



GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"The secret for happiness is
appreciation and gratitude."*

Gedatsu is to practice. Practice what? In a word, it's to practice appreciation.

Who needs to practice? If we are good, or adept, at something, we need little or no practice.

Generally, we are very good at complaining or criticizing others, so we hardly need practice there. However, we are poor at saying "thank you," so we need to practice the skill of appreciation.

By practicing appreciation and gratitude every day, we will naturally increase our feelings of gratitude for everything.

Appreciation is the gateway to happiness. Why don't we practice appreciation and gratitude to create happiness in our lives?

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

DECEMBER 2021

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
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
Thu	16		Zoom – Regional Board Meeting
Sun	19	10:00 am	In Person – Appreciation Service / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service
Sat – Sat 25-31			Church Closed for Holidays

JANUARY 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sat	1	9:00 am	In Person – New Year Homage (until noon)
Sun	2	10:00 am 11:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service Regional Board Meeting – via Zoom
Sun	9	9:30 am	In Person – First Service of the Year / Gift Exchange
Tue	18		Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
Sun	23	9:30 am	In Person – Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sat	1	7:30 am	In Person – New Year Homage (until noon)
Sun	9	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	16	10:00 am	In Person – New Year Appreciation service
Tue	18		Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
Thu	20		Regional Board Meeting via Zoom



December “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 the service.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, December 5, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Tomiji Nakayama, George Sekikawa, Tokio Tateishi, Tomota Tateishi, Kiyoshi Tateishi, Soshiro Hatae, Shizuye Kodani, Kazuo Ide, Kanzaburo Ide, Mariko (Mizumoto) Takemura, Dorothy Keiko (Takemura) Nakamoto, Kiichi Ogawa, Kimi Yamada, Eizan Kishida, and Albert Ryoze Akiyama.**

The L.A. Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Service on **Sunday, December 12, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Yoshio Arakawa, Glen Blaser, Glen Naoya Hiram, Eiko Ishida, Junnosuke Ishida, Natsu Grace Kikuchi, Chizu Kitagawa, Helen Akiko Matsumoto, Tatsumi Matsuura, Shizuyo Mizutani, Johnny Kazuhiko Numata, Mitsuko Numata, Kou Helen Sakuma, Sugi Shiba, Dale Smith, Thomas Yasukiyo Sueyoshi, Chisayo Taniguchi, Goro Gary Tanji, Ruby Toshiko Tanji, Shiro Paul Tanji, Tomota Tateishi, Gary Chin Toy, and Toru Toyama.**

Obituaries

The Los Angeles Gedatsu Church mourns the loss of **Roger Nishida**, who passed away on October 18 at the age of 88. Roger is survived by his wife, **Helen**; sons, **Ken (Kathleen) Nishida** and **Bob (Trichelle) Nishida**; daughters, **Caryn (Ed) Ito** and **Lori (Edgar) Eugenio**; and nine grandchildren. Private funeral services were held earlier this month.

Sacramento Spiritual Center mourns the loss of long-time San Jose member **Saeko Nishino**, who passed away on October 25, at the age of 90. She is survived by her husband, **Akio**, and their three children.

Have You Renewed Your Church Membership?

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 Members 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, prices and order form.

Wednesday Nite Zoomers – Now Twice a Month

Join this popular online group for friendship and prayers on the first and third Wednesdays at 7 pm PT via Zoom.

Members and friends are encouraged to join!

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89182635066>

Meeting ID: 891 8263 5066

AROUND OUR CHURCH

Sacramento Spiritual Center

Aztec Dance Troupe



This summer, the Sacramento Spiritual Center hosted a vibrant cultural ceremony of Indigenous Mexican Peoples, showcasing the Aztec Dance Troupe of Sacramento, a group of 50 young men and women, trained in dance based on ancient Aztec cultural traditions. The troupe was invited to perform on the *Goreichi* grounds by **Minister-trainee Mica Rodriguez**, who is, herself, trained in Aztec dance.

"I believe there is a strong affinity between our Gedatsu community and the Aztec dance circle," says Mica. "We share respect and appreciation for the Universal Life Force, ancestral spirits, humankind's relationship with the natural world, the seasonal changes, and cultural traditions."

In photos at right, in the celebration of indigenous Mexican customs, the dance rituals demand discipline and endurance, as the dancers, dressed in ancient traditional apparel, move in step with complicated patterns and rhythms.

At bottom, altar offerings of furs, pottery and photos honor ancestors and show appreciation for blessings from the Universal Life Force and the earth.

*Sharing cultural,
community pride*



Los Angeles Gedatsu Church



Learn to Play the Ukulele

Want to play a musical instrument that's fun to play and easy to learn? Beginner classes in ukulele instruction will be given at the L.A. Gedatsu Church, starting Saturday, January 8.

With more than 30 years' experience, professional musicians **Stan** and **Rocena Tashiro** are excited to join our Gedatsu community by introducing this fun, relaxing music class for young and old. No experience needed – just you, your ukulele and an eagerness to learn the amazing art of ukulele.

Classes will be held once a week, on Saturdays, in the kendo social hall, adjacent to the church. Beginner adults at 10 to 11 a.m. Beginner children, 11:15 a.m. to noon. Prices are designed for "more the merrier" -- \$25 per month for the first student and just \$20 per month for each additional family member or friend. COVID mandates, including masks and temperature checks, will be observed.

To reserve a spot, or for more information, contact L.A. regional board chair, **Mark Ishida**, at 626-328-0092 or markishida1@gmail.com.

The ukulele classes are sponsored by the Gedatsu Church and the AIJO Foundation.



*Need a ukulele?
Call or email Mark Ishida
– he can help!*

*Great hint: a new or used
ukulele makes a great
Christmas gift.*



Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #7

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

- Gedatsu is, in a word, to live with warmth.
- Do what should be done and make the most of your heart and everything. This is Gedatsu.
- Gedatsu is not to always rely on a Supreme Spirit, but it is to sincerely scrutinize yourself to comply with the Universal Law.
- Learning Gedatsu without practice is of no use.
- Live your life purely and honestly.
- Asking why we need to learn Gedatsu is like asking why we need to live.
- Fish and animals never complain. Only humans complain. A life that starts with complaints and ends with complaints is time-wasting and empty.
- Many wealthy people may become obsessed with holding onto their money. It is better to live honestly in poverty than to live against humanity in wealth.
- Worries and sufferings are mostly caused by greed. Don't be overly greedy and do whatever should be done with sincerity. You will then be able to live in good health.
- Seeking, protecting and losing ill-gotten wealth creates suffering. You will never enjoy such wealth.
- Love and compassion should be the foundation of all good deeds.
- Water in the ocean may be large or small according to the size of its container.
- Approach modern society with modern language.
- To benefit others is to benefit yourself. To save others is to save yourself. Other's happiness is your happiness.
- Work hard at any task as if today were the last day of your life. Don't idle away your time.
- Gedatsu study without practice will come to nothing.



Gedatsu Q&A – Part 18

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *What is the significance of the Spring and Fall Grand Festivals?*

A Gedatsu Spring and Fall Grand Festivals are two of the most important events that Gedatsu members should attend. We observe the Grand Festivals in order to thank the Universal Life Force and all spirits for the great blessings we receive from them.

We all receive immeasurable blessings from all elements in the universe that sustain our lives each day. While we are usually not aware of these blessings and tend to take them for granted, it is very important to acknowledge the greatness of the blessings we receive from the universe each day and express our gratitude.

In his speech at the Grand Festivals, **Master Gedatsu Kongo** often stated:

“Everyone, from all parts of the country, congratulations on your attendance at this Grand Festival! I will not say ‘thank you’ for coming, because this Festival is not held for me. Rather, it is held for your own happiness.”

We should learn from these words that appreciation and gratitude is the key to our true happiness and prosperity.

Q *What is the significance of the monthly Appreciation Service?*

A The Appreciation Service is held each month at our Gedatsu churches. It is one of the most important events of church. Gedatsu members are encouraged to attend this service each month to express sincere appreciation for the great blessings they receive from the Universal Life Force, all spirits, all people and things on earth.

The most important part of the monthly Appreciation Service is the Opening Prayer. Members should join the prayer to sincerely express their gratitude to the Universal Life Force and all spirits for their blessings. That is why Master Gedatsu Kongo always encouraged members not to be late for the starting time of the service.

You can listen to ministers’ sermons at the monthly service to learn the path of happiness. It is also important to communicate with other church members and enjoy church activities.

Think of yourself not as a guest, but rather, as someone who will create a better place for yourself and others to gain happiness by learning the Gedatsu teaching.

Q *How can I explain Gedatsu to my friends?*

A While this is an important question for Gedatsu members, it is not necessary to get into a deep, serious explanation about Gedatsu. Instead, you can introduce Gedatsu by saying the following.

We are all allowed to exist by the grace of a Universal Life Force and receive immeasurable blessings from all elements in the universe. It is important for us to be aware of this fact and be thankful for all people and things on earth. This sense of appreciation and gratitude is the key to our true happiness. This is what we Gedatsu members learn and practice.

Gedatsu is the path of happiness for everyone. It is a non-sectarian study. We respect all traditions and appreciate the common ground of all religions. Anyone can join and study Gedatsu regardless of any religious faith they may have.



2022 EVENT SCHEDULE

At right is a schedule of the major church events that are planned for 2022. Please add them to your calendar.

Because of continuing uncertainties related to COVID-19, church events, fundraisers and other activities remain tentative. Changes to the schedule will be announced by the church and published in the *Gedatsu Companion* and other communications.



Sun Spirit Service



Rokujizo Service



Higan Service



7-5-3 Children's Celebration

Jan 1 (Sat)	New Year Homage
Jan 9 (Sun)	Sacramento New Year Service / Gift Exchange
Jan 16 (Sun)	L.A. New Year Service
Jan 18 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day)
Feb 13 (Sun)	Sacramento Sun Spirit Service
Feb 20 (Sun)	L.A. Sun Spirit Service
Feb 22	Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents' Day)
Mar 11 (Fri)	Propagation Meeting 10 a.m. (TBD)
Mar 12 (Sat)	Board of Directors Meeting 10 a.m. (TBD)
Mar 20 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service
Mar 27 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service
Apr 10 (Sun)	Spring Grand Festival 9:30 a.m.
May 8 (Sun)	Sacramento Mother's Day Service
May 15 (Sun)	L.A. Mother's Day Service
May 22 (Sun)	Sacramento plaque burning (<i>Joen-no-gi</i>)
May 31 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)
Jun 12 (Sun)	Sac'to Mother Kiyota Memorial / Father's Day Service
June 19 (Sun)	L.A. Mother Kiyota Memorial / Father's Day Service
Jun 25-26 (Sat-Sun)	<i>Rokujizo</i> Bazaar Sacramento (TBD)
Jul 5 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Independence Day)
Jul 10 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Obon</i> Service
Jul 17 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored
Jul 24 (Sun)	Appreciation Service / Graduates Honored
Jul 25-28 (Mon-Thu)	Youth Camp – Sacramento (TBD)
Aug 5-7 (Fri-Sun)	Lake Tahoe <i>Benzaiten</i> Service (TBD)
Aug 21 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Sep 4 (Sun)	Fall Grand Festival 9:30 a.m.
Sep 6 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
Sep 18 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service
Sep 25 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service
Oct 1-2 (Sat-Sun)	L.A. Autumn Moon Festival (TBD)
Oct 11 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
Oct 16 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Ujigami</i> Service
Oct 23 (Sun)	Sacramento All Souls Service
Nov 6 (Sun)	L.A. Gedatsu Kongo Service
Nov 13 (Sun)	Sacramento Gedatsu Kongo Service
Nov 20 (Sun)	L.A. 7-5-3 Children's Celebration
Nov 27 (Sun)	Sacramento Gedatsu Kongo Birthday / 7-5-3 Celebration
Nov 24-25 (Thu-Fri)	Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)
Dec 4 (Sun)	L.A. Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service
Dec 10 (Sat)	L.A. Church Clean-up
Dec 11 (Sun)	Sac'to Last Service / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service
Dec 18 (Sun)	L.A. Last Service / Christmas Program
Dec 24-31 (Sat-Sat)	Church Closed

OCTOBER 2021 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$1,558

General Donations: J. Sebe/J. Detwiler, M/M D. Tsuboi, P. Harada, M/M J. Horner, M/M D. Ide, T. Wakabayashi, M. Rodriguez

Special Acknowledgments

M/M D. Tsuboi Successful surgery

M/M G. Wood Fall Festival

M/M D. Ide Yosemite *Benzaiten* appreciation

Southern California Total: \$3,290

General: C. Barthel, M/M K. Chinen, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, K. Kuritani, M/M V. Mizokami, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, K. Okimura, T. Okimura, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood

Special Acknowledgments

M/M G. Wood Katsuyo Nagao successful eye surgery

T. Matsumoto 17th memorial service for Hiroishi Nakaguchi

I. Hiram Successful lung surgery (\$500)

D. Mukai Appreciation to *Ujigami*

J. Kaku *Ujigami* Service

T. Okimura Fall Festival

Online Donations: Total: \$356

General: S. Matsumoto, S. Shiroishi, J. Reid, H. Tsujimura

Special Acknowledgments

T. Palelek L. A. Church Community Outreach Program

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



*The officers, ministers and staff of Gedatsu Church
extend their warmest wishes to members, families and friends
for a happy and healthy holiday filled with
peace, hope and joy.*

SPECIAL GIFTS

Major financial support from **Senior Reverend Akira Sebe** and **Senior Deacon Jackson Ito** earlier this year has enabled the Sacramento Spiritual Center and Los Angeles Church to make significant purchases – like those described below – to enhance and upgrade our church facilities and grounds.



A heavy-duty, multi-utility tractor has been the dream of the Sacramento church for many years. That dream has now been fulfilled with the purchase of a John Deere tractor (with tiller, forklift, posthole digger), a versatile workhorse that can perform the many tasks needed on the *Goreichi* grounds. The tractor will be stored in the 384-square-foot shed, newly built by member John Horner.



A shiny, finishing touch to the many improvement projects conducted this summer at the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church is the purchase of a commercial-grade gas range in the newly floored kitchen. With six burners, griddle and double ovens, the church is ready to handle the food-preparation needs for church fundraisers and other functions.



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **June Hayashi** of the Gedatsu Church of Hawaii. June and her husband, **Larry**, have three children, nine grandchildren and three dogs. In her spare time, she enjoys “a little crocheting of baby blankets and a lot of crossword puzzles.”

June began studying Gedatsu 47 years ago under **Rev. Michiyo Asami**, then resident minister in Hawaii. Her dedication to Gedatsu encouraged her to hold Gedatsu meetings in her home for 30 years. “I try to practice appreciation and gratitude every day,” says June.

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OUR GEDATSU STUDY



Archbishop Eizan Kishida, revered teacher and primary architect of the Gedatsu Church in America, passed away on December 22, 1981.

Every year, in December, Gedatsu members gather to honor his memory and offer their prayers of appreciation for his guidance and teaching.

At right, the *Companion* pays tribute to his wisdom with a brief excerpt from his book, *Makoto, or Truth*.

Things Are as We Make Them By Archbishop Eizan Kishida

When we give deep thought into any adverse situation, we will always discover a way to change unhappiness into happiness. In this way, we can accept all things gratefully.

Just as strenuous physical activity builds a strong body, when we endure hardships in life and surpass them with enthusiasm, our mental and spiritual powers increase. No matter what obstacles and hardships confront us in our everyday living, when we take full responsibility to solve them, without attempting to escape from them or become indignant toward them and consider them to be a means for our spiritual development, there will always be a solution.

Some people place material wealth as the sole object of happiness, but this is because of their lack of spiritual wealth. Happiness and security dependent only upon material things are only temporary and may be lost at any moment.

Even the most ordinary routines, if performed repeatedly, will become extraordinary acts. Luster is produced through repetition of the same motion. Wood, metal, or a diamond will show its luster to the extent it is polished.

Likewise, when we become aware that our daily life is a place of spiritual training, and are consciously accumulating good deeds, we will experience a bright and joyous existence.