



4 BUDDHIST HEAVENLY KINGS

Mantras and Sadhana

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Four Buddhist Heavenly Kings: Mantras and Sadhana

The Four Heavenly Kings in Buddhism are important in most lineages and traditions.

Known as the Chaturmahārāja in Sanskrit — Maha meaning great and Raja meaning king — they have an important role as devas or gods who protect the Dharma and the world. They are also called Lokapāla, meaning “guardians of the world.”

Each Heavenly King protects a cardinal direction and an associated Pureland, a Buddhist virtue, and protects from a major poison. Each has a powerful mantra, a special entourage, including a sacred animal, and a special focus in practice. One of their primary roles, is to protect our senses, which in Buddhist practices are called the gateways of Samsara and also the gateways of Dharma.

For this reason they are also called the Four Virtuous Upholders.

- Vaiśravaṇa “He Who Hears All” in the North upholds the virtue of Karuṇa or Compassion through well-being and prosperity so that we can practice Dharma.
- Vaisravana’s Mantra: om vaiśravaṇa ye svāhā
- Dhṛtarāṣṭra “He Who Upholds the World” in the East upholds the virtue of Empathetic Joy or muditā, ensuring the harmony of the world, through the inspiration of music and art.
- Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s Mantra: om dhṛtarāṣṭra raḷā pravādhana svāha
- Virūḍhaka “He Who Causes to Grow” the King of the South, is the upholder of the virtue of Equanimity or upekkhā and fosters growth and wisdom.
- Virūḍhaka Mantra: om virūḍhaka kuṃ bhāṃ dādhī pataye svāha
- Virūpāksha “He Who Sees All” in the west is the upholder of the loving-kindness or Metta, through the power of sacred Dharma, symbolized by his Stupa.
- Virūpāksha Mantra: om virūpāksha nāgā dhipata ye svāha
- Together, they are the Four Upholders of the Four Virtues.
- They are so important we find them in all branches of Mahayana and all areas, including India, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Tibet, Mongolia and around the world.



4

| Pali name | Vessavana | Dhatarattha | Virūlhaka | Virūpakka |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Devanagari | वैश्रवण (कुबेर) | धृतराष्ट्र | विरूढक | विरूपाक्ष |
| Sanskrit romanization | Vaiśravaṇa (Kubera) | Dhṛtarāṣṭra | Virūḍhaka | Virūpākṣa |
| Direction | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
| Traditional/Simplified Chinese | 多聞天王 / 多闻天王 | 持國天王 / 持国天王 | 增長天王 / 增长天王 | 廣目天王 / 广目天王 |
| Pinyin | Duōwén Tiānwáng | Chíguó Tiānwáng | Zēngzhǎng Tiānwáng | Guǎngmù Tiānwáng |
| | 毗沙門天 / 毗沙门天 | 多羅吒天 / 多罗吒天 | 留博叉天 / 留博叉天 | 毗琉璃天 / 毗琉璃天 |
| Kanji Hepburn romanization | 多聞天 (毘沙門天) Tamon-ten (Bishamon-ten) | 持国天 Jikoku-ten 治国天 Jikoku-ten | 增長天 Zōchō-ten | 広目天 Kōmoku-ten |
| Hangul romanized Korean | 다문천왕 Damun-cheonwang | 지국천왕 持國天王 Jiguk-cheonwang | 증장천왕 增長天王 Jeungjang-cheonwang | 광목천왕 廣目天王 Gwangmok-cheonwang |
| Vietnamese alphabet Chữ Hán | Đa Văn Thiên Vương 多聞天王 | Trì Quốc Thiên Vương 持國天王 | Tăng Trưởng Thiên Vương 增長天王 | Quảng Mục Thiên Vương 廣目天王 |
| Filipino alphabet Baybayin | Bisrabana ᠔ᠪᠰᠢᠷᠠᠨᠠ | Dhltalastla ᠳᠬᠲᠠᠯᠠᠰᠲᠤᠯᠠ | Birudhaka ᠪᠢᠷᠠᠳᠬᠠ | Bilupaksa ᠪᠢᠯᠤᠫᠤᠰᠠ |
| Burmese Script | ဝသောဝဏ္ဏနတ်မင်း (Waithawun Nat Min) ကုဝရနတ်မင်း (Kuwaira Nat Min) | ဓတရဋ္ဌနတ်မင်း (Datarattha Nat Min) | ဝိရုဋ္ဌနတ်မင်း (Wirulakka Nat Min) | ဝိရူပနတ်မင်း (Wirupakkha Nat Min) |
| Tibetan alphabet and romanization | ནཱ་ཤེལ་གྲུ་ (Namthöse) | ཡུལ་འཁོར་གྲུང་ (Yülkhorsung) | ཕག་པམ་པོ་ (Phakyepo) | ཤུན་མི་བཟང་ (Chenmizang) |
| Mongolian Script and Mongolian Cyrillic and Mongolian Latin alphabet | ᠲᠢᠢᠨ ᠰᠣᠩᠰᠣᠭᠴᠢᠨ ᠰᠣᠨᠣᠰᠤᠶᠴᠢ (Тийн сонсогч) Tiin sonsogch/tein sonosuyci (Намсрай) Namsrai | ᠣᠷᠣᠨ ᠣᠷᠴᠢᠨᠢᠭ ᠰᠠᠬᠢᠭᠴᠢ (Орон орчиниг сахигч) Oron orchinig saxigch/Oron orčin-i sakivči (Ёлхорсүрэн) Yolxorsüren | ᠤᠯᠡᠮᠵᠠ ᠪᠡᠶᠡᠲᠦ (Үлэмж биет) Ülemzh biyet/Ülemji beyetü (Пэгжийбуу) Pagzhiibuu | ᠡᠭᠨᠡᠭᠲᠡ ᠤᠵᠡᠭᠦᠴᠢ (Эгнэгт үзэгч) Egnegt üzegch/Egenegte üjegči (Жамийсан) Zhamiisan |
| | ᠣᠯᠣᠨ ᠤᠨᠳᠡᠰᠡᠨᠢ ᠵᠡᠰ᠋ᠪᠠᠷ (Олон үндэстний үзэл) Olon ündestnii üzel | ᠤᠨᠳᠡᠰᠡᠨᠢ ᠵᠠᠰ᠋ᠪᠠᠷ ᠤᠯᠢᠴᠢᠯᠭᠡ (үндэсний засвар үйлчилгээ) ündesnii zasvar üilchilgee | ᠲᠢᠡᠨᠢ ᠥᠰᠡᠯᠲᠡ (Тиений өсөлт) Tiyenii ösölt | ᠰᠡᠯᠡᠶᠡᠰᠡᠲᠢᠶᠡᠯ ᠰᠣᠷᠲᠠᠯᠴᠢᠯᠭᠠᠭᠠ (сөлөстиеел сурталчилгаа) syelyestiyel surtalchilgaa |
| Thai script romanization | ท้าวเวสวัณ (Thao Wetsawan) ท้าวเวสสุวรรณ (Thao Wetsuwan) ท้าวเกวณ (Thao Kuwen) | ท้าวธตรฐ (Thao Thatarot) | ท้าววิรุฬหก (Thao Wirunhok) | ท้าววิรูปักษ์ (Thao Wirupak) |

Four Kings Sadhana Merit Practice



I prostrate and take Refuge in the Three Jewels, the Buddha the Dharma and the Sangha until I attain Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

I offer real and imagined flowers, incense, butter lamps, scent, food, music, and so forth. Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and Heavenly Kings, please accept them.

I confess all my faults from beginningless time until now, committed with a mind under the sway of the afflictions, such as the ten nonvirtues.

I rejoice in whatever merit has been accumulated in the three times by Hearers, Solitary Realizers, Bodhisattvas, ordinary beings, and others.

Please turn the wheel of the Dharma according to the intentions and mental dispositions of sentient beings.

Until Samsara is emptied, please do not pass into Nirvana but look with compassion upon sentient beings who are drowning in the ocean of suffering.

May whatever merit I have accumulated become the cause of Enlightenment for the benefit of sentient beings.



May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.
May they be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.
May they not be separated from the sublime happiness that is free from suffering. May they rest in the great equanimity that is free of the duality of attachment and aversion.

Thus we gather the accumulations through prostrating, offering, confessing, and generating the two types of bodhichitta of the preliminaries.

Now I accumulate wisdom, compassion and activity with the mantras of the Four Great Heavenly Kings.

N



To the Heavenly King Vaishravana, “King of the North” who “listens to the world” and who upholds the virtue of karuna and compassion through virtuous abundance, I prostrate, make offerings and request blessings.

om vaiśravaṇa ye svāha

E



To the Heavenly King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, King of the East, “he who upholds the world” and who upholds the virtue of Empathetic Joy, muditā, creativity, harmony and art, I prostrate, make offerings and request blessings.

*om dhṛtarāṣṭra raḥ
pravādha na svāha*



S



To the heavenly King Virudhaka in the south, who causes to grow, the great upholder of the of the virtue of equanimity, I prostrate, make offerings and request blessings.

*oṃ virūdhaka kuṃ bhāṃ
dādhipata ye svāhā*

W



To the Heavenly King of the West, Virūpāksha, “he who sees all” and is always vigilant as protector of the world and the Dharma, who upholds the virtue of Loving Kindness, I prostrate, make offerings and request blessings.

*oṃ virūpāksha nāgā
dhipata ye svāhā*

By the power of praising and supplicating the Three Jewels and the Four Heavenly Kings, wherever I and others reside may illness, obstructive spirits, poverty, and fighting be pacified, and may the Dharma and auspiciousness flourish.

*May I attain Enlightenment for the benefit
of all sentient beings.*



Video link



Buddha Weekly Video on the 4 Kings

Four Buddhist Heavenly Kings: Documentary, Mantras and Sadhana - 4 Upholders, 4 Guardians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGQ1ymkSlyw>

Resource Links

Feature on *Buddha Weekly*:

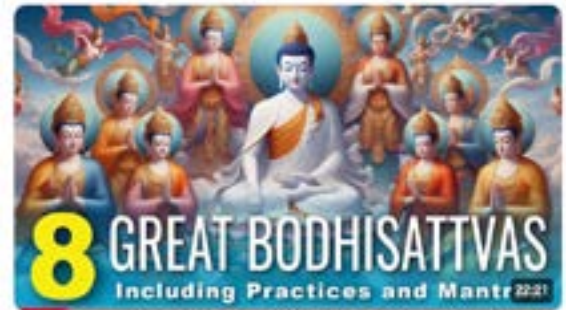
4 Guardians of the World and Dharma: the Watchers of the World: the Four Heavenly Kings in Buddhism, Their Mantras and Practice

<https://buddhaweekly.com/?p=23339>

Related of Interest:

Video on the 8 Great Bodhisattvas and their 8 Practices

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neMDKY68lY4&t>



Video of Interest:

Five Buddhas, 5 Wisdoms, 5 Mantras: Their Practices, Symbols, Seed Syllables, and Visualization

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3Rj9gm34hg&t>





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