

My Personal Death Plan

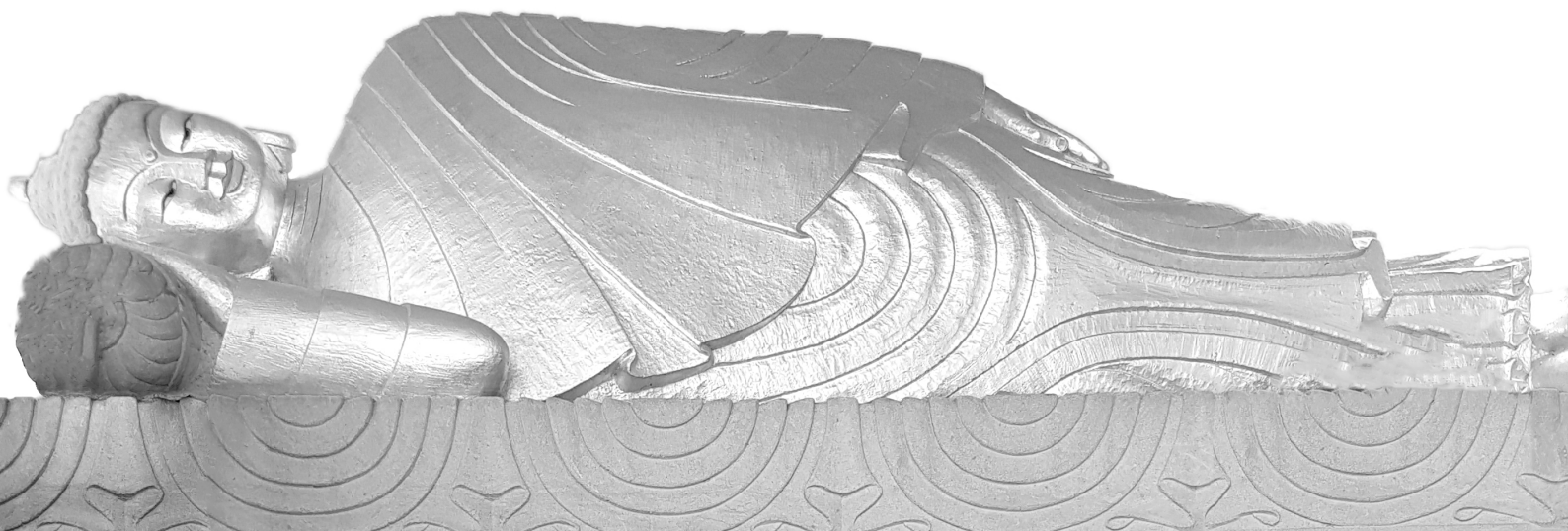
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Member of the Buddhist Healthcare Chaplaincy Trust

On behalf of

Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds and FPMT UK

What I would like my family, friends and Buddhist Community to do before, during and after my death, including my funeral plan.



Who is this document for?

This document has been compiled for Buddhists in the Tibetan Gelugpa Tradition with spiritual advice from Lama Zopa Rinpoche and who wish to plan for their own death, and to share their final wishes with friends, family and local authorities.

How this document came about

As a Buddhist Chaplain I am well aware how life can end with no prior warning and with that in mind I decided to do my own Death Plan, so my family understands my wishes and have all the information they need. As a result of that I thought it would be good for Jamyang to have a document that any of its followers could use with ease.

Preparing for death

Here in the West our culture tends to push death away and we are reluctant to talk about it. Conversations about death bring about the reality of our own mortality. As a result, death is a subject we tend to ignore let alone prepare for. As Buddhists we are taught that nothing in life is permanent including ourselves. We attend workshops about Death and Dying and yet still very few of us actually do anything to prepare for it. The benefits of preparing for our own death are that we develop peace of mind that our wishes and practical needs are recorded and taken care of so that at the time of death we have as few regrets as possible and have peace of mind.

Friends and family also benefit from your preparations by having a clear understanding of your wishes and having practical information to hand during a difficult period for them.

This document will help you plan and share your wishes and practical requests.

How to use this document

Use this document as a template and having considered your choices when preparing for your death, it's hoped that this document will help you to record your wishes clearly and alleviate any anxiety for you and those left behind.

Before you complete the document, please read and consider the section on Resuscitation and Organ Donation, which you may wish to discuss with your family or friends to avoid any confusion in the future. Once you have completed and signed, the various appropriate sections can then be stored securely or given to your next of kin and copies made for friends, executors, hospital staff etc.

Please consider this document as a template and use whatever parts of it that is suitable for your particular needs and circumstances.

Once completed, this document may hold highly personal and confidential information, therefore please ensure you keep this document in a secure location so that it may be accessed when needed.

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Resuscitation

You should consider making a Living Will in the event you may require resuscitation and it should be discussed with family and friends so there is a clear understanding of what to do in such an event.

- ☐ I wish to be resuscitated
- ☐ I do not wish to be resuscitated

In the event that you do not need or make a living will, record below the conditions under which you may wish/not wish to be resuscitated.

.....

.....

Useful Links:

Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/legal-issues/advance-decisions

My Living Will

www.mylivingwill.org.uk

Organ donation

- ☐ I do not want to donate my organs
- ☐ I want to donate my organs

Please note: If organ donation is requested please ensure that following any hospital procedures, please ensure my Mala (prayer beads) and Paper Mantra and or any holy objects are put back in the correct position on the body.

To My Family

Important

Hospitals and Funeral Directors have to work within the Law and have some procedures that cannot be altered, and some flexibility may be needed but please try and keep as much as possible to my wishes.

In order to spare you unnecessary worry about any difficult decisions with regard to arrangements at the time of my death, I have given the matter much thought. I have recorded my preferences here, which are based on my beliefs as a Buddhist in the Tibetan tradition.

The areas highlighted with an asterisk * indicate aspects that are really important to me and I would ask that you to abide by my wishes to the best of your ability. The rest, are simply preferences.

You may not agree with some of the decisions I have made, but please know that the prayers and spiritual care during the dying process and immediately following my death are believed to be a supremely important for Buddhists. These are the choices I have made based on my personal beliefs.

As I go, know that I love and cherish all of you and thank you for being a part of my life even if I may have never made that clear enough to you.

When I am dying, or as soon as possible after my death, please contact my local Buddhist Centre to advise my teachers and other Lineage Lamas if possible.

With love and affection

Signature:

Date:

Final moments

When I am dying, or as soon as possible after my death, please contact my local Buddhist Centre to advise my teachers and other Lineage Lamas if possible. Also request them to ask the chaplain to assist before and after my death.

Keep the room as peaceful as possible and try not to disturb the environment with lots of noise etc. and also try to keep conversations about happier times and positive situations.

Please request prayers to be said and to included me in prayer dedications at my local Buddhist Centre

Buddhist Centre contact details:

.....

.....

My teachers name and contact details:

.....

.....

After death

Please request for the Prayers and Meditations on pages 26-28 to be read at the Buddhist Centre, by a Chaplain or by the family and friends. Please request my local Buddhist Centre to ask for a chaplain to assist before and after my death.

Also please request prayers via my local Buddhist Centre or Chaplain who can request the office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to say prayers. At my death please tap the crown of my head 3 times gently and gently pull the hair on my crown.

Place the printed Mantra sheet face down on my chest so it is touching my skin.

Please recite the following Mantra immediately after my death

Medicine Buddha Mantra Recitation

OM NAMO BAGAWATAY BEKANZAY GURU BAIDURYA / PRABA RADZA
YA / TATAGATAYA / ARHATAY SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TA YA TA / OM
BEKANZAY BEKANZAY MAHA BEKANZAY BEKANZAY / RADZA
SAMUDGATAY SOHA

Recite as many times as possible.

Please see pages 26-28 for the recommended prayers and where to find them.

You are welcome to use the prayers on my behalf or you can ask my Buddhist centre or chaplain to attend to them on my behalf.

It is recommended prayers are said for 49 days following my death.

Information for nurses and caring professionals

Caring for a Buddhist in the Tibetan tradition

At the end of their life

Name:

Date of Birth: __ / __ / ____

NHS No:

Caring for a Buddhist coming towards the end of their life is no different to how you would treat others; all beings should be treated with dignity and respect.

Dying is the most important event in a Buddhist life and ensuring peace and quiet is essential so that prayers and practices can be performed by the person passing away or by the Buddhist Chaplain, family or friends.

Please bear the following points in mind:

Buddhists believe that consciousness continues after the body dies. The first 3 days following death are considered to be particularly important, whereby the subtle process of the mind disengaging from the body is taking place. It is generally believed that the deceased mental continuum can take up to 3 days to leave the body.

Please contact my next of kin to request them to contact my Tibetan Buddhist Centre for prayers to be said, if death is known to be close, or as soon as possible after death. Prayers done at the bedside before or as soon as possible after death would be ideal.

The Buddhist Centre contact details:

Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds - Tel: 07866 760 460

After death please leave the body undisturbed for 4 hours.

A doctor may need to touch the body to certify death, but request that nurses delay laying out the body until prayers have been said.

Once prayers are said, the body can be laid out and moved. Only the minimum should be done, and the crown of the head should be the first place touched is gently pulled. It is recommended the crown of the head is tapped gently 3 times and then the hair on the crown of the head.

If there are red blessing strings around the neck, arm or wrist or if wearing jewellery such as Buddha images or items containing mantra etc., please do not cut or remove these.

If holy images have been placed on the body, please replace them in the correct positions once the body has been moved (images face down touching the skin). There may also be additional holy objects with the person such as Buddha images, sacred texts or jewellery containing blessed mantras etc. Please keep these clean and with the body.

Buddhists believe that it is possible to help the person who has just died by maintaining a tranquil and compassionate environment around them wherever possible. Friends and family may want to sit by the body to pray. Please allow as for long as is necessary.

If a post-mortem is required, please ask for it to be postponed for 3 ½ days if possible. The Buddhist Chaplain can do this for you if you ask him should it be required. If papers or Holy images have been placed on the body, please replace them in the correct positions once the body has been moved (images face down touching the skin).

Where there is no family to arrange a funeral, please inform social services that the undertaker should simply lift the body into the coffin (assuming that you have washed it already) and that there should be no embalming. Cremation or burial should not take place until at least 3 ½ days after passing away.

Thank you.

Information for Undertakers

Dealing with the body of a Buddhist in the Tibetan tradition

Name:

Date of Birth: __ / __ / ____

Buddhists believe that consciousness continues after the body dies. It is generally believed that the deceased mental continuum can take up to 3 days to leave the body.

The first 3 days following death are considered to be particularly important, whereby the subtle process of the mind disengaging from the body is taking place.

Please bear the following points in mind:

Where the body has been washed and dressed by the nurses, please just lift the body into the coffin and avoid unnecessary contact or movement. If the body does need to be washed, please just do the absolute minimum and the crown of the head should be the first place touched.

If there are red blessing strings around the neck, arm or wrist or if wearing jewellery such as Buddha images or items containing mantras etc., please do not cut or remove these.

If holy images have been placed on the body, please replace them in the correct positions once the body has been moved, (images face down touching the skin) after putting the deceased in the coffin. There may also be additional pieces to be placed in the coffin (holy objects) such as Buddha images, sacred texts or jewellery containing blessed mantras etc.

Please refrigerate the body and do not embalm it, unless requested.

Some Buddhists would prefer not to be embalmed, the reason being in the Himalayan countries it was and still is traditional for Monks to have a sky burial. This is where the body is taken up the lower of the mountain and is stripped and is consumed by wildlife. This is seen as a final act of compassion. Many western Buddhists try and remain true to the traditional ways. It is not compulsory but would ask for your compliance. If not embalmed, a speedy completion of the cremation after the 3 ½ days would be required.

Buddhists believe that it is possible to help the person who has just died by maintaining a tranquil and compassionate environment around them wherever possible. Friends and family may want to sit by the body to pray so please allow as long as is necessary.

If possible, the Chapel of Rest should have no religious symbols other than Buddhist.

Cremation or burial should not take place until at least 3 ½ days have elapsed from the moment of death.

Thank you

Practical arrangements

I wish to be cremated at
Crematorium

I wish to be buried at Cemetery

☐ I have a pre-paid funeral plan with:

.....

Ref: Tel:

☐ I do not have a pre-paid funeral plan but a preferred funeral director:

.....

Ref: Tel:

☐ Body to be embalmed

☐ Body not to be embalmed

My preferred coffin is:

.....

Prior to funeral, my body to rest at:

.....

☐ My ashes to be scattered at:

.....

☐ My ashes to be interred at:

.....

Funeral Arrangements

I would like the funeral service to be held at:

.....

- ☐ Buddhist Images only ☐ No religious images
☐ Other religious images acceptable

Person to officiate if available:

.....

To include these prayers:

.....

.....

Poems/Readings:

.....

Music:

.....

.....

- ☐ Flowers ☐ No Flowers

Donations to:

.....

Funeral tea/Wake to be held afterwards at:

.....

Other useful information

Where to find my:

Will:

.....

Birth certificate:

.....

Marriage/Civil Partnership certificate:

.....

Pensions:

.....

Address book:

.....

My email address/social media account is:

.....

Password:

.....

Details for registering my death

Full name:

.....

Previous names:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Date of Birth: ___ / ___ / ____

Place of Birth:

Occupation:

National Insurance Number:

Religion:

Marital/Civil Partnership status:

Mother's Maiden Name:

Fathers Name:

Fathers Occupation:

NHS Doctor & Address:

.....

.....

Tel:

Next of Kin:

.....

Tel:

Partners Details:

Name:

.....

Date of Birth: __ / __ / ____

Occupation:

Tel:

Lodgement of this document

I have lodged a copy of this document with:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Signature:

Date:

Things to attend to after my death

A list of the following would be useful for family, friends or Executors that have to deal with things after my death. You may fill in the details below:

Registrar of Deaths, Marriages and Births: Address and Tel.

State Pension Details: Reference details and Tel.

Life/Death insurance policy: Reference details, Addresses and Tel.

Private Pension Companies: Reference/Policy details, Addresses and Tel.

Income Tax Office: Tax Reference and Tel.

Local Water Supplier: Reference details, Addresses and Tel.

Local Council (Tax): Reference details, Addresses and Tel.

TV Licensing: Reference details, Addresses and Tel.

Gas Supplier: Reference details, Addresses and Tel.

Electricity Supplier: Reference/Policy details, Addresses and Tel.

Telephone/Broadband Provider: Reference details, Addresses and Tel.

House Insurance: Reference/Policy details, Addresses and Tel.

All Bank Accounts: Names, Addresses and Account Numbers.

Boiler Contracts: Reference/Policy details, Addresses and Tel.

Alarm System: Code, Reference details, Addresses and Tel.

Car Log Book and Insurance details for transference or sale.

Add any other details needed to attend to:

Some accounts you may deal with online so remember to leave Website details, Social Media account details, passwords etc.

Further support and resources

The following resources will be useful when completing this document as well as for the loved ones left behind.

List of recommended books:

How to Help your loved ones Enjoy Death and go Happily to their Next Rebirth by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

(Available as a Free download at www.fpmt.org)

Heart Practices for Death and Dying by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Heart Advice for Death and Dying by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Other Resources:

FPMT Website

www.fpmt.org/edu-news/prepare-for-death-and-dying

FPMT Shop

www.shop.fpmt.org

Death Cafe Website

www.deathcafe.com

NHS - Organ donation and religious beliefs

A guide to organ donation and Buddhist beliefs

www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Prayers

It has not been possible to include the necessary suggested prayers in this document due to their size.

All the recommended prayers are available as a free pdf called **How to Help your loved ones Enjoy Death and go Happily to their Next Rebirth** by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Download at www.fpmt.org. This book also has more information on the death process and is highly recommended reading.

Or in these published books:

Heart Practices for Death and Dying by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Heart Advice for Death and Dying by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

If you need help with finding or reciting prayers, please contact your local FPMT Buddhist centre.

Prayers before and at the time of death

Medicine Buddha Mantra Recitation

OM NAMO BAGAWATAY BEKANZAY / GURU BAIDURYA / PRABA RADZA
YA / TATAGATAYA / ARHATAY SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TA YA TA / OM
BEKANZAY BEKANZAY MAHA BEKANZAY BEKANZAY / RADZA
SAMUDGATAY SOHA

Recite as many times as possible.

My personal practices to be carried out before and at the time of my death

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Prayers for after my death

Friends or family can also recite these after my death or they can be recited after I have passed away for **49 days** by my local Buddhist Centre or Chaplain.

King of prayers

Medicine Buddha wish fulfilling Jewel

The exalted Zung of Norbu Sangpo

Namgyalma Mantras

Medicine Buddha Sadhana

Eight prayers to benefit the dead

Rinchhen Tsugtor 'Verse for the dead and dying

Ten Powerful Mantra's For the Time of Death

Tonglen Practice

My personal practices to be carried out after my death

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Any specific personal daily practices either written or recorded will need to be obtained/downloaded from a relevant source if possible by the individual, and then made available to friends, family or the Buddhist centre if appropriate.

Liberation Box, Protection Tool for a Fortunate Rebirth

Normally just before death, a Buddhist Chaplain would be available to tend the dying person. In the unusual event that a Buddhist Chaplain is unavailable, a family member or friend can borrow a Liberation Box from your local FPMT centre Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds along with contact details of their Chaplain/s.

These boxes can also be used when the dying person is at home or in a Hospice.

There are booklets within the box that give advice from Lama Zopa Rinpoche. This advice may be slightly different to the details in the main body of this document as this is written mainly for people who are dying in Hospitals and Hospices, also the information in the Liberation box will be updated from time to time. The Liberation Box is more suited to deaths at home or in a hospice setting and this documents also covers deaths in hospitals.

These materials are reusable so we would ask you to take good care of them and to return them to the Centre, once prayers have been done etc.

This collection of tools for the time of death has been assembled according to Lama Zopa Rinpoche's advice, and contains powerful methods for ensuring a fortunate rebirth for those who have died or are in the process of dying.

"All centres should have this box, in preparation, so when suddenly a student dies you know what to do, what practices to do and what to use; so you don't have to worry and are already prepared."

– Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The Liberation Box includes:

- An easy to follow instruction booklet for what to recite, what recordings to play, and what to place on the body of the dying or deceased person
- Recitations for Alleviating Pain MP3
- Recitations for the Time of Death MP3
- Liberation Card for a Dying Person to look upon
- Large Namgyalma mantra card for the dying person to look upon
- Stupa filled with the Four Dharmakaya Relic mantras to be placed on the crown (approx. 6.5 inches x 3 inches)
- Small Namgyalma mantra card, The Ten Powerful Mantras, and the Short text to be placed on the body
- Phowa pill made by the late Geshe Lama Konchog of Kopan Monastery to be placed on the crown
- Blessing string to be placed on the chest or upper torso of the dying or deceased person

The tools in this kit can be reused to assist others at the time of death.

The books Heart Advice for Death and Dying and Heart Practices for Death and Dying are optional companions to this kit. Heart Advice for Death and Dying includes an explanation by Lama Zopa Rinpoche of the five powers at the time of death and other essential advice, as well as an MP3 CD audio course led by Ven. Sangye Khadro on death and dying. Heart Practices for Death and Dying includes the most important practices and prayers for the time of death.

Printed Mantra sheet face down on my chest so it is touching my skin [on the following page 31]

Additional Notes

Leave a Legacy

Could you support the next generation of Buddhism in the North of England?

A living legacy

A gift in your Will is one of the most special and enduring ways that you can support the development of a living tradition for future generations. This could be either to support our work in general, or as a memorial in your name, or that of a loved one. The use of the funds can also be for specific projects according to your wishes.

How to make a gift in your Will

A legacy to Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds is exempt from inheritance tax. You can donate a fixed amount, an item or specific gift, such as property or shares, or what is left after other gifts have been given out (the Residue of your estate). These opportunities depend upon careful will drafting, which is best left to a qualified solicitor or will-writer. Whether you have already written your Will, or planning to do so, it is a simple process to include a gift to Jamyang Leeds. The following legal wording can be issued to your solicitor:

To leave a share of your estate:

"I give [%] of my residuary estate free of all taxes to...

To leave a fixed sum of money:

"I give the sum of [£] free of all taxes to...

*... Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds, [Insert JBCL address] for (*delete as appropriate) *the general use of the centre / *the specific use [please specify], and I declare that the receipt of the Director or other authorised officer of Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors and trustees."*

See our website for more info: www.jamyangleeds.co.uk/legacies

“You can see more and more how much of an emergency it is to have such a centre, especially regarding the present situation, because it shows the whole unmistakable path to liberation and happiness, the unmistakable cause of happiness and of the path to liberation, the unmistakable cause to the path to great liberation, full enlightenment, in other words, how to get out of suffering. What is the cause of suffering, how to get rid of that, is never explained and taught in schools, colleges, or universities.”

– Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Credits:

Firstly I would like to Honour the Late Chöje Akong Tulku Rinpoche of the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism for writing the booklets “Funeral Advice for Buddhists in the Tibetan Tradition” and writing “When I am gone”.

Also Ani Lhamo from Samye Ling who has kindly given permission to use relevant parts of the booklets to be re-written for our use at Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds and FPMT UK.

Also to Jay Simpson from Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds who kindly help guide me, provide resources and to edit this document.



www.jamyangleeds.co.uk

Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds

Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds was founded in 1996 under the spiritual direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Our aim is to provide a peaceful place for meditation and a community of support for the study and practice of Buddhism. We honour the work of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and are affiliated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), which is part of the Gelugpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

www.fpmt.org.uk

*The Foundation for the Preservation
of the Mahayana Tradition in the UK*

As the home of authentic Buddhist teachings within the Tibetan Gelugpa tradition in the UK, we are part of the international Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) family and support His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

We are a network of Buddhist Centres, Projects, Study Groups and a Retreat Centre who work together to fulfil the wishes of our Founder Lama Thubten Yeshe and Spiritual Director Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche.

Visit our web site at www.fpmt.org.uk to find a centre near you or a study program suited to your needs.

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition in the UK - 4 Havercroft, Leeds, LS12 5AB, OR (+44) 7966792184.

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www.fpmt.org.uk