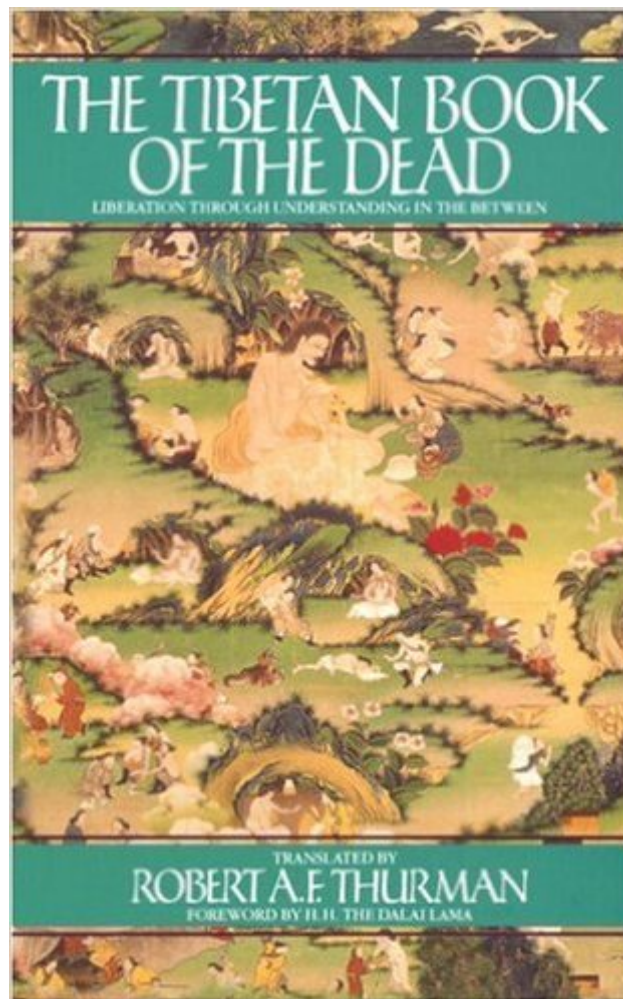


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# The Tibetan Book Of The Dead: The Great Book Of Natural Liberation Through Understanding In The Between



## Synopsis

The eighth-century Buddhist work about life and death

## Book Information

Paperback: 278 pages

Publisher: Bantam Books, Inc.; Later Printing edition (December 1, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0553370901

ISBN-13: 978-0553370904

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (74 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #24,028 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Eastern Religions & Sacred Texts > Tibetan Book of the Dead](#) #26 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Tibetan](#)

## Customer Reviews

I've been through three copies of this book and memorized the essence prayers.. Each night I use this in my meditation.. All my life I have had a fear of death and this book cuts right to the bone.. Padma Sambava tackles the problem head on.. I don't really remember why I started reading it.. I could never make it through the Evans-Wentz translation.. Too much esoteric mumbo jumbo.. Robert A. Thurman's version is for the everyman.. Please get this book..Life is short..From the Root Verses.. "With mind distracted, never thinking death is coming... To slave away on the pointless business of mundane life, and then to come out empty is a tragic error.."

With this translation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, or Natural Liberation in the Between, Thurman fulfills the function of a Bodhisattva in helping others attain liberation. This is the most accessible, down-to-earth and learned rendering of this guide to spiritual liberation that I have encountered in modern American English. Thurman even manages to work in a little humor on the edges. What this translation makes abundantly clear is just how many chances in the in-between we have for liberation. Apparently one has to be very non-aware to go through the in-between and miss the chance for stepping off the carousel. of samsara. (So why am I still here?) It would be interesting to devote some time to a cross cultural/cross discipline study of death, dying and beyond. In particular, a study comparing Stan Grof's 3rd perinatal matrix; Sufi descriptions of the interworld (barzakh) and

the world of Harqalya (see Corbin's Celestial Body); some schools of visualization/dream work; descriptions of the astral world (Robert Bruce's and Robert Monroe's works in particular); and shamanic traditions would be illuminating. Throw Dante in for good measure. There appear to be large areas of overlap and agreement as to what happens during death, and what happens next. (Get enough blind men together and compare their impressions of the elephant and a clearer picture may come to light.) The best thing about this book, however, is that it invites the reader to learn the Tibetan death ritual for oneself. It helps that, as the book explains, our after-death mind is nine times more intelligent than our current mind. So just a little application now in learning these texts will go a long way later. Face it. At some moment in the near future you will close your eyes for the last time on this world. Death is more certain than retirement - and longer. Like anything else, the more you learn about it and get acquainted with it, the less shocking and scary it will be.

The remarkable Bob Thurman offers us a new translation of the 'Tibetan Book of the Dead'. It surpasses by far the previous translation by Chogyam Trungpa and Frances Fremantle. As a text for practical use, as a source of spiritual inspiration, and as literature, this book shines. As well as the translation of the text and commentary, Professor Thurman has written an introduction which stands on its own as an introduction to Buddhism and Tibetan spirituality. If you have an interest in Buddhism, Tibet, or a concern about the after-death states, this book is essential. Pete Folly

The introduction provided by Robert Thurman provides valuable context for understanding The Book of Natural Liberation Through Understanding In the Between. Thurman is able to reach out to non-believers by calmly explaining that Tibetan Buddhism is not about belief and dogmatism, but understanding experience more fully. He likens the monks who obtained the knowledge found in the book to spiritual scientists--an oxymoron until one understands the pragmatic value of this book. Use of this book to greater good is not dependent on the particulars of one's personal religious faith or lack thereof. The author helpfully reminds us that according to the tenets of our scientific laws energy is neither created nor destroyed. Thus it seems likely that our whole being or part of it at least will end up going somewhere, in some form after we die. The introduction and translation are valuable tools for people who want greater understanding or for those who wish to use this book for its intended purpose.

This is a must have title for anyone who has an interest in Tibetan Buddhism. Thurman's translation of this central Tibetan text is lucid and inspiring. His personal experience as an ordained monk,

student of the Dalai Lama's and his many years of bringing the Dharma to west make him thoroughly and uniquely qualified to offer this brilliant translation. I find that Thurman writes in such a way that makes it easy to "hear", the strong tradition of oral transmission that plays such an important role in the practice of Tibetan Buddhist teaching.

This was the first edition of the Bardo Thodrol I ever read. I had been a practicing Buddhist for about a year, but still could not understand, or really accept the idea of transmigration, i.e., a cycle of births and rebirths. It was this book that shattered my doubts, and to this day, it remains the most vivid discussion of the nature of life and death I have ever read. Yet it was not the translation that had the effect. It was the vast supplementary material supplied by Robert Thurman. The introductory essays concerning Tibetan Buddhism, living and dying in Tibetan and modern traditions, and the nature of death, are in fact worth much more than his translation. In trying to render the Bardo Thodrol, an esoteric teaching of an esoteric religion, useful to all readers, Thurman sacrifices much of the intrinsic beauty of the text. He replaces words such as karma with evolution, Dharmakaya with Truth-body, and, following the tradition of Burton Watson, goes on to translate the names of various good and bad deities in a literal, clumsy translation. It was a nice effort, but ultimately, this text is made useful by Thurman's supplements, not his translation. For this, the Evans-Wentz version is still the standard. Yet, for a Buddhist who doesn't understand the cycle of birth and death, this is a great explanation.

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