

BURIAL CEREMONY

[For this ceremony, the grave should be prepared beautifully. At the head there should be a flower arrangement and an incense holder. Three sticks of incense and some matches should also be available.]

1. Introductory Words

[Adapt as appropriate]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the community has gathered at [*place of burial*] to join together in a ceremony of burial for [*name of deceased*], whose children, relatives and friends are here to take part in the ceremony.

Parents and grandparents, whether they are still alive or have left this life, are present in their children and grandchildren. The life of children and grandchildren is the life of the parents and the grandparents. The life of the ancestors continues in the life of the children and grandchildren. According to the teaching of the Buddha, the peace and joy of the children and grandchildren are the peace and joy of the parents, grandparents and all ancestors. Let us listen with a calm and peaceful mind in order to make possible the calmness, clarity and peace of those who have left this life.

2. Consecration of Burial Site

Incense perfumes the atmosphere
with the fragrance of great understanding and deep compassion.
One wisp of this smoke fills the Ten Directions
with mindfulness, concentration and insight,
putting an end to countless sorrows and misperceptions.
It has the power to purify and to make things fresh and new.
Homage to the Bodhisattva Who Refreshes the Earth.
[bell]

With flowers and incense, we turn to the source of compassion,
cooling and refreshing the world.
Listening deeply and offering help to countless beings,
ending the suffering of all species,
great love and compassion are unshakable;
helping freedom and uprightness to manifest,
responding wherever there is a need,
no appeal for help to true compassion fails to succeed.
With right faith and a calm mind,
we call upon the source of compassion within us
to make itself present in our offering of incense and flowers,
protecting and caring for this sacred Earth,
where the body of our beloved is being laid to rest.
[bell x 2]

3. Contemplation on No-coming, No-going 🎵

This body is not me.
I am not limited by this body.
I am life without boundaries.
I have never been born,
and I have never died.

Look at the ocean and the sky filled with stars,
manifestations from my wondrous True Mind.

Since before time, I have been free.
Birth and death are only doors through which we pass,
sacred thresholds on our journey.
Birth and death are a game of hide-and-seek.

So laugh with me,
hold my hand,
let us say good-bye,
say good-bye, to meet again soon.
We meet today.
We will meet again tomorrow.
We will meet at the source every moment.
We meet each other in all forms of life.
[bell]

4. Burial

[Adapt as appropriate]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, now is the time to lower the casket into the Earth. Aware of our breathing, we remember the presence of [*name of deceased*], knowing that s/he remains alive in many generations of children and grandchildren in the future.

[The casket is lowered into the grave while community members silently observe their breathing, focusing on the presence of the beloved in their own hearts.]

May this Earth, blessed and purified with great understanding and deep compassion, protect and nurture the virtues and wholesome seeds that [*name of deceased*] has transmitted to his/her children, relatives, friends and countless other beings. May these seeds grow to fruition in each of us, so that [*name of deceased*] may rest peacefully in the garden of awakening.

[The head of ceremony invites the closest relatives to offer the first spade or handfuls of earth to cover the coffin of the deceased. During this part of the ceremony, the head of ceremony watches carefully, initiating a simple song or chant or speaking words of support when needed. As the last participants offer their contribution of earth, the head of ceremony may begin the “Invocation of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas” to conclude the ceremony.]

5. Invocation of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas 🎵

Introductory Verse

[Chanted by head of ceremony]

The river of attachment carries living beings
away to the sea of suffering,
where waves of afflictions rise by the thousands to submerge us.
In order to transcend the wheel of samsara,
with one-pointed concentration we invoke the names of Buddha.

Recitation

[All chant each name three times]

Namo Shakyamunaye Buddhaya

[Homage to Shakyamuni Buddha, the Fully Awakened One]

[bell]

Namo Amitabhaya Buddhaya

[Homage to the Buddha of Infinite Light]

[bell]

Namo Manjushriye Bodhisattvaya

[Homage to Manjushri, Bodhisattva of Great Understanding]

[bell]

Namo Samantabhadraya Bodhisattvaya

[Homage to Samantabhadra, Bodhisattva of Great Action]

[bell]

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Bodhisattvaya

[Homage to Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva of Great Compassion]

[bell]

Namo Kshitigarbhaya Bodhisattva

[Homage to Kshitigarbha, Bodhisattva of Great Aspiration]

[bell]

6. Sharing the Merit 🎵

Reciting the sutras, practising the way of awareness,
gives rise to benefits without limit.

We vow to share the fruits with all beings.

We vow to offer tribute to parents, teachers, friends and numerous beings
who give guidance and support along the path.

[bell x 3]

7. **Hugging Meditation and Condolences**

[Spoken by head of ceremony]

Dear Sangha, throughout this ceremony we have been reminded that the peace and joy we have now is the peace and joy of the one who has passed away. To express their loyalty and gratitude to the deceased, relatives and friends are invited to turn and look at each other deeply, showing the true love, acceptance and forgiveness for each other. Please take each other by the hand or hug each other. Breathe deeply three times and be fully mindful as you do this. Your peace and joy are the basis for the peace and joy of the deceased.

My we all remain established in mindfulness to give spiritual support to the relatives and friends of the deceased as they practise this.