

། །བདེ་ལྡན་མ་ལུང་བསྟན་པ།

The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī

Kṣemavatīvyākaraṇa

འཕགས་པ་བདེ་ལྷན་མ་ལུང་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཚེན་པོ་འཛིན་གྱི།

'phags pa bde ldan ma lung bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Prophecy of Kṣemavati”

Āryakṣemavativyākaraṇanāmahāyānasūtra

· Toh 192 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 61 (mdo sde, tsa), folios 243.b–246.a



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s.

SUMMARY

- s.1 On their morning alms round, the Buddha and Maitreya meet Queen Kṣemavatī who is bedecked in all her royal jewelry. When the Buddha asks her about the source of such fine jewelry, referring to it metaphorically as fruit, Queen Kṣemavatī explains that her worldly position is the fruit of the tree of her previous good deeds. The remainder of the sūtra describes how one's good actions can eventually lead to buddhahood, and it concludes with a prophecy of the queen's future awakening.

ac.

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- ac.1 Translated by the Subhashita Translation Group. The translation was produced by Benjamin Ewing, who also contributed to the introduction (later completed by the 84000 editors). Lowell Cook checked the translation against the Tibetan and edited the text.
- ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī begins with the Buddha and his disciple, the bodhisattva Maitreya, walking through the city of Rājagṛha on their morning alms round. As they near King Bimbisāra’s palace, they are met by Queen Kṣemavatī, who is adorned with a dazzling display of royal jewelry. The Buddha asks the queen, in a seemingly playful way, for the name of the tree that produced the magnificent fruit that she is wearing. Kṣemavatī continues the analogy by describing her jewelry and her current station in life as the “fruit” borne by the “tree” of her past good deeds accumulated over lifetimes.

i.2

This exchange emphasizes one of the main themes of the text: one’s current situation is the result of previous actions, so if we desire a good future we should persevere in meritorious behavior. This applies not just to ordinary happiness but to spiritual pursuits as well. While Kṣemavatī’s “fruit” might at first seem worldly, she firmly sets the “tree” of her own past and present actions within the framework of the bodhisattva path, with her aspiration to awakening and her practice of the six perfections. The fruit and tree analogy continues throughout the sūtra, with the Buddha describing his own station, that of complete awakening and all its excellent qualities, as also being the result of his past good deeds. His account of his own path reflects that of Kṣemavatī, similar to his even if much less advanced in time.

i.3

The text concludes with Kṣemavatī declaring that she will dedicate all her future good deeds toward reaching buddhahood and thereby be of benefit to all beings. The Buddha responds to this prayer by prophesying the queen’s eventual awakening to buddhahood.

i.4

Kṣemavatī is mentioned in at least one other sūtra in the Kangyur¹ as one of Bimbisāra’s queens. She may well represent the same person as the Khemā who appears in the Pali literature as Bimbisāra’s consort, at first infatuated by her own beauty but later, on meeting the Buddha, becoming an arhat and bhikṣuṇī.² Here, however, she is described as a bodhisattva who has already

embarked on accumulating merit on the initial stage of her “natural career” (*prakticaryā*) and has vowed to attain awakening on the subsequent stage of her “resolution” (*praṇidhānacaryā*), as implied in 1.10. In the present narrative she reinforces her previous vow and receives her “prophecy” (*vyākaraṇa*) of future buddhahood from the Buddha himself.³

i.5 Twice in this sūtra, Queen Kṣemavatī aspires to be reborn as a man so that she may continue to progress on her path to awakening. It may be jarring to modern readers to hear the queen lamenting her womanhood, but such attitudes are not uncommon in Mahāyāna sūtras, in some of which it seems to be assumed without question that not only buddhas but bodhisattvas, too, are male.⁴ This sūtra, in which the focus is on a bodhisattva who is a woman, can therefore be seen as belonging to a distinct but quite large genre of texts that counter such assumptions. The genre includes other Kangyur sūtras featuring women bodhisattvas who are also queens or princesses and who, like Kṣemavatī, receive their predictions of future awakening, such as *The Sūtra of Aśokadattā’s Prophecy* (Toh 76),⁵ *The Questions of Vimalaprabhā* (Toh 168), *The Questions of the Girl Vimalaśraddhā* (Toh 84),⁶ *The Questions of Vimaladattā* (Toh 77), and *The Lion’s Roar of Śrīmālādevī* (Toh 92), as well as those in which nonroyal laywomen are the main interlocutors, like *The Questions of the Girl Sumati* (Toh 74), *The Questions of Gaṅgottara* (Toh 75),⁷ *The Questions of an Old Lady* (Toh 171),⁸ *The Miraculous Play of Mañjuśrī* (Toh 96),⁹ *The Sūtra of the Girl Candrottārā’s Prophecy* (Toh 191), and, notably, *The Prophecy Concerning Strīvivarta* (Toh 190).¹⁰ In some of these sūtras gender is dismissed as irrelevant or merely notional, yet all these accounts—even those of Strīvivarta and Vimalaprabhā, the most advanced bodhisattvas in their abilities to manifest in different forms—culminate in the prediction that the female protagonist will ultimately become male, at least for the final stages of the path to buddhahood.¹¹ So while this sūtra, like the others mentioned, imposes the traditional stance of male primacy, it is perhaps in countering texts that make no mention of women bodhisattvas at all that it is framed as an inspiration to women, and ends with many thousands of women developing the intent to reach buddhahood.

i.6 While the text does not include a colophon that identifies its translators, *The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī* is listed in the earliest Tibetan textual catalog, the Denkarma, so we can say with certainty that it appeared in Tibet at some point during or before the early ninth century CE.¹² Despite being among the main body of sūtras translated in the early period, *The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī* does not seem to have been the subject of any scholarly attention in Tibet. It was translated into Chinese (Taishō 573, *Chamopo di shouji jing*, 差摩婆帝授記經) in the year 525 CE by the Indian monk Bodhiruci, who translated some

thirty-nine Buddhist texts in the early sixth century. *The Prophecy of Kṣemavati* was translated into Mongolian and Korean and is included in the Buddhist canons in those languages. It was translated into French in 1866 by Henri Léon Feer as part of his collection of Kangyur excerpts, and an English translation by Peter Skilling was published in 2021.

i.7 The English translation presented here was prepared based on the Degé Kangyur version of the text in consultation with the Stok Palace manuscript and the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*).

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra
The Prophecy of Kṣemavati**

1.

The Translation

[F.243.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in Rājagṛha on Vulture Peak together with a large monastic congregation of twenty thousand monks and many bodhisattva great beings including Maitreya and Mañjuśrī. [F.244.a] At dawn, the Blessed One donned his robes, picked up his alms bowl, and, together with the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, went to the city of Rājagṛha for alms. As they progressed through their rounds in the city of Rājagṛha, they neared the palace of King Bimbisāra. From atop the royal residence, King Bimbisāra’s queen, Kṣemavatī, could see the Blessed One approaching from a distance. Filled with joy at the sight of the Blessed One, Kṣemavatī descended from the palace and laid out ornate cushions made of white silk for the Blessed One and the bodhisattva great being Maitreya. The Blessed One and the bodhisattva great being Maitreya seated themselves on the seats that had been prepared for them, and Kṣemavatī, bedecked in all her jewelry, bowed her head at their feet. So that she might hear teachings on the Dharma, she sat before the Blessed One with great respect and reverence for him.

1.2 The Blessed One saw Queen Kṣemavatī bedecked in all her jewelry and, although he knew the answer, addressed her in order to benefit all beings. He asked, “Kṣemavatī, what is the name of the tree that bears the kind of brilliant, dazzling, shining fruit that adorns your body?”

1.3 Queen Kṣemavatī answered the Blessed One with the following verses:

“The great being has asked,
‘What is the name of the tree
That bears the fruit you wear?’
Even though, great hero, you already know. [F.244.b]

- 1.4 *“It is called the tree arisen from the merit
Generated in the past.
Guide, these fruits I now enjoy
Are from a tree such as that.*
- 1.5 *“This very same fruit tree
Belongs to disciples of the Buddha.
Those who wish to obtain the wisdom of a buddha
Sit before it in order to awaken.*
- 1.6 *“Watered with generosity and discipline,
This fruit tree has been well tended.
And when it fully blossoms,
It will bear sublime fruits.*
- 1.7 *“With the powers of patience and diligence,
I have carefully tended this fruit tree,
And when it blossoms,
It will bear flawless fruits.*
- 1.8 *“This tree is beautiful to behold,
Covered with flowers of concentration and insight.
Guide, all that I enjoy
Is the fruit of that tree.*
- 1.9 *“Just like trees
Rooted in the mountains
Have outstretched limbs and leaves
That they spread far and wide without moving,*
- 1.10 *“In that way I carefully tended
This excellent broad fruit tree in the past
By seeking the essence of buddhahood
With the aim of benefiting all beings.*
- 1.11 *“Guide,¹³ this tree of merit
Will have many more fruits besides.
I will experience more
Than the mere flowers.*
- 1.12 *“I will attain the fruits of that tree—
Supreme awakening,
The unsurpassed awakening of a buddha.
When I leave this lowly station of womanhood behind,*

- 1.13 “I will be reborn as a man
Who is sublime among all beings,
Has perfected all qualities,
And is all-knowing and all-seeing.
- 1.14 “I will liberate those beings
Who are oppressed by suffering,
And become a compassionate refuge
For the denizens of the world.”
- 1.15 The Blessed One responded, “Kṣemavatī, [F.245.a] you have acted to bring benefit and happiness to many people and have compassion for the world. You have acted for the sake of the vast assembly of beings, for the happiness and benefit of gods and humans alike. Excellent, excellent indeed!”
- 1.16 “Blessed One,” Queen Kṣemavatī replied, “the Blessed One has the thirty-two major and eighty minor bodily marks of a great being, the ten powers of the thus-gone ones, the four fearlessnesses, the four special modes of knowledge, the eighteen unique qualities of a buddha, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. Where do all of your qualities come from? And, furthermore, where do the unfathomable, inconceivable, immeasurable, ineffable, incalculable qualities of the Buddha come from?”
- 1.17 The Blessed One answered Queen Kṣemavatī with these verses:

“Desiring the wisdom of the buddhas
In order to benefit all beings,
I too, in the past, have done nothing
But carefully tend such a tree.
- 1.18 “I gathered generosity, discipline, patience,
And likewise diligence and concentration.
For a long time, I applied myself
To absorption and insight.
- 1.19 “Beings have biased minds,
Yet my mind is impartial
Without needing to be cultivated.
Thus I discovered buddhahood itself.
- 1.20 “With an impartial mind
That equalizes
Beauty and ugliness, friend and foe,
I grew the tree of merit.

- 1.21 “As a result, this broad tree
Gained many excellent qualities.
I attained the state of a universal monarch
And the level of Śakra. [F.245.b]
- 1.22 “I surpassed the many-formed Maheśvara,
And even Brahmā himself.
I realized the characteristics
Of the inconceivable features of buddhahood.”
- 1.23 After hearing of the qualities of the Blessed One, Queen Kṣemavatī praised
the Blessed One’s well-spoken teaching and rejoiced, offering these verses:

“Just as the supreme human, the excellent one,
With his endless ocean of qualities,
Trained his conduct in the past,
So will I train.
- 1.24 “As you have perfected all qualities,
I train to emulate your qualities.
Abandoning the suffering of existence,
I too will become like that.
- 1.25 “I fully dedicate
All the generosity I cultivate
In all my subsequent lives
To the attainment of unparalleled wisdom.
- 1.26 “I fully dedicate
All the discipline I maintain
In this life and any other
To the attainment of the wisdom of the buddhas.
- 1.27 “I dedicate
All the patience, diligence, absorption,
Insight, and virtue I cultivate
To be of benefit to the Buddha’s teachings.
- 1.28 “All the virtuous deeds I accrue
Through body, speech, and mind
I dedicate to awakening,
For the sake of the wisdom and qualities of the buddhas.
- 1.29 “May I leave this woman’s body behind
And take the supreme form of a man.

- Upon attaining the body of a man,
May I become the most sublime of beings.
- 1.30 “Once that has come to pass, I will turn
The unsurpassed wheel of the well-gone ones.
I will free the masses of beings
Who are trapped in the prison of saṃsāra.”
- 1.31 The Blessed One then offered his approval to Queen Kṣemavatī with this
verse:

“Those words were well spoken,
Your mind is well disciplined,
And you have subdued Māra well! [F.246.a]
You will awaken to perfect buddhahood!”
- 1.32 Queen Kṣemavatī was joyful, elated, and jubilant. Filled with joy and delight,
she offered the Blessed One and the bodhisattva great being Maitreya plenty
of food and drink until they were satisfied. After the Blessed One put away
his bowl and washed his hands, he gave Queen Kṣemavatī extensive
Dharma teachings, encouraged her to uphold them, inspired her, delighted
her, and then made this prophecy:
- 1.33 “In the future, Kṣemavatī, many eons from now, you will become a thus-
gone, worthy, perfected buddha, a teacher for gods and humans. You will be
a blessed buddha known as Guṇaratnaśrī, and your buddha field will be
supremely pure. It will be free of the suffering of descending to lower
rebirths and the lower realms. It will be an abode of beautiful, pleasant, and
supremely pure bodhisattvas. Such will be your buddha field.”
- 1.34 As this teaching was given, many thousands of laywomen developed the
intent to reach unexcelled, perfect awakening. Thousands of beings and
many gods and humans obtained the light of the Dharma.
- 1.35 When the Blessed One had finished speaking, Queen Kṣemavatī, her
retinue, and the entire world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas
all rejoiced and praised what the Buddha had taught.
- 1.36 *This concludes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī.”*

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

C Choné

H Lhasa

J Lithang

K Kangxi

N Narthang

S Stok Palace

Y Yongle

n.

NOTES

- n.1 See *The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One's Wisdom Seal* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-055-005.html#UT22084-055-005-138>) (*Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhi*, Toh 131).
- n.2 See Malalasekera 1937 and *Khemātherī Apadāna* (Thi Ap 18).
- n.3 For a brief summary of these stages in a bodhisattva's career as set out in the *Mahāvastu*, see the introduction to Dharmachakra Translation Committee (tr.), *The Good Eon (Bhadrakalpika)*, Toh 94, 2022, [i.11](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh94.html#UT22084-045-001-14621) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh94.html#UT22084-045-001-14621>) and n.6 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh94.html#UT22084-045-001-14622>).
- n.4 See for example Roberts (tr.) *The King of Samādhis Sūtra* (Toh 127), [introduction i.24](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh127.html#UT22084-055-001-32) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh127.html#UT22084-055-001-32>). In her book *Women in Buddhism* (p. 169) Diana Paul identifies three ways in which Mahāyāna sūtras deal with the question of female bodhisattvas and buddhas. While most deny the possibility of buddhahood in a female body, some implicitly deny that women can be bodhisattvas at all, some accept that women may be “lower-stage” bodhisattvas, and some accept that women may potentially be “advanced” bodhisattvas whose buddhahood is “imminent.”
- n.5 See UCSB Buddhist Studies Translation Group, trans., *Aśokadattā's Prophecy* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh76.html>), Toh 76 (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2024).
- n.6 See Karma Gyaltsen Ling Translation Group, trans., *The Questions of the Girl Vimalāsraddhā* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh84.html>) (Toh 84), 2021.
- n.7 See 84000 Translation Team, trans., *The Questions of Gaṅgottarā* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh75.html>) (Toh 75), 2024.

- n.8 See Sakya Pandita Translation Group (International Buddhist Academy Division), trans., *The Questions of an Old Lady* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh171.html>) (Toh 171), 2011.
- n.9 See Jens Erland Braarvig, trans., *The Miraculous Play of Mañjuśrī* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh96.html>) (Toh 96), 2020.
- n.10 See Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans., *The Prophecy Concerning Strīvivarta* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh190.html>) (Toh 190), 2021.
- n.11 A notable exception to the seeming constancy of such outcomes can be seen in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (see Roberts, trans., *The Stem Array* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh44-45.html>), Toh 44, chapter 45, 2022) in which advanced female teachers appear with no mention of their eventual need to become male.
- n.12 See Denkarma, folio 299.b and Herrmann-Pfandt, p. 119.
- n.13 Reading 'dren pa from Y, J, K, C, H, S in place of 'dren pa'i.

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A type of nonhuman being whose precise status is subject to different views, but is included as one of the six classes of beings in the sixfold classification of realms of rebirth. In the Buddhist context, asuras are powerful beings said to be dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility. They are also known in the pre-Buddhist and pre-Vedic mythologies of India and Iran, and feature prominently in Vedic and post-Vedic Brahmanical mythology, as well as in the Buddhist tradition. In these traditions, asuras are often described as being engaged in interminable conflict with the devas (gods).

g.2 Bimbisāra

gzugs can snying po

བཟུགས་ཅན་སྡིང་པོ།

bimbisāra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The king of Magadha and a great patron of the Buddha. His birth coincided with the Buddha's, and his father, King Mahāpadma, named him "Essence of Gold" after mistakenly attributing the brilliant light that marked the Buddha's birth to the birth of his son by Queen Bimbī ("Goldie"). Accounts of Bimbisāra's youth and life can be found in *The Chapter on Going Forth* (Toh 1-1, *Pravrajyāvastu*).

King Śreṇya Bimbisāra first met with the Buddha early on, when the latter was the wandering mendicant known as Gautama. Impressed by his conduct, Bimbisāra offered to take Gautama into his court, but Gautama refused, and Bimbisāra wished him success in his quest for awakening and asked him to visit his palace after he had achieved his goal. One account of this episode can be found in the sixteenth chapter of *The Play in Full* (Toh 95, *Lalitavistara*). There are other accounts where the two meet earlier on in childhood; several episodes can be found, for example, in *The Hundred Deeds* (Toh 340, *Karmaśataka*). Later, after the Buddha's awakening, Bimbisāra became one of his most famous patrons and donated to the saṅgha the Bamboo Grove, Veṇuvana, at the outskirts of the capital of Magadha, Rājagṛha, where he built residences for the monks. Bimbisāra was imprisoned and killed by his own son, the prince Ajātaśatru, who, influenced by Devadatta, sought to usurp his father's throne.

g.3 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A high-ranking deity presiding over a divine world; he is also considered to be the lord of the Sahā world (our universe). Though not considered a creator god in Buddhism, Brahmā occupies an important place as one of two gods (the other being Indra/Śakra) said to have first exhorted the Buddha Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma. The particular heavens found in the form realm over which Brahmā rules are often some of the most sought-after realms of higher rebirth in Buddhist literature. Since there are many universes or world systems, there are also multiple Brahmās presiding over them. His most frequent epithets are “Lord of the Sahā World” (*sahāṃpati*) and Great Brahmā (*mahābrahman*).

g.4 **eighteen unique qualities of a buddha**

sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa bco brgyad

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཚོས་མ་འདྲེས་པ་བཅོ་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭādaśāveṇikabuddhadharma

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Eighteen special features of a buddha’s behavior, realization, activity, and wisdom that are not shared by other beings. They are generally listed as: (1) he never makes a mistake, (2) he is never boisterous, (3) he never forgets, (4) his concentration never falters, (5) he has no notion of distinctness, (6) his equanimity is not due to lack of consideration, (7) his motivation never falters, (8) his endeavor never fails, (9) his mindfulness never falters, (10) he never abandons his concentration, (11) his insight (*prajñā*) never decreases, (12) his liberation never fails, (13) all his physical actions are preceded and followed by wisdom (*jñāna*), (14) all his verbal actions are preceded and followed by wisdom, (15) all his mental actions are preceded and followed by wisdom, (16) his wisdom and vision perceive the past without attachment or hindrance, (17) his wisdom and vision perceive the future without attachment or hindrance, and (18) his wisdom and vision perceive the present without attachment or hindrance.

g.5 **eighty minor marks**

dpe byad bzang po brgyad cu

དཔེ་བྱད་བཟང་པོ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ།

asītyanuṣyañjana

A set of eighty bodily characteristics borne by buddhas and universal emperors. They are considered “minor” in terms of being secondary to the thirty-two major marks of a great being.

g.6 **four fearlessnesses**

mi 'jigs pa bzhi

མི་འཇིགས་པ་བཞི།

caturvaiśāradya

The four types of fearlessness possessed by buddhas: They have full confidence that (1) they are fully awakened, (2) they have removed all defilements, (3) they have taught about the obstacles to liberation, and (4) they have shown the path to liberation.

g.7 four special modes of knowledge

so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi

སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ་བཞི།

catuḥpratisamṃvid

The four correct and unhindered discriminating knowledges of (1) the doctrine or Dharma, (2) meaning, (3) language, and (4) brilliance or eloquence. These are the essential means by which the buddhas impart their teachings.

g.8 gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of generally benevolent nonhuman beings who inhabit the skies, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds, and more specifically to dwell on the eastern slopes of Mount Meru, where they are ruled by the Great King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They are most renowned as celestial musicians who serve the gods. In the Abhidharma, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by sentient beings during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances (*gandha*) in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

g.9 Guṇaratnaśrī

yon tan rin chen dpal

ཡོན་ཏན་རིན་ཆེན་དཔལ།

guṇaratnaśrī

The name of a future buddha.

g.10 Kṣemavatī

bde ldan ma

བདེ་ལྷན་མ།

kṣemavatī

One of the wives of King Bimbisāra. May possibly be the Khemā of Pali literature.

g.11 Maheśvara

dbang phyug chen po

དབང་ཕྱུག་ཆེན་པོ།

maheśvara

An epithet for the god Śiva.

g.12 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The bodhisattva Maitreya is an important figure in many Buddhist traditions, where he is unanimously regarded as the buddha of the future era. He is said to currently reside in the heaven of Tuṣita, as Śākyamuni's regent, where he awaits the proper time to take his final rebirth and become the fifth buddha in the Fortunate Eon, reestablishing the Dharma in this world after the teachings of the current buddha have disappeared. Within the Mahāyāna sūtras, Maitreya is elevated to the same status as other central bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, and his name appears frequently in sūtras, either as the Buddha's interlocutor or as a teacher of the Dharma. *Maitreya* literally means "Loving One." He is also known as Ajita, meaning "Invincible."

For more information on Maitreya, see, for example, the introduction to *Maitreya's Setting Out* (Toh 198).

g.13 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Mañjuśrī is one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha” and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. To his name, Mañjuśrī, meaning “Gentle and Glorious One,” is often added the epithet Kumārabhūta, “having a youthful form.” He is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.14 Rājagṛha

rgyal po'i khab

རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།

rājagṛha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ancient capital of Magadha prior to its relocation to Pāṭaliputra during the Mauryan dynasty, Rājagṛha is one of the most important locations in Buddhist history. The literature tells us that the Buddha and his saṅgha spent a considerable amount of time in residence in and around Rājagṛha—in nearby places, such as the Vulture Peak Mountain (Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata), a major site of the Mahāyāna sūtras, and the Bamboo Grove (Veṇuvana)—enjoying the patronage of King Bimbisāra and then of his son King Ajātaśatru. Rājagṛha is also remembered as the location where the first Buddhist monastic council was held after the Buddha Śākyamuni passed into parinirvāṇa. Now known as Rajgir and located in the modern Indian state of Bihar.

g.15 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱལ་བྱིན།

śakra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The lord of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (*trāyastriṃśa*). Alternatively known as Indra, the deity that is called “lord of the gods” dwells on the summit of Mount Sumeru and wields the thunderbolt. The Tibetan translation *brgya byin* (meaning “one hundred sacrifices”) is based on an etymology that *śakra* is an abbreviation of *śata-kratu*, one who has performed a hundred sacrifices. Each world with a central Sumeru has a Śakra. Also known by other names such as Kauśika, Devendra, and Śacipati.

g.16 ten powers of the thus-gone ones

de bzhin gshegs pa'i stobs bcu

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་སྟོབས་བརྒྱ།

daśatathāgatabala

A category of qualities that are distinctive of a thus-gone one. They are as follows: knowing what is possible and what is impossible; knowing the results of actions or the ripening of karma; knowing the various inclinations of sentient beings; knowing the various elements; knowing the supreme and lesser faculties of sentient beings; knowing the paths that lead to all destinations of rebirth; knowing the concentrations, liberations, absorptions, equilibriums, afflictions, purifications, and abidings; knowing previous lives; knowing the death and rebirth of sentient beings; and knowing the cessation of the defilements.

g.17 thirty-two major marks of a great being

skyes bu chen po'i mtshan sum cu rtsa gnyis

སྐྱེས་བུ་ཚེན་པོའི་མཚན་སུམ་རྩ་གཉིས།

dvātriṅśanmahāpuruṣalakṣaṇāni

The thirty-two major signs of a buddha that manifest as specific physical attributes to indicate the perfection of the awakened state of buddhahood.

g.18 universal monarch

'khor los sgyur

འཁོར་ལོས་སྐྱུར།

cakravartin

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

An ideal monarch or emperor who, as the result of the merit accumulated in previous lifetimes, rules over a vast realm in accordance with the Dharma. Such a monarch is called a *cakravartin* because he bears a wheel (*cakra*) that rolls (*varate*) across the earth, bringing all lands and kingdoms under his power. The cakravartin conquers his territory without causing harm, and his activity causes beings to enter the path of wholesome actions. According to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, just as with the buddhas, only one cakravartin appears in a world system at any given time. They are likewise endowed with the thirty-two major marks of a great being (*mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa*), but a cakravartin's marks are outshined by those of a buddha. They possess seven precious objects: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the wish-fulfilling gem, the queen, the general, and the minister. An illustrative passage about the cakravartin and his possessions can be found in *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), [3.3–3.13](#).

Vasubandhu lists four types of cakravartins: (1) the cakravartin with a golden wheel (*suvarṇacakravartin*) rules over four continents and is invited by lesser kings to be their ruler; (2) the cakravartin with a silver wheel (*rūpyacakravartin*) rules over three continents and his opponents submit to him as he approaches; (3) the cakravartin with a copper wheel (*tāmracakravartin*) rules over two continents and his opponents submit themselves after preparing for battle; and (4) the cakravartin with an iron wheel (*ayaścakravartin*) rules over one continent and his opponents submit themselves after brandishing weapons.

g.19 Vulture Peak

bya rgod phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྗོད་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

gṛdhrakūṭaparvata

Name of a hill close to Rājagṛha. It is famous as the place where the Buddha is said to have taught the Prajñāpāramitā and other teachings.