

Mahayana New Year

Source: <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/mahayana-new-year/>

A time of renewal and reflection for Buddhists around the world, this celebration is marked with meditation, offerings, and acts of kindness.

Mahayana New Year is a time to reflect on the past year, and to look forward to the new one with hope and positivity. With vibrant traditions, delicious food, and a festive atmosphere, it's an event not to be missed. So, mark your calendars and get ready to celebrate with friends and family!



History of Mahayana New Year

Mahayana New Year, also known as "Vesak," is a traditional Buddhist holiday that commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and passing of the Buddha. It is considered one of the most important events in the Buddhist calendar.

The origins of the holiday can be traced back to ancient India, where the Buddha lived and taught. It is believed that the holiday was first celebrated by Buddhist monks and nuns, who would gather together to pay tribute to the Buddha. Over time, the holiday spread to other regions in Asia, and eventually to other parts of the world, becoming a widely celebrated event among Mahayana Buddhists.

Today, it is a time for reflection, meditation, and the sharing of good wishes and kindness with others. It is also a time for community and family, as people come together to celebrate the holiday.

The event was created to pay homage to the life and teachings of the Buddha. It's a reminder that the path to enlightenment is open to everyone, and that all beings are capable of achieving it through practice, wisdom and compassion.

How to Celebrate Mahayana New Year

Mahayana New Year is celebrated by Mahayana Buddhists all over the world, including countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Taiwan.

The holiday is celebrated to reflect upon the principles of compassion, wisdom, and non-violence that the Buddha taught. Here are some ways you can celebrate Mahayana New Year:

- **Attend a local temple or monastery**

One of the best ways to celebrate Mahayana New Year is to attend a monastery or temple. Many of them will hold special events, such as prayer ceremonies, meditation sessions, and lectures, to mark the occasion. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about Buddhism and to connect with other people who share your interest in the faith.

- **Participate in a community service**

Mahayana New Year is also a chance to give back to the community. Many organizations, such as local charities, will hold events to help those in need. You can join a community service project, such as building a home for a homeless family or volunteering at a local food bank. This is a great way to honor the Buddha's teachings of compassion and generosity.

- **Practice mindfulness and meditation**



January 2026 Calendar

*International Creativity Month
Children Impacted by Parent's Cancer Month*

- 1 – New Year's Day (International)
- 1 – World Day of Peace
- 3 – Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)
- 4 – World Braille Day
- 5 – National Day of Dialogue (US)
- 6 – Three Kings Day (Christianity)
- 7 – Orthodox Christmas Day (Christianity)
- 13 – Lohri (Hinduism)
- 13 – Korean American Day (US)
- 16 – Isra and Mi'raj (Islam)
- 18 – World Religion Day
- 19 – Martin Luther King Day (US)
- 23 – Vasant Panchami (Hinduism)
- 27 – World Breast Pumping Day

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Mahayana New Year is an opportunity to think back on the previous year and to contemplate the upcoming one. One way to do this is to practice mindfulness and meditation. This can include simple practices such as deep breathing and yoga, as well as more formal meditation practices such as vipassana or zazen.

- **Share kindness and good wishes**

Mahayana New Year is a time to share good wishes and kindness around. You can do this by sending cards or messages to friends and family, or by performing small acts of kindness such as helping a neighbor with their groceries or buying a cup of coffee for a stranger.



Notetaking: Tips & Tricks for Interpreters

Source: <https://www.amnhealthcare.com/blog/language-interpreters/notetaking-tip-tricks-for-interpreters/>

Medical interpreters are challenged with retaining a large amount of information and quickly conveying it into another language for communication to flow smoothly from the LEP patient to the provider and back again. Notetaking is a tremendous skill that can be built and refined to aid the interpreter with memory retention, as it makes it easier to recall message details.

Importance of Notetaking

Notetaking helps the conversation flow naturally by decreasing the need of the interpreter to interrupt or pause the conversation, allowing the two parties to communicate in lengthier sections, as a language concordant conversation would. Digesting lengthier bits of communication also allows the interpreter to better understand the meaning, context and salient concepts of what is being conveyed.

Another great reason to work on notetaking techniques is that notetaking helps maintain the accuracy and completeness of the message, both components of the professional interpreter's code of ethics. The National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) code states that "interpreters have the duty to convey all messages faithfully and completely", and "the interpreter strives to render the message accurately, conveying the content and spirit of the original message".

Notetaking can be crucial for capturing key pieces of information in healthcare encounters or steps in a process, including:

Names (how they are pronounced) and addresses

1. Numerical figures (dates, times, monetary amounts, dosages, telephone numbers, and addresses -including zip codes)
2. Specific sequence -lists in the specific order given by the speaker (e.g., measurements, dosages, instructions)
3. Specific details (e.g., descriptive information)

Perhaps the best part about notetaking is that each interpreter develops their own method. While every interpreter's notes will appear unique, there is always room for improvement and to learn new techniques.

Recommended Notetaking Techniques

Notetaking Can Be Broken Into Three Modes:

1. Language
2. Images
3. Symbols

Recommended Language Mode Notetaking Methods Include:

- Skipping vowels in words of three or more letters
- Shortening sentences and abbreviating words down to four or five letters. For example, shortening "medications" to "meds".
- Writing the first letter of connected words. For example, writing "high blood pressure" as "HBP".
- Using an apostrophe. For example, shortening "continued" to "cont'd".

Images mode involves using vectors, arrows, graphic lines and geometric shapes to convey meaning.

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Recommended Image Methods Include:

- Drawing a line underneath a word to emphasize meaning
- Drawing a circle or box around a word to emphasize meaning
- Drawing a line through a word to indicate a negative meaning
- Using arrows to indicate the use of past, future and present
- Using arrows to emphasize the importance or frequency of an action

Symbols made is the most individual for each interpreter. As symbols are wide in variety, it is important not to make up symbols in the moment but rather to practice them between sessions. When using symbols, it is also best practice to keep them simple for fast and easy deciphering.

Additional Considerations for the Interpreter When Notetaking

Additional considerations to keep in mind include the interpreter's need to maintain a professional appearance when interpreting over video or onsite while notetaking. This can be achieved by maintaining eye contact and looking down only when necessary. When working on video, one way for the interpreter to do this effectively is to monitor him or herself in the self-view window.

Another factor to consider is the interpreter's composition layout. Vertical lists are helpful when given information in rapid sequence, such as symptoms, conditions, or an order of events. A diagonal layout with vertical parallels is helpful when grouping ideas and is preferred by many interpreters as it aligns with one's natural eye movement, making notes in this layout quick to decipher. Spacing or lines across the page between sections can be used to indicate boundary between different meaning units. Shorter lines can be utilized to demonstrate that information in different meaning units belongs together.

Retaining and rapidly conveying everything that is communicated in two different languages in a healthcare encounter is no easy task. The act of notetaking helps the interpreter more easily remember and provides the interpreter with a visual of the conversation to quickly reference for improved accuracy. Learn more about notetaking and discover additional tips and tricks for interpreters here.

"Sometimes I think we've all had moments where we thought that we could rely on our memory and then a few moments later we are not sure if we delivered the message without missing anything. So, it is extremely important to take notes and to continue developing the system that works best for you." - Yulia, Video Remote Interpreter.

New Staff Profile: Anel Santiago



Anel is the newest addition to our Spanish-language team. Originally from Zihuatanejo, Mexico, Anel began interpreting at the age of 13 while assisting her family, initially viewing it as a natural part of daily life rather than a potential career path. It was not until her time at American River College that she discovered interpreting as a profession, after a counselor encouraged her to explore the Healthcare Interpreting Program.

Anel completed the program in 2013 and has been interpreting professionally ever since. She began her career as an independent contractor and later transitioned into a staff role within an organization. Through her work as an interpreter, Anel discovered a strong passion for the healthcare field and a desire to support patients more directly. Two years ago, she returned to school to pursue a nursing degree—an interest that aligns closely with her family background, as many relatives on her mother's side work in healthcare. Her mother had been studying to become a pediatrician in Mexico prior to immigrating to the United States.

Outside of work, Anel enjoys spending time with her family. During the summer months, she can often be found paddleboarding with friends and her dog, and she also enjoys crafting in her free time.

Welcome aboard, Anel! We are happy to have you as a part of the UC Davis Health family!