

Disposition of Remains Report: Naha

February 24, 2012

Part I.

Japan

Part II. U.S. Embassy or Consulate Information

U.S. Consulate General Naha
2-1-1 Toyama, Urasoe City, Okinawa 901-2104, Japan
Tel: 81-98-876-4211
Fax: 81-98-876-4243
After Hours Phone: 81-3-3224-5000
Website: <http://naha.usconsulate.gov>

State Department Country Specific Information:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1148.html

State Department Travel Information:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP):
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html

Part III. Profile of Japanese Religions and Religious Services Available to Visitors

Country Profile: Visit the State Department's website, "Background Note: Japan."
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4142.htm>

Religions: Shinto and Buddhism are Japan's two principal religions.

Part IV. Funeral Directors, Morticians, and Related Services Available in Japan:

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Consulate General Naha, Japan assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise may be obtained directly from the funeral directors, morticians, or other service providers.

Sunray Okinawa, Co. Ltd.
3-1-7 Tsubogawa, Naha City, Okinawa 900-0025
Tel: 81-98-832-3011

Fax: 81-98-832-3004

<http://www.sunray-okinawa.com/>

Okizensha, Co. Ltd.

111-5 Aza Kurashiki, Okinawa City, Okinawa 904-2145

Tel: 81-98-938-3452; 24 hour call center: 0120-24-3659

Fax: 81-98-939-2328

<http://www.okizensha.co.jp/>

Part V. Profile of Services Available in Japan for Preparation and Shipment of Remains:

1. Period Before Burial or Cremation

The basic Japanese law governing the disposition of the remains of deceased persons is Law No. 48 of 1948, entitled "Law Regarding Graveyards, Burial, Cremation, and Disposition of Remains" which is applicable throughout Japan. Chapter II, Article 3 of Law No. 48 states: "A corpse or still-born fetus shall not be buried or cremated earlier than 24 hours after its death or birth, except as otherwise provided by ordinance." The law does not specify the maximum time limit within which a body must be buried or cremated. By local custom, bodies are cremated on the second or third day after death. When death results from an infectious or epidemic disease however, burial or cremation within 24 hours is permitted. Such cases are governed by Law No. 36 of April 1, 1897, entitled "Infectious Disease Prevention Law." Law No. 36 requires that "(1) an immediate report be made to the Public Health Center so that all areas of possible contamination may be promptly disinfected; and (2) a post-mortem examination be conducted by a physician, after death with the approval of competent officials."

2. Embalming

Since the normal custom in Japan is to dispose of remains by cremation, embalming is not widely practiced. There are no commercial embalming facilities or professional morticians on Okinawa such as exist in the U.S. However, embalming services may be provided at the USAF Mortuary, Camp Kinser for the remains of American citizens who have died on Okinawa on a cost reimbursable basis.

3. Cremation

Most urban areas on Okinawa have a crematorium, and local funeral directors may handle the arrangements for cremation. The only legal requirement is to obtain a permit for cremation issued by the village, town, or city office upon presentation of the report of death.

4. Caskets and Containers

There are no Japanese laws or regulations prescribing containers to be used for burial or for the storage of ashes and other remains after cremation. The remains are normally placed in a pine box casket draped with a white cloth for cremation. The ashes are stored in simple urns. Metal or wooden caskets are available at the USAF Mortuary for shipment of remains to the U.S.

5. Exportation of Remains

There are no Japanese laws, national or local, forbidding or otherwise governing the exportation of human remains. However, the following documentation is required:

Embalmed Body

1. Consular Report of Death.
2. Death certificate from local government authority.
(required by Japanese Customs)
3. Mortician's embalming certificate.
4. Mortician's statement of placement of remains in the coffin.
5. Regular customs declaration (required by Japanese Customs).

Note: Individual shipping companies and airlines have their own rules and regulations concerning the shipment of remains to the United States. In general, they are based on rules established by the U.S. Public Health Service.

Human Ashes: Air Freight

1. Cremation Certificate.
2. Consular Report of Death.
3. Death Certificate from local government authority.
(required by Japanese Customs)
4. Consular Mortuary Certificate
5. Affidavit from local funeral director concerning contents of urn.

Human Ashes: Local Mail

Ashes cannot be shipped by mail through Japanese postal facilities to points within Japan but may be mailed abroad if placed in a solid and securely fastened container or urn.

There are no special regulations governing such shipments. The only document required is the customs declaration, and the package is handled in the same manner as any ordinary parcel.

Human Ashes: APO Mail

Persons entitled to use US military facilities may ship human ashes by APO parcel post if packed in a tight container or urn. The only document required is the customs declaration stating the contents of the container.

6. Costs

All dollar costs have been converted from local currency at the exchange rate of 76 yen to the US dollar. All fees are approximate.

Local burial

There are no cemeteries for interment of a non-cremated body on Okinawa. The International Cemetery at Tomari Port, Naha City has been declared a “prefectural cultural asset” and is closed for all burials of non-cremated remains.

Cremation and disposal of ashes

The Okinawa City Crematorium charges the following uniform prices for foreigners. The price includes an urn and consumption tax.

<u>Age:</u>	<u>Price:</u>
0 to 5 years	70,000 Yen (\$921)
Over 6 years	141,750 Yen (\$1,865)

*Note: An additional 10,000 Japanese yen (\$132) per day will be charged for the use of dry ice in the preservation of any non-cremated remains.

Preparation and Shipment of Cremated Remains

Cremated remains (ashes) may be shipped as cargo. The average weight of a shipment is 10 kg. The cost for preparation, cremation, and air shipment of ashes to the U.S. is approximately \$2,100 (159,400 Japanese yen).

Also see cremation above.

Air Mail Shipment

Ashes packed in sealed containers may also be shipped to the U.S. by air mail through Japanese postal facilities. Average cost is 17,650 yen (\$150) to the U.S.

Surface Mail

Surface mail parcel postage rate is 1,800 yen for the first kilogram. Average cost is 6,750 yen (\$57) to the U.S.

APO MAIL

Parcel postage for air shipment of cremated remains from Naha to the U.S. West Coast is about \$50.

Transporting remains to crematorium

Intact remains are generally transported by hearse. Commercial funeral directors normally include these charges in their processing costs rather than charging separately.

Local Storage or interment of cremated remains at the International Cemetery

Local storage or interment of cremated remains at the International Cemetery is no longer an option due to the lack of available space.

Embalming, Preparation, and Shipment of Remains

The total average cost for the processing of remains is approximately \$9,700 to \$16,500, to include air shipment container, embalming, land transportation, labor, documentation and shipping. This depends on the type of casket chosen and shipping charges to the final destination.

The USAF Mortuary charges around \$2,500 for an air shipment container, embalming, land transportation, labor, and documentation. The shipping weight of the container is usually from 100 to 140 kilograms. The average weight of a casket for export with human remains is about 260 kilograms. Airfare is additional (approximately \$7,000 to \$10,000 to the U.S.) and payable by the person requesting shipment. The cost for metal and wooden caskets ranges from \$1,248 to \$2,303.

Note: Shipment of embalmed remains can be done through the commercial shipping companies, Okinawa Air Cargo and National Cargo. The USAF Mortuary will coordinate with these companies for the arrangements.

Air Freight

Costs per kilogram for air freight shipment from Naha to several representative cities in the United States are shown below:

<u>Naha to</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Los Angeles	Minimum (up to 4.5 kg)	10,000 Yen
	5.0 kg and over	2,090 Yen per kg.
Chicago	Minimum (up to 4 kg)	10,000 Yen
	4.5 kg and over	2,350 Yen per kg.
New York	Minimum (up to 4 kg)	10,000 Yen
	4.5 kg and over	2,390 Yen per kg.

7. Exhumation and Shipment

Japanese law provides that a body buried in the ground without having been cremated shall not be removed for reburial for three years unless the chief of the local Public Health Center grants special permission. Also Article 5, Paragraph 2 of Law No. 48 of

1948 prescribes that “any person who wants to perform a reburial shall obtain permission from the city, town, or village where the body is buried.” As a practical matter, exhumations are not performed on Okinawa because the only site for local burial has been closed for several years.

8. Autopsies

Autopsies are not common in Japan. The police will only conduct an autopsy when the death occurred under suspicious circumstances.

There are three types of autopsies: 1) Judicial autopsy for a criminal investigative purpose by court order; 2) Administrative autopsy (no crime is suspected, but the cause of death is unknown); 3) Pathological or consensual autopsy at the request of family.

9. Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, and Memorial Services

A typical Japanese funeral includes a wake, a funeral ceremony, the cremation of the deceased, placement of the cremated ashes in a family tomb, and periodic memorial services thereafter. Most Japanese are cremated and their remaining ashes buried in a family tomb.

A wake (“tsuya”) is held the night before the deceased is cremated. Relatives and close friends spend the last night with the body, praying for the soul of the departed. Funerals are held at the home of the deceased or a funeral parlor.

The funeral is usually held on the day after the wake. The ceremony is similar to the wake, and incense is burned while a priest chants a sutra. The funeral ceremony differs slightly as the deceased receives a new Buddhist name. A cremation usually takes about two hours, and the family members, relatives, and close friends wait for the completion of the cremation at the crematorium. Japanese cremation procedures do not result in the same fine ash as is found in the typical U.S. style cremation. Rather, large pieces of bone remain after cremation. When the cremation is completed, the family and relatives pick the bones out of the ashes and transfer them to the urn using chopsticks.

Traditionally, mourners bring condolence money (“koden”) in a special black and white or silver decorated envelope to the dead person’s home.

10. Remarks

The cost for a death certificate varies depending on where the death occurred, and whether the police became involved. The fee varies from 5,000 Yen (\$66) to 20,000 Yen (\$263).