

## Explaining Dharma Protectors

'Protector' means protecting from your ignorance, anger, and attachment. Protecting from self-grasping and self-cherishing—which is the biggest obstacle to success and enlightenment!

There are three protectors of the lamrim, the three capable beings: Mahakala, Kalarupa, and Namthöse. Namthöse is riding on a snow lion, with big eyes and carrying a mongoose.

So these three protectors are Dharma protector of the three capable beings, [as explained in] lamrim. The protector for lower capable beings is Kalarupa; the middle capable beings' protector is Namthöse; and the higher capable beings' protector is Mahakala, six-arm Mahakala.

And also the protector of the three capable beings is lamrim, which is the essence of the whole entire Dharma Buddha has taught, all 84,000 teachings. So that's the basic teaching. And these three are Dharma protector. So there are three Dharma protector of the three principle paths: Kalarupa is emptiness; Namthöse is renunciation; and Mahakala is bodhichitta.

The basic path is to be free from samsara, from the oceans of samsaric suffering from which we haven't been free from beginningless rebirth's suffering; so the way to get out of samsara. The basic path is the three higher trainings: higher training of morality; higher training of meditation, shamatha; then the higher training of wisdom. So you need to actualize these three, you need to practice, otherwise you can't get out of samsara, can't be free from the oceans of samsaric suffering which we have been experiencing from beginningless rebirth.

People in the world [praise] shamatha, only shamatha, [want to] achieve shamatha: but without thinking about morality at all, without thinking of the base. You have to have a foundation if you're building a house, so without thinking about that and just building a house, it's like you build a house in the sky, sort of like that. So, thinking 'I want to do shamatha', without thinking about the need for the basis, morality: many people do like that. No, no, no. You have to have pure morality; you have to have not just morality, but *pure* morality in order to have shamatha realization.

There's actual, fully characteristic shamatha realization; and there's similar shamatha realization, which is not fully characterized shamatha, but is similar to that.

Then after that, the higher training of wisdom, so meditating, [doing] analytical meditation, unified with shamatha.

This is very, very, very important in Buddhism, to be free from samsara: wow, wow, wow, wow, to stop rebirth, suffering rebirth completely, the cause which is karma, delusions, [you completely stop that].

Then by stopping that then you stop old age: by stopping that completely, then old age completely stopped, so all those undesirable things.

Then completely stop death. You have to know, the world has to know that, you can stop it! You don't *have* to experience, you can stop it!

So that means you have to study: in Buddhism you have to study. In other religions there's no study. They don't talk about, study, how to stop rebirth. You have to study in order to not get sickness, not get old age, not get death. When you're in the shop buying things, food, or clothing, or whatever, you have to analyze: there's many materials, you have to check the size, and quantity, you have to analyze, then you buy. So it's like that, the reason is not because you're Buddhist, or practicing Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism. When you go shopping, you have to use your logic.

Of course, then the best, the *most* important in life, is not to do with this life; is to do with next life. All the future life, hundred, thousand, billion, and to be free from samsara, it's all connected with and it all depends on what you do in this life. So how you live this life, if you practice Dharma, if you practice renunciation, and then, especially emptiness, and especially bodhichitta, wow, it's like the sun shining in the world, only one sun shining in the world gives happiness to the animals, to all kinds of animals, and human beings, can you imagine, bodhichitta is like that. So, depending on how you live this life, that affects all the future lives, billion, zillion [future lives], and if you're free from samsara.

So therefore, the higher training of morality, with its Dharma protector, Namthöse.

Then, meditate, shamatha: the protector of meditation is Mahakala.

Then, emptiness, the higher training of wisdom, that's Kalarupa. The three are like this.

So these three protectors are a common thing, when you practice Mahayana teaching, and tantra, Vajrayana: Mahayana sutra, and Mahayana tantra; on the basis of Mahayana sutra practice, you then practice Mahayana tantra, so then [you] practice all three, it's all related like that.

Because of what they mean, you understand that's what we need to achieve, so the three protectors come together like that.

And then of course each monastery or nunnery has a specific protector, so still like that.

The way to practice is that the protector, or deity, and the guru, all three, are one. For the guru you can think of His Holiness, as most have received teaching from His Holiness.

So, thank you very much. I thank everyone very much, for all your effort, your dedication, for holy Dharma, to help free sentient beings from lower realms, from samsara, from lower nirvana, and bring to enlightenment.

Thank you very much!

*Colophon:* Advice from Lama Zopa Rinpoche for students of the FPMT affiliates in Mexico, recorded at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, March 2021. Transcribed by Ven. Thubten Munsel, LYWA. Edited by Claire Isitt, FPMT International Office.