

What a Buddhist Should Do When a Person is Dying **人在临终时，佛教徒应该怎么做**

by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Lobsang Tharchin

由肯仁波切·格西洛桑达钦建议

In the spring of 1991, the director of an American hospital which often treats Buddhist patients requested advice on any special steps to be taken with followers of the Buddhist religion as they die. Khen Rinpoche Geshe Lobsang Tharchin the abbot of one of the largest Buddhist monasteries in the world, gave the following brief advice.

1991年春，一家经常治疗佛教徒病人的美国医院的院长，就对待佛教信徒临终时的特别做法征询建议。那时就任世界上最大的佛教寺院之一色拉梅寺的住持，肯仁波切·格西洛桑达钦，给出了以下简要的建议。

Question:

How should family, friends, and hospital staff handle a Buddhist who is dying?

问：家人、朋友和医院工作人员该如何对待临终的佛教徒？

Answer:

As a person is dying, it is extremely important not to disturb or upset them in any way. Family, friends, and staff should not show any excitement near the deathbed, and should speak softly, in restrained tones. It is best at this time to speak as much as possible about religious topics, according to the religious faith followed by the dying person.

答：当一个人快死的时候，很重要的一点就是不要以任何方式去打扰或扰乱他们。家人、朋友和工作人员在对方临终之际不应表现出任何激动的情绪，应压低语调轻和地说话。最好在这个时候根据临终之人所遵循的宗教信仰，尽可能地谈论宗教话题。

If the person is a Buddhist, the people present should try to talk about subjects such as the Buddhas, lamas or great religious teachers, compassion, loving kindness, the wish to achieve enlightenment for the good of all living beings, and especially the fact that the Buddha himself is a place where one can take ultimate refuge or shelter — a protection which will never fail.

如果一个人是佛教徒，在场的人应该试着谈论诸如佛陀、上师或伟大的宗教导师、悲心、慈心、为了众生的利益而达到觉悟的愿望，尤其要谈论佛陀本身就是获得终极皈依或庇佑的地方——一处永远不会落空的保护。

The reason for trying to speak about these things is that the last moments of thought in this life are extremely important in determining what will happen to a person in the future: these thoughts trigger particular seeds in a person's mind that will decide where they are to go next.

Therefore it is essential to see that these thoughts are as pure as possible. There should be no bad thoughts or disturbing emotions.

试着谈论这些事情的原因是，今生最后一刻的念头对于一个人的未来具有极其重要的决定性意义：这些念头触发一个人的意识里特定的种子，这些种子将决定他们接下来的去处。因此，以尽可能清净的方式来对待这些念头至关重要。不应该有不好的念头或令人不安的情绪。

The process of dying is very similar to what happens when an advanced religious practitioner goes into meditation. The mind goes deeper and deeper, and enters an extremely subtle state. Because of this it moves into a psychic chamber that is located in the area of the heart and forms part of the central psychic channel that passes down through the center of the body.

死亡的过程非常类似于高级宗教修行者进入冥想时所出现的现象。心识进入得越来越深，进入一种极其微妙的状态。由此，心识进入了位于心脏区域的精神内室，这个内室形成了通过身体中心，向下延续的中央精神通道的一部分。

Although the person has stopped breathing and has to all outer appearances become completely cold and lifeless, this subtle state of mind is nonetheless still present in the body, within this chamber. In some people it may remain there for as long as ten days, although seven days is more typical. The way in which the person's mind is stirred out of this deep, subtle state is the crucial point in the death process.

虽然这个人已经停止了呼吸，体表的一切都已经完全冰冷，没有生命力，但这种细微的心识状态仍然存在身体中，在这个内室里。对于有些人，它可能会在那里停留十天之久，而七天更常见。人的心识以哪种方式从这种深层、细微的状态中被唤醒，是死亡过程中的关键所在。

If allowed to do so, the mind will of its own accord come out of the subtle state — and this is actual death. If however we touch or jar the body abruptly, we can waken their mind from its deep state. The mind will leave the body where we touch it: if we touch the lower part of the body, the legs or feet, then the mind will leave from there and in most cases lead the person to a birth in hell or one of the other lower realms. If we touch the upper part of the body it is better, for most people will then take a birth in the higher realms. The best place we can touch the person is at the center of the top of the head.

如若可以，心识会自动从这种细微的状态中出来 — 这是真正的死亡。然而，如果我们突然触碰或撞击他们的身体，我们就会将他们的心识从深层状态中唤醒。我们触碰到哪，心识就会从哪里离开身体：如果我们触碰身体的下部，腿或脚，心识就会从那里离开。而且大多数情况下，这会令此人在地狱或其他下界出生。如果我们触碰身体的上半部分会好一些，因为之后大多数人会投生在上界，我们能触碰的最好位置是头顶的中心。

It should be emphasized though that one should avoid touching the person altogether. This is because stirring their mind out of its subtle state is actually taking it to the point of death — touching their body causes his mind finally to leave the body, and this is tantamount to killing them. Therefore we should be extremely careful to leave the person alone until the mind has completed the process of the subtle state and departed on its own accord.

但需要强调的是，我们应该完全避免触碰临终者。因为把他们的心识从细微的状态中唤醒，实际上是把人带到了死亡点 — 触碰他们的身体会导致心识最终离开身体，而这无异于杀死他们。因此，我们应该相当极其小心地不打扰这个人，直到心识完成了这个细微状态并自行离开的整个过程。

Question:

How do we know when the mind has departed on its own? What signs will appear?

问：我们怎么知道心识什么时候已自行离开？会出现什么迹象？

Answer:

Once the deep, meditative state has been released, certain liquids will come out of the two nostrils of the person's nose, and also from his lower parts. This should not be confused with the passage of urine during the grosser stages of death; the liquids referred to here are known as the "red" and "white" substances, and are involved with the process of physical conception.

答：一旦深度冥想状态被释放，某些液体就会从人体两个鼻孔流出，也会从他的身体下部流出。这不该与死亡较粗显阶段的尿液排出相混淆；这里所指的液体被称为“红色”和“白色”物质，与物理受孕过程相关。

When the liquids are released, the person is actually dead, and his body can be touched. With some people the subtle state might go on considerably longer, and in such a case you can speak to the person quietly and calmly, and ask him two or three times to come out of it. Then the liquids will be released, and you can touch the body.

当液体被排出时，这个人实际上已经死了，可以触碰他的身体。对于某些人来说，这种细微的状态可能会持续更长时间，在这种情况下，你可以平静地和他说话，并让他从里面出来，请两、三次。然后液体就会被排出来，这时你就可以触碰身体了。

Question: Is it all right after death to put the body into a refrigerated area?

问：死后把遗体放进冷藏区可以吗

Answer:

This is a very dangerous practice. If the mind is still in the subtle state, it will detect the cold and develop a strong desire for warmth. This can cause the person to take birth into one of the hot hells. It is better to wait at least 24 hours after death before refrigerating the body, and very preferable if the period can be even longer. If this is not possible, it is important to ask the person gently to release his state of meditation, as described above.

答：这是一种非常危险的做法。如果意识还处于细微状态，就会察觉到寒冷，对温暖产生强烈的欲望。这会导致这个人在某个热地狱里出生。最好等到死亡至少24小时后再冷藏遗体，如果等时间更长的话会更好。如果不可能做到，如前文所述的那样，轻柔地请求这个人从冥想状态中出来是非常重要的。

Question:

Is it appropriate for a Buddhist to have his bodily organs donated after death?

问：佛教徒死后捐献身体器官合适吗？

Answer:

It is a very good thing if one can make this final act of charity with their body. It should however be done out of a motivation of wanting to give, and not for any kind of monetary profit.

答：如果一个人能用自己的身体做最后的善行，那是非常好的事情。然而，这样做应该是出于一种想要给予的动机，而不是为了任何形式的金钱利益。

Question:

What is the Buddhist position on mercy killing, or ending someone's life to prevent him further, incurable suffering?

问：对于安乐死，或者说，结束一个人的生命以防止他遭受更多无法治愈的痛苦，佛教持什么立场？

Answer:

It is very wrong to turn off a life-support system, or to take any similar action, anything that will cause a being's life to end, even if they are "brain dead" but still breathing on a respirator, or the like.

答：哪怕已经“脑死亡”，但仍连接着呼吸器进行呼吸等情况下，关闭维持生命的系统，或者采取任何类似终结对方生命的措施，都是非常错误的行为。

Question: What is the Buddhist position on abortion?

问：佛教对堕胎持什么立场？

Answer:

Abortion is completely wrong. It is murder. In fact it is a particularly repugnant form of murder, since in most cases of murder the victim is someone who can physically attempt to fight back and defend themselves, whereas in an abortion the victim is small and helpless, and cannot protect themselves.

答：堕胎是完全错误的。是一种谋杀。事实上，这是一种特别不道德的谋杀行为，因为在大多数谋杀案件中，受害者是能够试图反击和自卫的人；而在堕胎时，受害者弱小而无助，无法保护自己。

Question: What is the Buddhist position on contraception?

问：佛教对避孕持什么立场？

Answer:

Contraception is not killing, in types of contraception where conception has not occurred, but it is preventing a being from achieving a higher birth, a precious human life.

答：避孕不是杀人，在有些避孕措施中怀孕还没有发生，但这措施阻碍了一个生命获得更高的出生，获得宝贵的人生。

Question: Is there any way that we can help a person after he dies?

问：一个人死后，我们有什么办法可以帮助他吗？

Answer:

In our lives we do a great many bad deeds, and they remain with us, like small black stones. We have also done a very few good deeds, either purposely or by sheer accident, and these are like small white stones. Nonetheless, by the force of our prayers, and by the blessings of the goodness of the "three gems" of Buddhism — that is, the Buddha, the high realizations of Buddhism, and people who have gained them — it is possible that at a very crucial point in the process of death, or during the "inbetween" period before the next life, the power of the white

stone or few good deeds can be pulled out and triggered, rather than the power of the many black stones. It would be a little like winning the lottery.

答：我们生生世世做了很多坏事，它们就像黑色的小石头一样留在我们身上。当然，不管是出于刻意还是纯属偶然，我们也做了一点好事，就像白色的小石头一样。尽管如此，借由祈祷的力量，借由佛教“三宝”的加持——即佛陀，对佛学的高度证悟，以及获得此证悟的人——在死亡过程中一个非常关键的时刻，或者在下一世之前的“中间”阶段，白色石头或那点善行的力量可以战胜众多黑色石头的力量先拔头筹而被优先激发。这就有点像中彩票了。

Question: What particular prayers or rituals can be held to help the dead person?

问：可举行什么特别的祈祷或仪式来帮助死者？

Answer:

After the person dies, their mind enters a state called the “bardo” or inbetween state. During this period they are still seeking out his next birth. This “inbetween” being will never live for more than seven days, although they themselves can die and become an inbetween being again — for up to a total of seven times, or a total of 49 days, before the next birth is taken.

答：人死后，他们的意识进入一种称为“中阴”或中间的状态。在此期间，他们仍在寻找下一次投生。这种“中间”生灵的寿命不超过七天，尽管它们自己可能会死亡并再次成为中间生灵——在下次投生前，它们最多会活七次，即总共四十九天。

Because the inbetween state even in the longest case cannot last more than 49 days, we normally perform one ritual on the 49th day after the person’s death (for all these prayers, we take the day of death as the first day counted). We believe that this ceremony, which is known as “jang-chok” or “ritual for the purification of bad deeds,” can actually help the dead person to take a higher birth.

因为中间状态最长也不能持续超过四十九天，我们通常在人死后的第四十九天做一次仪式（对于所有的祈祷，都把死亡的那一天作为第一天计算）。我们认为这种被称为“jang-chok”或“净化恶行仪轨”的仪式，可以真正帮助死者获得更高的出生。

During this ceremony we lay out some pieces of the dead person’s clothing. The “inbetween” being, or the person after his death and before their next birth, has a very subtle physical form, and during this “inbetween” period exhibits extranormal powers such as the ability to pass through walls. They are aware of outer physical events and can be present at the ceremony, attracted to his belongings.

在这个仪式上，我们陈列一些死者的衣物。“中间”身，或者说在死后和下一次出生前的人，有一个非常微妙的身体形态，在这个“中间”期间展现超凡的力量，如穿墙的能力。他们意识到外在的人事物，会被自己的物品所吸引而出席这个仪式。

Even though they may not understand the language in which the ritual is held, it is still effective for him. This is because the power of the ritual comes from what we call the “infallible three.” The first of these is the blessing of the three jewels, mentioned above. The second is the power of emptiness, or the truth of the fact that nothing can exist inherently. The third is the pure and selfless intent to help the dead person, felt in the hearts of the people performing the ritual.

即使他们可能不懂仪轨所持的语言，但对他来说仍然有效。这是因为仪轨的力量来自于我们所说的“不

败之三”。其中第一是上述提及的三宝的加持。第二是空性的力量，或者说是任何事物都不从本身内在存在的事实。第三是进行仪式者内心所感受到的纯粹的、无私的帮助死者的意图。

Incidentally, even if the dead person has already taken their rebirth by the time of the 49th day, the prayers will be effective in helping them in that rebirth. For this reason too it is a custom to hold an additional purification ceremony earlier, on the seventh day after death (again counting the day of death as the first day). Again the person's clothes are used, and the *jang-chok* is read, usually along with a set of nine prayers known as the *munlam de gu*, or any appropriate *munlam* type of prayer.

附带一句，即使死者在第49天的时候已经投生，祈祷对帮助他们投生也有效。也是出于这样的原因，在死后的第七天（同样把死亡的那一天算作第一天）提前多举办一场净障仪式成了一种习俗。再一次，死者的衣服会派上用场，读诵 *jang-chok*，通常还同时念一组九篇的祈祷文，也就是 *munlam de gu*，或任何适合的 *munlam* 类型的祈祷。

Question: Are there particularly effective prayers that can be read around the person as he actually dies?

问：当一个人真正死亡之际，有没有特别有效的祈祷文可以在他周围读诵？

Answer:

If the dying person has received the necessary initiations, it is very good if you can recite to them, calmly and clearly, the *dakkye* ritual used in the secret teaching of Vajra Yogini. The *tundruk* or secret six-session prayer is also very good. These rituals have a special power for the dying person because the prayers and visualizations have become ingrained in them, since he has recited and practiced these on a regular basis throughout their life. The prayers are effective whether or not they can at that point clearly hear or comprehend them.

答：如果临终的人已经接受了必要的灌顶，如果你能平静而清晰地向他们背诵金刚瑜伽母密法中使用的本尊仪轨，是非常好的。*Tundruk*，或秘密的六支祈祷，也是非常好的。这些仪式对临终的人有一种特殊的力量，因为祈祷和观想在他们的内心已经根深蒂固，因为他们的一生中经常背诵和练习这些。所以无论他们是否能在当时清楚地听到或理解其内容，祈祷文都有效。

Any other kind of *munlam* or prayer can be read around the dying person, if neither of the above is appropriate. It is also good if you can recite the *Om manipadme hung* prayer, which is familiar to nearly every Buddhist in our community.

如果上述两种都不合适，可以在临终的人周围阅读任何其他形式的 *munlam* 或祈祷文。如果你能背诵我们团体内几乎每一位佛教徒都熟悉的观音心咒（*Om manipadme hung*）祈祷文，也是好的。

Question: What kind of funeral ceremony is appropriate for a Buddhist?

问：什么形式的丧葬适合佛教徒？

Answer:

There is no great difference whether the body is cremated or buried. There is a tradition not to burn the body in a case where the person has had a serious and contagious disease, since it is believed that the smoke from the cremation would be unhealthy for other beings; in this case, burial would be preferred. In general though the practice of burial uses up what would otherwise be useful land for the living. We also believe that there are certain spirits which we can't see,

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and which are able to partake of the body's flesh. Some of them are made ill by the flesh of a human, so that again cremation would be preferred.

答：遗体火化或土葬没有太大的区别。有一个传统是，不焚烧已患有严重的传染性疾病的遗体，因为人们认为火葬产生的烟对其他生命而言是不健康的。在这种情况下，土葬更合适；尽管，总的来说，土葬占用了他人可用作谋生的资源。我们也相信有一些我们看不见的生灵，而且他们能够食用遗体的肉。有些生灵会因食用了人肉而生病，所以又更倾向用火葬。

Incidentally, in some countries it has become a tradition to hold parties or “wakes” including alcohol drinking, in connection with a funeral. Lord Buddha specifically prohibited the use of alcohol or drugs for Buddhists, and so Buddhists should avoid this practice.

附带一句，在一些国家，葬礼跟有饮酒活动的聚会或“守夜”连在一起已成为一种传统。佛陀世尊明确禁止佛教徒饮酒或吸毒，所以佛教徒应该避免这种行为。

Question:

What should be done with the belongings of the dead person?

问：应该如何处理死者的遗产？

Answer:

Of course, the wishes of the person as they expressed them before their death should be followed.

答：当然要遵从死者生前所表达的愿望。

