



GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"We can learn sincerity
by observing Nature. Sincerity is the
basic moral we should follow."*

By closely observing the workings
of Nature, we realize that Nature has
been operating with great accuracy
since time immemorial.

We humans have been allowed to
live and be nurtured by Nature, which
works unconditionally and bestows its
immeasurable blessings equally on all.
No one is excluded from its blessings,
no matter what kind of person he or
she may be.

This is God's will. We are always
held in God's unconditional love.
When we become aware of the infinite
love of God, we will start living an
authentic human life.

NOTICE: Our churches continue their "soft reopening," consisting of a combination of in-person and virtual services. Schedules are subject to change, based on community health conditions. Watch for updates.

OCTOBER 2021

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service Zoom – Regional Board Meeting
Sun	10	9:30 am	In Person – Appreciation Service
Tue	12		Church Closed (in lieu of Columbus Day)
Sun	24	9:30 am	In Person – Appreciation / All Souls Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	10	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	12		Church Closed (in lieu of Columbus Day)
Sun	17	10:00 am	In Person – Appreciation / <i>Ujigami</i> Service
Thu	21		Zoom – Regional Board Meeting

NOVEMBER 2021

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service Zoom – Regional Board Meeting
Sun	14	9:30 am	In Person – Appreciation Service / Gedatsu Kongo Memorial Service
Thu – Fri	25 – 26		Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)
Sun	28	9:00 am	7-5-3 Children's Celebration – TBD
		9:30 am	In Person – Appreciation Service / Gedatsu Kongo Birthday

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7		In Person – Appreciation Service / Gedatsu Kongo's Service
Sun	14	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Thu	18		Zoom – Regional Board Meeting
Sun	21	10:00 am	7-5-3 Children's Celebration – TBD
Thu – Fri	25 – 26		Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)



October “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, October 3, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kazuko Nakayama, Shane Holland, Yasuichi Sebe, Clarence Aiona, Sadako Taketa, Yoshi Tanaka, Motoji Ide, and Shinji Kobayashi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, October 10, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Teruko Arakawa, Richard Hiroshi Kikuchi, Tomiko Konishi, Suzuko Mallek, Mariko Michiuye, Kiyoko Nagahama, Kazuya Nagura, Hiroshi Nakaguchi, Shizuya Nakaguchi, Hen Kim Nghe, Peggy Ogawa, Takashi Okazaki, Toki Kotake Shiroishi, Harumi Tanji, Tsugio Tanji, Robert Toshiaki Tomita, and Mariko Maria Tsuruta.**

Order Your Holy Tea Plaques Now

Your *Amacha* holy tea plaques should be replaced at the beginning of each year. To have new plaques by New Year 2022, complete the order form inserted in this newsletter and mail it by November 1 to your local church with your check for payment.

Obituary

The Los Angeles Gedatsu Church mourns the loss of **Aaron Chodor**, who passed away on August 3 at the age of 29. Aaron is survived by his wife, **Kara**, their children, **Aurora** (7) and **Hunter** (5), and his parents, **Norman** and **Sherrie Chodor**. Private services for Aaron were held at the L.A. Gedatsu Church.



Children Ages 7, 5 and 3 to Be Celebrated

In November, Gedatsu members in L.A. and Sacramento will observe the *Shichi-Go-San* Festival, the traditional Japanese celebration for the well-being and healthy futures of children ages seven, five and three. So, if you have children, grandchildren, nieces/nephews of those ages, complete the application form available from your local church office to honor the children.

The 7-5-3 Celebration will be held on the following dates:

Los Angeles – Sunday, November 21

Sacramento – Sunday, November 28

Community health conditions at that time will determine whether the celebrations will be held indoors, outside, drive thru or by other means. Watch for updates.

Renew Your Church Membership for 2022

Annual Membership: Renewable annually

Individual \$45

Family \$70

Lifetime Membership: Pay your membership dues just once, instead of paying annually

Individual \$450

Family \$600

Pay Online or by Mail

- To pay online – by credit card or ACH/bank payment – go to the Membership page on the church website at www.gedatsu-usa.
- Or mail your check – made payable to Gedatsu Church USA – to your nearest church branch.

Year-End Membership Roster – Any Changes?

If you moved, changed your phone number, added or changed your email address, be sure to advise **Rev.**

Naoya Okano at the L.A. Church so that your correct information is published in the 2022 “Seasons Greetings” Membership Roster.

We especially want your current email address, so we can send you the latest church communications, special email bulletins and announcements. All changes must be received by December 1. You can email Rev. Naoya at naoya_okano@gedatsu-usa.org, call at (626) 288-1212, or text at (626) 233-2359.



Back-to-School Backpack Giveaway Supports Community Youths, Families

As part of its community outreach program, the regional board of the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church organized a backpack giveaway program to help area youths and families get ready for the new school year.

“The backpack giveaway idea grew from our desire to show support and care for our community youth, who have faced educational and other challenges during the many COVID months,” says **Mariko Elizabeth Locheo**, who was hired by the board to serve as the L.A. Church’s community project coordinator.

“From the advice of principals, teachers, and leaders in the community, we identified 100 students who would greatly benefit from receiving a new backpack, basic school supplies, and a gift card for Target or Walmart to start the new school year,” says Mariko.

Seventy-nine backpacks were given to the families during a recent one-day drive-thru event at the church, and the remaining backpacks were delivered to families who lacked transportation.

“Parents and guardians of the selected families have thanked us over and over for giving their children this boost as they start the school year,” say **Mark** and **Marie Ishida**, regional board co-chairs. “We can all be proud of this effort to help our community families.”



Gedatsu Young Adults “Get Social” on Zoom

“Thank you” to Northern California members **Avalon Akashi** and **Courtney Ide** for organizing the first Young Adult Gedatsu Zoom Social, which recently convened online. While attendees identified with the Sacramento and Los Angeles Gedatsu churches, they called in from California, Washington and Tokyo! Attendees included four sibling pairs: **Avalon** and **James Akashi**, **Kayla** and **Kady Hirayama**, **Courtney** and **Chris Ide**, and **Pop** and **Ami Rodriguez**, along with **Jeff Mukai** and **Danielle Mullins**.

According to **Joy Sebe**, who serves as group adviser, everyone spent the hour getting to know each other better via fun icebreakers and games in breakout rooms. “Thank you for attending, everyone! The virtual meetings with people living in different states and countries are a silver lining of this pandemic,” says Joy. “Please stay tuned for details on the next meeting. We hope more of you will join us!”



Giveaway Drive-thru, photos, from top:

- Church volunteers assemble backpacks.
- In the church parking lot, they await the arrival of families.
- Selected families are greeted and identified.
- Backpacks are distributed.



Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #5

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

- ☉ The Divine Spirit will never help selfish, greedy individuals.
- ☉ Try to know who you really are. Be aware of your shortcomings. Self-conceit will bring forth nothing good for your life.
- ☉ Self-reflection opens the door to spiritual peace and enlightenment.
- ☉ If you forget to appreciate the immeasurable blessings you have received from everything in the universe, although you have human form, how can you be worthy of being a human?
- ☉ Gedatsu is to sincerely practice appreciation and gratitude through your daily activities.
- ☉ Gedatsu is to revere God and respect parents and ancestors.
- ☉ Gedatsu is to scrutinize yourself and get rid of selfishness.
- ☉ Gedatsu is to do your best with sincerity in your daily work.
- ☉ Gedatsu is to make the Universal Law a reality on earth.
- ☉ Do not criticize others without knowing yourself.
- ☉ Egoism ultimately poisons self, home and the world. Gedatsu encourages us to self-reflect and get rid of selfishness for the reformation of society.
- ☉ Gedatsu does not stick to old thoughts and customs. Stagnation is not acceptable in Gedatsu. Gedatsu neither falls into traditionalism nor follows new trends but harmonizes both for everyone's happiness. Gedatsu encourages us to see the world from a wide perspective.
- ☉ The Divine Spirit of the Universe resides wherever we sincerely pray.
- ☉ A family is the foundation of a nation. A couple is the base of morality.
- ☉ Gedatsu has no national boundary. Gedatsu goes beyond creed, and is equal and impartial to all people, regardless of race or nationality.





Lighting the Flame of Gedatsu in Our Minds

Fall Festival Address by **Reverend Yasunori Miyasaka**
Director of the Propagation Department, *Gedatsu-kai* Japan



Hello, everyone. I am Reverend Miyasaka of *Gedatsu-kai* Japan. On this occasion of the Fall Festival, I would like to say a few words.

I understand that because of concerns that COVID-19 has not yet been eradicated and the risk of infection during travel is high, attendance at the Festival will be limited. Unfortunately, I, too, am unable to travel to Sacramento, so I am delivering my address remotely for the ceremony. Thank you for your understanding.

The worldwide pandemic has continued for more than a year, and many precious lives have been lost. In Japan, the Tokyo Olympics, which had been postponed, was finally held under extremely difficult circumstances that required a great deal of thought. I believe this event must be considered an extraordinary experience for our world, from which we can learn many lessons for the future.

Through the Olympics and Paralympics, we have come to respect and be inspired by the sheer mental strength, courage and passion of all athletes who challenge the limits of physical ability.



As you know, the Olympic flame, a symbol of the Olympics, is lit at the sacred site of ancient Olympia in Greece. The special flame was initially kindled from the brightly shining sun, which burns in the heavenly skies as the source of life. The flame is then carefully passed by torchbearers to the venue site to light the Olympic cauldron.

Not only is the Olympic flame revered, but fire itself has been treated as sacred. Throughout the long history of humanity, fire has been worshipped as a god. This reverence for fire has been passed down from our ancestors and still exists within ourselves.

(Continued on page 6)

(Lighting the Flame – Continued from page 5)

It goes without saying that while fire is essential to life, it needs to be handled carefully because of its frightening power to destroy everything. When handled appropriately, however, there is nothing more beneficial than fire. By controlling fire well and using it effectively, humans have received countless benefits and blessings from it.

The history of humankind – including great and wealthy civilizations – all began with human's acquisition of fire. When we look around us, we see the many benefits that fire brings us, just as we benefit from food, clothing and shelter. In addition to these advantages in our daily lives, electric energy sustains industries thanks to thermal power.

I would like us to think about fire and its relationship to our lives and to life itself.



Our lives can be compared to candlelight. There are many kinds of candles – thick and thin ones, long and short ones. Some candles burn intensely, while other candles burn feebly. The flame on a sturdy, tall candle is bright and constant, but the flame on a thin, short candle flickers weakly, appearing as if it may go out at any moment. This sounds like the terms we use to describe our own lives.

Similarly, health conditions and vitality vary from person to person. No one can predict one's lifespan. Sometimes, an energetic, healthy person suddenly dies, whereas a person who is given a short time to live may miraculously live much longer.

Predicting one's life and death lies within a dimension beyond human comprehension. Mortality is a serious matter in which we are all concerned, but, in the end, we only can leave our lives to God. Our body is given to us by God, and we are allowed to live. When we realize this truth, do our best and let God do the rest, we can find our true way of life.

Our life is to the body as a flame is to a candle. Just as a candle flame glows until the wick is burnt, our flame of life is extinguished when our body has expired. In the same way, our bodies decay when the flame of life is burnt out.

The flame of life that lights our body has been passed down from our ancestors for generations without interruption. We are allowed to live at this very moment thanks to the flame with which we are blessed through our parents. Therefore, we honor and respect our parents by cherishing the life and body we were given. That becomes a path to "reverence toward God and ancestors."

It is said that a healthy body comes from a healthy spirit, and a healthy spirit dwells within a healthy body. So, putting forth effort to maintain one's mental and physical health becomes the basis for a happy life.

We cannot say that merely staying alive is enough to truly live the life of a human. Our humanity is expressed in what we create through our work and effort. And the quality of that expression depends on our mind.

So, what is the true way to live as human beings? Among each of us who are allowed to live at this very moment, there is no one whose life is without meaning. Each person has their own purpose in life, and each person has their own mission to accomplish in their lifetime. Therefore, we, who are allowed to live because of infinite blessings, should realize an important purpose of our life is to contemplate the specific tasks that are assigned to us.

(Continued on page 7)

(Lighting the Flame – Continued from page 6)

Gedatsu Kongo taught, “We are the fruit of countless blessings.” This is an important teaching for our self-awareness. We are able to live thanks to the infinite blessings we receive from our country, parents, teachers, society and all creation in the universe. We are indeed “the fruit of countless blessings.”

Like the well-known proverb, “time is money,” Gedatsu Kongo also taught the importance of time and the value of life by saying, “Time is a life of blessing.” We can deepen our understanding of the importance of time by recognizing that life is a fruit of blessings.

We exist thanks to profound and immeasurable blessings. Therefore, minute by minute, every moment is truly precious. The time we are given as a fruit of blessings is our vital life itself.

“Our life is nothing but to live with appreciation and gratitude.” When we think deeply upon these words by Gedatsu Kongo, we realize that the meaning and value of our life as a human is only in living with appreciation and gratitude.



As vital as the conveying of life from ancestors to descendants, the passing of the flame of religious belief that lights our minds is also valuable. Just as a flame requires a candle, the flame of religious belief and one’s life cannot exist separately. Religious faith is passed onto future generations only when one’s belief is sincere and practiced in daily life. If no one puts that faith into practice, it will disappear.

Therefore, as students of the Gedatsu teaching, let us be aware that we are allowed to live as “fruits of immeasurable blessings.” Let us serve with sincere appreciation and obligation, so that we are not swayed by selfish desire, overcome with anger, or create disharmony by our ego.

With appreciation in our hearts, let us strive to create a harmonious family and benefit society through our endeavors. Let us unite in putting forth our full effort to create happiness for others and world peace.

When we truly practice a life full of appreciation and gratitude, happiness will naturally come to us. That is the law of life. So, happiness is the natural result of practicing the Gedatsu teaching.



Just like the Olympic flame is passed from one torchbearer to another, we, too, should pass the valuable flame of Gedatsu to others, one by one. The Gedatsu teaching surely shows the path of life to true happiness and guides us to world peace. Therefore, let’s invite others to this Gedatsu teaching with the desire for their happiness and to light the flame of Gedatsu in their minds. That is the mission given to each of us, so let us keep this in our mind and practice it in our daily life. True happiness is joining together with others for world peace.

We are a team bonded by our Gedatsu teaching. Let each of us, from our own place, become a light that illuminates our surroundings. Let us elevate the value of our life and earnestly do our best for the benefit of society.

Finally, it seems that this difficult COVID-19 situation will continue for a while. I would like to conclude my remarks today by sincerely praying for your health and happiness. Thank you very much.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 16

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *Master Gedatsu Kongo stressed the importance of “unconditional appreciation.” What does that mean?*

A When something favorable happens to us, we are happy and feel thankful for that. But, when something undesirable happens, it is hard for us to appreciate it. However, Master Gedatsu Kongo encourages us to say thank you even when we have difficulties or hardships. This is completely different from ordinary human thoughts. But this is the most important point for our Gedatsu study. How can we accept this teaching then?

We usually think of everything for our own convenience. When things go favorably, we feel happy. But, when things do not go smoothly or when something difficult happens, we may grieve over the situation or curse the world. This is our usual way of thinking, but it is a self-centered way.

Please look into your existence closely. Your heart keeps beating all the time. Who makes your heartbeat? It's not you who makes your heart beat, is it? Your heart keeps functioning even while you are sleeping at night. It functions due to something beyond your will, which is the Universal Life Force. The same is true about the functions of your internal organs, circulation of blood, breathing, etc.

We are alive now. This fact of our life is totally due to the Life Force permeating throughout the universe. We are allowed to exist by this Universal Life Force.

When you are truly aware of this fact, you may understand that everything about your life is a gift from the Universal Life. The truth is, there is nothing meaningless in the world. Everything that happens to us has meaning. Everything is given by the Universal Life Force because it has meaning for our life. Therefore, we should accept everything as it is, and try our best in the current situation. We will then be guided in the most appropriate way.

This is the meaning of “Unconditional Appreciation,” which Gedatsu Kongo encourages us to practice in our life. It is because this way of life will lead to our true peace and happiness.

Q *Does God punish us?*

A Some religions stress Divine Punishment. This encourages people to live correctly with the fear of God's punishment. In contrast, Gedatsu stresses God's unconditional love for everyone.

Actually, when we meet with unexpected difficulties, we may sometimes wonder if that's God's punishment. But we should not fear it but, rather, we should believe in God's unconditional love for us. How can we believe in God's love?

Please closely observe how you live now. See that you are alive! You may have difficulties now, but don't forget that you are still alive. This is because God loves you 100 percent. If God does not love you and punishes you, you cannot be alive now! Don't you think so?

God always love us unconditionally. That's why we can be alive now. Don't forget this. Try your best in the current situation no matter how difficult it may be. You will then be able to overcome difficulties and become happy.

(Continued on page 9)

OUR GEDATSU STUDY

(Gedatsu Q&A – Continued from page 8)

Q *What is God's love for us?*

A God's love permeates the universe. When we closely observe every phenomenon in the universe, we see God's love is everywhere. Four seasonal changes, the constant movement of celestial bodies, activities of various living things--- how miraculous they are! When we observe ourselves more closely, we will see miracles in our existence. Look closely at our heartbeat, blood circulation, functions of internal organs, breathing, movement of our limbs, eyesight, thoughts, etc. They are all possible because of God's unconditional love for us.

We may encounter hardships sometimes and may think they are God's punishment. But they are not. They are all lessons or challenges for us to improve. No matter what difficulties we may have now, why don't we accept them as lessons to learn or challenges to grow and try our best in the current situation. We will then be guided most appropriately and become happy.

Never forget that God always love us unconditionally.



AROUND OUR CHURCH



Community Building thru Wednesday Nite Zoom

By Joy Sebe

"Heads up! The kids are coming back with high energy in 30 seconds!"

This is a now familiar statement in the weekly Wednesday Zoom call just before the kids' breakout room closes. The weekly call has become a comforting routine for many Gedatsu members during the pandemic. We have met new people, gotten to know each other better, provided updates, and dedicated time to pray for loved ones who are living and who have passed.

We started the 30-min Zoom calls a year ago now, in September 2020, and have had 50+ calls so far. In the beginning, we designed for access and inclusion for our more senior and primarily Japanese-speaking members. My dad (**Sr. Rev. Akira Sebe**), **Mica Sensei** or I had 1:1 meetings to ensure that senior members learned the technology necessary to access the meeting, and hosted Japanese-speaking pre-calls with social time and special prayers.

As members got comfortable, we transitioned to only one call that starts at 7 p.m. Over the past year, we have shared our pandemic hobbies (puzzles from **Mr. and Mrs. Sam Sekikawa**), looked forward to waving at **Mrs. Sadaye Tanaka**, marveled at **Mrs. Ritsuko Nakatani's** technical savvy and laughed as we tried out different Zoom and Snapchat filters and backgrounds.

We also have a breakout room for the kids that we jokingly call "Wednesday Sunday School," where the kids play games like Hangman with ridiculously hard-to-guess answers like their video game usernames (e.g., ChocolateBunny613!). When their breakout room is done, they suddenly appear in our rooms and look bored because the adults are having "serious" or "uninteresting" conversations.

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(Zoom – continued from page 9)

Amidst the levity, we look forward to listening to **Rudy Tsujimura** about how his chemo is going, have mourned the loss of members like **Buster Ide** and **Victoria Bartos**, and have prayed for members battling cancer and illness. We have listened to internment camp experiences and references to the 442nd Infantry of Japanese-American soldiers who fought in WWII from **Dennis Tsuboi**, Rudy and others. We have shared fears about the increase in anti-Asian hate crimes and measures to protect the L.A. and Sacramento churches, as well as our senior members.

These virtual meetings have allowed us to gather members across different states, including California, Washington, New Jersey, and most recently Hawaii.

When my family took a recent trip to Oahu, we attended a service at the Honolulu Gedatsu Church. At the last minute, realizing that many members would love to see **Yamada Sensei** and **Yoko-san**, I texted the Zoom group and asked them to join a call later that day. Sacramento and Los Angeles members got to meet Honolulu members (see photo) and were so excited to see Rev. Yamada and Yoko. It felt like we got to take the Gedatsu family with us on our vacation.



From the Gedatsu Church in Hawaii, Joy Sebe shares her screen with Yamada Sensei and Yoko to say “hello” to the Zoom group on the U.S. Mainland.

Geography limited my family’s connection to the church community after we moved to Seattle. The virtual meetings have provided an opportunity to get to know each other better, stay connected, and join in prayer in a way that is manageable for our busy schedules. Please join us for our next prayer every Wednesday at 7pm PT. We would all LOVE to see you!

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89182635066>
Meeting ID: 891 8263 5066



Zoom participants from different states wave “Hello!” Participants from top left to right in descending rows: Ritsuko Nakatani, Joy Sebe, Senior Reverend Akira Sebe, Dave Ide, Sam (and Harriet, not pictured) Sekikawa, Sherri Mullins, Sally McSwain, Deacon Rudy Tsujimura, Dennis and Judy Tsuboi, Pauline Akashi, Nancy and John Horner, Noah Sebe and Jason Detwiler, Flo Dyson, Delphine Sebe, Sadaye Tanaka and Deacon June Tanaka, and Senior Deacon Jackson Ito.

AUGUST 2021 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$5,415

General Donations: M/M D. Tsuboi, M/M J. Horner, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, D/A Sekikawa, R. Tateishi, S. Nishino, S. Taketa, S. Tanaka, M/M S. Sekikawa, Anonymous

Special Acknowledgments

Dave/Penny Ide	"Never Forgotten" Appreciation
Jackson Ito	<i>Saito Goma</i> and <i>Fudo</i> Appreciation (\$500)
Ted Bartos	In memory of Victoria Bartos (\$500)
Sam/Harriet Sekikawa	In memory of Buster Ide
Jackson Ito	"Never Forgotten" service (\$600)
Kenneth Tateishi	Appreciation for facility rental (\$700)
June Tanaka	In memory of Susie Tateishi
Jackson Ito	<i>Benzaiten</i> appreciation (\$500)
June Tanaka	<i>Benzaiten</i> appreciation
Dave/Penny Ide	<i>Benzaiten</i> appreciation
Teruko Goto	In memory of Susie Tateishi
Maribel Macias	Appreciation for use of space (\$500)

Southern California Total: \$6,457

General: C. Barthel, M/M K. Chinen, M/M N. Chodor, T. Ishida, S. Kaku, I. Kawamura, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, T. Misumi, M/M V. Mizokami, T. Murakami, M/M L. Muronaka, P. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, M/M N. Okano, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, G. Tomita, M/M R. Tsujimura, T. Yamada

Special Acknowledgments

Yoko Oishi	"Never Forgotten" for Masakazu Oishi and Haku Michigami
Howard Tsujimura	60 th Anniversary
Howard Tsujimura	In memory of Yoko Tsujimura
Florence Sueyoshi	"Never Forgotten" for Ben and Nora Toguchi, Harry Arakawa
Victor Mizokami	"Never Forgotten"
Donna Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" for Shizuye Shiroishi, Shige Ishida
Debbie Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" for Shizuye Shiroishi, Shige Ishida
Jackson Ito	"Never forgotten" service
Julie Mah	In memory of Margaret Oyanagi
Julie Mah	In memory of atomic bomb victims
JoAnn Shiroishi	Re-opening of L.A. Church
Tina Hamada	"Never Forgotten" for Nora Toguchi
Jackson Ito	Appreciation to <i>Benzaiten</i> (\$500)
Diana Mukai	Appreciation to <i>Benzaiten</i>
Toyoko Murakami	"Never Forgotten" for Tomoe Toyama
Tadao Ishida	"Never Forgotten" for Shige Ishida
Sherrie Chodor	Aaron Chodor Memorial Service
Debbie Shiroishi	Aaron Chodor Memorial Service
Hisakazu Taki	Appreciation for Fall Festival
Adrienne Tomita	Tomita and Katako family ancestor blessing
Alice Yokota	Tomita and Katako family ancestor blessing

Online Donations: Total: \$380

General: N. Tsuboi, Scott Shiroishi, M/M P. Reid, H. Tsujimura

Special Acknowledgments

Sachiyo Matsumoto	"Never Forgotten" for Shoji Kusumoto
Lisa/Tom Shepherd	"Never Forgotten" in loving memory of Susie Tateishi



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like long-time L.A. Church member **Bruce Mizokami**, who lives in San Clemente with his wife **Sylvia**. They are “blessed,” Bruce says, to be parents of four children, two grandsons and a granddaughter due in November.

“The Gedatsu teaching has been my guide throughout my life’s journey,” says Bruce, who was raised in Gedatsu by his parents, the late **Tomiko** and **Roy Mizokami**. “At times, I have strayed from living in a state of gratitude, as I was taught to do. But I have found that at my low points, focusing on sincere appreciation and gratitude has pulled me up and out of self-pity and negative thoughts.”

Editorial Staff

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Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training, adviser

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Avalon Akashi, **Sherrie Chodor**, **Dave Ide**, **Marie Ishida**, **Mark Ishida**, **Mariko Locheo**, **Reverend Yasunori Miyasaka**, **Bruce Mizokami**, **Joy Sebe**, **Reverend Hisakazu Taki**, **Ami Vargas**

The 144th Fall Grand Festival was held in Sacramento on Sunday, September 5. More than 60 members and friends attended the first in-person Festival gathering in more than a year.

In photos from upper left to right, Jason Detwiler addresses the congregation in the *Gochi* Sanctuary, and Senior Deacon Jackson Ito, leads the All Souls prayer.

In bottom photo, Senior Reverend Akira Sebe invokes the spirit of the *Fudo* Guardian as he conducts the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony. At his side, Pop Vargas stands with umbrella.



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