



The death process

Vajrayana Buddhist teachings on the gross and subtle death processes and how to train and prepare for death as a great opportunity for spiritual development.

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NGALSO
Western Buddhism

Lama Michel Rinpoche

The death process

Lama Gangchen



Peace Publications

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Lama Michel Rinpoche

based on notes taken by Lama Michel Rinpoche from the
Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo in Tibet, the Venerable Kachen Lobsang
Tseten Rinpoche

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I. The 25 gross aspects of the self

1. the five aggregates

1. form
2. feeling
3. discernment
4. compositional factors
5. consciousness¹

2. the four elements

1. earth
2. water
3. fire
4. wind

3. the six sensory powers

1. eye sense power (sight)
2. ear sense power (hearing)
3. nose sense power (smell)
4. tongue sense power (taste)
5. body sense power (touch)
6. mind sense power (thought)

4. the five inner and outer objects

1. form
2. sound
3. smell
4. taste
5. touch

5. the five wisdoms of the basis

1. the mirror-like wisdom
2. the wisdom of equanimity
3. the wisdom of discernment
4. the all-realizing wisdom
5. the wisdom of dharmadhātu

¹ There are six consciousnesses of the primary mind: the consciousness of 1. sight, 2. hearing, 3. smell, 4. taste, 5. touch and 6. thought.

II. Gross death process

1. Earth *dissolves* into water

The five phenomena of the class of the form aggregate

1. the aggregate of form
2. the mirror-like wisdom of the basis
3. the earth element
4. the eye sense power
5. the inner form

External signs:

1. *the aggregate of form*: thinning of arms and legs, weakness and lack of energy;
2. *the mirror-like wisdom*: blurred and unclear vision;
3. *the earth element*: the body thins and weakens, limbs become loose and one has the feeling of falling or sinking;
4. *eye sense power (sight)*: inability to open and close one's eyes;
5. *inner form*: loss of the body's luster and loss of physical strength.

The internal sign: the mirage-like vision

2. Water *dissolves* into fire

The five phenomena of the class of feeling

1. the aggregate of feeling
2. the water element
3. the ear sense power (hearing)
4. inner sound
5. the wisdom of equanimity of the basis

External signs:

1. *feeling*: loss of the three sensations related to the awareness of the body;
2. *the water element*: the drying up of the internal fluids such as saliva, perspiration, urine and blood;
3. *the ear sense power (hearing)*: the inability to hear external and internal sounds;
4. *inner sound*: one can no longer hear the sound of wind in one's ear;
5. *the wisdom of equanimity*: loss of the three sensations related to mental consciousness.

The inner sign: the smoke-like vision

3. Fire dissolves into wind

The five phenomena of the class of the aggregate of discernment

1. the aggregate of discernment
2. the fire element
3. the olfactory sense power (smell)
4. inner smell
5. the wisdom of discernment of the basis

External signs:

1. *the aggregate of discernment*: the inability to discern one's own dear ones, such as one's own parents or children;
2. *the fire element*: the loss of body heat and digestive power;
3. *the olfactory sense power*: inhaling weakens and exhaling becomes heavy and long with laborsome breath;
4. *inner smell*: the inability to smell pleasant or unpleasant odors.
5. *the wisdom of discernment*: the inability to recall the names of dear ones, such as one's own parents or children.

The inner sign: the firefly-like vision

4. Wind *dissolves* into the space of consciousness

The seven phenomena of the class of the aggregate of compositional factors

1. the aggregate of compositional factors
2. the wind element
3. gustatory sense power (taste)
4. the sense power of touch
5. inner taste
6. inner touch
7. the all-realizing wisdom of the basis

The external signs:

1. *the aggregate of compositional factors*: inability to move one's body;
2. *the wind element*: inhaling and exhaling cease and the ten inner winds move to the heart;
3. *gustatory sense power*: the tongue becomes thick, short blue at the root;
4. *the sense power of touch*: the loss of tactile perception of roughness or smoothness;
5. *inner taste*: inability to perceive the six tastes;
6. *inner touch*: the loss of tactile perception of roughness or smoothness;
7. *the all-realizing wisdom*: the inability to recall or desire any action or mundane necessity.

The inner sign: the butterlamp-like vision

III. Subtle death process

The dissolution of the 80 natural mental states
(or conceptions)

The three phenomena of the class of the aggregate of
consciousness:

1. the aggregate of consciousness
2. the mind sense power (thought)
3. the wisdom of dharmadhātu

The four visions

1. the mind of the white appearance - empty
 2. the mind of the red increase - very empty
 3. the mind of black near-attainment - great empty
 4. the mind of the clear light of death - completely empty
-
1. the 80 natural mental states dissolve into the mind of white appearance
 1. 33 resulting from aversion (anger)
 2. 40 resulting from attraction (desire)
 3. 7 resulting from ignorance
 2. the mind of white appearance dissolves into the mind of red increase
 3. the mind of red increase dissolves into the mind of black near-attainment
 4. the mind of the black near-attainment dissolves into the mind of the clear light of death

IV. The nine unions or mixings

The three unions during the state of wakefulness

1. the union of the clear light in meditation with the *dharmakaya* – the truth body (the very subtle mind that realizes – in a non-dual way – its own nature as being free from intrinsic existence);
2. the union of the bardo in meditation with the *samboghakaya* – the enjoyment body;
3. the union of rebirth in meditation with *nirmanakaya* – the emanation body.

The three unions during sleep

1. the union of the clear light of sleep with the *dharmakaya*;
2. the union of dreaming with the *samboghakaya*;
3. the union of waking with the *nirmanakaya*.

The three unions at the time of death

1. the union of the clear light of death with the *dharmakaya*;
2. the union of the bardo with the *samboghakaya*;
3. the union of rebirth with the *nirmanakaya*.

V. The five forces before death

Should we not have completed the points of the path at the time of death, we seek your blessings that we may be led to a pure land through either the instructions of applying the five forces or by the forceful means of enlightenment, the Guru's transference mind.

- Guru Puja, verse 112

(Reviewing the Stages of the Path)

1. force or power of virtue
2. force of intention
3. force of opposition
4. force of prayer
5. force of familiarization

About Lama Michel Rinpoche

Lama Michel Rinpoche is a Buddhist master following the NgalSo Ganden Nyengyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, under the spiritual guidance of Lama Gangchen Tulku Rinpoche.

Born in São Paulo, Brazil in 1981, Lama Michel was recognized as a Tulku (the reincarnation of a Buddhist master) at the age of 8 and ordained as a monk at 12. He received a formal education of Buddhist practice and philosophy for 12 years at the Monastic University of Sera Me in the south of India. He continues his studies with annual visits to the Monastery of Tashi Lhumpo in Shigatse, Tibet-China.

Since 2004 he has been residing in Italy, dedicating his life to serving his Guru, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, and generously sharing his experience and wisdom in many formal and informal situations, such as conferences, teachings, retreats and school visits.

Under the guidance of Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, he oversees several Buddhist centers such as the Kunpen Lama Gangchen in Milan, Italy, Albagnano Healing Meditation Centre in Albagnano on Lake Maggiore, Italy and the Centro de Dharma da Paz in São Paulo, Brazil.

For more teachings on the nine mixings:

NgalSo Self-Healing III, LGPP

soundcloud: <https://goo.gl/I8Uees>

Death, bardo and rebirth:

youtube NgalSo Ganden Nyengyu: <https://goo.gl/eTnZ9h>



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