

SUBSEQUENT MEMORIAL SERVICES

The tradition of Buddhist memorial services is lined to some of the most basic and fundamental teachings of the Buddha; among these are transiency, interdependence, oneness, and karma.

Listed below is the schedule of memorial services generally observed.

49th day – *Shikukunichi (Manchuin) memorial service*

According to the Buddhist tradition, every 7 days after his/her death, the deceased family continues to observe the memorial service until 7th, 7 days, namely 49 days.

Although the origin of this service is obscure, it was believed at one time that on the 49th day after death the karmic destination of the deceased would be determined. By observing a special service, the surviving family hoped to eliminate all karmic effects of evil deeds the deceased may have committed during his lifetime, thus eliminating the possibility of having the deceased sent to any of the hells or animal worlds. This service was regarded as very important for the destiny of the deceased.

However, in our Jodo Shinshu sect, one attains birth in the Pure Land of the Amida Buddha through His Vow. Therefore, Nembutsu followers who have come to rely upon the Name of the Amida Buddha with the mind of *shinjin* are assured birth in the Pure Land immediately after death.

1st circuit – *Isshuki – 1st-cycle-memorial:*

This is on or near the date of death called *Meinichi* (life-date), one year after the death of a person.

3rd cycle – *Sankaiki – 3rd-cycle-memorial:*

According to the traditional way of counting, the yearly cycles begin with the *Meinichi* or death date as 1. One year later then, would be cycle 2, two years later would be cycle 3, etc. The *Isshuki* does not refer to the year but to the first round or circuit from *Mei nichu* to *Meinichi*. Thereafter the term used is *kaiki* or *cycle-memorial*. In other words, the 3rd cycle *Hoji* is observed on or near the *Meinichi* 2 years after the death of the person, the 7th cycle, 6 years after death, etc.

7th cycle – *Shichikaiki – 7th-cycle-memorial*

13th cycle – *Jusankaiki – 13th-cycle-memorial*

17th cycle – *Jushichikaiki – 17th-cycle-memorial*

25th cycle – *Nijugokaiki – 25th-cycle-memorial*

33rd cycle – *Sanjusankaiki – 33rd-cycle-memorial*

50th cycle – *Gojikkaiki – 50th-cycle-memorial*

100th cycle – *Hyakkaiki – 100-cycle-memorial*

Thereafter observances are held at 50-year intervals.

* In BCA history, the Issei tended to use the traditional way of counting for memorial services, birthdays, anniversaries, etc., but not always. Hence temple anniversaries and other traditional observances may or may not always be consistent. It is however, accurate within one year. *Hoji* observances, however, have remained according to the traditional way of counting.

* Other schools of Japanese Buddhism observe the 23rd and 27th cycle *Hoji*. This was combined into one 25th cycle by Jodoshinshu. Today, the *Isshuki* is considered to mark the end of the mourning period. The *Meinichi* of a family member was also traditionally a day of limiting food to vegetarian meals as was also the case on the 16th of each month, the *Meinichi* of Shinran Shonin.

As the first-year memorial of the deceased approaches, contact the temple and your minister to arrange for a service before the date of death of the deceased.

Our temple holds a *Shotsuki* (monthly) Memorial Service. At this service, family members may burn incense in memory of the deceased. See (section e) above for schedule of memorial services observed.

The *Obon* service is a general memorial service held once a year for all those who have passed away since the last Obon service. A special effort should be made by family members to attend the first *Obon* service (*Hatsu Bon*) after the death of a loved one.

CHUIN – *in the midst-yin*: *Chuin* refers to the first 49-day period of mourning after death. It is marked by observances every 7 days until the 49th day.

In the Tantric and popular traditions of Buddhism, the *soul* or karmic energy of a person is believed to be in a suspended state for 49 days before taking another form. Rituals were conducted and offerings to the Buddha were made every 7th day until the 49th day in the hopes of helping the deceased to bring about a higher birth. This 49-day period was a period when which the deceased was thought to be “*in the shadowy world or Yin*”, hence the term in *Chuin*. This belief became deeply rooted in Far Eastern cultures. It was a widespread practice in China by the later T’ang Dynasty and in Japan was observed from the time of the Emperor Kammu (781-806A.D.).

Jodo Shinshu, which categorically denies the efficacy of such observances, nevertheless observes *Chuin* in grateful memory of the deceased and yet another opportunity to listen to the Dharma. In other words, the *Hoji* in Jodoshinshu is not for the sake of the dead but is indeed for the sake of the living. In our remembering the deceased, we acknowledge the influence of the deceased’s Karma on our lives. We are the inheritors of the collective Karma of our ancestors who cause us to meditate on our own mortality and listen more intently to the Dharma.

The significance of having memorial services is:

- a. To express our gratitude for Amida Buddha and the life of Nembutsu.
- b. For members of the family, relatives, and friends to gather in the name of the deceased person to express thankfulness to him/her and to share their memories.
- c. To be reminded of the impermanence of this world and the value of faith in Amida Buddha in everyday life, since human beings are apt to forget that we are mortal.

d. HOJI – *dharma-affair*:

Hoji is originally a general term for any ritual observance. It has however, come to specifically mean a private family memorial service. The *Hoji* is a system of private memorial observances for members of a given family. Extended members of a family, and sometimes close friends, will gather at a temple or home in memory of a deceased member of the family. Following the service, the family invariably goes out to lunch or dinner or serves a potluck at the home, renewing and strengthening family ties. This custom, along with the Buddhist emphasis on death observances over birth observances, has resulted in the understanding that death is a natural occurrence, no matter how sorrowful it may seem to us. An important by-product of this custom has been the reinforcing of family ties with members beyond one’s immediate family and a sense of continuity from generation to generation.

HOMYO – *Buddhist name card*:

The use of a small book called *Kakocho (past registry)* for recording the names and dates of one's ancestors is used. The book is kept in the Butsudan drawer and never in the Butsudan itself. At Hoji observed at the temple, the *Homyo* card of the deceased is placed in a holder and put on the altar during the service to indicate who is being remembered. For services at the home Butsudan, the *Kakocho* is removed from the drawer and placed in front of the Butsudan.

DONATION SCHEDULE

The following are ***only suggested amounts*** for gratuities and donations. Any amount is very much appreciated. Please note these numbers are consistent with temples throughout the West Coast.

	<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>NON-MEMBER</u>
FUNERAL:		
Temple	\$400.00	\$600.00
Away Services	\$300.00	\$350.00
Ofuse – Minister	\$250.00	\$300.00
Organist	\$ 75.00	\$100.00
Custodian	\$ 75.00	\$100.00
CREMATION / BURIAL SERVICE:		
Temple	\$100.00	\$150.00
Ofuse – Minister	\$100.00	\$200.00
49 DAY AND FAMILY MEMORIAL SERVICE:		
Temple	\$100.00	\$150.00
Ofuse – Minister	\$100.00	\$200.00

Note: A non-dues paying person may not be a member through their parents.