

Special Words to Transfer Merit for Memorial Service for the Victims of War, Disaster, Accident, and Violence

We reverently address these words to
the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni—Great Benevolent Teacher, World-Honored One,
as well as all buddhas, bodhisattvas, and heavenly spirits.

Here, today, we members of [*Dharma center name*], together with people of pure heart in our
community, make offerings of incense, flowers, light, and several kinds of food and drink, and
reverently recite the sutra in unison to transfer the merits of this recitation to the victims of the
[*name of war / description of disaster, accident, or violence*].

May the powerful merit of this wondrous Lotus Sutra, which we have sincerely recited, relieve all
those who have passed from this world of their innumerable sufferings and attachments. May the
powerful merit also quickly bring them to the unsurpassable Way, so that all of them together
attain the great fruit of accomplishing the Buddha Way.

Now, all people of pure heart gathered here recognize today's memorial service as an opportunity
to transfer to the deceased all the merits we accumulate by doing good deeds and practicing the
bodhisattva way. We hope and pray that those merits may allow them to rest in peace and
tranquility.

We also wish to persevere in compassionate practice for the liberation of all living beings and
change our community and society for the better through our family's joy and harmony as well as
our practice of kindness.

We reverently pray that all buddhas and all honored ones know our deep devotion and extend
their hands of compassion, sympathy, liberation, and protection to all who have passed beyond
for whom we conduct this service.

We also pray that our recitation may bring the joy of the Dharma to all the deceased and help
them to quickly accomplish the great fruit of Supreme Perfect Awakening in the wondrous land
of nirvana and eternal tranquility.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo (*Strike the gong once.*)

Notes

1. In the second paragraph above, you can replace “Here, today, we . . . in our community” with “Today, at this site [*Modify with a proper noun or name of war / description of disaster, accident, or violence*], distinguished people from the community and the members of pure heart from Rissho Kosei-kai gather together.”
2. In the second paragraph above, when the victims have already been given a collective posthumous name or specific posthumous names, replace “the victims of the [*name of war / description of disaster, accident, or violence*]” above with the collective posthumous name.
3. After the second paragraph, refer to the war, incident, or disaster, the purpose of this memorial service, and so forth. See the examples 1-1 to 1-2 below.
4. After the third paragraph above ending with “accomplishing the Buddha Way,” quote an appropriate passage from the Lotus Sutra. See the examples 2-1 to 2-4 below.
5. Since the memorial service can be held in different ways according to various purposes, adapt the Special Words to Transfer Merit to each particular service, using appropriate words and phrases. The Special Words to Transfer Merit above as well as the examples below are models for your service.

Example 1-1

When we humbly reflect on the Second World War, we realize that the infinitely precious lives of many people were lost in the war. Acknowledging that the peace we enjoy today has been achieved as a result of their sacrifice, we owe them a debt of deep gratitude and express a sense of commemoration. We solemnly conduct this memorial service for the victims of war as we resolve ourselves to further efforts for world peace to prevent the tragedy of war from ever taking place again.

Example 1-2

We remember that on [*month/day/year*], rock and mud slides devastated [*place name*] with a thunderous crash and swept away many houses in an instant, eventually causing a disaster that took the lives of [*number*] people. Though [*number*] years have passed since then, we cannot help but shed tears of sorrow over the loss of our family members and loved ones, as the wound in our hearts remains unhealed.

Example 2-1

Chapter 2 of the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma, “Skillful Means,” says,
“Of those who hear the Dharma,
None will fail to become a buddha.”

From the remotest past, the vow of all buddhas is
To enable all living beings
To attain this very same Buddha Way
That they themselves practice.”

Example 2-2

Chapter 3 of the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma, “A Parable,” says,
“Now this threefold world
Is all my domain,
And the living beings in it
Are all my children.
But now it is filled
With disaster and trouble,
And only I am able
To rescue and protect them.”

Example 2-3

Chapter 12 of the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma, “Devadatta,” reads,
“If, in the future, there are good sons and good daughters who hear this Devadatta chapter of the
Wondrous Dharma Flower Sutra and believe and revere it with pure hearts and without doubt,
then they will not fall into the realms of hells, hungry spirits, or beasts. They will be born into the
presence of the buddhas of the ten directions. Wherever they are born, they will always hear this
sutra. If they are born among humans and heavenly beings, they will enjoy marvelous delight. If
they are born into the presence of buddhas, they will be born from lotus flowers.”

Example 2-4

Chapter 25 of the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma, “The Bodhisattva
Regarder of the Sounds of the World as Universal Gateway,” reads,
“When living beings are beset by woes
And burdened by countless pains,
The wondrous wisdom power of the Regarder of Sounds
Can free them from the sufferings of the world.
She is in full command of transcendent powers,
Having fully mastered the skillful means of wisdom.
In the lands of the ten directions,
There is no place she does not manifest herself.

All the evil states of existence,
Those of hells, of hungry spirits, and of beasts,
And the sufferings of birth, aging, illness, and death,
She gradually brings to an end.”