

Disposition of Remains Report: Naha

January 22, 2021

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: <https://jp.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/naha/>

State Department Country Specific Information

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Japan.html>

Department Travel Information:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP):

<https://step.state.gov/>

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

Country Profile: Visit the State Department's website, "Background Note: Japan."

<https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-japan/>

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 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.

Koekisha, Co., Ltd: 1-32-12, Tsuboya, Naha City, Okinawa 902-0065

Tel: 81-98-856-8181

Fax: 81-98-856-6300

<http://koekisha.okinawa.jp/>

Fuji Sosai, Co., Ltd: 3-8-3 Tabaru Naha City, Okinawa 901-0156

Tel: 0120-858-069

<https://www.fuji-sosai.co.jp/>

Anshin Sosai, Co., Ltd: 2-32 Torihori Shuri Naha City, Okinawa 903-0805

Tel: 81-98-887-7008

<http://ansinsousai.com/plan/>

Yasurai Planning, Co., Ltd: 4-57-3 Torihori Shuri Naha City, Okinawa 903-0805

Tel: 81-98-885-8205

http://w1.nirai.ne.jp/yasurai/en_guide.html

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 in the United States. If the decedent passed in Okinawa, remains may be transferred to available facilities in Tokyo for professional embalming. Interested parties should contact Tokyo-based funeral directors for this option. If the deceased was active duty U.S. military or in Japan under a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), please contact the appropriate branch of military service for possible additional services.

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.

There are crematoria in most localities in Japan, and arrangements for cremation are handled by local undertakers. The only legal requirement is to obtain a permission for cremation document (Maiso Kaso Kyokasho), which is issued by a village, town, ward, or city office upon presentation of the Report of Death. Japanese cremation procedures do not result in the same sized fine ash as it does in the United States, but with somewhat larger-sized pieces of bone. For an additional charge, bone can be processed into fine bone.

4. Caskets and Containers

There are no Japanese laws, national or local, governing the exportation of human remains. A casket containing a body or human ashes is treated as ordinary freight. Shipping companies, however, require that the body be placed in a metal lined casket. Suitable caskets or transfer cases are readily available and meet the requirements of the U.S. Public Health Service and U.S. port authorities. Containers for human ashes are also available.

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.

6. Costs

All dollar costs have been converted from local currency at the exchange rate of 103 yen to the US dollar. All fees are approximate.

Local burial

There are no cemeteries for internment 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.

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 \$3,600 (370,000 Japanese yen). Also see cremation above.

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 internment 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.

Air Freight

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

Naha to	Weight	Cost
Los Angeles	Minimum (up to 4.5 kg)	10,000 Yen
	5.0 kg and over	1,590 Yen per kg
Naha to	Weight	Cost
Chicago	Minimum (up to 4.5 kg)	10,000 Yen
	5.0 kg and over	1,860 Yen per kg

New York	Minimum (up to 4.5 kg)	10,000 Yen
	5.0 kg and over	1,900 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 is normally 20,000 Yen (\$195).