

# Holy Days, Observances, and Celebrations of July 2018



Children's National®

## Chaplaincy Services

### Holy Days with no fixed date

**Apache Girls Sunrise Ceremony** The Apache Sunrise Ceremony or na'ii'ees is an arduous communal four-day ceremony that Apache girls of the past and present experience soon after their first menstruation. Through numerous sacred ceremonies, dances, songs, and enactments, the girls become imbued with the physical and spiritual power of White Painted Woman, and embrace their role as women of the Apache nation. For most of the four days and nights, to songs and prayers, they dance, as well as run toward the four directions. During this time, they also participate in and conduct sacred rituals, receiving and giving both gifts and blessings, and experiencing their own capacity to heal.

The first woman, White Painted Woman (also known as Esdzanadehe, and Changing Woman) survives the great Flood in an abalone shell, then wanders the land as the waters recede. Atop a mountain, she is impregnated by the sun, and gives birth of a son, Killer of Enemies. Soon afterwards, she is impregnated by the Rain, and gives birth to Son of Water. However, the world the People live in is not safe until White Painted Woman's sons kill the Owl Man Giant who has been terrorizing the tribe. When they return from their victory, bringing the meat they have hunted, White Painted Woman expresses a cry of triumph and delight, which later will be echoed by the godmother at the Sunrise Ceremony. She then is guided by spirits to establish a puberty rite to be given for all daughter born to her people, and to instruct the women of the tribe in the ritual, and the rites of womanhood.

When she becomes old, White Painted Woman walks east toward the sun until she meets her younger self, merges with it, and becomes young again. Thus repeatedly, she is born again and again, from generation to generation. (continued)

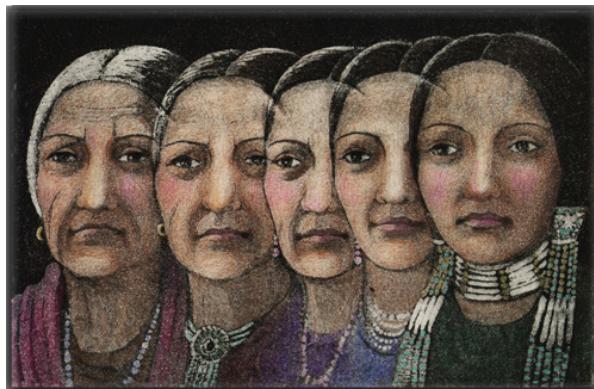


Photo: Journeyingtothegoddess.wordpress.com

The Sunrise Ceremony serves many purposes - personally, spiritually and communally - and is often one of the most memorable and significant experiences of Apache females today, just as it was for Apache women in the past. First, by re-enacting the Creation myth, and personifying White Painted Woman, the girl connects deeply to her spiritual heritage, which she experiences, often for the first time, as the core of her self. In her connection to Changing Woman/ White Painted Woman, she gains command over her weaknesses and the dark forces of her nature, and knows her own spiritual power, sacredness and her goodness. She also may discover her own ability to heal.

Second, she learns about what it means to become a woman, first through attunement to the physical manifestations of womanhood such as menstruation (and learning about sexuality), as well as the development of physical strength and endurance. The rigorous physical training she must go through in order to survive four days of dancing and running is considerable, and surviving and triumphing during the "sacred ordeal" strengthens her both physically and emotionally. Most Apache women who have experienced the Sunrise Ceremony say afterwards that it significantly increased their self-esteem and confidence. When it ended, they no longer felt themselves to be a child; they truly experienced themselves as "becoming woman."

Third, the Apache girl entering womanhood experiences the interpersonal and communal manifestations of womanhood in her culture - the necessity to work hard, to meet the needs and demands of others, to exercise her power for others' benefit, and to present herself to the world, even when suffering or exhausted, with dignity and a pleasant disposition. Her temperament during the ceremony is believed to be the primary indicator of her temperament throughout her future life. Not only does she give to the community - food, gifts, healings, blessings, but she also joyfully receives from the community blessings, acceptance and love. Throughout the ceremony, she receives prayers and heartfelt wishes for prosperity, wellbeing, fruitfulness, a long life, and a healthy old age.

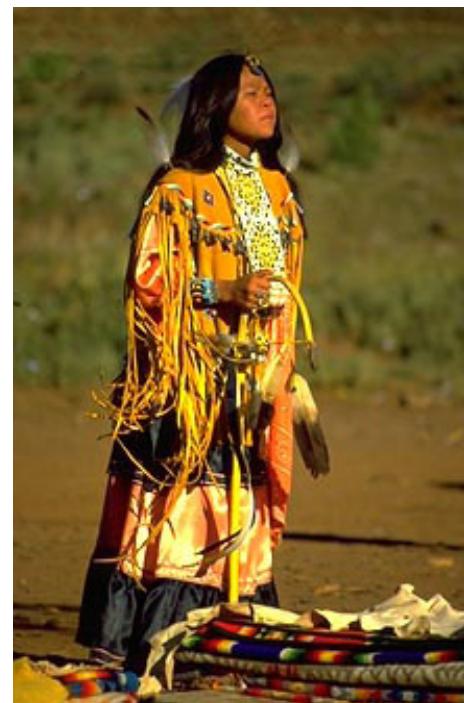
Finally, the Sunrise ceremony serves the community as well as the girls entering womanhood. It brings extended families and tribes together, strengthening clan obligations, reciprocity and emotional bonds, and deepening the Apache's connection to his or her own spiritual heritage.

The Sunrise Ceremony involves extensive preparation and teaching, often lasting six months or more before the ritual begins. Much of the preparation, such as creating the girl's highly symbolic costume, and building the lodge, requires following complex procedures and rituals; another facet of preparation is a physical regime oriented toward strengthening the girl's physical endurance. Her family also is engaged in extensive food preparation, since throughout the ceremony, they will be providing food and gifts to all participants and visitors. Once the actual ceremony begins, the girl is guided by her sponsor and the medicine man through its many stages, including hours each day and night of dancing (the number of hours increasing each day and night), often in tandem with a companion whom she chooses as a means of support through the ceremony. Rituals of running are also important - running east toward the sun at dawn, and running toward all four directions - symbolically through the "four stages of life."

Read more at:

<http://www.webwinds.com/yupanqui/apachesunrise.htm>

Photo: geocities.ws



**Niman Kachina    Hopi**   The word "Hopi" is shortened from Hopituh Shi-Nu-Mu, a Hopi word meaning "The Peaceful People." An important use of the word Hopi is to describe one who behaves with civility, manners, respect for all things, and being at peace with those things.

The Niman Kachina Festival is an important part of the Hopi tradition; it is also known as The Going Home Ceremony. Kachinas, the central feature of the ceremony, are the ancestral spirits of the Hopi and, in the Hopi tradition, the personifications of all things. Everything has a spirit which may be personified by a Kachina: people, animals, plants, minerals, the elements, features of the landscape such as mountains, water, and sky, all have a Kachina. For six months of the year Kachinas visit the tribe, bringing with them rain for the crops and good health for the people. Their January arrival is celebrated in the Powamu Festival, and the Niman Kachina Festival celebrates the Kachina's return to their mountain home on the San Francisco Peaks outside Flagstaff, Arizona. The commencement of the Kachina season coincides with the winter solstice as the Hopi begin to prepare the ground for planting and lasts through the first harvest in July. The Kachinas don't actually leave for the mountains until the second morning of the festival when a brief sunrise ceremony allows the Kachina dancers to be seen leaving the village heading west. They disappear just as the sun rises over the eastern horizon, apparently returning to the mountain, bearing the people's gifts and prayers for the gods.



Hopi mythology is an example of a mythology so complex and nuanced it is frankly impossible to convey an accurate sense of its significance and influence in [a] short space . . . , but one of its aspects, the concept of cyclical time, is a feature shared by many mythologies and conveys ideas of the sacred or numinous in ways that the modern notion of linear, advancing time simply cannot. Cyclical time emphasizes the cycles of life and death, darkness and light, cold and heat, solar and lunar progressions, ages and epochs that give way one to another.

Photo: prweb.com

## Holy Days with fixed date

**July 9    Martyrdom of the Bab    Baha'i**   On July 9, Baha'is around the world commemorate the date in 1850 that the Bab - one of two main figures in the founding of their Faith - was executed by a firing squad in Iran, then called Persia.

The Bab, whose name means "gate" in Arabic, had declared in 1844 that He was a messenger of God sent to prepare the way for the long-awaited promised one of all religions who would come to establish an age of universal peace. In 1863 Baha'u'llah announced publicly that He was that promised one. The Bab attracted tens of thousands of followers, and the unease and commotion created by His message led the authorities to put him to death on a charge of heresy. He and a disciple who begged to share His martyrdom were executed by a firing squad of 750 soldiers in a public square in Tabriz.

The remains of the Bab are now entombed in Haifa, Israel, in a beautiful shrine on Mount Carmel. How the Bab was brought to Haifa to His final resting place is in itself a special chapter in Baha'i history. Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Baha, the son of Baha'u'llah who was the head of the Baha'i Faith from 1892 to 1921, considered providing a fitting burial for the Bab to be one of the key duties and accomplishments of his ministry. (continued)

The remains of the Bab had been rescued by His followers from a ditch near the execution site and were carefully hidden in Iran for nearly half a century. In 1899, at the behest of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the remains were transported - under great threat from civil and religious authorities and others - by way of Isfahan, Kirmanshah, Baghdad and Damascus, to Beirut and then by sea to Acre north of Haifa where 'Abdu'l-Baha lived. 'Abdu'l-Baha hid the remains for another decade before presiding over an emotional ceremony on Mount Carmel where he himself placed the sacred trust at a specially prepared site that had been designated by Bahá'u'lláh for the final resting place of the Bab.

Much later, an exquisite shrine with a golden dome was built over the tomb. This building has become one of the best known landmarks of northern Israel and is a place of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís from all over the world.



**July 13 - 15 Obon Buddhist/Shinto** Obon or Bon is the Japanese festival celebrated to honor the dead and spirits of their ancestors. It is the equivalent of the Western or Christian's All Soul's Day except that Obon is a 3 day celebration and is marked by numerous religious and festive activities. The celebrations held today are noticeably getting more secular focusing much more on the festive activities. But Obon has its deep cultural and religious roots. Obon is primarily a Buddhist celebration. The Japanese believe on the interconnection and interdependence of almost everything on earth from humans, nature, the elements and including the spirits. They give honor and express their gratitude not only to their immediate relatives who have recently passed away but also to their earliest human ancestors who lived decades, centuries and millenniums ago.

The Japanese believe that at the start of Obon, the spirits of their relatives and ancestors come back to the physical world and visit them. Aside from offering prayers and holding memorial services at Buddhist temples, individual houses and establishments hang lanterns believing that their lights will guide the spirits. And on the last night of Obon, people send off the spirits back to their world with the help of floating or paper lanterns, candles, bon fires, etc.

The highlight of the Obon festival is the dance parade or carnival called Bon Odori. In Bon Odori, the participants dance and sing in a circle around a raised platform called a yagura. Those in the parade usually dance in unison but the rest of the crowd is welcome to have their own steps, let loose and simply celebrate. In the festival's long history, the different Japanese regions have come up with their own variation of the Bon Odori dance including its accompanying music.

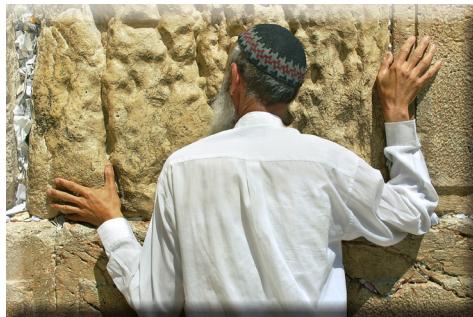
Bon Odori has its Buddhist story. It is said that a disciple of Buddha (Mokuren or Maha Maudgalyayana) used his powers to peek into his deceased mother's condition. Upon learning that his mother's spirit was suffering in the Realm of Hungry Ghosts, he asked Buddha that her mother be released from that realm. Buddha instructed his disciple to make food offerings to the sangha or monks who came from their summer retreat. Mokuren did so and out of joy on his mother's eventual release, the disciple danced and celebrated resulting to the tradition of Bon Odori.

**July 22 Tisha B'av Jewish** Tisha B'av is the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av, which usually falls in July or August in the western calendar. It is a solemn occasion because it commemorates a series of tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people over the years, many of which have coincidentally happened on this day.

These include the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar when 100,000 Jews were believed to have perished, and the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in 70 CE. World War I and the beginning of the Holocaust are also associated with this day.

Tisha B'av is observed with prayers and fasting. Shaving and the wearing of cosmetics and leather are banned, and people are also expected to refrain from smiles, laughter and idle conversation. All ornaments are removed from synagogues and lights are dimmed. The ark (where the Torah is kept) is draped in black.

The Book of Lamentations, written by the prophet Jeremiah after the destruction of the First Temple, is read at evening services. In Israel it is traditional for mourners to congregate at the Western Wall - the last ruins of the Second Temple - to recite kinot or laments for the dead.

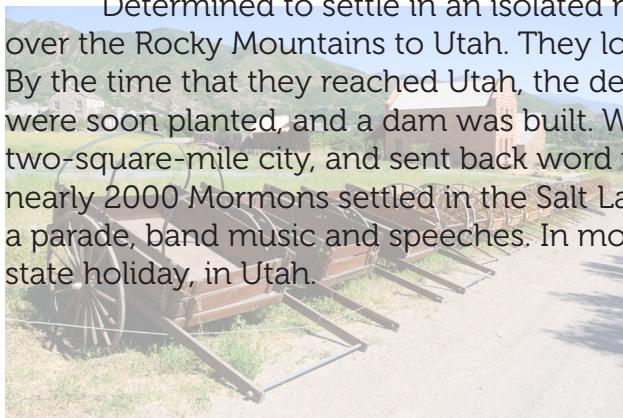


**July 24 Pioneer Day Latter Day Saints** Pioneer Day is a state holiday in Utah in the United States. It is celebrated on July 24 each year to commemorate the entry of Brigham Young and the first group of Mormon pioneers into Utah's Salt Lake Valley in 1847. This day celebrates the bravery of the original settlers and their strength of character and physical endurance.

Pioneer Day activities include fireworks, parades, picnics, rodeos and other festivities throughout the state. Some people say that this day is celebrated in Utah with more zeal and pride than major holidays such as Christmas. Children take part in essay contests and projects about pioneers, while families enjoy the day with concerts and festivals. For the parades, some people may wear costumes that resemble clothes worn during the 19th century when Salt Lake Valley was founded.

This day commemorates the entry of Brigham Young and the first group of Mormon pioneers into Utah's Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. The Mormon pioneers viewed their arrival as the founding of a Mormon homeland, hence Pioneer Day. The Mormons, as they were commonly known, left their settlement in Nauvoo, Illinois, and journeyed west seeking refuge from religious persecution. The final impetus for their trek was the murder of founder and prophet Joseph Smith on June 27, 1844.

Determined to settle in an isolated region, the pioneers made their way across the plains and over the Rocky Mountains to Utah. They lost many of their party to disease during the winter months. By the time that they reached Utah, the desolate valley was a welcome sight. Potatoes and turnips were soon planted, and a dam was built. With solemn ceremonies, the settlers consecrated the two-square-mile city, and sent back word that the "promised land" was found. By the end of 1847, nearly 2000 Mormons settled in the Salt Lake Valley. The first Pioneer Day was celebrated in 1849 with a parade, band music and speeches. In modern times July 24 is celebrated annually as Pioneer Day, a state holiday, in Utah.



**July 27 Asalha Puja Buddhist** Asalha Puja Day (Asanha Puja, Asarnha Bucha, Dhamma Day) is a Buddhist festival that occurs on the full moon of the eighth lunar month, which is usually in July. The festival pays homage to the Buddha and commemorates the Buddha's first sermon and the founding of the Buddha's Sangha - four noble truths.

The day is observed by donating offerings to the temples, monks and listening to Buddha's sermons. An important activity is to chant the scriptures telling of this event in the original Pali language.

All temples in Thailand have organized religious activities to observe this occasion. Various religious groups, government agencies, private organizations, and the general public have encourage each other to practice in accordance with Buddha's teachings such as leading to a happy and peaceful life.

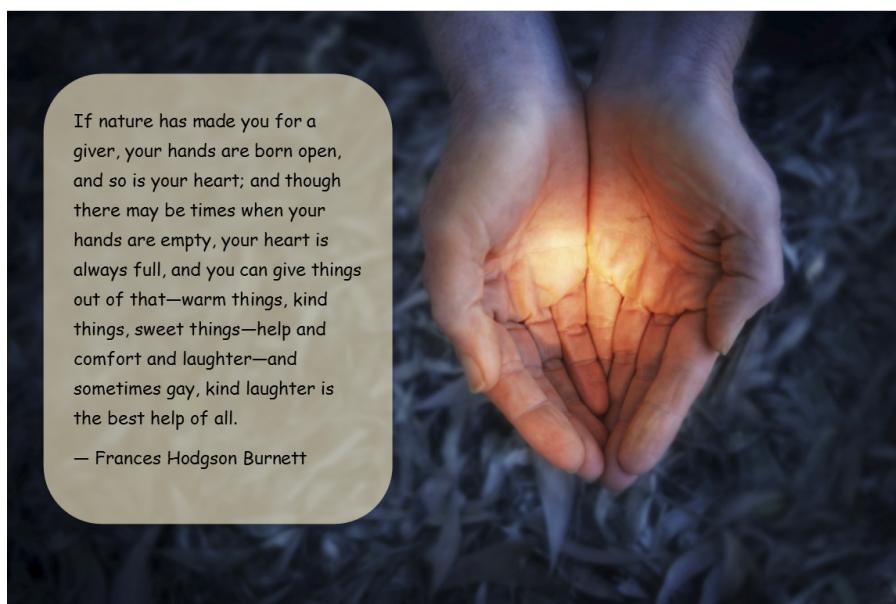
Asalha Puja is one of the most important festivals of the Thervada Buddhists because it celebrates the first teachings of Buddha. The Buddha's first teaching is the turning of the wheel of the Dhamma (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta) to the five ascetics at the Deer Park (Sarnath) near Benares city, India.

He delivered his first sermon which consisted of the essence of all of Buddha's future teachings. This is where one of his five friends, Kondanna, attained the first level of enlightenment. He was able to understand the Truths and asked Buddha to accept him as a disciple. This led to the simple ordination process that gave birth to the order of the monks.

Buddha's first teaching consists of the four noble truths which are: Dukka - life means suffering, Tanha - origin of suffering is attachment, Cessation of suffering is attainable, The way to cessation is via the eightfold path.

Sources: [webwinds.com](http://webwinds.com), [jcf.org](http://jcf.org), [bahai.org](http://bahai.org), [wouldreligionnews.com](http://wouldreligionnews.com), [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk), [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com)

All Photos are from the subscription service, Shutterstock, unless otherwise noted.



If nature has made you for a giver, your hands are born open, and so is your heart; and though there may be times when your hands are empty, your heart is always full, and you can give things out of that—warm things, kind things, sweet things—help and comfort and laughter—and sometimes gay, kind laughter is the best help of all.

— Frances Hodgson Burnett

#### Chaplaincy Staff:

Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine, room 4201, x 3321  
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Catholic Mass is held on Thursday at noon and Saturday at 4 pm in the Main Chapel, room 3201M.  
Jummah Prayer is held Friday at 12:15 in the Main Chapel, room 3201M