

A Ritual of Rice Scattering in Cemeteries

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Select a tomb or a tree in the cemetery and stand before it, facing west. Open the bags of rice and place them on the ground in front of you.

1. Refuge and Visualization

Visualize that all things in the Dharmadhatu return to original purity and turn into boundless blue light.

In the blue light, Buddha Amitabha appears in red color with Avalokiteshvara in white on his right and Mahasthanaprapta in blue on his left. They are surrounded by Bodhisattvas and the Holy Ones of the Utmost Joy Pureland. Above Buddha Amitabha appears Guru Lin and on top of Guru Lin appears Guru Chen. Appearing below Buddha Amitabha is Bodhisattva Wei Tuo. On his right is the Heavenly King Vaisravana, and on his left is the Dragon King. All the Holy Ones look compassionately upon the deceased beings of the Six Realms. Visualize that in front of the practitioner are all the suffering and deceased beings that are particularly prayed for, and behind the practitioner are all remaining deceased beings in the Six Realms. All look up to the Holy Ones in the sky with eager yearning for salvation.

Join your palms together and place it at the center of your chest, and then visualize that all suffering and deceased beings are looking up at the Holy Ones and recite together the followings for three times:

I take refuge in Vajra Guru

I take refuge in Buddha Amitabha

I take refuge in the Dharma of Liberation

I take refuge in the Enlightened Ones

Visualize all the Holy Ones feel gratified that all the suffering and deceased beings could clearly identify and choose the path of liberation; and Buddha Amitabha representing all the Holy Ones accepts all the suffering and deceased beings' refuges. Buddha Amitabha from his heart chakra radiates out a bright red light spreading throughout the Dharmadhatu to bless all deceased beings. Visualize all the newly deceased beings transform into light and merge into Buddha Amitabha. Then visualize all deceased beings in the cemetery transform into light as well and merge into Buddha Amitabha. Extend such visualization until all deceased beings in the Dharmadhatu have transformed into light and merge into Buddha Amitabha.

2. Poem: Learning from the Dead

*As I walk in the cemetery,
I read the tombstones one by one;
Although only a few lines each,
To a careful eye they tell many stories.*

*All the things that we worry about,
fight for or accomplish,
In the end are reduced to two dates
of birth and death!
When we live we are separated
by status and households;
When we die we come here
to lie down side by side.*

*The dead are my real teachers;
They teach me through their eternal silence!
A walk through the cemetery
simply dissipates all my worries.
The dead cleanse my mind
by the vivid example of their existence!*

*Suddenly I see that life could end at any moment!
Once I realize that I am so close to death
I am instantly free in life.
Why bother to criticize or fight with others?
Let me just be pure in mind and enjoy living!*

*Anyone we come across is sure to be
With us for only this moment!
Let us be kind to each other
And make life a merry-go-round!*

*May all who are lost
in the sorrows and worries of life,
Wake up to the fact of the closeness of death!
Once you see impermanence face to face,
You will enjoy peace and freedom for life!*

3. Scattering the Rice

Recite the name of Buddha Amitabha 108 times to bless the rice in front.

Each one present takes a small bag of blessed rice, and then scatters them at the tombs while walking through the cemetery to build Dharma connections with the deceased; at the same time visualize the blessing from Buddha Amitabha that turned the rice into blessed nectar showers on the cemetery ground. Also visualize that all deceased beings in the Dharmadhatu come to receive the blessed rice and immediately become liberated and gain rebirth in the Utmost Joy Pureland. When scattering the rice you may recite the Heart Mantra of Avalokiteshvara, **“OM MA NI PAD ME HUM”** until all rice are scattered.

4. Burning the Mantra Sheets

Then burn mantra sheets of **“Namo Amitabha Buddha”** and **“Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum”** in Guru Lin's calligraphy, 6 each, to signify our intention of saving and liberating all beings in the Six Realms to the Pureland.

5. Mantra Recitation

Recite the **“Mantra of Rebirth-in-Pureland”** 6 times to bless all the deceased beings in the Six Realms to take rebirth in the Pureland:

***Na Mo O Mi Duo Po Ye, Duo Tuo Qie Duo Ye, Duo Di Ye Tuo O Mi Li Duo
Po Pi, O Mi Li Duo Xi Dan Po Pi, O Mi Li Duo Pi Jia Lan Di, O Mi Li Duo Pi
Jia Lan Duo, Qie Mi Ni, Qie Qie No, Zhi Duo Qia Li Suo Po Ho***

6. Supplication for Blessing

Recite the following stanza once:

***Eagerly wishing for salvation are the deceased beings in Dharmadhatu,
Compassionate mercy of Guru Buddha spreads universally to all beings;
Scattering rice over tombs to grant blessings of enlightened salvation,
Buddha Amitabha arrives to lead all of you to Utmost Joy Pureland!***

7. Continuity

Recite the “Stanza of Supplication for Guru’s Extensive Stay in the World” once:

Oh, originally pure yogi you are!

Wonderful conversion through Ewam as the Lotus-born Guru;

The great joy in Sunyata is peerless,

May the Holy Guru live long and abide in this world!

Recite the “Stanza of Supplication for Continuation and Wide-spreading of the Lineage” once:

Marrow of the Right Dharma passed down from generation to generation,

Succeeding predecessors and leading followers to turn the Dharma Wheel,

Everlasting pure lineage guided by holy Gurus and guarded by Protectors,

A never-ending lamp shining through everywhere to enlighten all beings!

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