

GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org

JANUARY 2018

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Appreciation and respect
to God and ancestors
will lead you to happiness."*

You may think that enshrining God in your home is unnecessary, because God is everywhere. While this is true in theory, if you closely reflect within yourself, you realize the wisdom behind the home altar.

Even though we are able to discern between good and bad, we may not always make the right choices in life. This is only human.

The home altar is not merely a formality, but rather, an important means of sincerely expressing our appreciation to God in our daily lives.

By enshrining God and ancestors in your home – and paying respect and appreciation every day – you will be guided along the right path and enjoy a life of happiness.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Mon	1	New Year Homage
Tue – Wed	2 – 3	Church Closed
Sun	7 10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	14 9:30 am	First Service of Year/Potluck Party & Gift Exchange
Tue	16	Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Day)
Sun	21 1:00 pm	San Jose Branch <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Sun	28 9:30 am	Appreciation Service / Regional Board Meeting

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Mon	1 7:30 am	New Year Homage (until noon)
Tue – Wed	2 – 3	Church Closed
Sun	7 10:00 am	Japanese <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Sun	14 10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	16	Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Day)
Sun	21 10:00 am	Appreciation Service (Japanese & English) New Year Service / Potluck & Gift Raffle
Sun	28 10:00 am	English Appreciation Service / <i>Ajikan</i> Meditation L.A. Regional Board Mtg. / "Life in Your 20s"

FEBRUARY 2018

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4 10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	11 9:30 am	Appreciation Service / Regional Board Mtg.
Sun	18 1:00 pm	San Jose Branch <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Tue	20	Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents Day)
Sun	25 9:30 am	Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4 10:00 am	Japanese <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Sun	11 10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	18 10:00 am	Appreciation Service (Japanese & English) Sun Spirit Service
Tue	20	Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Day)
Sun	25 10:00 am	English Appreciation Service / <i>Ajikan</i> Meditation L.A. Regional Board Mtg. / "Life in Your 20s"



January “Never Forgotten” Memorial Services

“Never Forgotten” Memorial Services are held monthly at the Gedatsu Church to honor the memory of those who have passed away during that particular month. People of all faiths are welcome, so invite your friends and family members to attend. Even if you are unable to attend, you may still honor the soul of a loved one.

The Sacramento Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, January 7, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Leopoldo Zendejas, Bernard Sakamoto, Fudeyo Sekikawa, Genkichi Sekikawa, Rose Yamamoto, Tsuneko Sekikawa, Yoshiko Sekikawa, Natsuko Furukawa, Taro Takemura, Teiichiro Noritake, Jane Kaoru Ide, Hatsuko Mishima, Richard Aadland and Kenneth Kenichiro Yasuda.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, January 14, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **David H. Dyson III, Aileen T. Hirayama, Elaine Rose Kaproff, Yoshihiko Kitagawa, Jukichi Kumashiro, Tadashi Thomas Matsumoto, Kazuko Matsuura, Konami Miyakawa, Ichino Nagura, Mitsuko Nagura, Hisano Nakamura, Mohei Nakamura, Hiroko Notoya, Chika Okimura, Motoichi Okimura, Leah O’Leary, Chiyoko Sato, Grace Yuko Sato, Moto Tanji, Saburo Tanji, Dennis Koishi Toguchi, Masako Tokashiki, Sumiko Tsujimura, Frank Itaru Tsukamaki and Kenneth Kenichi Yasuda.**

Definition of “Family” Membership

Gedatsu Church membership dues are now due and payable for 2018.

Annual:

Individual	\$45
Family*	\$70
Additional Women’s Club Fee	\$6

Lifetime (Payable once. Does not include annual *toban* fees, minister gifts, etc.)

Individual	\$450
Family*	\$600

* “Family” is defined as: Couple, domestic partners, or single parent and dependent children under the age of 30 residing in a household.

L.A. Young Adult to Participate in Myanmar Study Tour



L.A. Church member, **Arthur Wataru Matsumoto**, 30, is being sponsored by Gedatsu USA to participate in the week-long Myanmar Study Tour in March. The tour is organized by the Gedatsu-kai Youth Group in Japan as part of Gedatsu-kai’s international philanthropic efforts to better understand and support areas of the world experiencing political, social and/or religious conflicts and unrest. Wataru is the son of long-time members, **Tetsuya and Sachiyo Matsumoto.**

2018 - A Special Anniversary Year

This year, 2018, is an auspicious year, marking the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Gedatsu Church, as well as the 70th memorial anniversary of Gedatsu Kongo.

Gedatsu members are encouraged to participate in the special anniversary programs, which will be held this fall in Japan and at the Grand Fall Festival in Sacramento.

Japan Tour Group Planned

A tour group from America is being organized to participate in the 90th anniversary event in October at the *Goreichi* in Japan, as well as in sight-seeing activities. Contact **Rev. Naoya Okano** at the L.A. Church if you are interested in participating. Additional details will be communicated in the coming months.

Return Your Old *Kuyo* Plaques

If you ordered new *amacha kuyo* plaques, the church urges you to show the proper respect for your old plaques. Give prayers of appreciation to your old plaques, wash and dry them thoroughly, then return them to your local church. They will be burned in a plaque-burning service in Sacramento in the spring.

Renew Your Holy Paper Plaques

The new year is the time to renew your holy paper plaques for placement around your home for protection and blessing. See your local church branch for details on types of plaques and prices.

AROUND OUR CHURCH

Annual *Shichi-Go-San* Children's Celebration

Big Thanks for the Little Ones

In November, Church members in Los Angeles and Sacramento observed *Shichi-Go-San*, the traditional Japanese celebration for the well-being and healthy futures of children. Parents of children ages seven, five and three years gave thanks at the *Ujigami* shrine and altar for their children's health and growth.



Also following the Japanese tradition, the children were given *chitose-ame* candy – *chitose* literally meaning a thousand years. The candy and ornamental bag are both expressions of the parents' wish that their children live long and prosperous lives.



SPECIAL DAY: The Sacramento Church celebrated *Shichi-Go-San*, honoring five-year-old Gynevere Ramey, shown above with (from left) her 11-year-old sister, Brianna; mother Allison Horner; and grandparents, Nancy and John Horner.



At the Los Angeles Church, in the weeks prior to the *Shichi-Go San* Celebration, several members invited their friends – parents of young families – to special “meet and greet” sessions organized by the church to acquaint them with the *Shichi-Go-San* Celebration. At these social sessions, Rev. Naoya Okano explained the purpose and tradition of the annual children's celebration, and invited the families to celebrate their 7-, 5- and 3-year-old children at the Sunday event. As a result of those sessions, 11 guest families attended the Children's Celebration. Many of the children wore the traditional Japanese garments, *kimono* for girls and *hakama* for boys.

FAMILIES CELEBRATE: Member and guest families celebrating *Shichi-Go-San*, shown above, greeted the congregation and posed before the altar. The children (in alphabetical order) are Evan Kai Arciniega, Brevyn Hiroki Choy, Yamato Justin Kongo, Dyna Jason Kongo, Nathan Kosei Leung, Nicholas Ryusei Leung, Ethan Avery Mizokami, Minato Muratani, Hayato Muratani, Leah Nagai, Aya Ximone Serrato, Koshiro Soller, Skye Sonksen, Logan Masami Tao, Jacob Tyler Tsang and Riku Toma.

Q

After being married five years, I am worried that I may be unable to conceive a child. Any advice?

A

Obviously, I advise you to address your concerns with medical professionals. Nowadays, there are many medical advancements and improved fertility treatments that have aided couples.

However, from the standpoint of a Gedatsu student, and as a young father myself, I can offer some observations and experience in this area.

First of all, women often feel that because the fetus develops within their womb, they carry the greater fault for being unable to conceive. I assert that this is the shared problem of both husband and wife.

Second, it is important for future parents to realize that a baby is not only a gift from God, it is given only when God grants it. That is why in Japan, young couples regularly visit their local guardian shrine as they begin planning for their family. In the same way, in America, I believe that young couples should go to church often to align their attitudes with God's mind, as preparation to receive the gift of a child. Thus, through the sincerity of their effort and discipline, they bond together as one mind and soul.

***"A baby is a gift from God,
but it is given only when God grants it."***

Next, you and your husband must realize that you are only alive thanks to your parents. Parents are like the root of a tree, you and your husband are the branch, and your children are the fruit. Without nourishing your roots – that is, being appreciative to your parents – how can you expect to bear fruit?

Lastly, look closely at your attitude and behavior. It is said that pregnancy is the chance encounter of one egg and one sperm out of more than one hundred million sperm. Learn from that. Treasure every meeting and encounter you have with people. Do you treat everyone equally, or do you rebuff some people and favor others? Your attitude and behavior in life will be reflected in the condition of your uterus.

Most importantly, build mutual respect and trust between you and your husband. When two different people meet, hold hands and walk the right path together, great power is created . . . with wonderful, unexpected results. I pray for your and your husband's happiness.

Rev. Naoya Okano

New 12-Part Series:

Brief History of Gedatsu Kongo

An Extraordinary Life of Purpose and Faith

Our Founder, Gedatsu Kongo, died in Japan in 1948. Today, here in America, among his followers, his spiritual legacy remains undiminished – despite the differences of culture, tradition, language and history that it has faced since his passing 70 years ago.

His legacy endures for two reasons: The absolute truth and spirit of the Gedatsu teaching, and the extraordinary personal character of the Founder himself.

It is important for us, as serious Gedatsu students, to understand not only the Gedatsu teaching, but its architect as well.

How did his personality affect his actions? What awakened his religious outlook? What events led him to formulate the Gedatsu teaching? How did his successes and failures influence his thoughts and actions? The answers are practical life lessons that we can learn from and apply to our lives.

Beginning this month, to commemorate the Founder's 70th memorial anniversary, the *Gedatsu Companion* presents a 12-part series on the life of our Founder. The condensed version of *The Biography of Gedatsu Kongo*, which was published in 1988 (with English translation published in 1998), begins on the following page.

As with many Gedatsu written materials, we are indebted to **Rev. Hisakazu Taki**, who translated the original volumes into English and condensed them for this series.

Editor

A Brief Biography of Gedatsu Kongo

Chapter 1

Childhood and Youth

Gedatsu Kongo,* founder of the Gedatsu Church, was born in Kitamotojuku Village of Saitama Prefecture near Tokyo, Japan, on November 28, 1881. He was born into the Okano family, the fifth child of Makitaro and Kise. His childhood name was Eizo.



The thatched-roof home in Kitamotojuku Village is the birthplace of Gedatsu Kongo. The home is preserved today just as it stood when the Founder was born in 1881.

The Okano family was one of the wealthy farmers in the village, and had served as village head for generations. Eizo grew up healthy with his parents' love.

Several episodes from his childhood illustrate the personality and character of young Eizo.

Firm and dutiful

When he was six years old, Eizo's father, Makitaro, told him to take a parcel to the home of the Oshimas, his grandparents, and get some ointment from them.

* "Gedatsu Kongo" is the Founder's Buddhist title, conferred upon him posthumously by the Daigo Temple of Shingon Buddhism. "Gedatsu" means liberation, and "Kongo" means wisdom as indestructible as a diamond. Therefore, Gedatsu Kongo literally the durable wisdom of liberation.

The Oshima home was two miles from the Okanos. In order to reach it, Eizo had to walk on a winding path through a dense forest, and it was easy for a child to get lost. Other family members worried whether he could return home safely, but Makitaro sent him out saying only, "The path is under your nose," meaning that if young Eizo got lost, he could simply use his mouth to ask someone for directions.

When Eizo arrived at the Oshima home, his grandmother was surprised that he had come alone. Eizo gave her the parcel he was instructed to deliver and received a bottle of ointment from her. He then left, arriving home toward evening. He calmly gave the ointment to his father.

Early religious influences

Before he entered elementary school, Eizo often visited the neighborhood Tamonji Buddhist Temple. He listened to the priest's discussions, and asked him questions until he was satisfied with the answers. (In those days, he often gazed admiringly at the setting sun at a commanding spot. In later years, after he established Gedatsu, he built the Sun-Spirit Monument at that same spot.)

When he took over as head of the family, Makitaro became the parishioner representative of the Tenmanten Shinto Shrine and the Tamonji Buddhist Temple. He also had faith in *Fuji-ko*, a religious association connected with Mt. Fuji. He climbed Mt. Fuji every year as his religious practice, and he paid his respect and appreciation to the country, society, teachers, parents, and all creation in the universe.

Makitaro, who considered himself the restorer of the Okano family, established the following precepts for the Okano family:

1. Choose an occupation with prudence.
2. Be prompt in everything.
3. Be thoughtful and judge fairly.
4. Be patient in times of difficulty.
5. Don't forget integrity.
6. Be honest in your duty.
7. Pay your debts promptly.
8. Don't do anything unbecoming to you.

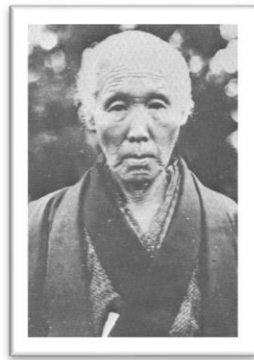
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(Biography – Continued from page 5)

Parental guidance

Eizo spoke about his father as follows. “When I was a boy, I asked my father what I should do that day. He scolded me, saying, ‘Can’t you see what I’m going to do now by looking at me? How can you become a man if you can’t do anything without someone’s instructions?’”

Eizo’s mother, Kise, always instructed her children, “By looking at your father’s eyes, you can tell what he is about to do. Learn to read his mind and act accordingly.” Eizo was raised in this family environment.



Eizo Okano’s father, Makitaro, and mother, Kise, raised their children in a strict, but loving, manner.

Bold and courageous

Eizo entered elementary school in 1888. He had a lot of new friends. Among them, he was outwardly vigorous and active. Not a follower, he was always the leader and played the main role. His classmates called him *Abatei*, which means *Rascal Tei-chan*. He was also called *Teruzo*, and his friends called him *Tei-chan*.

He later wrote of that period, “In truth, as the leader of naughty boys in my childhood, I damaged the shutters of the Tenmanten Shinto Shrine and used them as firewood.” When one of his friends said, “God will punish you for it,” Eizo calmly replied, “I will build a much better shrine when I become an adult.” He was already showing something of his boldness in his early school days.

In those days, the Okanos were engaged in silkworm cultivation and had a big mulberry field near the temple. They gathered mulberry leaves to feed silkworms. Silkworms have a big appetite when they prepare to spin cocoons and had to be fed at midnight

and again early in the morning. Every evening, Makitaro gathered mulberry leaves and kept them under straw mats on the veranda of the Tamonji Temple, but the mulberry leaves were often stolen during the night.

One day, when Eizo was ten years old, his father instructed him, “Go to the Tamonji Temple and watch over the mulberry leaves.”

Although his family worried about sending Eizo alone in the night, Makitaro flatly refused to retract this order. Rascal Eizo had to be taught a lesson.

Thus, despite his family’s anxiousness, Eizo calmly left home and serenely sat cross-legged on the temple veranda throughout the night. Early next morning, he came home rubbing his drowsy eyes. When his family asked him, “Were you okay?” Eizo told them, “*Niou* (a godlike being) appeared in the middle of the night, but I passed gas and shouted, ‘*Niouka!*’ (Do you smell that?).” Makitaro was amazed at Eizo’s brazen courage and wit.

Eizo was not simply naughty, but a boy of unusually strong mind. His friends respected him, and he took good care of them. When one of his friends was mistreated by someone, he fought against even an older boy to defend his friend.

Admiration and respect for his father

However, there was one person with whom Eizo could never compete: his father. When Makitaro played a major role in the village festivals, or when he climbed Mt. Fuji wearing his white uniform, Makitaro displayed indescribable dignity. Eizo looked up to his father as a hero, with admiration and respect.

When Eizo finished elementary school, Makitaro considered whether Eizo should continue school or not, and concluded that he should start working as soon as possible. He arranged for Eizo to apprentice at Isekin Liquor Shop in Tokyo. Eizo accepted his father’s decision, and the two of them left for Tokyo together.

All his family members helped with the preparations for his leaving and gave him a warm and loving send-off with heartfelt words of advice and care. Thus, Eizo left his boyhood days of school behind to embark on a new life in business in Tokyo.

(Continued on back page)

Three Sacred Gifts

Gedatsu Kongo passed on to his followers three sacred practices that are unique to the Gedatsu Church: *amacha* blessing, *hiho* meditation and *goho* practice.

In this, the first of three installments, the *Gedatsu Companion* presents brief explanations of each of these “gifts” from the Founder. We begin with the principle and practice of *amacha* blessing.

The Wonders of *Amacha* Blessing

In the unique, sacred practices of *amacha* blessing, we dedicate our sincere prayers and gratitude to God and all living things, and pray for the peaceful repose of our deceased ancestors and unrested spirits.



We accomplish this by pouring *amacha* holy tea over memorial tablets or stupa (as shown) on which souls are invited to receive the blessing. (*Amacha* tea may also be spread over land to console spirits connected to property.)

The service can be done by anyone, even young children. Yet, while simple to perform, the service is profound in its effect. When done with complete sincerity and faith, *amacha* blessing can transmit our feeling of gratitude to the universe and bring peace and comfort for unrested spirits, no matter how dire their suffering.

An Early Part of the Teaching

The practice of *amacha* blessing was discovered by Founder Gedatsu Kongo through his divine inspiration and spiritual power. He instructed his followers to perform *amacha* blessing as a central practice in their daily prayers, not only to purify deceased souls, but as a means to bring comfort to all entities and purify their own minds, souls and bodies.

Gedatsu Kongo began teaching the practice of *amacha kuyo*, or blessing, a year after founding the Gedatsu Church in 1929. By pouring *amacha* heavenly tea over plaques on which inscribed the names of spirits and the holy *goho* (described below), the spirits of departed souls could then be consoled and rest peacefully.

Gedatsu Kongo taught that among our ancestors, there are many ancestral spirits who are suffering because of their misdeeds – often karmic in nature – or earthly attachments. They cannot be purified or find repose through our recitation of prayers and offerings alone. To be purify ancestral karma, *amacha* blessing is necessary.

Essential Elements

The miraculous ability of *amacha* blessing to bring relief to suffering souls and purify negative karma results from the combination of three essential elements: the power of the holy *goho*, the intrinsic qualities of *amacha* holy tea and the performer's sincerity.

The Holy *Goho*

The term *goho*, as used in the Gedatsu doctrine, represents no less than the dynamic concentration of cosmic forces: the infinite and inexhaustible Universal Life Force, or God, and the representation of its activities. These forces are

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manifest in the combination of five Sanskrit characters representing the five elements of the universe – earth, water, fire wind and air – which were inscribed by Gedatsu Kongo while in a state of divine revelation.

In the early years of the teaching, using an ink brush, Gedatsu Kongo would write the holy *goho* characters and names of specific souls and spirits on paper. He instructed members to perform *kuyo* by placing the inscribed strips in a bowl and pouring *amacha* tea over them, all the while giving prayers of appreciation and repentance on behalf of themselves and the departed souls. Soon, however, the immersed paper was reduced to pulp. Consequently, the paper strips were later replaced by pieces of white cotton cloth, and finally by wooden plaques, as we use today.

The *kuyo* plaques that we use in our homes are stamped with the holy *goho* in red ink (copied from the Founder's original writing) and printed with the names of various souls and spirits related to our families and ancestors as requested. All writings of the Founder – whether original or copies – are imbued with the spirit of Gedatsu Kongo and, therefore, are activated with his spiritual power.

Amacha Heavenly Tea

Our *amacha* tea is derived from the *amacha* plant, a deciduous tree of the Hydrangea family. It is grown and harvested at the foot of Mt. Kurohime in Nagano Prefecture, Japan, where *amacha* was purchased even when Gedatsu Kongo was alive. (*Amacha* bloom and factory shown below.)



The term *amacha* is commonly translated as “sweet tea,” because the tea contains a natural sweetener that is many times sweeter than table sugar. The tea is often associated with the celebration of the birth of the Buddha, when Buddhists sprinkle the sweet tea over the image of the infant Buddha. *Amacha* leaves have been used as herbs and for medicinal purposes since the Middle Ages. They are believed to improve the condition of the body organs and purify the blood.

Instead of “sweet tea,” the Gedatsu Church writes *amacha* as “heavenly” or “holy” tea in the belief that it is conferred by God for holy purposes. Gedatsu Kongo discovered the mysterious efficacy of *amacha* to bless and purify spirits. He also encouraged members to drink it for health and spiritual reasons. The Founder himself often enjoyed taking an *amacha* bath to reinvigorate himself, physically and spiritually.

Sincerity and Faith

The third essential element that determines the effectiveness of *amacha* blessing rests within ourselves: the degree of sincerity and faith we bring to the performance of the *amacha* service. This involves our emersion in a prayerful attitude in which we submit ourselves – meaning our egos – fully to the Universal Life Force. It is a state of mind in which our attitude of “I am doing” gives way to a higher consciousness of “I am allowed to do.”

Submission of the ego is no small feat, but it is nonetheless essential in order for true sincerity and faith to shine forth. Reaching such a state is transformative, not only in our ability to bring peace and happiness to unrested spirits, but in purifying our own souls and elevating our characters, as well.

Thus, the daily performance of *amacha* blessing is truly joyful and transformative – a sacred gift beyond value left to us by our Founder.



NOVEMBER 2017 OFFERINGS

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

\$5–\$49: M/M R. Nakatani, K. Gibson

\$50–\$99: Horner family, M/M B. Ide, J. Tanaka,
M/M S. Sekikawa, D. Ide, S. Taketa, M/M D. Tsuboi,
S. Tanaka, M/M A. Akashi

\$100+: Horner Family, M/M S. Sekikawa, Rev/Mrs Yamada,
J. Sebe/J. Detwiler, K. Tsukamoto

\$300+: S. Nishino, S. Bush

Special Acknowledgment

S. Nishino Gedatsu Kongo birthday (\$100)
A. Sebe In memory of Sumiko Sebe (\$500)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

\$5–\$49: M/M K. Chinen, M/M S. Mizokami, M. Nakamura,
A. Okimura, M/M A. Shiroishi

\$50–\$99: M/M M. Hamada, M/M T. Hiram, M. Kimura, H.
Kumashiro, M/M K. Kuritani, A. Matsuno, M/M C. Morioka,
M/M M. Murakami, Y. Oishi, A. Sebe, N. Takara, T. Toyama,
M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M R. Tsujimura

\$100+: K. Fujii, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M M. Ishida, L. Ito, J.
Kaku, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, T.
Nakamura, M/M S. Shaskan

\$200+: M/M B. Hamamoto, T. Ishida, M/M T. Matsumoto,
M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, D. Shiroishi

\$300+: M/M R. Allum

\$600+: Gedatsu Kendo Dojo

Special Acknowledgment

Tadashi Sato 49-day memorial service for
Mariko Michiuye (\$150)
Tadao Ishida Three-year memorial for Fumio Ishida
and ancestor kuyo (\$400)
Mary Kimura Three-year memorial service for
Ken Kimura (\$200)
M/M V. Mizokami Goreichi Care Fund (\$1,000)
Jo Ann Shiroishi Shiroishi family ancestor blessing (\$100)
Frank Miyamura Special appreciation (1,800)
Anonymous Safety in accident and new car (\$200)
Florence Sueyoshi "Never Forgotten" service for
Thomas Sueyoshi (\$100)

Goreichi Care Fund

(The Fund is established to pay for repairs, upgrades and ongoing
maintenance of structures and property of the *Goreichi* Holy
Grounds in Sacramento.)

Victor and Marian Mizokami (\$1,000)

2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 10 (sat)	L.A. Casino Bus Trip (TBD) 8 a.m.
Mar 16 (Fri)	Propagation Meeting 10 a.m.
Mar 17 (Sat)	Board of Directors Meeting 10 am
Mar 18 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service (Japanese/English)
Mar 25 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service
Apr 8 (Sun)	Spring Grand Festival 9:30 a.m.
May 13 (Sun)	Sacramento Mother's Day Service
May 20 (Sun)	L.A. Mother's Day service
May 26 (Sat)	L.A. Rummage Sale (TBD) 8 a.m.
May 27 (Sun)	Sacramento plaque burning (<i>Joen-nogi</i>)
May 29 (Tue)	Church closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)
Jun 10 (Sun)	Sacto Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Jun 17 (Sun)	Sacto Set-up for <i>Rokujizo</i> Bazaar
Jun 17 (Sun)	L.A. Mother Kiyota's Memorial Service
Jun 23-24 (Sat-Sun)	<i>Rokujizo</i> Bazaar Sacramento 11 am
Jul 4 (Wed)	Church Closed (Independence Day)
Jul 15 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Obon</i> Service/Graduates Honored
Jul 22 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Obon</i> Service
Jul 26-29 (Thu-Sun)	Youth Camp in Sacramento
Aug 4 (Sat)	Lake Tahoe <i>Benzaiten</i> Service (TBD)
Aug 29 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Sept 2 (Sun)	Fall Grand Festival 9:30 a.m.
Sept 4 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
Sept 15 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service
Sept 23 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service
Oct 6-7 (Sat-Sun)	L.A. Autumn Moon Festival
Oct 9 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Columbus Day)
Oct 14 (Sun)	Sacramento All Souls Service
Oct 20 (Sat)	Sacramento Trip to Apple Hill (TBD)
Oct 21 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Ujigami</i> Service
Nov 4 (Sun)	L.A. Gedatsu Kongo 70 th Memorial Service
Nov 11 (Sun)	Sacto Gedatsu Kongo 70 th Memorial Service
Nov 17 (Sat)	L.A. Casino Bus trip (TBD)
Nov 18 (Sun)	L.A. Gedatsu Kongo Birthday and 7-5-3 Children's Celebration
Nov 22-23	Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)
Nov 25 (Sun)	Sacramento Gedatsu Kongo Birthday and 7-5-3 Children's Celebration
Dec 2 (Sun)	L.A. Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service
Dec 9 (Sun)	Sacramento Last Service of Year Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service / Church Clean-up
Dec 9 (Sun)	L.A. Church Clean-up
Dec 16 (Sun)	L.A. Christmas Service Last Appreciation Service
Dec 23-31	Church Closed

1 月度教会行事予定

ロサンゼルス教会

1 日 (祝) 7:30A	新年参賀(正午まで)
2 日・3 日	三が日休み
7 日 (日) 10:00A	日本語感謝会
14 日 (日) 10:00A	祥月追善法要
16 日 (火)	振替休日 (キング牧師の日)
21 日 (日) 10:00A	日英・新年初感謝会 パットラック・福引
28 日 (日) 10:00A	英語感謝会 リージョナル委員会

サクラメント教会

1 日 (祝)	新年参賀
2 日・3 日	三が日休み
7 日 (日) 10:00A	祥月追善法要
14 日 (日) 9:30A	新年初感謝会 パットラック・ギフト交換
16 日 (火)	振替休日 (キング牧師の日)
21 日 (日) 1:00P	サンノゼ支部初感謝会
28 日 (日) 9:30A	感謝会・リージョナル委員会

1 月度みさとし

「朝に尊き礼拝は夕に幸福の贈答となる」

神さまはいつでもどこにでもおられるのだから、あえて神さまを祀ったり御神前で礼拝したりする必要はない、という人がいる。たしかに、理屈はその通りかもしれない。しかし、そのようにいう人は、人間というものがどのような存在であるかを知らないのである。自分自身をよく見つめてみれば、それがよくわかるはずだ。われわれは誰でも不完全な存在である。「こうすべきだ」「このようであるべきだ」と理屈ではよくわかっていても、実際そのようにできているかといえば、そんな人はどこにもいないだろう。そこに、形式や儀礼や修行が大切な所以があるのである。形式的に見えるようでも、実際に、朝夕神さまにお給仕し、御神前でぬかずき神さまに感謝の祈りを捧げるといふ実践を、日々続けることが大切なのである。そのような日々の実践をとおして、知らない間に少しずつ、神の御心にそった生き方に近づいていくことができるのである。

講 話

LA 教会 2017 年 11 月 19 日

親子が仲の良い幸せな家庭を築くには

瀬部 明

幸

せな家庭、親と子供が良い関係を築くにはどうしたら良いかという質問をいただきましたので、そのことについていくつかのポイントをお話しさせてい

たきます。

第

一に、親と子供、どちらも自分自身に対し、愛や、尊敬、感謝という心を感じていることです。言い換えれば、子供にその愛を伝えるためには、親が十分な愛や感謝というものを自分の親から受けた経験、もしくはいつかのタイミングでそれに気づく必要があります。

人

は、自分の両親の態度や感情を、成長する過程で観察し、経験して、それを吸収していきます。そして、人は知らず知らずのうちに、そういった考え方や性格など、良い部分だけではなく、悪い部分も自分たちの子供に引き継いでしまいます。

このように知らず知らずのうちに自分の特徴が子供に引き継いでいかれることを因縁や家族の伝統と言います。一般的には、因縁は自分たちにはどうすることもできないもののように考えられていますが、解脱の教えを通して、自分自身を深く理解することによって、そういった悪い因縁や、家族の伝統を子供に繰り返さないようにすることができます。

もし成長過程で両親から十分な愛情を受けていないと、自分が親になった時に、子供の長所よりも欠点や短所に目が行くようになります。そして、そういった自分の性格が自分の子供に遺伝しているのを感じることになります。なぜなら、子どもは私たちの写し鏡だからです。

二

つ目は、たとえあなたが両親から十分な愛情を受けて育っていても、それだけでは、必ず自分に自信がある幸せな子供に育つとは限らないということです。

病気や、夫婦の不仲や仕事のストレスなど、生活の中で何か困難や苦しみが起こった時、それが家族全体に広がり、なかなか自分の子供に愛情を注ぐことが難しくなることもあります。

こういった時には、あなた自身のことではなく、周りのことに目を向ける必要があります。自分や家族のことではなく、社会のため、周りの人のために何かをする。そういった自分の利益ではなく、人のために何かをする行動は、子どもたちにとって素晴らしい見本となります。1 日や 2 日限定ではなく、人生を通して、自分ではなく、周りを第一に考える…そんな生き方をする必要があります。

たとえば、私は 20 代の頃、岸田英山先生に、木に毎日水をあげるように言われました。サクラメントの御霊地には木がたくさん生えており、水をあげないとすぐに枯れてしまいます。先生にそう言われてから、少なくとも 10 年間は木に水をあげ続けました。今では、スプリンクラーがありますが、それでも、スプリンクラーが故障したときはすぐに修理をし、木に水が途切れないように努力しています。当時、それまで花

や木などを育てた経験がほとんどなかった私にとって、木のために、御霊地のため、それを見る人々のためになる木への水やりはその後の私が、「人のために生きる」上で、大きな土台となりました。

三つ目の大事なポイントは、多くの親は気づいていないことが多いのですが、あなたは常に1人ではないということです。たとえ、自分自身が孤独に感じていても、神の慈愛や大自然の大きな力によって支えられ、導かれています。

もし、そういった神の慈愛や大自然の恵みに気づいていないのであれば、先ほど言ったように、自分のためではなく“人のため”を常に頭に入れて行動していれば、だんだんと自分の周りにある慈愛やポジティブなエネルギーを感じることができるようになります。

ですから、たとえ子育て中に困難や難しさに直面しても、ストレスを抱えたり、孤独を感じたりする必要はありません。そういったときは目を閉じて、神様やご先祖様に、そういった困難を乗り越えられるよう祈るといいでしょう。そうすることにより、心に安心が生まれ、不平不満をためて家庭の雰囲気を悪くすることがなくなっていくと思います。

“私たちは自分以外の周りの人や物事に助けられ、生かされている”という考え方は、もしかしたらアメリカの個人主義の思想と相反するのように感じるかもしれません。アメリカではこの個人主義の考え方はとても強く、仕事や学校など社会のいたるところに浸透しています。そこから逃げることはできません。この「個人主義」は、間違えて捉えると“自分自身一人でもできる”と思わせてしまう危険性があります。神や先祖に見守られ、周りの人たちと支えながら生きているということを忘れてしまいがちです。そして、子どもは天からの授かりものであり、私たちはその授かったものを“育てさせていただいている”という気持ちを失ってしまいます。こうなってしまうと、家族の中で問題が生じ、家庭の雰囲気が悪くなってしまいます。

アメリカの“個人主義”の考え方は否定しません。しかし、子どもの幸せを願うのであれば、個人主義を見誤らずに、幸せな家庭を作る必要があります。

- ① あなた自身の心の安らぎ（愛、尊敬、感謝といった気持ちを持ち生活すること）
- ② 周りの人の幸せを第一に考えること
- ③ 神や先祖の大きな力に生かされていることを知ること

これら三つが幸せな家族を作るうえで大切なことです。親として、子どもを天から授かり、育てさせていただいているという気持ちを決して忘れないでください。
(翻訳：岡野尚也)

掲示板

● 松本わたるさんミャンマー・スタディ・ツアーへ

このほど、LA教会の松本わたるさんが、米国教会の後援で、日本・解脱会青年部主催の「ミャンマー・スタディ・ツアー2018」に参加することになりました。これは同青年部が国際的な慈善活動の一環として行なっているもので、3月2日から約1週間ミャンマーの養護施設等を訪問し、子供たちとの触れ合いや現地での生活体験を通して学習するもの。わたるさんはLA教会・松本哲也・幸代夫妻の二男。

● 立教90年と日本ツアーについて

本年2018年は、日本において「奉祝・立教90年・解脱金剛70年」の記念すべき年にあたります。この記念式典は、10月14日（日）、日本の御霊地・秋季大祭にて開催されます。米国解脱教会では、この式典に向け「日本ツアー」を予定しています。ツアー募集要領につきましては近日中に発表されますのでお待ちください。詳細はLA教会の岡野尚也先生に連絡ください。

● 「御霊地ケア・ファンド」について

米国解脱教会では、現在および将来にわたり、御霊地の建造物および境内地の修理、修繕、維持管理のための財源を確保する「御霊地ケア・ファンド」が設立されました。御霊地ケア・ファンドは、会員からの寄付によって構築される基金です。1951年、サクラメントの20エーカーの敷地が、米国解脱教会の「御霊地」として設立され、今日まで、会員にとって重要な意味を持つ聖地として維持されてきました。将来の世代に引き継ぐためにも、御霊地ケア・ファンドへの寄付を通して「財施」の機会としてください。寄付者名は、その都度「解脱コンパニオン」に掲載します。

2018年度・会費納入をお願いいたします

— 年会費 —

- ・ 個人会員費 \$45
- ・ 家族世帯会員費 \$70
- ・ 婦人会費 \$6
- ・ 「解脱誌」代（一年分）\$25
- ・ 「解脱誌」年間郵送料 \$20

— 終身会費 —

- ・ 個人会員費 \$450
- ・ 家族世帯会員費 \$600

*家族世帯会費とは、一つの住居で生計を共にする家族分を含む会費で、子供は30歳未満までを含みます。



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Allen Shiroishi**, a second-generation Gedatsu member. His parents, **Pat** and **Sayo Shiroishi**, were church pioneers. Allen resides in Rosemead, Ca., with his wife, **Uzuko**, and sons, **Patrick** and **Andrew**.

Allen has worked in the consumer finance industry for 45 years. In his spare time, he enjoys following his UCLA Bruins, washing his cars, napping and entertaining his three dogs and cat. Allen serves on the Gedatsu Church USA Board of Directors and delivers Bishop Okano's sermons at our grand festivals.

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(Biography – Continued from page 7)

Apprenticeship

Arriving at the Isekin Liquor Shop, Eizo found dozens of *sake* barrels being placed orderly in the store and apprentices working busily. The storekeeper greeted Makitaro and looked at Eizo. He told Makitaro, "He looks strong. With training, he will be a good merchant." Makitaro sincerely asked the store owner to take care of Eizo. Then, after telling Eizo to do his best, the father left for home.

Next morning, Eizo started his new life as an apprentice. He got up early in the morning and cleaned the shop. He learned from his senior workers about all the operations, including how to deal with *sake* barrels and make deliveries. Eizo worked hard and learned steadily, eventually becoming a full-fledged worker in half a year. He mastered each task rapidly and soon became a central force in the store.

One day, Eizo received a letter from father, informing him that Eizo's older brother, Shinzaburo, had been called for military service. Because Shinzaburo was critical to the Okano family operation, Makitaro wanted Eizo to return home.

A few days later, Makitaro came to Tokyo to explain to Eizo in person. The Okano family planned to enter the weaving business. He could not entrust the business to employees. He needed Eizo. Bowing humbly to Eizo, Makitaro asked him to return for the sake of the Okano family. Deeply impressed, Eizo understood his father's feelings well. He could not deny his father's request. Thus, he replied, "I understand, Father!"

On the day of his departure, all the store workers gave Eizo a hearty send-off. Eizo walked toward the Ueno Station filled with deep emotion for his work experience. It was December of 1895.

(To be continued next month)

