



GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA

www.gedatsu-usa.org

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Our mind creates either
our happiness or unhappiness.
Our future depends on
our thoughts and attitude today."*

We all desire a happy life. But the reality is that we all have ups and downs in life.

If we complain or blame others when things do not go smoothly, we will never be able to have a good life.

No matter what difficulties we may have, if we accept the current situation as it is, fix what must be fixed and do our best, we will be able to live a happy life.

Whether we will be happy or not depends on our thoughts and attitude.

UPCOMING CHURCH ACTIVITIES

After a year and a half of restricted gatherings and strict health protocols, our Gedatsu churches will commence a "soft reopening" in August, consisting of a combination of in-person and virtual services.

Our aim is to promote a healthy, safe environment. It is up to each individual and family to decide if the time is right to participate.

AUGUST 2021

"Never Forgotten" Memorial Services – Virtual

Sacramento Spiritual Center – Sunday, August 1, at 10 a.m.

Los Angeles Church – Sunday, August 8, at 10 a.m.

Appreciation and *Benzaiten* Service – In Person

Los Angeles Church – Sunday, August 15, at 10 a.m.

(Sermon on YouTube)

Sacramento Spiritual Center – Sunday, August 29, at 9:30 a.m.

Outdoor *Benzaiten* Service. Clean-up/prep for Fall Festival

SEPTEMBER 2021



Fall Grand Festival – In Person and Virtual

Sacramento Spiritual Center – Sunday, September 5, at 10 a.m.

Members are invited to attend. Read details on page 2.

"Never Forgotten" Memorial Services - Virtual

Sunday, September 12, at 10 a.m.

Los Angeles Church and Sacramento Spiritual Center

Appreciation and *Higan* Service – In Person

Los Angeles Church – Sunday, September 19, at 10 a.m.

(Sermon on YouTube)



Fall Grand Festival Sunday, September 5, at 10 a.m. Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento

As part of the “soft reopening” of our church, a scaled-back three-part program – *Gochi* Sanctuary Service, Memorial Tower Ceremony and *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony – will be conducted.

- Members are invited to attend.
- Health and safety protocols will be observed.
- The event will be livestreamed and videorecorded for those who wish to participate from home.
- *Saito Goma* plaques will be limited to only those who attend. Applications for plaques (available from your local church) are due by August 15.
- A free box lunch will be served. Reserve a lunch by August 15 by contacting:
 - Sacramento Spiritual Center:
Mica Rodriguez (916) 363-6054
gedatsuchurchsac@gmail.com
- A free chartered bus from Los Angeles will leave the L.A. Church on Saturday night. Contact **Marylin Nakamura** at the L.A. Church by August 29 to reserve a seat. (626-288-1212 or naka5haru@gmail.com)



Manbu Kuyo Service Application

Twice a year, as part of the Gedatsu Spring and Fall Grand Festivals in Japan, a memorial rite is conducted on the *Goreichi* holy grounds to liberate all spirits from suffering and to transform them into protective spirits. If you would like to apply for *Manbu Kuyo*, complete the application form (inserted in this issue) and submit it by August 29. Our ministers can explain the significance of the service and the various categories on the form.



August “Never Forgotten” Online 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.

Currently, our “Never Forgotten” services are video recorded and viewable at the time of each service on the Gedatsu YouTube site. A digital link to the video is emailed to members prior to the service.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, August 1, 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 8, 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, Shoji Kusumoto, Haku Michigami, Glenn Mizuki, Jim Nakamura, Toku Nishi, Masakazu Oishi, Margaret Masako Oyanagi, Umeko Sasano, Shizuye Shiroishi, Charles Stoner, Kijiro Taniguchi, Yuki Tanji, Nora Ayako Toguchi, Chohei Tomita and Tomoe Toyama**.

Obituary

Sacramento Spiritual Center sadly reports the loss of long-time member, **Dan Taneyuki Harada**, who passed away on December 18, 2020, at the age of 97. He is preceded in death by his wife **Mary**, who passed in August last year. Dan is survived by their sons, **Dave** and **Wayne**, and daughter-in-law, **Raquel**.



Congratulations! 2021 Graduates Honored

Eight new graduates – the children and grandchildren of Gedatsu members – were recognized by the Gedatsu Church with congratulatory letters and Amazon gift cards, sponsored by the Sunday schools of the Los Angeles Church and Sacramento Spiritual Center.

Although we cannot honor them in person at this time, please join us in celebrating the lives and accomplishments of these outstanding students and wishing them further success and happiness in their future endeavors!

Los Angeles Gedatsu Church



From left: Justin Kim, Cameron Kuritani, Tyler Young

Justin Kim, 18, graduated from high school and is preparing to enter San Diego State University. He aspires to graduate with a degree in Kinesiology with plans to go to medical school and become a doctor. He was recognized for academic excellence (GPA of 4.0) and varsity volleyball defensive MVP. He enjoys sports, video games and hanging out with friends. His parents, he says, are his heroes. Parents: **Karen** and **Brad Kim**. Grandparents: **Victor** and **Marian Mizokami**.

Cameron Kuritani, 18, graduated from high school and will enter University of California at Berkeley in the fall. He graduated *summa cum laude*, was recognized as an Ignatian Scholar and achieved Eagle Scout rank. His hobbies include spending time with friends and family, watching sports and exercising, and he enjoys sports, watching movies and hiking. He cites his dad as his hero. Parents: **Kevin** and **Camille Kuritani**. Grandparents: **Ken** and **Ikuko Kuritani**.

Tyler Young, 12, graduated from elementary school and enters middle school in the fall, with his sights on a college education. He enjoys playing baseball, basketball and video games. Jackie Robinson is his hero. Parents: **Wendy** and **Patrick Young**. Grandparents: **Howard** and **Carole Tsujimura**.

Sacramento Spiritual Center



From left: Danielle Mullins, Kess Reano, Nathan Sebe

Danielle Mullins, 21, graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Southern California, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, majoring in Film and Television Production. Future career goals include working in the film and animation industry as a writer, producer or editor. Danielle enjoys making artwork, writing and playing piano, as well as watching films, going to the beach and hanging out with friends. Her hero is her dad. Parents: **Sherri** and **Mark Mullins**. Grandparents: **Sadako** and **Steve Taketa**.

Kess Reano, 14, graduated from middle school and was recognized for a 4.0 GPA in academics and citizenship for 8th grade. She aspires to attend college and become a chef, with the dream of one day owning a restaurant. Her hobbies include dance, tennis, cooking and baking. Parents: **Rich** and **Tami Reano**. Grandparents: **Sam** and **Harriet Sekikawa**.

Nathan Sebe, 14, graduated from middle school and will enter high school in the fall, aspiring to a college education. He enjoys rock climbing and playing video games and likes reading and math. He cites his grandfather, **Rev. Sebe**, as his hero. Parents: **Jason Detwiler** and **Joy Sebe**. Grandparents: **Akira** and **Sumiko Sebe** and **Daryl** and **Elaine Detwiler**.

(Continued on back page)



Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo – #3

Selected and translated by **Rev. Hisakazu Taki** from
“The Teachings of Master Gedatsu Kongo”

- ⊗ Everything has its cause. One’s goodwill will produce good results, and one’s malicious thought will bring forth negative results.
- ⊗ Mindfulness is the base of our Gedatsu practice.
- ⊗ A large society consists of middle societies, a middle society consists of small societies, a small society consists of families, and a family consists of a husband and a wife. That is why it is critical to deepen mutual understanding between husband and wife.
- ⊗ To raise healthy children who will contribute to humankind’s happiness and world peace is the sacred task of parents.
- ⊗ Our mind creates the world. A new world exists in our mind. With this awareness, we try to establish the best world. We will then be born again as a new person in a new era. We must devote ourselves wholeheartedly to discard selfishness and create a new world.
- ⊗ We should rely on no one but ourselves. Build an attitude of self-reliance and take advantage of your characteristics. Do not rely on old people. Do not imitate others but create a new life as a spiritually awakened new person in the new era.
- ⊗ When we do our best in our duties with love and compassion according to the Universal Law, God certainly helps us. So, don’t be afraid of anything. This is the only law humans should follow.
- ⊗ Where there’s a will, there’s a way. We must not hesitate to do whatever helps us grow and improve.
- ⊗ Do not be attached to old customs but make rapid progress.
- ⊗ When we pray sincerely, we will fully love others. When we love others deeply, we will accomplish what should be done. When we sincerely try our best, we will advance furthest. When we sincerely put forth our best efforts in our duties under divine guidance, we can accomplish whatever we aim to accomplish.
- ⊗ To cultivate self-knowledge is the foundation of human knowledge and the very root of morality.
- ⊗ Optimists strive to harmonize with everything in the universe and make progress toward the best and most beautiful purpose.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 14

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *Will God help us when we pray?*

A Master Gedatsu Kongo stated:

“When and wherever a sincere prayer is offered, through the grace and compassion of God, regardless of any human sufferings and diseases, these will be resolved completely. This is really a wonder.”

Therefore, it can be said that God will help us when we sincerely pray to Him. However, it does not mean that God will fulfill whatever we want when we pray. We should understand this point clearly.

God permeates the universe and is always working. The movement of celestial bodies, four seasonal changes, growth of plants and animals, our heartbeat, digestion of food, etc. --- these are all the workings of God. Thus, God always works and allows everything in the universe to exist. We are already blessed by God as long as we exist. When we appreciate the blessings of God and live according with His will, we will be guided towards a life of joy and happiness.

We should understand that our present existence is already the blessing of God. Therefore, we should be grateful for being alive. When we sincerely pray to God with appreciation, we will be protected and guided by God most appropriately. We will then be able to attain true peace and happiness.

Q *Why should we study Gedatsu?*

A Gedatsu is the path of peace and happiness for everyone. We humans are more or less egotistical. This selfish attitude causes various sufferings and conflicts with other people. In order to avoid troubles and conflicts with others and to live happily, we should examine ourselves deeply and be aware of our selfishness.

If we look deeply into our existence, we become aware that our existence is not possible without many blessings from everything on earth. First, our life is not created by our own will. It is a gift from God, or the Universal Life, through our parents and ancestors. In our daily lives, we consume many things. We breathe the air, drink water, receive sunlight, live in a house, drive a car, etc. Thus, our everyday life is already a blessing of everything in the universe.

When we become aware of this, we will naturally feel grateful to all people and things for their blessings and start to live a life of appreciation and gratitude. We will then be more considerate of others. This realization will lead everyone to true happiness. This is the Gedatsu life.

Q *What benefit do we gain through studying Gedatsu?*

A The benefit you can gain through studying Gedatsu is untold. But this does not mean that you can get whatever you want if you study Gedatsu.

One of the essential points we should learn in our Gedatsu study is “*unconditional appreciation*.” When we get what we want, or when things go smoothly, we feel happy and grateful. But it may be hard for us to be appreciative when something unfavorable happens to us. Master Gedatsu Kongo encouraged us to accept whatever happens to us with appreciation as a challenge or a lesson for us to improve ourselves. Even when we have a moment of difficulty, who knows the outcome in the future? Therefore, it is important to accept whatever happens to us and do our best in the current situation. This is the path towards our true happiness and prosperity.

We can learn and acquire this secret of happiness through studying Gedatsu.





First Annual *Ryujin* Festival Honors the Great Water Dragon Guardian of Hawaiian Islands

In June, under the brilliant blue skies of Honolulu and in the serene oceanfront garden setting of the Gedatsu Church of Hawaii, members and friends gathered in June to offer prayers of appreciation for the blessings of water and protections they receive from the great water dragon guardian, *Ame-Hachidai-Ryu-Oujin*.*

Ryu-Oujin, or the great dragon gods, are recognized as divine gods who control the function of water in the heavens and the earth, serving the supreme god of the universe and working to protect all creatures on earth. **Master Gedatsu Kongo** recognized *Ame Hachidai Ryu-Oujin* as the divine protector of the Hawaiian Islands. Its importance to the Hawaii Church is indicated by its enshrinement next to the Universal Life Force, *Tenjinchigi*, on the church altar, which was done under the direction of the late **Tekenori Okano sensei**.

Led by **Rev. Kazuo Yamada**, the ceremony inaugurated the *Ryujin* Festival as an annual church event. While reciting the Heart Sutra and offering holy tea blessing for all spirits connected to the Hawaiian Islands, members sprinkled holy tea throughout the grounds, praying for the purification and happiness of all spirits.

In his remarks, Rev. Yamada stressed the important and special role of the Gedatsu Church of Hawaii in honoring the great guardian deity of Hawaii.

* The guardian spirit is also enshrined in the pond on the *Goreichi* grounds of the Sacramento Spiritual Center. The various spellings of the water dragon gods refer to their many types and unique names.

“The *Ryujin* guardian moves freely throughout the heavens and the earth, creating the atmospheric flow of moving clouds, blowing winds and rains,” Rev. Yamada said. “In this way, *Ryujin* contributes to the continual enrichment and development of the earth. Therefore, our very existence and spiritual growth as human beings depend on the critical role played by *Ryujin*.”

“By honoring *Ryujin* and paying respect to its natural powers, its divine spirit has been activated in our lives. With its support, whatever we attempt to do can be achieved more easily and speedily and with more positive outcomes. When we put forth effort in our activities and work for the well-being of others, we will be supported by the dragon gods.”

“Now that we have inaugurated an annual *Ryujin* Festival, I expect the guidance and protection from the dragon gods will become stronger and clearer.”



Gedatsu Church of Hawaii members and friends gathered to celebrate the *Ryujin* Festival. Top photo: Congregants offer their prayers and thanks. Bottom photo: Participants enjoy a potluck luncheon and their bonds of fellowship.

JUNE 2021 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$675

General: M/M D. Tsuboi, M/M J. Horner, M. Rodriguez

Southern California Total: \$4,955

General: M/M K. Chinen, M/M M. Hamada, M/M M. Ishida, T. Ishida, S. Kaku, J. Mah, M/M T. Matsumoto, H. Mukai, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, K. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, A. Okimura, T. Okimura, H. Taki, M/M H. Tsujimura, R. Wynn

Special Acknowledgments

J. Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" service
M/M S. Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" service
M/M M. Hamada	"Never Forgotten" for Harry Arakawa and Ben Toguchi
S. Kaku	"Never Forgotten" for Mitsuko Kaku
J. Shiroishi	Appreciation for <i>Goshimpo</i> and wheelchair
J. Ito	In memory of Teruko Nakamura
Do. Shiroishi	Appreciation for Father's Day service and Mother Kiyota Memorial service
I. Long	In memory of Teruko Nakamura
De. Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" for Hidekichi and Tsuna Shiroishi, Philip Nakamura and Yoshiko Otera
T. Ishida	Knee surgery
K. Nakamura	Larry Nakamura memorial service

Online Donations: Total: \$558

General: D. Monroe, N. Tsuboi, M/M S. Shiroishi, M/M P. Reid, H. Tsujimura, M/M A. Akashi

Special Acknowledgments

D. Sebe	"Never Forgotten" for Sumiko Sebe
T. Reano	Appreciation for new job (Tami) and 8 th grade graduation (Kess)

Stock Gifts: Total: \$20,261

Anonymous Value of 100 shares of NovoCure stock donated to Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund (*Hosankai*)

Note: Special Acknowledgments are listed for gifts \$100+. Dollar amounts are shown for gifts \$500+.

SPECIAL GIFTS

Extraordinary Gifts Benefit L.A. and Sacramento Churches, Members

Our L.A. and Sacramento churches are the recipients of major donations totaling more than \$220,000 by **Senior Reverend Akira Sebe** and **Senior Deacon Jackson Ito**. Each benefactor donated 1,000 shares of stock last year to the church's Heizaburo Kobayashi Memorial Fund – when each gift was valued at \$173,000 – stipulating that the stock be sold when share values reached \$210,000. That was reached in June.

Of his \$210,000 gift, Rev. Sebe wishes to allocate \$100,000 to the L.A. Church general fund "in appreciation to the L.A. Church and members for the kindness and support he and his family received during the lean years of the church." He also allocates \$50,000 each to both Sacramento and L.A. churches for repairs and improvements and \$10,000 for the U.S.-born Minister Endowment Fund.

Of his \$210,000 gift, Jackson requests that \$100,000 be allocated to the Sacramento Church general fund, \$100,000 for the *Goreichi* Care Fund to purchase a tractor and for repairs and improvements of the Sacramento Spiritual Center, and \$10,000 for the U.S.-born Minister Endowment Fund.

"Our Gedatsu Church is truly humbled and honored to receive these extraordinary gifts," said **Joyce Reid**, chair of the Board of Directors. "We value the trust that Rev. Sebe and Deacon Ito have placed in us and promise to use these transformational gifts in accord with their hearts and wishes."

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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Yuri Elvin** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church. A noted, prolific artist, Yuri works in the entertainment industry, and his artworks appear in set decorations for TV and film, as well as in private collections and commissions.

Deeply sensitive to the movement of spirits, Yuri was introduced to Gedatsu 15 years ago after an impactful spiritual experience. “The lessons, philosophy and holy tea changed my life,” says Elvin. “Gedatsu has shown me how to have gratitude, control of my life and peace.”

Editorial Staff

Joyce Reid, Editor

Rev. Naoya Okano, adviser

Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training, adviser

Editorial contributors to this issue:

Yuri Elvin, **Dave Ide**, **Sr. Deacon Jackson Ito**, **Sr. Rev. Akira Sebe**, **Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi**, **Rev. Hisakazu Taki**, **Deacon June Tanaka**, **Rev. Kazuo Yamada**



Grace Sells

(Graduates Honored – Continued from page 3)

Grace Sells, 22, graduated with honors (Indira Nair Award for Excellence in Global Studies) from Carnegie Mellon University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Global Studies and minoring in Art. She plans to enter Vanderbilt University in the fall with career plans to become a nurse-midwife. She enjoys drawing, running, cooking and playing with her pets. Her interests include art and women’s health. Martin Luther King, Jr., is her hero. Parents: **Debra** and **Stanley Sells**. Grandparents: **Ritsuko** and **Roy Nakatani**.



Leslie Tanaka

Leslie Tanaka, 22, graduated from Whittier College with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Chemistry (with ACS certification) and minoring in Math and Physics. She plans to enter a career in research in Atmospheric Chemistry, with an emphasis on Analytical Chemistry. Her honors include California Tau Chapter of Pi Mu Epsilon national math honors society, Nu Mu Rho Whittier College chemistry honors society, and ACS 2019 Undergraduate Award in Analytical Chemistry. Leslie enjoys gaming, drawing, and talking with friends. Her role models include Dr. Christina Bauer, college advisor, and Dr. Peter Peterson, research professor. Parents: **Calvin** and **Stacie Tanaka**. Grandparents: **Sadaye** and **Karl Tanaka**; **Muneo** and **Kaneko Hatae**.