

The Essentials of the Chung Fung Thrice Yearning Ceremony

1. The Thrice Yearning Ceremony was compiled by Venerable Master Chung Fung, an imperial teacher in the Yuan dynasty. The ceremony is based on the *Amitabha Sutra* and on Buddha-name chanting.
2. The meanings of the Thrice Yearning Ceremony:
 - A. Thrice (Three Times). Thrice initially referred to the three times of early morning, midday, and evening. Later, people consolidated the three times and held them together with short breaks in between the sections instead of holding them at different times.
 - B. Yearning: Longing for [Buddha Amitabha]. This is the method Buddha Sakyamuni taught us in the three Pure Land sutras to practice to be reborn in the Pure Land. “Single-mindedness of [Buddha Amitabha]” in the *Amitayur Dhyana Sutra (Visualization Sutra)*, “single-pointed and persistently concentrated on [Buddha Amitabha]” in the *Aparimitayur Sutra (Infinite Life Sutra)*, and “one mind [on Buddha Amitabha] undisturbed” in the *Sukhavati-Vyuha Sutra (Amitabha Sutra)* translated by Venerable Master Kumarajiva all refer to the same method. In Venerable Master Xuanzang’s translation, it was translated as “being mindful and undisturbed.” Therefore, the key to the Buddha-name chanting method is to keep a continuous and uninterrupted pure mind.
 - C. Ceremony: Refers to the Dharma lectures in the three sections.
 - D. The Thrice Yearning Ceremony covers the three assets of Pure Land school—Faith, Vow, and Practice
 - First Section: Building faith on the Pure Land school and on Buddha Amitabha
 - Second Section: Urging us to make unwavering vows to be reborn in Pure Land
 - Third Section: Urging us to diligently practice and to be mindful of Buddha Amitabha
3. People normally pay respect to their ancestors on special occasions. Is it useful, though? The answer is “yes”. It shows our respect and care for our ancestors and those orphaned ones. Using the Dharma to help the deceased transcend benefits them even more. The Dharma will help them lessen their afflictions and anger, and can help them depart the hungry ghost realm and enter the good paths sooner. It even can help them to be reborn in Pure Land.
4. In the ceremony, relying on the power of the Dharma, we respectfully invite the deceased to the Dharma place for lectures, to recite the sutra and to chant, to repent their karmic obstacles, to make their vows, to take the triple jewels and to transfer the merit. We offer them the Dharma, which helps them open up and be reborn in the Pure Land.

Therefore, we should be very sincere in our wish to help these deceased ones. In reality, both the deceased and we are benefited for we are taking the opportunity to practice together with them, and helping them and all beings in all forms end their suffering. Therefore, everyone receives the real benefit.

5. So as long as we participate in the ceremony with a sincere and respectful mind, inconceivably virtuous deeds and merit will definitely result. Do you not think so?