

The Guardians Of The Four Cardinal Directions

The guardians of the four cardinal directions, also known as «The Four Cardinal Kings» reside in their respective palaces in the four directions of Mount Meru.

It is said that the kings generated their altruistic minds and performed religious services for the Buddhas, determined to reside in the four cardinal directions of Mount Meru for the sake of preserving and protecting the Buddhadharma by taking the form of heavenly protectors.

Following you will find a short description of each of the four guardians:

Vaisravana, he who hears everything (Ladakhi name: Nathos Ses)

Associated with the colour yellow, sometimes green.

This is the chief of the four kings and protector of the north. He is the ruler of rain. He holds a symbolic weapon, the victory banner, in his right hand. His left hand is holding a mongoose which keeps pouring gems out of its mouth. This is the reason why he is often associated with the ancient Indian God of wealth.

Virudhaka, he who causes to grow (Ladakhi name: Phah Skespo)

Associated with the colour blue.

King of the south and ruler of the wind. His symbolic weapon is the sword which he carries in his right hand to protect the Dharma, and so defending the faith.

Dhrtarastra, he who upholds the realm (Ladakhi name: Yulkhor Sung)

Associated with the colour white.

King of the east. His symbolic weapon is the pipa, a stringed instrument like a guitar because he rules over the realm of melodious music. He is a harmonious and compassionate king, and protects all beings. Dhrtarastra uses his music to convert others to Buddhism.

Virupaksa, he who sees all (Ladakhi name: Chanme Zang)

Associated with the colour red.

King of the west. He holds a stupa in his right hand, and a snake or red cord that is representative of a dragon in the left. As the eye in the sky, he sees people who do not believe in Buddhism and converts them.