

# Honoring the Departed: Celebrations of Remembrance Across Cultures

Section: Art and culture

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Samhain, Chuseok, Festival Gede, Day of the Dead, Phi Ta Khon, Pangangaluluwa, Pitru Paksha, Famadihana, Yu Lan, All Souls' Day, All Saints' Day, Halloween, and Obon are the names given to different festivities in which the memory of those who have already passed away is honored and celebrated. In many cases, it is also remembered that not all souls were good, and we must continue to protect ourselves from them.

The vast majority of cultures in the world (contemporary and ancestral) agree on something very singular: beyond the golden rule attributed to most of the world's religions (Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you, and wish for others what you wish for yourself ), the cult of the deceased and their still living souls, present in our spiritual reality, is another of the tremendous human coincidences. It is another of the actions that universally unite all human beings. It could be studied if this great coincidence of transcultural consensus did not cause the inclusion of the right to be able to care for deceased relatives with dignity not to be valued.

The human capacity to transcend to the directly palpable (from which mathematics or spirituality arise) offers respect for

its memory or its presence and the importance that this cult has among the reality of those of us who are still living beings, flesh and blood.

As proof of this longing as old as humanity itself, it is worth highlighting how in prehistoric caves such as Taghit (Algeria), Galpón Cave (Patagonia) or Cussac (France), among others, we can already find cave paintings that are associated with funeral rituals. The memory of those no longer with us has become extremely important since prehistory. It is necessary to record its relevance, along with hunting and the animals needed for sustenance and funeral rituals; their memory has been crucial since the beginning of humanity.

The vast majority of traditions listed in the opening paragraph (except for the Japanese Obon, which is celebrated in the middle of summer) coincide in being celebrated between October 31 and November 2. As if it were an implicit recognition of those pagan cultures such as the Celtic, which located Samhain between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice, a moment in which, in addition to beginning a new year, it was sensed that the doors between the world of souls and our own were opened.

In any case, we can agree that these days are, without a doubt, the most important in terms of memories and presence, in a great majority of towns and neighborhoods in the world, of all the people, present and past, who, either from living memory or from the most everyday action, make this world as it is. May this year, we gain in awareness of how important it is to make the best memories more present than ever, those that lead us to imagine and make us capable of living in a happy present and capable of being a little better for all humanity.

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