Human Composting in Tibetan Futures

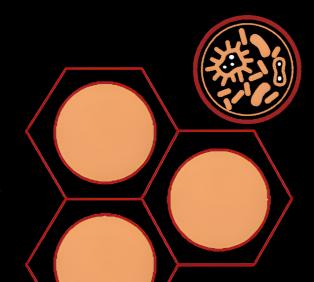
Explores how human composting can be culturally accepted and ecologically integrated into Tibetan urban burial practices by 2050.

Human Composting Process

How might future burial practices respond to ecological pressure on the Tibetan Plateau?



In response to ecological fragility, bodies are placed in composting vessels filled with wood chips, alfalfa, and straw. For 30 days, temperature, moisture, and oxygen are carefully controlled to support natural decomposition.



Microbes break down the body into nutrient-rich soil, turning death into a regenerative ecological process.



2035

Legal Recognition &

Subsidy Integration

The resulting soil supports ecological restoration and grounds new cultural rituals in the land.

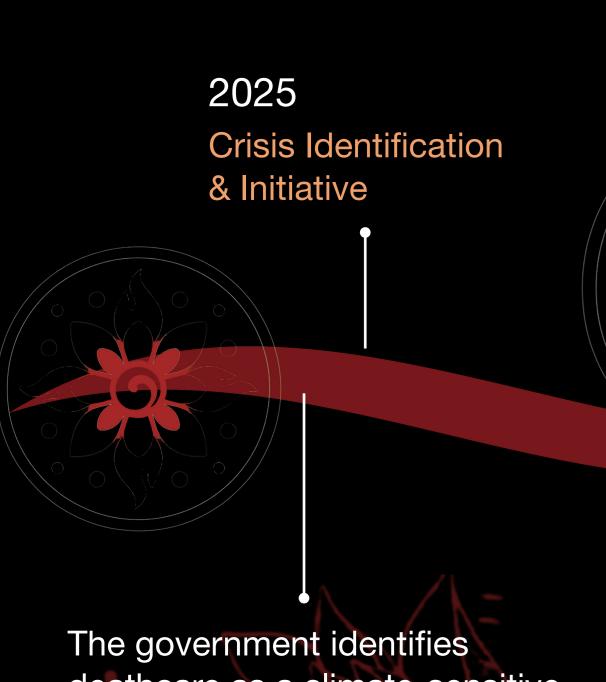
Jiaxin Zhang

care.

Jiaxin is a design futurist with an architectural background, exploring sustainable burial practices through cultural research, speculative design, and ecological systems thinking.

> Human composting offers a way to restore land and reconnect deathcare with ecological cycles. Families use the soil to regenerate degraded areas or grow memorial trees, creating rituals that honour both spiritual tradition and climate

Roadmap



deathcare as a climate-sensitive issue. A policy task force is formed to explore alternatives to cremation and burial, initiating a national Green Burial Transformation program.

Pilot composting sites are launched in Lhasa and Shigatse, supported by local governments and NGOs. Legal frameworks are introduced for regulated, lowemission human composting.

Human composting is recognised as a legal alternative in Tibet. Green deathcare practices are included in national ecological subsidy schemes and burial planning policies.

2042 Institutional Embedding & Public Integration



Municipal funeral services incorporate composting facilities. Composting vessels and soil quality standards are regulated. Universities and temples assist in training and monitoring.

Sacred Soil Rituals become part of Tibetan urban funeral policy, forming a humane, climate-resilient, and culturally adapted deathcare infrastructure across regions.



Cultural Pathway to Human Composting Acceptance

2030

Pilot Site

Establishment



2025 Community Dialogue & Cultural Listening

Monks, elders, and local designers host open conversations in temples and village squares to introduce the idea of returning to soil. Trust begins through shared stories and ritual memory.

2030 Participatory Ritual Design

Community workshops invite families to co-design composting ceremonies. Message walls, prayer flags, and symbolic items are created to localise rituals with Tibetan values.

2035 Youth Engagement & Generational Bridging

Young people document elder stories and plant memorial trees with their families. Composting rituals enter schools and festivals, linking ancestry, identity, and ecological care.

2042 **Everyday Sacred Practices**

Residents co-maintain a Sacred Soil Community Garden. Ritual composting becomes part of everyday life, integrated into temple offerings, seasonal planting, and the shaping of a living tradition.



2050 Cultural Continuity & Identity

Sacred Soil Rituals are embraced as a Tibetan tradition. Each generation grows up with this practice as a spiritual, ecological, and communal way of honouring the dead.

Insights Box

1. China's elderly deaths are projected to rise by 77.6% by 2050, with 130 million more people over the age of 60. This project explores culturally sensitive, low-impact burial alternatives to meet future deathcare needs in regions like Ti-

2. The Tibetan Plateau is warming 3 times faster than the global average, causing 30-50% of its grasslands to degrade.

Human composting offers a way to return nutrients to the land, addressing ecological fragility through regenerative soil practices.

3. Spiritual practices remain central to Tibetan identity.

This project integrates composting into rituals to ensure cultural resonance and spiritual continuity.

> **#RETURN TO NATURE #HUMAN COMPOSTING #CULTURE AND ECOLOGY**

Outcome & Impact

Policy

Sacred Soil Rituals are included in national green funeral subsidy programs.

Ecology

Promotes soil restoration and contributes to carbon emission reduction.

Culture

Young people reinterpret burial rituals through ecological and spiritual values.

Community

Temples lead participatory models of eco-deathcare within local communities.

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