

SEJIKI CEREMONY



A MONK PRAYS FOR A HUNGRY GHOST



KĀN RO MŌN

[NOTE: *Italicized portions of the text are not chanted*]

(GATE OF SWEET DEW)

Homage to the buddhas in ten directions.

Homage to the dharma in ten directions.

Homage to the sangha in ten directions.

Homage to our original teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha.

Homage to the great merciful, compassionate reliever of suffering,
Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva.

Homage to the expounder of the teachings, the venerable Ananda.

Giving rise to the awakened mind, we unconditionally offer a bowl of pure food to all the hungry ghosts in every land to the farthest reaches of vast emptiness in the ten directions, including every atom throughout the entire dharma realm. We invite all our departed ancestors going back to ancient times, the spirits dwelling in mountains, rivers, and earth, as well as demonic spirits from the untamed wilderness, to come and gather here. Now, with deep sympathy we offer food to all of you, sincerely hoping that you will each accept this food and turn it over, making offerings to buddhas, sages, and all sentient beings throughout the vast emptiness of the universe, so that you and all the many sentient beings will be satisfied. Moreover, we sincerely wish that your bodies be conveyed by these mantrams and food so that you may depart from suffering, be liberated, find birth in heaven, and receive joy. In accord with your intentions, may you travel freely through the pure lands in the ten directions and arouse awakened mind, practicing the awakened way and in the future become a buddha without regressing. We entreat those who have previously attained the way since ancient times to vow to realize liberation together with all beings. Day and night, constantly protect us so that our vows will be fulfilled. We offer food to beings throughout the dharma realm, so that every being will equally receive this fortunate offering. Whatever virtue and merit this produces, we completely transfer and dedicate to the unsurpassed awakening with total clarity and wisdom of the whole dharma realm of true reality, that all may speedily attain buddhahood without incurring any other destinies. May all sentient beings of the dharma realm take advantage of this teaching to quickly attain buddhahood.

Dharani for Summoning Deceased Spirits to the Great Assembly

Nō bō bohorī gyari tari tatāgyata ya

Dharani for Breaking Down the Gates of Hell and Opening Throats

Ōm boho tēiri gyatari tatāgyata ya

Dharani for Blessing the Food with the Unimpeded Radiance of Innumerable Virtues

Nō maku saraba tatāgyata baro kitēi ōm sām barā sām barā ūn

Dharani of the Flavor of Dharma covered with Sweet Dew

Nō maku soro baya tatāgyata ya tanyata ōm soro soro hara soro hara soro
sowaka

Dharani for Contemplating Vairochana through the Word “Heart-Mind” on a Sphere of Water

Nō maku sāmman da botanān bān *(Repeat until bell)*

Dharanis Summoning the Five Tathagathas with Precious Names

Homage to the Many Jewels Tathagatha,
Nō bo bagya batēi hara bota ara tānnō ya tatāgyata ya
Removing the karma of greed, fully complete with blessing and wisdom.

Homage to the Wondrous Form Body Tathagatha,
Nō bo bagya batēi soro baya tatāgyata ya
Destroying disgrace and vileness, fully complete with good marks

Homage to the King of Sweet Dew Tathagatha,
Nō bo bagya batēi ami ritēi arān jaya tatāgyata ya
Pouring the Dharma into body and mind, granting pleasure.

Homage to the Boundless Body Tathagatha,
Nō bo bagya batēi biho ragya taraya tatāgyata ya
Opening wide all throats, satisfying them with food and drink.

Homage to the Freedom from Fear Tathagatha,
Nō bo bagya batēi aba ēn gyara ya tatāgyata ya
Completely banishing fear, freeing all from rebirths as hungry ghosts.

Dharani for Arousing Bodhi Mind (All in Gassho)

Doshi: Ōm bōji shītta bodā hadāyāmi *(Call & response 3 Xs)*

All: Ōm bōji shītta bodā hadāyāmi

Dharani for Giving the Bodhisattva Samaya Precepts

Doshi: Ōm sāmmya sato bān *(Call & response 3 Xs)*

All: Ōm sāmmya sato bān

(End gassho. Third round continues into the following...)

Esoteric Dharani for Residing in the Great Virtuous Jeweled Pavilion

Nō maku saraba tatāgyata nān ōm bihora gyara bēi mani hara bēi tata tani
tashani mani mani soha rabēi bima rēi sha gyara gēn birēi ūnnūn jīn barajīn bara
boda biroki tēi kugya chishūtta gyara bēi sowaka ōm mani baji rēi ūn ōm mani
da rēi ūn bātta

Dharani of All Buddhas’ Radiant True Words Anointing the Head

Ōm a bogya bēi rossha nō maka bodara mani hān doma jīn bara hara bari taya ūn

Dedication (indicates a pause)*

By the positive energy of this assembly, we repay the virtue of our parents' toil
and care *

May the living be blessed with joy and longevity without misery *

May the deceased be freed from suffering and be born into peaceful nurturing *

May conscious beings in the three realms, having received the four benefactions *

Together with those born to suffering in the threefold path and the eight difficult
situations *

All thoroughly repent their errors, wash away their defects *

Finally depart the round of samsara, and be born in the pure land.

DĀIHI SHĪN DARANI

Namu kara tan no tora ya ya namu ori ya boryo ki chi shifu ra ya fuji
sato bo ya moko sato bo ya mo ko kya runi kya ya en sa hara ha ei shu
tan no ton sha namu shiki ri toi mo ori ya boryo ki chi shifu ra rin to bo
na mu no ra kin ji ki ri mo ko ho do sha mi sa bo o to jo shu ben o shu
in sa bo sa to no mo bo gya mo ha te cho to ji to en o bo ryo ki ru gya
chi kya rya chi i kiri mo ko fuji sa to sa bo sa bo mo ra mo ra mo ki mo
ki ri to in ku ryo ku ryo ke mo to ryo to ryo ho ja ya chi mo ko ho ja ya
chi to ra to ra chiri ni shifu ra ya sha ro sha ro mo mo ha mo ra ho chi ri
yuki yuki shi no shi no ora san fura sha ri ha za ha za fura sha ya ku
ryo ku ryo mo ra ku ryo ku ryo ki ri sha ro sha ro shi ri shi ri su ryo su
ryo fuji ya fuji ya fudo ya fudo ya mi chiri ya nora kin ji chiri shuni no
hoya mono somo ko shido ya somo ko moko shido ya somo ko shido
yu ki shifu ra ya somo ko nora kin ji somo ko mo ra no ra somo ko
shira su omo gya ya somo ko sobo moko shido ya somo ko shaki ra
oshi do ya somo ko hodo mogya shido ya somo ko nora kin ji ha gyara
ya somo ko mo hori shin gyara ya somo ko namu kara tan no tora ya
ya namu ori ya boryo ki chi shifu ra ya somo ko shite do modo ra hodo
ya so mo ko



ABOUT SEJIKI:

Sejiki is a traditional Japanese Zen Buddhist ceremony honoring our ancestors and the whole spirit world, and is one of the most important Buddhist observances of the year. In Buddhist mythology hungry ghosts (Gaki) are creatures living in deep suffering due to their behavior led by ignorance and greed. They are usually depicted with small necks and mouths and large bellies, which represent the greedy desires that are the cause of their condition of perpetual, unquenchable hunger. The hungry ghosts are a symbol for the mind-states of dissatisfaction that we all experience.

During this ceremony we make offerings to our departed ancestors as well as hungry ghosts and darker, unknown regions of our psyche, bringing them to light. We offer them food and chants as spiritual nourishment so that they can be satiated and liberated from their condition. This ceremony has its foundation in the Bodhisattva vow to save all sentient beings, and in addition to liberating hungry ghosts, serves the purpose of dispelling regrets and tensions related to unresolved situations that bind us to the past. This ceremony involves setting up an elaborate altar (traditionally arranged opposite to the usual altar in the zendo), instruments played to invoke the departed spirits, and the chanting of the "Gate of Sweet Dew," a series of mantras and wishes for well-being. The names of the departed are collected beforehand to be strung around the zendo and invoked aloud during the ceremony.

The Buddha recommended in the Ullambana Sutra that this ceremony be performed at the end of the summer practice period. Many Zen Centers hold the Sejiki ceremony around the time of Halloween, which is a time in our culture when we call forth the spirit world. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, this year we will be offering the ceremony outdoors (in-person but socially-distanced) as well as online. The instrumental portion of the ceremony will be from a recording in order to minimize contact.

MAY ALL BEINGS IN THE TRIPLE WORLD BE NOURISHED!

Originality and universality are the same thing for a sincere student. Universal truth must have an original approach for everyone. Mind and body are one; subjective and objective worlds are one in our single minded practice. Observing that mind and body are one, and that subjective and objective worlds are one, many people fear death. Reasoning will not solve this problem. Hakuin Zenji said, "If you want to know about life after death, ask the man who wants to know." Thus there is no other way than to ask yourself, for this problem does not belong to the category of knowledge. You yourself must solve it by practice. Buddha's practice after his enlightenment is not different from each individual's practice before enlightenment, if there is no idea of self. When you are engaged in selfless practice, you are free from the idea of past, present and future; from the idea of this world or another; from the idea of coming or going.

- Suzuki Roshi on Sejiki (Wind Bell #8, July 1962)