Instructions for Using Vajra Sand

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The Great Light Mantra and Vajra Sand have such functions as averting disasters, increasing benefit, consecrating and purifying, and delivering the departed. Vajra Sand empowered by recitation of the Great Light Mantra can liberate all departed spirits. Even those who have died many years ago and fallen into the three lower realms may be uplifted and delivered.

Excerpt from Master Yuanyin’s Questions and Answers: Question 65: What mantras are best for delivering the departed?

Answer: One may recite the “Mantra of Liberation through Hearing,” the “Great Secret Mantra of Primordial Awakening,” the “Six Realms Vajra Mantra,” the “Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Mantra,” and the “Great Light Mantra.” These are the most

important mantras. It is especially important to recite them frequently during the intermediate state, for they are very efficacious.

One may prepare “Vajra Sand” as follows: Take a box of sand, wash it clean, and dry it in the sun. Thread a red silk cord through a needle and insert the needle into the sand. Hold the end of the red cord at the base of the ring finger of the left hand, form the vajra-fist mudrā, point the right hand toward the sand, and recite [the mantra] 108,000 times. This sand can then liberate all departed spirits. Even if a departed spirit has been dead for many years and has fallen into the three lower realms, one need only scatter the sand over the corpse or ashes, from the feet toward the head, and that being may be reborn in the heavenly realms. There is then no need to recite other mantras.

Recording of Master Yuanyin’s teachings: To deliver the deceased, regardless of how long the person has been dead, simply take this sand. If there is a coffin, scatter it from the foot of the coffin toward the head. Even if the deceased has fallen into the three lower realms, this can draw them out and raise them to heaven. Thus, this mantra has great power.

Method of use: If there is a body or coffin, scatter it from the feet toward the head. If the body has been cremated, it may be scattered over the ashes, the urn, or the grave mound.

Source: The Amoghapāśa Vairocana Buddha Great Empowerment Light Dhāraṇī Sūtra states: “If sentient beings have committed all ten evil acts, the five heinous offenses, and the four grave offenses—sins as numerous as the motes of dust filling this world—and when their bodies decay and their lives end, they fall into the evil realms: empower earth or sand with this true word 108 times, and scatter it over the corpse or bones of the deceased in a charnel ground, or scatter it over a grave. Whenever one encounters [such remains], scatter it.”

“For the deceased person, whether in hell, among hungry ghosts, among asuras, or among animals, through the power of sand and earth empowered by the spiritual powers and force of the true original vow of the Great Empowerment Light Mantra of all the unfailing Tathāgatas, the unfailing Vairocana Tathāgata, that being immediately obtains light, is freed in body from all karmic retribution and abandons the body of suffering. They proceed to the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss, are born by transformation in a lotus, and, until bodhi, never fall again.”