

# The Essentials of the Zhong Feng Thrice Yearning Ceremony

1. The Thrice Yearning Ceremony was compiled by Dharma Master Zhong Feng, an imperial teacher in the Yuan dynasty of China. The ceremony is based on the *Amitabha Sutra* and Buddha-name chanting.
2. The meaning of the Thrice Yearning Ceremony
  - A. Thrice: Thrice initially referred to the three times of early morning, midday, and evening. Later, people consolidated the three sections and held them together with short breaks in between.
  - B. Yearning: Longing. This is the method of practice Sakyamuni Buddha taught us in the three Pure Land sutras to attain rebirth in the Pure Land. “Single-mindedness” in the *Visualization Sutra*, “single-minded concentration” in the *Infinite Life Sutra*, and “one-mind undisturbed” in Master Kumarajiva’s translation of the *Amitabha Sutra* all refer to the same method. In Master Xuanzang’s translation, the phrase was translated as “mindful and undisturbed.” Therefore, the key to the Buddha-name chanting method is to keep a continuously pure mind.
  - C. Ceremony: Refers to the Dharma lectures in the three sections.
  - D. The Thrice Yearning Ceremony covers the three requisites of the Pure Land school—Faith, Vow, and Practice
    - First Section: Overview to building faith in existence of the Pure Land World [ and Amitabha Buddha ]
    - Second Section: Urging us to make the unwavering vow to be reborn in the Pure Land
    - Third Section: Urging us to diligently practice and mindfully chant the name of Amitabha Buddha
3. People normally pay respect to their ancestors on special occasions. Is it useful, though? Yes, it is. It shows our respect and concern for our ancestors and for orphans. 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 path and enter the good paths sooner. It can even help them to be reborn in Pure Land.
4. In the ceremony, relying on the power of the Dharma, we respectfully invite those who are deceased to the Dharma place for lectures, sutra recitation, and chanting, in order to repent their karmic obstacles, make their vows, take the Three Refuges, and transfer merit. We offer them the Dharma, which helps them open up their minds to the Dharma and be reborn in the Pure Land.

Therefore, we should be very sincere in our wish and practice to help the deceased. In reality, both the deceased and we benefit for we are taking the opportunity to practice together with them. In doing so, we will help them and all beings in all forms end their suffering. Therefore, everyone receives genuine benefits.

5. As long as we participate in the ceremony with a sincere and respectful mind, inconceivable virtuous deeds and merits will definitely result. Don’t you think so?