

BUDDHIST FUNERAL TRADITIONS

Reincarnation plays an important role in Buddhist funeral traditions. Buddhists view death as a transition from this life to the next, bringing the soul closer to Nirvana, a state of absolute bliss. Death is also an occasion of major religious significance for family members. It serves as a reminder of the Buddha's teaching on impermanence and provides an opportunity to assist loved ones into the afterlife as they travel on to their new existence.

Dignity Memorial® professionals are here to fulfill your family needs so that your ancestors are honored and not forgotten, even after the service. Through close relationships with experts, such as feng shui masters and the best local floral providers, our compassionate staff will help you honor your Buddhist funeral traditions in a beautiful and meaningful way.

The Buddhist funeral

The Buddhist funeral is simple, solemn and dignified, typically taking place within a week after death. Many Buddhist funerals occur in a funeral home, not a temple. A viewing takes place for only one night, generally the evening before the funeral, and typically includes the ambiance of candlelight and incense.

During visitation, the family sits at the front of the room and greets those who have come to show support. Visitors offer their condolences, then go to the casket and bow as a sign of honor and respect. They may then either stay for a while or leave, according to personal preference. Visitors will often make a financial donation to the family.

Adhering to Buddhist funeral traditions, the funeral service is typically held the following day and is conducted by a monk. There is almost always an open casket allowing attendees to say goodbye. Guests are expected to bow slightly toward the loved one as a sign of appreciation for lessons regarding impermanence of life. There may be a period of meditation, a traditional Buddhist custom, during the ceremony to reflect on the person's life and honor their memory. After the ceremonies are completed, the casket is taken to a burial ground, often on a hillside for better feng shui. When the casket is buried, the family turns away from the grave site to show respect.

Depending on their beliefs and preferences, Buddhists may also choose [cremation](#). For some Buddhists, it is a traditional funeral custom for the family to witness the cremation. Dignity Memorial providers may have special viewing areas to accommodate this custom. Because Buddhist funeral practices can vary based on preference, we encourage individuals to make their wishes known ahead of time.

Attending a Buddhist funeral

Guests who are not of the Buddhist faith are not expected to participate in the Buddhist ceremony, but rather to quietly observe the rituals, standing or sitting as directed. Men and women are free to sit together. No head covering is required, and shoes must only be removed

if the ceremony is held in a temple. While white is the color of grieving for the family, friends often wear black.

Friends may visit the grieving family's home after the funeral, but not before. In the Buddhist tradition, [flowers or donations](#) may be sent to the family, but gifts of food are considered inappropriate. Guests may also make a donation to a designated charity in the name of the loved one.

For a temple ceremony, men should wear a tie and women a dress or skirt and blouse. Clothing should be suitable for sitting on the floor during meditation.

Planning a Buddhist funeral

If you'd like to arrange a Buddhist funeral that will honor your family traditions and the wishes of your loved one, Dignity Memorial professionals can help. We specialize in honoring Buddhist funeral traditions while adding personal details where appropriate. Our funeral homes offer traditional funeral and cremation services, and many include a private witness room where the family can gather to pay respects to a loved one before cremation.

Whether you are [creating a beautiful tribute](#), need help selecting or sending appropriate flowers, or would like to set up an extended visitation, we can help.