

Helping At The Time Of Death

by Lama Kathy Wesley, based on sources as quoted. Last revised 1.19.16

Ways to Practice for People Who Are Dying

From Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche (from his 10-Day teaching, 1999):

If there is a deity that you practice regularly (such as Chenrezig, Amitabha, Tara, etc) visualize this deity above the crown of the head of the person who is dying.

As the person is dying, visualize that the dying person's consciousness leaves the dying person's body through the top of their head and goes into the heart of that deity, merging with that deity completely.

Do this visualization again and again, while quietly saying the mantra of the deity and gently touching the crown of the dying person's head.

From Bokar Rinpoche's book, *Chenrezig, Lord of Love*:

When doing the meditation for a sick or dead person, think that light coming from Chenrezig's heart extends out to the person, relieves this person of suffering, purifies faults and karmic veils, and brings happiness.

"In this case, one can visualize Chenrezig above one's head or in space. At the end of the meditation, one imagines that Chenrezig's body melts into the body of the sick or dead person and their bodies, speech and minds become one."

Things to Do After Someone Has Died

If you are part of a Buddhist sangha, it is good to have your sangha dedicate the merit of individual and group practice to the person who has died. At Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Monastery, the dharma community observes the deaths of members, friends and family by reciting the Chenrezig/Amitabha practice once a day for three days.

It is customary to do extra practice in honor of the deceased for 7 weeks (49 days) after the person's death. It is especially beneficial to recite prayers and practices for the person who has died on the seven-day anniversaries of the person's death for seven weeks.

After death, the consciousness of the deceased is said to experience a mundane type of clairvoyance, and may be attracted to people who are thinking about them or speaking about them. Even if the deceased was not a spiritual person in their lifetime, they will appreciate prayers and practices done for them after they pass away.

So it is wonderful if, when you think of the person who has died, you also mentally or verbally recite a mantra or prayer for their benefit. This will help both you and the person who has passed away.

One may do the long or short forms of the Chenrezig and Amitabha mantras, whichever is better for you.

Amitabha Short Mantra

OM AMI DEWA HRI

Amitabha Long Mantra

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA NAMO BHAGAWATAY
AMITHABHAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATAY SAMYAK
SAMBUDHAYA TAYATA OM AMITAY AMITOBHAWAY
AMITA SAMBHAWAY AMITA BITRENTAY AMITA GAMINI
GAGANA KIRTI KARAY SARVA KALESHA KSHA YAM KARI SOHA

Chenrezig Short Mantra

OM MANI PEME HUNG

Chenrezik Long Mantra

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA NAMO ARYA JNANA SAGARA
BEROTSANA BAYUHA RADZAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATEH
SAMYAK SAMBUDHAYA NAMA SARWA TATHAGATEBEH
ARHATBAY SAMYAK SAMBUDDHEBEH
NAMA ARYA AWALOKITESHROYA BODHISATOYA
MAHASATOYA MAHAKARUNIKAYA
TAYATA OM DHARA DHARA DHIRI DHIRI
DHURU DHURU EETAH WEETAH TSALEH TSALEH
TRATSALEH TRATSALEH KUSUME KUSAMA WAREY
EELEH MEELEH TSEETEHDZOLA MAPANAYA SOHA

Khenpo Rinpoche also said that if people want to send money to the retreatants at Three-Year Retreat Center at Karne Ling and request prayers or lamps dedicated to the deceased, it's very meritorious. When lamps are offered, the name of the person is placed next to that lamp on the shrine for the number of days that the lamp is offered. The name also is read before Mahakala puja each day that a lamp has been offered.

To request prayers and lamps, write a note to the Karne Ling treasurer and send money along with your request (checks payable to Karne Ling Retreat Center). Your note should include the name of the person for whom you are requesting lamps, and whether you want lamps in the men's building, the women's building, or both. If you want lamps in just one building, the cost is \$1 per lamp per day. For both buildings, send \$2 per lamp per day.

Karma Lodro
c/o Karne Ling
315 Retreat Road
Delhi, NY 13753-9304

Short Prayer to Be Reborn in Dewachen

Tibetan:

E MA HO
NGO TSAR SANG GYE NANG WA TA YE DANG
YE SU JO WO TUK JE CHEN PO DANG
YON DU SEM PA TU CHEN TOB NAM LA
SANG GYE CHANG SEM PA ME KOR GYI KHOR
DE KYI NGO TSAR PAK DU ME PA YI
DE WA CHEN SHE JA WAY SHING KHAM DER
DAK NI DI NE TSE PO GYUR MA TAK
KYE WA SHEN GYI BAR MA CHO PA RU
DE RU KYE NE NANG TAY SHAL TON SHOG
DE KE DA GYI MON LAM TAP PA DI
CHOK CHU SANG GYE CHANG SEM TAM CHE KYI
GEK ME DRUP PAR JIN GYI LAB TU SOL
TAYATA PENTSA DRIYA AWA BODHA NA YE SO HA

English:

*In this pure realm known as Dewachen
There is undefineable splendor and bliss.
Here is Amitabha the Lord of Boundless Light
On the right is Chenrezig, the Lord of Great Compassion
On the left is Vajrapani, the powerful bodhisattva
Here is the whole retinue of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
When I pass from this world,
May I be transferred immediately
Without taking rebirth in any other realm,
To this Pure Land.
May I see the face of Amitabha!
By the power of this prayer and the blessings
of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
In the ten directions,
May this be fulfilled without any hindrance.*

TAYATA PENTSA DRIYA AWA BODHA NA YE SO HA

