



spiritual care directive

tibetan buddhist declaration for the time of dying

name

date

my dharma advocate

Reflections

My beliefs and thoughts about death and what i expect.

My ideal dharma death

Dharma Box

The contents of my Dharma Box include:

Spiritual Care Directive

Pictures of my Teacher

Prayer Book

Liberation upon touch – Takdrol cloth / Death shroud

Liberation upon taste – mendrup

Liberation upon smell – powder

Recordings of chants, practices, etc

Blessed water

Saffron

Candles

Incense

Essential oils – frankincense, lavender

Mala

Approaching Death

1. CONTACT MY TEACHER AT IMPENDING PASSING AND/OR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING DEATH

I have a Spiritual Teacher, first and foremost, my main guide (root guru) who I request to be notified. Please request prayers while I am sick, dying and the traditional prayers of transference of consciousness (p'howa) at the time of my death. It is also important to contact my other teachers with whom I have a strong, positive connection that may also do prayers.

**Please make an offering at the time of the request for good interdependence and to accumulate merit. I have made the following offering instructions.*

Name of Lama/Teacher: _____

Contact Info: _____

What I am requesting: _____

Offering: _____

Name of Lama/Teacher: _____

Contact Info: _____

What I am requesting: _____

Offering: _____

Name of Lama/Teacher: _____

Contact Info: _____

What I am requesting: _____

Offering: _____

2. CONTACT MY SANGHA CENTER

Primary Contact and Number: _____

Name of Center: _____

3. CONTACT MY DHARMA FRIENDS

I have chosen Dharma friends who I feel comfortable with, who I love and trust, and with whom there is no enmity or afflictive relationship to be present during my dying process. I am grateful to have these Dharma friends come regularly for the weeks preceding the dying process, during active phases of dying, the moment of death and the days following my death. These Dharma friends can do practice with me and remind me of the Dharma teachings I have received. They know my Teacher and may contact him/her to ask what prayers and practice should be done during this time.

1. Name of Dharma Friend: _____

Relationship to Me: _____

Contact Info: _____

What I request of them: _____

2. Name of Dharma Friend: _____

Relationship to Me: _____

Contact Info: _____

What I request of them: _____

3. Name of Dharma Friend: _____

Relationship to Me: _____

Contact Info: _____

What I request of them: _____

4. Name of Dharma Friend: _____

Relationship to Me: _____

Contact Info: _____

What I request of them: _____

4. **SEDATION / MEDICATION.** I would like to use pain medication if I look like I am in significant pain. Once it is clear that I am in the active phases of dying, I would prefer to be taken off medication. If it appears that it is too difficult for me to focus on my practice, please slowly add pain medication so that I am comforted and am still aware of my prayers and readings. I appreciate you doing your best, as this is difficult to assess. My personal thoughts on medicine and be medicated are:
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5. **MENDRUP.** While I am in the process of dying, please add mendrup to my water and let me drink it if I am able.

6. **THE ENVIRONMENT.** It is important to create an environment that is quiet, peaceful and as supportive as possible. My request and specifications are as follows:

- A. **Touching my body during the dying process.** It is traditional not to touch the body during the dying process. When that begins is hard to determine, but usually when I am no longer aware of my circumstances or am unconscious. Other signs of dying, such as labored breathing, shaking, difficulty drinking fluids, supporting myself upright can be learned from hospice caregivers as well as the traditional teaching on this subject. (Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, is a good resource) Touch is important before the active process of dying, but once it starts, I will be in my own experience and my consciousness is focused on dying, not on those living. This time is a crucial time of practice. General intuition is needed, but my appointed Dharma Friends, or nurse or hospice worker, can say that it looks like the time is near. Then, everyone should follow that advice and refrain from touching during this process. When my appointed Dharma Friend has made this decision, I request everyone in advance to respect my request by listening to that person.

My Dharma Friends are familiar with the practices recommended by my teacher, the teachings on the six bardos, the dissolution of the elements and consciousness, and how to hold a supportive space of Dharma advice and practice.

I wish that those present **not** touch me during the active time of dying.

I appoint _____ to make the call as to when this time begins.

_____ YES, I do NOT want to be touched during this time.

_____ OTHER. State other preferences or exceptions.

- B. **Sound.** Not only do I request that my loved ones be mindful of touching me while I am in the process of dying, I also would prefer that the room is either quiet or there are specific prayers being done. Any sound should be made in the area of the head, and not down at the feet. Attention is drawn toward sound and so if Dharma Friends are talking/praying at the foot of the bed, this can be distracting and pull

my attention downward. When I am dying, my mind will become much more subtle, and I will be more open to receiving mental messages from everyone around me. Resting in the natural state, silent communication and prayer can be very helpful. It is not necessary to talk much.

I wish that people have ordinary conversation, tv, music, etc outside the room.

____ YES, I request people either are silent or doing specific prayers, and do so near my head.

____ OTHER. State other preferences or exceptions.

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- 7. PRACTICE REQUESTS.** Listed here are certain practices that I do regularly. I have listed specific instructions from my teacher, ie. P’howa, recordings. A couple of examples of this can be that Dharma Friends familiar with P’howa are chanting from a specific text during this time, or Rinpoche may be called and do p’howa or the prayers he deems necessary over speaker phone, or a recording of Rinpoche doing p’howa may be played near the head area.

MY PRACTICE REQUESTS AND PREFERENCES ARE:

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- 8. DEDICATION.** I would like to have the merit dedicated to:

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- 9. SPONSOR PRAYERS ON [MONLAM.ORG](https://monlam.org) (while sick and dying)**

Moment of Death

1. **LAST MOMENTS.** My last moments of awareness are the most important. I aspire to have my final thoughts be on my teacher and focused on the Dharma.
2. **PHOTOS OF MY TEACHER.** Please have photos of my teacher within sight of my bed. I will find pictures of my teacher very comforting.
3. **SITTING POSTURE WHILE DYING.** If I have died in sitting meditation, allow me to stay in the position until my body drops naturally.
4. **GENTLY MASSAGE THE TOP OF MY HEAD.** Massaging the top of my head will bring my awareness to the crown chakra and help my consciousness travel out of my body. The best spot is eight finger widths above my hairline. Please avoid drawing my attention toward my feet. Rubbing and tapping this area is very beneficial and may help the process in obtaining a higher rebirth.
5. **LIBERATION UPON TOUCH.** Please place the takdrol upon my chest at my heart center.
6. **LIBERATION UPON TASTE.** Please place my mendrup upon my tongue.
7. **LIBERATION UPON SMELL.** Please place my sacred powder in my nostrils.
8. **LIBERATION UPON HEARING.** Please recite or play recordings of my personal practices/mantras and the instructions from my Teacher. These are familiar to me and will comfort and guide me.

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9. **BEHAVIOR AROUND MY DEAD BODY.** My consciousness will be acutely perceptive. My mind will mingle with the state of mind of each person in the room. Please generate a spiritually supportive mindset and nurture an attitude of acceptance, encouragement and harmony in order for me to let go. Fill the room with love, calmness, and faith that I am transitioning into a phase of my journey that will require mindfulness, relaxation and openness.
 10. **TOUCHING THE BODY AFTER THE LAST BREATH.** After the last breath, it is suggested not to touch my body until certain signs have appeared. These signs are: my body is completely cold, even cold at the heart center, fluid comes out of my nostrils, etc. If I have died in a nursing facility or hospital or other public facility, I understand that it is required for the nurse to check the pulse. We cannot stop what is legally

necessary, but as much as possible, do not touch the corpse, even to close the eyes. Western medicine considers the time of death to be when the last breath is taken, but there is an inner respiration that continues according to Tibetan Buddhism, and so there are other signs that should be observed before the body is touched, such as fluid emitting from the nostril and the absence of warmth at the heart, etc.

I request that no one touches my body after my last breath until the signs have appeared.

____ YES, I request that no one touches my body after my last breath until the signs have appeared.

____ OTHER. State other preferences or exceptions.

Nurses can often grant the wishes of a family for longer time. Ask them to wait as long as they possibly can. If their shift is not over for a few hours they can buy more time until the end of their shift. The mortuary also may take several hours to come after that, so you may “buy” time for as many as 12 hours after the person has passed to leave the corpse without touching or moving it.

If you would like this to happen, specify your wishes here:

11. ORGAN DONATION.

_____ Yes, I wish to benefit other beings and donate my organs. See my Organ Registration.

_____ No, I wish for my body to remain undisturbed.

12. EMBALMING. I do not wish to be embalmed.

13. CONTACT MY FUNERAL DIRECTOR:

Name: _____

Contact Info: _____

14. SPONSOR PRAYERS ON **MONLAM.ORG** (at moment of death):

3 Days After Death

1. It is very important to me on the grounds of my spiritual practice that my body remain for at least three days without being moved. Although the outer respiration has ceased the inner respiration may still be completing its process.
2. **WASHING AND DRESSING THE BODY.** Upon my death and after the signs have appeared, My Dharma Friends may touch and move me mindfully to cleanse my body. This can be done with a simple sponge bath or with saffron water (1/2 gallon of water, several pinches of saffraon and steep until golden-orange.) You may also use the essential oils from my Dharma Box. I can be wrapped in a cotton or linen shroud or clothed in an appropriate outfit. I am so grateful for you care for me at this time and will be infused with the positive, calm state of your minds.
3. **LIONS POSE.** Once washed and dressed and If you are able, place me in Lion's pose. Position my body on my right side with my right hand (palm) open under the right cheek, and my left hand along the curve of my left hip. My head may be pointed in the Northern direction.
4. **MOVING THE BODY.** Ideally, if in the case of a home death, my body should be left undisturbed for three days. You have to check the laws in your state to see if this is possible. If the viewing room cannot be kept cold, dry ice can be used so that my body can be kept cold. Plans should be made in advance if this is the case.

___ YES, I request that my body is left for three days, untouched, if possible.

___ OTHER. State other preferences or exceptions.

5. **CONTINUED ACTIONS TO TAKE.** If these have not yet been done, or you would like to do them you may while my body lies in state.
 - a. **LIBERATION UPON TOUCH.** Please place my takdrol upon my chest.
 - b. **LIBERATION UPON TASTE.** Please place my mendrup upon my tongue.
 - c. **LIBERATION UPON SMELL.** Please place my sacred powder in my nostrils.
 - d. **LIBERATION UPON HEARING.** Recordings of practices and prayers may be played.

6. PRACTICES/MANTRAS

7. SPONSOR PRAYERS ON [MONLAM.ORG](https://monlam.org) (3 days after death):

Cremation / Burial

WHAT TO DO WITH MY BODY – FINAL DISPOSITION

I WISH TO BE:

_____ Cremated

_____ Buried

CREMATION. Practices may be done at the cremation site, at a different location at the time of the cremation or after the cremation. There is great merit in this process. The purpose is to liberate all beings. This ritual cleanses my negative emotions, defilements, and difficult circumstances.

PRACTICES/PUJA/MANTRAS:

MY ASHES. Please give to: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MY ASHES

Buddhist options are to ask your teacher and/or sangha to make/oversee making tsa-tsas with the ashes. Or, you may ask to have them brought to sacred places. Or you may allow your family to bring them somewhere special. Or, you may ask your teacher to specify which is best.

BURIAL. My instructions are as follows.

8. ADDITIONAL REQUESTS

Dharma Will _____

WHAT TO DO WITH DHARMA ITEMS

Dharma items include all representations such as stupas, statues, tangkas (any image – pictures, posters, etc.), and texts (both personal practice texts and books). It is very important to make a directive about these items, especially if your family is not Buddhist so as to be ensured that these representations are cared for respectfully.

I have specific items that I would like to give to specific people or donate to a Dharma center.

49 Days _____

1. PRACTICES BY REQUEST

2. SPONSOR PRAYERS ON **MONLAM.ORG** (EVERY 7TH DAY AND AT 49 DAYS)

3. CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MY TEACHER, SPIRITUAL CENTER, ETC.

I, _____ of _____, being of sound mind, make this Spiritual Advance Care Directive, a BUDDHIST DECLARATION FOR THE TIME OF DYING, and request that it be honored by all care givers, family, and friends.

Executed at _____, in _____. on _____.

(Signature)

Signed in our presence by _____ who, at the time of the execution of this document, appeared to be of sound mind and over eighteen years old.

_____ of _____

(Signature of witness)

_____ of _____

(Signature of witness)

This document
SPIRITUAL CARE DIRECTIVE
was made in partnership with
Rangjung Yeshe Gomde CA & Peacefully Prepared

For more information on End-of Life Coaching and Planning contact:

Rhonda LoPresti at Rhonda@peacefully-prepared.com

To connect with our resident Lama and request to placed on our prayer list contact:

Lama Kunzang at anikunzang@yahoo.com

Links:

Gomdeusa.org

Monlam.org

Shedrub.org

Monksandnuns.org

Dharmasun.org

Akaracollection.com

Peacefully-prepared.com