

# FUNERALS OBT

Oregon Buddhist Temple Board developed these guidelines to help families during a most difficult time. The passing of a loved one is a traumatic time that Shinran Shonin and Rennyō Shonin guided us through with their words.

**Prior to:** Some families want assistance from before death while others will want assistance with just the funeral/memorial. To help them through this process OBT has developed the following guidelines:

If possible prior to death, the family should talk to their family member about their wishes. Some people want to plan their entire funeral while others are not willing to talk about the subject. If it is too difficult for the family to discuss this matter, the resident minister or someone from the funeral committee can be asked to talk to the family member. There is also the possibility of a sudden, unanticipated death so you may not have any idea of their wishes.

The forms at the back of the booklet will aid you in this discussion.

## Things to think about

### Who is the service for?

Some people think about their service and plan everything from the pall bearers to the songs that will be sung. Traditionally the service is a way of bringing the family together before the Buddha.

### What is your relationship with the Temple?

Regardless of whether your family has been associated with the Temple for generations or whether you're new to the area or have never been to the Temple all are welcome to have their funeral or memorial services at the Temple.

### What do you want for your children?

Many people get comfort from the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and want to encourage their children to continue this relationship after they're gone.

### What do you want their relationship to be with the Dharma, Sangha or Temple?

## Put together some information

The best time to get information together is when people are healthy and able to remember details.

It may be a good plan to have the following information on all family members in a safe, yet accessible place.

Name:	Full name, spelling and Japanese characters if appropriate.
Maiden name:	If applicable Buddhist Name: (or location of Homyo)
Address and length of residence	
Birth date and birthplace	For death certificate
Social Security Number	(for notification to Social Security Administration)
Spouse's name	date of marriage and location (date of death and location if applicable)
Parents' names	include mother's maiden name and birthplaces
Other personal information	Include education, military service, employment, organization affiliations, interests, hobbies, etc.
Causes	In lieu of flowers some people would like money donated to their cause(s). Koden can also be directed to the cause rather than the family. (see info below on Koden)

Contact persons and phone numbers:

Hospice	_____	_____
Funeral Home	_____	_____
Rose City Funeral Home		(503) 281-3821
Bateman Funeral Home		(503) 665-2128
Riverview Abby		(503) 343-4006
Temple	Oregon Buddhist Temple	503-234-9456
Minister	Rev. Gregory Gibbs	971-222-9230

If possible find out if a Homyo or Buddhist name was given previously. The Homyo might be kept in the drawer of the family Obutsudan or with important papers. Family members should be informed of the location and also the information sheet.

## When Death Occurs

Per the BCA booklet Funeral Information, they provide the following checklist:

### A. Immediately after a death occurs

1. Contact your doctor. In the case of an accidental death, contact the coroner. [ You may have already contacted your loved one's hospice contact or 911]
2. Contact your minister. (503-234-9456 Temple) (971-222-9230 Rev. Gibbs) In the event the minister is not available, a minister's assistant or other Temple representative will respond to the family.
3. Contact a mortuary.
4. Contact relatives and close friends
5. Make arrangements with the minister for a Makuragyo (Bedside) Service. [This usually occurs in the first 24 hours.] If possible and if desired, the minister will come immediately to perform the Makuragyo/Pillow Service. If you are unable to reach the minister at the Temple or by cell phone, you should contact the temple president. Although it is a difficult time, please understand if you are not able to contact anyone immediately.

### B. Making Soshiki (Funeral) arrangement

The funeral service consultation is a meeting that plans the funeral service. If possible please bring this booklet.

If you have looked through this booklet before death occurs and discussed some of the issues with your family, this process should take about an hour. However, consultations may take longer.

1. Select someone to act on behalf of the family (Optional).  
Consider who should participate in the decision making process. When children plan the funeral service for a parent it may be helpful to have one of the parent's sibling or friend attend to assist and make suggestions at the consultation.
2. Meet with temple Soshiki (funeral) committee. [At OBT you would meet with the Minister , minister assistant or an experienced member of the funeral committee.]  
While it is preferable to meet with the family in person, we are able to assist with your process over the phone, especially when family members are out of the area.

\* Please consider the following when deciding on date and time of the funeral:

\* **Date and time of Funeral**

Does anyone need to come from out of town or another country?

When will people need to return home? And what are their schedules?

What is the availability of the Temple and Minister? Although generally all schedules are quickly adjusted to accommodate a funeral, sometimes this is not possible. Also, it may not be possible to satisfy everyone's needs.

\* **Pallbearers and Honorary Pallbearers**

Generally six pallbearers are needed to assist carrying the casket. You may need to consider if a person is physically capable of assisting in this honor. If they are not you may want to honor them by asking them to be an Honorary Pallbearer. If there is no casket then it is not necessary to have pallbearers.

Honorary pallbearers do not assist in moving the casket and therefore honorary pallbearers may be of any gender, age or physical ability. There is no set number of honorary pallbearers.

\* **Incense Offering by Representatives**

In the funeral service, groups the deceased was a member are asked to send a representative to burn or offer incense on behalf of the group. If the family decides to have groups represented a list of the various organizations will be compiled at the Funeral Consultation. Generally, the president of the organization is contacted. If the president is unable to represent their group, then it would be up to the president to find an appropriate person.

\* **Personal History**

During the funeral service the life of the deceased is briefly shared. This may be done chronologically and/or by sharing an event or characteristic. Generally the personal history would take 4-8 minutes and can be done by one or two individuals. Individuals giving the personal history are usually close friends of the deceased and/or family. Please understand that it may be very difficult for a person to participate in this role. In some cases the personal history is read by the chairperson. In these cases the family is asked to prepare the family history.

\* **Words of Appreciation on Behalf of the Family**

At the conclusion of the service words of appreciation are expressed by someone on behalf of the family. Generally, it is someone who is close to the family, but not related. Sometimes a family member will say a few words, but this is not necessary.

3. Hold the Soshiki (funeral) service.

4. Hold the Final service and Shonanoka (Seventh day Service) [Many times this is done on the same day..]

**C. After the Soshiki (funeral)**

1. Send the acknowledgements. [OBT will assist with addressing acknowledgements from cards and Koden (money offering) ]

2. Settle expenses and financial obligations

3. Arrange subsequent memorial services [49 day, 1 year, etc.]

Certain information about the deceased will be needed by the mortuary to assist with death notices or obituaries. Some of this information will be helpful in putting together the personal history or eulogy (Greek word for praise).

## Assistance from the Temple

### If the funeral service is at the temple..

- \***Chairperson** - The chairperson is generally selected by the minister but may be requested by the family.
  - \***Receptionists** - The Temple Board of Directors and others assist the family in recording the names and addresses on the envelopes and floral pieces. Other members will assist in addressing acknowledgements. The family may also provide their own receptionists.
  - \***Ushers** - Ushers are temple members who will direct seating, distribute service programs and direct the movement during the service.
  - \***Other Arrangements** - In addition, the temple can arrange for an organist (The funeral home will generally add in the organist's honorarium) and someone to arrange the flowers and offerings.
- If a reception at the Temple is requested members from that group will assist with the planning and implementation.

### If the funeral is NOT at the temple

- \* **Chairperson** - The chairperson announces the order of the service at the funeral. This position is generally performed by the minister.
- \***Receptionists** - This service is generally not available at the funeral home, but if possible will be members of the temple if available.
- \***Ushers** - Funeral Directors perform the function of ushers; directing seating, distributing service programs, and directing movement during the incense burning. The minister will coordinate these duties with the Funeral Directors.

## Things to bring to the Temple

### \*Thank You/Acknowledgement Cards

The family is asked to prepare these cards:

Have the cards imprinted or signed, indicating the family name (The family of the late \_\_\_\_\_)

Have the outside of the envelopes stamped with a return address

Seal the envelopes

Provide postage stamps. Do NOT affix the postage stamps to the envelopes (in case of error)

The Koden committee will address the acknowledgement cards and attach the postage. (The completed cards will be returned to the family or Funeral Director for mailing)

### Osonae/Food Offerings

This is the food offerings placed in the Onaijin (inner area). Traditionally osonae are fruit and manju. For funeral services, which is a formal service we ask for a specific number of fruit and manju.

Manju One box of white Manju 12 pieces

Fruit: an assortment of three kinds to fill 3 small 5 inch plates.

Suggestions would include three different fruits the size of a small grapefruit, large orange or apple. Fruit should be favorites of the deceased and in odd numbers; i.e. 3 bananas, 3 oranges, 3 apples, or 1 large grapefruit, pineapple, etc.

**Flowers** No altar flowers are required because of the temple's 'lotus circle' program which makes sure that flowers are available. Fresh flowers are arranged every Friday and are still very fresh through the following week. (A donation of \$40 can be made to OBT Lotus Circle for future acknowledgment.)

Flowers sent for the service by friends and wreaths from relatives preferably need to be removed by the family at the end of the service. If the service is held on a Friday or Saturday, flowers can be offered to the congregation on Sunday.

**Photo** If the funeral is done with ashes, it is helpful to have a photo of the deceased. It can be old or recent,

but should be framed and 5X7 or larger. It will be returned to the family after the service.

## **Things to take to the Funeral Home**

### **\*Personal Clothing**

If the body is to be prepared for any type of viewing or service, the funeral home will need a complete set of clothing including under garments and shoes. A fairly recent photo is helpful as they prepare the body.

\* **Religious articles** If the deceased has an Onenju or Okesa, these should be brought to the funeral home with the personal clothing.

### **Miscellaneous**

Family may wish to provide a guestbook.

## **The Services An Overview**

### **Makuragyo/Pillow Sutra (Service )**

The Makuragyo is a short service after the death of a person. It is chanted at the person's bedside, hence the term "pillow sutra" or "pillow service" as the person's head was still on the pillow. When death occurs we are filled with a variety of emotions which are not limited to grief, sadness, anger and frustration, surprise and shock, relief and guilt. It may not be the same for each individual.

The Makuragyo/pillow service is the first ritual that takes place after death occurs. The rituals assist us to acknowledge death has occurred and allows those closest to the deceased to begin the mourning process and allows gratitude and appreciation without judgment, for the life of the deceased and the relationship we shared with them.

Traditionally it was just after death, but this is not always logistically possible these days so it is done after death or the following day. The minister chants the sutra; usually Juseige and those in attendance offer incense.

This is an opportunity to meet with the minister and mortuary official (if present) to plan the funeral service. A Temple representative or minister's assistant are usually present to offer any advice or assistance. The funeral is usually scheduled 5-6 days later and usually in the evening to allow those that work to attend. This goes back to the days of the Issei.

### **Funeral Service**

The funeral service is generally a formal and public service honoring the deceased and paying respect to the family.

Because the Buddhist tradition has both memorial and funeral services, the format of the services determines which type it is. A funeral service can be held with or without the deceased's body or ashes.

In the Japanese-American community funeral services for a member of the community are extremely well attended. Most of those attending come to pay their respects to the deceased and their families. At these services there is the practice of giving "Koden" (incense money) . Koden is a gift of money to the family of the deceased as a way to assist them through this time of trial and grief. The Koden given and received allows the family to have a meal following the service. Family members keep lists of how "Koden" was given and received by members of different families. (more information can be found in the Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present edited by Brian Niiya, Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Today many members are opting out of an actual funeral and family members find it comforting to have a "celebration of life", memorial service or the Temple may request to honor the member at a regular Sunday service. The Buddhist services are really for the living and were designed to help the family transition through the phases of grief.

While there are many traditions which find their roots in Indian Buddhism or Chinese Buddhism which correspond to the four elements; earth, water, fire and wind. Here we would have the Earth burial or Doso which was standard in Japan until the introduction of Buddhism and cremation. Water burials are very strictly governed in the U.S. Fire burials or cremation as explained is now the burial of choice for Buddhists in Japan. Forest burials were where the body was left in a forest or open field corresponding to the wind, but is not available in the U.S.

Homyo ( Buddhist Name) It is the Dharma name given to a Jodo Shinshu member. It can be given by the Gomonshu during a visit, after a short training, a priest on the occasion of his or her Tokudo or initial ordination, lay minister's assistant, but most commonly at death. It is made up of two Chinese characters preceded by the character "Shaku" for male or "Shakuni" for female which has been interpreted as "Child of the Buddha." A Dharma Name transcends the finite nature of the physical form and expresses the truth and reality of the causes and conditions that have influenced and been influenced by that person's life. The two following characters are also characteristics of the recipient given by the minister. If the family can't find the Buddhist name, another one can be given at death.

### **Cremation or Burial Service**

The cremation or burial services are separation services when the family is able to be with the deceased one last time. The point of the service is the family must let go of the deceased at the funeral home before cremation or at the cemetery before the burial.

After receiving condolences and support of friends and the community at the funeral service, the family must now separate from the physical form of the deceased. After one final time together, loved ones must say "good-bye" and leave. This may be the most difficult and painful thing we do as human beings.

### **First Seventh Day Service**

The emptiness that one feels when leaving a loved one behind the last time can be overwhelming. The first seventh day service can take place after the funeral service or after cremation or burial service and provides the family with a direction and focus.

The first seventh day service is a service or remembrance. It is the first service that takes place without the physical form of the deceased present. Without the formal rituals, this service encourages those in attendance to actively participate by chanting the sutra.

Traditionally the family has a series of services each seventh day until the seventh-seventh (or 49th) day.

### **49th Day Service**

The 49th day service takes place approximately 49 days after death occurs. The 49th day service marks the end of the "official" mourning period. However, Buddhism acknowledges that mourning does not cease just because time has passed. Memorial services allow us to reaffirm the continued benefit we receive from the life of those who have died before us.

At this point in time the family has usually been able to contact family and friends of the death of their family member and acknowledged the many kindnesses extended to the family. Routine normalcy is being re-established. This process can, although necessary, may bring back feelings of letting go all over again. Gathering family and friends together and moving on from this point together is a very healing part of the mourning process.

### **Other Memorial Services**

A family memorial service or Hoji "Dharma affair" is a private memorial observance that may be extended to extended family members and close friends. It ties the family together during the grieving process through the Nembutsu. It lends a sense of natural flow to the death process and as a result brings the family generations closer together. In Jodo Shinshu these services are not for the deceased, but for the living. It may be a way for a parent to reinforce the Temple and Dharma to their children and grandchildren. Some spouses are very adamant about memorial service observations.

The go as follows:

7 day	49 day	100 day		
1st year	3rd cycle	7th cycle	13th cycle	17th cycle
25th cycle	33rd cycle	50th cycle	100th cycle	

The traditional way of counting the year of death counts as one, so two years later would be the third cycle, six years would be 7th cycle, etc.

### **Orei (Gratuity)**

Family provides gratuity to the temple (suggested minimum \$300) and to the minister (\$250). If a reception is held in the basement (additional \$200 and \$100 to Oregon Buddhist Women's Assn for assistance in serving and clean-up). If member of OBWA a donation can be made to them. The organist should be acknowledged (\$150). Organizations who sent representatives for incense offering are usually acknowledged with a minimal gratuity of \$50 each to the organization. These donations are suggestions and may depend on the family's ability to pay. No one will be turned away because of ability to pay.

## **The Services explained**

### **Funeral Service**

**Opening** The chairperson will express condolences to the family and thank everyone for attending.

#### **Kansho / Calling Bell.**

A typical funeral service begins with the KANSHO or calling bell. All services typically begin with the Kansho, but a funeral pattern is slightly different. The pattern is 2 strikes, followed by the crescendo and decrescendo, 5 strikes, followed by the crescendo and decrescendo, then struck 3 times. The chairperson will ask everyone to stand if there is a casket,. During this time if a casket is going to be present it is brought into the Hondo and placed in front of the Onaijin. Traditionally the casket is opened at this time. If there is no casket (ashes), everyone is asked to sit quietly while the minister brings in the ashes.

#### **Chanting before the casket (Kan Zen Dokkyo)**

The minister will enter (followed by the family). He will chant in front of the casket or while holding the ashes. First is the Sambujo calling Amida to enter while we joyfully scatter flowers of welcome. This will be followed by the Kisanbo Ge and then Ekoku - Dedicatory Verse. Translation" I expound on Amida's venerable meritorious deeds, whose goodness is as limitless as the waters of the ocean. Amida's protecting; pure, goodness is

bestowed on all sentient beings for their birth in that country. "

The minister will present the Buddhist name. There are three copies of the Buddhist name; one for the casket, the second for the family and the third for the Temple records.

### **Ojo Yoshu, Zendo Daishi**

"While alive, we flow and turn in the Three Worlds of Delusion, and are unable to sever the bonds of desire and attachment. When death occurs we discard them and entering into the Uncreated, becoming a True and Real Being of gratitude and indebtedness."

### **Sutra Chanting Before the Buddha (Butsuzen Dokkyo)**

Once the minister goes to the Onaijin he will stand and chant Butsuzen Dokkyu where the family and friends will have an opportunity to offer incense and at that time view the body, or if ashes, view the picture, then offer condolences to the family (bow toward them).

During the sutra chanting family members, honorary pallbearers, pallbearers, followed by everyone in attendance will burn incense, pass by the casket/view the body, pay respect to the family and return to their seats. Burning incense symbolizes clearing the mind and is a gesture of respect and reverence. The viewing of the body or passing by the casket is an act of recognition and acceptance of death as an aspect of life. These rituals are traditionally done at the beginning of the service to clear one's mind, pay respect to the deceased and their family are considered to be the most important things we can do and therefore done at the beginning of the service.

To offer incense, when about 3 steps from the incense burner (koro) bow with hands on legs, take three steps, take a pinch of incense, put it in the koro, put hands together and bow your head, step back three steps and bow deeply again.

Additional chants would be **Shoshinge, Wasan, Ekoku**. If the minister completes his chanting and there are still people offering incense, the organist will fill in with music until everyone has had the opportunity to pay respect.

### **Gatha/Song**

A Gatha or song is sung which is usually NADAME a gatha of condolence written in western music. The words are in Japanese. There are four verses which are usually split during the service. The English translation is below:

1. His ties to this "floating world" having reached their limit, a friend in the Dharma has died. But, even amidst tears, we are consoled by the assurance of his happiness in the presence of the Buddha.
2. Having departed from this world of sadness and sorrow to be born in the Land of Joy as a Buddha, there is consolation in the midst of sorrow.

### **Brief personal History of Deceased (Kojin Ryaku Reki)**

A short history is usually read, by either the chairperson, close friend or family member.

After that Choji or condolence words or eulogy are given by a close friend. This may be omitted. They may also read emails or telegrams.

### **Incense Burning by Representative (Daikyo Shoko)**

Next the Daihyo shoko or representative Oshoko is done, which is an additional incense offering by a representing close friends, representing organizations to which the deceased belonged, representing organizations the members of the immediate family are involved in, and the Temple.



## **Gatha/Song Nadame verses 3 & 4**

Translation:

"His limbs can no longer move. His physical body discarded, he has attained the body of unlimited power. Even amidst tears, we are consoled. "

"His mortal eyes are closed forever. But with the eyes of the Dharma, he looks upon this gathering. Thus there is consolation in the midst of sorrow."

## **Dharma Talk and Reading of Rennyo Shonin's "On the White Ashes"**

Dharma refers to the teachings of the Buddha. A Dharma Talk is a talk given by the minister based on the teachings of the Buddha.

"On the White Ashes" is a letter which is always read at Jodo Shinshu funerals and is usually read in English, the sung in the traditional Japanese verse.

Translation: In silently contemplating the transient nature of human existence, nothing is more fragile and fleeting in this world than the life of a human being. Thus, we have not heard of human life lasting for 10,000 years. Life passes swiftly, and who among us can maintain our form for even a hundred years? Whether I go before others or whether others go before me, whether it be today or tomorrow, who is to know? Those who depart before us are countless as the drops of dew. Though in the morning we may have radiant health, in the evening we may return to white ashes. When the wind of impermanence blows, our eyes are closed forever, and when the last breath leaves us, our faces lose its color. Though loved ones gather and lament, everything is to no avail. The body vanishes from the world with the smoke of cremation leaving only the white ashes. Nothing is more real than this truth of life. The fragile nature of human existence underlies both the young and the old; therefore, we must, one and all, turn to the teachings of the Buddha and awaken to the ultimate source of life. By so understanding the meaning of death, we come to appreciate the meaning of this life, which is to be treasured because it is unrepeatable. By virtue of true compassion, let us realize the unexcelled value of this existence, and let us live together with gratitude in our hearts.

## **Words of Appreciation on Behalf of the Family (Shaji)**

Shaji or "thanks words" ends the service by a relative or close friend of the family. Words of appreciation for those offering their kindness, support, flowers, food, Koden, attending, involved in conducting the service or visiting the deceased and/or family. If refreshments are being offered, an invitation should be extended. Occasionally the representatives may also want to say a few personal words. Because a representative expresses appreciation on behalf of the family it is not necessary for the family to bow to everyone after burning incense.

## **Closing Address - Including Announcements**

If there are other services to follow; burial, cremation, etc. this will be announced at this time by the Chairperson who will then close the service and direct the audience to remain seated while the family leaves. Again he will thank everyone for their attendance and express condolences to the family.

## **Recessional**

### **\*Casket Funerals**

Everyone is asked to stand as the casket is lead out of the temple by the minister, followed by pallbearers, honorary pallbearers, the casket, the family and the Sangha.

### **Non-casket funerals**

If there are ashes, the minister will carry the ashes out of the Hondo (hall) followed by the family, honorary pallbearers and Sangha. After that the family will receive the attendees.

If a 7 day service has been scheduled, it may follow the funeral service and will involve chanting by the minister and those in the audience that desire.

Some families may have an IHAI or dignity tablet used by other denominations that record the secular and Buddhist name of the deceased and the day. The Homyo is kept with the Obutsudan and is brought out on that day each month to honor the deceased. You can also have a book for recording these and keep it close to the Obutsudan but not placed directly in front.

PERSONAL INFORMATION AND DIRECTIVES

It may be a good plan to have the following information on all family members in a safe, yet accessible place.

Name: Full name, spelling and Japanese characters if appropriate.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Maiden name: If applicable \_\_\_\_\_

Address and length of residence \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Res \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date and birthplace For death certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number (for notification to Social Security Administration) \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_

date of marriage and location \_\_\_\_\_

(date of death and location if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names \_\_\_\_\_  
include mother's maiden name and birthplaces

Other personal information \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ include education, military service, employment, organization affiliations, interests, hobbies, etc.

Causes In lieu of flowers some people would like money donated to their cause(s). Kodon can also be directed to the cause rather than the family. (see info below on Kodon)

\_\_\_\_\_

Medical directives and donor preferences should be known to the family and may be included on this sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Home preferences \_\_\_\_\_

Burial \_\_\_\_\_ Cremation \_\_\_\_\_ Donation (organs, any, restrictions, body) \_\_\_\_\_

It is suggested that you place this information in a safe place along with will and financial information.

SAMPLE PROGRAM

Cover

*In Loving Memory Of*

Name

Photo if available or desired

birth – death

*Funeral Service*

Date

Time

Location

Minister

*Officiating Minister*

*Guests: Those who wish, please offer incense on entering Chapel*

Inside Left

**Name**

*BORN*

Date

Location

*DIED*

Date

Location

Survivor information

Preceded in death by  
or combination of both

***Pallbearers (if casket)***

***Honorary Pallbearers***

Names

***Chairperson***

Name

***Organist***

Name

*Inside Right*

***Order of Funeral Service***

***Processional***

***Opening Address***

Chair

***Kansho "The Calling Bell"***

***Sutra Chanting and Presentation of Buddhist Name***

Minister

***Sutra Chanting with Incense Offering by:***

***Family, Relatives, Honorary Pallbearers***

***Gatha "Nadame" Verses One and Two***

***Personal History***

Name

***Incense Offering by Representatives***

***Friends***

Name

Organizations

Names

***Gatha "Nadame" Verses Three and Four***

***Dharma Talk and Reading of "On the White Ashes"***

Minister

***Seven Day Service***

***Words of Appreciation***

Name

***Closing Remarks***

Chair

***Recessional***

***Following the service,*** (reception, otoki, etc.) (location)

Back cover

NADAME Music and translation