



The Padma



December 2023 **Berkeley Buddhist Temple Newsletter** Web-Edition

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Guidelines

The Padma welcomes articles from sangha members.

Articles should be around 500-600 words typed. Word documents are best; PDF documents are discouraged.

Please include your name, a title for the article, and include any photos. Cite references if quotes are used.

Articles will be reviewed for content and length, and should contain information relevant to Buddhist teachings, the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, and/or the Buddhist Churches of America. Publication will be at the discretion of the editorial board.

Email submissions to
padma@BerkeleyBuddhistTemple.org



Wrap up the old year & prepare to welcome the new one.

Saturday, 12/10 - Temple Clean-up
Sunday, 12/31 – Joya-e Service



December Dharma Message Theme

The theme for this month's Dharma messages aligns with the commemoration of Bodhi Day on Sunday, December 8th. Bodhi Day is the day Shakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment.

Enlightenment (Nirvana, No Self, Dependent Origination)

Our Vision
A Community Where Our Spiritual Life and True Self Can Be Realized

Our Mission
To Live A Life Of Joy In The Nembutsu And Share The Dharma With Others

December 2023

the Padma



BERKELEY BUDDHIST TEMPLE

2121 CHANNING WAY, BERKELEY, CA 94704

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Berkeley Buddhist Temple (510) 841-1356 berkeleybuddhisttemple.org info@berkeleybuddhisttemple.org facebook.com/berkeleybuddhisttemple youtube.com/berkeleybuddhisttemple					1	2
					3:00p Beginner Taiko	JAYA Conference
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9:30a Virtual & In-person Dharma Family, Shotsuki Memorial, & Bodhi Day Service			7:00p Virtual Meditation		3:00p Beginner Taiko	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8:30a Temple Clean-up (No Service) 1:30p Taiko Public Workshop		7:00p Board of Directors Mtg			3:00p Beginner Taiko	<i>Padma Articles Due</i>
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
No Service		Padma Newsletter Production	7:00p Virtual Meditation	6:30p Virtual Dharmanar		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
No Service						
31						
7:00p Joya-E						



Future Dates to Remember

N
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R

Thu
30
Nov
Online Study Session
BBT Dharmanar (Topic: Garland Sutra)

Sun
3
Dec
Livestream & In-person
Shotsuki Memorial Service & Bodhi Day Service

Wed
6
Dec
Virtual
Meditation & Discussion

Sun
10
Dec
Temple Clean-up
Please come and participate in our annual temple cleaning ritual!

Wed
20
Dec
Virtual
Meditation & Discussion

Thu
21
Dec
Online Study Session
BBT Dharmanar (Topic: Year-end Summary)

Sun
31
Dec
Joya-e New Year's Eve Service

2022
Sun
28
Jan
Temple New Year's Celebration
(After service)

2024
Sat
15
Jun
2024: Save-the-Date
Rev. Dr. David Ryoe Matsumoto
Tribute & Retirement Celebration
Mountain View Buddhist Temple



Berkeley Buddhist Temple UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 6, 20

WED. 7:00 - 8:00 PM

Sign up at:
<https://sanghaevents.info/meditation>

MEDITATION & DISCUSSION

Join us for an evening of online silent meditation led by our minister, Rev. Kuwahara. Everyone is welcome and no prior experience needed. We will have a short discussion after. All are welcome!

DECEMBER 21

TUE. 6:30 - 8:00 PM

Sign up at:
sanghaevents.info/dharmanar

DHARMANAR

Join us for BBT's monthly online study session. We focus on Buddhist sutras this year. The December session will be a summary of all the sutras we learned this year. Rev. Kuwahara, Rev. C.J, and Rev. Tanis Moore will be presenting. Then we will discuss it after. Everyone is welcome!

2121 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704

info@berkeleybuddhisttemple.org

www.berkeleybuddhisttemple.org/



Please come participate in our annual temple cleaning ritual!

**Sunday, December 10th
8:30AM**

Breakfast will be served.



**Berkeley Buddhist
Temple**

新年会

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

**Sun. January 28th, 2024
after the service**

Join us in celebrating the New Year
with Mochitsuki, Taiko Performance,,
Bounce House for children and
New Year bites!



www.berkeleybuddhisttemple.org



Minister's Message shared by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara

This month Rev. Kuwahara chose to share an article written by Sydney Shiroyama, a minister's assistant of the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple. Please reflect deeply on this thoughtful message.

“If the karmic cause so prompts us, we will commit any kind of act.”

By Sydney Shiroyama, Minister's Assistant

In high school, my friends often asked me about the Buddhist take on social justice issues. “What do Buddhists think about abortion?” “How about gay rights?” “Do Buddhists eat meat?” “Are you allowed to own a gun?” Sometimes I had an answer, but for other issues I wasn't sure. I knew I had my stance, but I didn't know what I was “supposed” to believe. Some of my religious friends seemed so set on their opinions, and part of me envied their strong conviction even if I didn't agree with it. As someone who wanted things spelled out in black-and-white terms, the ambiguity of Shin Buddhism felt frustrating. Just tell me—it's never okay to kill, right?

Even today, part of me still wants a clear path on what I *should* do and think as a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist follower. With issues of social justice, I want to be told that my religion validates my own beliefs. I've talked to some folks in the Shin Buddhist community who also crave this clarity, and I've heard arguments that Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) leadership should take a stronger organizational stance on social issues to advocate for justice and change. The most recent issue being the war in Palestine.

I can't begin to understand the anguish, fear, and horror that Palestinian and Israeli families are currently enduring. I struggle to find words that convey the heaviness of this collective suffering. Families have been torn apart, and heartbreaking killings continue with no end in sight. The ripples of trauma will be felt for generations. I feel so helpless absorbing news from the safety and privileges of my home, feeling like there's nothing I can do to ease such pain. With Jodo Shinshu being such a key part of my identity and community, I find comfort in knowing that *our* religious organization stands firmly *against* evil.

But...do we? As I struggle with how to wrap my mind around war conflicts, I'm reminded of a passage from one of the exhibits of the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle, Washington. This beautiful museum focuses on the art, culture, and history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. One of the permanent exhibitions includes a brief walk-through of the history of various Asian American diasporas, with a section featuring Cambodian Americans. This part of the exhibit includes historical depictions of the Cambodian genocide. As disturbing as it is to be reminded of such a brutal part of history where millions of people were killed, I appreciate that the museum does not shy away from the truth. At the end of the description, it states:

To simply finger [point out] a “brutal regime” however is to risk missing a valuable lesson from the Cambodian genocide. The initial aims of the Khmer Rouge were hardly evil— they did not set out to decimate the Cambodian people. Instead, Khmer Rouge leaders were swept away in an ideology. They were corrupted by power and abandoned common sense in an attempt to make a flawed belief system work. The lesson of the Cambodian genocide is not that the Pol Pot was evil; it is rather that—like good—evil lurks in the heart of every human being. Don't view the exhibition here and wonder only, “How could they be capable of such evil?” Instead, as well, “How could I be capable of such evil?” and pledge to prevent it from happening again.

To me, this feels very much aligned with Shin Buddhist thought. Shinran Shonin talks at length of the cruel realities of the world and the evils of human nature. Not only the evils of humans in general, but specifically our own capacity. Our suffering—this “burning house”—is fueled by our own human anger, ignorance, and greed.

In the *Tannisho*, Shinran has an interaction with Yuien-bo, one of his followers. He challenges Yuien-bo's loyalty by telling him to kill a thousand people. Yuien-bo responds, "Though you instruct me thus, I'm afraid it is not in my power to kill even one person." Shinran replies with, "By this you should realize that if we could always act as wished, then when I told you to kill a thousand people in order to attain birth, you should have immediately done so. But since you lack the karmic cause inducing you to kill even a single person, you do not kill. It is not that you do not kill because your heart is good. In the same way, a person may wish not to harm anyone and yet end up killing a hundred or thousand people".

As shown in this passage, Shinran points out that Yuien-bo's ability to refuse to kill anyone is a privilege of his circumstances rather than a testament to his morals. If Yuien-bo's feared that his family would be hurt if he didn't comply, then he may have acted differently. Shinran explains this further, "For those who make their living drawing nets or fishing in the seas and rivers, and those who sustain their lives hunting beasts or taking fowl in the field and mountains, and those who pass their lives conducting trade or cultivating field and paddies, it is all the same. If the karmic cause so prompts us, we will commit any kind of act."

When I think about the violence in Palestine and Israel, I find myself wondering, "What kind of people kill and rip others from their homes and families?" and "How could people drop bombs and make decisions that lead to tens of thousands of civilian deaths?" Surely, I could never do the same. However, Shinran reminds me that the more I tell myself that there is a moral disparity between myself and militant fighters, the more I conclude that *they* must be morally flawed for enabling such suffering. As I result, I am less likely to value their lives and extend compassion and understanding.

Some people might not see this thought-process as an issue. After committing such atrocities, are they even worthy of our compassion and understanding? I would argue that trying to understand and extend compassion does not mean we're passive or complicit. We can form opinions and take action, while understanding that our perspectives stem from our own subjective causes and conditions.

I think Shinran helps us understand that someone's actions are not theirs alone, but rather a result of their causes and conditions. This includes situational circumstances, subjective perspectives, implicit biases, and fears that dictate one's judgment. Instead of condemning individual actions and seeing groups of people as the problem, I believe that Shinran challenges us to look upstream at the karmic conditions that inform these choices. How do anger, ignorance, fear, and greed contribute to patterns of oppression, imperialism, colonialism, and war, and how do we stop our own evil nature from becoming corrupted by and contributing to these powers?

It seems that Jodo Shinshu Buddhism doesn't tell us what we should and shouldn't do because navigating these decisions is something that we must go through ourselves with our individual karmic conditions. While I think it's okay for leaders to express opinions and reflections about current events, I can see why BCA would struggle with the issue of taking a strong stance on behalf of everyone in the organization. As a collective of "foolish beings", no one can speak for everyone.

However, I want to be clear that not having a unified organizational position does not mean that we need to be passive. In our community, I believe it's essential to create space to address heavy topics that are on our minds and discuss how they relate to Jodo Shinshu thought.

At Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, we often have discussions after service where folks can talk about what's on their minds. The topics have included controversial issues. During the dialogues, I don't always agree with everyone and sometimes hearing a different perspective sets me even more firmly into my own thought-process. However, as my outlook shifts and grows, I'm always grateful to have gained insight into what others are thinking and feeling. With skilled facilitation, some trust-building, and lots of practice, I feel that we've been able to express and receive our opinions and reflections with respect.

Amidst violence and seemingly endless cycles of suffering, I've noticed that I feel less alone and helpless following these dialogues. As I awaken to my own internal biases and capacity for evil, I also know that I am embraced by community. A community of "foolish beings" whose collective wisdom and compassion is deeper than I'm able to grasp alone. I am eager to continue discussions with our sanghas about Palestine and Israel—exploring the depths of our wisdom and practicing compassion as we walk the Shin Buddhist path together toward a more peaceful world.

As seemingly pessimistic (or perhaps, realistic) as Shinran was at the capacity of humans to overcome their greed, anger, and ignorance, he also talked about the infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha and the promise of universal liberation for all sentient beings. When we discuss and process the heavy realities of human evil and suffering, I know that we, like Shinran, can create space that fits both critical self-reflection and hope as we strive for a future with more compassion and peace.

In Gassho,
Sydney



“What Can We Do?”

by Diane Ames

“Oh what can we do?” I lamented. “This latest war! It’s a sickening bloodbath! There’s no end in sight, and it could easily spread! If it does, how long will it be before American forces get involved, and maybe Russians? It’s terrifying! And it seems like there’s nothing I can do!”

“But there is!” said Mara the Evil One, materializing in a puff of smoke. “Do what people do in every war; hate the other side. Or if you’re mainly concerned that this war might lead to a catastrophe for your own country, why not hate both sides? Just look at all the things you can do! Oh, you’re too old and feeble to commit violent hate crimes. But there’s always hate speech, on the internet or in the supermarket. There’s online harassment. If you want to be really anonymous, there’s hate politics.”

“Why fight the war here? At least now it’s in another hemisphere!”

“But there are people here you can identify with one side or the other because of their religion or ethnicity or politics. Persecute them!”

“How will that stop the war?”

“Who said anything about stopping the war? I’m just saying that if you persecute some minority because of it, you’ll be doing your bit.”

“My bit for what?”

“For me!” said Mara. “For me!”





Temple News & Photos

BBT's College Welcome Night Was a Hit!

Article and photos courtesy of Jon Kawamoto.



The Nikkei Student Union (NSU) and BBT's College Welcome Night was a big hit on Sept. 22! More than 60 students — mostly from nearby Cal — came for a night of fun, food, and fellowship.

The students were so appreciative that many of them stuck around to help clean up! They said, "If Judy (Kono) tells us what to do, we can help clean up!"

A big shoutout to Alan Hirahara for creating the menu, grocery shopping, leading the kitchen staff, and adjusting to the constantly changing numbers and schedule.





Sydney Shiroyama



KC Mukai & Kylie Tamura



Halle Fukawa & Zora Uyeda-Hale

It takes a village to put on these events. We'd like to say thank you to the following College Welcome Night volunteers:

- Bakers: Judy F., Caroline, KC, and Yuki
- Bakers baking on short notice: Caroline and Yuki
- Service: Rev. CJ and Juliet
- Last minute Dharma message: Rev. Kuwahara
- Ice breaker: KC and Kylie
- Performers: Nikkei Choral Ensemble
- Activity: Nina and Ashley, Nikkei Student Union (NSU) at UC Berkeley
- NSU coordinator: Devon
- Head chef: Alan
- Grocery shopping: Alan and Willie
- Cooking/set up crew: Alan, Karen, Rev. CJ, Caroline, Willie, Yuki, Patty, Carl, Pam
- Set up/Cleanup crew: Alan, Judy K., Jon, KC, Kylie, Juliet, Michelle, Rev. CJ, NSU
- Photographer: Jon
- NSU cleanup crew lead: Judy K.
- Logistics: Rumi and Community Outreach Committee
- Mic/sound help: Bradley
- Event coordinator: tara

**The Halloween Party on 10/29 was a big hit, too,
with costumes, games, and **BATS** (so wonderful)!**

Photos courtesy of Jon Kawamoto.





Who is this person with the beautiful, enigmatic smile?



BBT Miniature Golf – 11/4 at Subpar Alameda

Article and photos courtesy of Jon Kawamoto.

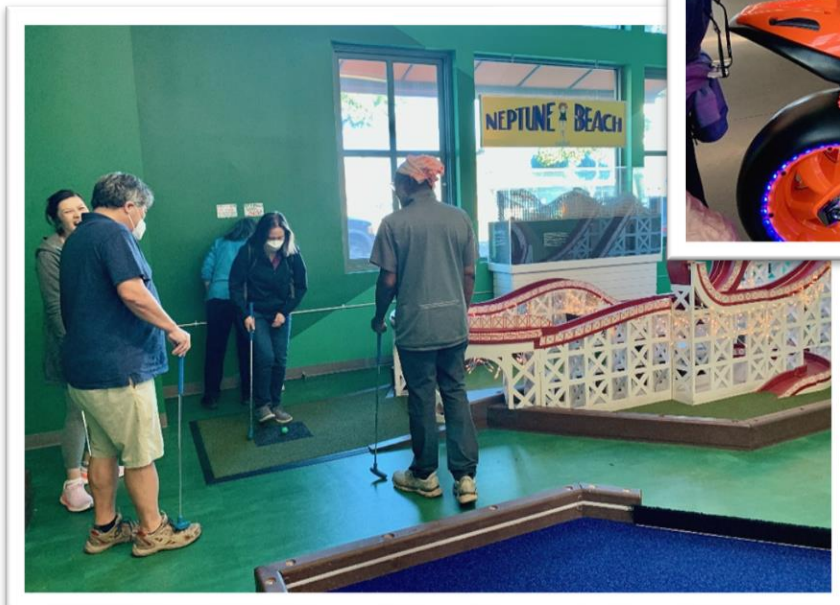
Over 20 BBT Sangha members and relatives had a blast playing miniature golf on Nov. 4 at Subpar Alameda. Patricia's 3-year-old granddaughter Emma scored a hole in one!

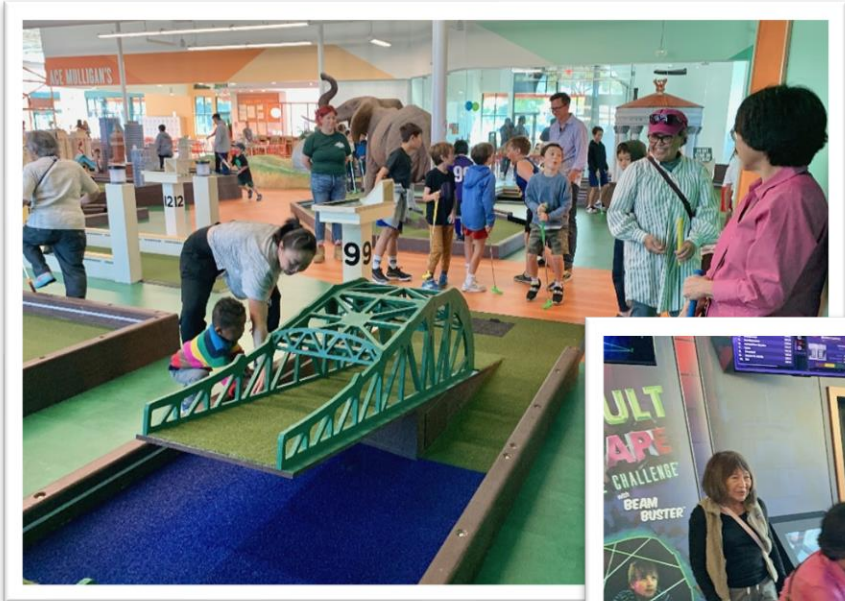
And, after a round of golf, it was onto the arcade games -- and Sangha members loved shooting hoops, playing skeeball and shooting pool -- it wasn't just for the little ones.

After the all the games, the Sangha members enjoyed a delicious lunch at KoKoLo Donburi, about a block away. It was a fun day -- and this may be the start of a new tradition for the BBT.



Emma & parents, Scott and Chistina celebrating her hole-in-one!





Berkeley Buddhist Temple

Dharma School Newsletter

December 2023

Being Transgender Is a Superpower poster

For the Transgender Day of Remembrance, the Dharma School created a huge poster covered with inspiration and quotations by notable LGBTQIA+ people speaking on ideas that Jodo Shinshu Buddhists find very important, such as awareness, appreciation, and authenticity. Special thank you to Rev. CJ Dunford for giving the Dharma School an opportunity to contribute to the Transgender Day of Remembrance Service every year!



December Schedule

12/3/2023	Dharma School leads Bodhi Day presentation; Dharma School class afterwards
12/10/2023	Temple Clean-Up
12/17/2023	No Dharma School classes
12/24/2023	No Dharma School classes
12/31/2023	Joya-E Service; no Dharma School classes

Please Give to High School Share the Spirit Fundraiser

The high school students ask you to give generously to San Leandro-based [Building Futures](#), which supports women and their children experiencing domestic violence and/or housing insecurity. **Ways to give:**

- (1) Use this [online link to donate](#) today.
- (2) Purchase gift cards to Safeway, Target, Visa, or gas stations and deliver them to BBT high school students on December 3rd or 10th.
- (3) Write a donation check to Building Futures and deliver it to BBT high school students on December 3rd or 10th.

Thank you for your dana during this Season of Sharing!

Your Family Is Always Welcome to BBT

Remember: ALL ARE WELCOME to the BBT Dharma School! Please refer to this quick [FAQs sheet](#) with general information about the Berkeley Buddhist Temple Dharma School. Parents, guardians, and grandparents are welcome to observe and/or accompany their children to class. Just ask to speak to Stacy, Karen, Irene, or Joyce before the Dharma Family Service.

Namo Amida Butsu.

The BBT High School Class Requests Donations for:

Share the Spirit 2023 for Building Futures



3 Ways to Give:

1. Donate online: <https://givedirect.org/buildingfutures/bbtsharethespirit/>
2. Purchase a gift card from Walmart, Target, Safeway, Visa or a Gas Station and deliver to BBT
3. Write a check to Building Futures (not BBT) and mail to - 2121 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704

Please make online donations before Sunday, December 10th or mail/bring gift cards and checks to BBT Clean-Up on Sunday, December 10th!

Questions? Email kkato@berkeleybuddhisttemple.org



Community Announcements

**Haven't you always wanted
to try this??**

Join Us for a Taiko Workshop

**December 10th @ 1:30 in the BBT Social Hall
(No registration necessary)**

COMBINED DHARMA FAMILY SERVICE & SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL SERVICE

Sunday, December 3, 2023, 9:30 AM

Live Stream: <https://www.berkeleybuddhisttemple.org/dharma-live>

The following persons will be remembered
during the Shotsuki Hoyo (monthly memorial service) for *December*.

Harumi Susie Aoki	Hisako Masunaga	Toki Sakaki
Dick Hideo Fujioka	Saburo Matsumoto	Konami Sasaki
Tazuye Lucille Fujita	Wakaji Matsumoto	Robin Sasaki Ledeker
Gary Anthony Glenn	Shizue Sue Matsuoka	Henry Kaoru Shiromoto
Jay Gluck	Fred N. Miike	Eiko Sugihara
Helen Shigeko Harada	Masuyo Mitsuyasu	Kiku Sumida
Mitsuru Haraguchi	Kiyoshi Mitsuyasu	William Sumner
Nora Hataye	Shio Mizusaki	Asako Tagumi
Sadami Hayashida	Asano Muramoto	Akira Takaha
Shigeo Hoki	Grace Y. Nakahara	Hiroshi Takamoto
Jane Michiko Imamura	Sachiye Nakahara	Yae Toyota
Diane Ishida	Haruko Nakano	Grace Yukiko Ueda
Nathan Moichi Iwasaki	Kimiye Nakao	Thomas Kitaru Uehisa
Yoshimi Jimbo	Minoru Nojima	Tadashi Umawatari
Hide Jimbo	Yoshiye Nonaka	Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno
Toshio Kaji	Stephen O'Donnell(Olivella)	Thelma Toshiye Wakasa
Tazuko Kanda	Masako Matoi Oishi	Yoneko Yamada
Toshiko Kaneko	Shinichi Okimoto	Mauch Yamashita
Miyo Katayama	Kanichi Okita	Yuki Yokoi
Sode Kawano	Komura Okita	Shigeru Yokoyama
Kameyo Kikawa	Keiji Onizuka	Sada Yoshida
Tomiko Kosakura	Hideko Oshima	Koichi Yoshimura
Akira Kurihara	Kishino Ota	George Toshio Yuasa
Eleonore Kurihara	Cathy Hayashida Romeo	

Note: If there are any additions, corrections, or deletions to the above list, please notify the Berkeley Buddhist Temple at 510-841-1356.



Membership & Toban

Membership Pledges (Receiving Period: 10/6/2023 – 11/10/2023)

The temple would like to gratefully acknowledge the following members for their generous contributions:

Lorin & Aaron Bond
Grand Din & Rosalyn Tonai
Pauline Fong
Bill & Judy Fujimoto
Patty Fujiwara & Carl Wilmsen
Jon Gwaltney
Hiroko Kurihara
KC Mukai
Michael & Patricka H-N
Nobuko Nishikado
Beryl Potter

New Members

We'd like to introduce a new member, Hiroko Kurihara and a new college member, Molly Maseba. Please give Hiroko and Molly a warm welcome when you see them at the temple!

If you have any questions, please contact Membership Team at membership@berkeleybuddhisttemple.org or 510-841-1356.

TOBAN

Coordinators - Lena Yin & Pat Takeda

November 2023	December 2023
Chair - Lena Yin Cochair - Miri Nikaidoh Cochair - Yuki Otake Fujikawa, Darren & Courtney *Hane, Masako Leo, Kim & Vera Lindquist, Eric & Mary McGuire, Jeff & Robin Nikaidoh, Mia Nikaidoh, Skye Nikaidoh, Takashi & Miri *Nishikado, Nobuko Otake, Gary & Lisa Cougar Otake, Gene & Yuki Steimetz, Satoshi & Elaine *Tsuda, Toshio & Elaine Yokoyama Yin, George & Lena	Chair - Judy Kono Cochair - Emily Ushijima Cochair - Patty Fujiwara Cochair - Wes Fukumori Anzai, Michiko Fukumori, Wes *Harada, Gail Hamamoto, Lesli Hirose, Paul Honda, Dina *Kono, Judy Manning, Ron & Julie Kono-Manning *Okino, Shizu *Oto, Makoto Potter, Beryl See, Ava Ushijima, David & Emily Wilmsen, Carl & Patty Fujiwara

** Denotes disabled and/or elderly. Toban optional.*



Memorial Service Schedule



The following is a list of special service years.
 If you have a departed relative who has passed away
 in any of the listed years,
 and would like to make arrangements
 for a memorial service,
 please contact Rev. Kuwahara at [\(510\) 841-1356](tel:5108411356).

2023 MEMORIAL SERVICE SCHEDULE

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>SERVICE</u>
2022	1 st Year
2021	3 rd Year
2017	7 th Year
2011	13 th Year
2007	17 th Year
1999	25 th Year
1991	33 rd Year
1974	50 th Year
1924	100 th Year

Services

Our regular Sunday program begins with a Chanting Service at 8:30am followed by a Family Service at 9:30am. A Dharma talk is available after the Family Service while Dharma School classes are convened for students.

Special Services

January 1 Service	Gantan-e	New Year's Day
February	Nehan-e	Nirvana Day
March	Ohigan	Spring Equinox
April	Hanamatsuri	Flower Festival
May	Gotan-e	Birthday of Shinran
July	Kangi-e	Obon
September	Ohigan	Autumn Equinox
November	Hoonko	Shinran Shonin Memorial
December	Jodo-e	Bodhi Day
December 31	Joya-e	Year End Service

A Shotsuki Hoyo (Monthly Memorial) Service is held the first Sunday of each month.

Dharma School

Our Dharma School (Sunday School) has classes from preschool through high school. Our teachers are happy to discuss the appropriate level of spiritual enrichment for your student.

Monthly Discussions

In our discussions, we strive to experience the Buddha-Dharma with our entire selves – with our bodies (quiet sitting and other forms of meditation), voices (chanting and other liturgy) and minds (study and discussion).

Our sessions focus on ways in which Buddhist teaching and practice can impact our everyday lives. Each session will take up a different topic and you are welcome to attend any or all sessions.

All interested persons are welcome to attend.

Visitor Information

Please feel free to ask any of our greeters for information. We are here to assist you with whatever level of participation you may be seeking.

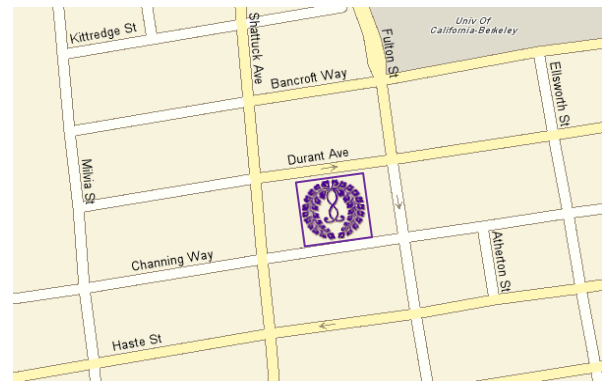
Whether you are here to satisfy a slight interest or to make a more personal connection, we wish you well and hope that you will be visiting us again soon.

Membership Information

Membership is open to all who view the Temple as their spiritual home and seek the Buddha-Dharma.

Kindly complete a [Membership Form](#), have your name entered in the membership roll and support the Temple through a pledge and participation.

For more information about becoming a member, visit our



[Registration](#) page, or contact our [Membership Chair](#).

Berkeley Buddhist Temple

2121 Channing Way
Berkeley, CA 94704

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
10:00am – 1:00pm

[510-841-1356](tel:510-841-1356)

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