism of other orders, especially in the face of the excesses of privilege that had occurred. The backlash against the Sa-skya-pa—intellectual as well as political—must have been intense, and the Sa-skya-pa themselves attempted to retain control of Tibet’s intellectual direction by polemics. It is between the years 1404–1406 (ages twenty-two to twenty-four) that we find Ngor-chen involved in the first of his two periods of apologetics. In 1404 he wrote his defense of the superiority of Vajrayāna enlightenment—the theory that buddhahood obtained by the Path of Secret Spells is more exalted than that obtained by the standard Mahāyāna perfections. In 1406, he defended the orthodoxy of the Hevajra-tantra itself against those who maintained that, because the scripture speaks primarily of all-embracing gnosis and because Virūpa is rumoured to have been the Vijnānavādin monk Dharmapāla before his conversion to the lightning path, the Hevajra must be of the class of texts reflecting the “mind only” conceptualization of reality and therefore inferior to the orthodox Madhyamaka view. Although the chronologies are confused, Ngor-chen’s hagiographies speak of his defending the Sa-skya-pa position in central
Tibet against vociferous critics. Doubtless, his *Amazing Ocean*, written in 1405, also reflected these same concerns, despite the fact that the text is not overtly polemical and does not specifically identify an antagonistic position, as do the 1404 and 1406 apologies.

Who were these *parāmitā*-based critics of the Sa-skya system? Modern Tibetan religious folklore often reifies all Sa-skya-pa critics into dGe-lugs-pa monks and, in the case of Ngor-chen, into mKhas-grub dge-legs dpal-bzang-po (1385–1438). Certainly, mKhas-grub-rje was one of Ngor-chen's critics in his later life and clearly did maintain, for example, the doctrine that there was no difference in result when buddhahood is obtained by either the perfections or the Path of Spells. However, the circumstances were more complex than reification into a single antagonist. For example, the dates themselves are difficult—in 1404, mKhas-grub-rje turned 19 years of age and was still a good Sa-skya-pa monk studying with Red-mda'-ba; he did not even visit Tsong-kha-pa until 1407. Moreover, Tibetan proclivity towards oral exaggeration certainly exacerbated the problem, some members of the clergy assuming that the refutation of a facet of a practice indicates a wholesale condemnation of the tradition. Red-mda'-ba was a *prajñāpāramitā* master and is said to have held that Dharmapāla's view was idealist, but we have no sense that he extended this critique to the *Hevajra-tantra* itself, although some of his more rash followers may have done so. Clearly, mKhas-grub did not. Exaggeration, in fact, led mKhas-grub to complain that people said he refuted the *Lam-'bras*, a charge he hotly denied—he had called into question two specific practices. However the polemical stage was set: once Ngor-chen produced the verification of the *Hevajra* in its mythic setting, his sense of closure became the standard for Sa-skya-pa savants. We find 'Jam mgon A-mes zhabs, writing his masterpiece of *Lam-'bras* lore in 1621, specifically reproducing Ngor-chen's mythos, relying on his prestige.

b. The literary shift from the snappy dialogue of the *Tattva-samgraha* to the cosmic diagram of the *Cakrasaṃvara mandala* is in some measure dependent on the shift from an Indian milieu
to the Sa-skya-pa system in Tibet. Whereas rNying-ma-pa authors continued the use of vital dialogue, Sa-skya-pa authors eliminated it in favor of the codification into diagrams. Why the difference? Again, social values and levels are at the heart of the issue. Village culture supports the wandering bard, whose presence serves to alleviate oppressive boredom and whose message imbues meaning into the lives of the audience. Clearly, many rNying-ma-pa literary genres were closely influenced by oral and bardic literature. The Sa-skya-pas, conversely, made the transition to textually-based monastic institutions; their myths directly expressed the importance of verifying the presence of texts in the institution rather than delineating the drama of unfolding awareness. For the rNying-ma-pa, the drama of the struggle in multiple episodes was the focus; for the Sa-skya-pa, the goal of the received text as the epiphany of gnosis was paramount.

Turning to the plot, we notice that Mahesvara and crew are directly included into the dharmadhātu mandala of the Tattva-samgraha, while neither the Cakrasamvara nor the Hevajra utilize Mahesvara or other divinities as anything but adversaries. Both Sa-skya-pa myths make allowance for the ultimate liberation of the Hindu divinities, but neither allows them a formal position in the mandala as exemplars following the universal pattern. The Sa-skya-pa formulation more closely follows the paradigm of the Buddha’s victory over Māra, and the indebtedness of both the Cakrasamvara and Hevajra episodes to the Māra myth is explicit. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan specifically introduces his version with a Māra-myth reference; the four figures trampled on by Hevajra are Māra, Mahesvara, Indra, and Brahmā, while HT I.iii.17 is explicit that Hevajra destroys the four Māras. Thus, the dramatic device—of the contentious dialogue among Mahāvairocana, Vajrapāṇi, and Mahesvara, followed by the reincarnation and liberation as denouement—is not essential to the plot. Rather, the given qualities of the individuals, being the ground of conversion, are the essential elements for the unfolding of the drama. Symbolically, this is played out in the direct imitation of one deity by another: Vajrapāṇi does not imitate Mahesvara, but Heruka does. The iconography is developed in recognition, specified time and again in the texts of the Sa-skya-pa, that the tantras of the Anut-
tara-yoga class have been preached to attract those beings filled with all the various defilements and who do not wish to abandon their preferred behavior.

As a corollary, the later myths imply that the lowest variety of behavior leads to the highest enlightenment. We have every expectation that the tellers of such myths enjoyed the spectacle of the lowest fiends and their dastardly crimes, with the gallant Heruka coming to the rescue of all beings. Clearly, Heruka and his retinue do not enjoy acting in a manner similar to that of Maheśvara but have undertaken this form of divine activity to attract those addicted to perverse behavior. We are thus impressed by how far the Buddha's compassion extends, including even degraded beings. As an antidote to personal guilt, the scenario is as attractive to the myth's listeners as Amitābha's saving power in another era—no one need feel irredeemable, whatever their crimes may have been.

In the Cakrasamvara system, the exact locales are important, and their specification is an extension of that lineage's concern for the integration of the macrocosm and microcosm, each of the twenty-four external locales being identified with an internal locale within the body of the yogin. While the precise Indic source for identifying a system of twenty-four lingams and bhairavas is obscure, it cannot be immediately assumed that it was a popular Hindu system subsumed into the Buddhist fold. Virtually none of the more famous "lingams of light" (jotirlinga) belong to the Cakrasamvara formula; I have encountered no list in purānic literature which corresponds to either the number twenty-four or the places identified. Closest in spirit are the various Buddhist places of pilgrimage specified frequently in most of the tantras concerned with dākinīs: the Cakrasamvara, Abhidhanottara, Hevajra, etc. The Buddhist mythic contention that these places were initially Śaiva cannot be accepted as fact, or even that they existed outside of the minds of the storytellers, although some clearly did. Instead, the list is developed out of such geographical lists of places noted in esoteric Buddhist literature as early as the Mahāmāyūrī-vidyā-rajkī-dhārani.

As a meditative technique, the identity of macrocosmic locales with microcosmic structures is striking. It allows the meditator to understand the cosmic drama as internal as well
as external, Mahesvara as an extension of his own proclivity to defilement and Heruka as the resonance of the Buddha in his own stream of being. As literature, the specification of locales is equally dramatic and is a technique frequently used in Indian and Tibetan tales, whether in the Purāṇas or the Epic of Ge-sar. For a village-bound audience with little opportunity or resources for travel, the identification of all the places of the known world by the wandering teacher must have seemed at least as romantic and exciting as travel stories are for us today.

To find, moreover, that the entire itinerary is located within one's own psycho-physical continuum must have been a stunning validation of the listener's existence.

No such literary devices are available to Ngor-chen; his work invokes neither the quick repartee of the Tattvasamgraha nor the grand schematism of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's work. In all fairness, the subjugation of Mahesvara is not his real concern; Ngor-chen just wants to get the tantras preached and authenticated, so that he can discuss the scriptural relations and proceed to the hagiographies of the saintly lineage. We get little sense that Ngor-chen appreciates the literature of his mythic inheritance. Rather, he appears solely concerned with verifying its reality on a scale of values developed by the institutional requirements of his day. As a result, Ngor-chen's is the driest expression of a juicy story.

c. The doctrinal framework of the Tibetan versions of the myth is explicit and, in the Hevajra telling, quite essential to the story. Clearly, the expression of multiple levels of truth—further trifurcated in the Cakrasamvara mandala into physical, vocal, and mental—brings out the necessity of admitting the mythic reality into the ordinary world. Here, Mahesvara and his retinue really perform all their actions, which are countered by Heruka and his mandala: evil is suppressed, defilement purified, and the cosmos realigned into the universal form. Much more difficult is the myth as the expression of absolute truth. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan stresses the drama of subjugation when he extends the movement of reality from Vajradhara to Mahesvara. Conversely, Ngor-chen emphasizes the process of teaching as an act of nondifferentiated communication, although he clearly includes Mahesvara in the ground of being as emblematic of defiled existence. The hermeneutic of mythic
nondifferentiation raises a fundamental soteriological and ontological question: If Mahēśvara and the demonic horde are merely facets of the teacher’s gnosis, then does the absolute body of the Buddha emanate evil?

Ngor-chen attempts to circumvent the problem by maintaining that both pure and impure elements of reality are penetrated by the dharmakāya. I find this explanation intellectually problematic. If the entire process of defilement and awakening—either cosmically or personally—operates absolutely undifferentiated from the absolute body of the Buddha, then the Buddhist has as little claim to solve the problem of evil as does the theist. Indeed, the personality and activity of the eternal Buddha come to center stage, since the drama is enacted at his pleasure. If the Buddhist replies that such a drama is a play to lure beings away from defilement, then the equivalence of the microcosm and macrocosm cannot be maintained. In this instance, external defilement is unreal while internal defilement is real; the internality and symbolic reality of the myth are futile and cannot be reenacted in the discharge of personal awakening.

Buddhist soteriology has yet to come to grips with the problems evoked by an open-ended cosmological system. The apparent sophistication of its doctrine still masks an incomplete exploration of the philosophical implications of its mythic structure, partially because it has recourse to a series of soteriological postulates buttressed by the irrefutable invitation to try it for oneself. Yet when the system attempts to identify itself with the ordinary-language images of the individual, which are required in the mythic process, we obtain a curious reversal: the system, as it were, meets itself coming and going—denying the individual while relying on the individual’s self-delusion to eliminate the potential for further delusion. If there are no real individuals, however, we revert to a soteriological autokinesis wherein the absolute deludes itself and awakens itself.

So, while mythically powerful, this inversion of agent, from the individual to the absolute body of the Buddha, is problematic in an intellectual culture of agentlessness. The myth has drawn the tradition into the implications of the identity of the two levels of truth, but bringing the absolute into the
operation of relative truth, which reverses the vector of standard Buddhist hermeneutic. Traditionally, Buddhist thought has deconstructed the categories of relative truth to arrive at the identity of the two truths. Here, Buddhist myth constructs categories of the absolute truth in order to arrive at this identity, the absolute taking on characteristics of relative process. So, while Ngor-chen has ignored the myth as literature, his invocation of the doctrine of the Buddha’s bodies is quite to the point—the problem is gnostic embodiment as a response of the ultimate. Space prevents a more thorough examination of the issue, but we note that the requirements of textual authenticity and closure propelled Tibetans to a land seldom visited. Exegetes found themselves hovering on the periphery of myth, attempting to manipulate images which did not invoke their ideas while working in a curious twilight between symbol and theory. Yet mitigating the tension between myth and doctrine is Buddhist literature’s playful willingness to eradicate ultimate categories and turn the devil into a Buddha with the stroke of a pen.

Conclusions

The extraordinary popularity of the Buddhist myth of the subjugation of Maheśvara—whether at the hands of Vajrapāṇi or Heruka—has much to do with its ability to invoke several levels of meaning simultaneously. As a story, it is a classic tale of Buddhist values overcoming the power-oriented behaviors still evident among Śaiva and Śākta practitioners. As soteriology, it implies that no depravity is irredeemable; indeed, it affirms that the defiled condition will be answered by the insistent movement towards awakening, becoming finally the stuff of enlightenment itself. As doctrine, particularly in Tibet, it affirms the interpenetration of all elements of reality and their mutual interdependence. And, as history, it leads us to understand the internal and external forces that affected the Buddhist communities in India and Tibet, and gives us more insight into the process whereby Buddhist communities developed tools of identity in the face of fissiparous forces.
NOTES

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ABBREVIATIONS


To.  Hakuju Ui, et al., *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Cannons* (Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934).


Chandra’s “edition” simply added misprints to Yamada’s fine edition, which is now unavailable. The Tibetan of the Tattvasamgraha is PTT. 112, vol. 4, pp. 218-283; the standard Chinese text is T. 882.18.341-445. The Sarvârtha-siddhi myth is pp. 4-5 of Chandra’s text; Tibetan text is pp. 219.4-220.2; and pp. 341c-342b of the Chinese.

5. Chandra ed. pp. 211-213; Tib. pp. 281.4-282.4; Ch. 443b-444c.

6. The following is a summary of the essential sections of the myth, which is found at Chandra pp. 56-59; Tib. pp. 239.4-241.5; Ch. 370a-372c.

The critical reader will realize that I have taken some poetic license with the language to reflect the quick repartee of the Sanskrit. The myth was first studied by Giuseppe Tucci, who discovered the Tattvasamgraha manuscript in Nepal; he edited and translated much of the text of the myth in Indo-Tibetica, Reale Accademia d’Italia Studi e Documenti I (Rome: Reale Accademia d’Italia, 1932), vol. 1, pp. 135-145. The myth has been considered in detail and summarized by Nobumi Iyanaga, “Récits de la soumission de Mahesvara par Trailokyavijaya—d’après les sources chinoises et japonaises,” in Michel Strickmann, ed., Tântâc and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein, Mêlanges chinois et bouddhiques vol. XXII (Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1985), pp. 633-745. Unfortunately, Iyanaga’s excellent study does not capture the snappy dialogue of the Sanskrit, being based primarily on the ponderous Sung translation into Chinese, T. 882. The material has been also considered by Stein, Annaire du Collège de France 1972:499-510, 1973:463-470, 1974:508-517. A noted Tibetan discussion of the Mahesvara (Rudra) myth is that by sLe-lung-pa bZhad pa’i rdo rje, Dam can bstan srng rgya mtsho’i rnam par thar pa cha shas tsam brjod pa sgon med legs bshad, Sman Rtsi Shesrig Spendzod vol. 104 (Leh, Ladakh: T.S. Tashigang and B.P.O. Nemo, 1979), pp. 1-103.


8. T. 1171, 1172. The authenticity of Amoghavajra’s translations is frequently disputed; see Iyanaga, “Récits,” pp. 640-642. The Tibetan text is To. 482, and the myth is found in sDe-dge rgyud-’bum vol. ta, fols. 10a-12b. sLe-lung-pa, pp. 10.7 & 13.6, attempts to integrate the rather innocuous statements of the Mahâvairocana-abhisambodhi-sûtra (To. 494) into the full-blown form of the myth, but the sûtra simply confounds Māra and Mahesvara, giving a mantra to bring him under control; sDe-dge rgyud ‘bum, vol. tha, fol. 182a.

9. sDe-dge rgyud-’bum, vol. ta, fol. 11b: gang ‘di lta bu’i snags kyi tshig smra ba ni khyod rab tu mi hgrongs so].

10. To. 480; sDe-dge rgyud-’bum, vol. nya, fols. 237a-247b.


14. Stein, *Annuaire* 1973, p. 468, mentions that there is a commentary ascribed to Nāropa which contains a fuller version, but I have no access to the Peking bsTan-'gyur at this time. This version is not cited by Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, Bu-ston, sLe-lung-pa, or other Tibetan savants whom I have studied, and so its influence was less than complete, yet Stein mentions that Pretapuri in "Nāropa's commentary" is identified with Pu-hrangs in Tibet, an identification that Bu-ston accepts, bDe mchog nyung ngu'i rgyud kyi spyi rnam don gsal, Lokesh Chandra, ed., *The Collected Works of Bu-ston*, Satapiṭaka Series, vol. 64 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), pt. 6, pp. 54–61.

15. *dPal he ru ka'i byung tshul*, SKB III.298.4.2–300.2.6.

16. The division of Mahēśvara's retinue into celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean is evident in the *Tattvasamgraha* mythology also; Chandra, pp. 59–60.

17. I have edited the place names; the versions found in the text are clearly orally transmitted and are meant to reflect the widely accepted names for the twenty-four locales found in the *Cakrasamvara* system. Confer HT I.vii.10–18; *Abhidhānottara*, PTT 17, vol. 2, pp. 48.1.1–4, 52.5.6–53.2.3, 56.1.6–56.2.3, 56.5.8–57.2.1, 58.4.4–59.2.8, etc.; Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. 3, part 2, pp. 38–45; Shinichi Tsuda, *The Samvarodaya-Tantra: Selected Chapters* (Tokyo: The Kokuseido Press, 1974), pp. 93–96, 260–263.

18. It is not clear why Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan specifies that these two yakṣa came from the north to take control of these two locales, or why he does that selectively in other instances (*nāgas, asuras*). Most likely, it is the conservation of a prior association on his part (did all these figures have such associations?); it is less likely that he is selectively developing associations found in the sādhanas in question.

19. Color assignment here contradicts the names of the Umā, which identify each Umā with her own color.

20. I have not observed elsewhere the identification of a goddess with vicissitudes of the planet Rāhu, rendering the stem feminine. The asterisked (*) Indic forms of the names ascribed to the Umā and the Māṭrāka are conjectural.

21. We note the irregular application of the feminine ending *mo*.

22. The first four Māṭrāka names are available from the literature. See Martin M. Kalff, "Dākinis in the Cakrasamvara Tradition," in Martin Brauen and Per Kvaerne, eds., *Tibetan Studies* (Zürich: Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, 1978), pp. 149–162, esp. p. 157; Tsuda, *Samvarodaya* XIII.30, pp. 117, 285. According to these sources, the other four Māṭrāka are most commonly identified as Yamadātī, Yamadūti, Yamadāṃṣṭri, and Yamamathani.


24. While the *mandaḷa* utilized by Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan appears the general synthesis of the four traditions mentioned at the end of the text, in the 1730-s edition of the SKB, our text follows the hagiography of Luhipāda’s lineage, leading to the surmise that the Zhu-chen Tshul-khrims considered the *mandaḷa* to be based on Luhipāda’s *Śrī Bhagavadabhisamaya* (To. 1427, sDe-dge
rgyud 'grel, vol. wa, fols. 186b3–193a1). This text is apparently the earliest attested practice of the Cakrasamvara, having been translated by Rin-chen bzang-po (958–1055) and Śraddhākaravarman. It also enjoys two commentaries by *Tathāgatavajra, To. 1509–1510, the latter including a separate chronicle of Paṇḍita dPal-'dzin and the teachers of the lineage. A form of the mandala is also given in Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, ed., Nispamayogāvalī of Mahāpaṇḍita Abhyākaragupta, Gaekwad’s Oriental Series No. 109 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1972), pp. 44–46, 26–29.

25. A preta is one departed, but usually a ghost rather than a corpse. Here, as before, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan is attempting to tie the myth to the language of the ritual.

26. This was a favored hermeneutic among the Sa-skya-pa. Sa-chen had maintained that it was one of the signs of the superiority of the Vajrayāna (SKB I.122.3.3), an idea also utilized by bSod-nams rtse-mo in his commentary on the Hevajra-tantra (SKB II.51.2.6–3.2). In the previous reference, however, Sa-chen quotes Padmavajra’s Guhyasiddhi (To. 2217) in support of his idea, and we see that Puṇḍarika maintains the idea in his Vimalaprabhā commentary to the Kalacakra, Upadhyaya ed., pp. 23–24. Decidedly, the Sa-skya teachers looked for Indic support of favored doctrines.

27. The received Sanskrit text of Guhyasamāja XVII.19, while discussing Vajrapāni, reads somewhat differently:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kāyavajro bhavet brahmā vāgavajras tu maheśvarah} & \\
\text{citavajradharo rājā saiva viṣṇur maharaddhiḥ} & \\
\text{Being physically adamantine, let him be Brahmā,} & \\
\text{But as vocally adamantine, he is Maheśvara;} & \\
\text{The king bearing the sceptre of mental adamant,} & \\
\text{It is just he who is Viṣṇu, of great majesty.}
\end{align*}
\]


28. Dpal he ru ka`i byung tshul rnam par gzhag pa bla ma`i gsung las cung zad brys sgre n. SKB III.300.2.6.

29. sNgon byung gi rnam `phrul, SKB I.388.3.4–389.1.3.

30. Sa-chen was doubtless considering his various commentaries to the basic texts of the Lam-'bras (To. 2284), traditionally considered eleven in number; see Musashi Tachikawa, “The Tantric Doctrine of the Sa skya pa according to the Śel gya me phun,” Acta Asiatica 29 (1975): 95–106.

31. Actually, as is apparent from his gDan gyi rnam dag (SKB I.387.4.4–388.3.4), Heruka tramples on Brahmā, Indra, Kāmadeva, and Maheśvara, while Ghasamri tramples on Iśāna-Maheśvara, apparently considered the principal variety of the species Maheśvara.

32. The same method was utilized by Ngön-chen in his exegetical monument, the (dPal kye rdo rje’i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa) bsKyed rim gnad kyi czer, SKB IX.173.4–277, esp. see p. 179.3.6.

33. The standard work on the legends and concerns of the Lam-'bras remains the Yongs rdzogs bstan pa rin po ch'i nyams len gya man ngag gsung ngag rin po che’i byon tshul khog phub dang bcos pa gyas par bshad pa legs bshad 'dus pa’i rgya msho of 'Jam-mgon A-mes zhab (1597–1659; text completed 1621), The Tshogs Bsdad Tradition of the Sa-skya Lam-'bras vol. 1 (Rajpur, India: Sakya Centre, 1983), pp.
1-314; cf. Ngor-chen’s introductory materials at the beginning of the \textit{bsKyed rim gnad kyi zla zer} (SKB.IX, pp. 174 ff.), and his own discussion of the central Path/Fruit tradition, the \textit{Lam ’bras bu dang bcas pa’i man ngag gi byung tshul gsung ngag rin po che bstun pa rgyas pa’i nyi ’od} (SKB IX.108.3.1–126.4.3); this latter text includes supplemental notes by Gung ru Shes rab bzang po.

26. \textit{rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal kye rdo rje’i byung tshul dang brgyud pa’i bla ma dam pa rnams kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtsjar rgya mtho}, SKB IX.278.1–284.3.3. The Synopsis addresses the material in pp. 278.3.2–281.4.5.

27. The resultant form of a divinity is that which is brought back from integration with emptiness at a specific time in the meditative practice of the \textit{utpattikrama}. See Ngor-chen’s \textit{bsKyed-rim gnad kyi zla-zer}, SKB IX.249.1.6–251.1.3.

36. Ngor-chen’s primary source for the myth is Sa-chen’s text, which he partially misquotes and identifies as \textit{gDan gyi dag pa}, this latter being placed before (387.4.4–388.3.4) Sa-chen’s \textit{sNgon byung gi rnam ’phrul} in the SKB edition, the quote being from 388.4.3–4. Secondarily, he quotes from Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan’s commentary to the \textit{Hevajra-tantra}, SKB III.151.4.6–152.1.1, itself a development of HT II.v.5.

37. Ngor-chen’s statement 279.3.4 is an obscure but definite reference to \textit{Hevajra tantra} II.v.5, which was not translated by Snellgrove:
\begin{verbatim}
cumbayitvā tu Nairātmyāṃ kṣiptvā vajrāṃ vakalāke | mardayitva stanau devo manḍalam samprakāśayet || Having kissed Nairātmyā, having placed your vajra in her skull, Having fondled her breasts, let the deity express his manḍala.
\end{verbatim}

38. \begin{verbatim}
vākhyaṭāham aham dharmaḥ śrūṭam sugaṇaīr yutaḥ || sādhyo ’ham jagataḥ sāstā loko ’ham laukiko ’py aham || \end{verbatim}

We should note that the Tibetan for HT II.ii.39cd reads as if sāstā ’loko ’ham laukiko: ’jig rten ’jig rten ’das ma nga, but here following the \textit{Yogaratnamālā}, HT, vol. 2, p. 139.

39. See note 6, above.
41. André Bareau, “Le Buddha et Uruvilvā,” in Daniel Donnet, ed., \textit{Indianisme et Bouddhisme—Mélanges offerts à Mgr Étienne Lamotte}, Publications de l’Institut orientaliste de Louvain 23 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut orientaliste, 1980), pp. 1–18. Bareau has theorized that the Kāśyapa episode was initially non-Buddhist and became the mythic anchor which brought the identification of \textit{bodhivrksa} to the village of Uruvilvā. His theory is interesting but exceeds the data at this time and needs more verification than he has offered.

42. See Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan’s various \textit{Cakrasamvara} lineage hagiographies listed in note 52. below; his \textit{bLa ma rgya gar ba’i lo rgyus} (SKB III.170.1.1–174.1.6).
45. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan’s great formulation of the Vajrayāna is found in his *rgyud kyi mgon par rtogs pa rin po che’i ljon shing*, SKB III.1.70.

46. See Śrīcakrasamvaratarantaratrājasambharasamuccayavṛtti, To. 1413, rgyud-grel, vol. tsa fol. 4ab; Mūlāntarāhṛdayasamgrahābhidhānottaratanramūlamūlayāttī, To. 1414, rgyud-grel, vol. tsa fol. 121a7.

47. See, for example, the rationale given in his gSung ngag rin po che lam ’bras bu dan bcas pa’i don gsal bar byed pa glegs ham gyi dkar chags, *The Slob Bsd tradition of the Sa-skya Lam-’bras* (Rajpur: Sakya Centre, 1983), vol. XI, pp. 1–8, esp. p. 1.3–2.1.

48. See the bLa ma brgyud pa’i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar snang ba of bLa-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1312–1375), the first part of his extraordinary *Pod nag ma*, *The Slob Bsd*, vol. XVI, pp. 1–121, esp. p. 20.

49. Nag-tsho maintained that he visited Nāropa (providing us with a stunning portrait of Nāropa as the Mahāpandita) and that Nāropa was said to have passed away with great portents while Nag-tsho was accompanying Aṣīa in Nepal in C.E. 1041. Sometime later, Nag-tsho traveled with Mar-pa to central Tibet and heard nothing of a meeting. Finally, some of Mar-pa’s disciples denied that a meeting had taken place. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan appears to agree in his reply to Byang-chub seng-ge’s request for his opinion on the matter; rNal ’byor byang chub seng ge’i zhu ba dang / de’i dris lan, SKB III.276.3.5–278.2.6.

50. George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals* (Reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), pp. 118–121. The biography of Rwa lo-tsa-ba rDo-rje grags by Bande Ye-shes seng-ge, mThu stobs dbyab phyug rje btsun ruwa lo tsa ba’i rnam pa thar pa kun khya snyan pa’i rnga sgra, (Lhasa xylograph: 1905) presents a wealth of stories concerning early Tibetan religious intrigue, esp. fols. 22b1–24a1, 26b1–27a5, 39b6–40b3, 46a5–47a5, 62b2–63b2, 70a3–70b3, 74a5–75b4, 93a6–94b4, 97a1, 99b1–100a1, 106a4–108b2, 112b5–114a2, 117a5–118a2, 121b3–122b2, 129a4–129b3, 135a3. We note that Rwa-lo’s biographer has Rwa-lo claim to have killed 13 snags’-dzin (holders of spells) by magic, fol. 136a1. Rwa-lo does become involved in a dispute with unnamed clerics at Sa-skya, fol. 56b1–3, but the burden of proof is on him rather than them.

51. His father, Sa-chen Kun-dga’ snying-po (1092–1158), had already written one hagiographical chronicle of his version of the Kanhapāda lineage; bDe mchog nag po pa’i lugs kyi bla ma brgyud pa’i lo rgyus, SKB I.214.1.1–216.4.1.

52. Kanhapāda’s is hidden at the beginning of his Nag po dkyil chog by shad sbyar, SKB III.304.3.2–326.3.6, esp. 304.3.4–306.2.2; Ghantapāda’s is in sLob dpon rdo rje dril bu pa’i lo rgyus, SKB III.345.1.1–346.1.4; Luhipāda’s is found in bDe mchog lu hi pa’i lugs kyi bla ma brgyud pa’i lo rgyus, SKB III.293.2–298.4. The latter text is also apparently the final production, referring to the other two, SKB III.295.1.2–3.


56.  *Zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang chen po'i sa mtshams rnam par bshad pa log rtag ngan sel*, written at Sa-skya, SKB IX.164.2.5–172.2.6.

57. Primary is dKon-mchog dbang-phug'u's *StNigs dus kyi rdo rje 'chang chen po chos kyi rje kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdus pa*, *Lam 'bras slob bshad*, vol. 1, pp. 432–473, esp. 462; also see the pasticcio of Sangs-rgyas phun-tshogs, rDo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa legs bshad chu bo 'dus pa'i rgya msho, *sLob bshad*, vol. 1, pp. 475–585, esp. pp. 537, 546.


60. See, for example, Go-ram bSod-nams seng-ge's commentary on and defense of the bsKyed rim gnad kyi zla zer, dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub pa'i thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer la rtos pa spong ba gnad kyi gsal byed, in *Kun mkhyen go bo rab 'byams pa bsdod nams seng ge bka' 'bum* (Rajpur: Sakya College, 1979), vol. 12, pp. 557–693, esp. p. 560, where Ngor-chen's primary opponents are listed as sLob-dpon chen-po dPalchos-pa, mKhas-grub, and dPal 'jigs-med grags-pa.

61. See his biography, *mKhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa'i rnam thar mKhas pa'i yid 'phrog*, in *The Collected Works of The Lord mKhas Grub Rje*, vol. 1, p. 8.

62. Red-mda'-ba's name is identified with this position in a note (mchan) to Ngor-chen's *bsKyed rim gnad kyi zla zer*, SKB 9.176.3.2.

63. Everything mKhas-grub says in his dPal brtag pa gnyis pa'i rnam par bshad pa leads us to believe that he thought the Hevajra-tantra fully in conformity with fifteenth-century Tibetan comprehension of Madhyamaka; see esp. pp. 559–560.

64. He relates the course of events in a letter included in his *Thor-bu, Collected Works*, vol. 7, pp. 775–808. In his discussion of *Guhyasamāja* meditation,
rGyud thams bcad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho, Collected Works, vol. 9, pp. 1 ff., esp. p. 238, he had generally refuted the Lam-'bras ideas of the physical mandala (lus-dkyil) and the reception of consecration during meditation (lam dus kyi dbang), without citing the system by name. He complains (Thor-bu, p. 776–7) that everyone jumped to conclusions. Given the inflammatory language mKhas-grub was wont to use, it is easy to see how such an impression developed.

65. Lam'bras khog phub, p. 70.5.

66. Confer HT I.vii.10–18, Abhidhānottara, PTT 17, vol. 2, pp. 48.1.1–4, 52.5.6–53.2.3, 56.1.6–56.2.3, 56.5.8–57.2.1, 58.4.4–59.2.8, etc.


68. I presume that there were village-level applications of the Cakrasamvara myth both before and after it entered the monastic milieu, even if the version under discussion is textual/monastic in form.