



SPIRITUAL CARE DIRECTIVE

BUDDHIST DECLARATION FOR THE TIME OF DYING

NAME

DATE

MY DHARMA ADVOCATE

Dharma Advocates

1. DHARMA ADVOCATES / DHARMA FRIENDS and their contact information.

I am grateful to have Dharma friends who I have exchanged end of life planning and Spiritual Care Directives. These Dharma Advocates may attend my dying while I am in sickness, during active phases of dying, the moment of death and the days following my death. Doing practice together, in my room or remotely, will steer my mind towards the dharma and the teachings I have received. Some may know my Teacher and may contact him/her to ask what prayers, practice and sponsorships should be done during this time.

1. Dharma Friend: _____

Our dharma connection: _____

Contact Info - Telephone/email: _____

I welcome their support in the following ways: _____

2. Dharma Friend: _____

Our dharma connection: _____

Contact Info - Telephone/email: _____

I welcome their support in the following ways: _____

3. Dharma Friend: _____

Our dharma connection: _____

Contact Info - Telephone/email: _____

I welcome their support in the following ways: _____

4. Dharma Friend: _____

Our dharma connection: _____

Contact Info - Telephone/email: _____

I welcome their support in the following ways: _____

Dharma Box

The contents of my Dharma Box include:

Spiritual Care Directive

Liberation upon sight – Photos of my teachers, thangkas, stupas

Liberation upon touch – Takdrol / Dharani blanket

Liberation upon taste – Mendrup / Dutsi / Vajrasattva pill

Liberation upon smell – Incense powder

Liberation upon hearing - Recordings of chants, practices, etc

Prayer Books

Practice Instructions

A copy of the Tibetan Book of the Dead

Mala

Sur Incense

Kata

Blessed water

Saffron

Candles

Ting-shas (meditation cymbals)

Essential oils – frankincense, lavender

Homeopathics

Chapstick or lip moisteners

Approaching Death

1. CONTACT MY DHARMA FRIENDS

2. CONTACT MY TEACHER AT IMPENDING PASSING AND/OR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING DEATH. I have a Spiritual Teacher, my main guide (root guru), who I request to be notified. Please request prayers while I am sick and dying and the traditional prayers of transference of consciousness (P'howa) at the moment of my death. I also have special relationships with other teachers and it would be auspicious to contact them for support and prayers.

In order to keep the circumstances auspicious, generous and accumulate good merit, please make an offering at the time of these requests to them personally or their organization, monastery, etc. I have made the following offering instructions.

Name of Lama/Teacher: _____

Contact Info: _____

Please have compassion on me with the following request: _____

Offering: _____

Name of Lama/Teacher: _____

Contact Info: _____

Please have compassion on me with the following request: _____

Offering: _____

Name of Lama/Teacher: _____

Contact Info: _____

Please have compassion on me with the following request: _____

Offering: _____

3. CONTACT MY SANGHA CENTER

Primary Contact and Number: _____

Name of Center: _____

Prayer List - Please request that my name be added to the daily Prayer List.

4. THE ENVIRONMENT. The environment is a powerful display that can point the mind towards the dharma. My five senses will be open to this sacred space and familiar experiences can help me access my teachings and the natural state. While dying my mind will become less contained by the body and will merge more with the atmosphere of the room. The space becomes a precious holding environment and it is important to me that it is full of acceptance, presence and love. Our minds may mingle and it will be an opportunity to practice together. My request and preferences are as follows:

- A. SIGHT** - If possible, arrange an altar within sight of my bed on a nightstand or dresser that displays photos of my teacher, the lineage of teachers, the refuge tree, statues, stupas, thangkas that is similar to the altar that has been my meditation seat.
- B. SOUND** - I prefer that the room is either quiet or specific prayers or mantras are being recited. Speaking, reading, chanting, singing, is most welcome at the head of the bed, close to my ear or around the head. As my mind ascends up the central channel, it is better to refrain from drawing my attention downward or towards my feet. 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.
- C. TASTE** - MENDRUP. While I am in the process of dying, please add mendrup to my water and let me drink it if I am able.
- D. SMELL** - The incense in my dharma box is familiar to me and will create a calming state of mind.
- E. TOUCHING** - During the dying process there is deep internal awareness, presence and openness. Awareness is deepening into the central channel as the body is going through the stages of dissolution. Since touch can bring our awareness more exterior, it is often recommended to limit touch. It can be difficult to determine when to refrain from touching. One sign to refrain from touching is when I have become unconscious. I will be in deep practice at this time. I have appointed a Dharma Friend to make the decision when to determine that touch should be limited. 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. Preferences or exceptions may include:

5. **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 being medicated are:

6. **PERSONAL ASPIRATION PRAYER.** Please recite my Personal Aspiration Prayers as often as you like. Not only have I have written these prayers carefully and purposefully, I have recited them often. They will be familiar to me.

7. **PRACTICE REQUESTS.** Listed here are certain practices that I do regularly. I have listed specific instructions from my teacher, ie. P'howa, recordings. Dharma Friends who are familiar with P'howa may chant from a selected text during this time. Rinpoche may be called to perform P'howa or offer prayers he deems necessary over a speaker phone. A recording of Rinpoche doing P'howa may be played near the head area. The practice of tonglen is always a powerful and compassionate offering.

MY PRACTICE REQUESTS AND PREFERENCES ARE:

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

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, infused with compassion and focused on the Dharma. I will be resting in the natural state. My Traditional and Personal Aspiration Prayers are very helpful to me at this time.
- 2. SITTING POSTURE WHILE DYING.** If I have died in sitting meditation, allow me to stay in the position until my body drops naturally.
- 3. 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. Rubbing and tapping this area is very beneficial and may help the process in obtaining a higher rebirth. Please avoid drawing my attention toward my feet.
- 4. LIBERATION UPON SIGHT.** Photos of my teacher within sight of my bed will be very comforting and trigger thoughts of virtue and refuge.
- 5. LIBERATION UPON HEARING.** Please recite or play recordings of my Personal Aspiration Prayers, personal practices/mantras and the instructions from my Teacher. These are familiar to me and will comfort and guide me.

- 6. LIBERATION UPON TASTE.** Please place my Vajrasattva pill upon my tongue.
- 7. LIBERATION UPON SMELL.** Please light the incense powder.
- 8. LIBERATION UPON TOUCH.** Please place the takdrol upon my chest, face up at my heart center.
- 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. PRAYERS AND PRACTICES. At the moment of death, it is auspicious to take the Refuge and Bodhisattva vows. A Dharma Friend may read these aloud. The instructions for dying, practices, may be read near the ear or near the head of my body. Traditional aspiration prayers and dedication would seal this practice.

11. TOUCHING THE BODY AFTER THE LAST BREATH. My Dharma Advocates and Friends have been instructed to look for the certain signs that appear when my consciousness has left the body. These may include my body feeling completely cold, a coldness at my heart, a fluid flowing from my nostrils, or flowing from the crown of my head.

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

___ YES, I request that my Dharma Advocate decide when the signs appear and is appropriate to touch or move my body. Until those signs appear, please do not touch my body if possible.

___ OTHER. State other preferences or exceptions.

12. 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.

13. EMBALMING.

___ Yes, I wish to be embalmed.

___ No, I do not wish to be embalmed.

14. CONTACT MY FUNERAL DIRECTOR:

Name: _____

Contact Info: _____

15. SPONSOR PRAYERS AT _____ (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 with saffron water (add several pinches of saffron to 1/2 gallon of water and steep until golden-orange.) You may also use the essential oils from my Dharma Box. My body may be wrapped in a cotton or linen shroud or clothed in an appropriate outfit. The takdrol may be left on my chest at the heart center. I am so grateful for your care for me at this time and will be infused with the positive, calm state of your minds.
3. **MOVING THE BODY.** If it is possible, please allow my body to remain undisturbed for three days. The body can be placed on a massage table, a covered table, a bed in a special room or bedroom. Dry ice can be used to keep my body cold. Plans should be made in advance if dry ice is to be used.

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

___ OTHER. State other preferences or exceptions.

4. **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 SIGHT.** Keep photos in the environment.
 - B. **LIBERATION UPON HEARING.** Recordings of practices and prayers may be played
 - C. **LIBERATION UPON TASTE.** Please keep the vajrasattva pill upon my tongue.
 - D. **LIBERATION UPON SMELL.** Please light the powder incense.
 - E. **LIBERATION UPON TOUCH.** Please keep my takdrol upon my chest.
5. **PERSONAL ASPIRATION PRAYER.** Please recite my Personal Aspiration Prayer as often as you like. Not only have I have written this prayer carefully and purposefully, I have recited it often. It will be familiar to me.

6. PRACTICES/MANTRAS

7. DEDICATION. I would like to have the merit dedicated to:

8. SPONSOR PRAYERS AT _____ (3 Days Following Death)

These are my last acts of generosity. It is important to me to be of benefit to others, and offer up my suffering on behalf of others who are suffering.

Cremation / Burial

WHAT TO DO WITH MY BODY – FINAL DISPOSITION

I WISH TO BE:

_____ Cremated

_____ Buried

CREMATION. The following 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 at Cremation:

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. You may ask to have ashes brought to sacred places. Or you may invite your family to bring them somewhere special. Or, you may ask your teacher to specify which is best.

BURIAL. My instructions are as follows.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS

49 Days

1. **PRACTICE OF SUR OFFERING or SANG OFFERING.** See attached instructions.

2. **PRACTICES BY REQUEST.** Practices may be done every 7 days until the 49th day.

3. **SPONSOR PRAYERS AT _____ (EVERY 7TH DAY AND AT 49 DAYS)**

4. **CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MY TEACHER, SPIRITUAL CENTER, ETC.**

Dharma Will

WHAT TO DO WITH DHARMA ITEMS

Dharma items require special care and may include all representations such as: statues, photos, stupas, thangkas, pechas, ornaments, malas and texts (both personal practice texts and books). Some of these items may be secret or have incredibly deep and meaningful connections. It is important to clearly identify these pieces to ensure that they are carefully respected and protected and that they are passed on to other Dharma Friends or your Dharma Center. This is especially important if your family is not Buddhist and may not be aware or understand the significance of these items.

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

Item

To whom they are assigned or given

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Execution

I, _____ of _____, being of sound mind, make this SPIRITUAL
(Print name) (City)

ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVE, a Buddhist Declaration for the Time of Dying, and request that it be honored by all Dharma Advocates, Dharma Friends, Family, Friends, Caregivers, Nurses, Primary Physicians, Doctors, Lawyers and Funeral Directors.

Executed at _____, in _____, on _____
(City) (State) (Date)

(Signature)

STATEMENT OF WITNESSES I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of California (1) that the individual who signed or acknowledged this Spiritual Care Directive is personally known to me, or that the individual's identity was proven to me by convincing evidence, (2) that the individual signed or acknowledged this Spiritual Care Directive in my presence, (3) that the individual appears to be of sound mind and under no duress, fraud, or undue influence, (4) that I am not a person appointed as an agent by this directive, and (5) that I am not the individual's health care provider, an employee of the individual's health care provider, the operator of a community care facility, an employee of an operator of a community care facility, the operator of a residential care facility for the elderly, nor an employee of an operator of a residential care facility for the elderly.

FIRST WITNESS

_____ on _____
(First Witness Signature) (Date)

_____ address _____
(Printed Name of First Witness)

SECOND WITNESS

_____ on _____
(Second Witness Signature) (Date)

_____ address _____
(Printed Name of Second Witness)

References

This SPIRITUAL CARE DIRECTIVE

has been evolved by Rhonda LoPresti of Peacefully Prepared
from an incredible weekend teaching with Paloma Landry, 2014

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

Rhonda LoPresti at 619-200-5433

Rhonda@peacefully-prepared.com

www.peacefully-prepared.com

Resources

Bardo Guidebook Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche

Dying with Confidence by Anyen Rinpoche

How to Help Your Loved Ones Enjoy Death and Go Happily to Their Next Rebirth by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Living is Dying: How to Prepare for Death, Dying and Beyond Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse

Preparing to Die by Andrew Holecek

The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying by Sogyal Rinpoche