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COVER LEGEND

Research institutions in Japan have the charming custom of holding memorial services for their experimental animals. Services are usually held in the auditorium or lecture hall, during the spring and autumn equinox. The equinoxes are national holidays and in Buddhism are devoted to memorial services of various kinds.

Some organizations have set up a monument to the spirit of experimental animals, and the ceremony is held before the monument. Illustrated is the monument to experimental animals at the Hikari Plant of the Takeda Research Laboratories. On the monument is written “Born as animals, they have offered their body for revelation of medical science. A memorial is here set up to honor their souls.” This memorial was written by Hon. Saeki, the chief priest of Hōryuji Temple in Nara.

The ceremony, also pictured, is usually conducted by a Buddhist priest according to usual Buddhist rites, with chanting of Sutra and burning of incense. This is followed by burning of incense by all present. The ceremony is attended by all members of the organization.

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