



GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org

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Gedatsu Kongo's
Thought for the Month

*"Another name for 'Life' should be
'Spirit of Mutual Help.'"*

The global coronavirus pandemic is forcing the world to realize that people everywhere are closely connected with each other, regardless of history, culture, tradition, ideology, language, etc.

In this sense, this pandemic is truly significant.

Global issues, such as environmental pollution and global warming, demonstrate that our planet Earth is a living organism. However, because of the egoism of individual countries, cooperation and unity among nations have hindered efforts to collectively solve these problems.

It is hoped that our combined experience of this global pandemic will enable us to rise above national egoism and to take steps toward mutual cooperation.

UPDATE ON GEDATSU CHURCH ACTIVITIES AND COVID-19

To safeguard the health and safety of our members and the public, our Gedatsu churches in Los Angeles and Sacramento remain closed. All in-person services continue to be suspended until further notice.

In addition, to ensure the health and safety of our members, volunteers and the public, we announce the following changes to upcoming church events:

- Our **Fall Grand Festival** in Sacramento will be observed in September, but without attendance by members. Services will be conducted by ministers, aided by a handful of participants.
 - A scaled-back **Saito Goma Fire Ceremony** will be conducted, similar to the modified ceremony that was held in June. No personal *Saito Goma* plaques will be thrown.
 - The **Gedatsu Memorial Tower Service** will be conducted by ministers for the enshrinement of new souls. The service will be repeated for the families of the newly enshrined souls and congregation at a future time when it is safe to assemble.
- Our annual **Autumn Moon Festival** fundraiser, scheduled for October in Los Angeles, is canceled.
- News concerning other upcoming local services and activities will be announced by your branch church.

***Gedatsu Companion* Newsletter Changes**

In this year of unprecedented changes, we ask our readers to adjust to a few more:

- This August issue is the last issue to contain Japanese-language pages. With the departure of my trusted co-editor, **Rev. Kazuo Yamada** (see article below), the two Japanese pages will be dropped. We regret this loss for our Japanese readers and hope that periodicals published by *Gedatsu-kai* Japan will fill the void.

Thank you, Rev. Yamada, for your many years as editor of the *Gedatsu Companion*!

- Beginning with the September issue, *Gedatsu Companion* will become an 8-page publication, reduced from the usual 12 pages.
- Also beginning with the next issue, our monthly Offerings page will no longer list the names and donation amounts of individual donors.

Thank you for your continued support and readership.

Joyce Reid
Editor-in-Chief

Yamadas Say Farewell to States, “Aloha” to Hawaii

As he announced earlier this year, Sacramento minister, **Rev. Kazuo Yamada**, and his wife, **Yoko**, will be transferring to Honolulu in late August to serve the members of Gedatsu Church of Hawaii, who have been without a resident minister since last fall.

Rev. Yamada concludes his ten-year ministerial term, after having served six and a half years in Los Angeles and three and half years in Sacramento. During those years, the Yamadas created warm and lasting friendships among the members, who will deeply miss the couple. Hawaiian members are eager to welcome the Yamadas back to Hawaii, where Rev. Yamada served as resident minister for five and a half years prior to serving in the States.

Read Rev. Yamada’s farewell message on page 6.



Participate from Home in Online August “Never Forgotten” Memorial Services

“Never Forgotten” Memorial Services are held monthly by 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 YouTube site:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIbbFt3XLuWin8_OGPmifGw. The videos will remain viewable from the date and time of each service.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, August 2, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Mitsu Ito, Nobuyoshi Ito, Katherine Kazuye Sato, George Nakayama, Konami Ide, Toshio Ide, Kuma Kotabe Ide, Rinpei Kino, Kiyota Mishima, Shirley Nakamoto Hughley, Yoshiye Ide Obu and W. Royal Domingo.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, August 9, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Masaru Akiyoshi, Mankichi Arakawa, Masako Azama, Mario Boras, Toku Dyson, William Ishibashi, Shige Ishida, Mitsu Ito, Nobuyoshi Ito, Kimiyo Kikuta, Masaru Kikuta, Sumishichi Kikuta, Kazuo Kumashiro, Shoji Kusumoto, Haku Michigami, Glenn Mizuki, Jim Nakamura, Toku Nishi, Masakazu Oishi, Umeko Sasano, Shizuye Shiroishi, Kijiro Taniguchi, Yuki Tanji, Nora AyakoToguchi, Chohei Tomita and Tomoe Toyama.**

Now . . . Donate Online!



Donations to the Gedatsu Church can now be made online on our website: www.gedatsu-usa.org.

Read more about online giving under Special Announcements on page 9.



HATS OFF TO 2020 GRADUATES!



We are very proud of you and excited to see you continue to grow. May your futures be filled with success and happiness!

Even though our members cannot honor them in person, our 11 new graduates – from elementary school to doctorates – are recognized with congratulatory gift cards and certificates, sponsored by their Sunday Schools.

Join us in celebrating the accomplishments of the following outstanding students.

Sacramento Spiritual Center



L to R: Avery Bridgham, Courtney Ide, Brianna Prescott

Avery Bridgham, 14, is the daughter of **Nikki** and **Phil Bridgham** and the granddaughter of **Margie Fukushima**. Avery graduated from middle school (Certificate of Academic Achievement) and will enter high school in the fall, with future plans to go to college. Her hobbies include singing, dancing and musical theater. She enjoys traveling and the beach.

Courtney Ide, 21, is the daughter of **Penny** and **Dave Ide** and granddaughter of **Reiko** and **Buster Ide**. She graduated from California State University, Sacramento (*Magna Cum Laude*) with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology. A Sacramento Kings fan, Courtney enjoys baking, cooking and traveling.

Brianna Prescott, 14, is the daughter of **Allison Horner** and granddaughter of **Nancy** and **John Horner**. She graduated from middle school and will enter high school in the fall, with future plans of earning a Master's degree. Brianna enjoys art and swimming.

Los Angeles Gedatsu Church



L to R: Mia Olivia Hayashi, Kayla Hirayama, Kayla Kim



L to R: Mason Mizokami, Savannah Olmos, Sarah Shaklan



L to R: Andrew Isao Shiroishi, Holly Shiroishi

Mia Olivia Hayashi, 14, is the daughter of **Lisa** and **Rick Hayashi** and the granddaughter of **June** and **Ted Hayashi**. Holly graduated from the 8th grade (Honor Roll, Student Ambassador) and will be attending high school in the fall. She has plans to go to college and enter the medical field. She enjoys sports, friends, TikTok and puppies.

Kayla Hirayama, 17, is the daughter of **Janet Hirayama** and granddaughter of **Minae** and **Mitsuji Okada**. She graduated from high school and will be attending Mt. San Antonio College in pursuit of a career in radiology technology. Her hobbies include painting, cooking and baking.

Kayla Kim, 14, is the daughter of **Karen** and **Brad Kim** and granddaughter of **Marian** and **Victor Mizokami**. Kayla graduated from 8th grade (honor roll, California Junior Scholarship Federation) and will enter high school with sights on a career in fashion design. She enjoys competitive dance and show choir, art and baking.

(Continued on page 4)

AROUND OUR CHURCH

(2020 Graduates – continued from page 3)

Mason Mizokami, 10, is the son of **Jenny** and **Steve Mizokami** and grandson of **Marian** and **Victor Mizokami**. Mason graduated from 5th grade and will enter middle school in the fall. His heroes are “Mommy and Daddy,” and he enjoys dinosaurs, Star Wars and playing video games.

Savannah Olmos, 18, is the daughter of **Adrian** and **Jaime Olmos** and granddaughter of **Tony Sanchez**. Savannah graduated from high school and will enter college in the fall with plans to become a certified EMT and eventually a firefighter. She has a passion for dance, especially hip hop, and enjoys spending time with her family at Disneyland.

Sarah Shaklan, 21, is the daughter of **Pam** and **Stuart Shaklan** and granddaughter of **Arlene** and **Rudy Tsujimura**. Sarah graduated from University of Washington with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Health and minors in Women’s Studies and Diversity. She plans to enter graduate school and law school next year, potentially leading to a career in the public health sector. Her hobbies include student government, shopping, travel and spending time with friends and family.

Andrew Isao Shiroishi, 28, is the son of **Uzuko** and **Allen Shiroishi** and the grandson of the late **Sayo** and **Pat Shiroishi**. Andrew graduated from USC School of Pharmacy with a Doctorate degree in Pharmacy. Andrew enjoys going bouldering, top-roping and long hikes. He likes interacting with dogs and cats because of their colorful personalities.

Holly Shiroishi, 25, is the daughter of **Gail** and **Scott Shiroishi** and granddaughter of the late **Shizuye** and **Terry Shiroishi**. Holly graduated from Roseman University of Health Sciences with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing and looks forward to a nursing career. Her hobbies are running, drawing and playing with her dog. She considers her parents her heroes.

Congratulations to our outstanding 2020 graduates!



OUR GEDATSU STUDY

Gedatsu Q&A – 2

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *What does it mean to believe in the Gedatsu faith?*

A You may think religious faith is not necessary for you – that only weak people believe in religion.

When things go smoothly, we may naturally feel that we can do whatever we want and live without any help. It is only when we encounter difficulties that we may feel powerless and pray for help.

Actually, we are allowed to live by receiving immeasurable blessings from many people and many things in the universe, but we are unaware of these blessings.

Think about your everyday life. You eat meals, drink water, breathe the air, and receive sunlight every day. Your life is sustained by receiving those elements from the universe. Without them, you cannot live for even a single moment. Your heart, stomach, kidney, lungs are working constantly, even when you are sleeping at night. But the working of those internal organs is not controlled by your will. We are all allowed to exist by the Universal Life Force. This awareness will lead us to live a happy and meaningful life.

Through the Gedatsu study, we become aware of the great blessings we receive from all people and all things in the universe. We then feel grateful for their blessings. This sense of appreciation is the foundation of a prosperous and meaningful life. To believe in Gedatsu doesn’t mean to be bound by any doctrines and ideologies. By learning Gedatsu, we free ourselves from egotistical thoughts and become aware that we are interconnected with the universe.

(Continued on page 5)

Q *It is said that Gedatsu is a study, rather than a religion. Please explain.*

A Gedatsu is a non-sectarian religious study.

Founder Gedatsu Kongo stated, “*Gedatsu has no national boundary. Gedatsu goes beyond creed, and is equal to all people, regardless of any races and nationalities.*”

He also said, “*The Path of God is but one. The universe is unified by one law.*”

This is our Founder’s basic thought on Gedatsu. Please open your eyes widely and look up at the sky. You’ll then be aware that there is no partition in the sky. The universe is a boundless world, which allows all living things to exist. You may call it God or any other name. But name doesn’t matter. What is important is to be actually aware that the universe is a boundless world of life.

There have been many religions in the world. When you see their doctrines and rituals, they may look different and sometimes mutually exclusive. But, when you look into them more closely, you’ll be able to see a common ground among them, which is universal. When you have this insight and understanding, there should be no conflicts among different religions.

We should respect other religions and cooperate with each other for people’s happiness. This is our goal to study Gedatsu. When you show depth in your faith and widen your views, you will be released from sectarianism and will see a boundless world of religion.

Through the Gedatsu study, your understanding of other values and religions will be deepened. This will be your personal step toward world peace.



Q *What is enshrined in the Gedatsu altar?*

A In the Gedatsu altar, three primary symbols of our reverence are enshrined: *Universal Life Force* (center), *Creative Principle* (on the left), and *Founder Gedatsu Kongo* (on the right).

The Universal Life Force permeates the universe and is the very source of all life. It creates and nurtures all living things and controls natural phenomena, including the movement of celestial bodies, the seasonal transitions and our bodily functions.

The infinite and inexhaustible Creative Principle represents the life substance behind all forms and allows the universe to carry on its activities without interruption. While the varied species of life may differ, they all derive their life from this one Creative Principle.

The Universal Life Force and the Creative Principle cannot be separated. They are one in essence.

Founder Gedatsu Kongo established the Gedatsu path for everyone’s happiness.

By offering sincere prayer to these three primary symbols in the Gedatsu altar, we show our respect to the very source of our life and the spiritual guide of our life, and express appreciation and gratitude.





Rev. Kazuo and Yoko Yamada

Dawn Breaks – A New Phase Begins

By Rev. Kazuo Yamada

In late August, **Yoko** and I will leave Gedatsu Church U.S.A and transfer to Gedatsu Church of Hawaii.

Nearly 10 years ago, we moved to the L.A. Church in October 2010. Yoko and I feel that this last decade – during which we have fully shared life's joys and disappointments together with all of you – has been a precious treasure and source of pride for our souls. We can never express our appreciation enough for the great blessing this has been for us.

It has been a half a year, since the "stay at home" directive was issued due to COVID-19. This means that it has been six months since I lost the opportunity to speak in front of you. While this saddens me, I feel, at the same time, a new positivity – as if a new dawn were breaking, signaling the beginning of a new phase for our church.

Envisioning my purpose and goal

For two years, before I was appointed resident minister in the U.S. church, I traveled back and forth between the Los Angeles Church and Tokyo headquarters. In those days, I was blessed with opportunities to receive spiritual messages from the late **Archbishop Eizan Kishida** through my *Goho-shugyo* practice at the L.A. Church.

One day, Archbishop's spirit said to me, "The current members think only of themselves. No one thinks of the Gedatsu Church."

Immediately after I received this message from him, I realized what I was required to do in the United States. I clearly saw my purpose and my task ahead. The goal I envisioned was to have the members run this church as their own, standing on their own feet.

As resident minister, I immediately set to work on improving various areas, but I found myself constantly struggling, mainly due to my inability to communicate well in English.

In the summer of 2011, Archbishop Kishida gave me the following advice: "If you are sincere in continuing your efforts, a good collaborator will appear in front of you in the near future."



Rev. Yamada with Joyce Reid

It was then that I met **Mrs. Joyce Reid**, who had come from Texas to attend the Fall Festival in Sacramento. The moment I saw her, I was intuitively convinced that she was the "collaborator" Archbishop Kishida foretold of.

I have been helped by Joyce ever since. First, Joyce implemented innovations to our church newsletter, and the renewed monthly *Companion* began spreading a mood and spirit of positivity and innovation to all members of the church.

And organizationally, since the establishment of our regional boards, and the introduction of various new events and activities, the running of our church is now being planned and carried out by the members themselves.



Rev. Yamada and Yoko (at left) celebrate the church's 70th Anniversary in Reno with Sacramento members and friends.

(Continued on back page)

***“May peace reign over the world and
all the people enjoy prosperity and happiness.”***

By Joy Sebe

I grew up on the *Gochi* Sanctuary in Sacramento. I rode my red bike, which I shared with my sister, around the grounds. I loved watching tadpoles transforming into tiny frogs in the pond surrounding *Benzaiten*. I dug up the clay-like dirt on the side of the basketball court to make little pots that baked in the hot sun. Year after year, I watched the cycles of busy festivals in which the property was bustling with people, the quiet clean-up and the periods when it was only me and my family.

As a child, I also experienced how ignorant the people outside of the church were. When I accompanied my mom to the grocery store, I saw the condescending ways in which store clerks and everyday people spoke to her. Their impatience and frustration when she spoke with an accent and their assumption that she wasn't as smart as she was because they didn't hear it in the way she talked. I saw how it made my mother quieter and apologetic.

I remember on multiple occasions, mattresses and large pieces of trash dumped on the church property. I answered phone calls and listened to phone messages from angry or ignorant people who did not like that we were a non-Christian church. I remember one day when my dad asked me to go to our house and stay inside until he returned. He and **Miki Sensei** went to scrub graffiti on *Rokujizo*, and I still don't know what it said. The black fence around the property went up to keep the property, and maybe us, safer.

Since I was a child and perhaps because of my experiences, I was so happy that Gedatsu welcomed people of all backgrounds and faiths. During my childhood and into my teen years, I absorbed some key themes from the Gedatsu teachings. One of these teachings was the emphasis on respect and appreciation for our pioneers. I saw the love with which Gedatsu members cared for their elder family members, the prayers we offered for deceased members and pioneers for their sacrifices.

Alongside the prayers for family, I saw an appreciation of Native American spirits on the *Amacha Kuyo* stupa and in the explanation of the Gedatsu



Above, Joy and older sister, Delphine, next to the house they grew up in – and their shared tricycle.



Left, the Sebe Family with the girls' swing set, located next to the *Tenjinchigi* Shrine near Rev. Sebe's current house.

Gedatsu Memorial Tower. During the *Saito Goma* ceremony, I saw wooden plaques offered to express appreciation to Native and African American spirits and thrown into the bonfire. Within our Prayer Book, we also “pray for all spirits and their peaceful rest.”

What does it look like to express appreciation to ancestral spirits of our nation?

I think that most of us can agree that a key part of Gedatsu is to express appreciation to our ancestors, who came before us and allow us to live our current comfortable lives.

However, our ancestors are not just our great grandparents and family, who are connected by blood or marriage. Our ancestors include the Native people whose land we now live on, who experienced a systematic genocide, whose children were taken from them and whose languages and cultures were suppressed. They include African slaves who built our nation for free and were treated less than animals. Our ancestors include generations of African American descendants who have survived policies that were designed to keep them poor, powerless and feared. Our ancestors have a history of resistance and resilience. They continue to rise to celebrate their cultures and traditions.

(Continued on page 8)

(May peace reign – continued from page 7)

Given all that has happened to our collective ancestors, is it enough just to pray for their peaceful rest? No, we first start by educating ourselves, so we learn about the suffering and beauty of our ancestors and to develop context for our prayers.

Do we teach our children about the Japanese American Internment Camps and what their grandparents and great grandparents experienced when they first came to the U.S.? Do we teach our children about the hardship and discrimination their family members experienced so that they have a greater appreciation for their lives? If we do, we must also learn for ourselves and teach our children about our Native and Black ancestors and the centuries of institutionalized racism they have and continue to experience.

There are many ways to learn, but Ava Duvernay's documentary "13" on Netflix and Ijeoma Oluo's "So You Want to Talk About Race" are good places to start. I have shared more resources (at right).

Thank you for sharing this time with me and I hope that this is the beginning of a conversation we can have as a Gedatsu community.

In our Prayer Book, we say "May peace reign over the world and all the people enjoy prosperity and happiness." I hope that we can start or continue learning about our nation's history and ancestors with peace, prosperity and happiness for all people, including our institutionally marginalized people, in mind. (Our Japanese ministers are starting by learning about and discussing Black History amongst each other.)

If you have time, I would appreciate learning how my thoughts were received. Perhaps, you saw yourself in parts of it, would like to share something with me, or you disagree with me. I welcome and would appreciate all of your feedback: joysebe@gmail.com.

With much love to you and your family,
Joy



A Place to Start: Books and Films about Racism

Books:

- Ijeoma Oluo -- *So You Want to Talk About Race*
- Ibram X. Kendi -- *How to be Antiracist*, *Stamped from the Beginning*, and *Stamped*
- Howard Zinn -- *A People's History of the United States*
- Robin DiAngelo -- *White Fragility*
- Michelle Alexander -- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*
- Elizabeth Hinton -- *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*
- Paul Butler -- *Chokehold*
- Andrea Ritchie -- *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*
- George Takei -- *They Called Us Enemy*
- Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians -- *Personal Justice Denied*
- Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress -- *The Grassroots Struggle for Japanese American Redress and Reparations*

Films and Documentaries:

- Ava Duvernay -- *Selma* and *13th*
- Saabah Folayan -- *Whose Streets?*
- PBS -- *Slavery by Another Name*
- Vox -- *Why all Americans should celebrate Juneteenth*
- NowThis -- *Diary Reveals Reality of Living in a WWII Japanese Internment Camp*
- Konrad Aderer -- *Resistance at Tule Lak*

Joy Sebe is the daughter of **Senior Reverend Akira Sebe** and the late **Sumiko Sebe**. She and her husband, **Jason Detwiler**, live in Seattle, Wash., with their sons, **Noah** and **Nathan**. Joy runs the Advocacy and Civic Engagement Program for a nonprofit, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, that engages and partners with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with disabilities and their families.

JUNE 2020 OFFERINGS

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

\$5–\$49: M/M D. Tsuboi

\$50–\$99: K. Gibson

\$100+: M/M Detwiler/Sebe

\$300+: M/M K. Yamada, A. Cool, M/M J. Horner

Special Acknowledgment

M/M Dan Harada Appreciation to Mother Kiyota (\$500)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

\$5–\$49: M. Nakamura, A. Okimura

\$50–\$99: M/M V. Mizokami, J. Mizutani, T. Nakamura,
M/M H. Tsujimura

\$100+: M/M N. Chodor, M/M M. Hamada, M/M K. Kuritani,
Y. Oishi, M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, M/M P. Reid,
M/M R. Tsujimura, R. Wakasa

\$200+: D. Shiroishi

Special Acknowledgment

N. Gonzalez/R. Rivera Special donation (\$500)

J. Mukai Appreciation for new job (\$100)

M/M S. Mukai Appreciation for Jeff's new job (\$100)

M/M S. Mukai "Never Forgotten" Manabu Mukai (\$100)

M/M M. Hamada "Never Forgotten" for Ben Toguchi and
Harry Arakawa (\$150)

Kaku/Mahoney Family "Never Forgotten" Mitsuko Kaku (\$100)

M. Kimura "Never Forgotten" service (\$100)

T. Murakami "Never Forgotten" Fusako Murakami (\$100)

NOTE: Beginning next month with the September issue of the *Gedatsu Companion*, monthly offerings will no longer list names of donors and donation amounts.

2020 UPCOMING EVENTS

Events and Services Suspended

Because all regularly scheduled events and services are suspended until further notice, the list of Upcoming Events will be published after regular events and services resume.

As situations change, watch for announcements from your regional board concerning services and activities at your local church.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Now . . . Donate Online!

Your Gedatsu Church is pleased to offer you a new way to donate that is convenient, easy and secure. Donations can now be made online – from your home or work – on your laptop, tablet or cellphone.

You have the option of donating by credit card or ACH/bank payments, making one-time gifts or recurring payments, designating general or special offerings and lots more. Email and printable receipts are automatically generated. You can pay your membership dues, too, by going to the Members page on the site.

Just go to the Give page on the church website at www.gedatsu-usa.org to get started.



Get DVD of Church Videos, Online Communications

Don't have a computer or internet access? You can still watch the church's latest YouTube videos of sermons and services (like the "Never Forgotten" services). Just ask Rev. Naoya at the L.A. Church to mail you a DVD containing current digital communications.

Help Gedatsu Grow on Social Media

Hey, Gedatsu Family! Stay connected, support and share. Check us out at:

Twitter <https://twitter.com/GedatsuFaith>

Instagram https://www.instagram.com/gedatsuchurch_usa/

Facebook

LA <https://www.facebook.com/GedatsuLA>

Sacramento <https://www.facebook.com/GedatsuUSA>

Like and share with your family and friends. Interact with us by sharing your thoughts, feedback and ideas of content you'd like to see. Spread the love!

米 国 教 会 理 事 長 か ら の お 知 ら せ

COVID-19 への対応について (7/6/20 版)

9月の秋季大祭は開教師と少数のみで
10月のLA「秋月祭」は中止

ジョイス・リード

親愛なる会員と法縁者の皆さま；

パンデミックのこの5か月、コミュニティの感染率の上昇が懸念される中、ロサンゼルスとサクラメントのゲダツ教会はほぼ閉鎖を続けていますが、引き続き、私たちの対面型サービス（感謝会等）は7月および8月も新たな通知が行われるまで中止とします。

秋に予定されている教会のイベントは、会員や、ボランティア、公衆の健康と安全を確保するため、次のように変更されます。

- 9月に予定されているサクラメントでの秋季大祭は、会員の出席はなしで、開教師と少数の参加者たちのみで開催されます。
 - ① 柴燈護摩は、6月に行われたように縮小された形で行われ、個人が申し込む護摩木は火に投げられません。
 - ② ゲダツ金剛宝塔祭祀の儀は、新たに祭祀されるみ魂のために開教師を中心に執り行われます。今後、安全に集会ができるとき、改めて安置されたみ魂のご家族とともに礼拝の儀を行なう予定です。
- 10月にロサンゼルス教会で予定されていた“オータム・ムーン・フェスティバル”は、本年中止になります。
- 各教会にて予定されていた近々のサービスやイベントについては、所属する教会からの発表に従ってください。

私たちの教会は、会合が見送られる中でも、会員の皆さまへの情報提供やサポートを維持する新しい手法で活動を続けておりますので、次の点をお知りおきください。

- ① YouTubeによる、講話、サービス、祈りの実践や個人的な感想など、会員の勉強に役立つビデオが、YouTubeビデオのライブラリーに保存され提供されています。

- ② ロサンゼルス教会やサクラメント教会における「ネバー・フォーゴットン（祥月法要）・サービス」も毎月ビデオで録画され提供されています。
- ③ さらに、私たちの、IN TOUCH メール、ウェブサイトにおけるオンラインリソース、ソーシャルメディアへの投稿、月刊コンパニオン（ニュースレター）を通して、教会の活動に関する最新ニュースをお伝えしております。パンデミックの中においても、常に教会の発展と改善への工夫を続けてまいります。

3月以降、ロサンゼルスやサクラメントの各地域理事はじめ、各教会のリーダーや開教師らは、ズームビデオ会議を介して定期的に「会合」を持ち、教会の運営や計画について議論し、問題に取り組み、効果的に前進する方法を戦略化しています。

私たちは長い間離れており、心より再び集まることができる時を切望しています。その時まで、質問がある場合、考えを共有したい場合、または何らかの方法で支援が必要な場合は、教会の役員や開教師に連絡することをお勧めします。あなたは私たちゲダツ・チームの重要で大切なメンバーです。

どうか安全にそしてご健康にお過ごしください。

8 月 度 み さ と し

「生命の別名は、
解脱互助の精神でなければなりませぬ」

今回のコロナウィルスの世界的蔓延は、世界中の国々や人々が、その歴史、文化、伝統、思想、言語、等の違いにかかわらず、互いに緊密につながり合っていることを、あらためてわれわれに自覚させてくれた。この意味では、今回の騒動もきわめて意義深いものであったといえるのではないか。環境汚染や地球温暖化等の問題を通じて、生命世界が互いにつながり合った一つの世界であることは、これまでもいわれてきたことであるが、その根本解決への具体的実践においては、国や人間のエゴイズムにもとづいて、共同歩調がとられてきたとはいいいがたい状況にある。今回のコロナウィルスの世界的感染拡大という経験が、人類が、エゴイズムを超えて、相互扶助・相互協力へと向かう第一歩となることを願う。

新たなフェーズを告げる「夜明け」

米国教会開教師 山田 一雄

このほど米国ゲダツ教会でのお役目を終え、ハワイ解脱教会に転任させていただくことになりました。2010年10月に夫婦で赴任してから約10年になります。米国にいる皆さんと苦楽を分かち合っただけでなく、この10年は、私共夫婦にとっての魂の宝であり誇りであり、感謝してもしきれないお恵みです。

現在、COVID-19による“ステイホーム”指令が出されてから半年が過ぎようとしています。皆さんの前で話す機会を失ってから半年になります。少し寂しい気もしますが、同時に、これは新たなフェーズへの始まりを告げる夜明けを迎えているような気がします。

現在、教会ではサービスは行われていませんが、にもかかわらず、ロサンゼルスとサクラメントの若い開教師・岡野尚也先生・ミカ・ロドリゲス先生はじめ教会の役員、リーダーたちは、今までにない創造的な手法を駆使しながら、会員とのコミュニケーションやサポートを続ける努力をしています。

私は米国ゲダツ教会駐在の開教師に任命される前、2年ほどロサンゼルス教会と本部とを行き来しておりました。その当時、ご修業を通して故・岸田英山先生から様々なお勉強をいただく機会に恵まれました。以前、皆さまにもお話したことがありますが、あるとき英山先生のみ魂より、「今の会員たちは自分のことばかりしか考えなくて、だれも教会のことを考えなくなった」とメッセージをいただきました。

このお言葉により、私は米国ゲダツ教会で何をすべきか、何が求められているのか、直ちに理解することができました。その後、ロサンゼルス教会に専従として着任した私は、英山先生からいただいたメッセージを基に、「米国会員が米国教会を自分たちの教会として、自らの責任と努力で運営し、自立していくこと」をビジョンに、また私自身のゴールに決めました。そこに向かうことが自分の役目だと感じておりました。

しかし身近なところからの改善に着手したものの、私の拙い英語力ではうまく表現しきれない課題が多々あり、大きな壁に向かう悪戦苦闘の日々でした。

2011年の夏、英山先生が次の助言をくださいました。「あなたが誠実に努力を続けているなら、近い将来、あなたの目の前に良い協力者が現れるでしょう」

その秋、サクラメントの大祭でテキサスから来たジョイス・リードさんに会いました。ジョイスに会った瞬間、彼女が英山先生が言われた「協力者」だと直感的に確信しました。

以来、ジョイスから助けられてきました。まず、彼女はニュースレターの改変に取り組んでくれました。その刷新されたニュースレターが、積極的で革新的なムードを全世帯の会員たちに広めていってくれたのです。

徐々に協力の輪が広がり、組織的には「地域委員会」が設立されました。特にそれ以降、今や教会の運営は会員自身によって計画され実行されています。昨年は会員たちの努力が結集し、米国教会70周年の節目を見事に輝かせました。誰にとっても喜びと誇りに満ちた忘れられない体験が生まれました。私にとっても忘れられない思い出です。

さまざまな面で、私たちの教会は今日ほかに進展を遂げ、自立しました。今後さらに成長に向かっていくものと思います。この背後には、会員たちの努力に応じ、見えない世界からのサポートがあったと確信します。だからこそ、皆さんが心をついにし、明確なビジョンと共通のゴールを抱くとき、そこに向かう道は自ずと開かれていくことと信じているのです。

カリフォルニアで過ごした多くの美しい瞬間、楽しい思い出、磨き石となった困難の数々を、私の宝としてまいります。皆さまお一人お一人にお世話になりましたこと、夫婦共々、心より感謝申し上げます。

日本語ページは今月号で 終了させていただきます

ゲダツ・コンパニオンにおける日本語ページは、編集人・山田一雄開教師が米国教会からハワイ教会に異動する機会を捕らえ、本8月号をもって終了とさせていただきますことになりました。

日本語読者層の減少に伴い新世代層の比率が増え、当教会が発信するビデオによる日本語講話をはじめ、In Touch メールやインターネットを通じた情報ソースへの需要が増えたこと。さらに日本語会員には引き続き「解脱誌」が提供されることから、このたびの決定に至りました。長らくご愛読いただきました皆さまには厚く感謝申し上げますと共に、ご理解たまわりますようお願い申し上げます。なお、9月号から日本語ページを除いた全8ページのコンパニオンに移行します。引き続きご愛読たまわりますようお願い申し上げます。



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Sam Okimura** of the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church. Sam was introduced to Gedatsu through his older brother, **Tom**. A widower and retired carpenter by trade, Sam keeps busy with a number of hobbies and creative interests.

When his beloved Japanese pine tree died, he cut it up to create a number of artistic sculptures. He loves to keep fit at the gym and at home, cook barbecue and entertain his grown children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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(Dawn Breaks – continued from page 6)

Last year, the efforts, dedication, and teamwork by the members culminated in a brilliant achievement: the successful celebration of the milestone 70th Anniversary of Gedatsu Church USA. This remains one of the most joyful and unforgettable experiences for me.

Signs of a dynamic new phase

In various ways, our church is much improved today. Now, in the Los Angeles and Sacramento churches, **Rev. Naoya** and **Minister-trainee Mica** are demonstrating their creative young power and energy. I have every confidence that they will spiritually lead our U.S. churches in ways that will enable our Gedatsu teaching to shine.

And our church officers and leaders are running this church as their own, putting forth their effort, and standing on their own feet. When the leaders of the church unite and see a clear vision and goal, it naturally opens the way for further dynamic development and advancement. Although our church

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services are not currently being held, our church leaders in Los Angeles and Sacramento continue to work in new and creative ways to engage and keep members informed and supported.

I believe that behind our progress and advances, we have received help and support from the invisible world – which continues as we put forth our full effort to help ourselves and others.

Yoko and I will never forget the many memorable and fun moments – as well as valuable challenges – we've experienced in our years in California. They are our treasures.

We extend our sincere appreciation to each one of you. God bless you!