

GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org

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Gedatsu Kongo's
Thought for the Month

*"Your character is developed
through your daily practices."*

Gedatsu is a path to developing your character. However, there is no special method for that purpose. The path to improve your character is in your everyday life.

When you wake up in the morning, thank God and ancestors for another day. During the day, in demonstration of your appreciation, do your best to be of service to everyone through your daily duties.

And in the evening, before going to bed, say "thank you" for the day.

When you sincerely perform these simple practices each day, your character will be cultivated more and more deeply.

Gedatsu should be practiced in everyday life.

COVID-19 NOTICE: In accord with the State's stay-at-home order, our churches are closed, and all in-person services and activities are suspended until further notice. Read more on page 2

JUNE 2020

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	14	9:30 am	Appreciation Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service Father's Day Service / Regional Board Meeting
Sun	21	1:00 am	San Jose Branch <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Sat	27	11:00 am	<i>Rokujizo</i> Bazaar
Sun	28	11:00 am	<i>Rokujizo</i> Bazaar

CANCELED

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7	10:00 am	Japanese <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Sun	14	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	21	10:00 am	Appreciation Service (Japanese & English) Mother Kiyota Memorial Service Father's Day Service / L.A. Regional Board Meeting

JULY 2020

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sat	4		Church Closed (Independence Day)
Sun	5	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	12	9:30 am	Appreciation Service / Graduates Honored <i>Obon</i> Service / Regional Board Meeting
Sun	19	1:00 am	San Jose Branch <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Thu-Sun	23-26		Summer Youth Camp

CANCELED

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sat	4		Church Closed (Independence Day)
Sun	5	10:00 am	Japanese <i>Kanshakai</i> Service
Sun	12	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	19	10:00 am	Appreciation Service (Japanese & English) <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored
Sun	26	10:00 am	English Appreciation Service / Regional Board Meeting



Participate from Home in Online June “Never Forgotten” 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. Because our churches are currently closed, our “Never Forgotten” services are conducted online, enabling you to participate by praying from home.

The services are video-recorded and viewable at the time of each service on the Gedatsu Church YouTube website: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIbbFt3XLuWin8_OGPmifGw. The videos will remain on the site from the date and time of each service.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its virtual “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, June 7, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kinuyo Nakatani, Mihoko Tanaka, Suyeko Hada Takemura, Motokichi Ide, Mine Kino Hirose, Isamu Yamada, Masaru Yamamura and Bettie Yamamura.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its virtual “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, June 14, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Harry Hidejin Arakawa, Kimiko Hirano, Mitsuko Kaku, Masa Kikuta, Tsuchinojo Kimura, Nancy Hitoye Kono, Kazumi Matsunami, Kameyoshi Michiuye, Manabu Mukai, Fusako Murakami, Mutsuno Nagura, Yazo Nagura, Phillip Nakamura, Robert Nakamura, Mary Anne Nolan, Ken Numata, Ai Okada, Hideyo Okada, Masakichi Okada, Kay Miyoko Okazaki, Michael O’Leary, Lawrence Sasano, Hidekichi Shiroishi, Tsuna Shiroishi, Hironobu George Terakawa, Ben Seiroku Toguchi, Yoshitow Tomari, Carolyn Wong and June Tsuyoko Yamamisaka**

2020 Memorial Tower Enshrinements

Applications for enshrinement in the Gedatsu Memorial Tower at this year’s Fall Grand Festival in Sacramento will be accepted until June 14. The fee is \$300 per application. Application forms are available at your church office.

COVID-19 Update

Following the guidance of health experts on social distancing and group gatherings, Gedatsu Church is taking the following steps to ensure the health and safety of our members, volunteers and the public:

- **Our Churches Remain Closed**

In-person gatherings are suspended until further notice.

- **Rokujizo Bazaar Canceled**

Our annual fundraiser in Sacramento, scheduled for June 27 and 28, has been canceled. We thank our many volunteers, vendors, suppliers and the public for their annual support of our event. We look forward to seeing everyone next year.

- **Summer Youth Camp Canceled**

Our summer event, scheduled for July 23-26 in Sacramento, was canceled to safeguard the health and safety of our teens, young adults and counselors. We hope to hold a fun-filled event next summer.



Let’s Celebrate Our 2020 Graduates!

Despite church closures, we want to honor all graduates and their parents in July. If you have a student in the family who will be graduating this year from elementary, middle or high school; college; or graduate school, submit their name to be honored. Request an application form from your branch office and submit it by July 1.

Obituaries

The L.A. Gedatsu Church mourns the loss of **Seiichiro Mizutani**, 68, who passed away on April 30, following a courageous battle with ALS. The son of the late **Shizuyo Mizutani**, Seiichiro is survived by his daughter, **Jennifer**, as well as his sister, nephew, niece and extended family.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center reports the tragic news that **Rodney Hu**, 45, was the victim of a fatal hit-and-run crash on May 2. Rodney is the son of Stockton members, **Rodney and Amy Hu**. He leaves a wife and two children. Our sincere condolences go out to the Hu Family.

Prayers for COVID-19 Victims and Unrested Spirits

How can I understand COVID-19 in terms of my Gedatsu faith?

What meaning does Gedatsu have at this time?

How can I practice Gedatsu to help others?

In these troubling times, these are questions that we, as Gedatsu students, have been asking ourselves . . . and our teachers.

Bishop Teruo Okano, in his April message to members, stated: “The unity of the visible and invisible worlds is the absolute law of the universe. The chaos we see in our present world reflects disturbances in the spiritual world. I believe that COVID-19 is a result of deep-seated feelings of resentment held by the spirits of those who were cruelly mistreated and killed. We must be careful not to be influenced by such negative vibrations. We need to purify these unrested souls so that the COVID-19 pandemic can be eradicated as soon as possible.”

Prayers for COVID-19 Souls

Our ministers urge members to direct our daily prayers to ease the suffering of these “unrested souls” and comfort the victims of the pandemic. They recommend that we recite the following words after our morning and evening prayers:

“Universal Life Force, guardian angels and Master Gedatsu Kongo, we offer our prayers for the eradication of the coronavirus. We pray for the peaceful repose of those who were killed by the virus and the safety of our health care workers. Please allow us to offer sincere holy tea blessing for all unrested spirits related to the coronavirus.”

Then, as we pour the holy tea over the stupa or blessing plaques, say:

“To all unrested spirits related to the coronavirus, please accept our sincere prayers. Through the sacred power of this holy tea blessing, may you be released from feelings of resentment and rest peacefully.”

Even if you have no holy tea or blessing plaques at your home, your sincere prayers radiate peace and comfort to the spiritual world.

Special COVID-19 Plaques for Holy Tea Blessing

Two holy tea blessing plaques for coronavirus victims and unrested spirits are available for purchase:

- “Spirits of Coronavirus Victims” for the souls of those who perished as a result of the pandemic
- “All Unrested Spirits Related to the Coronavirus”

You may order the plaques by contacting **Rev. Naoya** at the L.A. Church. The plaques are \$5 each.

Meet Mica Rodriguez

A Personal Spiritual Quest Leads Minister Trainee to Gedatsu

Over the 70-year history of Gedatsu Church USA, American members have studied Gedatsu under the guidance and support of many dedicated teachers primarily from *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, a tradition that continues to this day.

The long-term goal of our church, however, has always been the training and ordination of our own U.S.-born ministers. Steps toward that goal were taken in January when the Board of Directors announced the appointment of Sacramento member, **Micaela (Mica) Rodriguez**, as Gedatsu Church USA's new minister-in-training.



Mica is based at the Sacramento Spiritual Center and is currently involved in a six-to-12-month-long minister training course, under the supervision of U.S. ministers, led by **Rev. Kazuo Yamada**.

Mica's new position has been structured as a dual role that allows her to devote half her time to ministerial duties and the other half to serve in an office staff capacity, which includes ministerial support, clerical/office duties, social media management and facility maintenance.

Mica's Training

"To be a Gedatsu minister is to live in the teachings and spirit of Gedatsu," says Rev. Yamada. "It is to fulfill the role of sharing the Gedatsu teachings for the happiness of others. In essence, it is to serve God and **Gedatsu Kongo**."

While current social-distancing demands require some creative adjustments to their working and training arrangements, Rev. Yamada describes the fundamental elements of Mica's daily responsibilities:

- Altar offerings of water and holy tea to each divine spirit each day before the morning prayers – an important practice to deepen the bonds of trust between Mica's inner spirit and spiritual entities.
- Leading ministers and members in the morning prayer at 9:00 each morning – offering prayers of appreciation and requital to God and deities and asking to be of service to others.
- Recitation of the Heart Sutra, with offering of holy tea blessing, for the repose of all spirits, ancestral spirits of family and church members and all souls enshrined in the Gedatsu Kongo Memorial Tower, recognizing each spirit who passed on that day.
- As part of her personal spiritual development, holy *hiho* meditation and holy tea blessing. *Goho* training, under Rev. Yamada's supervision, is practiced once a month.

"The performance of these practices is essential," says Rev. Yamada, "because experiential learning, in which spiritual movements are perceived by Mica's own soul, results in her deeper spiritual awakening and strengthening of her faith."

Mica's doctrinal education in Gedatsu consists of reading Gedatsu Kongo's "Shinko," the "Biography of Gedatsu Kongo," books and texts by **Archbishop Kishida**, and other Gedatsu texts. She prepares three theses each month, summarizing her learnings, which she discusses at length with Rev. Yamada.

In addition, Mica is taught basic instruction in the meaning, practice and customs of annual church and cultural events and services, such as Sun Spirit service, *Ohigan* and *Obon*, Grand Festivals, "Never Forgotten" services, etc.

The completion of Mica's training will take place at *Gedatsu-kai Goreichi* in Japan. Her ordination as minister is contingent upon approval by **Bishop Teruo Okano** and ministers.

"From the start, Mica has been driven by her strong faith and spiritual conviction," says Rev. Yamada. "With her outgoing personality, calm demeanor and can-do attitude, she is rapidly gaining the trust and admiration of the congregation, taking on responsibilities and adapting well to her new role."

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A Spiritual Path, Religious Education

Mica, 31, is a seventh-generation Mexican American. She is a Sacramento native whose family has been in the United States for generations, originating from San Antonio, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona.

From a young age, Mica has been interested in religion and philosophy and was raised in the Catholic faith.

Although her family are all very spiritual people, the want for assimilation and survival in the United States greatly impacted the way the future of the family was guided. This provided the impetus behind Mica's desire to learn about other religious practices and cultures.

Interestingly, this want for exposure to other practices is what motivated her Grandmother Dora to bring Mica and sister Grace to the *Rokujizo* Bazaar when Mica was about ten years old. This was her first exposure to Gedatsu and a memory that stayed with her for many years after.



In photo at left, Mica, at age 11, with her cousin Bobby and Grandmother Dora. A year earlier, Mica and her grandmother visited the Sacramento Spiritual Center for the first time. At right, Mica in a recent selfie with Grandmother Dora.

Family Life and Interests

Mica is mother to two children: her 14-year-old son, Pop, and 12-year-old daughter, Ami.

In her spare moments, Mica enjoys spending time with her children, watching films with them and talking about media and philosophy ("though as adolescents, I probably enjoy those discussions more than they!") They also spend time training their Great Pyrenees puppy, Cal.

Mica's interests and skills are wide and varied – everything from making sugar skulls for The Day of the Dead and participating in the Aztec Dance Troupe to reading and finding inspiration in the mind-expanding works of C.G. Jung and Allan Kardec.

She's also an avid social networker, who feels comfortable and energized, connecting with people, organizations, ideas and events around her.



Mica and Rev. Naoya conducted prayer services together earlier this year at the Los Angeles Church.

A Personal Spiritual Quest

With her rich religious and spiritual background and orientation, it is not surprising that Mica would be drawn to the Gedatsu faith. Its fundamental philosophy of inclusiveness and non-sectarianism appealed to her as she sought to be part of a spiritual teaching and community in which she could learn and grow.

Nearly 20 years after she first set foot on the *Goreichi* Holy Grounds, Mica has been delighted to be warmly received by the Sacramento members – a feeling of friendship and camaraderie that continues to grow as she meets more members of the congregation and participates in church activities. She's an active member of Sacramental Regional Board and volunteers at the youth camps, Festivals and fund-raising events.

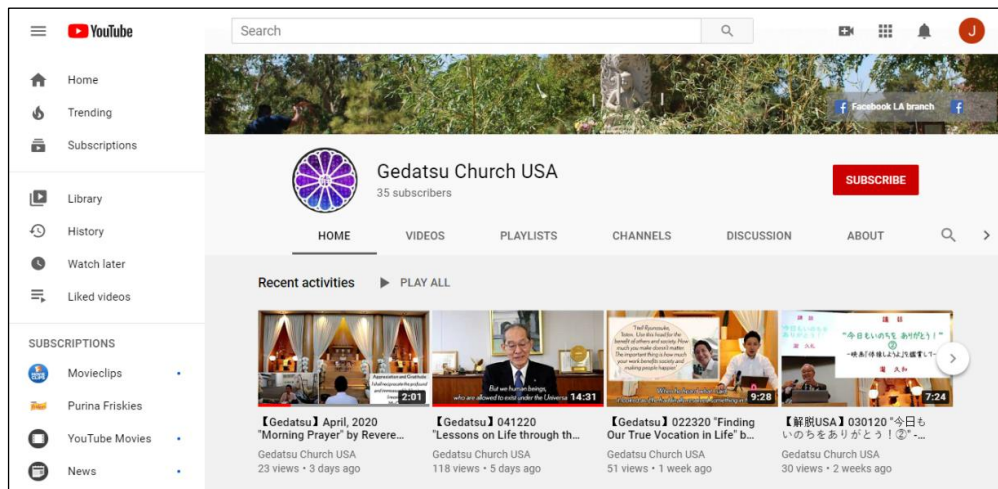
Learning to Live in the Spirit of Gedatsu

"My study of the Gedatsu doctrine and history has taught me that Master Gedatsu Kongo sent Mother Kiyota to America to spread Gedatsu to people of all cultures, faiths and backgrounds," says Mica. "This was how he hoped to achieve his vision for world peace.

"Through my study of Gedatsu, I hope to grow spiritually, deepen my understanding of this beautiful faith and benefit my fellow beings and community so that I can contribute toward making Master Gedatsu Kongo's vision for world peace a reality."



AROUND OUR CHURCH



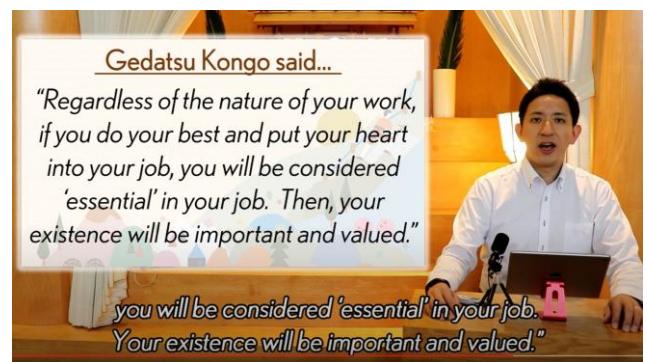
Entertaining, Instructional Videos Build New Audiences for Gedatsu Brand

More and more, Gedatsu Church is using YouTube, the hugely popular online video-sharing platform, to attract interest in Gedatsu and deliver its messages beyond its sanctuary walls, creating an image of a church that is contemporary, accessible and relevant.

“Not only do YouTube and other social networking platforms enable our church to stay connected with members,” says L.A. Church minister **Rev. Naoya Okano**, “it’s an important channel to engage new audiences, who may be learning about Gedatsu for the first time.”

Rev. Naoya is an avid proponent of YouTube as a propagation tool and has been recording Sunday sermons, members’ remarks and services over the past year and uploading them to the church’s YouTube site. At the Sacramento Spiritual Center, **Mica Rodriguez**, minister-in-training, is doing the same. In the absence of the congregation and other ministers, she recently narrated, conducted and video-recorded the April and May “Never Forgotten” services and posted the video on YouTube.

“As a church, we can no longer grow by just waiting for members’ friends and acquaintances to come to us,” says Rev. Naoya. “We have to proactively reach out online and into social networks to tell our Gedatsu story by showcasing our beliefs and practices in the form of memorable video experiences and images.



The library of Gedatsu YouTube videos has been steadily expanding with recordings of sermons, personal reflections and services.

Photos, from top, Gedatsu Church USA YouTube home page displays all videos. Middle: Rev. Naoya’s sermon, “Finding Our True Vocation in Life” (2/23/20). Bottom: Deacon Hisato Tsujimura’s hilarious “What Makes a Marriage Last?” (5/26/19)

To view the church’s videos, go to Gedatsu Church USA You/Tube at
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIbbFt3XLUWin8_OGPmifGw

(Continued on back page)

“Welcome to Gedatsu”

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Chapter 12:

Gedatsu for Modern Americans

The Gedatsu Church was established in Japan in 1929. And it's been over 70 years since the Gedatsu teaching was planted in the soil of America.

Originally, the Gedatsu teaching was taught for the Japanese people. As a Japanese citizen, **Master Gedatsu Kongo** established the Gedatsu Church to inspire Japanese to be proud of their heritage and contribute to the global society as good Japanese citizens. He equated the Japanese spirit to the spirit of the sun and believed strongly that this indomitable spirit would be the foundation of world peace.

Gedatsu for All Time, All People

For these reasons, the Gedatsu teaching looks very Japanese and may seem foreign to Americans. However, we must understand that Gedatsu contains valuable teachings for all people – regardless of time, race or nationality – which constitute the core of Gedatsu. Here in America, we should learn this core spirit of Gedatsu in order to become good Americans and benefit the world as good American citizens.

What, then, is the core spirit of Gedatsu? I believe it is quite simple.

- We are allowed to exist by the grace and will of the Universal Life Force. We may call it God or another name – it doesn't matter. What is important is that we be aware of, and pay our respects to, the Universal Life Force as the very source of our life.

- We should have a deep sense of gratitude for the immeasurable blessings we receive from our ancestors and parents, and everything on earth.

In our Gedatsu prayer, we say, *“I shall reciprocate the profound and immeasurable blessings I receive from my country, my parents, my teachers, society, and all creation in the universe.”* We should learn this essential element of the Gedatsu teaching.

- Devote yourself to your vocation or daily activities selflessly as a token of appreciation. This is the path to grow spiritually, and to benefit the world. Master Gedatsu Kongo said, *“Life is religion, religion is life.”*
- Self-reflect and develop your character through daily activities.
- Try to live each day with *integrity, filial piety, compassion, fidelity, and gratitude* as basic morals based on the Universal Law.

These are the essential elements of the Gedatsu teaching.

Purpose of Our Gedatsu Study and Practice

It is also very important for us to keep in mind the purpose of our Gedatsu study and practice. The purpose of Gedatsu propagation in America is:

- To cultivate the spirituality and human character of Americans and to inspire and foster Americans to benefit their country and the world by promoting the happiness and welfare of all people.

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It is important to solve our problems and become happy through learning and practicing Gedatsu, of course. But this is not enough.

Master Gedatsu Kongo always said that this is only the beginning of our Gedatsu study. Our purpose is to make people happy, and work for the betterment of society and world peace. Please remember this.

If Master Gedatsu Kongo Were Alive Today

Archbishop Kishida used to say, *“It is important to follow the teachings of Master Gedatsu Kongo, of course. But it is not enough. You should always consider what Gedatsu Kongo would do if he were still alive today.”* As Gedatsu members, let this thought be your guide in whatever you do from now on.

Master Gedatsu Kongo stated:

“Religion should not be fixed. Religion should always lead the times and move forward with the times. I respect all religions and their doctrines, but I do not consider them as unchangeable truth.”

“Water stagnates unless it constantly flows. In the same way, doctrines should not be fixed. Teachings and scriptures should not be considered as rock-ribbed law.

“Even if a religion is true and wonderful, if people cannot understand and accept it, it is dead for the people of that time. Religion should always be fresh and meaningful for the people of that era. Modern people demand religions to solve their problems. Can religions truly meet their needs? If you stick to ancient scriptures and doctrines, how can you compete with the modern times?

“Gedatsu has no national boundary. Gedatsu goes beyond creed and is equally applicable to all people regardless of race or nationality.”

Make the Gedatsu Teaching Workable

So, let us ask: If Gedatsu Kongo were alive as an American citizen today, what would he do?

As American Gedatsu members, this is the challenge we must solve. The answer is, we need to adapt our Gedatsu teaching for the needs of modern Americans and our future generations.



This concludes the 12-part series “Welcome to Gedatsu,” written, translated and greatly condensed by Rev. Hisakazu Taki from his original work, which was serialized in Gedatsu Magazine of Gedatsu-kai Japan from January 2004 through December 2007. The work was later published as three separate books (shown above).

For the American reader, both new and longtime followers of the Gedatsu faith have strengthened and reaffirmed their understanding of the teaching through Rev. Taki’s work. We thank Rev. Taki for sharing his knowledge and understanding of Gedatsu with us and for making it accessible to us in our English language.

APRIL 2020 OFFERINGS

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

\$50–\$99: D. Ide, M/MD. Tsuboi

\$100+: M. Rodriguez, H. Graham

\$200+: J. Detwiler / J. Sebe

\$300+: A. Cool, A. Sebe

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

\$5–\$49: J. Kaku

\$100+: M/M V. Mizokami, M/M N. Okano, T. Palelek,
M/M P. Reid

\$200+: M/M K. Kuritani, M/M G. Miyasako charitable fund

Thank You for Your Financial Support

Your donations, memorial gifts and membership dues help to sustain our church by providing funding for our operational expenses, minister and staff salaries and activities.

During this time of uncertainty and isolation, we appreciate your continued financial support for our church, as well as for those in our community who are in need.

2020 UPCOMING EVENTS

Due to the indefinite timeline of social-distancing rules, the following church services and activities are subject to change.

Aug 1-2 (Sat-Sun) Lake Tahoe *Benzaiten* Service (TBD)

Aug 16 (Sun) L.A. *Benzaiten* Service

Sep 6 (Sun) 142nd Fall Grand Festival 9:00 am

Sep 8 (Tue) Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)

Sep 13 (Sun) Hawaii Church 40th Anniversary

Sep 20 (Sun) L.A. *Higan* Service

Sep 27 (Sun) Sacramento *Higan* Service

Oct 3-4 (Sat-Sun) L.A. Autumn Moon Festival

Oct 13 (Tue) Church Closed (in lieu of Columbus Day)

Oct 18 (Sun) L.A. *Ujigami* Service

Oct 25 (Sun) Sacramento All Souls Service

Nov 1 (Sun) L.A. Gedatsu Kongo Service

Nov 8 (Sun) Sacramento Gedatsu Kongo Service

Nov 15 (Sun) L.A. 7-5-3 Children's Celebration

Nov 22 (Sun) Sac'to 7-5-3- Children's Celebration/
Gedatsu Kongo Birthday

Nov 26-27 Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Dec 6 (Sun) L.A. Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service

Dec 12 (Sat) L.A. Church Clean-up

Dec 13 (Sun) Sacramento Last Service of Year /
Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service

Dec 20 (Sun) L.A. Last Service / Christmas Program

Dec 24-31 Church Closed

Chicken Broccoli *Au Gratin*

Contributed by Sachiyo Matsumoto

A rich and cheesy stove-top casserole

Ingredients:

- ❖ 2 large skinless, boneless chicken breasts in bite-size cubes
- ❖ 1 garlic clove, diced
- ❖ 3 heads of broccoli, separated in florets
- ❖ 2 medium onions, sliced
- ❖ 6 medium-sized mushrooms, sliced
- ❖ 3 cups mayonnaise
- ❖ 2 tablespoons plain yogurt
- ❖ 1 tablespoon curry powder
- ❖ 2 tablespoons butter
- ❖ 1 can cream of chicken soup (family size 22.6 oz.)
- ❖ 3 cups finely grated cheese (Parmesan or cheddar)
- ❖ 4 tablespoons olive oil



Directions:

- ❖ Boil broccoli florets until crisp-tender. Drain.
- ❖ Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in frying pan over medium heat. Add chicken cubes and half of garlic. Stir and cook until chicken is no longer pink. Remove chicken mixture from pan and set aside.
- ❖ In same pan, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat. Add remaining garlic, onions and mushrooms. Stir until cooked; remove from pan.
- ❖ In large bowl, combine chicken soup, mayonnaise, yogurt, curry powder.
- ❖ In large skillet, evenly layer two-thirds of the broccoli, then chicken, then onion/mushroom, then remaining broccoli, then cream chicken mixture. Top with butter and grated cheese. Cook slowly for 20-30 minutes.
- ❖ Serve chicken broccoli *au gratin* over rice.

6 月度 教会行事予定

* ウィルス感染防止の在宅命令により、教会サービスや活動も中止の対象です。状況に応じて対応されますので、予定につきましては教会からの最新情報をお確かめください。なお、6月の六地藏バザー、7月のユース・サマーキャンプは中止となります。

ロサンゼルス教会

7 日 (日) 10:00A 日本語感謝会
14 日 (日) 10:00A 祥月追善法要
21 日 (日) 10:00A 日英感謝会・清田憲祐先生法要
父の日サービス/R. B 委員会

サクラメント教会

7 日 (日) 10:00A 祥月追善法要
14 日 (日) 9:30A 感謝会・清田憲祐先生法要
父の日サービス/R. B 委員会
21 日 (日) 1:00P サンノゼ座談会・感謝日

6 月度 みさとし

「善を行うは心の訓練であり、
智慧も聡明も心の訓練による」

解脱は、人格陶冶を通じて世界平和へと向かう道である。しかしそれは、何か特別の行を修めなければできないというものではない。われわれが心を磨き、人格を陶冶していく道は、あくまでも日々の生活そのもののなかにあるのだ。朝、目が覚めたとき、今日も生命をいただいたことを神先祖に感謝申し上げる。そして日中は家族や社会、そして宇宙万物からいただいている限りないおかげさまに感謝すると共に、自分に与えられた役目に誠心誠意お使いいただく。また、さまざまな人間関係を通して、自分をはたしてこれでよいかと自らをふり返る。そして夜、一日無事にお使いいただいたことを神先祖に御礼申し上げ、休ませていただく。このような日々の生活を、一步一步でいねいに歩んでいくことを通して、われわれの魂は磨かれ、人格が陶冶されていくのである。解脱は生活即宗教の道であることを忘れてはならない。

第 141 回 春季大祭式辞

大自然の姿に学ぶ

解脱会教務局長 宮坂 保徳

本年の春季大祭がジョイス理事長をはじめとする役員の皆様方のご尽力、また、献身的なご奉仕をくださる皆さまのご協力によりまして、準備がすすめられてまいりましたこと、心より感謝申し上げます。しかし本年は、新型コロナウイルスの世界的な感染拡大に

より、3月13日にはトランプ大統領が国家非常事態を宣言するほどの厳しい状況となり、その後も深刻さは一層増しております。このような状況下で今回の春季大祭が中止となったことは残念ではありますが、これからの新たな時代に立ち向かうために与えられた、貴重な試練と受け止めて、今後も心をつなげて前向きに取り組んでいくことが大切であると考えます。

さて、今からちょうど40年前、私は半年間アメリカに滞在する機会に恵まれました。1980年1月に、岸田英山先生に伴われて日本からハワイを経由してサンフランシスコ教会に到り、その後ロサンゼルス教会での生活が始まりました。

当時の教会は、ヴァン・ビューレン・プレイスにあり、辻村さん宅の隣に位置しておりました。その教会の2階で岡野総長とともに過ごした6か月間は、なつかしい思い出として今も心に宿されております。

特に、5月から6月にかけての1か月間、岡野総長と2人で広大なアメリカ大陸をグレイハウンドバスで1周した旅は、貴重な経験となりました。

ヒューストン、ニューオリンズ、マイアミ、ワシントンDC、ニューヨーク、シカゴ、ソルトレイクシティ等々、今でもなつかしく思い出されます。

また、ロサンゼルスはじめ、サンフランシスコ、サクラメントは格別な場所であり、半年間で得た多くの思い出は、私の大切な宝です。

中でも忘れがたい思い出は、グランドキャニオンです。今考えると、片道約10時間をかけての孤独なドライブは、アメリカに来てから運転免許を取得した未熟なドライバーである私にとっては無謀な行為であり、お世話になった方々に変なご心配をおかけしたことは、深い反省と共に貴重な教訓となっております。

知識も経験も欠けていた当時の未熟な私にとって、それは向こう見ずで乱暴な行動であったと今さらながらに思いますが、それでも、深夜の真っ暗な道をひたすら走り、ようやく朝方になって到着したグランドキャニオンは、言葉にならないほどの感動を与えてくれました。その雄大な自然の造形に魅せられて、夕方まで飽きることなく眺め続けた日のことは、今も心に深く刻まれています。

人間の歴史は、百年、千年単位で計ることができませんが、大自然の造形は、100万年、1000万年という単位でなければ計ることはできません。

グランドキャニオンの起源は、今から7000万年前の地殻変動による隆起にあり、約4000万年前にコロラド川による浸食が始まったといわれています。

遙かな遠い過去から、長い年月をかけての絶えることのない川の流れが大地を浸食し、現在のような圧倒的な存在感をもつ大渓谷を生み出したのです。この事実には、水の力の偉大さを思わざるを得ません。

解脱金剛尊者は、「無字の書を読むように」とご指導くださいました。その教えは、文字に表現されることのないさまざまな事象の意味を読み取り、自分自身の学びとして生かすことが大切であると理解できます。それは大自然の姿に学ぶということにも通じております。

そこで今日は、水について考えてみたいと思います。水は、私たちがより良く生きるためのヒントをたくさん与えてくれるからです。

水は、常に私たちの身近にあり、実にさまざまな働きをもって私たちの生活を支えてくれています。生命を養うことはもちろん、衛生面も含めて、炊事・洗濯・洗面・入浴など生活の全般にかかわって必要不可欠のものであります。また、農業・工業などの産業においても大きな働きをしており、水運・海運など物流にもなくてはならないものであり、水なくして私たちの生命も生活も成り立ちません。

しかしその反面、台風やハリケーン、津波、高潮、河川の氾濫などさまざまな自然災害に見られるように、水は私たちの生命や生活に、深刻な被害をもたらすものでもあります。

解脱金剛尊者はこの真実を、平易な言葉をもって「花を散らすの雨は花を咲かすの雨、人を殺すの雨は人を生かすの雨ともなる」とご指導くださいました。

大自然の法則は、時に冷酷と思われるほど厳然たる表現をもって私たちに迫ってまいります。それが地球全体に大調和をもたらす偉大な働きであることは言うまでもありません。大自然は、人間の都合や常識などとは異なる次元で、常に大調和の世界を生み出しているのです。

つまり、生命の源である水は、万物を潤し養い生かすとともに、時には尊い生命を奪う働きもするということです。それは、私たち人間をはじめ万物は、法則に逆らって生きることとはできない、ということをも意味しております。

ここで、水に関係の深い龍の姿をイメージしてみてください。龍は、天空を自在に行き来して天地を結ぶものでありますが、それはまさに水の姿を象徴するものであります。天空より降り注いだ雨は大地を潤し、川となって大海へ注ぎ、やがて蒸発して天に帰り、再び大地に降り注ぎます。このようにして水は、倦まず

たゆまず天と地を行き来して循環を繰り返しております。

次に、水の性質という面から考えてみましょう。水は常に下へ下へと流れて大海に注ぐまで留まることはありません。そして、どのようなところへでも染み入って、相手を選ぶことはありません。そのようにして、生きとし生けるすべての命を養う働きをしています。

その過程においては、あらゆる汚れを引き受けて、濁流となることもあります。しかしどれほど汚れても、やがて蒸発して天空に帰り、再び大地に降り注ぐという循環を繰り返しながら、透明で清らかな水としての本性を決して失うことはありません。

また、その性質はなめらかで柔軟であります。四角い箱に入れれば箱の形に、壺に入れれば壺の形になるというように、どのような器にも納まる柔軟性をもっています。そして、自在に形を変えながらも本性を失うことはありません。しかも、この柔らかくなめらかな性質をもちながら、広大な大地を削り、堅い岩に穴を開けるような強さもそなえています。これらの性質を言葉にすれば、純粹、透明、寛容、謙虚、包容力、浸透力、持続力、柔軟性、等々の特質として数え上げることができます。

以上、グランドキャニオンの思い出から、水の特質や大自然の法則について考えてみました。

法則は不変であります。表現は自在であります。時代が大きく変わろうとも、法則は変わることはありません。国や地域が違って、法則に違いはありません。法則は時間や空間を超えて不変であります。法則のもとで生かされている私たち人間の表現は時代の進歩にともなって変化し、国や民族など様々な文化となって多様な色彩を生み出しています。

法則に基づいて説き示された解脱の教えも、その最初は日本の伝統文化の上に生まれ、日本人に理解しやすい表現をもって学びが続けられておりますが、アメリカにおいてはアメリカの文化に基づいて、アメリカ人にとって理解と納得の得られる教えの表現があってこそ、教えの本質が今の時代に生きるものとなり、今を生きる者にとって価値のある教えとなります。

刻々と変化し続ける世界のなかで、常に新たに時代に生きる教えの展開をはかることが、私たちに求められております。今日のこの大祭を機に、改めて真理法則に心を向け、水のような柔軟性と寛容性としなやかな強さをもって、世界の平和と人類の幸福のために、共に力を尽くして歩み続けてまいりましょう。



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Jeffrey Mukai** of the L.A. Church. Jeff is a civil law attorney, who enjoys mountain biking, skiing and other active sports in his spare time. A third generation Gedatsu member, Jeff is the son of **Shu** and **Diana Mukai**, and the grandson of **Sadaye** and the late **Karl Tanaka**, early pioneers of the Gedatsu Church in Sacramento. Says Jeff: "I appreciate and respect Gedatsu for its values-based teaching that brings perspective, understanding and appreciation to aspects of everyday life."

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 **YouTube** – Continued from page 6)

"In future videos," adds Rev. Naoya, "I would love to feature Gedatsu practices – like ancestor and property blessings, *Saito Goma* fire ceremony and *Ajikan* meditation – to show the public how the spiritual world affects our physical lives and how we can bring peace to unrested spirits, as well as our own lives."

Together with the church's newly redesigned website and growing social media presence, YouTube videos play a key role in keeping members connected with the church and feeling like they're participating in church activities, especially at this time of social distancing.



YouTube videos of "Never Forgotten" memorial services - like the screen shots of recent services video-recorded (top right) by Mica Rodriguez at the Sacramento Spiritual Center and (bottom) by Rev. Naoya at the L.A. Church – demonstrate how members, ministers and friends can offer their prayers together from their homes in virtual online services.

