

Special Words to Transfer Merit for a Vigil Service

These words transferring merit are reverently addressed to the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni, all buddhas, and all other honored ones.

Now, we conduct this vigil service for the departed [*full name*], who passed away at the age of [*number*]. [*Given name*] has received the posthumous name of [*Posthumous name*] (*Recite it twice*).

The “Devadatta” chapter of the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma states: “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.”

We pray:

May those who are not yet free from suffering become able to attain freedom from suffering,
May those who are not yet happy become able to attain happiness,
May those who have not yet aspired to the mind of awakening become able to aspire to it,
May those who have not yet attained buddhahood attain the joy of the Dharma inspired by this sutra recitation, enter the unsurpassable Way, and thereby accomplish embodiment as buddhas, all through the merits of embracing the Three Treasures.

We respectfully pray that the departed may be guided by the Founder and Cofounder’s teachings of great benevolence and great compassion so that [*appropriate pronoun*] may quickly enter the wondrous realm of nirvana and accomplish the great fruit of Supreme Perfect Awakening.

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

Notes

1. If a posthumous name has not yet been conferred on the departed, delete the second paragraph’s sentence above beginning with [*Given name*].
2. After the second paragraph that begins with the words “Now, we conduct this vigil service,” state the date when the departed passed away and the reference to the departed in his or her lifetime. Make the text appropriate to the departed’s good personality, virtuous deeds, age, accomplishments, and so on. Refer to the examples 1 to 4 below.

Example 1

On [month/day/year], [given name] departed from this world to continue on [appropriate pronoun] spiritual journey. Our meeting was also the start of our parting; such is the way of this world. Life is as fleeting as the morning dew in the sunlight. Those who leave this world are surely sorrowful, but those left behind are also grieved.

Due to [appropriate pronoun] abundant virtues from past lifetimes, [given name] received the rare gift of life as a human being and encountered the Wondrous Dharma that is rarely met. Since the time when [appropriate pronoun] became a member of Rissho Kosei-kai in [year], [appropriate pronoun] has practiced diligently and lived [appropriate pronoun] entire life in single-minded pursuit of the Dharma.

Example 2

On [month/day/year], [given name] reached the fullness of [appropriate pronoun] life in this world and quietly took [appropriate pronoun] last breath. When we reflect on life, humans beings are likely to flounder in the ocean of samsara, and they find it difficult to ascend to the pinnacle of nirvana. Those born in this world are destined to pass away and someday part from those they have met. This is the truth of the world that even the distinguished sages are unable to avoid.

Thanks to [appropriate pronoun] abundant virtues from past lifetimes, [given name] received the rare gift of life as a human being and encountered the Wondrous Dharma that is rarely met. In [year], [appropriate pronoun] was connected to the Dharma through Rissho Kosei-kai, and since then, [appropriate pronoun] has cultivated the fields of [appropriate pronoun] heart and mind, thoroughly dedicated [appropriate pronoun] to sharing the Dharma with many people, and thus demonstrated the model of a lay bodhisattva for all of us.

Example 3

[Appropriate pronoun] received the rare gift of life as a human being and encountered the Wondrous Dharma that is rarely met. But, on [month/day/year] as the last day in this lifetime, at the age of [number], [appropriate pronoun] departed this world. This life is much like a pretty flower in bloom that is violently blown away by a gust of wind; or comparable to a beautiful full moon that is unexpectedly obscured by sudden clouds.

In the spirit of honesty and sincerity, the deceased has unfailingly rendered service for the sake of people and the world as well as venerated [appropriate pronoun] ancestors and been kind to

[*appropriate pronoun*] parents. Thus [*appropriate pronoun*] has walked the Buddha Way, focused single-mindedly on the Buddha.

Example 4

[*Given name*] was born through the utmost benevolence of [*appropriate pronoun*] parents, and on [*month/day/year*], [*given name*] departed this world at the age of [*number*]. Parents depart this world, and their children are left behind, as this is the usual order of passing away in this world. But death comes to old and young alike. In the face of a child's untimely passing, parents feel overshadowed by gloom as though dark clouds have obscured the sunlight, or as if they have strayed deep into dim mountain forests.

With abundant virtues from past lifetimes, [*given name*] was born into the family of Rissho Koseikai members who deeply venerate the Three Treasures and earnestly transfer the merits of sutra recitation to their ancestors. [*Appropriate pronoun*] was a boy [*girl*] who embraced the true Dharma by making those merits a part of their lives.