

## OUR MEMORY AND BUDDHA'S PRIMAL VOW

By Rev. Ryoko Osa

Buddhist memorial services are occasions to listen to the Buddha's teaching while family and friends of the deceased pay their respects.

In Japan, memorial services will continue for the deceased up until the 50th year anniversary of their passing. For example, if a 10-year-old granddaughter were to lose her grandfather, the 50th anniversary memorial for him would be held when she turned 59. In this case she will surely remember him, even after many years have passed. Although today the number of 50th anniversary memorial services for family members is decreasing, the tradition still continues for this reason—because family members often remember the deceased.

However, nobody who's alive 100 years from now will have met us or known us directly. As expressed in the movie "Coco," it is sometimes said that human beings experience two deaths. The "first death" is the physical one, the death of the body. The "second death" is the moment no one remembers you. It's an idea that seems to say memory is what life is really about.

We all follow the same path, growing older and then dying.

If, as is the case for many, you were to one day suffer from dementia, then you would likely face a deep fear that you were losing yourself, or what you thought of as "myself." However, even among the young, there is a kind of memory disorder where memories last only for a few hours. How could we ever accept either of these conditions? We are afraid to lose our memories. On the other hand, we humans may also suffer from unbearable memories of painful events, such as violence, abuse, and even murder. And so a key question becomes: Does personal memory define the self?

Here I would like to address the connection between our memories and Buddha's primal vow. Buddha's primal vow is the vow to liberate all sentient beings from their suffering. This vow took shape when the Bodhisattva was practicing to become a Buddha. The direct translation of Hongan (Buddha's vow) is "original vow." This means it is a vow that goes back countless eons into the past. We tend to think about life and death based on our own lifespans, but primal vows are based on a different concept of time, one beyond our ability to

fully comprehend. Indeed, it is said that these vows have no beginning point in time.

According to Buddhism, our subconscious is like a storehouse in which all histories, from the immeasurable past, are stored. Even if we cannot remember or be aware of those histories, all the world's past events have come to be stored within our subconscious. We might think of the subconscious, then, as a huge backup drive of all histories; and this store creates our biological instincts, or life force, as living beings.

From a thinking centered on my body, my consciousness, my subjective perspective, we can awaken to our own impermanence. By listening to the Buddha's vow, we can reach a state of freedom and oneness that transcends the subjectivity-objectivity paradigm.

Here I might use a metaphor of the ocean. "I" is the shape of a wave that appears on the surface of the water, while in the deep ocean there is a storehouse of memories past which "I" cannot even imagine—memories which I share with other lives. However, "I" instinctively feel that these memories are calling me to survive as a vital force.

So even if individual

*(Continued on page 3)*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## August 2021



Date	Day	Time	Event
8	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Shotsuki memorial/family service (online)
		11:00 a.m.	WBA Zoom meeting

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**AUGUST TOBAN**  
(group #1) *Janice Adachi, Wendy Adachi, Nina Costales, Satoko Davidson, Grace Goto, Alice Horio, Doreen Imada, Elsie Lum, Denice Nakano, Diane Nishioka, Michi Takata, Miyoko Truong*

**SUNDAY SERVICE**  
We will continue live-streaming our Sunday services via Facebook in September. You DO NOT NEED a facebook account in order to view the live-stream. Just go to the link on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. You will also be able to watch the service later if you miss the initial 10:00 a.m. broadcast. Here is the link: <http://www.facebook.com/berkeleyhigashi/live>.

**SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL SERVICE**  
This month, we will hold the

Shotsuki monthly memorial service on August 8th Sunday at 10 a.m. The following families observe memorials for loved ones this month: Chiyoji Nagatoshi, Janet Jung, Janette Jenkins, Kinuyo Hiwano, Nancy Moriwaki, Noboru Otani, Noriko Yanaba, Takaji Matsunaga, Tom Tominaga, Yoshihiro Takahashi Yoshii, Kazuko Jitosh, Shinoda, Morodomi, Cooc, Nakazawa, Imazumi. This service is open to everyone.

**E-MAIL SUBSCRIPTION**  
For COVID 19 safety precautions and to save temple expenses, also in order to quickly notify temple members and friends of important information we are currently asking members to change their subscription format from the

mailed paper version to email. If you have an email address, and would like a paperless subscription, please contact Rev. Osa at: [ryoko.osa@gmail.com](mailto:ryoko.osa@gmail.com).

**BBT TAIKO CLASS SURVEY**  
Are you interested in Japanese taiko drum lessons? The Berkeley Buddhist Temple (Sangha) is considering starting weekly taiko class at the temple as early as September. The class will be instructed by local professional taiko instructors. Please let us know by filling out the survey if you are interested. Survey link: <https://berkeleybuddhisttemple.breezechms.com/form/taikosurvey>. You don't have to be a BBT member to participate. Everyone is welcome! Thank you.

## IN MEMORY

Mrs. Fumiko Kanbara (Naomi Yamada's mother) passed away peacefully in her home on June 30th, 2021. The private service was held at the temple.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### BIG THANK YOUS TO THE FOLLOWING

**IT'S TIME TO GATHER EVENT** Thanks to the *Activity Committee* for organizing a fun get-together. It was so good to see and visit with everyone! (*Debbie Yatabe, Wendy Adachi, Nina Costales, Satoko Davidson, Chris*

*(Continued on page 3)*

Credits:

This is a publication of the Berkeley Higashi Honganji. Please contact Rev. Ryoko Osa at 1524 Oregon Street, Berkeley, CA 94703. 510-843-6933 [www.bombu.org](http://www.bombu.org). [osa@higashihonganji.org](mailto:osa@higashihonganji.org). Newsletter design by Kevin Sullivan

(Continued from page 2)

Fujii, Kevin Toyama, Patti Yamashita). Thanks to Naomi Yamada for our favorite chicken salad, Artie and Scott Yamashita for the great chili, Dave Yatabe for the cold drinks, everyone who brought the delicious desserts and Jimmy & Bob Kihara for tending the barbeque. Thanks to Chris Fujii and Debbie Yatabe for donating all the bingo prizes.

**ACRYLIC DONATION BOX** Thanks to Dick Horio for making a beautiful stand for an acrylic donation box that will stand in the back of the temple.

**NEW FENCE PROJECT** Jane Fujii, Jimmy Kihara and Artie Yamashita

Thank you everyone for your donations, time, energy and support. Because of you, our temple exists for us and for future generations. Help us by calling or emailing the temple if names are inadvertently omitted from acknowledgements or donations. Domo arigato gozaimashita!

## DONATIONS

### Temple donations

Rev. Akinori & Mrs. Akiko Imai	50
Jeff Shannon & Satoko Davidson	100
Ichiko Jitoshō (for food bazaar donation)	50

### Obon & Hatsubon service

Jane Fujii	50
Toyoko Araki	25
Constance Morita	50
Sachiye Toyofuku	50
Mark Toyofuku	200
Gregory Takahashi	50
Shizuko Asazawa	50
Akinori & Akiko Imai	50
Mike Yatabe	50
Agnes, Nancy & Grace Kubota (Hatsubon Mrs. Chidori Kubota)	500
Julie & Robert Kihara (Hatsubon Mrs. Emiko Nakano)	25
Steven & Denice Nakano (In memory of Mrs. Emiko Nakano)	50
Steven & Denice Nakano (Hatsubon Mrs. Emiko Nakano)	100
Gary & Anne Tominaga (Hatsubon Mrs. Fumie Tominaga)	100
Grant Tominaga (Hatsubon Mrs. Fumie Tominaga)	50

Alice Neishi (Hatsubon Mrs. Fumie Tominaga)	50
Ichiko Jitoshō & Jitoshō Family (Hatsubon Mrs. Kasuko Jitoshō)	100
Tazuko Jitoshō (Hatsubon Mrs. Miya Jitoshō)	100

### Shotsuki Service

Michiko Jitoshō (For Mr. Fumio Jitoshō)	50
Tazuko Jitoshō (For Mr. Fumio Jitoshō)	50
Jane Fujii (For Masuji Fujii)	30
Kenneth & Terry Fujii (For Masuji Fujii)	50
Julie & Robert Kihara (For Ai Fujikawa, Kimiyo Uchino, Robert Jung)	25
Michael & Pamela Yanaba (For Mr. Ichiji Yanaba)	50
Sachiye Toyofuku (For Mr. Ichiji Yanaba)	50
Mike Yatabe (For Kuranoshin Yatabe)	100

### Memorial Service

Tadao & Toshiko Kunishi	50
Fumiye Takano	300

### Temple Gathering (picnic)

Chris Fujii	35
-------------	----

David & Deborah Yatabe	50
Shannon & Satoko Davidson	30
Rev Ken & Naomi Yamada	30
Janice Adachi	20
Kevin & Lisa Toyama	50
Clayton Au	20
Jason Lee	5
Wendy Adachi	20
Bob & Julie Kihara	50
Connie Wong	20
George & Anna Hightower	40
Lorraine Yoshikawa	25
Tom & Karen Morioka	25

### 2021 Pledges

Jim Hiwano	50
Clayton Au & Jason Lee	700
Isao & Shizuko Inose	300
Steven & Kim Chew	50
Wayne Kurahara	50
Lynn Wade	200

Please note, donation acknowledgments will not appear in the Bombu on the same month as the donations are made due to processing time.

(Continued from page 1)

remembrances are forgotten we are still connected through this store of memories. After physical death, we will truly melt with others in the great ocean of the Hongan, the primal vow.

100 years later, no one will know us directly; but 100 years later we will be stored in the memory of future sentient beings and will serve as the vital force of other lives. At the present time,

however, past histories lie in our subconscious and make us live as vital forces. So one's life is not just an individual life, but is connected with all lives that have gone before.

# バークレー東本願寺会報 2021年8月号

## 8月お寺の行事予定

すべての日曜礼拝はオンラインによる放送になります。

8日(日)	午前10時	祥月法要
	午前11時	婦人会

礼拝はすべてライブ配信です。<http://www.facebook.com/berkeleyhigashi/live>.

---

**8月当番(当番1):** あだちジャニース、あだち ウェンディ、Costales ニーナ、Davidson さとこ、  
ごとう グレイス、堀尾アリス、今田ドーリン、Lum エルシー、中野デニース、西岡 ダイアン、高田みち、  
みよこTruong (敬称略)

**ライブ配信祥月法要:** 8月8日午前10時に祥月法要が勤められます。今月の施主は、地頭所、永利、ジヤング、肥和野、森脇、大谷、柳場、松永、富永、高橋、吉井、篠田、金子、大潤、奥本、もろどみ、クック、中澤、いまずみ の諸家です。

<http://www.facebook.com/berkeleyhigashi/live> このリンクからご参加ください。

**E-mailでの寺報送信:** 新型コロナウイルス感染防止並びにお寺の経費削減の為、この寺報の送付方法を郵便からE-mailへと変更させていただきたく、皆様にご協力をお願いしております。お寺の支援のためにE-mailによる受け取りに変更しても良いという方はお寺にご一報をお願いします。



# 記憶と本願

長 良子

ご法事は、亡き人を偲ぶ法縁であり一般的におよそ50回忌まで執り行われています。それは50年後であればご家族の中に故人を覚えている方がいるからです。例えば孫が10歳の時に同居していた祖父が亡くなった場合、祖父の50回忌はその孫が59歳になった時におこなわれます。きっとその孫は10歳の頃の記憶から祖父を思い出すことができるでしょう。

映画“Coco”にも出てきますが、人の死には二つあると言われることがあります。一つ目の死は肉体が滅びること、二つ目の死は誰からも忘れ去られることです。

それでは今から100年後の世界はどうでしょうか。寂しいことですが、自分のことを直接知っている人間は一人もいないことでしょう。一体、記憶とは「いのち」そのものなのでしょうか。

私たちは、皆、歳を取り死んでゆきます。認知症になった場合、自分の記憶が徐々に失われていく段階において、自分が自分でなくなるような強い恐怖に苛まれることでしょう。他にも記憶障害には、年齢に関わらず記憶が数時間ごとに消えていくという障害もあります。記憶をなくすというのは我々にとって非常に恐ろしいことです。

また忘却という恐怖の一方で、我々人間は、殺戮、暴力、虐待といった忘れたくても忘れられない痛ましい記憶によって精神的に一生苦しめられるということもあります。

そう見ていくと、記憶とはこの私を私として形づけるもののようにも思えます。このことで「本願」の意味を考えてみたいと思います。

「本願」とは菩薩が仏になろうと修行していたときに、すべての衆生を救おうと立てた誓いです。もともとサンスクリット語のプールヴァ・プラニダーナという言葉が「本願」と漢訳されました。「本願」とは本来の願い、もとの願いという意味です。宿世の誓願、遠い過去からの誓いがあります。私たちは普段、自分の寿命の時間内で生死を考えますが「本願」とは50年、100年という時間の長さをはるかに超える無始からの願い、呼びかけなのです。

仏教においては、私たちの潜在意識には、遠い過去からの記憶の貯蔵庫があるとされます。この記憶の貯蔵庫には、たとえ私が思い出したり意識したりできなくてもすべて過去の出来事がちゃんと貯蔵されています。それは生物としての本能が作られていくための太古の昔からの歴史上のすべての出来事のバックアップのようなものかもしれません。

海で喩えるのなら、私という一人の人間は海の表面に現れる一つの波の形であり、その深海には自分が思うこともできない過去の記憶、ほかのいのちとの共通の記憶が存在し、その記憶が本能として、生存せよと、今、私に呼びかけているように感じます。私たちは、この記憶の貯蔵庫で繋がっており、肉体が滅びたあとは本願の大きな海に本当の意味で溶けあうのではないのでしょうか。

? ページに続く



そう考えますと、記憶とは「いのち」ではありますが、ここでいう記憶とは私個人の記憶のことではなく、私が忘却したり、忘却されたり、また辛い記憶を持っていたとしても、すべての歴史が実はわたしの「いのち」であり、わたしとは結局は大いなるいのちの一部であり、またそのものなのです。そう考えると記憶について恐れではなく安らかさを見出すことが出来るのではないかと思うのです。私という肉体、私という意識、私という主観という私から、無我、無常に目覚めよという本願の呼びかけを聞くことによって、主観・客観を超えた自由無碍な境地に至り、自他一如としておおいなる「いのち」と溶け合う喜びを感じることができるのではないのでしょうか。

---

### Words of the Month | 今月の言葉

What calls to us human beings to awaken to our true self is the Tathagata's Primal Vow.

人間そのものの目ざめを呼びかけるものが 如来の本願である



Berkeley Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple  
1524 Oregon Street  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
U.S.A.

Address Correction Requested