

GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Religion should not be fixed.
It should keep moving forward."*

Religious study is like learning how to drive. In the beginning, we may not be able to drive smoothly as we learn the rules of the road and driving techniques. But, as we get used to driving, we are able to drive confidently without conscious attention to driving technique or rules.

Learning Gedatsu is quite similar. In the beginning, we may feel uncomfortable, being deliberately attentive to the teaching. But, as we study and practice more, we will naturally be able to take appropriate actions where necessary without conscious attention to the teaching.

That is why daily practice is important – especially the recitation of our morning and evening prayers. Through daily practice, we are able to develop the Gedatsu spirit within us and live happy lives.

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.

NOVEMBER 2021

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7		In Person – Appreciation Service / Gedatsu Kongo Memorial Service
Sun	14	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Thu	18		No Service 7-5-3 Celebration (See page 2)
Sun	21		Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)
Thu – Fri	25 – 26		

DECEMBER 2021

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service Regional Board Meeting – via Zoom
Sun	12	9:30 am	In Person – Appreciation Service / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service / Church Clean-up
Sat – Sat	25-31		Church Closed for Holidays

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5		No Service
Sun	12	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service Zoom – Regional Board Meeting
Thu	16		
Sun	19	10:00 am	In Person – Appreciation Service / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service
Sat – Sat	25-31		Church Closed for Holidays



November “Never Forgotten” Online 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.

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, November 7, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Dorothy Tomita, Harold Horner, Toshiko Kusahara, George Akiyoshi, Yasuno Niiguma Tsuboi, Hirohide Obu, Kaoru Ide Kotabe, Maio Kino, Tracy T. Takahashi, Sho Akira Wakabayashi** and **Henry Calderon**.

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, November 14, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kakujiro Arakawa, Moto Arakawa, Ibo Roque Chaves, George Imuta, Ikuko Inoue, Seiji Inoue, Fumio Ishida, Hitoshi Ishida, Seitaro Kawamura, Fude Kikuta, Masaji George Kikuta, Ken Kimura, Tomio Kubo, Patsy M. Matsumoto, Robert Miyamoto, George Joroshi Miyasako, Harukichi Miyazaki, Masao Roy Mizokami, Kiyoko Mochida, Yukimi Mochida, Yataro Nagura, Emiko Okimura, Manabu Okimura, Nami Sakuma, Teruko Shimatsu, Jon Nobuyuki Tanji, Dorothy Kiyoko Tomita, and Henry Urada**.

Obituary

With great sadness, the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church announces the passing of **Arlene Okimura**, who died peacefully at home on September 16 at the age of 70. Arlene is survived by her father, **Itsuto Tom**, younger brother **Ken**, sister-in-law **Cheryl**, younger sister **Judy**, nephews and nieces **Matthew, Timothy, Kristine, Jonathan** and **Michi**, and six great nieces and nephews. Funeral services for Arlene were held at the L.A. Gedatsu Church.



7-5-3 Children’s Festival

On Sunday, November 21, the L.A. Gedatsu Church 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. If you have children, grandchildren, nieces/nephews of those ages, complete the application form available from your local church office to honor the children.

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.

Donate to the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund

Membership dues and donations help to ensure the day-to-day operations of our church. Donors to the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund give the church an additional boost – providing sustaining dollars that help us achieve our longer-range plans for growth and development.

Participation in the Fund requires an annual pledge of \$600 a year, which is in addition to the general membership dues. This \$600 may be paid in a single lump sum; two biannual payments of \$300; or 12 monthly installments of \$50. Complete the application form that is available at your local church office.

Renew Your Holy Paper Plaques

The new year is the time to renew your holy paper plaques for placement throughout the home for the protection of our dwellings and happiness of its inhabitants. See your local church branch for details on types of plaques and prices.



Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #6

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

- ⊗ Gedatsu is a study through real life. Anything that does not deal with our real life is meaningless in Gedatsu study. Desk theory has no meaning in our real lives.
- ⊗ Living each day with appreciation and gratitude will lead us to real happiness.
- ⊗ Eagerness in our faith will make the desert bloom.
- ⊗ Self-reflection today will bring forth peace and happiness tomorrow.
- ⊗ True religion genuinely addresses people’s real lives and aligns with the times.
- ⊗ Gedatsu is all about doing our best in our daily lives and activities.
- ⊗ Gedatsu is life’s compass.
- ⊗ The true value of a nation is not measured by its wealth or vastness of land. It is measured by its people’s ideals and integrity.
- ⊗ They who are truly wealthy have few wants.
- ⊗ Just as shadow follows form, our current thoughts and attitudes produce results in the future. Gedatsu is the path to correct our mind.
- ⊗ A person who spews a torrent of verbal abuses like a machine gun in self-defense is like a fool who spits into the sky, spitting into his own face below.
- ⊗ Do not step backward in your Gedatsu study. Keep moving forward.
- ⊗ A pure heart sees the world as a beautiful land. An impure heart views the world as confusion. Our mind and heart create the world.
- ⊗ Effort, effort, effort! The sun is making efforts day and night. The earth is making efforts constantly. Effort is the royal road to Gedatsu.
- ⊗ Everything is at the mercy of the Universal Life Force. The Divine Spirit prevails throughout the universe. When a hen lays an egg, it is not creation but an act of the Universal Life Force.
- ⊗ Embrace a high ideal but be humble. Humility is the basis of learning.
- ⊗ Regretting what cannot be undone is a waste of time. Instead, go forward toward a new life with renewed resolution and fresh perspective. Fear and hesitation are obstacles to living.





Helping Hands, Helping Hearts

Living the Gedatsu Faith in Our Communities

In the spirit of Master Gedatsu Kongo's doctrinal principle of unconditional giving, our Gedatsu churches in Los Angeles and Sacramento are reaching out into their communities to help charitable organizations struggling during the pandemic to fulfill their missions.

Working through our regional boards to identify a variety of organizations, our churches are providing financial assistance to help support everything from food distribution and women of color impacted by domestic violence to programs that assist low-income migrant families.

Over the past two years, as individuals and families everywhere have been struggling with the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, community-based nonprofit organizations have been particularly hit hard. With the disruption of normal sources of funding and unable to maintain staff payrolls, many charities have struggled to carry out their work in the community, ultimately affecting disadvantaged, underserved individuals, families and children who depend on their services.

"Community and public service is at the heart of our Gedatsu teaching."

-- Mica Rodriguez

At the January 2021 meeting of the Sacramento regional board, **Mica Rodriguez**, minister-in-training at the Sacramento Spiritual Center, proposed to fellow board members that the Gedatsu Church could help to ease the dire financial burden of area non-profits.

"It struck me that community and public service is at the heart of our Gedatsu teaching," says Mica. "Master Gedatsu Kongo was a social activist, who worked tirelessly to help disadvantaged people, and he encouraged members to do whatever they could to help their neighbors and those in need."

"When our founder advocated 'to promote the happiness and welfare of all people,' he wasn't just stating a lofty religious principle. Gedatsu Kongo put his words into action, real practice," says Mica. "I felt that we, as Gedatsu members, could – and should – do the same."

Her fellow Sacramento regional board members agree. They consulted **Senior Deacon Jackson Ito**, church investment director, who assured the Sacramento group that funds were available for community outreach support. The board approved monetary gifts for selected nonprofits of \$1,000 to \$2,000 a month.

Mica began in earnest researching charitable organizations in the Sacramento area, seeking partnerships that aligned with Gedatsu values, such as inclusion, diversity, tolerance and selfless service.

The community outreach program actively serves the mission of Gedatsu: putting good into the world without asking for anything in return.

When Jackson proposed the Sacramento board's community outreach concept to the Los Angeles regional board, it also met with enthusiastic response. The L.A. board approved the same funding model as Sacramento and hired an outside consultant to serve as the L.A. Church's community project coordinator and to identify potential partnerships with area charitable organizations that were impacted by the coronavirus.

The church's community outreach program actively serves the mission of Gedatsu, which revolves around putting good into the world without asking anything in return. Our financial gifts are making a positive impact in the lives of individuals, families and children who receive the vital services provided by the charitable organizations we support.

On page 5, read more about the individual organizations we have supported this year. And go to "Shorts" on the Gedatsu YouTube page to view video testimonials on our outreach program from several of our partner organizations.

(Continued on page 5)

Helping Hands, Helping Hearts



My Sister's House



Guadalupe Pregnancy Services



Migrant Education Program



iForce Dojos – AIJO Nippon Kenpo Foundation

Gedatsu Community Outreach Program Partners 2021

My Sister's House, Sacramento

Serving Asian and Pacific Islander and other underserved women and children impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking by providing a culturally appropriate and safe haven, job training and community services.

The Lavender Library, Sacramento

An all-volunteer-run lending library, archive and community space with LGBTQ+ books, films and more, serving as a hub of learning and connection for Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community.

Good Shepherd Center, Los Angeles

Home for abused / homeless women. The center provides education and help to men and women to become independent, offering temporary housing to women and children of all races.

Guadalupe Pregnancy Services, Rosemead

Counseling and education resources for women and men facing unplanned pregnancy.

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, San Gabriel Region

Provides services to people in need, including emergency and basic needs assistance, advocates for social justice, and encourages active involvement.

San Gabriel Convalescent Center, Rosemead

Long-term nursing home with 151 beds for elderly. Funding for purchase of sanitizing supplies for patients.

Halau Hula Moani'a'ala Anuheia, Monterey Park

Perpetuates the Hawaiian culture while providing a place for self-evolvement. Assists individuals and their families with financial needs.

Migrant Education Program, San Gabriel Valley

Serves children of migrant families in area school districts. Requests donations to provide items for children, including school supplies, backpacks, toys, clothing.

Kodomo No Ie, San Gabriel

Japanese preschool for two- to six-year-olds. Using Japanese language, fosters learning through principles of Christianity and Japanese culture and customs.

Gedatsu USA Kendo, Rosemead

Japanese *Kendo* instruction by following the Gedatsu teachings and philosophy and expression of appreciation for the Universal Life Force and all living things.

AIJO Nippon Kenpo Foundation- iForce Dojos, San Gabriel

Teaches youth the Japanese mixed-martial arts discipline of *Nippon Kenpo*, while promoting intellectual growth, discipline, multicultural awareness, community service, and activism.

Gedatsu Q&A - Part 17

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *If “Gedatsu” means liberty and freedom, why do I feel more restricted and uncomfortable after I joined Gedatsu?*

A Some people may be feeling more restricted after joining Gedatsu. This is because they regard Gedatsu as a moral code of “should” or “should not.” Actually, there are many elements which look like moral standards in Master Gedatsu Kongo’s teachings, such as self-reflection, self-renunciation, the highest moral, etc. If you look upon these teachings as moral codes, you may feel strongly restricted. But this is not what Master Gedatsu Kongo meant.

Gedatsu Kongo emphasized the significance of self-realization. By this, it is not meant that Gedatsu places moral restrictions on people. Rather, Gedatsu is to be deeply aware of our innermost divine self and to follow the true self within us. In other words, Gedatsu is to believe in the Universal Life Force, which allows us to exist, and do our best in our daily duties and activities with total trust in the Universal Life Force. This is the path of peace and freedom for everyone.

Q *What is the significance of Gedatsu as a home-based religious study?*

A Master Gedatsu Kongo’s main motive to establish Gedatsu was to make religion based on one’s daily living. Religion should be practiced in one’s everyday life. Gedatsu Kongo was critical of traditional religious establishments, which were apart from ordinary people’s daily lives. That was why Gedatsu Kongo established Gedatsu.

Master Gedatsu Kongo often stated, “Life is religion, religion is life.” He tried to make religion more accessible to ordinary people. In the first half of his life, he lived in the business world as a lay person. After establishing Gedatsu, he did not look like a professional priest. He tried to teach people based on their daily activities.

During his lifetime, Master Gedatsu Kongo did not build cathedrals or big church buildings. Instead, he encouraged members to learn Gedatsu at their branch churches that were their homes. Branch leaders have their own jobs, and they study Gedatsu together with branch members at their homes. Gedatsu Kongo strongly believed that religion should be practiced in one’s daily living. That’s why he established Gedatsu as home-based religious study.

Q *Gedatsu is taught as a non-sectarian religious study. What does that mean?*

A Master Gedatsu Kongo stated, “Gedatsu has no national boundary. Gedatsu goes beyond creed and is equal and impartial to everyone, regardless of race or nationality.” This is Gedatsu Kongo’s basic view on religions.

He also stated, “the Path of the Supreme Spirit is but one. The universe is unified by one law.” He called this boundless universal world “Gedatsu.”

It is not difficult to see this boundless world. We have only to open our eyes widely and just look at nature as it is. When we look up at the sky, we find no partitions there. The universe is one whole world with no boundary. It is an infinite, boundless world of complete freedom, which may be called the Universal Life Force, or God.

There are many religions in the world. When we look into their doctrines and rituals, they may sometimes look different and mutually exclusive. However, when we look more deeply into them, we see a basic common ground, which is universal.

When we realize this universal world, there should be no conflict among different religions. People would mutually respect and appreciate others’ values and practices and cooperate with each other for world peace. This is the goal of our Gedatsu study.

(Continued on back page)

Northern California Total: \$7,118

General Donations: Tateishi, Anonymous, J. Tanaka, M/M J. Horner

Special Acknowledgments

Appreciation for Fall Festival:

Gedatsu-kai Japan (\$1,000), C. Tanaka (\$500), M/M D. Ide, R. Ito, J. Tanaka, A./P. Akashi, M/M S. Mukai (\$500), J. Ito (\$1,000), M/M K. Kuritani, M. Fukushima, M/M Ho. Tsujimura, M/M N. Okano, A. Sebe, T./J. Kawamura (\$1,000), M/M B. Mizokami, S. Tanaka, C. Tsujimura, J. Arase, R. Nakatani, M/M D. Tsuboi, M/M R. Allum, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M C. Morioka, R. Ide, V./S./S. Matsuura, L. Tanaka, M/M B. Mizokami, C. Tsujimura

M/M S. Mukai	In memory of Susie Tateishi
R. Nakatani	July/August "Never Forgotten" services
A. Sebe	<i>Ryujin</i> Appreciation Service
A./P. Akashi	Daughter's return from Japan

Southern California Total: \$3,330

General: M/M R. Allum, K. Fujii (\$500), M/M M. Ishida (\$500), T. Ishida, M/M K. Kuritani, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura (\$500), D. Shiroishi, J. Tomita, M/M H. Tsujimura

Special Acknowledgments

D. Mukai	"Never Forgotten" for Misako Kobata
H. Inouye	"Never Forgotten" for Tomiko Konishi
Y. Oishi	"Never Forgotten" service
J. Ito	In memory of Arlene Okimura

Online Donations: Total: \$808

General: E. Detwiler, S. Matsumoto, M/M P. Reid, S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura

Special Acknowledgments

A. Kishida	Appreciation for Fall Festival
M/M P. Reid	Appreciation for Fall Festival
J. Reid	Hospitality Club in memory of Arlene Okimura

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

Online Donations



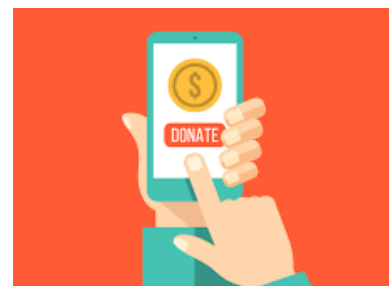
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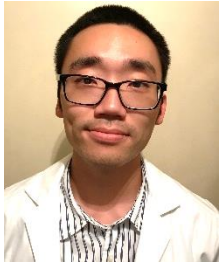
Gedatsu Church encourages you to make your donations online. It's a convenient, easy and secure way to contribute to the church – from your home or workplace, on your laptop, tablet or cellphone.

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 also 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.





The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Andrew Isao Shiroishi**. Andrew grew up attending the L.A. Gedatsu Sunday School. He is the son of **Allen** and **Uzuko Shiroishi** and the grandson of Gedatsu pioneers, **Pat** and **Sayo Shiroishi**. He is grateful for the guidance that he has received from his parents and ancestors.

Andrew is enjoying his first year as a CVS pharmacist in Santa Monica, working long hours during these challenging pandemic times. During his free time, he enjoys drinking coffee/tea while reading a good book. And, when possible, he tries to go outdoors for hiking and bouldering. He also enjoys music from bands such as “Oort Smog” and “Moonchild.”

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Gedatsu ministers and members gathered in October to perform the annual Old Plaque-burning Ceremony, *joen-no-gi*, at the Sacramento Spiritual Center. Before the *Fudo* guardian, sincere prayers



and holy tea blessing were offered to the Universal Life Force, as the pure flames of *Fudo* consumed and purified the old plaques and holy items, returning them to Nature and their natural elements.

(Gedatsu Q&A – Continued from page 6)

Unfortunately, the reality of religions in our current world looks quite different. They look exclusive and intolerant of other religions. Many of them are caught in sectarianism and dogmatism. As long as we are bound by sectarianism, our faith is not complete. We should be free from fixed views and more open to different traditions. When we show depth in our faith and widen our views, we will be liberated from sectarianism and see a universal religious world.

The difference of doctrines, rituals, and symbols of worship no longer matters. Our love and sincerity, which are cultivated through our Gedatsu study and practice, will penetrate all people’s hearts and move them. This becomes a step toward world peace – made possible because Gedatsu Kongo established Gedatsu as a non-sectarian religious study.

