

Chapter 8

DEATH AS TRANSFORMATION: *THE GREAT LIBERATION*

The Tibetan Buddhists are the only ones at present who have a really large number of people who have attained to extraordinary heights in meditation and contemplation.

Thomas Merton

In his book, *Life Ascending*, the biochemist and popular science writer, Nick Lane, set out what for him are 'the ten great inventions of evolution'.¹ These begin with the origin of life, the emergence of DNA, photosynthesis, and the complex cell, continue with the development of sex, movement, sight, and hot blood, and conclude with the inventions of consciousness and death. Consciousness and death are not traditionally the domain of natural science, though neuro-science is now investigating consciousness. The idea that death, however, might be one of evolution's most inventive creations is a novel one which the human sciences themselves have been reluctant to examine, except in terms of our human response to it.

Lane does not consider the issue of the "invention" of matter - and the universe - in the first place, nor the stranger question whether death might have invented evolution rather than the other way round, but he does introduce the idea that we might begin to look scientifically at death. Science, as he says in the epilogue to his book, is a very human form of knowledge and he quotes from Jacob Bronowski, whose scientific and non-dogmatic spirit informs Lane's work: "We are always on the brink of the known; we always feel forward for what is to be hoped. Every judgement in science stands on the edge of error, and is personal." To be on the brink of the known is also to be on the brink of the unknown. Hence death, as "the great unknown" – and the source of the known - is an obvious subject for scientific enquiry.

The Tibetans certainly thought so. Robert Thurman has written about their “science of death” in his own translation of, and commentary on, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.² As the first Western Tibetan Buddhist monk he is well-qualified to write about this from a Western perspective. In another book, *Inner Revolution*, he has described the minds and methods of the “enlightenment scientists” who had developed the wisdom of Buddhist traditions for over a thousand years and suggests that the Tibetans had plumbed the inner world of mind to a depth and degree we in the West are only recently becoming aware of.³ Whereas our astronauts have explored the outer reaches – and beyond - of the Earth’s physical atmosphere, Tibet’s “psychonauts” – Thurman’s term - had researched the inner world of mind and spirit and, by means of their contemplative “scientific” discipline, emerged with insights about the nature of life and death unknown to our human, let alone our natural sciences.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead

I hope that the profound insights contained in this work will be a source of inspiration and support to many interested people around the world, as they have been in my own culture.

The Dalai Lama

The book we know in the West as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is an ancient text with its origins in classical India. Although it is a manual for helping people to die - and explaining what happens to us when we are dead - it is also a book about how to live with the vital truth of one’s mortality since this knowledge, it claims, leads not to despair but to liberation and, paradoxically, to immortality. It may be no coincidence that this text became known to the modern western world in the early twentieth century, less than ten years after the end of the Great War and in a decade when people were looking for light to be cast on the great unknowns of death and the unconscious.

Freud published *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1920 and Heidegger, *Being and Time* in 1927. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, also published coincidentally in 1927,

comprised a translation into English of only a part of the original Tibetan text and was edited by an American scholar, W.Y.Evans-Wentz. ⁴ It was one of the first examples of Tibetan literature to be translated and widely read in the western world. Evans Wentz chose the title because of the comparison with *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, popular at the time, but it is a very different kind of book. Three other translations have been published since 1927, one by Francesca Freemantle and Chogyam Trungpa in 1975, Thurman's in 1995, and the most recent which is the complete, and authoritative version, translated by Gyurme Dorje and edited by Graham Coleman in 2005. ⁵ The latter has an introductory commentary by the Dalai Lama, who also provided a foreword to Thurman's edition. The actual Tibetan title is *Bardo Thoedal*, translated, as the later versions point out, as *The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States*. I prefer to refer to it by its correct title rather than as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

The Great Liberation was written some twelve hundred years ago by Padmasambhava, the Indian sage who brought Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth and ninth centuries CE. Perhaps because of the persecution of Buddhists at that time he hid the text and it was only rediscovered and "revealed" by Karma Lingpa in the fourteenth century. On one level it is a book which describes what happens to a person when he dies and is intended to be read as a guide both to the dying and to the dead as he enters the *bardo* - or intermediate state - between death and rebirth. But it is much more than this. Francesca Freemantle, in her recent study of the book, *Luminous Emptiness*, represents it as "a book of the living", a book for the living about this life: "The ideas, the visions, the insights it contains can have no genuine significance for us if we approach them only as descriptions of what happens after death, and if we do not understand they apply to us here and now in our everyday lives". ⁶

And in her own opening chapter she quoted Trungpa's introduction to their 1975 translation where he declares it could as well be entitled the *Tibetan Book of Birth*. According to Trungpa, "The book is not based on death as such, but on a completely different concept of death." Its whole point is "the fundamental principle of birth and death recurring constantly in this life." The processes of dissolution and coming into

being are continually at work in every moment of life. Buddhists consider that nothing is permanent, fixed, or solid, including the self. As Freemantle puts it:

The sense of self in each one of us, the “I”, is being born and dying at every moment. The whole of existence, the entire world of our experience, is appearing and disappearing every moment.... Whatever happens to us after death is simply a continuation of what is happening to us now in this life....⁷

This is, perhaps, strange for us to hear, brought up, as we are, in a secular, materialist tradition, and, certainly, the descriptions and instructions in *The Great Liberation* are, as the American counsellor for the dying, Stephen Levine, sensibly suggests, culture-specific, and need to be considered in the light of our own belief systems and customs.⁸ *The Great Liberation* does contain the profoundest teachings of Tantric mysticism, otherwise known as *Atiyoga*, or Highest Yoga Tantra, and is especially prized by the most enlightened adepts, including the Dalai Lama. Perhaps because of this, we think of it as mysterious and exotic, but it was also written with “ordinary” people in mind. In fact there are striking parallels between Buddhist practices - particularly Tibetan - and our own psychotherapies. Carl Jung, who wrote a psychological commentary to the 1960 Evans-Wentz edition, described it as his constant companion.⁹

The Tibetan Diaspora

The child who dwells inside us trusts that there are wise men somewhere who know the truth.

Cselaw Milosz

The Great Liberation was a significant cultural event for the Western world for it was the first of many more translations of Tibetan Buddhist teaching texts to come later in the century. This was made possible as a result of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in the late nineteen fifties and early sixties. The Chinese killed over a million Tibetans, many of them monks, and destroyed thousands of monasteries in the name of modernity. The Dalai Lama led the movement of exiled lamas over the Himalayas where he eventually set up his headquarters and government-in-exile in Dharamsala

in Northern India. From here the Tibetan teaching diaspora has filtered across the world. While in the Middle Ages Buddhism moved east from India at walking and camel speed along the Silk Road to China, Mongolia, Tibet, and Japan, it now flies west along our aviation routes throughout Europe, the Americas, and the rest of the world.

As Jeffrey Paine recounts in his book, *“Re-Enchantment”* - the story of Tibetan culture arriving in the West - there was a remarkable conjunction of medieval monks and the young generation in ‘sixties America. ¹⁰ Wondering what they were going to do with themselves after their expulsion from Tibet the lamas in exile, who had grown up never knowing or hearing of America, began lecturing and actually attracting American students by the hundreds and the thousands and, as Paine writes, “To win a place in the modern world those Tibetans had to cross a thousand years of religious development and do it in double time. In effect they recapitulated the history of religion.....in a single generation. Nothing quite like this has happened before, and with no other indigenous religions left intact, nothing like it will happen ever again”. As Joseph Campbell put it: “If a European scholar-monk of the period of, say, Abelard, were to appear in today’s New York....the miracle would be scarcely more remarkable or important for the students of political and religious history”. The same might now be also said of the students of psychology. As Paine remarks, the historian, Arnold Toynbee, declared that “The coming of Buddhism to the West may well prove to be the most important event of the twentieth century” and Einstein, in reflecting that religion will have to cope with modern scientific needs in the future and “should transcend a personal God and avoid dogma and theology”, added that Buddhism answers to this description. ¹¹

Toynbee and Einsteins’ remarks suggest that the phenomenon of the spread of Tibetan Buddhist teachings is far more than a fad. In fact there is now a body of Western-born Tibetan speakers, translators, commentators, and teachers who in the last twenty years or so have contributed to a proliferation of books published on the Tibetan Dharma - translations of increasing numbers of sutras and tantras in Tibetan - many themselves, very accurate translations from Sanskrit texts that are no longer extant - and accompanying commentaries. These are new to the West and are

now freely available through a number of dedicated publishers. The Tibetan lamas, observing the disenchanted condition of modern Western society, but also sensing the opportunity, given our high level of education and intellectual curiosity, have responded energetically to the demand world-wide for their teachings. ¹²

Inner Modernity

Robert Thurman's introductory chapters to his own translation of *The Great Liberation* are among the most insightful of commentaries written by a Westerner. Thurman is an old friend of the Dalai Lama, was taught by him in the early days of his exile, and is very familiar with Tibetan culture and its profound teachings. He refers to the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras - the subtlest teachings of Mahayana Buddhism - as "spiritual technologies of self cultivation" and considers Tibet's spiritual adepts to be "inner world adventurers of the highest daring" – hence his use of the term "psychonaut", since they explored the inner world with at least as much tenacity and discipline as we devote to the outer world.

As an outward-looking culture, western modernity privileges personal individualism and rational logical thinking, but its empirical approach relies on the material senses – and science's amazing extension of them - and perceives all things as ultimately reducible to material quantities. The inner modernity of Tibetan culture also values individuality and rational thinking but privileges the quality of mind before the senses and perceives all things to be interfused with spiritual value. For them the "strong force" in nature is spiritual, not material, and the key to their spiritual technology is the exploration of death and its beyond.

At a human level the Tibetans feared death, just as most cultures do. When a person died his life would be assessed and a judgement passed by Yama, the King of death, who would assign you to whatever level of the afterlife you merited, in a similar way to the dispensation of the omnipotent Jewish or Christian God, though Yama was not vindictively punitive in the way Yahweh is sometimes depicted. He merely held the scales of judgement. But Hell existed for the ordinary Tibetan and was to be feared as much as it was for those from other religions. Descriptions of

hell in Tibetan literature are quite terrifying and contrast strikingly with the idealised pictures of the Pure Lands of Buddha heaven.

At a more spiritual level the Tibetans viewed death as a vital force close to life, not its opposite. It was not an entrance to a realm apart, to be experienced only in the event of a person's death, but an immanent presence that is always with us. Death, in this sense, is a state of mind, as are "heaven" and "hell". As a form of consciousness it represents the truth of the transience of all things, including our own lives. Acknowledging this is not, however, in the Buddhist view, a cause for despair. The recognition of the impermanence of all things brings liberation, a release from our instinctual grasping after the illusion of permanence. It is ultimate freedom.

The Tibetan Science of Death

What the Tibetans deny is that death is, as the modern west now believes, a nothingness, viewed either as annihilation or oblivion. Western science, as Thurman points out, holds that a "flatline" on an EEG, indicating cessation of heartbeat and brain activity, represents death. Since the sense of a subjective conscious "I" is commonly identified by science with brain wave activity, when the latter ceases so, they assume, should the individual consciousness. But, according to Thurman, "the picture of death as a nothing in consciousness is not a scientific finding. It is a conceptual notion".¹³ There are plenty of people who have been revived after "flatlining" for some time who report intense subjective experiences.

The modern, Western notion of death as an end state, a nothingness, a void that swallows life up forever, is, as Thurman argues, an unexamined idea. Oblivion can be regretted by those who are enjoying life or welcomed by those who are not. But the idea of death as a nothingness, in the sense of a vacuous emptiness, is an illusory concept. "Nothing" is not analogous to anything. It cannot be said to "exist" in the way "something" exists. Neither can it be a destination, for it cannot be predicated, or even imagined, as a location. But just as unscientific is the notion of death as a sleep from which one doesn't wake up. It is not like a quiet state to

which one can retire at the end of life. One does not necessarily rest in peace in it. If science were to acknowledge that their notion of death - as nothing at all - is actually irrational, dogmatic, and unscientific, it would be forced to re-examine the fundamental materialist premises on which all its theory and practice is based.

By contrast, the inner science of the Buddhist traditions begins with the analysis of a “nothingness” which they regard as a fullness, not a vacuous space. It is a nothingness which embraces life rather than annihilates it. Nothing, in this sense, is thought of as “no-thing” rather than something called “nothing”. Entities - whether material, biological, or cultural – are, in the Buddhist view, never independent things-in-themselves. We may designate them as “objects” but they are essentially interdependencies and their interdependency is what connects them to life. “Nothingness” is about relationship, not its absence. This is the Buddhist notion of “interdependent origination” which the Dalai Lama suggests is the initial key to understanding *sunyata*, the Buddhist emptiness. ¹⁴

Buddhism also thinks of the universe in terms of a continuum, a continuum which includes mind as well as matter and life. The continuity of consciousness makes scientific sense, given the scientific principle of the conservation of energy and nature’s abhorrence of a vacuum. One of the strengths of evolutionary theory is the establishment of the seamlessness of nature in time and space. Why, Buddhists wonder, should mind – an element of nature – be exempt from this? Why shouldn’t minds evolve too - and do so by a process analogous to genetic inheritance? In Buddhist thinking this process is called *karma*, which is just the idea of evolution applied to the human mind. Death, then, is not an end-state or empty void but a potential transformation.

The Stages of Dissolution

If one entertains the hypothesis of the continuity of consciousness, it is possible to think more “scientifically” about death and about what might be happening before, as, and after we “die”. The Tibetans view dying as a process of withdrawal from life, through a dissolving, first of the body and then of the personal mind, though not of

consciousness. This dissolution, according to *The Great Liberation*, is seen as a gradual process with eight stages – Buddhism is an analytic science, never a sentimental form of mysticism! Thurman describes these stages in some detail in his commentary, as it is conveyed by the Tibetan text, and he indicates the subjective experiences which accompany each stage. ¹⁵

The first stages are conceived as the dissolution of the four classical elements which constitute the physical body. For instance, when the earth element dissolves into water, a person begins to feel weak and to experience a melting sensation. The body seems to shrivel, one's sight deteriorates, and forms become blurred. The text then describes how the water, fire and air elements also dissolve and how this is experienced by the dying person. ¹⁶ When the air element - or wind - eventually dissolves into space, or consciousness, the breathing stops, volitional functions fail, the tongue thickens, the sense of taste goes, and the body sense fades.

At this time a person may be pronounced clinically dead. The gross physical elements have gone and there is no activity in the brain or circulatory system. But gross consciousness, with its mind sense and instinctive patterns, dissolves only at a fifth stage. Even then, this is not the end of the dying process for, thereafter, there are a number of stages in the dissolution of the subtle levels of mind. These dissolutions of the subtle mind, according to the text, are accompanied by the perception of different, and increasingly subtle, kinds of light, which the Tibetans liken to the white moonlit sky, an orange sunlit sky, and a sky full of bright 'dark-light', or darkness.

The Clear Light

Finally one passes into the realm of what Thurman terms "clear-light transparency", often referred to as luminosity. This experience, which is easily missed or felt only fleetingly in death, is considered the subtlest light that illuminates the ultimate, or profoundest, reality of the universe. Thurman describes it in his glossary:

It is a light like glass, like diamond, like the predawn twilight, different

from the lights of sun, moon, and darkness. It is an inconceivable light, beyond the duality of bright and dark, a light of the self-luminosity of all things. Hence “transparency” is a good rendering, as is “clear light”, as long as “clear” is understood as “transparent” and not as “bright”.¹⁷

To glimpse this clear light is very special, the subtlest state one can reach. As one does so, the key structures of ordinary life seem to unravel as one experiences a consciousness beyond dualities such as the finite and the infinite, time and timelessness, subject and object, consciousness and unconsciousness, even ignorance and enlightenment. “It is a state so transparent”, according to Thurman, “that one unprepared for it will see right through it and not even notice it”. But insofar as you do experience it, it will be felt as “blissful freedom, total intelligence, boundless sensitivity – that is perfect enlightenment”.¹⁸

Most people are said to go through these dissolutions in the death experience without realising what is happening to them, and those who do recognise the clear light are often not able to stay with it, passing back to more familiar forms of dualistic consciousness. But these processes are not confined to the experience of death and dying. They are happening all the while we are alive, which is how we might begin to test these ideas for ourselves rather than just accept them as theoretical speculation about a life hereafter.

In our waking and sleeping life we are constantly subject to the continually shifting spectrum of gross and subtle consciousness and, in Buddhist meditative disciplines, the task is to become more aware of, and have more insight into, them. In “the between state” – between death and rebirth – consciousness is said to be embodied in a dream-like body, similar to that we experience in sleep. The dissolution stages are also discernible in the processes occurring within, and between, sleep and waking consciousness. For instance, a person falls asleep, wakes up in a dream, dissolves out of a dream, and wakes up in the gross body again, or we oscillate between different waking mind states, depending on what we are thinking or what is happening to us at any time.

In the stream that is our daily consciousness, when we have the time to contemplate - or free associate - to it, we can all begin to recognise these processes. The transitions between mind-states can be rapid and our normal awareness too dim to really appreciate them, but, if we are of a contemplative disposition, as many people are at some time - or can train themselves to be - we can become more aware of them. The more we “train” ourselves, not only will we become more sensitive and “awakened” in life, but the more likely we are to recognise and understand these mind-states in the death experience.

Naked Vision

The Tibetans equate death awareness with freedom - or liberation - because it leads to the loosening of our addictive attachment to the personal self and to the relief and real happiness that can result from this new perspective. To understand, and realise, that the independent, isolated, personal self that you instinctively think you are, is a construct, not an ultimate reality, is immensely liberating. You no longer need to grasp on to this construct of yourself. You can detach from it. You can change it. You can recreate it, and your “self”, in the process. And you can let go of much of your fear of death.

To realise also that your individuality is interdependently-arisen – that in fact you are not an individual but an interdependency - also brings an awakening to your essential interconnectedness with the world about you – other people, other species, the Earth, the universe and everything in it. You are part of the sublime continuum of everything.

The remarkable chapter four in *The Great Liberation* - “The Introduction to Awareness: Natural Liberation Through Naked Vision” – is, perhaps, the most rewarding for us to read, since it goes to the heart of what mind and consciousness is. ¹⁹ Looking “nakedly” at oneself is to distinguish between that construct of the core, isolated self that you think you are - and from which your instinctual drives and thoughts emerge - and to see beyond the illusion. You are, it turns out, transparent to yourself.

Once you begin to analyse yourself you may begin to wonder whether there is anyone there, whether an “I” actually exists. But this transparency reveals who you really are – naked, pure intelligence, clear-light awareness. This naked awareness is not annihilated at death because it has the nature of ultimate indestructible reality – absolute clarity, beyond duality, beyond time and space, void of intrinsic status, unborn and deathless. Buddhism has a simple name for this quality within all things: it is “Buddha nature”, your true awakened self. It is there within everyone. The trick is to uncover and experience it. As Thurman writes:

Experientially we enjoy the one taste of freedom without getting lost in isolation. This is the Diamond Reality of Clear Light, this is the real nature of each of us that makes natural liberation possible. Our true nature, our Buddha essence, is not something that needs to be laboriously created – it is already overwhelmingly present as our very soul. ²⁰

Notes

¹ Nick Lane *Life Ascending. The Ten Great Inventions of Evolution*. London: Profile Books, 2009.

² Robert Thurman (Translator) *The Tibetan Book of the Dead. The Great Book of Natural Liberation through Understanding in the Between*. Composed by Padmasambhava, discovered by Karma Lingpa. New York: Bantam Books, 1994

³ Robert Thurman, *Inner Revolution. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Real Happiness*. London: Rider, 1999.

⁴ W.Y. Evans-Wentz (Compiler and Editor) *The Tibetan Book of the Dead or The After-Death Experiences on the Bardo Plane, according to Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English Rendering*. Oxford University Press, 1960, 1927.

⁵ 1. Guru Rinpoche according to Karma Lingpa *The Tibetan Book of the Dead. The Great Liberation through Hearing in the Bardo*. Translated with commentary by Francesca Fremantle & Chogyam Trungpa, Boston and London: Shambhala, 1975.

2. Graham Coleman with Thubten Jinpa (editors) *The Tibetan Book of the Dead. The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States*, composed by Padmasambhava, revealed by Karma Lingpa, translated by Gyurme Dorje, with an Introduction by the Dalai Lama. London: Penguin 2005

Thurman's and Coleman's versions include the translation of the remarkable chapter 4 of the original, entitled *The Natural Liberation through Naked Vision, Identifying the Intelligence*, which is, perhaps, the most readable and most interesting to a Western mind.

⁶ Francesca Fremantle, *Luminous Emptiness. Understanding the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Boston & London: Shambhala, 2003 p 6

⁷ Ibid. p 7

⁸ Stephen Levine *Who Dies? An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying*. Dublin: Gateway, 1986. See chapter 23, p 272.

The Great Liberation recounts that, upon dying, a person is offered a series of experiences, ranging from initial, fleeting, and elusive moments of the most profound clarity to partially enlightened modes of consciousness and, depending on the nature of the life we have led, to less enlightened, and even hellish and horrific experiences of bewilderment, particularly if we have been ruled in our lives by purely selfish, gross, or coarse passions. These states of consciousness are embodied for the Tibetans in the appearance of the peaceful and wrathful deities that are so beautifully and graphically depicted in Tibetan tangkas, but it is emphasised that they are psychological projections and have no intrinsic reality in themselves. Thus, on dying, the experience you have of the 'afterlife' is a reflection of yourself and your own life experience. The purpose of the recitation of the text is to help the dying, or dead, person to realise this, gain insight thereby, and identify if possible with the better parts of yourself, which then direct you to a good rebirth.

The Great Liberation is a text that works on many different levels. When it first came out it tended to be interpreted esoterically in the spirit of the theosophy of the times as a sort of "secret doctrine". Jung, in his commentary to the 1960 edition, contributes to this response by aligning it with his own psychology of the archetypes though he also uses it to criticise Freud with the latter's emphasis on the interpretation of sexual desire as the central focus of therapy. Lama Anagarika Govinda, who provides an Introductory Foreword, also considers it esoterically, claiming that it can really only be understood by the enlightened few.

This is a view disputed by the philosopher, Robert Wicks. ('Death and Enlightenment' in *Death and Philosophy*, Malpas and Solomon (Ed.s), London: Routledge, 1998)⁹ As Wicks points out, Buddhism has always been considered a therapy. Shakyamuni Buddha essentially taught two things - that life was suffering and that there is a way to overcome, or transcend, the suffering. This is also what Freud taught, though his understanding of what causes suffering and how, or whether, it can be ended are different from the Buddhist view. In the Buddhist analysis, it is in our resistance to the fact of *samsara*, or "cyclic existence", that suffering resides. *Nirvana* – the state without (beyond) sorrow - is achieved through the enlightenment that helps us to accept our transience and, despite the passions with which we cling to our individual existence, to recognise our transcendent identity with all life. It is death awareness that makes this possible and, in doing so, introduces us to ultimate reality.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Paine *Re-Enchantment. Tibetan Buddhism Comes to the West*. New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2004. See 'Introduction. A Thousand Years in the Eye of God'.

¹¹ Ibid. p 17

¹² The translation of sacred texts is a highly esteemed practice in Tibet since Buddhism began with, and depended on, the accurate translation of Sanskrit sutras and tantras from India and it is not surprising that the Tibetan lamas place an emphasis on the skilful translation of root texts and commentaries from Tibetan into English, French, and other European languages.

An example of one such teacher, who has encouraged his Western students to translate seminal texts, is Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. Born in 1934 to a nomad family in Eastern Tibet he spent his early years as an ascetic, studying, meditating, and teaching in the caves and monasteries of Tibet. When exiled in 1959 he studied and mastered Buddhist scholarship in India before becoming a principal teacher in the Karma Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He has, like many other lamas, spent the last twenty years teaching extensively around the world and, with his students, has published translations and commentaries on such central Indian figures as Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, and Asanga/Maitreya. In his teachings he often quotes - and sings - from the great poet and mystic, Milarepa.

¹³ Thurman, 1994, op.cit. p 23

¹⁴ Dalai Lama, *How to See Yourself as You Really Are: A Guide to Self- Knowledge*, Bstan-'Azin-rgya-mtsho, 2008.

¹⁵ Thurman, 1994 op. cit. pp 41-45

¹⁶ When water dissolves and bodily fluids dry out, one becomes numb, sensations disappear, one's hearing fails and one feels surrounded by smoke. When fire dissolves into wind and one feels cold, desire fades, the mind dims, breathing weakens and one's sense of smell goes.

¹⁷ Thurman , 1994, op.cit. See entry in glossary under '**clear light (transparency)**' p 251.

¹⁸ Ibid. p 44

¹⁹ This chapter is translated in both Thurman's 1994 and Coleman's 2005 editions. Gyurme Dorje's translation in the Coleman Penguin edition is especially recommended.

²⁰ Ibid. pp 48-49