



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class One

1) Give the name of the principal text we will be using for our study of the realms of existence, along with the name of its author, and his approximate dates. (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan and Sanskrit.)

The principal text for our study of the realms of existence will be the third chapter of the *Treasure House of Higher Knowledge (Abhidharmakosha)* written by Master Vasubandhu about 350 AD.

ཚཱ་མཛུན་པ་མཛོད།

chu ngunpa dzu

ལོཔུན་ཡིཀའ་ལྷན་པ།

lopun yiknyen

2) Give the name of the principal commentary we will be using, its author, and his dates. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The principal commentary we will be using is the *Illumination of the Path to Freedom* composed by His Holiness the First Dalai Lama, Gendun Drup, who lived 1391-1474.

མཛོད་ལྷན་པ་མཛུན་པ་མཛོད།

dzutik tarlam selje

གྲུ་ལ་བ་དགེ་འདུན་གྲུབ།

gyalwa gendun drup

3) Give the names of the three realms. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Desire realm.

འདོད་ཁམས།
dukam

b) Form realm.

གཟུགས་ཁམས།
sukkam

c) Formless realm.

གཟུགས་མེད་ཁམས།
sukme kam

4) Explain how the desire realm can be divided into twenty different parts. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The division of the desire realm into twenty parts is done as follows:

a) eight hot hells

ཚ་དམྱལ་བརྒྱད།
tso-nyel gye

b) craving spirits

ཡི་དྲགས།
yidak

c) animals

འདྲུང་གྲོ།
dundro

d) humans of the four continents

གླིང་བཞིའི་མི།
lingshiy mi

e) six types of pleasure beings of the desire realm

འདོད་ལྷ་དྲུག།
du-hla druk

5) What quality characterizes the beings and places of the desire realm?

The quality that characterizes the beings and places of the desire realm is that they are all objects with which mental afflictions which are non-virtues can develop.

6) What is the nature of the “desire” in the expression “desire realm”?

The “desire” in the expression “desire realm” refers to craving aimed at getting sex or food.

7) What qualities characterize the form realm?

The form realm is characterized by (1) the quality of being beyond the desire realm, and (2) consisting of objects which can lead to the development of the particular mental afflictions of this level.

8) Why is the “form realm” called what it is?

The form realm is so called because this is the realm where form reaches its highest expression.

9) Why do the four levels of the form realm consist of seventeen different sections?

The first three levels of the form realm consist of three different sections each, whereas the fourth level of this realm consists of eight different sections. Each of these sections corresponds to a particular stage of causal meditation.

10) Is the level called “Below None” a part of the form realm or not? (Tibetan track also give the name of the level.)

This is a trick question. There are actually two levels with this same name, “Below None (*Okmin*).” One is the highest level of the form realm, and a part of the circle of suffering life. The other one, which has the full name of “the Paradise Below None (*Okmin Tukpo Kupa*),” is a Buddha paradise and beyond the circle of suffering life.

འོག་མིན།

okmin

འོག་མིན་སྐྱབ་པོ་བཀོད་པ།

okmin tukpo kupa

11) According to the highest school of Buddhism, what ultimately causes each of the different realms and types of birth?

According to the highest school of Buddhism, the “Consequence” section of the “Middle-Way” school (*Madhyamika Prasangika*), the realms and each of the kinds of beings in them are—like all other objects—the result of a projection forced upon an otherwise blank screen by our past karma. Thus it is perfectly acceptable to assert that Master Vasubandhu is describing actual life forms and realms that we ourselves could, if the karma demanded it, experience after our death from this present life.



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Two

1) Explain how the location of the formless realm is determined.

The formless realm has no separate place. The four heaps of a person who is born there (all but the heap of form, which is absent) come into existence at the same place where he or she died from the birth before.

2) What are the names of the four levels of the formless realm, and how does one reach them? (Tibetan track give the names in Tibetan.)

The four levels of the formless realm are called "Limitless Space," "Limitless Awareness," "Simple Nothingness," and the "Peak of Existence." These are four levels of birth that result from meditating, in the previous life, on the levels that are called "Limitless Space," "Limitless Awareness," "Simple Nothingness," and "Neither Conception nor Non-conception."

ནམ་མཁའ་མཐའ་ཡས།

namka taye

རྣམ་ཤེས་མཐའ་ཡས།

namshe taye

ཅི་ཡང་མེད།

chiyang me

སྲིད་ཅེ།

si-tse

3) Aside from the total lack of physical matter there, what distinguishes the formless realm from the lower two realms?

What distinguishes the formless realm from the lower two realms is the fact that it consists of objects which can lead to the development of the particular mental afflictions of the formless realm; these are mental afflictions which are relatively much more subtle than those of the lower two realms.

4) Name the five types of birth that a person can take. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) hellbeings

དམྱལ་བ།

nyelwa

b) craving spirits

ཡི་དྲགས།

yidak

c) animals

དུད་འགྲོ་

dundro

d) humans

མི།

mi

e) pleasure beings

ལྷ།

hla

5) Where in the five types of birth do we include the intermediate beings, and the lesser pleasure beings? (Tibetan track give their names in Tibetan also.)

Intermediate beings are not considered a separate type of birth. Lesser pleasure beings are included among the full pleasure beings.

བར་དོ་བ།

bardowa

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

hlamayin

6) Name the four ways of taking birth. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The four ways of taking birth are (1) birth from an egg, (2) birth from the womb, (3) birth from warmth and moisture, and (4) instantaneous birth as a complete being.

གོང་སྐྱེས།

gongkye

མངལ་སྐྱེས།

ngelkye

དྲུམ་གཤེར་ལས་སྐྱེ་བ།

drusher le kyewa

རྩུ་མ་ཉི་སྐྱེ་བ།

dzute kyewa

7) Which types of birth are considered better than the others?

Complete birth, birth from warmth and moisture, birth from the womb, and birth from an egg are each a better type than the next. This is because the first hurts no one; the second hurts no one else; the third hurts [another once and then] yourself once; and the second hurts [another once and then] yourself twice.

8) Which kinds of beings are said to be (a) aware of what they are doing as they enter the womb; (b) aware both while entering and staying; (c) aware while entering, staying, and issuing; and (d) aware at none of these points?

(a) Wheel-empowered emperors are said to be aware of what they are doing as they enter the womb; (b) self-made victors are aware of both entering and staying; (c) Buddhas are aware of entering, staying, and issuing; and (d) those who are born from eggs are always ignorant at all three points.



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Three

1) Name the text that we are using for our study of the lives of craving spirits and animals. Who wrote it, and what are his approximate dates? What famous book was based on this text? (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

The text we are using for our study of the lives of craving spirits and animals is the *Great Book on the Steps of the Teaching*, composed by the Kadampa Geshe Drolungpa, also known as Lodru Jungne. He lived during the last half of the 11th Century and the first half of the 12th. His text served as a basis for the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path* by Je Tsongkapa.

བསྟན་རིམ་ཆེན་མོ།

tenrim chenmo

བཀའ་གདམས་པ་དག་བཤེས་གྲོ་ལུང་པ། ལྷོ་གྲོས་འབྲུང་གནས།

kadampa geshe drolungpa, lodru jungne

ལམ་རིམ་ཆེན་མོ།

lamrim chenmo

2) Name the one general cause, and then the three specific causes that can lead us to a birth as a craving spirit. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) The one general cause is performing the ten bad deeds to a medium degree of seriousness.

མི་དག་བཅུ་པོ་འབྲིང་སྤྱད།

mige chupo dringche

- b) The first specific cause for birth as a craving spirit is a failure to perform the three kinds of giving. The three kinds of giving are giving material things, giving freedom from fear, and giving the Dharma.

སྤྱིན་པ་རྣམ་གསུམ་མ་སྤྱིན་པ།

jinpa nam sum ma-jinpa

ཟང་བྱིང་གི་སྤྱིན་པ།

sangsing gi jinpa

མི་འཇིགས་པའི་སྤྱིན་པ།

minjikpay jinpa

ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྤྱིན་པ།

chu kyi jinpa

- c) A second specific cause is possessiveness or cheapness.

སེར་སྒྲ།

serna

- d) A third specific cause is jealousy.

ཕྱག་དོག།

trakdok

3) Describe the three basic kinds of sufferings that craving spirits can have. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) The first type are those with outer obstacles that block them from partaking of what they crave. Those who are tormented by thirst, for example, catch sight of water and run towards it, but are either driven back by cruel beings, or else see the water as disgusting pus and blood when they reach it.

ཕྱི་ལྷོ་བློ་བ་པ་ཅན།

chiy drippa chen

- b) The second type of craving spirits are those with inner obstacles to partaking of what they crave. They have mouths the size of needles, spouting flames. Their throats are as thin as strings and their bellies are huge, and they can never be satisfied.

ནང་གི་བློ་བ་པ་ཅན།

nang gi drippa chen

- c) The third type are those with obstacles to what they can eat or drink. Whatever they eat or drink, instead of satisfying them, burns them, or leaves them unfilled.

ཟས་སྐྱོམ་གྱི་བློ་བ་པ་ཅན།

sekom gyi drippa chen

4) Name one general cause, and then two specific causes, for birth as an animal.

- a) A general cause for birth as an animal is performing the ten bad deeds to a less serious extent.
- b) The first more specific cause would be breaking minor rules of morality on a regular basis.
- c) The second more specific cause would be committing a great number of wrong deeds such as failing to respect those who are worthy of respect.

5) Describe some of the sufferings that animals must undergo.

Animals are in constant fear for their life; they suffer from being captured, experimented upon, tortured, skinned, and eaten.



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Four

1) Give the name, and the author and his dates, for the commentary we will use for our study of the suffering of humans. Then give the name, and the author and his dates, for the root text that this author is commenting upon. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) **Commentary:** The commentary we will study is *The Chest of Riches* of Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851).

རིན་ཆེན་བང་མངོད།

rinchen bangdzu

དངུལ་ཁུ་རྣམ་ལྷན།

ngulchu dharma bhadra

b) **Root text:** The root text is *The Path of Ease*, written by His Holiness the First Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen (1567?-1662).

བདེ་ལམ།

delam

པཎ་ཆེན་ལྷོ་བཟང་ཚེས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

panchen lobsang chu kyi gyeltsen

2) Name and describe the six kinds of suffering that we must undergo. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and describe in English.)

- a) **The first suffering is the fact that life has no certainty: because the events of our life are determined by our past karma and our mental afflictions, there is no certainty that your friend will not become your enemy, or your father your son, or any other possibility.**

ངེས་པ་མེད་པ།

ngepa mepa

- b) **The second suffering is that we can never find any sense of satisfaction. No matter how much we get of something, we cannot feel any contentment. In fact, the normal reaction to pleasure is that—rather than satisfying us—it creates a desire for even more of the object, thus giving us more pain.**

ངོམ་མི་ཤེས་པ།

ngom mi-shepa

- c) **The third suffering is the fact that we have to shed our bodies, over and over again. The point is that, "regardless of all the bad deeds we might accumulate in order to maintain this body we have now, it is an absolute certainty that—in the end—we will be forced to shed it. The power of the wrong deeds we did for the sake of the body though we carry along in our mind, and they bring to us the eventual result of unbearable pain."**

ཡང་ཡང་ལུས་འདོར་བ།

yang yang lu dorwa

- d) The fourth suffering is the fact that we have to take birth, over and over again. If we tried to count our past lives by using pinches of dirt to represent each one, this planet itself would be used up before we finished.

ཡང་ཡང་ཉིང་མཚམས་སྟུར་བ།

yang yang nyingtsam jorwa

- e) The fifth suffering is the fact that we have to go from a high position to a low position, over and over again. "The point here is that any good thing that ever happens here in the circle of suffering life eventually turns into some kind of problem."

ཡང་ཡང་མཐོ་དམན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ།

yang yang tomen du gyurwa

- f) The sixth suffering is the fact that we have no companion. We not only lose our other friends, but even the body which is our most intimate companion. "We tend to collect a great variety of different bad deeds for the sake of our friends. But when the time comes to experience the consequences of these actions, none of these same friends can participate in our pain at all. And in those situations where we try to practice some Dharma, these friends tend to hold us back. So what use are they, anyway?"

གྲོགས་མེད་པ།

drok mepa



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Five

1) Explain the meaning of the word "bardo."

The word "bardo" means "inbetween," since it refers to the state between death and rebirth.

བར་དོ།

bardo

2) Describe the example of seeds for crops of grain, used to explain why intermediate beings must logically exist.

Chim Jampey Yang explains that a plant cannot come directly from a seed: there must be the intermediary of a sprout. Just so, the being at rebirth in one location cannot come directly from the being at death in another location; there must be the intermediary of a bardo being, who travels between.

3) The existence of intermediate beings is also proven by statements of the Buddha. Describe the three conditions under which, according to the Buddha, a child will form in the mother's womb. (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

a) There is the presence of a being who is suitable to be a mother, and who is still menstruating.

མ་རུང་ལྷི་མཚན་དང་ལྷན་པ།

ma rung da-tsen dang denpa

b) There is a feeling of desire, and then sexual contact, between the prospective parents.

པ་མ་ཆགས་ཤིང་སྤྲད་པ།

pa ma chak shing trepa

- c) **There is the proximity of "one of the beings who lives on smells"; that is, an intermediate being.**

དྲི་ཟ་ཉི་བར་གནས་པ།

drisa nyewar nepa

- 4) What determines the appearance that an intermediate being's body will take?

The appearance of an intermediate resembles that of the "being before," which refers to the life that the person is about to take, meaning before one's next death but after one's next birth.

- 5) Who can see an intermediate being?

Intermediate beings of the same type can see each other; you can also see one with the meditative eye called the "eye of a god."

- 6) Describe the special powers that intermediate beings enjoy.

As the First Dalai Lama notes, "Intermediate beings have a capability to perform miraculous feats that comes through the power of deeds. They can fly through the sky, and display a special strength, or capacity to travel at extraordinary speeds. [Continued in next note.]"

All their powers, those of the eye and the rest, are complete—and they have the ability to pass through mountains and so forth without being stopped."

- 7) Is it possible to be diverted to another type of birth after one has already taken form as an intermediate being headed for a particular type of rebirth?

The First Dalai Lama notes, "You are never diverted to another birth: the energy of one's past deeds that is throwing forth the intermediate being headed for the hells is the same energy that will project the being "before"—that is, the hell being itself."

One can however reach the state of an intermediate being headed for the level known as "Class of the Pure" and still not have to take birth there: cases where one achieves nirvana between death and rebirth, as just such a being, do exist."

8) How does an intermediate being enter the state of a human womb birth?

If the person is to be born a human, he or she sees their parents from a distance, having sex together. Because of a mistaken impression, and imagining that they can play and enjoy themselves, they pass to their destination within the womb, lodged in the midst of the mother's abdomen and entrails.



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Six

1) Name the four different kinds of sustenance, and give examples of each. (Tibetan track name the four in Tibetan, and explain in English.)

a) Solid food, such as the food we eat.

ཁམ་གྱི་ཟས།

kam gyi se

b) Stained contact, such as contact of the object, sense power, and consciousness that involve an experience of pleasure.

ཟག་བཅས་ཀྱི་རིག་པ།

sakche kyi rekpa

c) Stained movement of the mind, such as that consisting of hope that one is about to be fed when close to starvation.

ཟག་བཅས་ཀྱི་སེམས་པ།

sakche kyi sempa

d) Stained consciousness, such as the consciousness linked with the contact involved in an experience of pleasure.

ཟག་བཅས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས།

sakche kyi namshe

2) What is the function of these types of sustenance?

They function to perpetuate this suffering life. As sutra states, "The four types of sustenance are the very root of sickness, cancer, agony. They help bring about old age and death."

3) Describe the very first stage in the formation of the world.

The foundation that lies below this world first consisted of nothing but empty space. Then began a portent of the formation of a new world: a gentle force of wind, swirling about itself over a period of very many years. Eventually it turned into a great disk of wind, so fierce and solid that even a massive diamond could never crack it.

4) Describe briefly the nine major mountains of the world.

In the center is Mount Meru, surrounded by seven concentric ranges of mountains. On the very edge of the world is the Encircling range.

5) Describe briefly the three oceans of the world.

The three oceans of the world consist of the seven seas of sport (between the concentric golden mountains around Mount Meru) and the great outer ocean, between the last of the concentric mountains and the iron mountain range known as "Encircling." The innermost of the seas of sport is called the "Inner Ocean."



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Seven

1) Name and describe the eight hot hells. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan, describe in English.)

- a) "Revive." So called because the beings living here strike each other with various weapons until they all lie still as death. Then a voice comes from the sky, commanding them to "Revive!" This makes them rise and start all over again.

ཡང་གསོས།

yangsu

- b) "Lines of Black." In this hell, the hellguards first cover beings' bodies with black lines and then use various kinds of blades to slice them open along these lines.

ཐིག་ནག།

tiknak

- c) "Gather and Smash." The hellguards gather the beings here together and smash them to a pulp.

བསྐྱུས་འཛོམས།

dunjom

- d) "Screaming." This hell is named from the shrieks of pain by the beings there, seared by heat.

རྩ་འབོད།

ngumbu

- e) "Great Screaming Hell." The heat that burns those living there is much greater, their screams of pain more horrible too.

དུ་འབོད་ཆེན་པོ།

ngumbu chenpo

- f) "Heat." This hell is named from the fact that its inhabitants burn stuffed in red-hot iron chambers.

ཚ་བ།

tsawa

- g) "Superheat." The beings here roast in an even more unbearable heat, jammed in ceramic chambers of single or double walls.

རབ་རུ་ཚ་བ།

rabtu tsawa

- h) "No Respite." The hell is known as "No Respite" because the beings living there experience unlimited sufferings without the slightest interruption.

མནར་མེད།

narme

2) Name and describe briefly three additional kinds of hells. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and describe in English.)

- a) The four adjacent hells, which are situated around the eight hot hells, and are known by the names of Embers, Corpse Rot, Razor Road, and the Uncrossable River.

ཉི་འཁོར་བའི་དམྱལ་བ་བཞི།

nyekorway nyelwa shi

- b) **The eight cold hells. You are naked, with cold, icy winds blowing. The suffering from the cold gets progressively worse in each of the cold hells, and your body blisters, cracks and breaks open from the cold in different ways.**

གྲང་དམུལ་བརྒྱད།

drang-nyel gye

- c) **The partial hells are located near the hot and cold hells, and also in particularly terrible locations in the lands of humans. They are places of great suffering which are less horrible than the full hell realms, and which you experience as a hell realm being.**

ཉི་ཚེ་བའི་དམུལ་བ།

nyi-tseway nyelwa

- 3) Explain how karma ripens into a hell birth, and why this makes it very possible for people like us to be born into a hell.

Karma ripens as a perception of the mind. When one passes into a hell bardo and then into a hell rebirth, it is all actually a shifting of the perceptions, projected onto an otherwise blank object. It may seem difficult to pass to a far-off land called the "hells," but it is easy to think of a shift of the perceptions forced upon one by unkind deeds.



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Eight

1) Name the four different kinds of kalpas (eons). (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) The eon of destruction

འཇིག་པའི་བསྐལ་པ།

jikpay kelpa

b) The eon of formation

འཆགས་པའི་བསྐལ་པ།

chakpay kelpa

c) The eon of continuation

གནས་པའི་བསྐལ་པ།

nepay kelpa

d) The great eon

བསྐལ་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

kelpa chenpo

2) Describe the events that open and close the eon of destruction. (Tibetan track in Tibetan, from the root text.)

The eon of destruction starts from the point when there are no more beings taking birth into the hell called "No Respite." It lasts up to the point that the outer world has come to its end.

།འཇིག་པའི་བསྐལ་པ་དབྱུང་བ་ཡི།

།སྲིད་པ་མེད་ནས་སྣོད་ཟད་པ།

jikpay kelpa nyelwa yi
sipa me ne nu sepa

3) The physical world can be destroyed by fire, water, or wind. Describe how the world ends when it is destroyed by fire.

Nineteen intermediate eons after the opening of the eon of destruction, the great pleasure beings begin to stop sending rain at its proper time; all the vegetation and forests of Dzambu Continent dry up and die. After an extremely long period of time, a second sun rises in the sky, creating tremendous heat. All the lesser bodies of water and small ponds turn dry. This leads to the rising of a third sun, which causes all the streams and rivers to evaporate. A fourth sun rises, and even the huge Lake Neverwarm disappears. Then comes the fifth sun, drying the Great Outer Sea as well. With the rising of a sixth sun, the four continents and Mount Supreme dissolve in a cloud of smoke.

Finally a seventh sun comes up, engulfing the world in a single flame, destroying it in fire. This fire then triggers a parallel fire in the first concentration level. The mansions of this first level, empty of inhabitants by this time, are burned completely. It is not actually the fire in the desire realm that burns down the mansions here, for they are separate levels. All this requires another intermediate eon, so that the eon of destruction requires twenty intermediate eons.

- 4) Describe the events that open and close the eon of formation. (Tibetan track in Tibetan, from the root text.)

An eon of formation begins from the rising of the first gentle wind on up to the birth of a single living being within the hell of No Respite.

།འཆགས་པ་དང་པོའི་རླུང་ནས་ནི།

།དུལ་བའི་སྲིད་པའི་བར་དུའོ།

chakpa dangpoy lung ne ni

nyelway sipay barduo

- 5) The eon of continuation continues for twenty intermediate eons. Describe the length of an intermediate eon.

One intermediate eon consists of the period during which average lifespans drop from an "inestimable" number of years down to when the spans of life are only ten years. There are eighteen other intermediate eons after that, each consisting of an increase in lifespans up to eighty thousand years followed by a decrease back to ten. Last of all is one intermediate eon which is another increase alone. How far is the increase? Up until they're eighty thousand long.

- 6) Describe the length of a great eon.

Thus we can say that the process of the world's formation goes on for twenty intermediate eons. This formation of the world, then its destruction, and the state that follows this destruction are all equal in duration: each lasts for twenty intermediate eons. As for the fourth and final type of eon—one great eon is made of eighty of these intermediate eons.

- 7) What is the length of time that a person must accumulate the collections of merit and wisdom to become a Buddha? (Tibetan track in Tibetan, from the root text.)

A Buddha occurs from the act of accumulating merit and wisdom for a period of three "countless" numbers of these great eons. "Countless" refers to the number 10 followed by 59 zeroes.

དེ་བྲངས་མེད་གསུམ་ལ་སངས་རྒྱས།

de drangme sum la sanggye

8) Describe the periods during which Buddhas appear in the world.

Buddhas never appear while the average lifespan is rising, for during this period beings feel less disgust with the circle of life. Rather, they come during the time that starts from the drop of lifespans from eighty thousand years, and which continues as they go down, until a hundred years is reached. Buddhas do not appear subsequent to this period, as lifespans are decreasing even further. Since the five degenerations have spread fairly widely by this time, beings then are not fit vessels to receive the teachings.



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Nine

1) Name the four steps in the contemplation of death. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Considering the problems of not meditating on death.

འཆི་བ་དྲན་པ་མ་བསྐྱོམས་པའི་ཉེས་དམིགས།

chiwa drenpa magompay nyemik

b) Considering the benefits of meditating on death.

འཆི་བ་དྲན་པ་བསྐྱོམས་པའི་ཕན་ཡོན།

chiwa drenpa gompay penyun

c) Identifying just what kind of death awareness we seek to develop.

འཆི་བ་དྲན་པའི་སློའི་ལྷ་བྱ་ཞིག་བསྐྱེད་པ།

chiwa drenpay lo jitar shik kyepa

d) How to meditate and develop this awareness of death.

འཆི་བ་དྲན་པ་བསྐྱོམས་པའི་ཚུལ།

chiwa drenpa gompay tsul

2) Describe the awareness of death which is not the one which we seek to develop through meditation.

"There is a kind of terror that a person can feel when he or she fears that they are about to be torn away from their loved ones and such. This fear stems from a very strong attachment for those around you, and is the natural fear of a person who has never attempted any kind of practice of the path. As such, it is *not* the awareness of death that we are talking about having to develop here."

3) Describe the awareness of death which is the one which we seek to develop through meditation.

"There is not a single being who has taken on a body like ours—one created by the force of our past deeds and mental afflictions—who is exempt from the absolute certainty of death. It is true that, in the short run, trying to develop some fear about this fact might not enable you to stop it. Nonetheless you really must try to develop some fear that you might die before you have been able to achieve your goals for your future life: that you might die before you have managed to put an end to anything that might cause you to be born in one of the lower realms, or before you have achieved all those things that would lead you to the higher realms, and to ultimate good."

"If you had this kind of fear, over these kinds of things, then it would help you to do something about them, and at the moment of death itself you would have no reason to be afraid. If on the other hand you find yourself unable to achieve these goals, then when death comes you will be tormented by regret, of two different kinds. In a general sense, you will realize that you were unable to free yourself from the circle of suffering life. More specifically, you will begin to feel sheer terror over the possibility of having to drop into the realms of misery."

4) Name the three principles for meditating on death. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Contemplating how it is certain that we will die.

ངེས་པར་འཆི་བར་བསམ་པ།

ngepar chiwar sampa

b) Contemplating how there is no certainty when we will die.

ནམ་འཆི་ངེས་མེད་བསམ་པ།

namchi ngeme sampa

c) Contemplating how, when we do die, nothing but the Dharma can be of any help to us.

འཆི་བའི་ཚེ་ཚོས་མ་གཏོགས་གང་གིས་ཀྱང་མི་ཕན་པར་བསམ་པ།

chiway tse chu matok gang gi kyang mipenpar sampa

5) Describe the three reasons for the certainty of death.

a) The Lord of Death must certainly arrive and, when he does, nothing at all can stop him.

b) It is impossible to add any time onto your life, and it continually leaks away, without a pause.

c) It is that you will die without having had any time to practice the Dharma, even while you were alive.



COURSE VIII

Death and the Realms of Existence

Answer Key, Class Ten

1) Name the three reasons behind the second principle of death meditation: contemplating that there is no certainty when we will die. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Here on the continent of Dzambu, lifetimes are anything but fixed.

འཇམ་གླིང་ཚེ་ལ་ངེས་པ་མེད་པ།

dzamling tse la ngepa mepa

b) The things that can kill you are very, very many; whereas the things that can keep you alive are very few.

འཚི་རྒྱུན་ཤིན་ཏུ་མང་ཞིང་གསོན་རྒྱུན་ཉུང་བ།

chikyen shintu mang shing sunkyen nyungwa

c) Our bodies are extremely fragile.

ལུས་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཉམ་ཚུང་བ།

lu shintu nyam chungwa

2) Name the three reasons behind the third principle of death meditation: contemplating that, when you do die, nothing but the Dharma can be of the least help to you. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) When you do die, there is not a single one of your friends or relatives that you can take along with you.

གཉིན་བཤེས་གཅིག་ཀྱང་འབྲིད་ས་མེད་པ།

nyenshe chik kyang trisa mepa

- b) When you die, you cannot carry along with you a single molecule of any material wealth you have. No object or possession will benefit you in any way at death.

ཚོར་གྱི་རྩལ་ཕྱན་འབྲེར་དུ་མེད་པ།

nor gyi dultren kyerdu mepa

- c) When you die, you must give up even the flesh and bone that are part of your very being. Your body will not help you in any way at death.

ཤ་རུས་ཀྱང་འདོར་བ།

sha ru kyang dorwa

3) State the three resolutions that we should make after understanding the nine reasons for the three principles.

- a) Knowing that we shall have to die, we must resolve to begin our practice.
- b) Knowing that we could die any time, we must quit our worldly work immediately and start our practice today.
- c) And finally, since nothing else can help us, we must devote ourselves to our practice only. A man who is hiking many miles doesn't fill up his pack with a lot of junk that he won't be needing.