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CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

II. BOOK REVIEWS

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

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Perhaps one of the least examined topics in Buddhism is the utilization of myth in service of clerical values. Myth, of course, is intimately connected with all the varieties of praxis, yet to read many descriptive analyses of the Buddhist dispensation, the nonspecialist 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 religion 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. Buddhist 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 formulations, 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 precisely those found in the Near Eastern religions—Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Specifically, the ideology of an encapsulated temporal sequence, involving a definite creation event, a closed revelation, and an approaching millenium, are all foreign 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 attendent personality issues of creator and soul.
Instead, it seeks to focus the attention of the audience on
paradigms exemplifying the potential for immanent rectifica-
tion, 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 Mahā-
yāna this frequently invokes mythic expressions of the inter-
penetration 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 Maheśvara and the birth of Heruka—is one
of these. We will see that it developed out of a source myth of
Vajrapāṇi taming Maheśvara in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and was
used in service of establishing authenticity for another body of
literature, the *Cakrasaṃvara* 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, start-
ing 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-tattvasaṃgraha

All three source traditions—*Tattvasaṃgraha*, *Cakrasaṃvara*, 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 Śambhala at the *stūpa* of Dhānyakaṭaka—thus tying the proclamation of the faith to the fabled land of Śambhala—or that the *buddha* preached the *Mahākālacakra* in Śambhala 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-tattva-saṃgraha*, the *Summary of All Tathāgatas' Reality* (abr. *Tattva-saṃgraha*), 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*, Vai-
rocana. Of particular interest to those in the business of
Mantrayāna apologetics are chapters one, six, and the epi-
logue. Chapter one delineates the culmination of the career of
the *bodhisattva* Sarvārthasiddhi.[4] 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 sum-
mit of Mt. Sumeru to take his rightful place. The body of the
Tattvasaṃgraha discusses the rituals and mystic circles (*maṇḍala*)
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.[5] 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: Tattvasaṃgraha[6]

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 *maṇḍala*. Vajrapāṇi, however,
declined, saying that there yet existed criminals, such as
Maheśvara and other gods. So Vairocana uttered the mantra
OṂ SUMBHA NISUMBHA HŪṂ...VAJRA HŪṂ PHAṬ, and
forms of Vajrapāṇi issued forth from the hearts of all the as-
sembled *tathāgatas*, coming together to create the body of
Mahāvajrakrodha. Vairocana intoned the mantra *OṂ ṬAKKI
JJAḤ,* which is known as the disciplinary ankus of all the *tathā-
gatas*. 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 *saṃgha*, and by obtaining the gnosis of omniscience.

But Maheśvara replied to Vajrapāṇi, "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 Vajrapāṇi, this cruel, mean, angry spirit, destroy the whole world with his flaming *vajra*."

Maheśvara, however, decided to show Vajrapāṇi 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 Vajrapāṇi 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 PHAṬ*, and Vajrapāṇi added his own adamantine *HŪM*. Immediately, all the gods, Maheśvara, etc., fell down on their faces, uttering a cry of pain, and went for refuge to the Lord Vajrapāṇi. 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 Vajrapāṇi: "If we revive His Deadness, he could become a real person." So Vajrapāṇi intoned the correct *VAJRĀYUḤ*, 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 Tathāgatas."

Vajrapāṇi then intervened: "Why don't you just do what I tell you?"

When Maheśvara 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, Maheśvara and his consort, Umā, were both dragged stark naked feet first before Vajrapāṇi, who stepped on Maheśvara with his left foot, while standing on Umā's breasts with his right. Then he uttered the mantra *OM VAJRĀVIŚA HANAYA TRAM TRAṬ* and Maheśvara 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 Maheśvara 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, Maheśvara 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—Maheśvara, Umā, and the others—were given new names and positions in the mystic circle.

This comical tale of direct competion between the Śaiva and Bauddha traditions recognizes the homogeneous nature of many of their rituals and symbols. As story, it was to prove extraordinarily successful: Maheśvara 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 Maheśvara became the "Māra" of the Vehicle of Secret Spells, and the similarities between the Buddha's conduct with Māra and the treatment of Maheśvara were quite explicit, as we shall see.

How Heruka Was Born—Cakrasaṃvara 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 *Trailokya-vijaya-mahākalparāja*, whose Chinese translation is ascribed to Amoghavajra (705–774).[8] 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.[9] Alternatively, a longer rendering of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* version was added to the *Vajraśekhara-mahāyoga-tantra*, but without the frame story of Sarvārthasiddhi / Vajradhātu.[10] 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 *Candraguhyatilaka-mahātantrarāja*, which gives more prominence to sex and violence.[11] Chapter six of the *Candraguhyatilaka* identifies the protagonist as Mahāsamantabhadra, who sends forth the wrathful Vajrabhṛkuṭīkrodha to subjugate all the worldly gods and steal their women, finally bringing the gods back to life through the production of divine nectar, while Vajrabhṛkuṭīkrodha 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 Maheśvara spawned as one of the denizens of hell.[12] Heruka, the cosmic policeman, seizes Maheśvara 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, Ucchuṣmakrodha, drinks up. The gods are then revived. Properly grateful for what can only have been an extraordinary experience, Maheśvara 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*.[13]

Yet another version of the myth verified the teaching of the most influential of the *yoginī-tantras*: the *Cakrasaṃvara*. The birth of Heruka is taken in the *Cakrasaṃvara* system as the necessary antidote for instability in the world, and Heruka has preached the *yoginī-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.[14]

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 *Cakrasaṃvara-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[15]

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 *Bhadrakalpika-Mahāyāna-sūtra* relates how the teacher Śākyamuni generated the thought of awakening and then per-

fected himself for three incalculable aeons through the accumu-
lation of merit and knowledge. Overcoming the four Māras, he
obtained complete awakening in the final reality (*nītārtha*) of
Akaniṣṭha, 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 teach-
ings to beings of disparate capacities. In particular, there was his
manifestation as Śrī Heruka.

II. At the beginning of this Kaliyuga, beings started contend-
ing 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 Jambud-
vīpa, Maheśvara's emanation arose. Now in the various direc-
tions, 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 ema-
nations 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*).[16] They were blue because
they represented a predominance of anger and were located in
specific self-originated places:[17]

East—Pullīra Malaya	⎫	Places of the four gods.
North—Jālandhara	⎬	In the language of the
West—Oḍḍiyāna	⎭	gods, these places are
South—Arbuda		called *pīṭha*.
SE—Godāvarī	⎫	The four attendant
SW—Rameśvarī	⎬	gods. In the language
NW—Devīkoṭa	⎭	of the genii (*gandharvas*),
NE—Mālava		these are called *upapīṭha*.

B. The two chief local spirits (*yakṣa*), the two attendant *yakṣa*,
the two chief demons (*rākṣasa*), and the two attendant *rākṣasa*
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.

East—Kāmarūpa North—Oḍra	2 chief *yakṣa*, from the north.[18] Called *kṣetra* in *yakṣa* language.
West—Triśakuni South—Kośala	2 attendant *yakṣa*. Called *upakṣetra* in *yakṣa* language.
SE—Kaliṅga SW—Lampāka	2 principal *rākṣasas*. Called *chandoha* in *rākṣasa* language.
NW— Kāñci NE—Himālaya	2 attendant *rākṣasas*. Called *upachandoha* in *rākṣasa* language.

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 iden-
tified as the eight below-the-earth-going ferocities (*aṣṭa-pātāla-
cara-bhairava*). They were white because they represented a pre-
dominance of ignorance.

East—Pretapuri North—Gṛhadevatā	2 chief *nāgas*, from the ocean. Called *melāpaka* in *nāga* language.
West—Saurāṣtra South—Suvarṇṇadvīpa	2 attendant *nāgas*. Called *upamelāpaka* in *nāga* language.
SE—Nagara SW—Sindhu	2 chief *asuras*, from below Sumeru. Called *śmaśāna* in *asura* language.
NW—Maru-deśa NE—Kulata	2 attendant *asuras*. Called *upaśmaśāna* in *asura* language.

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 sex-
ual union.

E. In conjunction with Maheśvara, his four Umā and eight
Mātṛkā emanated. The four Umā derived from the qualities
(*guṇa*) of Maheśvara and were yellow because of a predomi-
nance of malignity.[19]

Front—*Nīlarāhu (sGra gcan sngon mo)[20]
Left—*Haritoparāhu (Nye ba'i sgra gcan ljang gu)
Behind—*Raktāndhikā (Mun pa dmar po)[21]
Right—*Pītopāndhikā (Nye ba'i mun pa ser po)

F. The eight Mātṛkā came from the activity of Mahādeva. They were variously colored because of a predominance of envy.[22]

East—Kākāsyā (Raven-headed mother)
North—Ulūkāsyā (Owl-headed mother)
West—Svānāsyā (Dog-headed mother)
South—Sūkarāsyā (Pig-headed mother)

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, Maheśvara gave them twenty-four liṅgams 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 liṅgams.

Once established in Jambudvīpa, Maheśvara 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 brahminical 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 (nirmāṇakāya) as the "resultant Vajradhara."[23] In opposition to Maheśvara 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 Mātṛkā were the eight Samayadevī. 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, absorbtion, 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 (*gaṇacakra*), thus securing them the epithet of Glorious Bunch of Blood-drinking Divinities (*dpal khrag 'thung gi lha tshogs : *śrīherukadevagaṇa*). 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 supressed 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.[25]

Yet all these distinctions of subjugater/subjugated or converter/converted operate only in the realm of provisional meaning (*neyārtha*); according to the definitive meaning (*nītārtha*), they are to be understood as non-differentiated.[26] 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.[27]

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 *Cakrasaṃvara* exegesis—those of Luhipāda, Ghaṇṭapāda, Kāṇ-

hapāda, and Śavara. Each of them has utilized the three princi-
pal scriptures of the system, the *Tantrarāja-Laghusaṃvara* (To.
368), the *Abhidhānottara-tantra* (To. 369), and the *Yoginisañcarya-
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 *Cak-
rasaṃvara* arena is reflective of a number of concerns which will
be explored below (*Interperative Strategies*) when the three appli-
cations 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 *Bhad-
rakalpika-mahāyāna-sūtra*. While the use of frame and embedded
story is similar to that in the classical versions, the plot struc-
ture 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 extraordinar-
ily 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 *Saṃpuṭodbhāva-
kalpa-rāja* (To. 381) and the *Ḍākinī-vajrapañjara-tantra* (To. 419).
We have no sense, however, that the *Lam-'bras* enjoyed the
popularily or prestige in India accorded to those meditative
practices developed out of the scriptures of the *Tattvasaṃgraha*,
the *Guhyasamāja*, or the *Cakrasaṃvara*—quite the opposite, in
fact, since the *Lam-'bras* was a secret set of practices which pur-
portedly passed through relatively obscure figures. Moreover,
it was decidedly later than most of the widely disseminated sys-
tems and was initially not given in Tibet the esteem and accep-
tability granted those more popular traditions.

Accordingly, the *Lam-'bras* utilization of the Maheśavra
subjugation myth followed a more tortuous path than did the
Cakrasaṃvara version. Each of the *Lam-'bras* strata was verified
by a systematic hermeneutic of authentication. Such hermen-
eutics marked the system's movement into an increasingly

complex institutional milieu. The earliest *Lam-'bras* hermeneu-
tic on the *Hevajra* was a minor work by Sa-chen Kun-dga'
snying-po, a primary exegete of the *Lam-'bras*. His *Heruka's
Prior Epiphany* is focused on the mythic explanation of the
maṇḍala, rather than an explicit justification of the preaching of
the *Hevajra-tantra*.

Synopsis: Heruka's Prior Epiphany[29]

During the practice of generating the visualization of the
maṇḍala (*utpattikrama*), one should be aware of three specific
teachings: the way that such visualization purifies the personal-
ity 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.[30]

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 Maheś-
vara'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 brgyad*), each with his
own consort and incalculable henchmen, all of whom jeered at
and challenged the emanation body (*nirmāṇakāya*) of the Tathā-
gata. In order to subdue this ungodly army, the Lord man-
ifested his wrathful form and the eight goddesses, these latter
having the same names as the eight consorts of the "Big
Worldlies": Vetālī, Gaurī, Caurī, Ghasmarī, Pukkasī, Savarī,
Caṇḍālī, and Ḍombinī. 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 the eight Buddhist goddesses. The subsidary minions
were all finally collected into the eight great charnel grounds at
the periphery of the *maṇḍala*. This being done, each of the Bud-
dhist goddesses had the title "Adamantine" prefixed to her name,
so that they become Vajra-Gaurī, 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 posi-
tions as seats of the deities in the *maṇḍala*.[31] This arrangement is
in accord with the explanations of the teachers of the tradition,
and the chronicle is derived from the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, the *Vaj-
raśekhara*, 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-ldan 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.[32] 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*).[33] 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[34]

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 *Candrakāntamaṇiprabha 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 Maheśvara 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 Ghasmarī 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 Maheśvara'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 *Mahāmudrātilaka* (To. 420), the *Jñānagarbha* (To. 421), the *Jñānatilaka* (To. 422), the *Sampuṭa*, and so forth. According to the commentary on the *Ḍākārṇava-tantra* (To. 1419) there were preached six "root" *tantras*: the *Ocean of Yoga*, (*yogārṇava*) the *Ocean of Gnosis*,

(*jñānārṇava*) the *Ocean of Discipline* (*saṃvarārṇava*), the *Ocean of Ritual* (*kriyārṇava*), and the *Ocean of Reality* (*tattvārṇava*), these five being collectively equivalent in size to the large *Ḍākārṇava* (*Ocean of Ḍākas*) 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 Vajravārāhī and others.

Śākyamuni 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 *Vajrapañjara* was brought together by Nairātmyā. 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, who collected it, 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 Śākyamuni'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.[39] All three have rightly
remarked on the theme of the transmutation of Maheśvara's
hubris into the position of buddhahood. Both Stein and Iya-
naga, 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 Bud-
dhist *dharma*.[40] Furthermore, having maintained that extrapo-
lating 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 char-
acters depicted in the story are symbolic or allegorical rep-
resentations, allegory also being a primary theme in Stein's
interpretive strategy. Iyanaga goes even further. He proposes
that, as Maheśvara passes through moments—from being an
obstruction to the *dharma* to becoming a *buddha*—Maheśvara's
submission graphically demonstrates the nonopposition of
Buddhism and other religions. Following this approach, the
Buddhist and the nonbuddhist, Māra and the Buddha, the pas-
sions 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 jus-
tified 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 ver-
sions of the myth by milieu: I. the *Tattvasaṃgraha* in India and
II. the *Cakrasaṃvara* 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: Tattvasaṃgraha

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 conver-
sion 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 pri-
mary targets of the Buddhists' competitiveness.[42] Buddhist
monasteries at this period had become enormous landed insti-
tutions 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 Vajrayāna, 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 environ-
ments as Śaiva and Śākta yogins. At this level of society, the
perception of superiority is informed by oral literature, the ulti-
mate 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 cir-
cumstances of the utilization of the myth are quite different.
For example, the religious position of Maheśvara is unlike that
held by the foes of Devī.[43] Thus, at the socio-historical level, we
should understand the Maheśvara myth in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*
as a straight-forward defensive technique of the Buddhists to
establish the superiority of their gods over Maheśvara,
Brahmā, Viṣṇu, etc., in an attempt to retrieve some of their lost
position in unsophisticated circles in India, whether at Devī-
koṭa, Vārāṇasī, Patna, or wherever. The noticably increased
mythic and symbolic orientation of the Vajrayāna 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 Vajrayānists' 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 *Devīmāhātmya* 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 *Devīmāhātmya*—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.[44] However, the Māra story is that of the unenlightened Bodhisattva overcoming the threats and temptations of the Lord of Desire. "Māra," of course, is derived from the root √*mṛ*, 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—Aṅgulimāla, Aśoka, etc.—as opposed to Devadatta, who is like Māra in his intractability.

The Maheśvara 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 Maheśvara, 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, Maheśvara'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 Vajrapāṇi—Mahāvairocana does not himself subjugate Maheśvara. Thus, the dramatic requirements of cosmic mythology are fulfilled in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* by the scripture's refusal to depict Mahāvairocana as an abstract entity. Instead, he works through Vajrapāṇi for the salvation of beings from their own rude behavior—even if such behavior is as degenerate as that of Maheśvara—insisting finally on their integration into the balanced array of reality's *maṇḍala*.

c. Doctrinally, the *Tattvasaṃgraha* 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—Maheśvara 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.[45] 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 Śūravajra make the subjugation of Maheśvara part of the lore surrounding the advent of

that *tantra*.[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 south-
ern Tibet at this time. The resulting textual production was a
response to the fear for the imminent demise of the lore—Tibet-
ans being quite aware of current Islamic incursions—the meas-
ure of its quantity, and the need to verify its authenticiy.[47]

This brings us to the second point: the validation of the
system as a whole. Contrary to the stereotypes of popular lit-
erature, Tibetans have not always been benign, smiling moun-
taineers. 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 hostil-
ity 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 organ-
ized 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 reflec-
tion 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 *Cakrasaṃvara* medita-
tion 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. Addition-
ally, Tibetans had passed down oral materials taken from
India and Nepal on the internecine strife among Bauddhas,

Śaivas 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 cer-
tainly 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 con-
sidered act of world reform. Tibetans thus quite handily made
the jump from Hindu gods appearing in their *maṇḍalas* 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
'Gos lo-tsa-ba Khug-pa lhas-tsas as being Maitripa in the
flesh.[48] Tibetans were equally aware that certain of their own
compatriots were not above misrepresenting what they had
learned and from whom. Nag-tsho lo-tsā-ba was known to
have challenged the claim that Mar-pa studied directly with
Nāropa.[49] Thus, the clergy in Tibet continued to question sys-
tems 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 evi-
dent between the Mar-lugs and the Rwa-lugs, between the
Rwa-lugs and the 'Gos-lugs, or between such teachers as dGe-
bshes 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.[50]

Although we appear to have no record of a direct challenge
to his *Cakrasaṃvara* lineage, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, following
in the footsteps of his predecessors, did take some pains with

the *Cakrasaṃvara* materials at his disposal.[51] 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 Kāṇhāpāda, Ghantapāda, and Luhipāda.[52] The
result of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's mythic and hagiographic
writings was mixed. While gZhon-nu dpal's *Blue Annals* proba-
bly made use of his hagiographies, the mythic form of the ori-
gin of the *Cakrasaṃvara* explored by Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan
was not the one to obtain widest currency in Tibet.[53] Such cur-
rency derived from the textual and oral materials assembled
and amplified by Bu-ston Rin-chen grub (1290–1364); his ver-
sion was followed by many subsequent authors.[54]

If closure was Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's primary concern,
defense appeared to be Ngor-chen's. The Sa-skya-pa had en-
joyed a special postion in Tibet since the middle of the thir-
teenth century, when Sa-skya Paṇḍita was designated the first
monk-ruler of the Snowy Mountain. While the Sa-skya hege-
mony fragmented around 1358–59 and the Yüan Dynasty col-
lapsed 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.[55] The backlash against the Sa-skya-pa—intel-
lectual 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 enlighten-
ment—the theory that buddhahood obtained by the Path of
Secret Spells is more exalted than that obtained by the stan-
dard Mahāyāna perfections.[56] In 1406, he defended the
orthodoxy of the *Hevajra-tantra* itself against those who main-
tained that, because the scripture speaks primarily of all-
embracing gnosis and because Virūpa is rumoured to have
been the Vijñānavādin monk Dharmapāla before his conver-
sion 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. Al-
though the chronologies are confused, Ngor-chen's hagiog-
raphies speak of his defending the Sa-skya-pa position in central

Tibet against vociferous critics.[57] 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 *pāramitā*-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).[58] 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.[59] However, the circumstances were more complex than reification into a single antagonist.[60] 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.[61] 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.[62] Clearly, mKhas-grub did not.[63] 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.[64] 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.[65]

b. The literary shift from the snappy dialogue of the *Tattva-saṃgraha* to the cosmic diagram of the *Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala* 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 Maheśvara and crew are directly included into the *dharmadhātu maṇḍala* of the *Tattva-saṃgraha*, while neither the *Cakrasaṃvara* nor the *Hevajra* utilize Maheśvara 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 *maṇḍala* 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 *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra* episodes to the Māra myth is explicit. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan specificially introduces his version with a Māra-myth reference; the four figures trampled on by Hevajra are Māra, Maheśvara, 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 Maheśvara, 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 Maheśvara, 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 aban-
don 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 im-
pressed by how far the Buddha's compassion extends, includ-
ing 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 *Cakrasaṃvara* system, the exact locales are impor-
tant, 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 pre-
cise Indic source for identifying a system of twenty-four *liṅgams*
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"
(*jotirliṅga*) belong to the *Cakrasaṃvara* formula; I have encoun-
tered no list in purāṇic 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 *ḍākinīs*: the
Cakrasaṃvara, *Abhidhānottara*, *Hevajra*, etc.[66] 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-rajñī-dhāraṇī.[67]

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, Maheśvara 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.[68]
To find, moreover, that the entire itinerary is located within
one's own psycho-physical continuum must have been a stun-
ning validation of the listener's existence.

　　No such literary devices are available to Ngor-chen; his
work invokes neither the quick repartee of the *Tattvasaṃgraha*
nor the grand schematism of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's work.
In all fairness, the subjugation of Maheśvara 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 dryest 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 *Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala* into physical, vocal,
and mental—brings out the necessity of admitting the mythic
reality into the ordinary world. Here, Maheśvara and his
retinue really perform all their actions, which are countered by
Heruka and his *maṇḍala*: evil is supressed, 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 Maheś-
vara. Conversely, Ngor-chen emphasizes the process of teach-
ing as an act of nondifferentiated communication, although he
clearly includes Maheśvara in the ground of being as
emblematic of defiled existence. The hermeneutic of mythic

nondifferentiation raises a fundamental soteriological and
ontological question: If Maheśvara 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 main-
taining that both pure and impure elements of reality are pene-
trated by the *dharmakāya*. I find this explanation intellectually
problematic. If the entire process of defilement and awaken-
ing—either cosmically or personally—operates absolutely un-
differentiated 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 in-
stance, 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 incom-
plete exploration of the philosophical implications of its mythic
structure, partially because it has recourse to a series of
soteriological postulates buttressed by the irrefutable invita-
tion to try it for oneself. Yet when the system attempts to iden-
tify 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 iden-
tity 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

ABBREVIATIONS

HT   David L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra*, London Oriental Series Vol. 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

TTP   Daisetz T. Suzuki, ed., *Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking Edition* (Tokyo: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1956).

SKB   bSod-nams rgya-mtsho, ed., *The Complete Works of the Great Masters of the Sa Skya Sect of the Tibetan Buddhism* (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1968).

T.   J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, eds., *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* (Tokyo: Daizōkyōkai, 1924–1935).

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

1. See R.M. Davidson, "An Introduction to the Standards of Scriptural Authenticity in Indian Buddhism," in Robert E. Buswell, Jr., ed., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 291–325.

2. Davidson, "Standards," pp. 312–315. For a convenient discussion of the various lineages, see Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho, *Shes bya kun khyab*, rDo-rje rgyal-po and Thub-bstan nyi-ma, eds. (Szechuan: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982), vol. 1, pp. 366–371.

3. Compare the founding scenarios found in the *Vimalaprabhā* with the references in the *Sekoddeśa-ṭīkā*; Jagannatha Upadhyaya, ed., *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā of Kalki Śrī Puṇḍarīka*, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series No. XI (Sarnath, India: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1986), pp. 22–31; Mario E. Carelli, ed., *Sekoddeśaṭīkā of Nāḍapāda*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. XC (Baroda, India: Oriental Institute, 1941), pp. 1–4. See André Bareau, "Le stūpa de Dhānya Kaṭaka," *Arts asiatiques* 16 (1967): 81–88; Helmut Hoffman, *Tibet—A Handbook* (Bloomington, Indiana: Research Center for the Language Sciences, n.d.), pp. 143–145.

4. The text of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is that edited by Isshi Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata-Tattva-saṅgraha*, Śatapiṭaka Series 262 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1980) and reproduced in Lokesh Chandra, ed., *Sarva-Tathāgata-Tattva-Saṅgraha* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987). Lokesh

Chandra's "edition" simply added misprints to Yamada's fine edition, which is now unavailable. The Tibetan of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is PTT. 112, vol. 4, pp. 218–283; the standard Chinese text is T. 882.18.341–445. The Sarvārthasiddhi 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 *Tattvasaṃgraha* 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 Maheśvara par Trailokyavijaya—d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises," in Michel Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, Mélanges 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, *Annuaire du Collège de France* 1972:499–510, 1973:463–470, 1974:508–517. A noted Tibetan discussion of the Maheśvara (Rudra) myth is that by sLe-lung-pa bZhad pa'i rdo rje, *Dam can bstan srung rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa cha shas tsam brjod pa sngon med legs bshad*, Sman Rtsi Shesrig Spendzod vol. 104 (Leh, Ladakh: T.S. Tashigang and B.P.O. Nemo, 1979), pp. 1–103.

7.   In using Bhasmācchanna, I am following Tucci's text, p. 145, and Iyanaga, p. 675, who gives the readings of the edition of Horiuchi Kanjin, *(Bon-Zō-Kan taishō) Shoe-Kongō-chō-kyō no kenkyū* Bompon Kōtei-hen, jo (Kōyasan, 1983), IIIa, p. 32. Chandra, p. 59, gives Bhasmacchatrā. It is well-known that Śiva's conversion as Bhasmeśvara occurs in *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, in P.L. Vaidya, ed., *Mahāyāna-sūtra-saṃgraha*, Part 1, Buddhist Sanskrit Text Series, No. 17 (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1961), p. 304, but see Iyanaga's p. 675, n. 66, where he indicates that, whatever its occurrence in the Nepali manuscript tradition, it was missing in the recensions translated into Tibetan and Chinese.

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 *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi-sūtra* (To. 494) into the full-blown form of the myth, but the *sūtra* simply confounds Māra and Maheśvara, 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 sngags kyi tshig smra ba ni khyod rab tu mi bgrongs so|*.

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

11.   sDe-dge rgyud 'bum, vol. *ja*, fols. 281a–287a.

12.   To. 832, rNying rgyud, vol. *kha*, fols. 124b–128a. R.A. Stein has considered this version in the *Annuaire* 1974, pp. 511.

13. To. 829; rNying-rgyud, vol. *ka*, chapters 20–31, fols. 135b–166a. This material has been considered by Stein, *Annuaire* 1972:499–510, 1973:463–470. See also sLe-lung-pa, *Dam can bstan srung rgya mtsho*, pp. 48–103.

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*, Śatapiṭaka 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 Maheśvara's retinue into celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean is evident in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* 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 *Cakrasaṃvara* 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 Saṃvarodaya-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 Mātṛkā are conjectural.

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

22. The first four Mātṛkā names are available from the literature. See Martin M. Kalff, "Ḍākinīs 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, *Saṃvarodaya* XIII.30, pp. 117, 285. According to these sources, the other four Mātṛkā are most commonly identified as Yamadāḍhī, Yamadūtī, Yamadaṃṣṭrī, and Yamamathanī.

23. The numbering: 24 Bhairavas + their 24 consorts + 4 Umā + 8 Mātṛkā + Maheśvara + Umādevī = 62 divinities.

24. While the *maṇḍala* 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 *maṇḍala* 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 *Cakrasaṃvara*, having been translated by Rin-chen
bzang-po (958–1055) and Śraddhākaravarman. It also enjoys two commen-
taries by *Tathāgatavajra, To. 1509–1510, the latter including a separate chroni-
cle of Paṇḍita dPal-'dzin and the teachers of the lineage. A form of the *maṇḍala*
is also given in Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, ed., *Niṣpannayogāvalī 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 lan-
guage 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 Puṇḍarīka maintains the idea in his *Vimalaprabhā* commentary to the
Kālacakra, 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
Vajrapāṇi, reads somewhat differently:

kāyavajro bhavet brahmā vāgvajras tu maheśvaraḥ /
cittavajradharo rājā saiva viṣṇur maharddhikaḥ / /
Being physically adamantine, let him be Brahmā,
But as vocally adamantine, he is Maheśvara;
The king bearing the sceptre of mental adamant,
It is just he who is Viṣṇu, of great majesty.

Yukei Matsunaga, *The Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Osaka: Toho Shuppan, 1978), p. 98.

28. *Dpal he ru ka'i byung tshul rnam par gzhag pa bla ma'i gsung las cung zad
btus te* |. 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 num-
ber; see Musashi Tachikawa, "The Tantric Doctrine of the Sa skya pa according
to the *Sel gyi me loṅ*," *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 Ghasamrī tramples on Īśāna-Maheśvara, apparently considered the
principal variety of the species Maheśvara.

32. The same method was utilized by Ngor-chen in his exegetical monu-
ment, the (*dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa*) *bsKyed rim gnad kyi zla
zer*, 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 gyi man ngag gsung ngag rin po
che'i byon tshul khog phub dang bcas pa rgyas par bshad pa legs bshad 'dus pa'i rgya mtsho*
of 'Jam-mgon A-mes zhabs (1597–1659; text completed 1621), *The Tshogs Bsad
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 *bsKyed rim gnad kyi zla zer* (SKB.IX, pp. 174 ff.), and his own discussion of the central Path/Fruit tradition, the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i man ngag gi byung tshul gsung ngag rin po che bstan 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. *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 mtshar rgya mtsho*, 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 *utpattikrama*. See Ngor-chen's *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 *gDan gyi dag pa*, this latter being placed before (387.4.4–388.3.4) Sa-chen's *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 *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 *Hevajra tantra* II.v.5, which was not translated by Snellgrove:

> *cumbayitvā tu Nairātmyāṃ kṣiptvā vajraṃ kapālake |*
> *mardayitvā stanau devo maṇḍalam samprakāśayet ||*
> Having kissed Nairātmyā, having placed your vajra in her skull,
> Having fondled her breasts, let the deity express his maṇḍala.

38. *vyākhyātāham ahaṃ dharmaḥ śrotāhaṃ sugaṇair yutaḥ |*
       sādhyo 'haṃ jagataḥ śāstā loko 'haṃ laukiko 'py ahaṃ ||

We should note that the Tibetan for HT II.ii.39cd reads as if *śāstā 'loko 'ham laukiko: 'jig rten 'jig rten 'das ma nga*, but here following the *Yogaratnamālā*, HT, vol. 2, p. 139.

39. See note 6, above.

40. Stein, *Annuaire* 1973, p. 467; Iyanaga, "Récit de la soumission de Maheśvara," pp. 731–743.

41. André Bareau, "Le Buddha et Uruvilvā," in Daniel Donnet, ed., *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 *bodhivṛkṣa* 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 *Cakrasaṃvara* lineage hagiographies listed in note 52. below; his *bLa ma rgya gar ba'i lo rgyus* (SKB III.170.1.1–174.1.6).

43. Cf. the treatment of these *asuras* in Thomas B. Coburn, *Devī-Māhātmya—The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition* (Columbia, Missouri: South Asia Books, 1985), pp. 230–249.

44. *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi-sūtra*, To. 494, sDe-dge rgyud-'bum, vol. *tha*, fol. 182a.

45. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's great formulation of the Vajrayāna is found in his *rGyud kyi mngon par rtogs pa rin po che'i ljon shing*, SKB III.1–70.

46. See *Śrīcakrasamvaratantrarājasambarasamuccaya-vṛtti*, To. 1413, rgyud-'grel, vol. *tsa* fol. 4ab; *Mūlatantrahṛdayasamgrahābhidhānottaratantra-mūlamūlavṛtti*, 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 bam gyi dkar chags*, The Slob Bsad 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 Bsad, 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 Mahāpaṇḍita) and that Nāropa was said to have passed away with great portents while Nag-tsho was accompanying Atīśa 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-tsā-ba rDo-rje grags by Bande Ye-shes seng-ge, *mThu stobs dbyang phyug rje btsun rwa lo tsa ba'i rnam par thar pa kun khyab 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 *sngags-'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 Kāṇhapāda 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. Kāṇhapāda's is hidden at the beginning of his *Nag po dkyil chog gi bshad 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.

53. Cf. the *bDe-mchog lu hi pa'i lugs* with the Samvara section of Roerich, *Blue Annals*, pp. 380–82; Dung dkar bLo-bzang 'phrin-las, ed., *Deb ther sngon po* (Szechuan: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 460–464.

54. Found in his general introduction to the material in the *Cakrasaṃvara*, *bDe mchog nyung ngu'i rgyud kyi spyi rnam don gsal*, Lokesh Chandra, ed., *The Collected Works of Bu-ston*, Śatapiṭaka Series, vol. 64 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), pt. 6, pp. 54-61. 'Ba'-ra-ba (1310–1391,

according to the *Blue Annals*, p. 692), *A Tibetan Enclyclopedia of Buddhist Scholasticism: The Collected Writings of 'Ba'-ra-ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang* (Dehradun: Ngawang Gyaltsen and Ngawang Lungtok, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 452–459. Kong-sprul, *Shes bya kun khyab*, vol. 1, pp. 369–70. sLe-lung-pa, *Dam can bstan srung rgya mtsho*, vol. 1, pp. 14–16 maintains that his source is Bu-ston's *Chos-'byung*, but I have not located the myth there.

55. See Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 75–82 for the fragmentation of Sa-skya power. A close inspection of the Yüan / Sa-skya relation has been given by L. Petech, "Princely Houses of the Yüan Period Connected with Tibet," in Tadeusz Skorupski, ed., *Indo-Tibetan Studies—Papers in honour of Professor D.L. Snellgrove*, Buddhica Britannica Series Continua II (Tring, U.K.: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1990), pp. 257–269.

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

57. Primary is dKon-mchog dbang-phyug's *sNyigs 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 mtsho, sLob bshad*, vol. 1, pp. 475–585, esp. pp. 537, 546.

58. Mark Tatz has encountered similar difficulties in attempting to discover Tsong-kha-pa's opponents, "Whom is Tsong-kha-pa Refuting in His *Basic Path to Awakening?*" in Lawrence Epstein and Richard F. Sherburne, eds., *Reflections on Tibetan Culture—Essays in Memory of Turrell V. Wylie*, Studies in Asian Thought and Religion, Volume 12 (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), pp. 149–163.

59. See his *dPal brtag pa gnyis pa'i rnam par bshad pa rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma rnams kyi gsang ba'i mdzod*, in *The Collected Works of The Lord mKhas Grub Rje Dge Legs Dpal Bzang Po*, rJe yab sras gsum gyi gsung 'bum 27 (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Gurudeya, 1980), vol. 9, pp 469–961, esp. pp. 481–515.

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 rtsod pa spong ba gnad kyi gsal byed*, in *Kun mkhyen go bo rab 'byams pa bsod 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 dPal chos-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 *maṇḍala (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.

    67. Cf. T. 982–988. Shuyo Takubo, ed., *Ārya-Mahā-Māyūrī Vidyā Rajñī,*
Tokyo: Tokyo Sankibo, 1972. Sylvain Lévi, "Le Catalogue des Yakṣa dans le
Mahā-māyūrī," *Journal Asiatique* 1915: 19–138; P.C. Bagchi, "The Geographical
Catalogue of the Yakṣas in the Mahāmāyūrī," *Sino-Indian Studies* III 1 / 2 (1947):
13–87.

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