

DEATH & REBIRTH READING 1

ALL APPEARANCE-MAKING & APPEARANCES AS REFLEXIVE PLAY

We need to understand what we mean by all appearance-making and appearances of phenomena being the play of voidness, or of the primordial mind of great bliss, or of the inseparable unity of the two levels of truth, or of the inseparable unity of subtlest mind and subtlest energy-wind. As this topic of all appearance-making and appearances being the reflexive play or emanation of primordial mind will arise repeatedly in our later discussions, let us examine this topic now, although it is quite difficult.

Because tantric practitioners meditate on primordial deep awareness generated as inseparable blissful awareness and discriminating awareness of voidness, the tantra teachings show high regard for both greatly blissful deep awareness and voidness as its object; the two of which become of one taste, like water poured into water. It is commonly accepted that all phenomena are the play or appearances of voidness. The devoid nature of sights for example is that which allows for and makes possible their arising. Sights do arise. They arise dependently on factors other than themselves, and it is perfectly reasonable that they arise because they are devoid of existing in impossible ways. In this sense, all phenomena as things having a devoid nature are like the play of their devoid nature. That being the case, then as a consequence of tantra's high regard for a greatly blissful deep awareness and voidness as its object becoming inseparable by nature, the appearances of everything categorized as the play of voidness can also be presented, in terms of appearance-making of them, as the play of a great blissful awareness. This is one point.

Furthermore, we can speak of appearance-making and appearances as the play or emanation of simultaneously arising primordial clear light mind. "Simultaneously arising" refers to the fact that the clear light mind of each individual has no beginning and will have no end, even after each of us has become a Buddha. It has always existed and always will – there is no time when it was non-existent or when it will cease to be. Therefore, primordial clear light mind arises simultaneously with each moment of experience, with an ever lasting, constant nature. On the path, through various methods, we cause that clear light mind to arise as a blissful awareness simultaneously with each moment.

The cognitive arising of all phenomena can be presented within the sphere of clear light in the sense that the appearances, to which mind gives rise, of anything that exists are the emanates luster or effulgence of simultaneously arising clear light. In the context of cognition, all emanations of the appearance of things arise, or literally "dawn" from clear light and, ultimately, dissolve or "set" into the sphere of clear light mind. Thus the nature of emanations, in this context, comes down to clear light mind. Our experience of all phenomena, then, is the result of both the appearance-making and appearances of this ever-present mind. In this cognitive and not substantial, Chittamatra sense, then, all phenomena are the play of clear light mind arising simultaneously with each moment.

Let us look at this point more deeply. In *The Furthest Everlasting Stream*, Maitreya has explained that the elements withdraw or disintegrate progressively, one into the other, starting from earth, water, fire and wind up to space. They also emerge or arise progressively from each other, but in the reverse sequence, starting from space, wind, fire and water down to earth. Thus on the external level, at the end of a universe, the elements of earth, water, fire and wind – in other words, matter in solid, liquid, heat, and gaseous forms – dissolve in a progressive order, one melting into the next, ultimately ending with empty space. Then with the emergence of a new universe, the elements of wind, fire, water and earth arise once more from empty space.

The growth and decay of the form of the elements on the external level parallels and is thus related to their growth and decay on an internal level concerning the body. Thus, in the formation and development of a human embryo, for example, the five forms of the constituent elements grow or emerge progressively out of each other. Emerging from empty space, the body grows from a gaseous form through heat and liquid stages to, finally, a solid one. With death, it decays in the reverse order of these stages from a solid form back into empty space.

When we speak of the growth and decay of elements into and out of space on an internal level, however, we are referring not only to a material level and some sort of empty space like the ether, but also to a cognitive level and simultaneously arising primordial clear light mind. All coarse and subtle levels of mind and energy-wind withdraw, contract, or dissolve into internal, all-void, subtlest clear light mind, and then slowly emerge as well from this all-void clear light mind, becoming increasingly more gross or coarse in stages. These coarser levels of mind are the ones that give rise to the appearance of the elements. Thus it is in this sense that we can understand that the place from which the luster or effulgence of emanations arises and into which it sets is clear light mind of deep awareness.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN APPEARANCES, CLEAR LIGHT MIND, DEATH & REBIRTH

We can understand further how subtlest clear light mind is the source of all that is pure or impure by considering the anuttarayoga tantra explanation, from the Guhyasamaja system, of the relationship between clear light mind and impure appearances. Mind, as mere clarity and awareness, must have a physical basis for its functioning. It is always supported on energy-wind as its “mount”. The two abide in the same package and, in this sense; mind always “rides” on energy-winds. At the time of death, mind withdraws progressively from the elements of earth, water, fire, and wind as its basis. This means that mind is supported by progressively less coarse levels of energy-wind and there is less movement of these winds in the subtle vajra body. As a result of this process, all coarse levels of mind cease to function – in other words, the five types of sensory consciousness cease to function since mind no longer gives rise to the coarse appearance of the five elements. It no longer gives rise to the appearance of any sights, sounds, smells, tastes or tactile or bodily sensations.

The process of the strongest movement of energy-winds ceasing occurs in four stages, and is usually described as earth dissolving into water, water into fire, fire into wind and wind into space or consciousness. Through this four-stage process, the coarse levels of mind, with their attendant mental factors, likewise dissolve or cease. At the first stage, we no longer see anything. At the second, we no longer hear or feel any level of physical pleasure or pain. At the third, we no longer smell or distinguish any remaining sensory object. At the fourth, we no longer taste or feel any bodily sensation, such as hot or cold, or have any remaining mental factors regarding sensory objects such as the intention to move. Simultaneously with this process, our conscious, personal level of conceptual mind give rise to four stages of appearance that resemble progressively less congealed forms of light – namely, a mirage, a mist or smoke, sparks of light and a dim flame at the bottom of a well.

Although the process of falling asleep progresses through similar stages as the process of dying; sleep is different from death. With sleep, sense perception does not totally cease, but is merely accompanied by increasingly thicker inattention the deeper we sleep. The fact that sleeping persons can be awakened by a tickle on the foot indicates clearly that their coarse levels of mind have not completely ceased to function.

At this stage in the dissolution process of death, mind is supported only on the more subtle levels of energy-wind, and their movement through the subtle vajra-body is only slight. Consequently, mind can only give rise to more subtle appearances, namely the appearances cognizable by subtle conceptual levels of mind. As the dissolution process continues and the energy-winds enter and abide in the central channel, mind gradually withdraws from those winds as well. There is even less movement of winds, and mind is supported only on even more subtle energy-winds at the centre of the heart chakra.

As the energy-wind basis for mind becomes more and more subtle, and its movement continues to decrease, the level of mind that can be supported also becomes proportionately more subtle. First we reach the level of eighty preconscious, primitive conceptual minds – sometimes translated as “indicative conceptual minds” – in three groupings of progressive subtlety indicative of the next three levels of the mind also

being progressively more subtle. The first group of thirty three includes such primitive simple minds, or pre-conscious thoughts, as those of repulsion, sorrow, fear, hunger, thirst and protectiveness. The next group of forty includes more subtle pre-conscious thoughts of longing, satisfaction and wishing to suckle, kiss, hug or be unruly; while the last group of seven includes even more subtle thoughts of boredom, indifference and laziness. Even animals have these subtle, pre-conscious perceptual minds, perhaps called “feelings” in Western schemes of psychology. According to the explanation of most Gelug masters, this level of eighty pre-conscious, primitive conceptual minds ceases all at once, whereas most Sakya masters, on the basis of their personal meditational experience, assert that these minds cease in three stages.

Mind is now supported on even more subtle levels of energy-wind at the centre of the heart chakra. As it continues to withdraw from these as its basis, the three most subtle levels of conceptual mind cease in the order of their decreasing coarseness. These are the usually unconscious conceptual appearance-making minds called appearance-congealment, light-diffusion and threshold, which give rise, respectively, to appearances of white moonlit snow, the red glow of sunset or sunrise, and pitch-black darkness.

Finally mind is based only on the subtlest level of energy-wind. The mind that is left, void of all coarser ones, is the subtlest level of mind, known as clear light. In fact, the Guhyasamaja literature refers to the three subtlest conceptual appearance-making minds and clear light as the four voids; void, very void, greatly void and all-void since each is progressively emptier of coarser levels of mind. The all-void clear light mind is always inseparable from – in the entity or package – as subtlest energy-wind. As clear light mind, individual in each being, has neither beginning nor end, it is called primordial, arising simultaneously with each moment of experience of life, death, Samsara, nirvana or enlightenment. On the basis level, at the time of death, it gives rise to an appearance of clear light which, according to Kaydrub Norzang-gyatso - a disciple of two of Tsong-kapa’s disciples, Sherab-senggey and the First Dalai Lama, Gedun-drub - in *An Ornament for “The Stainless Light” (Commentary On “The Abbreviated Kalachakra Tantra”)*, is the appearance of voidness. It does not, however, normally apprehend it as voidness.

As it is ordinarily impossible for mind to remain in the state of clear light devoid of coarser levels of mind, continuing to experience the death phase of uncontrollably recurring existence, it soon begins to deviate from this state. This occurs with movement of the subtlest energy-wind upon which clear light mind is supported and heralds the re-emergent sequence of the coarser levels of mind and body. It quickly passes, in order, through the stages of the threshold, light-diffusion and appearance-congealment unconscious conceptual minds and reaches the level of the eighty preconscious, primitive conceptual minds. At each of these levels, mind gives rise to the appearances associated with each of these states.

Starting with the experience of these stages of re-emergence, the mind-stream continues through *bardo*, the samsaric state of existence in between death and conception in a new rebirth. The mind in bardo, being on the level of coarseness of the eighty primitive conceptual minds, gives rise to various appearances, pleasant or frightening, depending on the instincts and habits built up in previous lives. At the end of an appropriate period of time, up to a maximum of seven days, mind again

withdraws to clear light with what is called a “small death”. This emergence and dissolution sequence may recur a maximum of seven times, lasting over a maximum period of forty-nine days.

Finally, the coarser levels of mind re-emerge once more through these same four stages, heralding conception at the start of a new rebirth. At this point, if the mind-stream takes as its physical basis a human or animal embryo, mind becomes increasingly coarse as it is progressively supported by the increasingly coarse form of the constituent elements of this basis – energy-wind, fire, water and then earth. Correspondingly, mind gives rise to appearances of these elements in the form of sights, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations. The specific forms of these appearances are shaped by the instincts built up by the effects of previous actions and transmitted with the continuity of clear light mind. Thus, we can understand clear light mind as the source of all impure appearances within the context of this process of dissolution and re-emergence. It is through this process that we can explain, on the anuttarayoga tantra level, how impure appearances rise out of and set into clear light mind, in a manner reminiscent of the rising and the setting of the sun.

These are the points we need to ponder in order to understand that all appearance-making and all appearances – in other words, all phenomena – are the emanation or play of the clear light mind of deep awareness of inseparable bliss and voidness.

DEATH & REBIRTH READING 2

DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL REALIZATIONS THAT RELATE TO IMPERMANENCE

Turn now to the meditation topics that relate to impermanence.
You are sure to develop mental transformations by first meditating
for about a week on the six disadvantages of failing to recall death
and then for another week or so on the six advantages of recalling death.

After that, practice the three reasons that death is certain.
The first reason is that the Lord of Death is certain to appear
and cannot be turned back by any means. With great determination,
Apply analytic meditation to this topic no matter how many days or months it takes.

After achieving that experiential awareness, the next topic to verify
is that your life span does not increase and is constantly growing shorter.
Cultivate it by practicing analytic meditation forcefully.

After achieving that experiential awareness, apply analytic meditation
to the next topic—that there is little opportunity
to practice dharma even during the time you remain alive.

But the truly extraordinary and unequaled instruction for recalling death
is contained in the topic called “Meditating on the nature of death.”
Through it, recollection of impermanence can be generated easily.
In the outline that gives the order in which to present the teachings,
this topic is placed after the set of nine points for meditating on death.
But a key instruction for how to put the teachings into practice is that you should
meditate on it here.

So when you’ve used the three reasons to determine that death is certain,
Consider what the various stages in the dying process will be like.
By meditating on this, you will feel a sense of overwhelming terror.

When you contemplate again and again the experiences that will befall you,
Applying analytic meditation to the meanings contained in writings
Like the one that I composed urging recollection of impermanence;
You will be so dismayed that you cannot stay on your meditation seat.

If after meditating in this way you feel great terror
As though you were experiencing your actual death now
and if your reflection on the stages of death is so vivid
that they seem real and cause your heart to jump suddenly in fear;
this is the measure that you have realized the certainty of death.

After that, practice analytic meditation with total concentration,
applying it to the sole topic that your life span is uncertain—
the first reason in the root category called “The uncertainty of the time of death.”
There is no certainty that your death will not come this very moment.

You should contemplate this fact by applying analytic meditation from every standpoint and in every way.

Here is a key instruction that is both secret and profound,
About how to recollect that the time of death is uncertain.
You see and hear directly about the uncertainty of other persons' lives.
Death strikes by means of many causes, suddenly and unexpectedly.
Some persons die while they are walking.
Some die while they are eating, others while talking.
Some persons die while laughing, others while they are running.
Some who are strong and agile die performing athletic feats.
One moment they are persons; the next they are corpses.
One moment they are alive; the next they are gone.
As you contemplate again and again the nature of these occurrences,
Analyze yourself as well, using sharp reasoning's such as these:
"I have exactly the same nature as these persons."
"How can I be sure that I won't die this very moment?"
"How can I be sure that I won't be a corpse this very night?"
"How can I be sure my funeral rites won't be performed tonight?"
"How can I be sure I won't be laid to rest in a cemetery tonight?"

You will generate the proper realization by recalling
that you can never be sure when Yama, The Lord of Death
will grip you in his jaws and then crush you with his fangs.
Recall how you are locked in the throes of battle with this arch enemy
and that you can't be sure he won't kill you right now.

After that, meditate on the next topic, how the factors that bring death
are many while the factors that sustain life are few.
After gaining this experiential awareness, go on to the next reason
and apply analytic meditation intensely to the topic which addresses
how your body and life force are as fragile as a water bubble.

When you have forcefully applied these techniques for contemplating
the three reasons that relate to the uncertainty of the time of death
you'll think, "I can't be sure I won't die this very minute."
As you lie down, you'll wonder, "Will I wake up tomorrow morning?"
When you get up, you'll wonder, "Will I go to bed tonight?"
While going somewhere, you'll wonder, "Will I come home again?"
As you return, you'll wonder, "Will I ever go back there again?"
You'll wonder, "Which will come first, tomorrow or my next life?"
"Will death arrive before I can finish eating my bag of *tsampa*?"
"Which will come first, the end of this pot of tea or death?"
You'll think, "There's no certainty I won't depart this very moment."
When you develop an impatience which thinks, "I have no time, I have no time,"
Then you've generated the realization of the uncertainty of death.

Realization of the certainty of death comes with relative ease.
However, it's more difficult to realize the uncertainty of the time of death.
So don't think to yourself that the latter topic is taking too long.

Continue with your practice for days, months, or even years.
Meditate with single-minded resolve until you produce a mental transformation.
After generating this realization, go on to the next topic—
that nothing except holy dharma benefits you at the time of death.

For as many days and months as are needed, contemplate these three reasons:
That neither friends, nor wealth, nor body are of any help.

But once you perceive that nothing except dharma benefits you at death,
No further practice is needed; for this very understanding is the measure of
realization.
Because this topic is easy to realize and need not be practiced long,
A key point is to go on to the next subject after you have gained the proper awareness

DEATH & REBIRTH READING 3

THE CONTINUUM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

And now it's time to meditate on the continuum of consciousness and the possibility of future lives.

Material things such as your body depend on various causes and conditions, which means there has to be a continuum of causes for such an entity. The material body stems from material provided by parents, sperm and egg, which themselves stem from material provided by their parents, and so on.

Similarly, your consciousness depends upon its own causes and conditions, which points to a continuum of causes for the luminous and cognitive nature of your mind, which comes from former lives

Also, given the vast range of differences between children of the same parents, it seems likely that cognitive predispositions from earlier lives are at work in this life. Valid memory of previous lives confirms the existence of former lives. One person's valid memory indicates that such lives were experienced by all of us, whether or not we ourselves remember them. There can be no beginning to the round of rebirth.

Just as a house is constructed by a builder, so the entire world that is our environment takes shape due to the karmic influences of the beings who live in the world, and from their past lifetimes over a long course of time. Your own actions determine how you will be reborn, just as the world itself is shaped by the karma of the beings that will inhabit it.

Reflect on the cause and effect relationship between actions and their fruits, understanding the implications.

Bring to mind the suffering of animals, birds or insects, and imagine yourself in a similarly exposed situation. Is that what you want for yourself?

Inspire yourself to restrain from actions producing a negative rebirth.

Work at avoiding the ten non-virtues.

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THE MEDITATION ON KARMIC CAUSE AND EFFECT

To *practice in accordance* with karmic cause and effect is the essence of these instructions, and this is the fourth subject of meditation within the small scope.

The purpose of the meditation is to firstly gain conviction in the fact that we are the creators of our own experiences. If we wish to be happy we must restrain the mind from non-virtue and adopt virtue.

By knowing the causes for suffering we can eliminate them, and by knowing the causes for happiness we can proceed to cultivate them. This will stop the causes of miserable rebirths and ultimately lead us to the state of complete enlightenment.

When we reflect on karma in detail there are ten black actions we should shy away from.

And when we come to “lay down negativities and restrain the mind” there are four opponent powers. They are regret, restraint, support and the antidote.

And how do these four opponent powers affect the potential for suffering?

The future intensity and duration of suffering is diminished.

The path of the being of small scope is the means to escape the sufferings of the three lower realms and be reborn in the higher realms. We have gained the realization of the path of small scope when the needs of future lives come to take priority over the concerns of this life.

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THE MEDITATION ON SUFFERING AND FREEDOM

We have finished the contemplations of the lower scope and will now begin the contemplations of the middle scope. The goal of INTERMEDIATE SCOPE practice is freedom from cyclic existence.

Begin by considering how things made by causes change from moment to moment. The causes of a phenomenon themselves make it have a nature of disintegration from the start.

Impermanent phenomena are totally under the influence of the causes and conditions that produce them. Our present mind-body complex does not operate under its own power but under the influence of past causes, specifically ignorance. This indicates it is under the sway of suffering.

That our mind-body complex appears to exist under its own power but does not underscores the conflict between its appearance and reality.

Wisdom calls for perceiving phenomena to be empty of the way they seem to exist; this is how it can oppose the mistakes made through the ignorant view that phenomena exist independently. Thorough development of wisdom yields the peace of passing beyond suffering.

The goal will be achieved by developing the wish to definitely emerge from cyclic existence and by accomplishing the freedom of liberation. Liberation is a state of separation from the burden of living with a mind and body under the control of destructive emotions and karma.

Since all of us want happiness and do not want suffering, we must *recognize* the full extent of suffering, for then we will seek liberation from it. Once we decide we do not want these painful effects, we must *abandon* the destructive emotions that cause them, the origins of suffering. In order to achieve a cure we need to *actualize* the cessation of the origins of pain. To do this we need to *cultivate* the path.

If we do not have a strong intention to escape the clutches of pervasive conditioning by looking at its damaging works, the development of systematic compassion will lie beyond our reach.

Counterproductive emotions are not peaceful; they are uncomfortable, stressful, and disturbing. Desirous attachment leads to anger when it is thwarted.

We bring trouble upon ourselves by mistaking the true nature of people, but also mistaking what is impure for pure, what is a state of pain for pleasure, and what is impermanent for permanent.

Our birth from afflictive emotions and karma means that we are prone to those same emotions, generating lust for the attractive, hatred for the unattractive, and confusion for what is neither.

Sickness puts the elements of our body out of balance, bringing physical pain that in turn promotes mental pain, which weakens vitality and makes fulfilment impossible. We suffer from seeing that death will separate us from nice objects, nice relatives, and while dying we undergo many discomforts.

Our body-mind complex serves as a basis for present suffering that plays itself out in aging, sickness, and death, and our usual responses to painful situations promotes future suffering.

By being associated with dysfunctional tendencies, our mind-body complex induces out right suffering: the very existence of this sort of mind and body is itself an expression of the suffering of all-pervasive conditioning.

Since pain and pleasure arise from causes and conditions, these feelings are subject to techniques that bring relief.

Between the two origins of suffering – contaminated actions and afflictive emotions – afflictive emotions such as lust, hatred and ignorance are the primary cause, and among those counter-productive emotions ignorance is chief, because lust and hatred arise from exaggeration of the status of an object beyond what actually exists.

When you see that this ignorance can be eliminated because it lacks the support of valid cognition, you can become determined to tame your mind and to achieve what is known as cessation.

The presence of opposing forces indicates the potential for change; when you need to counteract something, first you identify its opposing force, and when you increase its power, the strength of its opposite diminishes. Since suffering is caused by afflictive emotions, relying on attitudes that oppose them promotes healthy change.

Chief among the paths leading to freedom is direct realization of selflessness [the absence of inherent existence], because this has the power to serve as an actual antidote to the origin of suffering.

This special training in wisdom requires concentrated meditation, which in turn depends on training in ethical disciplines. Thus the amelioration of suffering relies on three trainings – morality, concentrated meditation and wisdom.

When we have gained a complete understanding of the nature of cyclic existence and, through contemplation of true suffering, its origins, and the twelve links of dependent arising, you will generate the wish to abandon them, and to attain their cessation from the depth of your heart.

Our attitude will be like a person caught up in a house raging with fire, or a prisoner in a dungeon infested with scorpions. As such a person would have a powerful wish to escape, so you wish to escape cyclic existence. This attitude is the criterion for having achieved the path of medium scope.

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DEATH & REBIRTH READING 4

THE FIVE POWERS AT THE TIME OF DEATH

Although you partially forgot your mortality, you now recognize these early signs of death approaching, and so with calmness and certainty you begin to accept the closeness of your death and willingly create forces to protect your mind by practicing Dharma.

And so recalling the power of the **WHITE SEED** –

- Recollect the importance of accumulating as much virtue as possible in the little time that you have left.
- See the danger of attachment and give away your possessions – actually and mentally give away as much as you can.
 - Then seeing ones friends and family as being very natural to separate from; just as travelers who met together for a short time would then move on and go their own way even though they enjoyed their friendship
 - You reduce attachment for your body remembering the pain and suffering it has brought to oneself.
 - Feel that it's very natural and quite okay to separate from the body – just like a new change of clothes; one's new body will be young and workable.

And with a strong force of **ASPIRATION**

- Make the seven branch offering to the teacher
- Voice your wishes to meet future teachers
- Voice your wishes for enlightenment to benefit others
- With the strong bodhicitta thought, really wanting only the ultimate goal for all living beings and determining to bring that about. Take refuge and generate bodhicitta to counteract the negativities that you have done in the past through indifference and selfishness.
 - Just spend time strongly holding the mind of bodhicitta, love and compassion – don't leave out any living being.
 - Feel very relieved that you had the time to do this practice.

You are now about to reduce even further the negative mind of attachment. You feel quite comfortable facing death and you remember the need to purify whatever negative seeds might remain and so you recall the power of **REPROACH**

- Recall negativities you can remember in life; the ten non-virtues,
- Recall the five heinous crimes one would have committed in previous lives,
- Recall the broken vows and promises, having done everything, remember that and feeling tremendous regret – as if one has taken poison.
- Vow not to do those negativities in the future again - not in the bardo or in any of your future lives - Retake your vows
- Definitely remember the faults of being indifferent to others which have arisen through attachment and self grasping.
 - Remember how self-cherishing disregards others and feels attachment to one's own happiness, attachment to being free from suffering.
 - Remember this is the main enemy – this self-cherishing thought of disregarding others.
 - It's not death or separating from things that is the problem; one's only problem is self-cherishing and self grasping. Be very clear on that.
- Having the big-hearted attitude that destroys the self-cherishing; remember emptiness by being clear that self-grasping is the problem.
 - Recall that one's main enemy is the self-grasping that 100% believes that the way things appear is actually the way they exist; instead be aware that appearances are deceptive.

Then through the power of your **INTENTION** – decide that now is the most important time to generate a virtuous mental state. Plan to arrive at your destination. Make sure you're able to avoid being under the control of afflictive minds;

- Reaffirm your intention to remain connected with the positive minds of loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta so that
- During death, the bardo or the next life you will continue to feel real genuine affection for living beings; Remember
 - How all beings are worthy of happiness and want to avoid suffering;
 - May they definitely have happiness and the causes of happiness and freedom from suffering
 - Remember the mind of enlightenment – you taking the responsibility to bring about their happiness and freedom from suffering.

This power of motivation is to really calm your self, making the mind very positive and determined. You hold on to that positive intention to carry your loving concern through this whole transitional period of death, intermediate state and rebirth.

And now recollect the force of FAMILIARITY.

- And lying down assume the posture of the lion pose – the way in which Shakyamuni Buddha passed away; lying on your right side with the legs extended and with your right hand under your right cheek with the little finger closing the right nostril.
- And then remember loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta; being very familiar with these because one has practiced it very often during the life; feel quite comfortable.

Although you are facing death it's just like going to sleep – its how one always goes to sleep. Then practice *tong-len* – the practice of taking and giving –

- Place on your attitude of indifference towards others the suffering of others, feel delighted to do that because that negativity is then fed to the self-cherishing which is then destroyed.
- Feel an explosion of blissful positive energy within your body, which then radiates out to all beings, passing out all your good qualities on the breath as you breathe, just breathing in and breathing out – giving away all your happiness and realizations.

Very soon you will be experiencing

- The eight visions and you will remember the order of the mirage, the smoke, sparks, a flickering flame, and the white, red, black and clear light visions.

DEATH & REBIRTH READING 5

A COMPLETE MEDITATION ON THE STAGES OF DEATH

While your body is thin and the limbs are loose ...and the luster of your body shrinks ... it feels as if you're sinking under the earth; ... and as your sight becomes unclear and dark, ... you calmly recognize ... you are dying; ... and after the false idea of a truly existent I withdraws, ... an appearance like a mirage flickers across the mind ... as the energies that support the consciousness of the aggregate of form and the earth element absorb ... and the realization of their mutual dependency, ... which is empty of any attachment to the experience, ... induces great bliss ...

(While recollecting that a mirage is appearing ... and smoke is about to appear; ... accustom the mind to emptiness ... whereby subject and object lack independent existence)

The body fluids dry up ... and the body consciousness ... no longer experiences feelings that accompany sense consciousness ... and the ability to hear internal and external sounds finish ... and the energies ... that support awareness of the aggregate of feelings and the water element ... absorb; ... and as the water element dissolving into the fire element ... produces a smoky vision, ... the realization of their dependency ... which is empty of any attachment to the appearance, ... induces great bliss ... from the experience.

(While recollecting that smoke is appearing ... the mirage just passed ... and sparks are going to rise ... re-acquaint the mind with emptiness ... whereby subject and objects are without autonomous existence)

While inhalation weakens ... the sense of smell ceases ... and exhalations become strong and lengthy ... your memory of friends' and their names fade ... as the energies ... that support the consciousness of the aggregate of discrimination and the fire element dissolve; ... and as the fire element dissolves into the wind element ... producing an appearance of spark-like embers ... flaring in the dark, ... the realization of their dependency, ... which is empty of any attachment to the experience, ... induces great bliss ... that these appearances too ... are empty of inherent existence.

(While recollecting that sparks are appearing... smoke just passed... and a flame is about to appear ... re-acquaint the mind with emptiness ... whereby subject and object lack essential existence)

Your tongue is thick and short, ... and you can no longer taste... and because you cannot move, ... and both inhalation and exhalation have stopped ... others think you dead; ... but in the space of your mind ... an image of a flaring light... at the bottom of a deep well occurs... as the energies that support awareness of the aggregate of impulses and the wind element itself ... dissolve; ... and are absorbed; ... and the realization of their dependency ... induces great bliss, ... which is free of attachment to the physical body... and the experience of this life.

The gross minds ... have now completely absorbed ... leaving no awareness of a former physical body... and you now become aware of the subtle body's channels, ... energies and drops ... as the subtle minds begin to absorb.

As the aggregate of consciousness ... and the space element absorb ... the image of the flaring light continues. ... as the energies ... supporting anger and desire and attachment to experiences, ... objects and environments; ... energies supporting thoughts and memories ... and the projections and delusions ... associated with the belief in yourself ... as a permanent, single or independent entity; ... energies supporting the belief of a separate, independently existent 'I' ... that truly exists from its own side, ... dissolve and absorb, ... as you realize... that the 'I' and your emotional "baggage" ... have never truly existed ... as singular ... or plural ... or something other.

(While recollecting that a flame is appearing... sparks just passed... and a vivid white appearance is about to dawn ... re-familiarize the mind with emptiness ... whereby subject and object are without true existence)

The ten energy winds ... withdraw to the central channel ... and your extremely subtle mind ... experiences indescribable joy ... with its recollection of the coming Clear Light ... as the means to attain realization for others.

At the top of your head ... the energies in the right and left channels ... enter the central channel ... and the drop of white bodhicitta ... at the crown chakra ... begins to spin ... and descends to the heart chakra ... The white path opens ... and your mind experiences ... the vivid white appearance of the first 'empty', ... a clear vacuity of radiant white light.

(While recollecting that a vivid white appearance is appearing... a flame just passed... and a vivid red-orange increase is about to dawn... re-acquaint the mind with emptiness ... whereby subject and object lack autonomous existence)

At the base of the spine ... the energies in the right and left channels ... enter the central channel ... and the red bodhicitta drop ... begins to spin, ... and rises from your navel chakra to the heart chakra ... The red path opens ... and the mind experiences the vivid red increase,... the "very empty" ... a very clear radiant vacuity ... of reddish-orange light.

(While recollecting that a vivid red-orange increase is appearing... a vivid white appearance just passed... and a vivid blackness is about to dawn... re-acustom the mind with emptiness ... whereby subject and object lack independent existence)

The upper and lower energies gather at the heart, ... as the white and red drops surround the indestructible drop ... The black path opens ... as the mind experiences a vacuity of thick darkness ... and you feel as if you are swooning into unconsciousness ... as you experience the Black Near-Attainment, ... the "great empty".

(While recollecting that a vivid blackness is appearing... a vivid red-orange increase just passed... and the mind of clear light is about to dawn ... re-acquaint the mind to emptiness ... whereby subject and object are without intrinsic existence)

The mind experiences increasing great bliss ... encouraging itself to remember ... “to recognize the Clear Light and attain realization.” ... Then the indestructible drop opens ... and the extremely subtle body and mind ... experience the Clear Light of death ... as all of the winds dissolve ... into the very subtle ... life-bearing energy ... in the indestructible drop at the heart ... The mind experiences a very clear vacuity, ... free of the white, red, and black appearances... the “all empty”.

(While recollecting that the mind of clear light is appearing... and a vivid blackness just passed ... re-familiarize the mind with emptiness ... whereby subject and object lack a natural existence)

All the appearances have now dissolved ... Nature alone exists ... in the form of Clear Light... This is the mind of the Clear Light of death ... the “mother” Clear Light ... the nature of wisdom mind ... a samadhi of wisdom and bliss ... This is the result-time Dharmakaya mind ... spacious, empty of inherent existence ... and blissful.

(While taking an ordinary uncontrolled death as the path to enlightenment ... re-acquaint the mind with emptiness)

You realize that only Buddha’s can recognize you in the Dharmakaya form ... With the motivation that all beings should become enlightened ... you determine to manifest in the Sambhogakaya form of a Buddha.

(While taking the intermediate state of the bardo as the path to enlightenment ... accustom the mind to its emptiness)

You realize that only Buddha’s and Arya Bodhisattvas ... can communicate with you in the Sambhogakaya form ... With the motivation that all beings should become enlightened ... you determine to manifest in the Nirmanakaya form of a Buddha.

(While taking rebirth as the path to enlightenment ... accustom the mind to emptiness)

Instantaneously, you arise in the bodily form of glorious Vajrasattva ... with one face and two arms, holding a dorje and bell

DEATH & REBIRTH READING 6

THE STAGES OF DEATH WITH THE PRACTICE OF GENEROSITY

In relation to your own life, remember that your own death is certain, the time of death is uncertain, and at the time of death nothing but the dharma can benefit... and then ... imagine that you're in your bed right now and about to die a natural death.

Your body is thin and weak, and the hands and legs feel loose and without strength or control and it seems as if you're sliding beneath layers of shifting earth and as the weight of the earth gradually pushes you down, the colour of the body fades and you can't move your eyes. And you recollect the first two of the five powers to be used at the time of death. They are

1. White seed – to accumulate as much virtue as possible
2. Aspiration – right up to the point of losing conceptual consciousness, you will keep giving everything away to attain enlightenment to benefit others.

And you think that throughout beginning-less life-times you have had many material possessions and worldly enjoyments and have been unable to keep any of them. Everything has inevitably been lost or disintegrated or changed because of impermanence and the passing of time. You will shortly be separated from your remaining enjoyments and possessions so you decide to rely on the power of the white seed and to give them all away. To help yourself and others with the remaining powers of aspiration, repudiation, intention and familiarity you think that “this death I'm about to experience is for the benefit of all living beings and everything that's mine is theirs. May we all attain enlightenment through this effort”

Imagine that the four inner elements of solidity, liquidity, heat and motility that form the body absorb into the four external elements of earth, water, fire, and air.

Your flesh and bones absorb into the earth element becoming the stable earth itself, which is being used by all beings in whatever way they wish for their happiness. This body is being used as fields and crops and gardens; beautiful parks and forests and roads and vehicles; to obtain gold and diamonds and other precious gems; to build houses and cities, and to make tunnels and bridges.

Your two eyes become the sun and the moon and illuminate all living beings guiding them and warming them and illuminating and cooling them. Your flesh absorbs into all the food in all the supermarkets of the world, into all the food in the fridges of the world, into all the food on the plates of tables in the dwellings of the world. You become the pizzas and burgers, and macaroni's and vegetables and cheeses and butters and salts and peppers and chocolate cake and vanilla slice and apple pie and all beings everywhere in this world and other worlds are eating and enjoying you.

And your skin becomes the clothes that beautify and adorn the countless beings of the three times; your skin becomes the coats of fur and hair to keep them warm. And you see a silvery-blue mirage trembling like water in the heat.

And now your body no longer feels pain or pleasure or indifference and all the liquids of the body begin to dry up and you no longer hear the buzzing sound in the ears

And the blood, and the water, the urine and the sweat and every other liquid of the body absorbs into the external water element which is used for the survival and happiness of all living beings and your body liquids become flowing water irrigating countless rice paddy fields and terraces and wheat fields, nourishing vegetable rows and flower fields and fields of grain. It becomes the water of every bath and shower and swimming pool providing relief and enjoyment, and then it quenches the thirst of all beings everywhere as mother's milk and Gatorade and alcohol and Coca-cola and lemonade and cappuccino and breakfast tea and iced teas and Slurpee's and nectar and every other delicious drink. And in your mind's eye it seems as if the room has filled with wisps of incense smoke.

And as the heat of your physical body reduces, your capacity to digest food ceases and inhaling becomes difficult and weaker while the exhalation becomes stronger. While the internal heat of your body absorbs into the external fire element which is used by all beings everywhere for their happiness and survival, you wish it to provide warmth from the cold in winter as fire and heat to cook with and energy and light at night to read by and to watch television and movies and to travel and to explore the limits of land and sea and space. And you see sparks of fire, trembling like starlight.

Your body can no longer move. You no longer remember outer work and success or their necessity.

And now your breath absorbs into the external air, the wind element, which is used by all beings everywhere to breathe and to move. And your breath provides the freedom for each being everywhere to occupy their space and to move through time without obstruction and to be alive and you let yourself be breathed in by all beings everywhere sustaining their lives and bringing life-sustaining breath to every cell in all the bodies that fill the directions of space.

And then your breathing ceases and the tongue contracts and you can no longer perceive sensations or the taste of anything and a dim reddish-blue light like the last flickering of a candle is seen.

Then imagine that all the sufferings and negative karmas of all beings everywhere ripen upon your last vestiges of indifference towards others. Absorb all this suffering and all its causes into the last vestiges of ego-centricity and the object it cherishes, the real "I".

And now a white vision appears, like a very clear sky in the autumn night, full of the brightness of the moon.

And then a red vision which is like a copper-red reflection in the sky appears.

And this is followed by a vast and empty darkness which is followed by the appearance of clear light, like the sky of an autumn dawn.

And the real “I”, which appeared to exist from its own side is seen to be empty of that appearance and the merely imputed I dedicates all your past, present and future happiness and merit to all the sentient and enlightened beings.

All that is left now is your very subtle mind, which doesn’t have natural existence and existing free from its own side you rest in its clear and empty nature hearing the sounds of OM AH HUM reverberating like thunder throughout its sky like nature.

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