

THE PRACTICE OF TRANSCENDENCE

*I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.
I am of the nature to have ill health. There is no way to escape ill health.
I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.
All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change. There is no way to escape being separated from them.
My actions are my only true belongings. I cannot escape the consequences of my actions. My actions are the ground upon which I stand.*

Buddha Shakyamuni

Once we realize that life and death are connected as to sleep and to be awake, we overcome most of our fear of death. Although death provides us new experiences, they emanate from our own mind, they do not manifest from external sources. If we train and become friends with our mind in this life, we will have a chance to recognize what is taking place during death. This recognition can lead to enlightenment.

Dalai Lama

THE 15 ESSENTIAL FACTORS IN THE PRACTICE OF TRANSCENDENCE

- 1-The first step is to recognize the great potential that being alive in a human body implies in the process of self-development.
- 2-Recognize that there is continuity of consciousness once we leave the physical dimension.
- 3-Recognize that there is a transcendent consciousness superior to the ego, that we experience during dream state and at the moment of dying.
- 4-Clarify the intention to practice disciplines which allow us to guide the consciousness in the intermediate states when dreaming or in the process of dying.
- 5-Clear the physical, emotional, mental, cultural and religious obstacles that limit the direct experience of our original state of being.
- 6-Learn to go sleep every day in an empowered state of high vitality and mood.
- 7-Develop the Upper Astral dimension as a destination to which we project the consciousness every day when we sleep.
- 8-Learn to radiate the intention from the central channel.
- 9-Develop lucidity in dream state.
- 10-Develop the ability to perceive beyond appearances and realize unity in multiplicity.
- 11-Develop the ability to let go of things without attachment, resistance or remorse.
- 12-Develop a luminous source of purification and well-being.
- 13-Develop a central mantra.
- 14-Become familiar during life with the stages of death and the states of consciousness which manifest in us.
- 15-Regularly generate altruistic intention and actions in the world and dedicate the benefit they generate to the well-being of other beings which as us, aspire to happiness and wellbeing.

SIGNS OF DEATH APPROACHING:

This signs can manifest months or weeks ahead of time:

- Changes in the duration of expiration which becomes much longer than inspiration.
- Dreams about death or going on a long trip / killing someone / being useless / leaving things unfinished
- Frequently thinking and speaking about death
- Detachment from the habitual environment and wish of being in another place
- Wish of doing things not done before
- Sudden change of personality from being rough to cooperative
- Skin glow decreases
- Intense desire of contacting someone with whom we have unfinished business in order to clear it.

SIGNS IN THE FINAL STAGE OF DYING:

- When death approaches, sleeping more than being awake
- As breathing rhythm deteriorates, the mind becomes more unstable with fluctuations between being conscious and unconscious more often
- Confusion in recognizing if we are awake or asleep
- Confusion between past and present
- Self-identity fragments
- In the final stages of an illness, sudden improvement and feeling like eating
- Fast breathing and hiccups

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DAYS BEFORE DYING

1. Bear in mind that the dying is in the most vulnerable situation of his life.
2. The person is losing his entire world: his home, his job, his relationships and his physical body. All the losses that we possibly could experience in life come together in an overwhelming blow, so how can a dying person not be sometimes sad, terrified or angry?
3. Be completely honest, open and natural with the dying person. Tell the truth that the person is dying. Sometimes the person instinctively knows that he is dying, but expects that others, his doctor or his loved ones confirm it.
If the dying aren't told the truth, how can they prepare for death? How can they prepare to close the cycle of a life that is now ending? How can they prepare to guide the consciousness through the intermediate state?
Death is an opportunity to accept our whole life and it sometimes inspires positive changes so profound that allow us to come closer to our most intimate truth as beings of infinite possibilities.
4. Let the dying speak without interfering.
5. Maintain an undivided attention in communicating with the dying.
6. It is more important to determine what the person needs than trying to force our point of view or emotions on him or her.
7. The communication with the dying has to be relaxed, without expectations, without disappointment if communication doesn't take effect.
8. To establish a good communication it is necessary to do the effort to see the person in relationship to his or her own life, character, origin and history and accept the person openly, just the way he or she is.
9. What a dying person needs the most is that we demonstrate love as unconditional as possible, without any expectations.
10. Avoid selfish or negative communication that one could want to let go before the person dies.
11. Maintain a sense of humor and lightness of spirit in the communications with the dying person.
12. Take nothing personally if negative emotions manifest with the dying person. It is possible that many repressed emotions such as sadness, fear, anger, guilt or even jealousy from those who are still well manifest. It is important to help the person not to repress these emotions when they come up. Any emotion that arises, no matter how terrible it may be, focus on the divine spark of the Inner Guide which resides at the center of the chest of all beings.
13. Be with the person when waves of pain and sorrow appear; with acceptance, time, understanding with patience, and above all, letting go all the emotions that manifest.
14. Stay focused on the things the person has achieved and done well. Help the dying feel their lives have been as useful as possible. One of the most valuable things that we can do at the time of dying is to remind the dying of virtuous thoughts.

Concentrate on virtues instead of failures. The people who are dying are often vulnerable to guilt, remorse and depression. Allow the dying to express freely their deepest feelings by listening to what is being said with total openness.

15. Encourage the dying person to connect with the spiritual practices he/she has cultivated during life. As the mind can be in a state of disorientation or wandering when we are near the end, we need to be reminded of our practice, whatever it is.
16. Do not force the dying or relatives and friends with our points of view or to a higher level of practice than they are familiar with.
17. Do mantras internally or in a very quiet voice. The mantra practitioners who have recovered from near-death experiences inform that the mantra continues even when the person is not capable of communicating verbally. Mantra practice has the potential of continuing with unusual clarity because the process of dying liberates the consciousness from all superfluous considerations and intensifies the clarity of mind.
18. When it is appropriate, remind the person that inside his/her chest resides the divine spark of perfection and that his/her most intimate nature is unaffected by emotions or thoughts, whatever they may be.
19. Try not to be too much know-it-all; try not to find always something profound to say. Sometimes the silence in which we let things pass without attachment is the best communication we can do.
20. Avoid trying to convince the dying person to do something against his/her will.
21. Avoid the temptation of sermonizing the dying person or giving him/her an account of our own spiritual formula. Avoid these temptations especially when we suspect that it is not what the person wants! Nobody wishes to be "rescued" with the beliefs of others.
22. Don't have great expectations in what you are doing or that the help you are offering is going to produce miraculous results in the dying or is going to "save" him/her. The person dies the way he/she has lived.
23. If you don't know what to do, say it openly to the dying and ask for his/her help. This honesty will get the dying closer to us and it will help to open a freer communication. Sometimes the dying person knows more than us how we can help. In the context of dying sometimes the assistant is enriched and receives more from the dying person than what he/she is giving. Bear in mind that the assistant is not the only one who is giving. Being in the presence of a great yogi or wise person who has lived virtuously, it is often they who give more in the end and we the ones who receive the most from their life's wisdom.
24. Summon spiritual help from the Inner Guide when you don't know what to do. Remember that you cannot inspire or encourage another person if you don't do it first for yourself. So when you don't know what to do, when you feel incapable, ask for help to the Inner Guide, pray, meditate, summon the gods or some other figure whose power you trust.
25. Death is an opportunity to contact directly our own fears of dying. Being in the presence of death is like confronting our own reality in a shining mirror. We see in it the rough face of our own panic of pain and suffering. If we don't look and accept the face of fear in ourselves, how can we deal with the fear in the dying person in front of us? To contemplate our own fears honestly will help us in our own process of maturity. Sometimes to contact death is the most effective way to accelerate our growth.
The contact with death has the potential to awaken in us a profound and limitless compassion, that perhaps we haven't experienced before.
26. If the dying is in great suffering, visualize all your spiritual masters and sources of gratitude pouring their purifying light on the person. Simultaneously, visualize the dying in a state of enlightenment with all the colors of the chakras shining, the aura well-balanced and the divine sun of the Inner Guide radiating over the crown the light of infinite well-being and bliss.
27. Activate the energy of compassion perceiving ourselves in the place of the person who is dying. Put yourself in the place of the dying, experiencing your own death and then ask yourself: what would I need the most? What would I like the most? What would I want from the friends in front of me? Perhaps we feel that the thing we need the most is to be really loved and accepted as we are.
28. Have physical contact with the dying person. The people who are very ill often long to be touched, to be treated as living instead of sick people. While we are present, hold their hands, look into their eyes with a smiling face, massage them softly, hold them in your arms or breathe at the same soft rhythm with them.

29. It is essential to die consciously, not drugged because pain is being avoided at all costs. We need to die consciously, with as much lucidity, mental clarity and serenity as possible, to be able to unite with our Original Mind.
Have always in mind the purifying effect of pain to clean karmas. Pain manifests in the areas where the life force cannot circulate freely due to karmic factors [previous causes]. Pain invites us to let things pass without holding on to them.
30. A very effective way of releasing or relieving the areas of resistance which are experimented as pain is forgiving unconditionally.
Encourage the dying person to forgive or ask for forgiveness from those they could have hurt. To help remind him/her that in the center of the chest in all of us resides the divine spark of perfection and that when we bury it we act out of ignorance and make mistakes.
Encourage the dying person to clean the heart with forgiveness, as well as not to retain any trace of hatred or resent. To really encourage another person to forgive, it is essential that the helper is able to do it in his/her own life, otherwise the communication is not going to be honest as it is supposed to be with the dying.

PRACTICE OF FORGIVENESS BEFORE DYING

All religions emphasize the power of forgiveness, and this power is most needed when somebody is dying. Through forgiving and being forgiven we purify ourselves from the darkness which has been created and prepare completely for the transition through death.

If the dying cannot meet with the person they are at odds, suggest to call them, to record a message or to write an apology letter.

If we suspect that the person to whom they want to apologize doesn't want to forgive them, it is unwise to encourage confronting the person directly; a negative answer could add more pain. To forgive takes time. It is advisable that the dying people leave a message to the person inviting him/her to forgive so that at least they will die knowing that they have done the best they could. Sometimes through a simple act of apology an unsuspected strength and peace manifests.

The essential points of forgiveness are:

1. Forgiving is urgent. Do not leave it for the future.
2. Forgive and let go the matter without attachment. There is no forgiveness if we continue thinking about it.
3. Make the forgiveness unlimited and unconditional. To say "I forgive you now, but if you do it again I will never forgive you" is not forgiving.
4. Do the sounds of the chakras to raise consciousness and thus operate the intention from the highest level of consciousness.
5. Connect with the Inner Guide as a light that flows from the crown to the whole body and purifies the states of intolerance, attachment, rejection or any other negative emotion and makes us feel infinite bliss and well-being.
6. Clean the aura of all resentment or guilt with a red-orange light.
7. After the red-orange light expand possibilities with the blue-white light.
8. Visualize the person we have to ask forgiveness or whom we have to forgive, in front of you, with all the chakras in their shining colors, deep roots into the earth bringing the color of each one; the individual sounds radiating with a well-balanced, luminous aura and the golden light of the Inner Guide radiating from the center of the chest.
9. In a loud voice speaking from the heart to the Inner Guide of the other person, say: "I ask forgiveness for any injury I may have caused you, consciously or unconsciously". Or "I forgive you for anything you may have done to me, consciously or unconsciously". It is best to repeat three times the phrases, each time with deeper feelings, speaking on behalf of your whole family to the other person and his/hers family.
In each case add: "I ask that all the negative energies generated by this situation be dissolved in the fires of eternal love, freeing us completely".
10. It may be necessary to communicate the previous words in person, face to face, if the dying person is strong enough, physically, emotionally and mentally.
11. If the other person refuses to forgive us, we keep taking the initiative to heal the relationship and let things go. In that case it is necessary to continue the practice as many times as necessary.
12. This practice can also be done with someone who has already died.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LAST DAYS BEFORE DYING

- Relatives or friends intensify the practices of light, perceiving the dying person in a state of transparent purity, in a luminous state purified by the brightness of the Original Mind of infinite bliss and well-being.
- Take the opportunity to deepen one's reflections about the impermanent nature of life and the quality of our practices to face up to the experience of death.
- Avoid trying to forget what is taking place by escaping into false illusions, mental intoxication by taking substances or fatigue by overwork or sleep debt.
- Children are very interested in everything dealing with death. Speak to children about death. Negation of death starts when children are kept away from death as if it was a contagious disease or something unnatural.

Be delicate when speaking to children and tell the truth. Do not let the child believe that death is something strange or terrifying that only affects some people.

Let the children take part as much as possible in the experience of the dying person and answer honestly any question they could ask. The frankness and innocence of a child can really bring sweetness, lucidity and sometimes even humor in the process of dying and transcendence.

- Encourage children to receive the blessings or some final advice from the dying. With this gesture they make the dying feel their lives have been valuable.
- Encourage children to pray for the dying and feel that they are really doing something to help. This is an excellent opportunity to tell them about the transcendent nature of consciousness and how the individual has to train during life to experience death properly; about how we have to live a life generating benefit to others and how our actions affect us in the process of transition.
- After death has taken place, make sure to give the child special attention and affection and tell him/her about the impermanent nature of existence.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MOMENT OF DYING

- Death is a process in which we contact our Original Mind in all its splendor. Death is not a disease and it should be surrounded by spiritual symbols and energies that remind us of our Original Mind.
- Home is the best environment for dying.
- The best position to die is close to the earth, as near to the ground as possible, facing west, the direction of sunset and letting go.
- If it has been previously established, lie down on the side for crossing dimensions used in the dream practice, be it the tiger position [left side] or the dragon position [right side]. If you don't know which of the two sides to choose, lie down on the right side.

In the right side of the body are certain subtle channels which activate the right hemisphere of the brain and facilitate the recognition of the luminosity of Original Mind. The position also helps consciousness to separate from the physical body through the crown chakra.

To avoid distractions, no noise or sound should be made, except for mantras or prayers, when the person is in the final stages of dying. We can do prayers or mantras mentally focused in the ascending flow of the central channel, rising to the crown and beyond.

- It is essential not to bother the dying in the last moments. We must refrain from trying to make the person comfortable touching him/her constantly. Consciousness is no longer connected to the physical body, so comfort is irrelevant. The most important thing at this time is to carry out the separation of consciousness without interferences or deviations.
- When the person is very close to death, it is important to ask the hospital staff to stop all treatments and to stop doing tests. Make sure they interrupt all the injections and invasive procedures when the person is in the final states of death. These can cause annoyance, irritation or frustration and interfere with the experience of the Original Mind.

In an intensive care unit it will be very difficult to die in peace and do spiritual practices without interferences. Sometimes is not possible to let the body undisturbed before the consciousness separates. Therefore it is recommended that the dying person or the relatives agree with the medical staff to let the dying die in peace and with the electronic monitors disconnected when there are no possibilities of recovery.

Make sure that the medical staff knows and respects the will of the dying person, especially if he/she doesn't want to be revived, and make sure the staff also knows the will of the dying person that nobody touches his/her body after death for as long as possible. For that it is sometimes necessary to have a legal document written and certified by the proper authorities.

- Try not to get angry if the agreement of leaving the body alone is violated by the hospital staff. The focus during the process of transition is on the dying person, not on the concerns of the living.
The right to die properly is a right of all beings who incarnate in the physical dimension. There is no more altruistic gesture than helping another being to die well.
- If there are several relatives and friends, a circle can be done around the dying person, holding hands and singing together in a quiet voice that flows from the heart with love and without sorrow or pity. Sing mantras or prayers that the person used during his/her life. This helps the dying person and the living to maintain the heart free avoiding the accumulation of sorrow and pain.
- Avoid that the people present during the last moments are crying or in any other way experiencing negative emotional states, since these states pull the dying consciousness downwards when it needs precisely to ascend. If they cannot contain their emotions it is better they leave the place where the person is dying.
- We interfere seriously with the process of transcendence when:
 - o We do not let go of the person by regretting they are dying
 - o We ask them not to go away
 - o We feel sorrow for their situation
 - o We make vigorous practices to avoid death at all costs
 - o We try to ease the suffering of the dying person using invasive remedies.
- Many people die in a state of coma, but bear in mind that the dying can be totally conscious of all that is happening in their environment, including the thoughts and feelings of relatives and friends. This is due to the fact that the process of dying is a liberating and purifying experience in which everything that is superfluous falls away as the clarity of Original Mind intensifies.
- While the person is in the process of dying, do not sit or stand near the lower part of the body or in the direction the feet are facing. Do not touch the lower parts of the body, and in no way focus attention towards the feet until the process of death has finished completely.
No religious object must be put around the lower part of the body or toward the direction of the feet.
If the attention of the dying person goes to the lower part of the body, the consciousness could sink into lower states of consciousness. The inferior chakras project consciousness towards dimensions of low vibration characterized by intense negative emotional states.
It is advisable to draw attention towards the crown. If the person has not died yet, attention is drawn without touching, only with intention. Once the person has died it can be done touching very softly the upper part of the head, placing religious objects behind the head and singing AUM rising through the central channel and merging with the state of Original Mind of infinite bliss and unlimited well-being.
- If the dying person is open to help but is not familiar with meditation and energy practices and the assistant is better trained, then the assistant can say prayers, mantras, do ceremonies and give instructions to the dying person in a quiet voice. Instructions must be short, clear, simple and felt from the heart. Avoid trying to introduce an energy practice at this point. Instructions have only to do with focusing attention towards the crown, follow the ascending AUM, merge with the light, let go and remember that he/she is a being of light of infinite bliss.
- Relatives and friends can visualize the light of Original Mind purifying the dying one who merges and dissolves in the splendor of infinite bliss.
- It is important that the assistant places emphasis on his own meditative experience and his direct experience of Original Mind. It is through example that the assistant can guide the dying person through the process with clarity and certainty.
- If the people present are not familiarized with transcendence practices or have resistance toward spiritual practices, then, we can do the practice internally in silence, trying not to generate negative feeling towards the people who do not accept such practices.
- If the assistant is familiarized with the practice of the dissolution of the elements of consciousness [Appendix], describe slowly the signs of dissolution of the elements. Remind the dying person that all the experiences and impressions arising are projections of his own mind.
- If the dying one is well trained in meditation, the assistant could say mantras, prayers, do ceremonies and remind him of the instructions related to the process of dying.
- If the dying person is highly trained in meditation, more than the assistant, then the assistant remains in contemplative meditation and says prayers in a low voice or from a distance, without interfering, allowing the dying to go at his own rhythm.

- The assistant shouldn't touch the body of a person trained in meditation to avoid distraction.
- Purify the environment where the dying process is taking place maintaining the luminous state of the Original Mind.

SIGNS THAT CONSCIOUSNESS HAS LEFT THE PHYSICAL BODY

The heat in the heart center at the center of the chest is the true determining factor of the separation of consciousness, not the pulse, breath or heartbeat.

When we are falling asleep, in the same way as when we die, consciousness gradually withdraws through the meridians of consciousness [nadis] in the direction of the heart chakra. This process takes time, and in the dying person, warmth at the center of the chest is a sign that the process is not completed.

When the heat disappears from the heart chakra area, then consciousness has separated completely from the physical body.

The heat that can be perceived without touching the body physically is like the temperature of a bird. If there are extraordinary spiritual powers, as in the case of advanced practitioners, the heat in the heart can last up to 49 days after clinical death. This is the sign that the practitioner is steadily absorbed in meditation. The heat in the heart is a sign that a subtle breath still continues.

While the heart warmth remains, calm must be kept around the deceased. Nobody must enter the room or do any noise in the house, until his/her meditation has finished. Do not hold or manipulate the body during this period of absorption. Do not get rid of the body if the heart chakra area is warm. If maintaining the body during the period of warmth in the heart causes negative emotions in the minds of others or creates confusion or controversy among the relatives or in the environment, it would cause negative karmic effects for the deceased. It would be wiser to get rid of the body quickly focusing the consciousness towards the light with successive AUM. The most important thing is to maintain the mind calm and peaceful with an atmosphere of fluidity and cooperation, instead of confrontation or aggressiveness.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDING THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE DECEASED TOWARDS THE LIGHT ONCE CONSCIOUSNESS HAS LEFT THE PHYSICAL BODY

1. The best moment to do this practice is when the breathing and pulse of the person have stopped, although the heart is still warm. The consciousness could be assimilated in the dimension of Original Mind before falling into the illusory trap of a low dimension.
2. The assistant of the practice must sit behind the head of the deceased. Do not place religious object around the lower part of the body or directed towards the feet.
No loved ones must sit near the feet or the lower part of the body. If they do, they could pull the consciousness of the deceased to flow down to the lower exits.
3. It is essential that the assistant rises his/her level of consciousness beyond the ordinary before acting using the intention. This is done with the root sounds of the seven energetic centers: perineum with the sound LAM; sexual palace, VAM; solar plexus, RAM; heart, YAM; throat, HAM; crystal room, AUM; crown with silence.
The sound AUM with silence at the end is repeated until from within the silence begins to manifest the subtle energy of Original Mind as infinite bliss, inexhaustible well-being and unlimited happiness.
If this initial step of clearing emotional and mental obstacles is not done the practice can gradually get corrupted with doubts, emotions that interfere or improvisations that come from a subtle state of separation.
4. Clarify intention about what is going to be done. In the practice the intention is to help the consciousness of the deceased to recognize his/her true essence as a being of light whose most intrinsic quality is infinite bliss, inexhaustible well-being and unlimited happiness. The purpose of the practice cannot be reached if in the first step of rising consciousness we haven't connected with our Original Nature.
5. The Original Nature can be perceived as a sphere, a sun or a star of intense golden light with the feelings of intense and inexhaustible well-being; or it can be personified as a deity if we have practices with the Buddha, Krishna, Christ, Virgin Mary, etc., The image is placed over one's head radiating golden light with intense feelings of inexhaustible well-being. It is important to bear in mind that it is not only a practice with light, but also with intense positive feelings.
6. Visualize the deceased as a deity, instead of his/her ill or dead image; in transparent and luminous state radiating the positive qualities Original Mind.

7. Perceive the colors and the root mantras of the chakras radiating with the central channel well aligned.
8. Perceive the light of the Inner Guide at the center of the chest.
9. Perceive the essence of consciousness as a white-red pearl at the centre of the Inner Guide in the chest.
10. Visualize high and above the golden sun of the Original Mind.
11. Feel all the positive qualities of Original Mind radiating in all directions from the deceased.
12. The complete name of the deceased is called with a firm, commanding voice which calls the attention of the consciousness which could be in a dreaming state.
13. As the dissolution of the five elements which sustain consciousness anchored to the physical plane takes place, the dissolution of the subtle bodies starts: the energy body with the meridian system and the dissolution of the central channel; the emotional body, in which the vast majority of people get trapped; the mental body in which other people remain in closed circles of ideas and repetitive images, etc.
 Calling firmly the name of the deceased breaks the spell of emotions or images in which consciousness can find itself trapped as in a dream.
 After summoning the deceased we inform him/her about the transition which has taken place:
 - a) *Your consciousness has separated from the physical body, at such a place and such a date*
 - b) *You are a being of light of infinite wellbeing who belongs in the light*
 - c) *There is a central channel of light that has been made available at such a place (if the practice is done from a distance some time after the death and disappearance of the physical body).*
 - d) *With the sound AUM ascend toward the bright light of your Original Nature.*
 - e) *Your Original Nature is of infinite bliss, well-being and happiness.*
14. We make the sound AUM from the depths of the earth rising through the central channel towards the divine light of Original Mind.
15. Sing the AUM, in a loud voice or internally, rising each time the white-red pearl that represents the consciousness of the deceased at the centre of the chest within the Inner Guide toward the light of Original Mind above the crown.
16. After one or several AUM we order the consciousness of the deceased to follow with a firm: "*Follow the light!*"
 Repeat the process as many times as our Inner Guide indicates us or until we feel the consciousness has ascended towards the lights generating a void in the environment.
17. Maintain the state of Original Mind as long as possible with an intense altruistic feeling.
18. At the end practitioners repeat for themselves the smile of gratitude to the earth to activate the upward energy that rises consciousness and then to the divine dimension towards light.
19. Practitioners repeat for themselves the root sounds of each chakra connecting with Original Mind.
20. We end bringing the golden light of Original Mind to the cauldron where it concentrates in a pearl of intense cohesion with the purpose of adding durability to everything that has been done.
21. At the end of the practice we dedicate any benefit generated by the practice to all beings so they may realize their highest destiny of realizing the Original Mind of infinite well-being unaffected by emotions or limited ideas.

BEHAVIOR OF THE ASSISTANTS AND RELATIVES AFTER DEATH

- While somebody is dying and the days following death it is important that the people close to the deceased refrain from negative thoughts and feelings of attachment toward the deceased. Take the opportunity to cultivate a luminous vision of the deceased.
 If it is not possible to avoid that negative thoughts and attitudes arise, we should avoid expressing them in words or acts substituting them immediately with mantras and very bright light flowing through the central channel from above.
 Take the chance to intensify the personal practice with negative emotions and forgiveness.
 If sadness affects us deeply, intensify the breathing practices, do the Healing Sounds, and meditate about the positive qualities of the deceased, or the peak moments we experienced together, in a spirit of celebration, for what it contributed to our lives.
- Try not to wear mourning clothes, cry or regret. Emotions such as sadness and lament tend to pull down consciousness of the deceased and do not support the process of transcendence that is the most important thing. Remember the central focus of attention is still the deceased not oneself only.
- It is also important not to dig up the dark side of the deceased, to gossip about his/her bad actions in which it could have been involved or even have these thoughts in our minds.

- Avoid thoughts such as "now the person has died, I will get rich" or "at last he/she is gone and now I am free". Such thoughts generate incalculable negative karmas for the people who generate them.
- During several days after the death, maintain the belongings of the deceased in the same place where they used to be. This way we will avoid disturbing his/her consciousness, if he/she is still in the plane close to the physical one.
- Watch the dreams during the period after the death to notice if the deceased appears in them as if he/she was alive, or asking for help. These can be signs that the consciousness continues near the physical dimension in the lower astral. In this case, we must repeat the practice of guiding the consciousness to the light with much more vigor and altruistic feeling.
- If we feel the deceased is still present, if we hear his voice, or perceive his image out of the corner of one's eye, it is necessary to repeat the practice of guiding the consciousness to the light with more clarity of purpose and a higher energetic level.
- In the home where the deceased lived we make purification practices. The first level is a physical cleansing of the space, recycling, throwing away or burning the belongings of the deceased. We do it in an altruistic spirit of detachment to help in the process of transition in which the consciousness of the deceased is. We avoid doing this cleaning with rejection, repugnance, disdain or critical mind. We continue with an energetic, emotional and mental cleaning with which we purify the home with mantras and we install a new central channel in each room with renewed purposes. If it is possible we change the decoration, removing object which evoke intense memories of the deceased. Especially avoid having photographs of the deceased on display. Purify the home with the 5 elements: fire and wood, burning incenses; water, spraying perfumed water with essential oils; metal, playing bells or recordings of mantras or music which vibrates the environment to a higher level; earth and wood, with new plants and flowers which symbolize rebirth.
- Do a closing ceremony some weeks after the death, perhaps in the next full moon, in which we let go with profound gratitude all the experiences we have lived. Take the chance to meditate on the impermanence of life, the inescapable nature of death, the preciousness of our human incarnation as an opportunity to clear obstacles and realize our Original Mind.

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE DECEASED AFTER DEATH

- Death is governed by the principle of liberation. There is a removal of all that is superfluous until our mind is completely revealed. What is revealed is what we have become. Habitual tendencies manifest with tremendous intensity unable to be controlled by thoughts. Mind is the combination of the habitual tendencies of countless lives. Our mind is not a simple reflection of the experience in this life. It is modeled by the strength of our habitual tendencies that we have established through countless lives.
- Valuable teachings come to consciousness, but if they were not totally integrated, the feeling of remorse intensifies as a profound anguish and a loss of opportunity.
- The experience of the intermediate state arises by itself from our consciousness, there is no external factor. There is no judgment nor external punishment, because all that is experienced emanated from the totality of our mind, especially all that has been rejected or hidden.
- The consciousness of the deceased could be in a state of dreaming in which he/she hasn't recognized that death has taken place and that he/she is not operating in the physical dimension. This state can be prolonged for weeks, months or years. If the person died in a negative emotional state, consciousness is very likely to be projected to the inferior astral where the intense state of separation, which characterizes all negative emotions prevails.
- The clarity of consciousness which manifests as the density of the physical body disappears enhances any quality that was cultivated during life, be it positive or negative. As the mental-psychic layer is contacted, enhanced mental and psychic powers manifests, resulting in the ability to sense the thoughts and feelings of the living. Negative thoughts or feelings generated by the living toward the deceased can become a powerful factor in provoking negative reactions. Therefore, after the death has taken place, the living should try to generate positive thoughts and memories about the deceased.
- In the same way we make effort in staying in a positive frame of mind, we also do vigorous effort to overcome sadness promoting positive states of mind and deepening the energy practices such as deep breathing, stretching, Healing Sounds, Harmonizing the Five Elements and acting altruistically dedicating the fruits of our efforts for the benefit of the deceased in his experience of the intermediate state.

When overcoming sadness it is important to take the chance to investigate its causes. Perhaps we realize that we are sad because of attachment that doesn't allow that things flow as they should. Perhaps we realize that there is an attitude of wanting things to be this or that way, but they aren't, there is a rejection and a lack of acceptance which keeps us attached to certain ways of behavior.

We let go of the feelings of sadness accepting them as they are, without rejections nor attachments; without refusing them as negative nor attaching to them as signs of our love.

We could think: *"Yes, I am sad. It is a sign of my love and esteem towards my loved one. How wonderful is this beautiful memory and affection. What a great fortune that this person has passed through my life! As soon as we experience sadness as positive it transforms into a cause of happiness, and the pain transforms into healing energy.*

Every time the feelings of sadness and loss come back, we can say to ourselves: *"if I have sad feelings along with the thoughts and images of my loved one, this will affect him/her negatively in his/her experience in the intermediate state, so I have to stop it and cultivate positive feelings".* Such an understanding and commitment will help to stop the continuity of sad feelings.

- It is extremely important for those who have experienced the loss of a relative or a friend to remember that the death of the loved one is not the end of the being. The person is not the physical body. Consciousness is not limited by the experience of death. There is continuity of consciousness. Everything has a previous cause; life is the previous cause to experience death, and death is the previous cause to experience a new life.
- If the deceased had been suffering from some illness, dying is a great opportunity to overcome suffering and enjoy a better incarnation in which they can clear the obstacles that prevent them from realizing their most intimate nature as beings of light of infinite well-being.
- The most useful help for the deceased are the actions of the living; most especially, the ones from relatives and closest friends. The most effective practice, is to purify and center the mind with mantras, prayers, meditations and altruistic gestures in the name of the deceased. All action generates a reaction, and positive actions generate positive reactions which manifest as the ability to fulfill goals. The positive actions we do dedicated to the well-being of the deceased are the most powerful gestures we can do to help. Simultaneously, actions generate positive karmas in our favor and inspires others to do the same.

The positive actions which generate positive reaction energy of achievement in the name of the deceased are:

1. Cultivating thoughts and actions of generosity, self-discipline, patience, diligence and contemplation.
2. Serving others, save lives, be helpful.
3. Practices of purification to overcome emotional and mental obstacles
4. Giving teachings
5. Making offerings
6. Offering shelter
7. Sponsoring ceremonies and acts which promote positive states.
8. Sponsoring or creating object which inspire us to better ourselves spiritually, such as statues, paintings, centers of retirement and temples.
9. Building paths and shelters to facilitate pilgrimage to sacred or retreat places.
10. Helping other beings to die and transcend.

BENEFITS OF HELPING SOMEONE TO DIE

- Death generates self-reflection about our life, so it is an experience which intensifies consciousness.
- To take care of the dying makes us realize about our mortality, the fragile and ephemeral nature of life and the lack of resources truly useful that we have to go through the experience with confidence and strength.
- Death makes us reflect about the impermanence of everything we consider important.
- Death generates self-reflection, where it is possible that we examine more carefully the goals we have set for ourselves.
- Death makes us reflect about our relationships and our emotions.
- Each dying person is a master who gives to all the people who help an opportunity to transform through the development of their compassion. Compassion is something active, it is the wish of doing everything possible to relieve the suffering of others, isn't only an affectionate feeling. Compassion is not simply a feeling of sympathy or of

taking care of the person who suffers, it is not only affection from the heart towards the person in front of you or a sharp clarity of recognizing his/her needs and pain, it is also a practical and sustained determination of doing everything possible and necessary to help ease their suffering. Compassion is not true compassion if it is not active.

APPENDIX

Sequence and signals of the dissolution of the elements of consciousness at the beginning of the process of dying

The following signs may appear over time as the elements of consciousness weaken

1) *Earth [perineum] dissolves into Water [sexual palace]: Mirages*

Feeling of heaviness
Cheeks sink
Dark spots appear in the teeth
Blurred vision
Thin body
Physical strength disappears
Eyes cannot be opened or closed
Falling – no more movement
The nine orifices of the body discharge
Sometimes it feels like a mountain pressing
Mind excites and then falls in sleepiness or inebriation
Sound of mountains collapsing
Mirages fill the mind

2) *Water [sexual palace] dissolves into Fire [solar plexus]: Smoke*

Dryness in lips
Thirst
Sensation of floating
Kidney failure
Hearing disappears
The brightness of the face disappears
Feeling of suffocation, asphyxia
Dryness in the eye sockets
Dryness in throat
Nostrils collapse
Trembling or involuntary movement
Sound of huge waves crashing
Smoke fills the vision

3) *Fire [solar plexus] dissolves in Air [heart]: sparks-fireflies*

Cold
Failure of vision
Liver stops
Taste disappears
Inability to digest
Inability to pay attention to the people around
Bleeding from the nose
If the person has lived a non-virtuous life the body warmth flows downward from the head toward the feet. If life has been lived altruistically the body warmth dissolves from the feet towards the crown.
A warm vapor comes out of the crown.
Sound of fire burning
Feeling of being consumed by fire
Sparks, fireflies and flashes of light fill the vision

4) *Air [heart] to Space or Akash [throat]: steady and dull brightness like a candle in a big dark place*

Short inhalation
Long exhalation
Difficulty to breathe
Breathing stops
Tongue turns blue
Lungs stop
The last sigh
Subtle breathing continues
Eyes roll backwards
Awareness of the outer world stop
Head falls. With a great practitioner the head remains upright and the heart center warm for as long as they are absorbed in Original Mind.
The Akash developed through meditation and calm mind sustains the experience of luminosity of Original Mind
If life was lived virtuously pleasant visions manifest, if not, terrifying visions-hallucinations destabilize the mind.
Sound of hurricane, great wind sweeping the world and the consciousness
Progressive dimming of the consciousness till black out

Useful books

- Dalai Lama: *Advice on Dying*.
- Sogyal Rinpoche: *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*
- Von Franz, Marie-Louise: *On Dreams & Death: A Jungian Interpretation*. 1990

*"Awareness of death is the very bedrock of the path.
Until you have developed this awareness, all other practices are obstructed."* 14th Dalai Lama

The 15 foundation steps for establishing a transcendence practice:

- 1-The first step is recognizing the great potential that being alive holds for the spiritual journey.
 - Death is governed by the principle of liberation not limitation. There is a stripping away of everything superfluous until our mind is revealed naked in its entirety.
 - What is revealed is what we have become and what we are.

- 2-Recognize there is an afterlife once we leave the physical dimension
 - The continuity of consciousness is the transcendent aspect.
 - The continuity of consciousness is based on the premise that everything has a previous cause.
 - Consciousness is made of moments, with gaps between them through which the clarity of Original Mind shines through.
 - Death is the separation of consciousness from the physical body

- 3-Recognize there is a transcendent superior consciousness function [Inner Guide] contacted during dream state

- 4-Clarify the intention to practice
 - Dying day is the most important day in our lives We all want to die well.
 - Most people have not trained on how to die well or how to live well

- 5-Clear obstacles, physical, emotional, mental, cultural, religious which prevent us from realizing our Original Nature
 - The clearing of obstacles takes place in terms of being able to connect with Original Mind often when we go to sleep and each time we do the Softening Smile.

- 6-Develop an upper astral destination or remain in Original Mind.
 - Observe the dreams to know in which dimension one is operating.
 - As the dreams become more peaceful and joyful one is more often experiencing the Upper Astral dimension.

- 7-Learn to go to sleep empowered by developing the dream practices as training ground for transcendence

- 8-Learn how to work with the intention [central channel]

- 9-Develop lucidity in dream state

- 10-Develop the ability to perceive beyond appearances and realize the unity in all things
 - The bardo experience is self-arising there are no external factor
 - There is no judgment or punishment in the bardo
 - The sense of separation is the biggest obstacle in the bardo
 - Denial tendency and tendency to blame others reinforces the sense of separation and the perception of phenomena arising externally
 - Dying in a negative state is the source of nightmarish experiences

- 11-Develop the ability to let go and accept by putting yourself in the hands of the Inner Guide without resistance

- 12-Develop a core mantra practice

- 13-Have a source of purification and blessings

- 14-Become familiar with the stages of death

- 15-Generate altruistic intent and actions in the world

**** THE PILLAR OF LIGHT PRACTICE ****

I wish to take the opportunity to review the essential elements of the practice of the Pillar of Light.

1.-Before taking action using the intention it is essential to raise the level of consciousness beyond the ordinary level we are operating at the moment. This is attained doing the healing sounds of the different energy centers from the perineum with the sound LAM; sexual palace, VAN; solar plexus, RAM; heart, YAM; throat, HAM; Crystal Room, AUM; crown, with the silence which follows AUM.

The AUM with ever increasing quality of silence is repeated until from within the state of silence begins to manifest the subtle energy of Original Mind as infinite Bliss, unlimited Joy and unconditional Wellbeing.

If this initial step of liberating obstacles at the emotional and mental levels is not made, in time the practice gradually degenerates contaminated with doubts, interfering emotions, improvisation arising from a subtle state of separation and selfishness, manifesting as arbitrary ideas about how to carry on the practice. In time there is the risk of abandoning the practice altogether as ineffective.

2.-Clarify the intention about the ultimate purpose of the practice. In the Pillar of Light practice the intention is, first of all, to guide the consciousness of the deceased so that it can recognize its essential nature of Original Mind as infinite Bliss, unlimited Joy and unconditional Wellbeing. This primary objective of the practice cannot be accomplished if the first step of raising consciousness has not given us a direct experience of Original Mind.

3.-Original Mind can be perceived as a sphere; sun; star of intense golden color radiating simultaneously the intense feelings of infinite Bliss, unlimited Joy and unconditional Wellbeing, or it can be personified as deity such as Buddha, Krishna, the Virgin Mary and so forth.

The image of Original Mind is at a great height above the crown radiating the golden light with intense feelings of unlimited Bliss. It is important that Original Mind is experienced as Light, plus intense feelings of unlimited Bliss, plus Silence. This is not a practice with light only.

4.-The complete name of the deceased is called in a firm, commanding, loud voice in order to orient the consciousness which could be in dream state unable to recognize that it has detached from the physical dimension. When we sleep and at the moment of dying, the consciousness detaches from the physical dimension and the physical body and is projected toward the subtle dimension of the unconscious. As the dissolution of the five elements, which anchor the consciousness to the physical plane, takes place, the dissolution of the subtle layers begins: the energy layer with the meridian system and the central channel dissolves. The emotional layer is next in which the greater number of beings becomes trapped through unresolved emotions at the moment of dying. Next follows the mental layer in which the consciousness can become trapped in a vicious circle of repetitive images and ideas.

The purpose of firmly calling the name of the deceased with a commanding tone of voice serves the purpose of breaking the dream spell in which the consciousness could be trapped. When we are in the unconscious any commanding voice is perceived as arising from one's own consciousness and becomes a dream command manifesting the reality described.

5.-After calling the name of the deceased, it is informed about the state of transition which is taking place, each of the items is spoken with a commanding voice in order to help manifest such a reality in the consciousness of the deceased:

a- You have left the physical dimension by dying at such a date/place

b- You are a being of light and belongs in the light

c- There is a Pillar of Light available in such a place

d- With the sound AUM go to the Golden Light of your Original Nature

e- Your Original Nature is infinite Bliss, unlimited Joy and unconditional Wellbeing

6.- The sound AUM is done from the underground base of the Pillar of Light toward the golden sphere or image of Original Nature above.

7.- After several AUM the order to the deceased of ascending to the Light is repeated with a firm "Follow the Light!!!" which follows the ascending path of the Pillar of Light.

8.- The practice is repeated until a sense of vacuum or emptiness becomes manifest

9.-The practitioner now does for him/herself, The Softening Smile of gratitude toward the Earth for granting the ascending energy which raises consciousness and to Heaven for the gift of the Divine Light. The root sounds of each of the energy centers is repeated in order to consciously connect once again with Original Mind and bring the Golden Light to the cauldron.

At the cauldron the Golden Light is slowly concentrated into a pearl of intense cohesiveness to add durability to everything which has been done.

10.-At the end any benefit generated by the practice is dedicated to all beings incarnated in a physical or subtle form so that they realize their Original Nature as infinite Bliss, unlimited Joy and unconditional Wellbeing unaffected by limited emotions or narrow points of view.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you all, for your courage to carry on this practice and the strong determination with which it is being carried. Your efforts are generating infinite benefit at many levels and simultaneously are widening the road that we all are destined to traverse through this world.

The Pillar of Light practice, each time it is carried out, has an unmeasured positive effect on the personal and family structure we were born into. As we deeply know, the family structure extends through time and space to include all humanity.

As the I Ching suggests with the Wind trigram, it is a time to go deeply in what we are doing. The place where we go the deepest possible is our own heart through the heart of the world.

Aiguaviva, Spain, full moon of October 25th 2007

Dear family of practitioners of the Column of Light:

I would like to take the opportunity to bring up to date some of work that is being done by the groups in different countries with regards with the Column of Light practice. As of December 2008, there are six main groups carrying on the practice each full moon. The groups are in Germany, Canary Islands, Barcelona, Madrid, Greece and Holland. As the class on Death and Transcendence is presented in different locations, a new central channel is established. The three central channels in Spain are all located on top of mountains. The one in the Canary Island was utilized during the forest fires there during the summer of 2007 to help extinguish the blazes. This was the first time that the intention that we radiate through the central channel was used for other purposes than guiding the consciousness to the light. This summer of 2008 a plane crash in which over 150 people died in Madrid, opened the precedent to use the central channel to deal with a massive tragedy. As the work of expanding consciousness, which generating benefit for other beings, continues, it is inevitable that the Column of Light project will expand the possibilities for its use. In November a powerful central channel was established by the core Greek group on the Likavitos mountain towering over Athens. As in the previous locations where the practice has been done, there were signs of transformation during the practice in the form of rainy weather clearing right after the practice. The channel was used for the first time not only to guide the consciousness of relatives and friends, but also to radiate the strong wish of greater harmony and recognition of our fundamental humanity among the dwellers of the great metropolis.

The Dimension the Consciousness is Guided to During the Pillar of Light Practice.

Some clarification about the dimension of light to which the consciousness is guided needs to be made. As we know, there is the Lower Astral dimension close to the physical plane, in which the sense of separation and the accompanying negative emotions are the predominant experience. Then at a much higher vibrational level is the Upper Astral dimension that we tune by going beyond the perception of separation as our predominant way of relating to the world and other beings, and adopting an altruistic point of view not only in our minds but specially in our actions. When we learn the techniques for guiding the consciousness, emphasis is made in the preliminary stages of preparation to raise our own level of consciousness and contact directly the experience of Original Mind, either in its primary stages as silence, serenity and calmness or in its unfolding, as tremendous joy, sense of wellbeing and bliss. This preliminary stage brings us to the level where our actions are in accord with our higher values of altruism and compassion. If we are able to sustain the vibration of altruism and compassion, that functions as a guiding beacon to the consciousness of the deceased we are helping. The dimension we are tuned to during sustained states of altruism and compassion is the Upper Astral dimension, therefore, it is there that the consciousness of the deceased is guided to. The Upper Astral is a dimension that is linked to the higher values of physical existence in the world, therefore it offers the opportunity for continuing the cycle of change in the physical dimension through taking a new physical body. So, to recapitulate, the practice of the Column of Light opens new possibilities for incarnating in order to complete cycles pending in our karmic account. The experience of contacting a body of practitioners operating as a group for an altruistic purpose, links the consciousness of the departed with the opportunity of doing the same in the next incarnation. In terms of the practitioners carrying out the practice, positive action generates positive reaction, so there is a re-structuring of the karmic factors stored at the level of the Causal body. This positive effect has a far-reaching effect not only at the personal level, but most specially, at the level of the family structure we have been born into. By introducing powerful altruistic action to the family structure we generate the positive conditions for beings at the stage of developing the heart center to incarnate within our family structure. Thus we begin to fulfill the goal of leaving the places we pass through better than we found them.

The Continuing Investigation and Refinement of the Practices.

As far as my personal practice is concerned, during the winter of 2007 I had the opportunity of receiving the teachings and empowerments on the practice of phowa, as the Tibetans name the practice of transcendence, at Bodhgaya, the place where the historical Buddha attained realization of

Original Mind. The guiding light was the superb teacher, specially appointed by the Dalai Lama to bring to the world the practices of guiding the consciousness to the light, Lama Ayang Rinpoche. A group of some four hundred practitioners, half of them Tibetan monks from different monasteries throughout the Himalayas and India, sat for eleven intense days of nine to ten hours each, to receive the oral teachings and the energy transmission of the practice.

The essence of the Tibetan practice, consists in generating a strong connection with the Upper Astral dimension through visualizations and devotional practices. The Upper Astral is personified as the paradise of Devachen presided by Buddha Amitabha. Buddha Amitabha would be the personification of Original Mind of infinite bliss and wellbeing.

Two different methods of transcendence were transmitted by Lama Ayang Rinpoche. The daily experiences were concluded, on most days, with a ceremony at the foot of the tree of enlightenment, where the Buddha attained realization.

The retreat is given each year, free of charge, in January. The teachings are presented in Tibetan and English. Lama Ayang Rinpoche is fluent in English, so he takes turns explaining the steps of the practice in both languages, often punctuating the delicate points of the teachings, with humorous comments.

For those interested in these teachings, look up www.ayangrinpoche.org or www.amitabhafoundation.org/aboutphowa

Experiences with the Pillar of Light to the web page.

The web page www.ICHINGDAO.org is being redesigned to include a window for the Pillar of Light project, in which refinements to the practice can be transmitted and the body of experiences which is being generated can be shared.

Personal experiences which could illuminate aspects of the practice can be published in this window.

The contact is Adriano Peroti e-mail: Adriano@wutan.net

The new web page is in Spanish, English and French.

Aiguaviva November 2008