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Entendiendo la Muerte por medio de las filosofías Budista y Taoísta

**Understanding the Death through the Buddhism and Taoism
philosophies**

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Dedicatoria

Me gustaría dedicar el trabajo y esfuerzos realizados para lograr este título a mis abuelos fallecidos, Señor Jorge Castillo Prócel, Señora Luz Amada Tapia y a la Señora Blanca Verga, quien en vida fue mi madrina. Sus deseos siempre fue la superación personal como humanos de los miembros de las familias que encabezaron y de esta manera aportar a que el mundo se conforme de mejores personas. Espero con este trabajo honrar su memoria, poner en práctica y vivir lo aprendido para el mejoramiento de esta y las generaciones venideras.

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RESUMEN

Este documento pretende desarrollar de un punto de vista filosófico, usando las enseñanzas budistas una idea de la experiencia humana en el mismo instante de morir. El Budismo desarrolló conceptos y percepciones del mundo para mostrarlo como este es. La importancia que el hombre da al mundo en su mente como una realidad material es el muro que divide a éste de su iluminación y liberación de la conciencia material. La iluminación es el objetivo de todo ser en el universo; por lo que cada ser tiene el potencial de despertar. Este potencial tiene que ser cultivado y desarrollado en la mente de los seres. Los sentimientos, ideas y percepciones de cada ser es lo que define la realidad y esta definición de realidad y vida misma es el camino por el cual la muerte puede ser entendida. A través de la filosofía del Budismo este documento tratará de dibujar un marco para entender la vida. El centro de atención será puesto en lo que puede ser útil para entender las preguntas básicas de la vida ¿Cuál es el propósito del ser humano? ¿Cuáles son las leyes que le rigen al ser humano? ¿Cuál es el origen de los seres? ¿A dónde trascienden los seres cuando mueren? Es importante recalcar que este documento tiene un fin meramente filosófico y no se sumerge en discusiones religiosas. La filosofía Budista con respecto a los conceptos de muerte se basará en su mayoría en el Libro Tibetano de los Muertos. Los conceptos básicos de la filosofía Budista serán tomados del Budismo Hindú. Estas enseñanzas revelan claramente que la vida es regida por leyes que deben ser sentidas y experimentadas plena y diariamente con una fuerte convicción de que existe un mar de opciones de las cuales los seres humanos construyen su vida. La vida es una cadena de decisiones constantes tomadas al ritmo de la música universal. Muerte no es más que el traslado de los sentimientos, ideas y percepciones de este lugar a otro, es la desconexión de la asociación con gente, lugares, cosas, eventos y tiempo.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation intends to develop, in a philosophic way, using the Buddhism teachings, an idea of what experiences the human being when the time to die has arrived. Buddhism developed a concept and a perception of the world to show it as it is. The importance of the world in the mind of human, as a material reality, is the wall between the enlightenment and a material conciseness. Get enlightenment is the goal of every being on universe; therefore every being has the potential to awake. This potential must be cultivate and develop in the mind of the beings. The feelings, ideas and perceptions of the beings are what define reality. Define reality and life itself is the way of how dead can be understood. Through the philosophy of Buddhism this dissertation will try to shape the framework of life. The teachings of Buddhism will be specifically focus on what can be useful to understand the most basic questions of life. What should the human being do for propose in here? What are the laws that rule the life? And the two ultimate questions of this dissertation which are connected, where we come from? And where do we go when we die? It is important to remark that this dissertation has merely a philosophical direction and it doesn't have any to do with religious believes. The Buddhism philosophy will be supported mostly in the Tibetan Book of the Death. The basic concepts of Buddhism will be taken of the teachings of Indian Buddhism. Results of those philosophies reveal that life is rule by laws that should be feeling and living plenty in a daily life with hard conviction of the existence of a mare of options. Life can be seen as a chain of different choices the human being does constantly in harmony and in rhythmus of the music that the universe plays. Dead simply is the movement of the feeling, ideas and perceptions out of the place in which they play to another, is the disconnection with the association to people, places, things, events and time.

Keywords: Dead, Enlightenment, Propose, Choices, Nirvana.

CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING THE DEATH THROUGH THE BUDDHISM PHILOSOPHY

Overview of the Buddhism	1
The First Noble Truth: Dukkha	4
The Second Noble Truth: Samudaya	8
The Third Noble Truth: Nirodha	11
The Fourth Noble Truth: Magga	13
The Doctrine of the Inexistence of the Soul	18
Twelve Causes of Suffering	21

THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD

Introductory Foreword to the Tibetan Book of the Dead by Lama Anagarika Govinda	27
Commentary to the Tibetan Book of the Dead by His Holiness the XIV th Dalai Lama	40
Introduction	49

Chapter 8: Natural Liberation through Recognition of the Visual Indications and Signs of Death

Introduction	52
Internal Signs of Death	57
Secret Signs of Death	62
Signs of Near Death	63
Signs of Extremely Near Death	67
Signs Indicating the Place of Subsequent Rebirth	71
Conclusion	72

Chapter 11: The Great Liberation by Hearing

Right Directing of Thought when Dying	73
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The Esoteric Significance of the Forty-Nine Days of the Bardo	74
Book I The Chikhai Bardo and The Chönyid Bardo	76
Part I the Bardo of the Moments of Death	79
Part II The Bardo of the Experiencing of Reality	88
The Dawning of the Peaceful Deities, from the First to the Seventh Day.	91
The Dawning of the Wrathful Deities, from the Eighth to the Fourteenth Day	113
BOOK II THE SIDPA BARDO	132
Part I the After-Death World	133
Part II the Process of Rebirth	148
The General Conclusion	164
BIBLIOGRAPHY	167

APPENDIX

The Origin of the Tibetan Book of the Dead	168
Lama Anagarika Govinda	174
His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso	178

UNDERSTANDING THE DEATH THROUGH THE BUDDHISM PHILOSOPHY

Overview of the Buddhism

The term Buddhism refers to the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. Siddhartha reach the enlightenment and become a Buddha. Trough the time has been a lot of Buddha and still will be. Any person has the capacity to become a Buddha. The mental attitude of the Buddhism is to impulse every person to reach the enlightenment. To become a Buddha is not a divine fact, there are not a holy being that has been chosen by a God as Jesus. Siddhartha itself declared to be a common human being. The success of awakening is a pure result of the effort of the man. The man itself is the only responsible for his acts and his future. Therefore the Buddhism doesn't represent any God and it doesn't bases their teaching on the faith of its followers. The consequence of these facts permits the Buddhism coexist with every religion on the world.

If someone wants to call Buddha a savor it should be in the direction that he showed the way to the salvation, but each person has to find their own path. Buddhism is not a paternalist doctrine with a God. Freedom of human being depends directly of the understanding of the truth. It doesn't depend on the benevolence of a God, or an external power, or a reward of an obedient behavior and a life full of virtues. Therefore the Buddha impulse to believe and practice what is visible. Every practice has a tangible result. Doubt is one of the five impediments to reach the Nirvana. To get freedom from doubt is necessary to see clear. Knowledge and understanding is the only way to see clear. It is not enough just to believe without understanding. It is not an argument and doesn't help just to believe. These concepts

were important for the Siddhartha Buddha since the beginning until his death. Before dying Buddha tried to be sure to clear any doubt in his followers. He died teaching everything he knew and made a great effort to answer every question to his disciples.

Respect, tolerance and free mind between the Buddhism and any other religion were another strong teaching of the Buddha. His mind about the differences between religions leave to the world a great teaching that should be practiced today. A resume of this teaching is: honor a self religion is to understand and respect others' minds, that makes great a religion. To attack and injure others' religion under the shield of one's beliefs only injures its own religion. The peace is a good thing, everybody should be willing to hear others' doctrines. During the history of the Buddhism, 200 years, its expansion represents a peaceful process which implies none drop of blood spilled. Every violence act, no matter the argument, is contrary to the Buddha teachings.

A useless question is if Buddhism is a philosophy or a religion. No matter the name that is given it doesn't change what it is. The names that are given to the things blind the human being from the truth. The label that is assigned to any being most of the times implies a judgment of that being before knowing it. The same happens with the ideas; he who is a searcher of the truth doesn't care from where it came from. What matters is to see clearly and understand the issue. Therefore doesn't matter if the teaching came from the Buddhism if it is essential for the enlightenment of a person. Reach the Nirvana, Buddha said, depends always on vision, in every sense of the expression, penetration, knowledge but not of beliefs. When Buddha reached the enlightenment expressed "Rise in me the eye, the wise, the

knowledge and the light”⁷ Always is a matter of see, knowledge or wise and not of believe and faith.

About the attachments, Buddha expressed that they constitute an anchor. In an example to their disciples he expressed his doctrine of the cause and effect. Then he asked if everything was clear and added to his doctrine. Even this teaching that is clear and pure, if you treasure it and attached to it, you haven’t understood that it is just a tool to cross the sea from one side to other. Buddha was a practical master who taught to humanity the path to a saved place full of peace, happiness and to reach the Nirvana. This is the goal of his teachings not to satisfy an intellectual curiosity.²

According to the view of the three vehicles of the Buddhism: Theravada or Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana, “there were three turnings of the wheel of dharma (Dharma means teachings of the Buddha). In the first turning Shakyamuni Buddha taught the dharma as the Four Noble Truths at Varanasi which led to the Hinayana schools, of which only the Theravada remain today.” “As a living tradition, Mahayana is the larger of the two major traditions of Buddhism existing today, the other being Theravada.” “As a branch of Buddhist philosophy, Mahayana refers to a level of spiritual motivation and practice namely the Bodhisattvayana. The alternate philosophical approach is the Hinayana, which is the Arhatyana.” “As a practice path, Mahayana is one of the three yantras, or routes to enlightenment, the other two being the Hinayana and the Vajrayana.”³

¹ Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 27. 1959

² Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 29. 1959

³ He Xiaoping USFQ Indian Buddhism lectures 2008.

The First Noble Truth: Dukkha

To be exact with the meaning of the word Dukkha, it will be expressed in its natural language in this paper. Dukkha is translated as Suffering. But some texts translate Dukkha as suffering literally and interpret Dukkha as life full of suffering and pain. Both, translation and interpretation show Buddhism as a pessimist believes. Buddhism is neither optimist nor pessimist, it is realistic. The objective of Buddhism is to assume objectively the world that is around us and show the path to perfect freedom, peace, calm and happiness. In this conceptual mark, Dukkha in Sanskrit means suffering, but it has a deeper philosophical meaning because it implies also imperfection, impermanence, emptiness and unsubstantial.

While the existence of the suffering Buddha doesn't deny the existence of the happiness. But because of the impermanence of the things Dukkha includes the happiness. The concept of Dukkha could be seen in three aspects: Dukkha as common suffering, Dukkha produced by changes and Dukkha as a conditioned statement.

Birth, growth, sickness, death, any association with persons and unpleasant conditions, separation from loved ones and pleasant conditions, not reaching an objective, affliction and everything universally accepted as suffering and pain is included in Dukkha as common suffering.

Every pleasant sensation as pleasant condition is impermanent and changes fast. Soon or later they change, when it happens they produce pain, suffer and unhappiness. This perchance is included in Dukkha produced by changes.

These two aspects of Dukkha are easily understood because they are part of human daily life. Nobody will discussed because it easily understanding. Because of it they are the most known from the First Noble Truth. But the Dukkha as a conditioned statement constitute the philosophical branch most important of the First Noble Truth and requires a deeper analysis and the understanding of “Self” first.

For Buddhism philosophy the self is not only than a combination of psycho-physicals strengths and energies in continuous change. The self can be divided in five groups. Buddha said: “Summarizing, these five groups of the attachment are Dukkha”⁴ it is object of attention, Dukkha is the five groups of the self.

The first group of the self is the matter which includes the four great traditional elements: solid, fluid, heat, movement and the derivates of these elements. These derivates are the five sensitive organs. This means the eye, the ear, the nose, the tong, the body and the external objects of the world corresponding to the organs: visible shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles objects as ideas, thoughts and conceptions concerning to the mind. This way the kingdom of the matter, internal and external, is included in this group.

The second group is the sensations. This group includes pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sensations experienced trough the organs with the external world. There are six sensations: those experienced trough the eye with visible shapes, the experienced trough the ear with sounds, the experienced trough the nose with smells, the experienced trough the tong with the flavors, the experienced trough the body with tangibles objects, the experiences trough the mind with the ideas and thinking.

⁴ Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 40. 1959

Mind, is not an opposite of the matter, it is an organ similar to the eye or the ear. Buddhism doesn't recognize a soul in opposite with the matter. Mind can be develop and control as the other faculties. The mind is the part of the matter able to perceive the ideas and thoughts. Thoughts and ideas are not independent of the experimented material world, they actually depends and are conditioned by physical experiences.

The third group is the perceptions. They are related with the six sensations and the six organs with the external objects. The perception recognizes the physical and mental objects.

The fourth group is the mental shapes. Here are included all the voluntaries activities good or bad. These activities are known as Karma. The Buddha definition is the volition constitutes a mental construction, mental activities. Their functions lead the mind to a sphere of actions good, bad and neutral. The same way there are six organs, sensations and perceptions, there are six volitions, relates with the six internal faculties and their corresponded object of the external world. But the sensations and perceptions are not voluntaries activities and they don't produce karmic effects. The mental shape group is constituted of fifty two mental activities.

The fifth and last group is conciseness. It is a reaction or answer; it is based on the six faculties and the six corresponding objects own of them. For example, the basis of the visual conciseness is the eye and an object in its visible shape. The same way as the perception, sensation and volition there are six concisenesses related with the six internal faculties and their external objects. Conciseness doesn't recognize the objects, only notes the presence of one. It should be stressed the fact that there are not a soul or ego on the other side of the

matter. The conciseness nether should be consider as the other side of the matter. It is important because since ancient times until our days have persisted the idea of a conciseness with a continuity of long life which is impermanent. The conciseness exists based on the condition which made them arise. For example a fire exists because a wood is burning. This is a fire of wood. The same way a conciseness of light or color is a visual conciseness. It doesn't transcend to the smell, tong, or mind conciseness. Nether way it transcend of time, the same way the fire doesn't transcend trough the ashes.

Those are the five groups of the self. Actually the self is just a shield appropriate for these groups, those are impermanent and changes continuously. Everything that is impermanent is Dukkha. The total understanding of Buddha's words: "Summarizing, these five groups of the attachment are Dukkha" is: those are not the same not even in two successive immediate instants. "A" is not the same as "A"; it is a constant flow of arise and extinction of moments. Something appears and it conditions the arising of the next. It is a chain of causes and effects in which there aren't immutable substances. There aren't a permanent self. There is no "Me". None of the five groups can be called "Me", but when these five groups, interdependent, act together, same a psycho-physic machine, arise the idea of the self. It is a wrong idea one of the fifty two ways of mental condition. "There only exist the suffering, but the sufferer can't be found; there are acts, but the actor can't be found"⁶ . Behind the movement there is not an immobile engine. Life is movement. Behind the thoughts there is not a thinker.

This is the very meaning of the first truth about Dukkha. In must be very good understood because he who can see Dukkha can see the other three Nobles Truths.

^{5,6} Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 48. 1959

Since the men started to understand the world and itself, there have been an innumerable wrong conceptions and wrong answers to the basic questions. How the universe works? Who we are? Why are we here? A lot of these conceptions have been taken as an unquestionable and ultimate grade of knowledge. The capacity to learn and accept new concepts totally different from what is usual is still very limited in humanity. The refuses of changes are very strong, because it is simpler to believe something that is already set. Somehow humanity is lazy in this aspects, is more comfortable to suffer and life a lie than awake and take the rope of their own destiny. On the other hand big religions are not interested to impulse knowledge, which could means lose of power and lose of money. That because the religion in our time have become an industry of multimillion of money. As the Buddha taught, every being has the capacity to be free and happy. It is in our hand to follow or not the path that have been showed. The truth is a matter of practice and open mind, not a matter of believe with faith. Just try to understand is enough to calm much part of our suffering and it constitute a step next to the Nirvana. Even if it seems to be very complicated to reach the enlightenment and see clear the life, it must be try to be reached. It is much better to live a life of strong effort to reach the happiness than live a life blind full of lie and suffering.

The Second Noble Truth: Samudaya

Samudaya is translated as arising or the origins of the Dukkha. Samudaya is defined as thirst, thirst of to pleasures of the senses, thirst of existence and future and thirst of no existence and annihilation. That thirst, desire, eagerness which expressed in many ways made arise the suffering.

Tanha, the thirst, is not the first and the only cause of the arising of the Dukkha. But it is the principal thing and it is the thing that enter trough anything. This thirst is based on the wrong idea of the Self, which come from the ignorance.

The word thirst includes not only desire and attachment given to the pleasures of the senses, power and richness; but desire and attachment for the ideas, ideals, opinions, theories, conceptions and believes too. It was Buddha believe that every unhappiness and conflicts on the world, starting from the smaller ones in each family until wars between Nations arise from the thirst. “The world is sick of frustration, anxiety and it is slave of the thirst.”⁷

It is not difficult to understand that the egoist desire creates every bad on the world. But is not easy to understand how this thirst can produce the existence and the rise of this badness constantly. This is the main philosophical point of interest which are related the first and the second Noble Truths. Also is important to be clear with the idea of Karma and renascence.

There are four important things that permit the arising of the thirst, in the meaning of cause, necessary to the existence and the continuity of the beings. 1) Food of the matter; 2) the contact of the senses (included the mind) with the external world; 3) the conciseness and 4) the mental volition. This last one is the desire to life, of existence and return to exist, to continue constantly arising. This source of the arising makes grow the root of the existence and continuity projecting trough the good and bad actions. It is the same of volition. Volition (mental volition) is the same as Karma. If it is understood the sources that makes arising the mental volition, understand the three kinds of thirst. In consequences, thirst, volition, mental volition and karma are the same. The desire , the willing to be, of existence and return to

⁷ Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 52. 1959

exist, to arising, to grow more and more, the unending accumulation. This is the very reason of the arising of Dukkha.

Note that the cause, the germ of the arising of the Dukkha is in Dukkha. The same way the cause, the germ of the cessation, the destruction of Dukkha is found in Dukkha. “Everything that has the nature of the arising, all of it, has the nature of cessation.”

The understanding of Samudaya is the second basic concept to be understood. He who does not understand the Dukkha cannot understand the Samudaya. Without understanding of Samudaya there are not gate to begin the path of the Nirvana. He who really understands the two first Noble Truths does not care anymore about material things. The past is not important because it doesn't exist, even the present badly exist. He who understands the concept of there is not an immutable essence doesn't care anymore about death and understand the body as a tool to experience. The body must be care, but it is impermanent and some day has to die. The ideas are generate by an organ of the body, the brain. They are not different from the colors or the smells of the flowers generate by the eye or the nose, and as the colors or the smell of the flowers the ideas must not generate attachments to them. He, who understands these two truths, understands the constant chain of action and reaction and it brings a big relieve to the suffering and many things are not important anymore and many others became primordial. For example get importance to start a good action because it conditions the next to be good. The impulse to be just and truth in every act of the daily life is primordial. This understanding is the beginning of the path to really happiness through the practice of the Buddhism teachings.

The Third Noble Truth: Nirodha

This Noble truth revels that it is possible to free from suffering. This cessation of Dukkha is the Nirvana. “the Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering: (it ceases with) the complete cessation of this thirst --a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion--with the abandoning of this thirst, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.”¹²

But what is the Nirvana? The languages is a reduce sources to explain what is the Nirvana. It is like try to explain a fish what is outside the water and what is to walk, trying to explain it to the fish, its vocabulary will run out without the understanding. But because the language is the only tool the men has to express, it is necessary; therefore to describe the Nirvana usually is used a negative languages to avoid mistakes. So some of the conceptions of the Nirvana are: immortal, freedom (it mean the liberation of something negative), thirst extinction, unconditioned, desire less, detachment, cessation, extinction. In the Pali texts Nirvana has these conceptions concerning of the cessation of the thirst (Tanha): to give up, to resign, to become emancipated and detachment from her.¹³

Buddha, referring to the Nirvana said: There is no-birth, no-caused, no-conditioned. If there wasn't no-birth, no-caused, no-conditioned there were any chance to avoid the birth, the conditioned and the caused. But, because of the existence of the birth, the conditioned and the caused, there is the emancipation from them too.

“Here there is no space for the four elements: solidity, fluidity, heat and movement; notions of soft and much, good and bad, mind and body are totally destroyed. There can't be found

¹² (Vinaya Texts I, 95)

¹³ Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 59. 1959

this or the other world, not a coming, not a leaving, not be standing, not dead, not birth, not the objects of the senses.”¹⁴

Because the Nirvana is expressed in negative terms can be understood or related to a negative idea. But the Nirvana is not positive or negative. The absolute truth is far beyond the duality and the relativity.

The essence of the speech of the Buddha that is known through the Dhatuvibhangha-sutta No 140 of the Majjhimanikaya is: six are the elements that constitute the men solidity, fluidity, heat, movement, space and conciseness. The disciple analyses and understand with respect to this elements there is impossible the conception of “me” or “I”. Then he understands that arises and disappear the conciseness, the same way arise and disappear the good, bad and neutral sensations. Through this knowledge; the mind of the Buddha experiments detachment. He found a pure equanimity inside his self that can drive him to any high state, and he knows that this equanimity will stay for a long time. But he thinks: If I lead this clear and pure equanimity to the sphere of the infinity and develop a mind within, this is a mental creation (samkhatam). If I lead this clear and pure equanimity to the sphere of the infinity, to the sphere of the void or to the sphere where there doesn’t exist nor no-perception nor perception and develop a mind within, this is a mental creation. In consequence, he doesn’t create mentally nor desire the continuity and the becoming, nor the extinction. Because he doesn’t create no more continuity, or becoming, or the extinction, he doesn’t attach to nothing in this world. Because he doesn’t feel attachments, he is not anxious. Because he is free from every anxiety he is totally in peace. He knows that for him there will be not any other rebirth than the pure life he just lived, he has done what it must be done and nothing

¹⁴ Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 61. 1959

more left to be done. After this when he experiences a good, bad or neutral sensation, he knows that all of them are impermanent, he doesn't hug them, nor experience them with passion. No matter the sensation, he experience it without attachment. He knows that with the dissolution of the body every sensation will be calm, the same way a lamp turns off when the oil runs down.

The person who knows this has the absolute wisdom, because this knowledge of the total extinction of the Dukkha is the noble and absolute wisdom. Therefore a person with this understanding has the absolute truth and this absolute truth is the Nirvana, which is the reality.

What is the absolute Truth? This consists of the understanding that there are nothing absolute and nothings relative, conditioned and interdependent, and there are not an absolute immutable eternal and dominate substance named Soul or I or Atman. To see the things as they are without illusion or ignorance is the extinction of the thirst as the cessation of the Dukkha; and this is the Nirvana. The only thing that can be done with the Nirvana is to see it in a direct perception or experience it. The Nirvana is not a result, is not a cause not an effect. There is a path that leads to the Nirvana but the Nirvana is not the result of this path.

The Fourth Noble Truth: Magga

The fourth Noble Truth is the Path to the cessation of Dukkha. This path is known as the Path of the Middle Way. This path avoids the two extremes ways to search the happiness. One extreme is the happiness through the pleasures of the senses; it is low, vulgar, vain and is the path of the common people. The other extreme is the self mortification; but it is painful, not noble and vain. The Buddha experiences himself these two extremes proving they are useless.

The Meddle Way confers the internal vision, the wisdom, the conduction to the calm, the intuitive penetration, the enlightenment, the Nirvana. The path of the Middle Way is also called the Noble Octopus Path because it has eight factors:

Right comprehension (samma dithi)

Right thinking (samma sankappa)

Right word (samma vaca)

Right action (samma kammanta)

Right life ways (samma ajiva)

Right effort (samma vayama)

Right attention (samma sati)

Right concentration (samma Samadhi)

These eight factors don't have to be followed and practice one next to the other as they are listed. They must be develop and practice if it is possible all at the same time. This development depends on the capacity of the person. These eight factors have a stretch relationship between them and the cultivation of each helps the development of the others.

The final goal of these eight factors is the development and the perfection the tree capital principles of the training and the Buddhist discipline to learn: 1) ethic conduct (sila), 2) mental discipline (Samadhi) and 3) wisdom (pañña). To get an exactly and coherent understanding of the eight factors, it is better to group and explain them based in the tree principles.

The ethic conduct is based on the conception of the universal love and the compassion to all beings. This principle constitutes the Buddha fundamental teaching. The Buddha dedicates his life thinking on the good and happiness of the majority. He did it because of his great compassion to the world.

A perfect man, described by the Buddhism, is he who cultivate at the same time the compassion (karuna) and wisdom (pañña). The compassion includes love, charity, goodness, tolerance and the rest of the noble qualities of the heart. The wisdom represents the intellectual aspect or the qualities of the mind. If one quality is develop more than the other a person can become in a good-natured fool or in an insensible intellectual. This can be described as the path of the Buddha where wisdom and compassion have a close relationship.

The ethic conduct is based in love and compassion and contains tree of the eight factors: right word, right action, and right way of life.

Right word means 1) don't say lies; 2) don't defame or slander and don't say words that can promote the hate, enmity and discord between people; 3) don't talk rude, impolite and offensive; and 4) avoid the unsubstantial conversations and whisperings. Never must be spoken careless. The time and the place must be respected to talk. If there is nothing useful to say, should be respect the noble silence.

The right action cultivate the moral conduct, honorability and peacefully. It promote us not to kill, not to steal, not to do dishonorable deals, no to have illegitimate sexual relationships and in the same way help the others to carry out a peacefully and honorable life in the right path.

Right way of life means to choose a profession that doesn't go against the goodness of other person. For example don't commercialize weapons, alcoholic drinks, don't make business of vicissitudes and so on.

The ethic conduct should be understood as the ethic and moral teachings of the Buddhism. It tries to ensure a happy and harmonious existence individual and collective in the society. Without this moral basic there is not possible any spiritual development.

Mental discipline includes tree more factors: right effort, right attention and right concentration.

The right effort consists in: 1) the energy and the will to stop the arising of the bad and negative thinking; 2) the energy and the will to stop the bad and negative thinking that has already arising; 3) the energy and will to give space to arise the good and meritorious thinking, and 4) the energy and will to develop and improve the best the good and meritorious thinking.

The right attention means: 1) pay attention to the body (kaya); 2) pay attention to the sensations and emotions (vedana); 3) pay attention to the mental activities (citta), and 4) pay attention to the ideas, thinking, conceptions and things (dhamma).

The concentration in the breathing (anapanasati) is one of the most known exercises related with the body to develop the mind. It is necessary to distinguish if the sensations and feelings are pleasant, unpleasant or neutrals. The same way it is necessary to see how they surge and disappear. With the mind activities it is necessary to note if there are some avarice, hate,

distraction, concentration. The same way it is necessary to be conscious how they surge and disappear. The ideas, thinking, conceptions and things it is necessary to know the nature of them, to see how they rise and disappear, how they develop, how they are abolish and destroyed and so on continuously.

The third and the last of the mental discipline is the right concentration. It conducts to the four stages of the dhyana, normally called trance or absorption. In the first stage of the dhyana are discarded the passionate desires, and impure thinking, but there are feelings of happiness and joyfully and other mental activities. The second stage disappears all those mental activities. The tranquility and the unify fix of the mind are development, but there are still feelings of happiness and joyfully. The third stage disappear the happiness but there are still feelings of joyfully together with conciseness equanimity. Finally the fourth stage disappear all sensations staying only equanimity and mental brightness.

The wisdom contains the right thinking and the right comprehension. The right thinking constitutes detachment, not egoism, love and no-violence. It is important and interesting to note that the right thinking is grouped in the wisdom because it shows that the truth wisdom understands them and the opposite actions are a result of ignorance or lack of wisdom.

The right comprehension is to understand the things as they really are; the four noble truths explain the truly light. It can be said that the right comprehension is resume in the four noble truths. There are two kinds of comprehension the “knowing depending on” (anubhoda) and the penetration (pativedha). The first comprehension is the intellectual capacity, the accumulate knowledge, the memories. The penetration consist to see the things with the truly

nature, without names and labels. This penetrations is possible only if the mind is pure and development trough the meditation.

The Doctrine of the Inexistence of the Soul

The idea of the “I” is the thinker behind the thoughts; the soul is what feels the sensations and it is what receives the punishment or the recompense of all its actions. The Buddhism considers the soul as a wrong conception and imaginary which lack of a correspondence reality. This wrong believes can be the determination of the origins of all badness in the world.

There are two ideas established in the human mind, self-protection and self-preservation. As a self-protection the human being created a God as a father to protect him. As self-preservation human being created the idea of the soul or Atman immortal for the eternity. This is the reason why men attach so hardly to this conception, so hardly that is difficult even to talk about other kind of conceptions without a drastic negative reaction.

The theory of the relativity given by the Buddhism is that there is nothing on the world absolute, everything is conditioned, relative and interdependent. In the first noble truth the analysis of the Dukkha determines that the five aggregates constitute the individual. The analysis of these aggregates makes clear the inexistence of something that can be interpreted as Atman or soul, or some immutable substance.

A conditioning summary was written: Where there is A, there is B. When arise A, arise B. When there is not A, there is not B. When cease A, cease B. Staring from this principle of

conditioning, relativity and interdependence; the existence, the continuity of life and its cessation is explained in the Paticca-Samuppada in twelve factors:

The voluntary actions and karmic formations are conditioned because of the ignorance.

The conciseness is conditioned because of the voluntary actions.

The mental and physic phenomena are conditioned because of the conciseness.

The six faculties are conditioned because of the mental and physic phenomena.

The contact (physical and mental) is conditioned because of the six faculties.

The sensation is conditioned because of the contact.

The desire (thirst) is conditioned because of the sensation.

The attachment is conditioned because of the desire (thirst).

The future is conditioned because of the attachment.

The birth is conditioned because of the future.

Because of the birth are conditioned:

The old age, the death, the affliction, the sadness and so on.

That is the way that life arises, exists and continues. This same formulation taken in the other way is the formulation of cessation. But, it is important to note that all the factors are relative, interdependent and are interrelated. The Buddhism doesn't accept one cause, it is not a chain, it is a cycle process.

The free willing has an important place in the occidental philosophy. But it has no meaning in the Buddhism. How can be free the willing if everything is conditioned, relative and

interdependent? The willing as the other thoughts depends on the other conditions. There are causes and effects and the free willing means to act without them. How can a willing act arise without conditioning, totally independent of cause and effect, when the continuity of the existence is conditioning, relative and rule by the law of cause and effect? The idea of the free willing is directly connect with the idea of God, soul, justice, reward and punishment. The doctrine of the anatta considers as a wrong believe, no more than a mental projection, the existence of the soul, me, I or Atman.

There are two realities: the conventional truth (sammuti-sacca) and the ultimate truth (paramattha-sacca). In the ultimate truth the “me” or “I” doesn’t exists. “One person (pugala) must mention himself as an existing being only because of designation (prajñapti) (It means, the person only exists conventionally), but not in the reality (substance, dravya).¹⁵

The idea of the No-soul is so difficult to accept that many illustrate of the Buddhism tried to find something that shows the existence of the Atman in the doctrine of the Buddha. It is easy to think that the Buddhism has a wrong conception about the Atman when it is the only doctrine compare to the occidental thinkers to expose that there are nothing impermanent. But Buddha was very clear and there is not confusion in this concept. “In the Dhammapada there are tree verses the th, 6th and 7th of the Buddha teachings:

Sabbe SAMKHARA anicca. All conditioning things are impermanent.

Sabbe SAMKHARA dukkha. All conditioning things are dukkha.

Sabbe DHAMMA annata. All the Dharmma lack of soul.^{16,,}

¹⁵ Mh sutralankara, XVIII, 92. Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 81. 1959

¹⁶ Walpola Rahula, Lo que el Buddha enseñó. Pag. 83. 1959

Note the importance of the difference of the tree verses. The two first is used the word samkhara to refer to conditioning things. But in the third is used dhamma to refer the things without soul. The reason to use dhamma is because this term includes the conditioning, the not-conditioning, the absolute, the Nirvana.

There is nothing in the universe or out of it that stay out of this term. In the third verse is clear that there are not soul, atman or “me” not in the aggregates and not in the exterior or independent of them.

It is not possible not to feel suffering if the idea of the inexistence of something impermanent is accepted. The suffering comes from the idea that everything is impermanent; it can produce loneliness, emptiness, misery, affliction, anguish and difficulties. It is also common to think that the “me” or the “I” come from the ideas or the conciseness, it is closer to the truth to think that the “me” or “I” is the combination of the physic aggregates in the human body, not only in one of the elements. It is a mistake to affirm that there is not a “me” (annihilation theory); it is also a mistake to affirm that there is a ‘me’ (eternity theory). The correct thinking is not to have a point of view or support an opinion. It is important to try to see the things as they really are in an objective way.

Twelve Causes of Suffering

Gautama Buddha believed that all life was suffering, and that suffering was caused by desire. He sought, through meditation, to attain a state known as Nirvana, in which one is free of desire and therefore of suffering.

Suffering is caused by human weakness -- desire, lust, pride, anger, greed and a host of other foibles. The philosophical foundations of Buddhism proclaim that all worldly phenomena is unsatisfactory, transient and impermanent; there is nothing one can call one's own; the world is an illusion; and our suffering is caused by our clinging to the world of illusion (the world of desire).

Referring to this term in Buddhism there are four basic sufferings:

Birth

Old Age

Illness

Death

And four more were added and considered in later times:

Parting from those one loves

Having to meet those one hates

Not being able to have what one desires

Clinging to the five aggregates (sufferings of the mind and body)

This belief of Sakyamuni Buddha started before attaining Buddhahood, when he realized the miserable condition how people used to live. He described this human being situation as a suffering situation, " they are born, they decay, they die, pass away and are born again; and they do not know the path of escape from this decay, death and misery." (class lessons). To find the way to find this path of escape from this decay, the phenomena of this suffering was necessary to understand.

To understand this phenomena of suffering Sakyamuni Buddha explains a continuous line of depended causes that exists through the concept of the "dependent origination" or

"conditioned origination", it is: " The phenomena are happening in a series and we see that there being certain phenomena there become some others; by the happening of some events others also are produced." (class lessons).

All this events happen in a series of continuous dependent origination. This series of events are composed of twelve causes, the twelve causes of suffering. Everything begins with the ignorance (无始无明wu shi wu ming) "the basic misapprehension of reality, inherently enacted by sentient beings from the beginningless past." (class lessons), and ends with the old age and death, to begin again in the next rebirth again with the ignorance.

Buddha found for this need of understand the causes of suffering this phases, and this doctrine in time became a fundamental one.

These twelve phases are:

- (1) ignorance; (2) action-intentions;
- (3) consciousness; (4) name and form;
- (5) the six-fold sphere of sense contact;
- (6) contact; (7) sensation; (8) craving;
- (9) grasping; (10) becoming; (11) birth;
- (12) old age and death (impermanence).

To eliminate suffer it is necessary to eliminate or extinguish those phases. These phases must be extinguished in order, it means " if the prior condition is extinguished, the next condition is extinguished." (class lessons)

To understand deeper this twelve causes of suffering it would be analyzed each one in order to understand its meanings and the cause that produces the next cause and so the continuous conditioned origination of them twelve.

In the "The Seven Sermons To The Dead" written by Carl Jung, in the second sermon referring to how creation originated, says: "The effective emptiness is the being of the Devil. God and Devil are the first manifestations of the nothingness, which we call the Pleroma." Understanding Pleroma as the emptiness and the fullness at the same time. This philosophical explanation of a occidental author, makes it possible to realized how many ways of understanding this beginning of causes of suffer there are. In this case it could be understood the Devil as the ignorance, and God as the death or the last phase of this causes and between them the Pleroma or nothingness.

In that case for the Buddha vision of these causes the beginning less ignorance is the first cause of everything. It produces defilements or action-intentions. These defilements cause both the body and the mind to be afflicted and suffer. There are ten defilements: "greed, hatred, delusion, pride, wrong views, doubts, sloth, distraction, absence of embarrassment before others over one's wrongdoings, and absence of shame for one's wrongdoings." (class lessons). Desire produced by the beginningless ignorance produce these action-intentions, and this forms Karma.

Then the third cause of suffers " is the product of the past karmas of the dying man and of his past consciousness too" (class lessons), it is Consciousness (Vijnana). " Consciousness descends in the womb of the mother and produce the five skandhas as namarupa (a sentient body) out of which the six senses are specialized." This Consciousness (vijnana) thus forms

the principle of the new life. It is in this vijnana that name (nama) and form (rupa) become associated. (class lessons). Name and form are product of the consciousness.

"With Name and Form as condition, six sense organs arise" (class lessons), then sense, sense-objects and sense consciousness arise from contact between them. Contact is the sixth cause of suffering. There are six classes of contact: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact and mind-contact. Contact has the six sense organs as its cause. "Contact is conditioned by the presence of the six sense-openings, and in turn is a condition for the arising of physical sensations." (class lessons)

Through the experiences it is expressed the sensation. There are three kinds of sensations: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral.

Analyzing this line of causes, it possible to realize that with the contact between the senses and their object it appears another new cause, it is the craving. Sensations accord to the six sense organs, it has six classes. These six classes of sensations or feelings in the human experience relate to its affective dimension. Feelings are accord to this six sense organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. These sense organs in contact with sense and their sense objects, causes the sensation and these sensations caused with this contact cause the craving. Craving generated from the sense organs and their contact with their sense objects and their sensations, for what? Craving for pleasant feelings or craving for sensory pleasures.

When craving, it is determined that not to have is a negative situation. When pleasant feelings and sensory pleasures are not or doesn't exist, then the situation is negative. Feelings generate craving for sensory pleasures, craving intensified causes grasping.

There are four forms of grasping or clinging, to: pleasurable sensual experiences, to view and theories, to rules and rituals and to belief in a soul or self.

In order to understand this meaning of craving and grasping, it is possible to get confused about what to don't crave or grasp. It can be understood about or every days craving or grasping for such feelings as close family as an example. In the url: <http://en.allexperts.com/q/Buddhists-948/2008/8/grasping-clinging.htm> it is possible to find a real asking question from a mother to a Buddhist about this fact: "I am struggling with the idea of grasping and clinging with regards to my children - by loving them and worrying about them is that grasping and clinging?" to this question the answer is: "Grasping and clinging" are the results of our desire for things. The "desire" the Buddha was referring to was about sensual desires. Sensual desires refer to desires of the senses. These sensual desires are unquenchable. It is the very nature of physical senses. Take for example, hunger. Once the hunger is satisfied with intake of food; the process of depletion starts, and after some time one feels hungry again. Another aspect of sense desire is the stronger feeling of craving. One's craving to satisfy one's desire is itself a catalyst to crave for more. When this craving goes unchecked, one becomes crazy! So the option is opened to anyone who follows the Buddha's teachings: to continue feeding these desires with more craving, or to come to one's senses to reduce this crazy cycle of on-going "madness".

When craving causes grasping, grasping causes becoming (Bhava), it by clinging exists.

With becoming as a condition, birth arises. Grasping causes becoming, it causes birth, the desire for further life and sensation causes the continuity of life and death. When birth, then

become by desire, grasping and clinging, then lives begin in a particular form. There are four kinds of births: from an egg, from a womb, from moisture and by transformation. In the moment that birth exists, and then the old age and death arises. Buddha includes in the canonical description of "suffering" in the First Noble Truth "Birth" with "Old Age and Death".

So then, from the beginning less ignorance to old age and death, the twelve causes of suffering are attached one to each other as a chain of causes that need to be eliminated in the order they produced one to each other. This is the knowledge that Buddha left to learn to find the path to finish the suffering and with this the Samsara.

THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD

Introductory Foreword to the Tibetan Book of the Dead by Lama Anagarika Govinda

It may be argued that nobody can talk about death with authority who has not died; and since nobody, apparently, has ever returned from death, how can anybody know what death is, or what happens after it?

The Tibetan will answer: 'There is not one person, indeed, not one living being, that has not returned from death. In fact, we all have died many deaths, before we came into this incarnation. And what we call birth is merely the reverse side of death, like one of the two sides of a coin, or like a door which we call "entrance" from outside and "exit" from inside a room.'

It is much more astonishing that not everybody remembers his or her previous death; and, because of this lack of remembering, most persons do not believe there was a previous death. But, likewise, they do not remember their recent birth--and yet they do not doubt that they were recently born. They forget that active memory is only a small part of our normal consciousness and that our subconscious memory registers and preserve every past impression and experience which our waking mind fails to recall.

There are those who, in virtue of concentration and other yogic practices, are able to bring the subconscious into the realm of discriminative consciousness and, thereby, to draw upon the unrestricted treasury of subconscious memory, wherein are stored the records not only of our past lives but the records of the past of our race, the past of humanity, and of all pre-human forms of life, if not of the very consciousness that makes life possible in this universe.

If, through some trick of nature, the gates of an individual's subconsciousness were suddenly to spring open, the unprepared mind would be overwhelmed and crushed. Therefore, the gates of the subconscious are guarded, by all initiates, and hidden behind the veil of mysteries and symbols.

For this reason, the *Bardo Thödol*, the Tibetan book vouch-safing liberation from the intermediate state between life and re-birth,--which state men call death,--has been couched in symbolical language. It is a book which is sealed with the seven seals of silence,--not because its knowledge should be withheld from the uninitiated, but because its knowledge would be misunderstood, and, therefore, would tend to mislead and harm those who are unfitted to receive it. But the time has come to break the seals of silence; for the human race has come to the juncture where it must decide whether to be content with the subjugation of

the material world, or to strive after the conquest of the spiritual world, by subjugating selfish desires and transcending self-imposed limitations.

According to Tibetan tradition, the Bardo Thödol is one of those works of Padma-Sambhava which were secretly hidden in order to preserve them for later generations, and which were to be revealed to the world when the time was ripe. However this may be it is a fact that during the persecution of Buddhism by Langdarma, at the beginning of the ninth century, A.D., innumerable books of the earliest period of Tibetan Buddhism were concealed under rocks, in caves, and other places, to prevent their destruction. Since all members of the Buddhist Order and their supporters were either killed or driven out of Tibet, most of these buried scriptures remained where they had been hidden. Many of them were recovered during the succeeding centuries and designated Termas, a term derived from the Tibetan word Gter, pronounced Ter, meaning 'Treasure'. Those who discovered these spiritual treasures and propagated their teachings were called Tertöns, from Tibetan Gter-bston, pronounced Tertön, meaning 'Revealer of Treasure'.

This seems to me a far more reasonable explanation for the tradition of the Tertöns, which, significantly, is held in the oldest Schools of Tibetan Buddhism, like the Nyingmapa and Kargyü tpa, than the theory advanced by certain Western critics, that these scriptures had been 'faked' by people who wanted to pass off their own ideas under the guise of ancient revelations. Such critics underestimate the religious sincerity and the deep respect for the sanctity of spiritual tradition which is engrained in every Tibetan, layman and lāma alike. To add to or omit from the Sacred Scriptures a single word or letter has ever been looked upon by Tibetans as a heinous sin, which even the most impious would fear to commit.

Furthermore, these same critics underestimate the difficulties of forging and issuing such scriptures, for the forging would require a technical and critical knowledge of history and linguistics such as was not only unknown in Tibet, but such as would have required a master-mind for its execution. Had a genius of that sort existed in Tibet, he would have had no need to resort to the subterfuge of forgery, for he could have stood on his own feet, as did many scholarly geniuses who wrote and taught in their own name. Nor is it likely that men who could create and propagate such profound thoughts and lofty ideals as the Termas contain would stoop so low as to deceive their fellow-men. And when we consider that the literature in question is not a matter of a few isolated treatises but of about a hundred big volumes (according to tradition 108 volumes), running into tens of thousands of folios, then the theory of wilful deception becomes not only improbable, but absurd.

In considering the influences on the Bardo Thödol of the preBuddhistic religion of Tibet, namely that of the Bön-pos, there must be taken into account the fact that all of those Termas attributed to Padma-Sambhava declare, in no uncertain terms, their adherence to him, the very personage who opposed and defeated the Bön-pos. These recovered scriptures cannot, therefore, be regarded as propagating Bön ideas.

Even though Padma-Sambhava did adopt into the Buddhist system some of the local Tibetan deities, to serve as guardians of the Faith, in doing so he did not give up one inch of Buddhist ground to the Bön-pos, but acted in perfect conformity with the principles of orthodox Buddhism, wherein, in all Buddhist countries, the deities of the Earth and of space have always been honoured and propitiated, as being protectors of the Dharma. Thus, the following Pāli verses are still recited, in the course of the regular pūjā (or ceremony of

worship), by the followers of Theravāda Buddhism, in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, and elsewhere:--

'Ākāsaṭṭhā ca bhummāṭṭhā, devā nāgā mahiddhikā, Puññantam̄ anumoditvā, ciram rakkhantu sāsanam.'

These verses may be rendered into English as follows:--

'May the beings of the sky [or of space] and of the Earth, Devas and Nāgas [i.e., gods and serpent-spirits] of great power, After having shared in the merit [of this pūjā], Long protect the Sacred Doctrine.'

Any cultural influence, as between Buddhism and Bönism, was more in the nature of a one-way traffic than a mutual exchange of ideas; for the Bön-pos, who had no literature of their own, took over Buddhist concepts and symbols on a vast scale, and thereby created a literature and an iconography which so greatly resemble those of the Buddhists as to be almost indistinguishable to the casual observer.

There is also current the wholly arbitrary assertion that it was the Bön influence which encouraged laxity in the observance of Buddhist monastic rules in Tibet and led to a general decline in the standard of Tibetan learning and morality. Whoever has had the opportunity to stay for even a short time in one of the still existing Bön monasteries of Tibet, will have noticed, with surprise, that the rules of celibacy and monastic discipline are stricter there than in most Buddhist monasteries, and that for many of the major scriptures of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon a parallel can be found in the scriptures of the Bön-pos. They have their 'Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras,' their 'Pratīyasamutpāda' (represented in a Wheel of Life of thirteen

divisions), their Tantras and Mantras; and their deities more or less correspond to the various Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Devatas, and Dharmapālas of Buddhism.

It may seem paradoxical, but it is a fact, that whereas the older Schools of Tibetan Buddhism, despite their tolerance of local deities, succeeded in breaking the power of Bönism, it was the Gelugpas, the youngest and most vigorously reformed School, which re-introduced one of the most influential institutions of the Bön-pos, namely, State Oracles in Oracle-Temples, in all important monasteries of the Yellow Sect. The deities who are invoked in these Oracle-Temples are exclusively of Bön origin. Among the older Buddhist sects, and especially among the Kargyü tpas, no such Oracle-Temples exist. This shows that the Old Schools, contrary to common belief, are less under the influence of Bönism than the Gelugpas, in spite of the Gelugpas' reforms and stricter monastic discipline. This stricter monastic discipline of the Gelugpas really brings them nearer to the above-mentioned puritanism of the Bön-pos.

We must, therefore, beware of sweeping statements, as to what can be attributed to the influence of Bönism and what not. Especially is this so because we do not know of what the teachings of Bön consisted before the advent of Buddhism, although we can safely assume that they were animistic, the spiritualised forces of man and nature being worshipped, chiefly in their awe-inspiring and terrifying aspects; and certain rituals were performed for the benefit and the guidance of the dead. Such religious practices as these are commonly found in almost all early civilizations; and they prevailed in India as much as they did in Tibet. This 'animism' permeates all Buddhistic texts, wherein every tree and grove, and every locality, is held to have its own peculiar deities; and the Buddha is represented as discoursing with gods and other spiritual beings, inhabiting the Earth and the realms beyond, as if that were a most natural procedure. Only a completely intellectualized and Westernized Buddhism, which

attempts to separate the rational thought-content of Buddhism from its equally profound mythological elements, can deny this animistic background and with it the metaphysical foundations of Buddhism.

The Buddhist universe is alive through and through; it has no room for inert matter and mere mechanism. And what is more, the Buddhist is alert to all possibilities of existence and to all aspects of reality. If we have read of the fearful apparitions which surrounded the Buddha during the night preceding His Enlightenment, we need not search for Bön influences in relation to the animal-headed monsters that appear from the abyss of the subconscious mind in the hour of death, or in the visions of meditation. Wrathful deities, demons in animal form, and gods in demonical guise are as much at home in Indian as in Tibetan tradition. Despite the popular usages to which the *Bardo Thödol* has been put in connection with the death rituals--and herein, probably, is discernible the only trace of Bön influence worth considering--the central idea and the profound symbolism of the *Bardo Thödol* are genuinely Buddhistic.

The Tibetans themselves have put forth considerable effort to free their Scriptures from errors and non-Buddhistic accretions, and to ensure the correctness and reliability of their traditions. After the rules for the translation of Sanskrit texts and the necessary corresponding Tibetan terminology had been established by the early Tibetan translators and pioneers of the Dharma, 'translators were explicitly forbidden to coin new terms. When this was unavoidable, they were directed to report the matter to a special Tribunal, called "the Tribunal of the Doctrine of the Blessed One," attached to the royal palace. The translation of Tantric works could be undertaken with the king's permission only. These rules were promulgated by King

Ti-de Song-tsen (Ral-pa-can, 817-36 A.D.) and have been followed by all Tibetan translators ever since.'

With the advent of wooden block-prints, similar precautions were taken, not only with regard to translations, but with regard to all religious literature. Thus it became a rule that no religious book could be published without the sanction of the highest spiritual authorities, who appointed qualified proof-readers and scholars to prevent faulty renderings or unwarranted interpolations. This, however, did not interfere with the diversity of interpretations by the various acknowledged Schools and their Teachers. The chief purpose was to prevent the degeneration of established traditions either through carelessness or ignorance of unqualified copyists and interpreters.

It is for this reason that the authorized block-prints contain the most reliable versions of the generally accepted traditional sacred texts. But hand-written books, although sometimes suffering from mistakes in spelling and from other errors of the copyist, who often shows lack of understanding of the archaic or classical language of the text, are, nevertheless, valuable, especially if they go back to originals of greater antiquity than those of the current block-prints, or if they represent some lesser known tradition handed down from guru to chela through many generations.

If, therefore, I direct the reader's attention to certain differences between the officially accepted version of the block-print and that of the manuscript, which formed the basis of Lāma Kazi Dawa Samdup's translation, I do not wish to question the value of the manuscript, but merely to throw light upon some important points of Buddhist tradition, which may lead

to a deeper understanding, not only from the historical, but, likewise, from a spiritual point of view.

Indeed, it is the spiritual point of view that makes this book so important for the majority of its readers. If the *Bardo Thödol* were to be regarded as being based merely upon folklore, or as consisting of religious speculation about death and a hypothetical after-death state, it would be of interest only to anthropologists and students of religion. But the *Bardo Thödol* is far more. It is a key to the innermost recesses of the human mind, and a guide for initiates, and for those who are seeking the spiritual path of liberation.

Although the *Bardo Thödol* is at the present time widely used in Tibet as a breviary, and read or recited on the occasion of death, --for which reason it has been aptly called 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead'--one should not forget that it was originally conceived to serve as a guide not only for the dying and the dead, but for the living as well. And herein lies the justification for having made *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* accessible to a wider public.

It is one of the oldest and most universal practices for the initiate to go through the experience of death before he can be spiritually reborn. Symbolically he must die to his past, and to his old ego, before he can take his place in the new spiritual life into which he has been initiated. The dead or the dying person is addressed in the *Bardo Thödol* mainly for three reasons: (1) the earnest practitioner of these teachings should regard every moment of his or her life as if it were the last; (2) when a follower of these teachings is actually dying, he or she should be reminded of the experiences at the time of initiation, or of the words (or mantra) of the guru, especially if the dying one's mind lacks alertness during the critical moments; and (3) one who is still incarnate should try to surround the person dying, or just

dead, with loving and helpful thoughts during the first stages of the new, or after-death, state of existence, without allowing emotional attachment to interfere or to give rise to a state of morbid mental depression. Accordingly, one function of the *Bardo Thödol* appears to be more to help those who have been left behind to adopt the right attitude towards the dead and towards the fact of death than to assist the dead, who, according to Buddhist belief, will not deviate from their own karmic path.

In applying the *Bardo Thödol* teachings, it is ever a matter of remembering the right thing at the right moment. But in order so to remember, one must prepare oneself mentally during one's life-time; one must create, build up, and cultivate those faculties which one desires to be of deciding influence at death and in the after-death state,--in order never to be taken unawares, and to be able to react, spontaneously, in the right way, when the critical moment of death has come.

This is clearly expressed in the Root Verses of the *Bardo Thödol* as rendered in The Tibetan Book of the Dead:--

['O] procrastinating one, who thinketh not of the coming of death,
Devoting thyself to the useless doings of this life,
Improvident art thou in dissipating thy great opportunity;
Mistaken, indeed, will thy purpose be now if thou returnest
empty-handed [from this life].

Since the Holy Dharma is known to be thy true need,
Wilt thou not devote [thyself] to the Holy Dharma even now?"

It is recognized by all who are acquainted with Buddhist philosophy that birth and death are not phenomena which happen only once in any given human life; they occur uninterruptedly.


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