
Rite of Transcendental Deliverance Through Amitabha-Recitation

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Preface

The rite contained in this booklet is special, different from any other that's comparable in some way. It is unique because the entire text is based on the three Pure Land sutras and the teachings of Master Shandao, *de facto* founder of Buddhism's Pure Land School.

Both concise and precise, the rite is easy for participants to understand and follow. It takes a direct, straightforward approach to convey a powerful message, guiding bewildered, just-deceased persons as they seek deliverance at this critical moment.

During the ritual, the deceased, wherever and whatever his or her current form, will approach for a close counter with Amitabha Buddha, who will immediately comfort, embrace and protect the person with his light. With recourse to Amitabha's inconceivable vow power, the deceased naturally will be received and welcomed by a multitude of sacred beings and be reborn in Amitabha's

Land of Bliss.

Though it is a rite, it is not rigidly ritualistic. It can be presented and conducted by a monastic, a householder or even a layperson, and can help all needy people. Sincerity and faith are the key factors of success in performing the rite. A simplified or “fast-track” version is also included in this booklet to facilitate use by those constrained by environmental or other circumstances.

The service most directly benefits deceased persons still in the state of Bardo – within 49 days of death. They can expeditiously be reborn in the Pure Land if they accept Amitabha’s deliverance and recite his name, as the ritual explains. The effects will be enhanced if the rite is conducted by family members of the deceased. The service helps those who passed away longer than 49 days, enabling them to encounter the Buddha’s teachings more easily.

Nor are the rite’s benefits confined to the deceased; they extend to the living as well. All sentient beings can profit from the elimination of their karmic offenses in past and present lives through Amitabha-recitation, increasing their good fortune and extending their lives.

The translation of the ritual text bears a significant meaning to the world's English-speaking communities. It is because Amitabha's deliverance is truly transcendental and absolutely equal. It is not confined to any period of time or any particular place in the worlds of the ten directions. Nor is it restricted to any species of living beings, race, nation or religion. Amitabha Buddha, in his infinite compassion, reaches out to all beings, in all places and at all times, forever embracing them with his light.

Namo Amitabha Buddha!



**Rite of Transcendental
Deliverance Through Amitabha-
Recitation**

-- Three prostrations before Amitabha Buddha;

-- Silent recitation: “I, (name), lacking in wisdom and blessings, pray that the compassionate Buddha will pity, not forsake, protect, and allow me to stay with the lotus assembly, as vast as the ocean, and perform this Buddhist rite.”

I. Praise of the Lotus Pond (recite “Namo Amitabha Buddha,” from ten to a hundred times):

In this lotus pond assembly, as vast as the sea,
May Amitabha Tathagata, Avalokitesvara and
Mahasthamaprapta, on lotus platforms,

Lead beings to ascend the golden steps;

As the Great Vow unfolds, may they all

Wish to take leave of defilements.

Homage to the lotus pond assembly of Buddhas
and Bodhisattvas as vast as the sea (three times)

II. Dharma Teachings

The banquet of Amitabha's deliverance is open now;

A multitude of pure Bodhisattvas descends and arrives.

They will deliver numerous sentient beings to the Land of Bliss;

All Buddhas joyfully expound their original intent [of deliverance].

With a sincere heart, I address you, the spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors surnamed -----): We are followers of the Buddha. Because we had profound karmic connections with the ----- family and are its descendants, we received a physical body.

It is also precious for us to hear and believe in the Buddhist teachings in this life. Thus, we know the principle of the retribution of good and evil karma, the Law of Cause and Effect in the three periods of time, and reincarnation within the Six Realms. We also know the way to attain ultimate emancipation by rebirth in the

Land of Bliss through reciting Amitabha's name. To repay the grace of all ancestors, and fulfill my moral duty, I now stand before all relatives and families of ancestors in the past, I respectfully explain the truths of Buddhism, and reverently describe the wonderful teaching of deliverance.

I hope the spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors surnamed -----) can recite Amitabha's name, and, relying on Amitabha's vows, merit and virtues, leave the sea of suffering and reincarnation in the cycle of birth-and-death forever, and be reborn in the Land of Bliss and eternal nirvana.

III. Inviting the Sacred Beings

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the greatly compassionate Amitabha Buddha to be present.

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the greatly merciful Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva to be present.

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the greatly powerful Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva to be present.

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the ocean-wide assembly of pure Bodhisattvas to be present.

I pray that Amitabha and a multitude of sacred beings, adhering to their vows, will take pity on us and come to this ceremony now and receive the spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors surnamed -----) so that they can leave the Three Domains and the Six Realms. Let them never again suffer reincarnation in the cycle of birth-and-death, but attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss, and realize true suchness and nirvana.

IV. Calling the Spirits

With a sincere heart, I call and invite: Seeing the colors of distant mountains, hearing the silence in flowing water; flowers bloom though spring is gone, and birds do not scatter though people approach. This is the initial offering of incense to call the spirit of ----- (and all family members). I pray that they come here now, and through reliance on the vows, merit and virtues of Amitabha Buddha, accept his deliverance and attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss!

With a sincere heart, I call and invite: The black crow flying like an arrow, and the white rabbit running like a shuttle; they are now separated and no longer can see or hear one another. This is the second offering of incense to call the spirit of ----- (and all family members). I pray that they come here now, and through reliance on the vows, merit and virtues of Amitabha Buddha, accept his deliverance and attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss!

With a sincere heart, I call and invite: It is easy to fall into the Three Wretched Realms, and it is difficult to leave the Six Realms. Without relying on Amitabha's compassion, it is hard to find the way to transcendental liberation. This is the third offering of incense to call the spirit of ----- (and all family members). I pray that they come here now, and through reliance on the vows, merit and virtues of Amitabha Buddha, accept his deliverance and attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss!

To the spirit of ----- (and all family members): take heed!

Because of the power of Amitabha's Vow, you can now encounter this splendid Dharma banquet!

Contemplating this rare opportunity, you should admire the joys of the Land of Bliss, and renounce the suffering of the Saha world. Let us together recite Namó Amitabha Buddha, and aspire to be reborn in the Land of Bliss!

V. Offerings (incense, flowers, fruit and food)

VI. Prayer Message

Amitabha delivers sentient beings with great compassion and unfathomable wisdom.

His light permeates the ten directions, unimpeded throughout the realms of “yin” and “yang”.

To the spirit of ----- (and all family members): You have encountered this splendid Dharma banquet.

You should be sincere and respectful in this place and listen reverently to the wonderful teaching.

You should recite Amitabha’s name sincerely and aspire to rebirth in the Pure Land through Amitabha’s deliverance!

VII. Discourse

1. Brief Description of the Land of Bliss, and Leading Sentient Beings to Amitabha-Recitation

Your gold is gone and silver dispersed. Could you still grasp them in the realm of death?

Your wife is gone and your son departed. You won't meet them again, not even on the path to the netherworld.

The Buddha says: "Traveling westward from here, there is a land called Bliss, wherein dwells a Buddha named Amitabha. He is teaching the Dharma now. In the Land of Bliss, beings suffer no pain but only experience joy of various kinds. For this reason, it is called 'the Land of Bliss'." The inhabitants there suffer no vexations of body and mind, but know infinite happiness and pure joy. They do not suffer reincarnation within the Three Domains and the Six Realms, but have eternal, unimpeded freedom in body and mind.

This Land of Bliss is established by Amitabha Buddha for sentient beings of the ten directions. It pains

Amitabha Buddha to see them reincarnating in the Six Realms and sinking into the Three Wretched Realms. They commit karmic offenses and suffer endlessly, life after life. So Amitabha makes compassionate vows to deliver all iniquitous, suffering sentient beings -- proactively, equally and unconditionally. All who inhabit the Six Realms -- regardless of their status as heavenly or human beings, regardless of their being good or evil people, regardless of their being caught in the Three Wretched Realms in Four Modes of Birth – if they recite Namó Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha will immediately appear to embrace and protect them. In a flash, they will be reborn in the Land of Bliss so that they can part from birth-and-death forever, never again to reincarnate. They will possess the fullness of joy and peace, and speedily achieve Buddhahood.

Those who recite Amitabha's name will be immediately delivered by the Buddha. Spirit of ----
- (and all family members), you have now encountered these auspicious conditions, so please follow the sound of my/our Amitabha-recitation. Recite sincerely with the aspiration to be reborn in the Land of Bliss!

Flowers blossom every day in the lotus pond.

Auspicious light in four colors reflects on the jeweled altar.

In earnest, the golden arm reaches out to grasp the pitiful ones.

Why do sentient beings not think of coming here?

Namo Amitabha Buddha! (ten, a hundred, or a thousand times)

2. Description of the Six Realms, and Leading Sentient Beings to Renounce Them

The five marks of decay appear in the beings of the Six Heavens of Desire.

Those who dwell in the Third Dhyana Heaven still suffer the devastation of wind.

Even if you can achieve the Heaven of Neither-Perception-nor-Non-Perception,

It is much better to return to the Land of Bliss.

The Buddha says, “There is no peace in the Three Domains. It is like a burning house, full of countless

and horrible sufferings!” The Six Realms are those of heavenly beings, humans, asuras, animals, hungry ghosts and hell-beings.

The Six Realms are worlds of retribution resulting from the karma of sentient beings. Because of their unresolved karma, sentient beings must suffer the endless cycle of birth-and-death. Thus, it is called reincarnation in the Six Realms. Those practicing virtues are reborn in the Three Wholesome Realms (the Heavenly Realm, Human Realm and Asura Realm), and those committing evil offences will fall into the Three Wretched Realms (the Animal Realm, Hungry Ghost Realm and Hell Realm).

In life, some people have more virtues and fewer offenses, while some have more offenses and fewer virtues. Some are plentiful in both virtues and offenses, while some are scant in both virtues and offenses. But no one has virtues alone, with no offenses. Generally, ordinary beings have more offenses and fewer virtues, so most of them will fall into the Three Wretched Realms. Not many are reborn in the Human Realm, and only a few can ascend to the Heavenly Realm. Thus the Buddha says: “The chances of receiving human form are as few

as the sand grains in my palm, but the chances of losing human form are as great as all the flecks of soil in the land.” He also says, “Once we lose our human body, it takes 10,000 *kalpas* to recover one.”

Nevertheless, within the Three Domains and the Six Realms -- from the human worlds to the celestial heavens – all is suffering. It includes the sufferings of body and mind, environment, reincarnation, large and small scale, long and short duration, as well as pain without boundaries and beyond description. Since these sufferings are due to our vexations and anxieties, they are terrible and frightening, and the Buddha compares them to a burning house. Sentient beings who have not escaped from the Three Domains and the Six Realms will scorch in the flames of the fiery house. They are forever drowning in an ocean of sufferings.

You, spirit of ----- (sentient being in the spirit realm, and all family members): if you have fallen into the realms of hell or hungry ghosts, you have personally experienced the pains of this burning house. Though you may be reborn in the heavenly realms, you will inevitably suffer the bitterness of falling from your station when

your life ends. The Buddha says, “Though you can recover your body in Brahma Heaven, or even in the Heaven of Neither-Perception-nor-Non-Perception, you will fall into the Three Wretched Realms when your life ends.” He also says, “To be reborn in the hells from the heavens; to be reborn in the heavens from the hells.” So, we know the Three Domains are like a burning house. Their pain is inconceivable and indescribable.

It is Amitabha’s compassionate vow to save all suffering beings. He calls to us: “All beings in the wretched realms of hell, hungry ghosts and animals, please come to be reborn in my land. Receive my Dharma teaching that you may soon become Buddhas.”

He also says: “All beings in the various reincarnated realms come to be reborn in my land and receive the fullness of joy! My compassionate heart exerts itself to rescue all sentient beings and endlessly deliver them from Avici Hell.”

He also says, “If I attain Perfect Enlightenment, my Buddha name will be called Infinite Life. All sentient beings who hear this name can come to my land.” Their bodies will be gold-colored like the Buddha and their

forms will be splendid, perfect and complete. Moreover, they will benefit all the various kinds of sentient beings with the mind of great compassion.

Because there exists the deliverance of Amitabha Buddha and a Land of Bliss, you, spirit of ----- (all sentient beings in the spirit realm and all family members), should take this splendid opportunity. So, please follow the sound of my (our) Amitabha-recitation, and recite sincerely with aspiration to be reborn in the Land of Bliss.

Committing the Ten Evil Deeds and the Five
Gravest Transgressions,

They are trapped in the Six Dusts for countless
kalpas.

Should they recite Amitabha's name but once,

They would reach that Land and attain a Dharma
body like the Buddha's.

(Recite Namo Amitabha Buddha ten, a hundred, or a
thousand times)

3. Description of the Splendidness of the Beings in the Land of Bliss

Contemplating the Pure Land of Bliss;

Vast and great, wide and level, formed by
countless jewels.

From the 48 Vows sublime adornments arise,
Transcending all Buddha-lands.

The Land of Bliss is pure and splendidly adorned, surpassing all worlds in the ten directions. Names associated with the Three Wretched Realms aren't even found there -- only natural sounds of joy. It is wide open, vast and sublime. Everything is permanent, subject to neither decay nor change. In its form, it is a wondrous realm, foremost in ultimate truth.

In the Land of Bliss, all is pure. The immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions can be seen, as clearly as if we were looking at our own reflection in a bright mirror.

The Land of Bliss is a realm of natural and spontaneous manifestation. Food, dress, lodging,

transport, study, recreation and every sort of daily need are readily available according to our thoughts. They come and go as we wish.

Food in the Land of Bliss: All is readily available as we wish, like chairs, tables, bowls and utensils made of the seven jewels. They appear before us naturally, filled with food of a myriad flavors. Having taken the meal, we feel relaxed and soft, and unattached to the taste of the food. Our energy is replenished, and the body excretes no waste. Once the meal is finished, the tables, bowls and utensils disappear, only to re-appear as we wish. There is no labor or effort involved.

Clothes in the Land of Bliss: Wonderful and beautiful clothing appears whenever we wish for it. It naturally appears on our body and fits perfectly without any sewing, measurement, dyeing or washing. Whatever decorative ornaments we wish will naturally manifest on our person. Their splendor and beauty are such that they cannot be described through comparison or analogy.

Lodging in the Land of Bliss: The lecture halls, practice rooms, palaces, mansions and pagodas are adorned with the seven jewels. They manifest naturally,

and their splendor far surpass that of any heavenly palace. All structures in the Land of Bliss, whether large or small, many or few, above or below, coming or going, appear before us as we please. All furniture and fixtures manifest as we wish.

Material in the Land of Bliss: All materials are pure and bright, and unique in form and shape. Their wondrous splendor is such that it cannot be explicitly described.

Climate in the Land of Bliss: There are no four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter. Neither cold nor hot, it is always clear and cool, soft and moderate, and extremely agreeable. Never are there natural disasters or earthquakes. One is always safe and secure.

Terrain in the Land of Bliss: The ground can be of gold, or the seven jewels, or other various jewels. It is wide, open and infinitely expansive. The jewels are naturally bright, resplendent and pure, without any flaw. The ground is flat like the palm of our hand, and no high mountains and deep seas are to be found there. We can see it all according to our wish.

Ponds in the Land of Bliss: The wondrous seven-jeweled ponds are everywhere, which hold the water of the eight virtues. It causes karmic offences to diminish, wisdom to brighten, obstructions to end, and blessings to accumulate.

Water in the Land of Bliss: When we enter the jeweled ponds, the water naturally pours over the body, and will also recirculate if we wish. The water temperature spontaneously adjusts to our comfort. It energizes the body, opens and gladdens the spirit, and eradicates all mental defilements.

Flowers in the Land of Bliss: In the ponds, there are various kinds of lotus flowers composed of many jewels. They are as large as chariot-wheels -- the blue ones radiating a blue light, the yellow a yellow light, the red a red light and the white ones a white light. They are resplendent like the sun and moon; fine and splendid, fragrant and pure.

Sky in the Land of Bliss: During the six periods of the day and night, wondrous celestial flowers rain down. They shine brightly, emitting a pure fragrance. They are soft, with an infinite array of color. Those who see the

flowers feel rejuvenated and joyful in body and mind. Their merit and virtues are immeasurably enriched.

Fragrance in the Land of Bliss: Sky, palaces, pagodas, ponds, trees and all things on the land are made of immeasurable and assorted jewels and emit hundreds of thousands of different kinds of fragrance. These things are wonderfully adorned, surpassing those in the heavens. The fragrance permeates the worlds of the ten directions. When Bodhisattvas smell this fragrance, they spontaneously cultivate Buddhist practices.

Trees in the Land of Bliss: There are many different kinds of trees everywhere -- trees of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, coral, carnelian and rosy pearl. They are resplendent and bright, supreme in their majesty. When a breeze passes through them, they naturally and harmoniously produce the five tones of the musical scale.

The trees in Amitabha Buddha's place of teaching are 4 million *li* tall, with branches extending 200,000 *li*. All their assorted jewels are naturally formed. When soft breezes waft through the rows of jeweled trees, they produce infinitely subtle and wonderful music. These melodies spread out to other Buddha-lands, and

whoever hears them attains the profound “Perseverance of Dharma” and dwells in the state of non-retrogression until Buddhahood is achieved. Their six organs are clear and sharp, without any vexation. Those who see these trees attain the three kinds of perseverance.

Birds in the Land of Bliss: There are different kinds of marvelous birds in the Land of Bliss. Birds of assorted colors, white cranes, peacocks, parrots, *sharis*, *kalavinkas* and *jivamjivakas*. Six periods of time during the day and the night, these birds sing with melodious and elegant voices, proclaiming the wondrous Dharma. On hearing them, the people of that land become mindful of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Their bodies are filled with immeasurable merit and virtues.

These birds are not born as retribution for evil karma. The reason is that none of the Three Wretched Realms exist in that Buddha-land. Even names associated with these realms do not exist there; how much less the realms themselves? These birds are manifested by Amitabha Buddha so that their singing can proclaim and spread the Dharma to render joy and benefit to sentient beings.

Music in the Land of Bliss: That land spontaneously

fills with infinite, boundless and wondrous music. This music manifests the sounds of the Dharma, melodious and delicate, for the benefit of all the beings there. It is the most sublime music in the worlds of the ten directions. Upon hearing these wonderful melodies, all wretched afflictions are immediately extinguished and replaced by innumerable virtuous teachings that lead toward unsurpassed perfect enlightenment.

Teaching in the Land of Bliss: Before Amitabha Buddha teaches the Dharma to Sravakas, Bodhisattvas and celestial beings, they gather in the seven-jeweled lecture hall. Once Amitabha Buddha expounds the marvelous teachings and explains the wonderful Dharma, all beings in that land joyfully attain the Way.

No sufferings in the Land of Bliss, immeasurable joy only.

No reincarnation, aging, illness or death.

Delicate food comes naturally, and heavenly clothing appears with the speed of thought;

In celestial palaces, large and small, things manifest accordingly.

The climate is temperate and mild, the ground is of sundry jewels.

Water of eight virtues, sweet and refreshing, clear all mental defilements.

Rain of heavenly flowers, whose fragrance reaches the ten directions.

Birds and trees preach the Dharma. Whoever perceives will realize “Perseverance of Non-arising.”

The Land of Bliss is so pure, splendid and blissful! Spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors under the family name of -----), you have now encountered these splendid conditions. Please arouse your sincerity, and follow my voice in reciting Amitabha’s name and aspire to be reborn in the Land of Bliss.

Amitabha Buddha-land pure and splendid,

Absent names from the Three Wretched Realms and the Six Realms.

Everything is adorned by inconceivable virtues,

And every kind of refined marvel.

Namo Amitabha Buddha (ten, a hundred or a thousand times)

4. Description of the Splendidness of the Environment in the Land of Bliss

People can complete the Buddhist path because of the purity of the Land of Bliss.

Habitual karma from the Saha world will cease instantly,

And the reincarnation cycle ends thereafter.

Afflictions of birth and death cannot bind anymore.

Any sentient being, once reborn in the Land of Bliss, ceases to reincarnate in the Three Domains and the Six Realms. Forever terminated are the sufferings of physical and mental afflictions – no suffering of birth, aging, illness, death, separation from loved ones, encounters with enemies, thwarted desire, and suffering of the Five Aggregates. For those in the Land of Bliss, these eight kinds of suffering (and all other kinds of suffering) cease forever, while happiness abounds.

The facial appearance and bodily form of the inhabitants of the Land of Bliss are splendid and perfect, exactly the same as those of Amitabha Buddha. They realize the same infinite auspicious marks, infinite light, infinite life, infinite wisdom, infinite compassion, infinite merit and virtues, great deep vows, extensive supernatural powers and unimpeded eloquence. All are natural and freely attained.

As a scripture says: “All sentient beings born in the Land of Bliss dwell in the Stage of Non-Retrogression. Many are in the Stage of Becoming a Buddha After One More Life. Such Bodhisattvas transcend the course of practice of ordinary Bodhisattvas, manifest the practices of all Bodhisattva stages, and cultivate the virtues of universal benevolence. Their bodies are golden in color like the Buddha’s, and their forms are splendid, perfect and complete. Moreover, they benefit various kinds of sentient beings with the mind of great compassion. They have 32 marks and 80 kinds of splendor like the Buddha. They can also expound the teachings and practice the Bodhisattva path like the Buddha.”

The scripture continues: “That Buddha-land, second to the realm of unconditioned nirvana, is pure and serene, resplendent and blissful. The Sravakas, Bodhisattvas, heavenly beings and humans there have lofty and brilliant wisdom, and are masters of supernatural powers. They are called 'heavenly beings' and 'humans' in accordance with their states of existence in former lives, but are all of one form without any differences separating them. They are of noble and majestic countenance, rare in all the worlds; their appearance is superb, unmatched by any heavenly or human being. They are all endowed with bodies of naturalness, emptiness and infinity.”

Those born in the Land of Bliss are “endowed with bodies of naturalness, emptiness and infinity.” That means they have realized the state of nirvana. They have achieved and completed the Buddhist path. They eradicated all traces of ignorance and cut off all delusive karma. Their life is eternal -- no decay, extinction, or suffering of birth, aging, illness and death; no worry, sadness, pain or affliction. Their compassion, wisdom and vow power are great and deep, and their supernatural powers are unimpeded and free. They can travel to the worlds of the ten directions with the speed of thought,

and can reach them all simultaneously. They can come and go as they wish. If they want to see their parents or children in this present life, relatives from past lives, they can see and deliver them in any expedient form. They can transform their bodies as they wish, and expound the wonderful teachings to widely deliver sentient beings.

Sentient beings of different kinds: Be reborn in the Land of Bliss,

Leave behind the pain of reincarnation, be free of the Eight Sufferings;

Delusive karma, affliction and ignorance are cut off;

Attain three kinds of thorough understanding, six kinds of supernatural powers,

And hundreds of thousands of Dharani;

Come and go among all worlds in a single thought;

Manifest under any condition, teach Dharma appropriate to the hearers;

Body golden like the Buddha's, form splendid, perfect and complete;

Deliver sentient beings comprehensively with the mind of great compassion.

A lineage master says, “Humans or heavenly beings, wholesome or unwholesome beings – all shall be reborn. In the Pure Land, no differences separate them. They all walk on an irreversible path to Buddhahood.” Spirit of --- --- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors under the family name of ----), you have encountered these splendid conditions. Please arouse your sincerity, follow my voice in reciting Amitabha’s name, and aspire to be born again in the Land of Bliss!

The bodies of Amitabha Buddha and the multitudes of sages are golden in color;

Minds interconnect because their lights shine on one another;

Their forms are equally splendid, as they were formed by Amitabha’s Vow.

All is accomplished through Amitabha’s power.

Namo Amitabha Buddha (ten, a hundred or a thousand times)

5. Description of the Land of Bliss, and the Direct Cause of Rebirth

The Land of Bliss is a realm of unconditioned nirvana;

It is hard to be reborn there by practicing assorted virtues according to circumstances.

The Tathagata selects the key method –

He teaches us to recite Amitabha’s name with two-fold exclusivity.

The Land of Bliss is a realm of unconditioned nirvana, pure and magnificent, surpassing all the worlds of the ten directions. But how can all people, good and evil, attain rebirth?

The primary cause of rebirth is “exclusive recitation of Amitabha’s name.” Any sentient being who aspires to be reborn in the Land of Bliss and exclusively recites Amitabha’s name is assured of rebirth through the power of the Buddha’s Vow. Once reborn, they are assured of attaining Buddhahood.

Amitabha says in his Vow: “If sentient beings in the

lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, wish to be born in my land, and call on my name, even ten times, should fail to be born there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”

The lineage master explains: “Today Amitabha is before us, having achieved Buddhahood. We should know that his Fundamental Vow has been unequivocally fulfilled. If sentient beings recite his name, they will certainly be reborn in the Land of Bliss.”

“Sentient beings of the ten directions” refers to all beings, including sages and mortals, good and evil people, celestial and human beings, those coming across the teaching during their lifetime, and near the end of life -- and even those in the transitional body (or ‘Bardo’), in the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm and the animal realm. They are the focus of Amitabha’s compassionate deliverance.

Ten *kalpas* have passed since Amitabha Buddha attained enlightenment. He extends his golden arm and calls out to sentient beings of the ten directions, particularly those who suffer in the Three Wretched Domains. The Buddha says: “All beings in the various

reincarnated realms come to be reborn in my land and receive the fullness of joy! My compassionate heart exerts itself to rescue all sentient beings and deliver them from Avici Hell.”

So, spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm of/all ancestors under the family name of -----), you are the focus of Amitabha’s deliverance. Right now, just recite Amitabha’s name, and you will immediately attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss!

The lineage master says: “With Amitabha’s vow power, all those who commit the Five Gravest Transgressions and the Ten Unwholesome Deeds will be cleared of their offences and be reborn in the Land of Bliss. All those who slander the true Dharma and have no roots of virtue can be reborn if they turn their minds to the Buddha.”

Also, what is the meaning of Amitabha’s name? The *Amitabha Sutra* says, “It is the name of immeasurable and boundless, inconceivable merit and virtues.”

The *Infinite Life Sutra* says: “If there are persons who hear the name of [Amitabha] Buddha, rejoice so

greatly as to dance, and recite his name even once, then you should know that they have gained great benefit by receiving the unsurpassed virtue.”

The *Contemplation Sutra* says: “With a sincere heart, he continuously recites [the Buddha's name], thus completing ten recitations of *Namo Amitabha Buddha*. The evil karma that he has committed during 80 *kotis* of *kalpas* of *samsara* in the past is extinguished by his every recitation.”

We should know: *Amitabha*’s name contains immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable, profound, hidden, splendid and unsurpassed merit and virtues. No matter who you are, all sentient beings who exclusively recite *Amitabha*’s name can attain great benefits and unsurpassed splendid merit and virtue immediately. They can eradicate the heavy karmic offenses of eight billion *kalpas* in the past. They can leave the cycle of reincarnation within the Six Realms, and be reborn in the Land of Bliss to become Buddhas.

The lineage master explains: “Sentient beings who recite his name will immediately clear the offenses of many *kalpas*. Moreover, at the end of their lives, they will

be welcomed by the Buddha and a multitude of sacred beings without them being invited. They will not be impeded by any deviant or evil karmic forces [preventing them from being reborn in the Land of Bliss].”

The *Amitabha Sutra* also says, “That Buddha’s light is boundless, illuminating the lands of the ten directions without obstruction. This is why he is called Amitabha.”

The *Contemplation Sutra* says: “The light [of Amitabha] permeates all worlds, always embracing those who recite his name.”

The lineage master combines the two texts and explains: “That Buddha’s light is infinite, illuminating all lands in the ten directions without any obstruction. He watches over the Amitabha-reciters, and embraces them always. That is why he is called Amitabha.”

Also: “For those sentient beings who exclusively recite Amitabha Buddha’s name, the light of the Buddha always shines upon them, protecting and embracing them, never forsaking them; it does not shine upon and embrace those who perform miscellaneous practices.”

Further: “Amitabha Buddha made a profound, weighty vow to embrace all beings with his light and transform them with his name, asking only that they have faith, aspire to rebirth in the Pure Land and recite his name. Whether one recites an entire lifetime, or merely ten times, or even just once, rebirth is easy because of the power of Amitabha’s vow.”

Thus all sentient beings who recite Amitabha’s name exclusively are certainly embraced and protected by Amitabha’s light. They assuredly attain rebirth in the Pure Land of Bliss in this lifetime.

The *Infinite Life Sutra* says, “If sentient beings encounter his light, their three defilements (greed, anger and delusion) are removed; they feel tenderness, joy and pleasure, and good thoughts arise. If sentient beings, desperately caught in the Three Wretched Realms, see his light, they will all be relieved and freed from affliction. At the end of their lives, they are all delivered.”

Thus, spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors under the family name of -----), if you are caught in the Three Wretched Realms, this is the best time to recite Amitabha’s name! Seek the embrace

and protection of Amitabha's light, so that you can be liberated from the sufferings there, and attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss.

Amitabha's name contains immeasurable merit and virtues;

Amitabha's light embraces [all Amitabha-reciters] without any obstructions.

Amitabha compassionately delivers sentient beings of the ten directions.

Amitabha receives sentient beings with lotus altar in hand.

Now is the best time for sentient beings to recite Amitabha's name.

They will be received by Amitabha and be reborn in his Pure Land.

I request the assembly here, and the spirit of -----
- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors under the family name of -----), to follow my voice and recite Amitabha's name sincerely and earnestly, and aspire to be reborn in the Land of Bliss!

The body of Amitabha is like gold mountains.

The splendor of his marks illuminates the ten directions.

Only those who recite his name are embraced by his light.

His Fundamental Vow is the most powerful.

Tathagatas of the Six Directions extend their tongues to attest:

By reciting Amitabha's name exclusively,

Sentient beings will arrive at the Western Land of Bliss.

Once born there in a blooming lotus,

One can listen to the wondrous Dharma teachings.

The aspiration and practice of the ten Bodhisattva stages manifest naturally.

Namo Amitabha Buddha of great kindness and great compassion in the Western Land of Bliss!

VIII. Recitation of Amitabha's Name

(Sincerely and earnestly, recite Namó Amitabha Buddha!)

IX. Dedication

May all sentient beings recite Amitabha's name,
And be reborn in the Land of Bliss as life ends.

Family and loved ones can gather together
forever,

With light and life equal to those of the King of
Vows.

May the resulting merit be transferred to the spirit
of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors
under the family name of -----), and be distributed
everywhere without discrimination. May we all aspire to
perfect enlightenment for the sake of other beings, and be
reborn in the Land of Peace and Joy.



**Rite of Transcendental
Deliverance Through Amitabha-
Recitation**

(simplified version)

-- Three prostrations before Amitabha Buddha;

-- Silent recitation: “I, (name), lacking in wisdom and blessings, pray that the compassionate Buddha will pity, not forsake, protect, and allow me to stay with the lotus assembly, as vast as the ocean, and perform this Buddhist rite.”

I. “Namo Amitabha Buddha” (Repeat ten times)

II. Dharma Teachings

The banquet of Amitabha’s deliverance is open now;

A multitude of pure Bodhisattvas descends and arrives.

They will deliver numerous sentient beings to the Land of Bliss;

All Buddhas joyfully expound their original intent [of deliverance].

With a sincere heart, I address you, the spirit of -----

(sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors surnamed -----): We are followers of the Buddha. Because we had profound karmic connections with the ----- family and are its descendants, we received a physical body.

It is also precious for us to hear and believe in the Buddhist teachings in this life. Thus, we know the principle of the retribution of good and evil karma, the Law of Cause and Effect in the three periods of time, and reincarnation within the Six Realms. We also know the way to attain ultimate emancipation by rebirth in the Land of Bliss through reciting Amitabha's name. To repay the grace of all ancestors, and fulfill my moral duty, I now stand before all relatives and families of ancestors in the past, I respectfully explain the truths of Buddhism, and reverently describe the wonderful teaching of deliverance.

I hope the spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors surnamed -----) can recite Amitabha's name, and, relying on Amitabha's vows, merit and virtues, leave the sea of suffering and reincarnation in the cycle of birth-and-death forever, and be reborn in the Land of Bliss and eternal nirvana.

III. Inviting the Sacred Beings

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the greatly compassionate Amitabha Buddha to be present.

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the greatly merciful Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva to be present.

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the greatly powerful Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva to be present.

With a sincere heart, I reverently invite the ocean-wide assembly of pure Bodhisattvas to be present.

I pray that Amitabha, with a multitude of sages, without breaking their vows, will take pity on us and come to this ceremony now and receive the spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the realm of spirit / all ancestors under the family name of -----) so that they can leave the Three Domains and the Six Realms. Let them never again suffer reincarnation in the cycle of birth-and-death, but attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss, and realize true suchness and nirvana.

IV. Calling the Spirits

With a sincere heart, I call and invite the spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the realm of spirit / all ancestors under the family name of -----). I pray that they come here now, and through reliance on the vows, merits and virtues of Amitabha Buddha, accept his deliverance and attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss!

(three times)

V. Discourse (Brief Description of the Land of Bliss, and Inducing Sentient Beings to Recite Amitabha's Name and Seek Rebirth in the Land of Bliss)

This Land of Bliss is established by Amitabha Buddha for sentient beings of the ten directions.

No sufferings in the Land of Bliss, immeasurable joy only.

No reincarnation, aging, illness or death.

Delicate food comes naturally, and heavenly clothing appears with the speed of thought;

In celestial palaces, large and small, things manifest accordingly.

The climate is temperate and mild, and the ground is of sundry jewels.

Water of eight virtues, sweet and refreshing, clear all mental defilements.

Rain of heavenly flowers, whose fragrance reaches the ten directions,

Birds and trees preach the Dharma. Whoever perceives will realize “Perseverance of Non-arising.”

Sentient beings of different kinds: Be reborn in the Land of Bliss,

Leave behind the pain of reincarnation, and be free of the Eight Sufferings;

Delusive karma, affliction and ignorance are cut off;

Attain three kinds of thorough understanding, six kinds of supernatural powers,

And hundreds of thousands of Dharani;

Come and go among all worlds in a single thought;

Manifest under any condition, teach Dharma appropriate to the hearers;

Body golden like the Buddha's, form splendid, perfect and complete;

Deliver sentient beings comprehensively with the mind of great compassion.

Within the Three Domains and the Six Realms -- from the human worlds to the celestial heavens -- all is suffering. It includes the sufferings of body and mind, environment, reincarnation, large and small scale, long and short duration, as well as pain without boundaries and beyond description.

It pains Amitabha Buddha to see them reincarnating in the Six Realms and sinking into the Three Wretched Realms. They commit karmic offenses and suffer endlessly, life after life. So Amitabha makes compassionate vows to deliver all iniquitous, suffering sentient beings -- proactively, equally and unconditionally. All who inhabit the Six Realms -- regardless of their

status as heavenly or human beings, regardless of their being good or evil people, regardless of their being caught in the Three Wretched Realms in Four Modes of Birth – if they recite Namó Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha will immediately appear to embrace and protect them. In a flash, they will be reborn in the Land of Bliss so that they can part from birth-and-death forever, never again to reincarnate. They will possess the fullness of joy and peace, and speedily achieve Buddhahood.

Amitabha says in his Vow: “If sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, wish to be born in my land, and call on my name, even ten times, should fail to be born there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”

Ten *kalpas* have passed since Amitabha Buddha attained enlightenment. He extends his golden arm and calls out to sentient beings of the ten directions, particularly those who suffer in the Three Wretched Domains. The Buddha says: “All beings in the various reincarnated realms come to be reborn in my land and receive the fullness of joy! My compassionate heart exerts itself to rescue all sentient beings and deliver them from Avici Hell.”

The lineage master says: “With Amitabha’s vow power, all those who commit the Five Gravest Transgressions and the Ten Unwholesome Deeds will be cleared of their offences and be reborn in the Land of Bliss. All those who slander the true Dharma and have no roots of virtue can be reborn if they turn their minds to the Buddha.”

So, spirit of ----- (sentient beings in the realm of spirit / all ancestors under the family name of -----), all of you are the focus of Amitabha’s deliverance. Right now, just recite Amitabha’s Name, and you will immediately attain rebirth in the Land of Bliss! Please follow the sound of my Amitabha-recitation. Recite sincerely with the aspiration to be reborn in the Land of Bliss!

Namo Amitabha Buddha! (ten, one hundred, or one thousand times)

VI. Gatha in Praise of Amitabha Buddha

The body of Amitabha is like gold mountains.

The splendor of his marks illuminates the ten directions.

Only those who recite his name are embraced by his light.

His Fundamental Vow is the most powerful.

Tathagatas of the Six Directions extend their tongues to attest:

By reciting Amitabha's name exclusively,

Sentient beings will arrive at the Western Land of Bliss.

Once born there in a blooming lotus,

One can listen to the wondrous Dharma teachings.

The aspiration and practice of the ten Bodhisattva stages manifest naturally.

Namo Amitabha Buddha of great kindness and great compassion in the Western Land of Bliss!

VII. Amitabha-Recitation

(Recite sincerely and earnestly “Namo Amitabha Buddha” ten, one hundred, or one thousand times)

VIII. Dedication

May all sentient beings recite Amitabha’s name,
And be reborn in the Land of Bliss as life ends.

Family and loved ones can gather together
forever,

With light and life equal to those of the King of
Vows.

May the resulting merit be transferred to the spirit
of ----- (sentient beings in the spirit realm/all ancestors
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reborn in the Land of Peace and Joy.

