

THE LHA OR ENERGY BODY-DOUBLE

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Something that I imagine few readers here will know much about is what the Tibetan Buddhists call the 'Lha.' The 'Lha' is an energy-body we each have that is superimposed between the physical body and our mind or mental body. It is often described as a shadow of the physical body, a complete mirror-reflection of our physical and psychological makeup. The Lha appears to be what western theosophists and psychics call the etheric body, which term itself originated from Tibetan texts.

What is interesting about the Lha is that when we die, our mind body or consciousness (in some form) goes on into the bardo (and perhaps is reborn), while our physical body decays and dies, and the Lha remains with the physical body as a kind of body-double, a psychic duplicate. It lives on as an etheric mirror-image, but decays as the body decays. It does not migrate to the next lifetime. It is not immortal.

In other words, the Lha is somehow useful when we are alive, and as long as we have life, as a supporter to the physical body and our psychological self. It is tempting to think of the Lha as being a mirror-reflection of the image of our self, if not the self itself. Remember that Tibetan Buddhist point out again and again that what we call the 'self' is nothing more than a collection of our attachments (likes and dislikes) and does not have any permanent existence.

Our sense of self changes with every new desire and craving, so what made up our self when we were a kid (a new bike, etc.) may not be anything like what makes up our self as an adult (a new child, new car, etc.). It is not clear to me how the Lha relates to the 'self' image. Is the Lha the same as the self or is it different? Both have no permanent existence, in any case.

When we feel good and are healthy, the Lha and our physical body coincide or are somehow in synch, and we feel like ourselves. We feel energetic. But we are not always in equilibrium. Each of us sometimes get, as I like to say, 'beside ourselves', out-of-synch, and out of sorts. We can be separated from our Lha when our connection to it becomes weakened. If we become too separated, it can result in physical sickness and psychological upset, and in extreme cases, according to Tibetans, even in death of the physical body. So somehow we all need our Lha to stay with us and not wander.

The Lha can be disturbed by sudden shocks to the system, accidents, emotional disturbances, and so on, at which time it can separate and wander away from the body leaving the physical body depressed, out-of-sorts, and subject to illness and anxiety. Perhaps we all know something about how this feels.

The Lha is said to be a direct copy of our physical and psychological self. In fact, the Tibetans

say that what western mediums and psychics claim to be (as in séances, etc.) as contacts with departed spirits is not their consciousness (which has gone into the bardo and perhaps to another rebirth), but their Lha. It is the Lha that is channeled in every case, and never the consciousness of the deceased. The dead person's consciousness has already gone beyond. Only the Lha remains for an indeterminate time.

After death our consciousness and Lha separate, with the consciousness going beyond death, but our Lha staying here with our body. The Lha stays with the body as long as it takes the body to decay or until the body is destroyed. This is why Buddhists tend to cremate the body or tear it up, so that vultures can eat it. In that way the Lha or energy reflection of our self is completely destroyed and does not wander around in some kind of Limbo.

It is claimed that it's not easy to become aware of your own Lha, except by its absence. In fact, Tibetan doctors take a pulse reading for a person's Lha from a different point of the body, the ulnar artery, than it does for usual medical pulse. The Lha meridian or channel goes from the heart to the ring finger along the ulnar artery.

As mentioned, the Lha can be weakened by accident or when we are in shock, very sad, or depressed. It can also go away for a time. One account I read likens it to a radio and a transmitter; if the radio gets too far away from the transmitter, there is signal loss. The connection weakens or is lost. The same is true if the Lha gets too far out of the body. Not only can you feel out of sorts, but if it continues, you can become ill, disassociated, and so on.

And it is possible to permanently lose your Lha, which Tibetans consider very unfortunate and they have rituals for restoring the Lha to a particular body. This is kind of a scary thought, and some people have been said to lose their Lha and never be reunited, in which case they gradually wither and die. This is not said to be common.

I am not sure how much personal awareness of or conscious experience I have had with my own Lha. There have been times when I have not felt fully present in my own life (you know: "beside myself") and have had to consciously work on getting back into my body, pulling myself together, and getting centered, so please note that I am not an expert in this, but just interested (as some of you may be) in this fascinating topic. Here I convey only what I have understood from the teachings I have attended and the texts I have read.