



Funeral Planning Information

Prepared by Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Church
Sōdan Committee
12008

I. Introduction

When a loved one passes away, it is a sad, traumatic time and often family members are overcome by confusion and uncertainty. The intent of this brochure is to provide some assistance and guidance at one of the most difficult times in life.

II. When a Death Occurs

- A. It is important to immediately notify the proper authorities when a death occurs.
 - 1. Contact your doctor, if the deceased had been ill and death occurred at home.
 - 2. If death occurred as a result of an accident, call emergency at 9-1-1 and ask for assistance.
- B. If death occurred at home, hospital or nursing home, call the Temple to ask the Minister to conduct a bedside service (Makuragyō).
 - 1. Temple phone number: (206) 329-0800
 - 2. If it is after office hours, alternate phone numbers for the Ministers are given in the voice message.
- C. Contact a mortuary of your choice.
- D. Notify relatives and close friends

III. Funeral Arrangements

- A. If a bedside service is conducted, the Minister will confer with the family and determine the time and location of the Sōdan (i.e., funeral-planning meeting).
- B. If the family wishes to hold a Sōdan, the Ministers or Temple secretary will notify the Temple's funeral planning committee to assist.
- C. The Sōdan meeting is held at the Temple.

IV. Sōdan (Planning Meeting)

- A. The Sōdan meeting is preceded by a short service. In addition to family members, Minister and Temple Representative (Tōban person), Kenjinkai representatives, and close family friends may also be invited to participate in planning the service program.
- B. To begin the meeting, the Minister will record information for the Temple records (e.g., name of the deceased (Kanji of the person's name is typically used to form the Hōmyō), birth and death dates, next of kin, children, etc.

Information that will be needed for the meeting:

1. Exact spelling of full legal name of deceased.
 2. Birth date and birth place
 3. Address and phone number for next of kin
 4. Name of spouse, children, grandchildren and close relatives
 5. Buddhist Name (Hōmyō), if available
 6. Kanji (Characters) for Japanese names, if available.
- C. The Tōban person conducts the Sōdan meeting and explains the general format of funeral/memorial services and the options that are available (e.g., gathas, musical selections.)
- D. The Sōdan form will be filled out with dates and other information for the funeral/memorial service. The family may want to list names of friends who may be able to assist in various capacities during the funeral/memorial service. Assistance will be needed for:
1. Service Chairperson
 2. Pallbearers and Honorary Pallbearers
 3. Kōden Receivers and Recorders
 4. Ushers and Guest Book Attendants
 5. Personal History; Eulogy; Remembrance(s)
 6. Representatives for incense offering (e.g., Kenjinkai, Social Clubs, Work Colleagues, etc.)
 7. U.S. Flag Presentation, if deceased was a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services
 8. Family Acknowledgment
- E. Funeral procedures are flexible and family requests or preferences are accommodated wherever possible.
- F. In addition to the eulogy, remembrances may be given by special friends, etc. If family wants to ask for spontaneous remembrances from the attendees, it would be best to pre-arrange having at least one or two speakers come forward.
- G. Service Program: The Temple can provide a “standard” program. Programs that are custom-designed or with a photograph of the deceased, must be provided by the family.
- H. If there will be no casket, a framed photograph of the deceased is needed for the altar. The photo should be no smaller than a 5x7.
- I. The family is responsible for the organist/pianist fees if a Memorial Service is being conducted. The mortuary will pay the fee, if a funeral, with casket, is being conducted.
- J. The family is responsible for ordering the acknowledgment cards and stuffing the envelopes prior to the day of the funeral/memorial service.

V. Receiving Table, Ushers, etc.

- A. The family has the option of having the Kōden opened and recorded or, the family may open the envelopes and record the Kōden themselves.
- B. Generally, family friends and Kenjinkai (prefecture groups) are asked to assist as ushers, and with receiving and recording Kōden. Betsuin members may be asked to fill-in if additional help is needed.
- C. Ushers pass out programs and assist in seating. A minimum of two ushers is needed.
- D. Uketsuke (receivers) receive Kōden envelopes, and give an acknowledgment card in return.

If the family asks to have Kōden counted and recorded, write on front of each envelope “A1 to A100” then “B1 to B100” and continuing as necessary. Kōden record books are available through West Coast Printing.

A minimum of two people to accept and mark envelopes and two people to give acknowledgment cards is necessary.

A “runner” is needed to take the envelopes from the receiving desk up to the counting room.

E. Kōden Recording:

1. A lead person (captain) should be appointed to coordinate the process.
2. Record Books must be marked alphabetically (A, B, C etc.), taken apart, and given to the helpers. The use of laptop computers facilitates the recording of Kōden.
3. Helpers will take an envelope bundle containing ten envelopes, and record the name and address from the envelope onto the recording page. Each page has spaces for ten entries.
4. Two other helpers will open and record the amount. They verify each other’s entries to ensure no errors are made.
5. Each page is totaled and checked with the money. The books are reassembled.
6. Then all books are totaled together and checked with the money.
7. The money and envelopes and reassembled books, are bundled together and given to the family.
8. The lead person should gather all floral offering cards and record them on one of the empty pages of the record book.

F. Envelope openers and money bands are available at the Temple.

G. One or two persons are needed to tend to the Guest Book.

VI. Memorial Services

Memorial services are conducted as an expression of gratitude to the Amida Buddha and in memory of the deceased.

- A. Memorial Services are generally observed as follows: 1st year, 3rd year, 7th year, 13th year, 17th year, 25th year, 33rd year and the 50th year.

It is customary to count the year of death as the first year. Each subsequent service would be held in the year prior to the actual anniversary date (e.g., 3rd year service would be held in the second year after death).

The family should contact the Temple to schedule a memorial service.

- B. The Shonanuka (First Seventh Day Memorial Service) is conducted on or prior to the seventh day after a person dies.

For the convenience of family members and friends who may have traveled long distances to participate in the funeral service, the Seventh Day service is often held immediately after the funeral.

A photograph of the deceased is needed for the Shonanuka, if the service was a casket funeral.

- C. The 49th Day Memorial Service concludes the traditional mourning period.

- D. Hatsubon Memorial Service (First Obon) is conducted in memory of those who have passed away since the prior year’s Obon service. The names of the deceased are read during the Sutra chanting, and family members, relatives and friends are invited to offer incense at that time.

Checklist of Things to do:

A. When a Death Occurs:

1. Immediately notify doctor and proper authorities.
2. Call Temple to request Minister to conduct bedside service (Makuragyō).
3. Contact mortuary to entrust remains of the deceased.
4. Notify relatives and close friends.

B. Funeral Service Preparations

1. Meet with Temple funeral committee to discuss funeral/memorial service.
2. Meet with mortuary for burial/cremation arrangements.
3. Contact National Guard or Nisei Veterans Committee for flag presentation, if the deceased was a veteran of the Armed Services.
4. Framed Photograph of deceased.
5. Order acknowledgment cards and stuff envelopes prior to the funeral.
6. Order Kōden Recording books, if needed.
7. Place obituary notification in newspaper, if mortuary does not have responsibility.
8. Prepare and print programs, if they are more elaborate than the standard Temple program.
9. Purchase Guest Book, if mortuary does not provide

SEATTLE BETSUIN BUDDHIST TEMPLE FUNERAL SÔDAN FORM - Revised 4/14/2006

Date of Sôdan:		Location:		Minister(s):	
Tôban Persons:			Telephone:		
Name of Deceased:		Date of Birth:		Date of Death:	
Next of Kin:		Relationship		Phone #:	
Address:		City:		Zip Code:	
Family Point of Contact:			Telephone:		
Wake Service: ____ Yes ____ No. If yes, Date: _____ Time: _____ Where: _____					
() Funeral Service: Date: _____ Day of Week: _____ Time: _____					
() Memorial Service:					
Service Location: ____ Betsuin Temple. ____ Mortuary (Name):					
7 th Day Service: ____ Yes ____ No. If yes, When/Where?					
If Burial, Location:		Date:		Time:	
Estimated Attendance:		Over 300 () Gym () Memorial Hall Chapel			

FUNERAL SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

Service Chairperson:	Organist: (*See below)
Personal History:	Eulogy:
Remembrances:	U.S. Flag Presentation:
Family Acknowledgment:	

REPRESENTATIVE INCENSE OFFERING

FROM COMMUNITY	FROM BETSUIN
List friends, Co-workers, Organizations in Order for M.C. to Announce:	List Affiliated Organizations: (Betsuin is Always Last)
Friends	
Co-Workers	
Kenjin Kai	

* Consult Sôdan Representative for Organist fee and Recommended Orei to Temple and Minister.

Continued on back page for pallbearers, ushers, receivers, reception help.

REVISIONS MAY BE INCORPORATED BY SÔDAN COMMITTEE WITHOUT NOTICE

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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE:

<input type="checkbox"/> Processional - Immediate Family Only <input type="checkbox"/> No Processional - Side Entry for Family & Relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Floral Blanket for Casket (funeral only) <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Offering (4 each of 4 fruit) <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgment Cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Processional - Family and All Relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Printed Program <input type="checkbox"/> Floral Offering for Naijin (1 Doz. white) <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph for Memorial Service
Other Instructions: Incense Offering by Friends: ____ During sutra chanting ____ At conclusion of service Gatha(s):	
Reserved Seating: <input type="checkbox"/> Left Pews for Immediate Family & Relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Right Pews for Pallbearers, Honorary Pallbearers & Oshoko Representatives <input type="checkbox"/> Pews for Reception Helpers (last row in Hondo)	
Reception Set-up: <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs <input type="checkbox"/> Tables for Refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Tables for Coffee and Tea	

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