

Introduction

1.

This collection comprises the texts for the rites observed by the lay Buddhist organization of Rissho Kosei-kai and its members at their headquarters, local Dharma centers, homes, and other places when rituals and ceremonies are needed. A ritual text is a document which an officiate or sutra-recitation leader uses to announce to the Eternal Buddha, all buddhas, and all honored ones the significance and purpose of the ritual or ceremony that members will conduct as well as their vows and prayers. When read aloud by the ritual officiate, the text also informs those present at the ritual or ceremony of its significance and purpose and helps them prepare for it. Further, specific ritual texts are chosen for particular rituals or ceremonies, and in some cases, supplementary “special words” may also be stated in the recitation of the ritual text. Generally, the statement of the special words is considered a part of the ritual text, but for convenience of use, examples of the special words are collected in the appendix of this collection separately from the texts.

2.

Users of this collection of texts for rites and ceremonies may digitally store on digital devices texts they wish to use. As for the special words, please prepare them by referring to the examples in the appendix. For the special words used in funeral rites, it is recommended to obtain the necessary information about the deceased’s name, date of death, personality, lifestyle, and other relevant details prior to the service. This ensures that the content of the special words appropriately reflects what the departed was like in life.

3.

Ritual texts for the headquarters’ regular ceremonial events may differ from those in this collection because each time we receive guidance from the president on the text to be used for each ceremonial event. For this reason, we will send a copy of the text for each event to Dharma centers in advance.

4.

Statements of special words are read aloud in the recitation of the ritual text at the headquarters’ regular ceremonial events. As some phrases or words may be revised, we will send the special words to Dharma centers every time in advance of the following events: Celebrating the First Day of the Year, Commemoration of Shakyamuni Buddha’s Nirvana, Anniversary of the Founding of Rissho Kosei-kai, Anniversary of the Birth of Shakyamuni Buddha, Ullambana Ceremony, Memorial Service for All Victims of War and Prayers for Peace, Annual Memorial Day of Cofounder Myoko Naganuma, Annual Memorial Day of Founder Niwano, Annual Memorial Service for Nichiren,

Anniversary of the Birth of Founder Nikkyo Niwano, Anniversary of Shakyamuni's Attainment of Buddhahood.



When Dharma centers celebrate the enshrinement of their Buddha statue, the completion of their building, and significant milestones such as the decennial anniversaries of the center's founding, they receive the special words from the president.

5.

As for the recitation of the *Kyoten: Sutra Readings*, the whole *Kyoten* is usually recited unless otherwise indicated. However, specific chapters can be selectively chosen from the sutra or the Threefold Lotus Sutra, depending on the purpose and time limitation of the ceremonial event or memorial service, as well as on the guests invited.

6.

As every recitation leader officiates the entire ritual or ceremony on behalf of the president, in their everyday life they are expected to dedicate themselves to religious training in a way that is befitting their role and be well-versed in all aspects of the rituals. Officiates and sutra recitation leaders should ensure that they attentively read and understand the content of the special words in advance, and, at the ritual or ceremony, read them aloud fluently and clearly, calmly and slowly. They should offer the special words in the hope that the buddhas, gods, ancestors, and all those who have passed beyond, known and unknown to us, will be moved and overjoyed. This will create a solemn atmosphere.

7.

1) In the texts and special words, there are italicized words or phrases in parentheses as well as brackets. The words and phrases in parenthesis are instructions for ritual manners, such as chanting the O-daimoku or striking the gong, and also guidelines for chapters to be recited from the *Kyoten* and the Threefold Lotus Sutra. The words or phrases in brackets require officiates and sutra recitation leaders to insert appropriate names, pronouns, numbers, and so on, as well as to choose alternatives or appropriate words.

2) Notes are placed at the end of some texts. Officiates and sutra recitation leaders should read and understand them to prepare the text and special words before the ritual or ceremony at which they will officiate.

3) Direct quotations from the Threefold Lotus Sutra are taken from *The Threefold Lotus Sutra: A Modern Translation for Contemporary Readers*, published by Kosei Publishing Company in 2019.

4) The texts are formatted in both Microsoft Word and PDF files. With the Word files, users can

make necessary revisions to names, descriptions, and so on, while the PDF files can be preserved as unchanged standard data. The Word file is formatted for printing in letter size. However, users who wish to print the texts in A4 size should modify the format accordingly.

5) This collection of ritual texts may be revised in the future as the need arises. To avoid confusion between the old and new editions, each edition's publishing date is indicated in the right footer of the ritual texts. In addition, the left footer contains the particular number of each text, as shown in the table of contents.

6) The no. 9 folder "Addendum" has three ritual texts: "Anniversary of Birthday," "Wedding Anniversary," and "Wedding Anniversary Announcement before the Buddha." Rissho Kosei-kai International created them to adapt to the contemporary needs of dissemination worldwide.

7) The Special Words to Transfer Merit, the Words Guiding the Newly Departed, and the Announcement in the no. 8 folder "Appendix" may be better printed in slightly larger italics on letter-size or A4 paper to suit the solemn atmosphere of the ceremony. It is then folded and placed in an envelope with a title such as "Special Words to Transfer Merit" written in large letters on the front side. On the day of the ceremony, the officiant or sutra recitation leader should place it on the sutra desk beforehand. During the ceremony, after reciting O-daimoku ten times, the leader picks it up and reads the words aloud, and when finished, returns it to the envelope and places it on the sutra desk.