

༄༅། །བདེ་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་ལྷུས་པ།

The Question of Kṣemaṅkara

Kṣemaṅkaraparipṛcchā

འཕགས་པ་བདེ་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་ལྷུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa bde byed kyis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Question of Kṣemaṅkara”

Āryakṣemaṅkaraparipṛcchānāmahāyānasūtra

· Toh 165 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 59 (mdo sde, ba), folios 167.b–171.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

· Prajñāvarman · ye shes sde ·



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co.

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SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 *The Question of Kṣemaṅkara* contains a teaching given by Buddha Śākyamuni to the Śākya youth Kṣemaṅkara, in response to a question he poses about the qualities of bodhisattvas and how to develop such qualities. The Buddha teaches him about bodhisattvas' qualities, first in prose and later reiterated in verse, and then equates the teaching of this sūtra with the perfection of insight, stating that even if one practices the first five perfections for many eons, one will not make much progress without knowing what is taught in this sūtra.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the supervision of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche. Ani Jinpa Palmo produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Andreas Doctor checked the translation against the Tibetan and edited the text.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 The setting of this short sūtra, *The Question of Kṣemaṅkara*, is Nyagrodha Park near Kapilavastu, the city in the ancient Śākya kingdom that contained the family home where Prince Siddhārtha grew up. Kapilavastu is assumed to be some ten kilometers to the west of his birthplace, Lumbini, which is in present-day Nepal, but it is not certain which of two possible sites today might be its exact location.

i.2 The sūtra describes a conversation between Buddha Śākyamuni and the Śākya youth Kṣemaṅkara, who asks the Buddha a lengthy question about the qualities good bodhisattvas should have and how to develop such qualities. The Buddha's response unfolds as a teaching on how to practice the bodhisattva path—an uncomplicated instruction given to a layperson. The teaching is without the specialized vocabulary of Buddhist philosophy and does not place strong emphasis on monastic discipline, although it does admonish against involvement with women. For the modern reader it should be kept in mind that such comments regarding women are primarily meant for men as advice in support of celibacy.

i.3 In this teaching the Buddha offers Kṣemaṅkara a set of ethical instructions, such as not retaliating when attacked, combined with teachings aimed at liberation, such as how to realize emptiness in order to successfully complete the bodhisattva path. Delighted by the Buddha's response, Kṣemaṅkara makes an offering of his jewelry. The Buddha transforms the jewelry into a multitude of magically created beings, who in turn become the basis for a further teaching on the illusory character of phenomena. Unlike many longer sūtras, *The Question of Kṣemaṅkara* does not develop an elaborate storyline, nor are we given much information regarding the setting or the characters. Instead, this is a brief teaching that responds to a simple question. The only other participant in the conversation is Ānanda, in his usual role as witness to the Buddha's teaching.

- i.4 Near the end of the sūtra, the evil Māra also makes an appearance and inquires about the benefit of the Buddha's discourse. The Buddha then equates the teaching of this sūtra with the perfection of insight, stating that no matter how long one practices the first five perfections, unless one knows this teaching, one will be unable to make much progress on the bodhisattva path.
- i.5 Unfortunately, no Sanskrit version of this sūtra remains extant, but the text was translated into both Chinese and Tibetan. The Chinese translation (T 533) was produced by the prolific translator Chih-ch'ien (third century CE) sometime between 223–53 CE. As such, this sūtra can be dated to the formative period of India's Mahāyāna scriptural tradition.
- i.6 In producing this translation, we have based our work on the Degé xylograph while consulting the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*), as well as the Stok Palace manuscript. The colophon of the sūtra states that it was translated from Sanskrit by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman and the prolific Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé. So, we can date the Tibetan translation to the late eighth to the early ninth century, a dating that is also attested by the text's inclusion in the early ninth century Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) catalog.¹

**The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra
The Question of Kṣemaṅkara**

1.

The Translation

[F.167.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in the Nyagrodha Park of the Śākya, near Kapilavastu in the Śākya country, together with a great saṅgha of five hundred monks. At that time a Śākya youth² named Kṣemaṅkara set out from the city of Kapilavastu for Nyagrodha Park, where the Blessed One was staying. As soon as he arrived there, he touched his head to the feet of the Blessed One and sat down to one side.

1.3 With folded palms the Śākya youth Kṣemaṅkara bowed down to the Blessed One and asked him, “Blessed One, what attributes should bodhisattvas possess in order to progress irreversibly toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening, so that even with just a little effort they will obtain the thirty-two marks of a great being, proceed from buddha realm to buddha realm, pass away free from delusion, possess the five types of superknowledge as soon as they are born, discard all unfree states, obtain leisure and advantages, gain retention, possess unobstructed eloquence, [F.168.a] possess the quality of not regressing, gain interest in emptiness, always delight in going forth, and always delight in pure conduct, even when staying in a household?”

1.4 In answer to this question, the Blessed One replied to the young Śākya Kṣemaṅkara, “Noble son, you have asked the Thus-Gone One about this topic for the sake of benefiting and bringing happiness to a multitude of beings, out of love for the world, for the welfare of numerous people, and in order to benefit and bring happiness to gods and humans. Excellent, excellent! Therefore, noble son, listen carefully and keep the following in mind, as I shall now explain.

- 1.5 “Bodhisattvas who possess four attributes will attain the qualities you have described. What are those four attributes? Noble son, they are as follows: bodhisattvas who possess the strength of patience and practice patience (1) do not retaliate though others revile them, (2) do not strike back though others beat them, (3) do not quarrel though others quarrel with them, and (4) do not get angry though others are hostile to them. Noble son, bodhisattvas who possess those four attributes will progress irreversibly toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening and will obtain the perfect qualities you have described.”
- 1.6 When the Well-Gone One had said this, the Teacher also spoke these words:
- “Although blamed, do not reciprocate.
Having been harmed, do not harm others.
Even if it means giving up their human bodies,
Bodhisattvas will attain these qualities.
- 1.7 “Always guard against evil words,
And do not be controlled by a negative mind.
Eliminate misdeeds, and you will gain such results
And quickly achieve supreme wisdom.
- 1.8 “Some people take pleasure in striking³ others,
And have a ruthless and malicious attitude. [F.168.b]
Having forsaken the wisdom of the buddhas,
Such unwise people will be burdened with unbearable suffering.
- 1.9 “Therefore, do not beat others,
And abstain from striking anything, animate or inanimate.
Benefiting all beings with love and affection,
You will quickly attain supreme wisdom.
- 1.10 “Deluded beings overwhelmed by anger
Are far from the teaching of those who are wise in this world.
Because of wrong views, they are bent on negative ways.
Therefore, wise people should not disturb them.
- 1.11 “Bodhisattvas should not get angry,
But guard the truth without harming others.
Perfecting these rare actions,
They will possess all the exquisite thirty-two marks.
- 1.12 “The unwise always have a destructive and hostile attitude;
They⁴ do not even respect their own parents.

They are enmeshed in the roots⁵ of affliction,
Which are the flaws of the lowest type of person.

- 1.13 “Therefore, always rely wholly on patience,
Attend to monks who teach the Dharma,
And never forsake spiritual friends.
Then supreme awakening will be easy.
- 1.14 “Noble son, bodhisattvas who possess four additional attributes will progress irreversibly toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and they will achieve the perfect qualities you have described. What are those four attributes? Noble son, they are (1) pursuing the Dharma, yearning for the Dharma, and rejoicing, delighting in, and being inspired by the Dharma, as well as holding the Dharma and teaching the Dharma; (2) renouncing women and not indulging in women; (3) rejoicing in benefactors, in their giving nature, and in their giving,⁶ as well as renouncing dullness and sleep; and (4) feeling inspired by emptiness and abiding in emptiness. Noble son, bodhisattvas who possess those four attributes will progress irreversibly toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening and they will achieve the qualities you have described.” [F.169.a]
- 1.15 When the Well-Gone One had said this, the Teacher also spoke these words:

“Beings who yearn for the Dharma
And generate effort for the sake of the Dharma are rare.
Anyone who makes the wheel of Dharma turn
Will attain supreme wisdom.
- 1.16 “Hearing it from others they will genuinely retain it,
And then teach the Dharma to others who are interested.
Such wise ones will not lose courage in a gathering.
They will reach unsurpassed and supreme awakening.
- 1.17 “Rejecting women, the cause of downfalls,
A son of the victors will always practice pure conduct.
Stable in the practice of pure conduct,
He will turn the unsurpassed, sacred wheel.
- 1.18 “Those who delight in⁷ the features of women
Will become miserable, poor, and feeble.
Indulging in them will not bring peace,
So forsake them and engage in bodhisattva conduct.”

- 1.19 Upon hearing these teachings, the Śākya youth Kṣemaṅkara felt satisfied, delighted, and thrilled. Feeling joyful and happy, he unfastened the ornaments on his body and scattered them before the Blessed One. Through the Blessed One's power these ornaments now transformed into a mansion made of precious substances, hovering directly above the Blessed One's crown. From that mansion emanated five hundred people decorated with all manner of ornaments, who scattered their own ornaments in the direction of the Blessed One. In addition, they aroused the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening and said, "Blessed One, we are sharing our roots of virtue with all beings, and we dedicate them toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening."
- 1.20 The Śākya youth Kṣemaṅkara also perceived these emanated people. Seeing them, the hairs on his body stood on end, so he asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, where are these people from? Are they from the east, from the south, from the west, from the north, from below, or from above? [F.169.b] From which cardinal or intermediate direction did they come?"
- 1.21 "Noble son," replied the Blessed One, "these people are from neither the east, south, west, or north; nor from below or above; nor are they from any cardinal or intermediate direction. They are not gods, they are not nāgas, they are not yakṣas, they are not gandharvas, they are not demigods, they are not garuḍas, they are not kinnaras, they are not mahoragas, they are not humans, and they are not non-humans—they do not abide in the earth element, they do not abide in the water element, they do not abide in the fire element, they do not abide in the wind element, and they do not abide in the space element. They have no form, no feeling, no perception, no formation, no thinking, no mind, no consciousness, no karma, no ripening of karma, no present world, no other world, no coming, no going, no dwelling, no death, and no birth. However, noble son, they are known as magical emanations. They are called groundless, they are called lifeless, they are called beingless, they are called personless, they are called characteristicless, they are called void, they are called empty, and they are called essenceless.
- 1.22 "Kṣemaṅkara, those noble sons and daughters who hold all phenomena to be like magical creations—who accept, understand, and have faith and confidence in them as such, and who are not led astray by others—such noble sons and daughters, Kṣemaṅkara, are called my children. They are known as my descendants, they are known to possess illumination, they are known to be illuminating, they are known to clear away darkness, they are known to abandon afflictions. They are known as teachers, they are known as fields of merit, they are known as worthy of veneration,⁸ they are known as mendicants, they are known as brahmins, they are known as learned, they are known as elephants, they are known as those who accept that

phenomena are unborn, [F.170.a] they are known as bodhisattvas, they are known as great beings, they are known as having the quality of non-regressing, they are known as having the qualities of bodhisattvas, and they are known as having been prophesied.

1.23 “However, noble children who do not agree that all phenomena are like magical creations, and who do not accept this, do not engage with it, have no faith in it, and lack trust in it—who feel frightened and scared upon hearing about it and start to panic, turn away from it, and challenge it—such noble children are known as not being mendicants. They are known as not being brahmins, they are known as non-Buddhists, they are known as those who apprehend things, they are known as depraved, they are known as unwholesome companions, they are known as people to avoid, they are known as deceitful bodhisattvas, they are known as immoral bodhisattvas, they are known as fake bodhisattvas, they are known as worthless bodhisattvas, they are known as corrupted bodhisattvas, and they are known as savage bodhisattvas.”

1.24 At this point the evil Māra, feeling frustrated and unhappy, went to the location where the Blessed One was staying and asked, “Blessed One, by delivering this Dharma teaching, how many beings’ welfare are you accomplishing?”

“Evil one,” replied the Blessed One, “through the delivery of this Dharma teaching, eighty-four thousand deities in the realms of desire and form will attain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn. The minds of five hundred monks will become free of defilements with no further appropriation. Seventy-five nuns will also attain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn. The bodhisattva Kṣemaṅkara and five hundred other laymen will also attain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn. Twenty-five female lay practitioners will purify the eye of Dharma, making it free from dust and dirt with regard to all phenomena, and all of them will attain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn. [F.170.b] When passing away, all of them will be reborn in Sukhāvātī, the buddha realm of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Amitābha. Once born there, they will all jointly uphold the awakening of the buddhahood of² infinite blessed buddhas. They will express it, teach it, and authentically expound it. In the future, after as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, during the so-called Good Eon of this trichiliocosm, they will fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.”

1.25 The evil Māra felt frustrated and unhappy. With regret, he began to weep. As he was leaving, he said, “Blessed One, please do not deliver this Dharma teaching again!”

“Evil one, you should not speak like that!” replied the Blessed One. “And why not? Because the turning of the Dharma wheel of all the blessed buddhas is unimpeded.”

1.26 Then venerable Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, what is this Dharma teaching called, and how should it be identified?”

The Blessed One responded, “Ānanda, you may call this Dharma discourse *The Bodhisattva’s Renunciation*, or you should call it *The Question of Kṣemaṅkara*. Ānanda, I entrust you with this Dharma discourse. I entrust it to you in order that you retain it, read it aloud, explain it, and accurately teach it to others in great detail. Why? Ānanda, noble sons and noble daughters who have genuinely entered the Great Vehicle [F.171.a] might practice the five perfections without the perfection of insight for ten eons. Yet those noble sons and noble daughters who retain this Dharma discourse, hold it, read it aloud, understand it, accurately teach it to others in detail, or even make it into a book and carry it, will create much more merit.”

1.27 Then the Blessed One spoke these verses:

“Whoever practices generosity for ten eons
Without having heard about this way of so doing
Will not be praised
As having unsurpassed generosity.

1.28 “Those who observe mundane discipline
Even for tens of eons
Will continue to dwell on observations—
Such discipline will not be pure.

1.29 “Those who retain this profound discourse,
Which is praised by the buddhas,
Will have unsurpassed discipline
And will themselves be praised by all the buddhas.

1.30 “Though people may advocate patience for tens of eons,
And practice patience toward all who revile them,
That patience will not be praiseworthy
Unless they have heard about this way of doing it.

1.31 “Those who retain this discourse,
And correctly teach it to others,
Will have unsurpassed patience
And be praised by all the buddhas.

- 1.32 “Those who have not heard about this way of so doing
May never transgress the rules,
Even for tens of eons,
Yet such effort will not be praiseworthy.
- 1.33 “For those who retain this profound discourse,
Explained by the Buddha,
Their effort will be unsurpassed
And they will be praised by all the buddhas.
- 1.34 “Those who practice concentration
For tens of eons
May abide in the taste of concentration,
But will not be known as adepts at concentration.
- 1.35 “Yet those who do not conceive¹⁰—whether inwardly or outwardly—
Of any phenomena at all
Have unsurpassed concentration,
And are called adepts at concentration.
- 1.36 “In this way, through the sameness [F.171.b]
Of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence,
Concentration, and insight,
Awakening will be quickly attained.”
- 1.37 When the Blessed One had spoken, venerable Ānanda, the Śākya youth
Kṣemaṅkara, the entire retinue, and the world including its gods, humans,
demigods, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had
said.
- 1.38 *This concludes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra “The Question of Kṣemaṅkara.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman, and the translator and chief editor Bandé Yeshé Dé, and others.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 The Denkarma catalog is usually dated to ca. 812 CE. In this catalog, *The Question of Kṣemaṅkara* is included among the “Miscellaneous Sūtras” (*mdo sde sna tshogs*), which are fewer than one hundred śloka long. See Denkarma, folio 299.b.4; also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 115, n. 217.
- n.2 *gzhon nu* is missing from Yongle, Lithang, Kangxi, Narthang, Choné, and Lhasa. Only Stok and Degé have it.
- n.3 Translated based on Yongle, Lithang, Kangxi, Choné, and Stok: *'tshog rdung*. Degé: *'tshog rung*.
- n.4 Translated based on Stok: *'di ni*. Degé and the other versions in the Comparative Edition: *'di na*.
- n.5 Translated based on Yongle and Stok: *rtsa bar*. Degé: *rtsa ba*.
- n.6 Translated based on Stok: *sbyin pa'i bdag po dang / kun 'gyed pa'i ngang tshul can dang / kun 'gyed pa la dga' ba*. Degé and other Kangyurs have *kun bged pa* instead of *kun 'gyed pa* in both instances. Although *bged pa* occurs quite commonly in the Kangyur and must have a similar meaning, it does not seem to be found in any dictionaries.
- n.7 Translated based on Stok: *dga'*. Degé: *'ga'*.
- n.8 Translated based on Stok: *yon gyi gnas*. Degé: *yon tan gyi gnas*.
- n.9 Translated based on Yongle and Stok: *kyi*. Degé: *kyis*.
- n.10 Translated based on Yongle and Stok: *rtog*. Degé: *rtogs*.

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 Amitābha

'od dpag med

འོད་དཔག་མེད།

amitābha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The buddha of the western buddhaheld of Sukhāvātī, where fortunate beings are reborn to make further progress toward spiritual maturity. Amitābha made his great vows to create such a realm when he was a bodhisattva called Dharmākara. In the Pure Land Buddhist tradition, popular in East Asia, aspiring to be reborn in his buddha realm is the main emphasis; in other Mahāyāna traditions, too, it is a widespread practice. For a detailed description of the realm, see *The Display of the Pure Land of Sukhāvātī*, Toh 115. In some tantras that make reference to the five families he is the tathāgata associated with the lotus family.

Amitābha, “Infinite Light,” is also known in many Indian Buddhist works as Amitāyus, “Infinite Life.” In both East Asian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions he is often conflated with another buddha named “Infinite Life,” Aparimitāyus, or “Infinite Life and Wisdom,” Aparimitāyurjñāna, the shorter version of whose name has also been back-translated from Tibetan into Sanskrit as Amitāyus but who presides over a realm in the zenith. For details on the relation between these buddhas and their names, see *The Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* (1) Toh 674, i.9.

g.2 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

ānanda

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A major śrāvaka disciple and personal attendant of the Buddha Śākyamuni during the last twenty-five years of his life. He was a cousin of the Buddha (according to the *Mahāvastu*, he was a son of Śuklodana, one of the brothers of King Śuddhodana, which means he was a brother of Devadatta; other sources say he was a son of Amṛtodana, another brother of King Śuddhodana, which means he would have been a brother of Aniruddha).

Ānanda, having always been in the Buddha’s presence, is said to have memorized all the teachings he heard and is celebrated for having recited all the Buddha’s teachings by memory at the first council of the Buddhist saṅgha, thus preserving the teachings after the Buddha’s parinirvāṇa. The phrase “Thus did I hear at one time,” found at the beginning of the sūtras, usually stands for his recitation of the teachings. He became a patriarch after the passing of Mahākāśyapa.

g.3 demigod

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.4 five perfections

phar phyin lnga

ཕར་ཕྱིན་ལྔ།

pañcapāramitā

The five perfections of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, and concentration.

g.5 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.6 Ganges

gang gA

གང་གླ།

gaṅgā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Gaṅgā, or Ganges in English, is considered to be the most sacred river of India, particularly within the Hindu tradition. It starts in the Himalayas, flows through the northern plains of India, bathing the holy city of Vārāṇasī, and meets the sea at the Bay of Bengal, in Bangladesh. In the sūtras, however, this river is mostly mentioned not for its sacredness but for its abundant sands—noticeable still today on its many sandy banks and at its delta—which serve as a common metaphor for infinitely large numbers.

According to Buddhist cosmology, as explained in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is one of the four rivers that flow from Lake Anavatapta and cross the southern continent of Jambudvīpa—the known human world or more specifically the Indian subcontinent.

g.7 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗིང་།

garuḍa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.8 Good Eon

bskal pa bzang po

བསྐལ་པ་བཟང་པོ།

bhadrakalpa

An epithet of our current eon, so-called because one thousand buddhas are prophesied to appear during this time.

g.9 Kapilavastu

ser skya'i gnas

ཤེར་སྐྱའི་གནས།

kapilavastu

The capital city of the Śākya kingdom, where the Buddha had grown up as Prince Siddhārtha.

g.10 kinnara

mi'am ci

མིའམ་ཅི།

kinnara

A class of semidivine beings that resemble humans to the degree that their very name—which means “Is that a human?”—suggests some confusion as to their divine status.

g.11 Kṣemaṅkara

bde byed

བདེ་བྱེད།

kṣemaṅkara

Name of a Śākya youth.

g.12 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally “great serpents,” mahoragas are supernatural beings depicted as large, subterranean beings with human torsos and heads and the lower bodies of serpents. Their movements are said to cause earthquakes, and they make up a class of subterranean geomantic spirits whose movement through the seasons and months of the year is deemed significant for construction projects.

g.13 Māra

bdud

བདུད།

māra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Māra, literally “death” or “maker of death,” is the name of the deva who tried to prevent the Buddha from achieving awakening, the name given to the class of beings he leads, and also an impersonal term for the destructive forces that keep beings imprisoned in saṃsāra:

(1) As a deva, Māra is said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations (*paranirmitavaśavartin*), the highest paradise in the desire realm. He famously attempted to prevent the Buddha’s awakening under the Bodhi tree—see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.1—and later sought

many times to thwart the Buddha's activity. In the sūtras, he often also creates obstacles to the progress of śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. (2) The devas ruled over by Māra are collectively called *mārakāyika* or *mārakāyikadevatā*, the "deities of Māra's family or class." In general, these māras too do not wish any being to escape from saṃsāra, but can also change their ways and even end up developing faith in the Buddha, as exemplified by Sārthavāha; see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), [21.14](#) and [21.43](#). (3) The term māra can also be understood as personifying four defects that prevent awakening, called (i) the divine māra (*devaputramāra*), which is the distraction of pleasures; (ii) the māra of Death (*mṛtyumāra*), which is having one's life interrupted; (iii) the māra of the aggregates (*skandhamāra*), which is identifying with the five aggregates; and (iv) the māra of the afflictions (*kleśamāra*), which is being under the sway of the negative emotions of desire, hatred, and ignorance.

g.14 mendicant

dge sbyong

དགེ་སྦྱོང་།

śramaṇa

A term used broadly to denote a spiritual practitioner.

g.15 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments, where they guard wealth and sometimes also teachings. Nāgas are associated with serpents and have a snakelike appearance. In Buddhist art and in written accounts, they are regularly portrayed as half human and half snake, and they are also said to have the ability to change into human form. Some nāgas are Dharma protectors, but they can also bring retribution if they are disturbed. They may likewise fight one another, wage war, and destroy the lands of others by causing lightning, hail, and flooding.

g.16 non-Buddhist

mu stegs can

མུ་སྟེགས་ཅན།

tīrthika

A non-Buddhist religious practitioner who relies on sacred fords (*tīrtha*).

g.17 Nyagrodha Park

shing nya gro dha'i kun dga' ra ba

ཤིང་ཉ་གྲོ་དྲི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

nyagrodhārāma

A grove of banyan trees (Skt. *nyagrodha*) near Kapilavastu where the Buddha sometimes took residence. It was a gift to the Buddhist community by King Śuddhodana, the father of the Buddha.

g.18 Prajñāvarman

pradz+ny+A barma

པརྣ་བམ།

prajñāvarman

An Indian Bengali paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Arriving in Tibet on an invitation from the Tibetan king, he assisted in the translation of numerous canonical scriptures. He is also the author of a few philosophical commentaries contained in the Tibetan Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) collection.

g.19 retention

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *dhāraṇī* has the sense of something that “holds” or “retains,” and so it can refer to the special capacity of practitioners to memorize and recall detailed teachings. It can also refer to a verbal expression of the teachings—an incantation, spell, or mnemonic formula—that distills and “holds” essential points of the Dharma and is used by practitioners to attain mundane and supramundane goals. The same term is also used to denote texts that contain such formulas.

g.20 Śākya

shAkya

ཤཱཀ།

śākya

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Name of the ancient tribe in which the Buddha was born as a prince; their kingdom was based to the east of Kośala, in the foothills near the present-day border of India and Nepal, with Kapilavastu as its capital.

g.21 Sukhāvātī

bde ba can

བདེ་བ་ཅན།

sukhāvātī

The pure land of Buddha Amitābha in which a practitioner can take rebirth through a combination of pure faith, sufficient merit, and one-pointed determination.

g.22 those who apprehend things

dmigs pa can

དམིགས་པ་ཅན།

aupalambhika

Those who apprehend things conceptually.

g.23 trichiliocosm

stong gsum gi 'jigs rten gyi khams

སྟོང་གསུམ་གི་འཛིགས་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasralokadhātu

A universe containing one billion worlds.

g.24 unsurpassed and perfect awakening

bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub

སྒྲ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷན།

anuttarasamyaksambodhi

Manifesting the complete enlightenment of a buddha.

g.25 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled

through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the rule of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.

Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just-mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.

g.26 Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

Tibetan translator who was active during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. He participated in the translation of more than two hundred texts.