

## 從佛教死亡觀檢視當代腦死判準\*

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### 摘 要

本文從佛教死亡觀探討死亡概念之界說及死亡判定之依據，聚焦於對當代腦死判準之批判性檢視。本文首先說明當代醫學中關於腦死判準之主要理論背景及其相關臨床研究與批判性論述；其次，闡述佛教對死亡概念之界說及其死亡判準；最後從佛教之死亡觀檢視當代腦死判準及其相關之死亡界說。

從佛教生命觀來看，眾生之生命體乃由名、色兩類之構成條件和合而成。眾生之死亡乃涉及身心眾多關聯條件的變化歷程。從佛教壽、暖、識之死亡判準來看，必須待心識離體後，身體不再表現體溫與心識活動，始可將其判定為一期生命之結束。然而，當代腦死判準中，無論是全腦判準或腦幹判準，皆是將生命體之死亡判定依據簡化為單一物質性構成之器官或其部分組織以達到其提前宣判死亡之目的。

**關鍵詞：**佛教死亡觀、腦死、死亡判準、全腦判準、腦幹判準

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## Research on the Issue of Brain Death Criteria from the Buddhist View of Death

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### Abstract

This paper will discuss the definition of death and how one's death is determined from the Buddhist view of death, particularly focusing on the critique of brain death criteria in modern neurology. Firstly, this paper introduces the theoretical background and clinical critique on brain death criteria. Secondly, the author elaborates the Buddhist definition and criteria of death. Finally, this paper scrutinizes the brain death criteria and the related definitions of death in modern neurology from the Buddhist perspective.

From the Buddhist view of life, the living body of a sentient being is composed of many properties, which can be classified into two categories: mind (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*). One's death are part of an incessant process caused by one's physical and mental changes of correlated properties. In Buddhism, determination of one's death is based on three properties: vitality, heat and consciousness; when one's consciousness is no longer attached to the physical body—meaning the body displays no signs of breathing, temperature and mental activities—the person can then be ultimately declared dead. In comparison, modern neurology classifies one's death based on cease of

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activity in the whole-brain or the brainstem which merely establishes the determination of one's death on the activity, or lack of, in their physical brain, so as to allow one's death to be declared as soon as possible.

**Keywords:** Buddhist view of death, brain death, death criteria, whole-brain criteria, brainstem criteria.

