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### **The Death Process**

Recognizing What's Going On These boisterous, punchy, direct, funny, loving and compassionate teachings are from a weekend seminar on death, the intermediate state and rebirth given by Lama Yeshe.

**Lama Thubten Yeshe ལྷོ**

Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive

Because you cling to such a limited projection of yourself, such a limited self-image, this becomes the root of all your other limitations. You have limited love, limited wisdom and limited compassion. Because you've already decided that fundamentally, you're narrow, your whole life becomes narrow—your wisdom becomes narrow, your love becomes narrow, everything about you becomes narrow. Just because of your fundamentally narrow projection of yourself.

At the time of death, when your four elements absorb, all your gross concepts about yourself, your pleasures, environment, friends, self-pity love and compassion disappear. That's why we say that when your air element absorbs into your consciousness, your eighty superstitions disappear.

When your eighty superstitions, your eighty ego-aspects, stop, internally, your conscious experience is that of vast emptiness, a great empty space. It's like the clear blue sky, totally empty space, clean clear space: this is what you experience internally. Why? Because normally our mind is crowded with concepts, the eighty deluded superstitions; so crowded that there's no space to see reality. At that moment in the death process, all these dualistic concepts disappear.

The result is that you touch a broader reality.

## ***Preparing for the retreat***

Before the retreat, please read this short passage by Lama Yeshe and reflect on, then write brief answers to the following questions:

Lama Yeshe is asserting that we hold very small and limited projections of ourself, which in turn obscures our true limitless, selfless wide open nature.

1. What labels do you use to define yourself and your identity? Are these definitive in your mind, or more relational? Do you hold them to be absolute or relative? Are they flexible or more set ways of personal identity?

He goes on to say we are set in our ways, defining ourselves much too narrowly.

2. In what ways are you held back by a limited self view, based on past actions, criticisms or judgements you still hold onto as part of your identity? Can you list a few of these clearly, especially the ones you may be aware of which create fear, anxiety, doubt or denial?

In Tibetan Buddhism, daily practice involves being very mindful of impermanence, especially of death. This is not to be morbid or create fear, but to help wake us up to the truth of change, the truth of not being in ultimate control (no one can avoid or put off the time of death), and also to spur us on to make the most meaningful use of our precious human life, which is to awaken to our true nature, to know the deathless state of awareness as our true essence.

3. What are you most fearful of? What makes you anxious, impatient and uncomfortable? In order to prepare to truly let go at the time of leaving this body and life appearances behind, we need to really examine on what might arise to hold us back. Now is a much better time (rather than during our dying process) to become as clear as possible about where we feel most tightly bound, so that we can gently and with practice learn how to live fully and love freely, without clinging.

4. The four elements and eighty superstitions.

Make a list of the four elements, from what you imagine as the most coarse element to the most subtle. Can you list some things you might imagine to be on the list of the eighty superstitions?

