

Procedure for Funeral of a Lay Follower

檀信徒喪儀法

SOTO ZEN BUDDHISM

Foreword

Our lives are limited. When a person passes away, we cannot help but mourn the passing, and the bereaved family needs to accept the death and sends off the deceased. This is the meaning of the funeral service.

A unique feature of Soto Zen's funeral service is "*Motsugosaso*," which means to make the deceased become Buddha's disciple. In the funeral ceremony we, as the officiant, have the departed person take refuge in the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and give the Buddha's precepts for becoming a Buddha's disciple. We also guide the deceased person to the peaceful Buddha's way with help of the buddhas' grace. Priests should conduct funeral services with a clear understanding of their profound significance and with a strong sense of responsibility.

It is my hope that all *Kyoshi* in the West will be able to conduct funeral services for members and followers based on the traditional way of Soto Zen Buddhism. With that hope, the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center held a workshop for *Kokusai Fukuyoshi* in North America in 2010 on "Procedures for the Funeral of a Lay Follower." In this workshop, we learned about the significance, derivations, and the meanings of each part of a funeral through lectures. We also had a demonstration to learn how to perform funerals.

This text is based on that workshop which was in accordance with the *Sotoshu Gyojikihan* (Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School). Translations here are taken from the English version of *Sotoshu Gyojikihan*, published in 2010.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Rev. Shomyo Aihara, resident priest of Joganji Temple in Shizuoka prefecture, who gave lectures and conducted a demonstration as a lecturer at the workshop.

Gassho,

Rev. Issho Fujita

Director

Soto Zen Buddhism International Center

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Sutra Chanting at Time of Death (*Rinjū Fugin*)

When report of death is received, go to home of deceased, earnestly voice condolences and show sympathy. Having done that, perform sutra chanting at time of death (pillow sutras). Chant *Last Teaching Sutra* and *Verse of Homage to Buddha's Relics* three times. When finished, dedicate merit:

Having offered incense, flowers, lamps, candles and pure water, and having chanted the *Sutra of the Condensed Teachings Left by Buddha Upon His Final Nirvana* and *Verse of Homage to Buddha's Relics*, we dedicate the merit accumulated thereby to the newly deceased spirit. We pray that, as the karmic conjunction of the four elements fades, this merit may adorn his/her place of karmic retribution.

("All buddhas of the ten directions and three times... etc.")

Jōrai, kōge tōshoku jōsui o sonae, Busshihatsunehan ryakusetsu kyōkai kyō, Shariraimon o fujusu, atsumuru tokoro no kudoku wa, shinmō shōrei ni ekō su. Koinegō tokoro wa, shidai enja no tsuide, hōchi o shōgon sen koto o.

All-Night Vigil Sutra Chanting (*Tsuya Fugin*)

On night before funeral, relatives and friends talk about achievements of deceased during his/her lifetime. For all-night vigil, after sutra chanting it is desirable to give a wake sermon.

Preparation for Funeral



Alter

Top:

- Spirit tablet

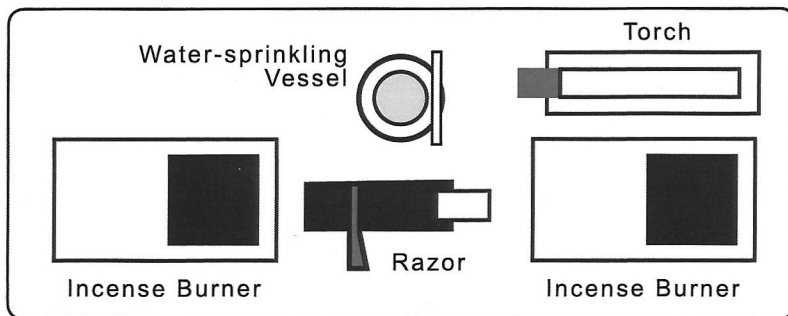
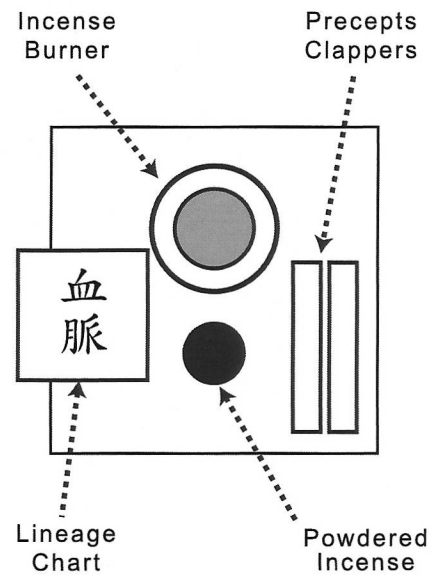
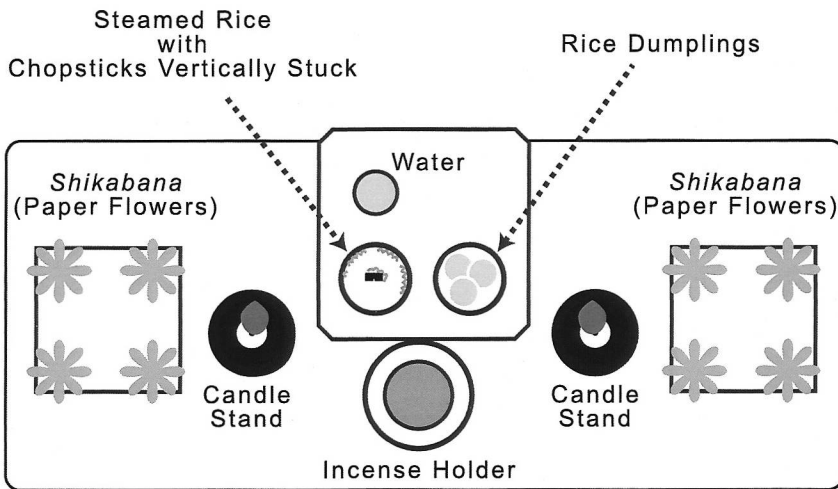
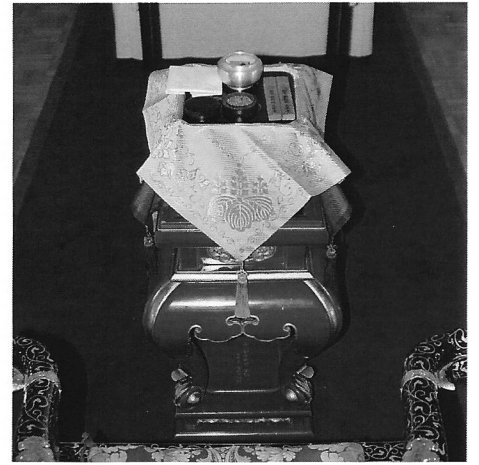
Second:

- Flower
- Offerings
- Sweet water (right)
- Tea (left)
- Portrait of a deceased person

Between Alter and Offering Table

- Coffin





Kie hō rijin son
Kie sō wagō son
Kie buk-kyo
Kie hō kyo
Kie sō kyo

Chant three times, or only once. After each phrase, strike precepts clappers once and monks of assembly repeat it just as before. At end, strike precepts clappers twice.

The conferral of precepts has thus been completed. From this time forth the true and perfect awakening of the Tathagata shall be the Great Master of layman / laywoman <Dharma Name>, who has newly returned to the source, and he/she shall not take refuge in other paths, for we hail great pity, great compassion, and great mercy. ||

Kikai o juyo surukoto kaku no gotoshi.

Ima yori igo, nyorai shii shintō shōgaku wa, kore Shinkigen ○○○○ ga daishi nari.

Sarani yodō ni kie sezare, namu daizu daihi dai ai minko.

Having taken refuge in the three treasures of buddha, dharma, and sangha, next you must receive the three sets of pure precepts.

Sudeni buppōsō no sanbō ni kie su, tsugi niwa masani sanju jōkai o uke tatematsuru beshi.

First are the precepts of restraint.

Second are the precepts of adopting good qualities.

Third are the precepts of benefiting all living beings. ||

Dai ichi shō ritsugi kai

Dai ni shō zenbō kai

Dai san shō shujō kai

Kore nari

Next, you must receive the ten major precepts of restraint.

Tsugi niwa masani jūjū kin kai o uke tatematsuru beshi.

First is the precept not to kill living beings.

Second is the precept not to steal.

Third is the precept not to misuse sex.

Fourth is the precept not to engage in false speech.

Fifth is the precept not to deal in alcoholic beverages.

Sixth is the precept not to point out the transgressions of others.

Seventh is the precept not to praise oneself and denigrate others.
Eighth is the precept not to be stingy with the dharma or material things.
Ninth is the precept not to give rise to anger.
Tenth is the precept not to disparage the three treasures. ||

Dai ichi fu sesshō kai

Dai ni fu chūtō kai

Dai san fu ton-in kai

Dai shi fu mōgo kai

Dai go fu koshu kai

Dai roku fu sekka kai

Dai shichi fu jisan kita kai

Dai hachi fu ken hōzai kai

Dai ku fu shin-i kai

Dai jū fu hō sanbō kai

Kore nari

The aforementioned three refuges, three sets of pure precepts, and ten major precepts of restraint have been secured and maintained by the prior buddhas and handed down by the ancestors. I now give them to you. Beginning with your present body and continuing until you obtain the body of a buddha, you should uphold these things well.

Jōrai, sanki, sanjujōkai, jūjūkinkai, kore wa kore, senbutsu no goji shitamau tokoro, nōso no denrai shita mau tokoro nari. Ware ima nanji ni sazuku, nanji konjin yori, busshin ni itaru made, kono ji yoku goji shitatematsuru beshi.

Having given the preceding set of sixteen precepts, next give lineage chart.

Dōshi raises lineage chart, censes it and says:

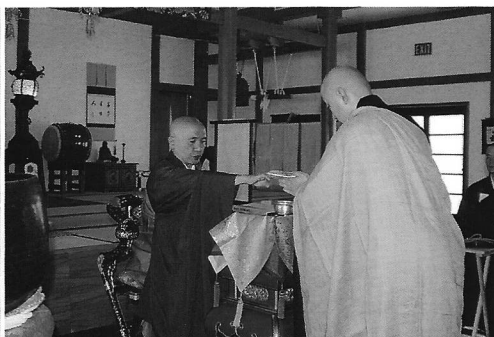
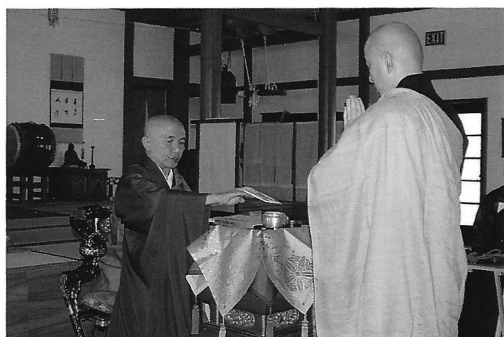
This is the lineage chart of the great bodhisattva precepts correctly transmitted by the buddhas and ancestors. Buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor, successor after successor have inherited it, and it has come down to me. I now give it to layman / laywoman <Dharma Name>, who has newly returned to the source. Beginning with your present body and continuing until you obtain the body of a buddha, you should reverently protect it.

Kore wa kore, busso shōden bosatsu daikai no kechimiyaku nari. Butsubutsu soso, tekiteki sōjō shite, ware ni itaru, ware ima shinkigen ○○○○ ni sazuku, nanji konjin yori, busshin ni itaru made, chōdai goji shi tatematsuru beshi.

Ino (Rector) receives the lineage chart from *Dōshi* and places the lineage chart on coffin (or in front of spirit tablet) and *Dōshi* intones (three times or one time):

When living beings receive Buddha's precepts, they enter the rank of all the buddhas. When one's rank is the same as the greatly awakened, truly one is a child of all the buddhas. Hail great pity, great compassion, and great mercy, which embrace us. |||

Shujō bukkai o ukureba, sunawachi shobutsu no kurai ni iru, kurai daigaku ni onajūshi owaru, makotoni kore shobutsu no miko nari, namu daizu daihi aimin shōju.



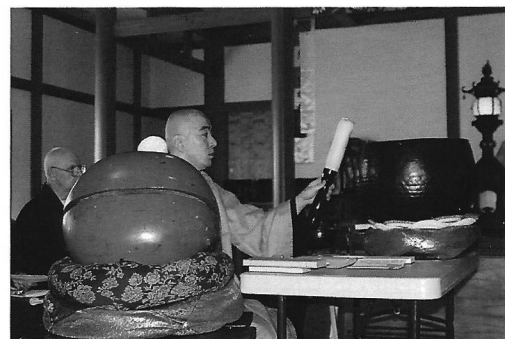
Encoffining Sutra Chanting (*Nyūkan Fugin*)

Upon hearing two claps of precepts clappers, *Ino* (who serves concurrently as *Dōan*) rings bowl-bell three times, initiates chanting of *Great Compassionate Mind Dharani (Daihishin darani)*. When sutra chanting is finished, dedicate merit:

Having chanted sutras, we dedicate the merit to layman / laywoman <Dharma Name>, who has newly returned to the source. We humbly pray, as he/she is encoffined, that this merit may adorn his/her place of karmic retribution.

("All buddhas of the ten directions and three times... etc.")

Jōrai, fugin suru kudoku wa, Shinkigen ○○○○ ni ekō su. Fushite negawaku wa, nyūkan no tsuide, hōchi o shōgon senkoto o.



Recitations Before Coffin (*Kanzen Nenju*)

Continuing without a break, *Ino* initiates recitations, as follows:

We are keenly aware that birth and death give way to each other; that cold and heat vary reciprocally. They come like lightning flashing in a vast sky; they go like waves calming on a great sea. Today, that is the case with layman / laywoman <Dharma Name>, who has newly returned to the source. His/her karmic conditions supportive of life are exhausted, and his/her ordained lifespan has suddenly expired.

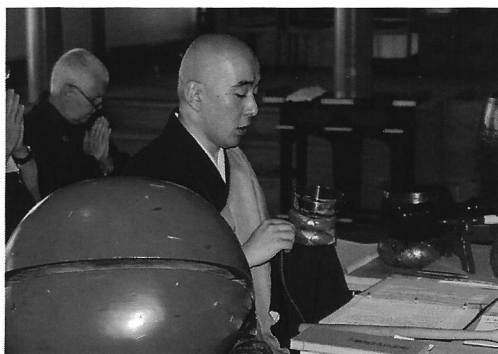
Understanding the impermanence of all things, he/she takes nirvana as ease. I respectfully request the pure assembly present here to humbly chant the glorious names of the sages, that the great blessings accumulated thereby may adorn the path of awakening.

I respectfully invite the pure assembly to mindfully recite:

Setsu ni omon mireba, shōji kyōja shi kanjo tagaini utsuru. Sono kitaru ya, den chōkū ni geki shi, sono saru ya nami daikai ni todomaru. Kono hi sunawachi Shinkigen ○○○○ atte, shōen sudeni tsukite daimai niwaka ni otsu. Shogyō no mujō narukoto o satotte jakumetsu o motte raku to nasu. Uyauyashiku genzen no seishu o shōshite, tsutsushinde shoshō no kōmei o ju su. Atsumuru tokoro no kōfuku wa, kakuro o shōgon su. Aoide seishu o tanonde nenzu.

Entire assembly, in accordance with *Ino's* hand-bell recites *Ten Buddha Names* (*Jūbutsumyō*):

Birushana Buddha, pure dharma body.
Rushana Buddha, complete enjoyment body.
Shakamuni Buddha, of trillions of transformation bodies.
Miroku Buddha, of future birth.
All buddhas of the ten directions and three times.
Mahayana Sutra of the Lotus of the Wondrous Dharma.
Monjushiri Bodhisattva, of great sagacity.
Fugen Bodhisattva, of the great vehicle.
Kanzeon Bodhisattva, of great compassion.
All honored bodhisattvas, those great beings.
Great perfection of wisdom.



*Shin jin pashin birū sha no fu
En mon ho shin rushā no fu
Sen pai kashin shikyā mu ni fu
To rai asan mirū son bu
Ji ho san shi ishī shi fu
Dai jin myo harin ga kin
Dai shin bunju su ri bu sa
Dai jin fuen bu sa
Daihi kan shiin bu sa
Shi son bu sa mo ko sa
Mo ko ho ja ho ro mi*

Next, *Ino* initiates chanting of *Verse of Homage to Buddha's Relics (Shari raimon)*. Chant in unison three times. Dedication of merit is as follows:

Having performed recitations and chanted sutras, we dedicate the merit to layman / laywoman <Dharma Name>, who has newly returned to the source. We humbly pray that his/her spirit may cross over to the pure land; that his/her karmic afflictions will fade away, that the lotus will open its highest grade of blossom, and that Buddha will bestow prediction of a birth. I again trouble the pure assembly to mindfully recite.

(“All buddhas of the ten directions and three times... etc.”)

Jōrai nenju fugin suru kudoku wa, Shinkigen ○○○○ ni ekō su. Fushite negawaku wa, shin jōiki o koe, gō jinrō o jasū. Hasu wa jōbon no hana o hiraki, hotoke wa issō no ki o sazuku. Futatabi seishu o rō shite nenzenkoto o. (Jihō sanshi ...)

Recitations Upon Lifting Coffin (Kokan Nenju)

Continuing without a break, *Ino* initiates the Recitations Upon Lifting Coffin.

We are now about to lift the spirit coffin and head for the most respectful rite of cremation / burial. I respectfully invite the pure assembly to chant the glorious names of the sages. Pulling aside the curtain and revealing the coffin, in order to assist him/her on the path of awakening, we mindfully recite.

(In many cases, chanting of *Ten Buddha Names* is omitted here.)

Reikan o koshite, dabi/endo no seirei ni omomukan to hossu. Aoide seishu o tanonde, shoshō no kōmei o ju su. Han-i o yūhyō shite, kami kakuro o shijo shite nenzu.

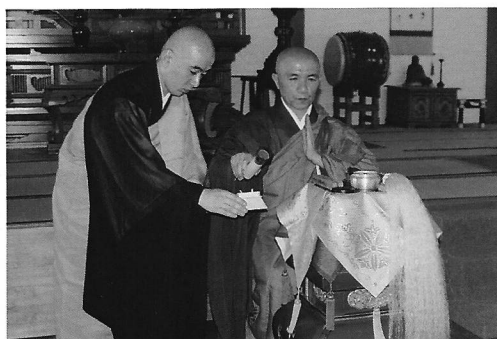
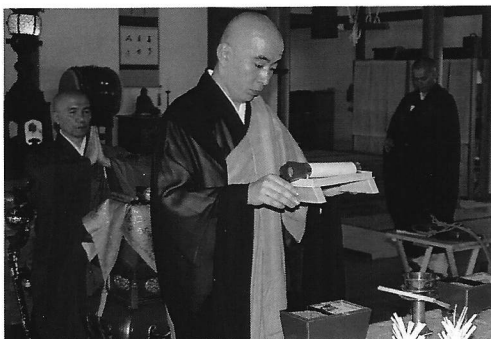
Ino, without cutting off voicing of last word, "recite," immediately initiates chanting of *Secret Root Dharani for Dwelling in the Great Jewelled Tower (Daihōrōkaku zenjū himitsu konpon darani)*.

When chanting is finished, play three series on drum and cymbals.

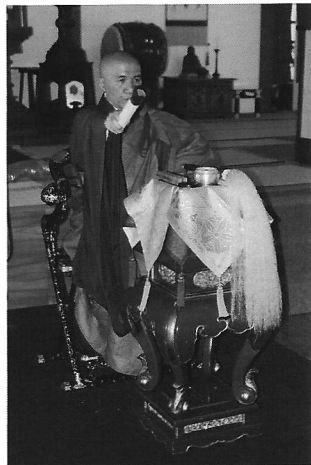
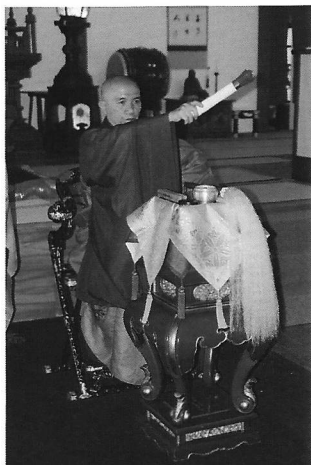


Guidance Dharma Phrase (*Indō Hōgo*)

When playing three series on drum and cymbals are finished, *Ino* advances, takes dharma torch (or mattock if burial), censes it, respectfully lifts it, turns body to left, withdraws, goes to right side of *Dōshi* (left side of *Dōshi* when facing *Dōshi*), presents torch (or mattock) to *Dōshi*.



Dōshi receives it, raises and moves it in a circle forward and reverse (first go around once from right to left, then once from left to right, inscribing full circles in the air); when finished, *Dōshi* gives it back to *Ino*. *Ino* returns to its original place.



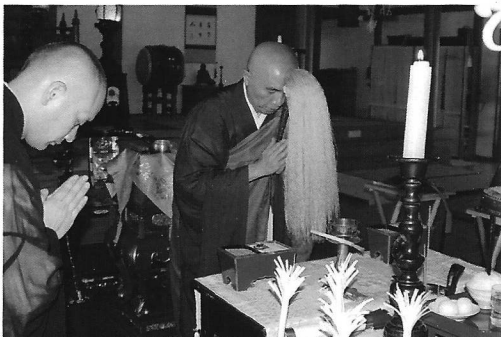
Next, *Jisha* presents large incense to *Dōshi*.

Dōshi raises incense, gives it back to *Jisha*, waves whisk, intones guidance dharma phrase.



When finished, advances before coffin. *Jisha*, holding large incense, follows along with *Dōshi*.

Offer stick of incense, bow in gassho, return to place.



If there are condolence messages or telegrams, when *Ino* sees that *Dōshi* has returned to place, *Ino* announces, “messages of condolence, telegrams of condolence,” and reads them aloud. Or, depending on circumstances, it is also permissible to read them aloud prior to *Dōshi*’s dharma phrase of guidance.

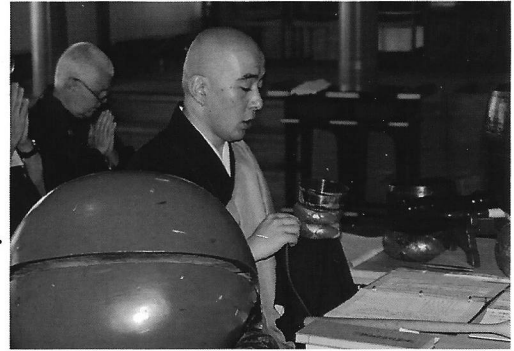
Recitations at Funeral Site (*Santō Nenju*)

Upon hearing the end of *Dōshi*’s dharma phrase, *Ino* damps ringing of bowl-bell and initiates chanting of the Recitations at Funeral Site.

Today there is layman / laywoman <Dharma Name>, newly returned to the source, who in accordance with his/her karma has already passed away. As is proper, we shall cremate / bury him/her. Burning / burying the body that for a hundred years has been a vain illusion, we set it on the single road to nirvana. I respectfully invite the pure assembly to assist his/her awakened spirit by mindfully reciting. (*Ten Buddha Names*)

Kono hi sunawachi Shinkigen ○○○○ atte, sude ni en ni shitagatte jakumetsu su, sunawachi hō ni yotte dabi (endo) su. Hyakunen kogen no mi o taite (uzunde), ichiro nehan no kei ni irashimu. Aoide seishu o tanonde, kakurei o shijo shite nenzu. (Jūbutsumyō)

Birushana Buddha, pure dharma body.
 Rushana Buddha, complete enjoyment body.
 Shakamuni Buddha, of trillions of transformation bodies.
 Miroku Buddha, of future birth.
 All buddhas of the ten directions and three times.
 Mahayana Sutra of the Lotus of the Wondrous Dharma.
 Monjushiri Bodhisattva, of great sagacity.
 Fugen Bodhisattva, of the great vehicle.
 Kanzeon Bodhisattva, of great compassion.
 All honored bodhisattvas, those great beings.



Great perfection of wisdom.
Shin jin pashin birū sha no fu
En mon ho shin rushā no fu
Sen pai kashin shikyā mu ni fu
To rai asan mirū son bu
Ji ho san shi ishī shi fu
Dai jin myo harin ga kin
Dai shin bun ju su ri bu sa
Dai jin fuen bu sa
Daihi kan shiin bu sa
Shi son bu sa mo ko sa
Mo ko ho ja ho ro mi

Following *Ten Buddha Names (Jūbutsumyō)*, Ino chants Dedication of Merit:

Having called the holy names and assisted the awakened spirit, all we pray is that the mirror of wisdom will be sharp in its luminescence; that the wind of truth will wave its colored banners; that the flower of awakening will blossom inside the

garden of awakening; and that the waves of purity will be stirred up in the ocean of dharma nature.

We pour out three libations of tea and burn one censer of incense, that he/she may advance beyond the clouds.

We pay respects to the assembly of sages.

Jōrai shōgō o shōyō shi kakurei o shijo su. Tada negawaku wa, ekyō kagayaki o wakachi shinpū irodori o san zu. Bodai onri ni kakui no hana o kaifu shi, hosshō kaichū ni muku no nami o katsudō su. Sa santen o katamuke, kō ichiro ni taki, untei ni busō shi shōshu o wanan su.

Next, depending on time and place, *Ino* initiates chanting of appropriate sutras and dharanis. (In most cases, sutras such as *Meaning of Practice and Verification* [*Shushōgi*] or *Verse of the "Universal Gateway" Chapter* [*Fumonbon ge*] are used.) Monks of great assembly all together chant sutras.

During sutra chanting, leader of funeral, relatives and friends of deceased, etc., take turns burning incense. When finished, the Dedication of Merit is as follows:

Having performed recitations and chanted sutras, we dedicate the merit to layman / laywoman <Dharma Name>, who has newly returned to the source. We humbly pray, upon his/her cremation / burial, that it may adorn his/her place of karmic retribution.

("All buddhas of the ten directions and three times... etc.")

Jōrai nenju fugin suru kudoku wa, Shinkigen ○○○○ ni ekō su. Fushite negawaku wa, dabi(endo) no tsuide, hōchi o shōgon sen koto o. (Jiho sanshi ...)

When the *Dedication of Merit* is finished, play three series on drum and cymbals.

Dōshi and great assembly disperse from hall.

Sutra Chanting for Placing Spirit Tablet (*An-i Fugin*)

After funeral ceremony is over, perform sutra chanting for placing Spirit tablet.
(Chant *Great Compassion Dharani*)

Dedication of merit reads as follows:

Having chanted sutras, we dedicate the merit to layman / laywoman <Dhama Name>.
We pray, upon placing his/her tablet, that it may adorn his/her place of karmic retribution.

("All buddhas of the ten directions and three times... etc.")

Jōrai fugin suru kudoku wa, ○○○○ ni ekō su. Koinegō tokoro wa, an-i no tsuide, hōchi o shōgon sen koto o. (Ji ho san shi ...)

(The Sutra Chanting for Placing Spirit Tablet, if done properly, should be performed after spirit bones have been settled, or after burial.)

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