



How to Think When Death Comes

The best puja is done by your mind

I did prayers for you: whatever is best for sentient beings, which means for every sentient being—whether it is best for sentient beings to die, to be sick, or to not die or not get sick, whatever it is—may that happen. This is the best puja, and it is done by your mind, by yourself.

One can do so many pujas but never actually practice, and then at death-time there's so much worry and fear, for oneself and for those surrounding, for family and friends. Instead of rejoicing, there's so much worry and fear.

With the first option, one can die happily; one can have a happy death.

Taking care of others is what pleases the buddhas and bodhisattvas the most

By helping and serving a dying person, you are taking care of numberless buddhas—Shakyamuni Buddha, Tara, Chenrezig, Manjushri, Vajrapani—as well as all the bodhisattvas. Why? Because they all cherish sentient beings the most, just like a mother cherishes her daughter or son more than herself. Serving her daughter or son, cleaning their urine and excrement, makes the mother so happy, even happier than if someone were taking care of her. Why? Because she cares for her son or daughter even more than her own life.

Having this wish to make others so happy while serving is the best; and it's the best offering to the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Also, think about how your past, present, and future happiness comes from the one you serve. Also, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha completely come from this person, from having generated compassion and bodhichitta. I hope you can understand this.

Generating compassion and bodhicitta purifies unbelievable amounts of negative karma

Asanga went into retreat for twelve years to achieve Maitreya Buddha, but during that time nothing happened. After coming out of his retreat, he met a dog with so much suffering in the lower part of its body, full of wounds infested with maggots. Seeing this, Asanga generated unbelievable compassion and was willing to sacrifice his own life. He cut his own flesh to spread out for the maggots to eat, picking up the maggots with his tongue, not wanting to touch them with his fingers, because by pressing them too much they might die.

When he opened his eyes, it was only then that he saw it was not a dog—it was Maitreya Buddha. His unbelievable negative karmas and obscurations were purified by having generated unbelievable compassion.

Asanga then asked Maitreya why he hadn't come to him during his retreat. Maitreya Buddha answered, "I was always there," and showed him all the marks on his own robes of Asanga's spit from the years in the cave!

Then Asanga requested teachings and was taken by Maitreya Buddha to the pure land Yiga Chodzin, where, during a time span of fifty human years, Maitreya gave Asanga the five sets or divisions of Maitreya's teachings for human beings. Then Asanga came back down to earth and transcribed those teachings, on the basis of which so many beings have already become enlightened.

Please, please enjoy this.

Colophon:

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