

A Tibetan View  
of  
Death, Dying, and Rebirth



Presented by the Monks of  
Labrang Tashi Kyil Monastery

Greetings! Welcome Everyone!

## Death is Natural



To a Buddhist, death is as natural as any other act of nature.

A person's death is to be accepted as a natural, although sad, event.

## The Process of Dying . . .



Like a Butter Lamp Ready to Die Out

As a person dies he will undergo a process of dissolution.

He will feel heavy. The earth element dissolves into water.

He will feel faint. Everything is drying, as the water element dissolves into fire.

He will feel cold.  
The fire element dissolves into air.

He will lose all touch with the world.  
The air element dissolves into ether.

The lamp goes out. Now is the moment of death.

## Wandering in the Bardo



The Hub of the Wheel of Life

After a person dies, his subtle consciousness goes to an intermediate state known as the “Bardo.”

In this state, he undergoes a variety of experiences. He should be unafraid, awake, and alert.

This picture shows the hub of the wheel of life that contains the three poisons: ignorance--a pig, greed--a rooster, and hatred--a snake.

It is your actions of the three poisons that cause the cycle of death, dying, and rebirth.

## Luminous Buddha Nature



. . . May Darken

Your innate Buddha Nature is luminous like a clear sky, but the dark clouds of the three poisons can obscure it.

## In the Bardo



Wandering Begins in the Clear Light

The stages in the Bardo begin with an experience of the Clear Light.

The Clear Light Mind is your Buddha Nature and leads you to the state of Enlightenment, a state of bliss that is free of suffering.

If you recognize that the Clear Light is the nature of our own mind that is devoid of any self, you will become instantly Liberated.

It is egoless. The moment you recognize this reality, liberation is yours.

If not, you will wander in the Bardo.

## Peaceful and Wrathful Hallucinations



If your consciousness does not “merge” with the Clear Light, it moves to visions of “Peaceful Energies” and then onto visions of “Wrathful Energies.”

These are projections of your own mind.

All of the positive and negative emotional materials, accumulated during your lifetime, take their turn in coming to the surface of your consciousness.

## Bardo Hallucinations – Projections of the Mind



Don't Be Seduced or Afraid

Don't be seduced by the pleasant visions you see.

Don't be afraid of the terrifying visions and bright lights you will see. You must not attach to these hallucinations.

If you fail to recognize that these are projections of your own being, you will begin the rebirth process that your karma dictates.



## Karma



Your karma follows you, just as your shadow follows you. Karma is not “fate.” It is “action.” The fruits of that action are either good deeds or bad deeds.

Karma is imprinted on your consciousness that moves from one form to another, just as a flame from a candle may light another candle.

As you wander in the Bardo, your karma dictates where in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth you will be reborn—so that you can correct the hatred, and greed, and ignorance you have previously acted upon.

## Man and Woman Embracing



As you prepare to take rebirth in the human realm, you will see a man and woman coupling and you will enter the womb.

Your rebirth has begun.

## Twelve Links of Dependent Origination



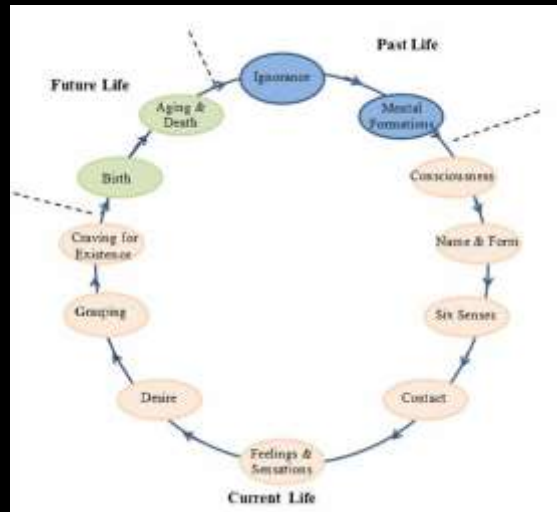
We have described what happened to you in the Bardo.

However, as you go from one life to another, there is a process called the “Twelve Links of Dependent Origination.”

We will explain this process. Symbols of the Twelve Links encircle this wheel.

In the center of the wheel is the hub that contains the three poisons of ignorance, hatred and greed. These are the karmic actions that have caused your rebirth.

## Diagram of the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination



This is a diagram of the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination as pictured in the previous slide.

Two of the links are associated with Past Life: Ignorance and Mental Formations or Karma.

Eight of the links are associated with Current Life: Consciousness, Name and Form, Six Senses, Contact, Feelings, Desire, Grasping, Craving.

Two of the links are associated with Future Life: Birth, then Aging and Death

The following slides will explain each of these links.

## Link 1 – Ignorance



Wandering Blindly

The First Link is Ignorance.

As you wandered blindly in the Bardo, you were not aware that you were devoid of an independent self.

You were ignorant of your true Buddha Nature -- selflessness.

## Link 2 – Mental Formations or Karma



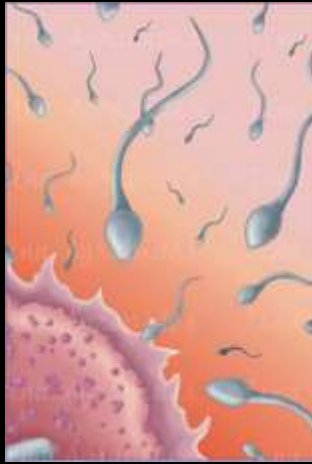
Our Actions Create Our Rebirth

The Second Link is Mental Formations or Karma

Karma shapes our rebirth.

Please know that your actions create your karma just as a potter shapes a vase.

## Link 3 – Consciousness

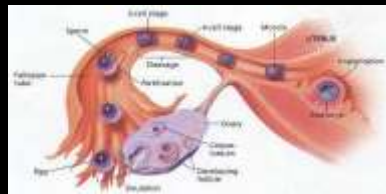


The Mindstream Connects with New Being

The Third Link is Consciousness.

At the act of conception, the mindstream connects with the new being.

## Link 4 – Name and Form



The Embryo is Implanted

The Fourth Link is Name and Form.

This is depicted as a person in a boat traveling down the river of life.

“Name” refers to Mind.

“Form” refers to Body.

At this link, your identity is formed.



## Link 5 – The Six Senses



Via Perception

The Fifth Link is the Six Senses.

Your fetus continues to develop.

Now you have your six senses.

You are like an empty house with six open windows.

## Link 6 – Contact



The Senses Allow You to Contact

The Sixth Link is Contact.

Since you have now developed senses, you can be in contact with other phenomena.

## Link 7 – Feeling and Sensation



With Feeling Comes Pain

The Seventh Link is Feeling and Sensation.

With contact, comes feeling.

This is shown as a man with an arrow in his eye, since feelings cause pain.

Now your fetus displays signs of feeling.

## Link 8 – Desire



But Nothing is Permanent

The Eighth Link is Desire.

Feelings give rise to attachments.

You cling to these and forget that nothing is permanent, similar to a child sucking on its thumb.

## Link 9 – Grasping



Aggression May Enter

The Ninth Link is Grasping.

You continue to cling to the illusion of an independent self.

Your dependence becomes more aggressive

## Link 10 – Craving for Existence



Energy for the Seed of Rebirth Consciousness

The Tenth Link is Craving for Existence or Becoming.

Feeling will condition craving.  
Craving will condition grasping.

And grasping conditions the continual actions of becoming--creating the energy which is the seed for rebirth consciousness.

Because of these karmic actions, again there is re-birth.

## Link 11 – Rebirth



A New Chance

The Eleventh Link is Rebirth.

Finally, your new birth occurs.

You have a new opportunity to achieve a state of enlightenment, both for yourself and for all sentient beings.

After you are liberated, you may choose to return to the realm of suffering and guide others to reach enlightenment.

Such a person is called a “Bodhisattva.”

## Link 12 – Aging and Death



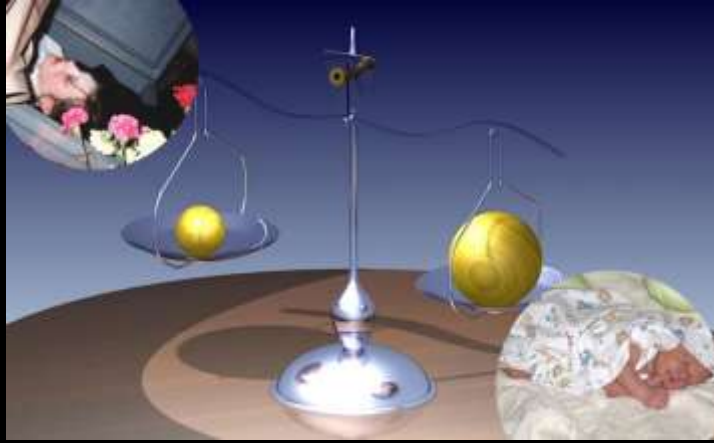
The Twelfth Link is Aging and Death.

Life is short. All too soon, you will move away from childhood and begin to wrinkle and age.

Death visits you once more.



# Death, Karma, Rebirth



So It Begins Again . . . Death, Karma, Rebirth

And So, It Begins Again . . .



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