

GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Self-reflect and awaken spiritually
to create a better world."*

What should be our purpose in studying Gedatsu? Because Gedatsu teaches us to awaken our spiritual senses, some may think that the Gedatsu study is to develop psychic powers.

In fact, many individuals throughout the world possess psychic, or clairvoyant, abilities. Master Gedatsu Kongo himself was such a person, but he never advocated for the development of psychic powers by studying Gedatsu. Instead, he always urged members to self-reflect and live each day with sincere appreciation. This, he said, was the true path for everyone's happiness and spiritual growth.

To awaken spiritually does not mean to be psychic. Rather, it means to have a deep sense of appreciation, love and compassion. These are the qualities that Master Gedatsu Kongo earnestly hoped each of us to develop within ourselves.

Note: All services are held in person unless indicated as "virtual."

JUNE 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	7	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	12	9:30 am	Appreciation / Father's Day Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Sat/Sun 25-26			Rokujizo Bazaar Canceled

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5		No Service
Sun	12	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	19	10:00 am	Appreciation / Father's Day Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Thu	23	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom

JULY 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00 am 11:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Tue	5		Church Closed (in lieu of Independence Day)
		7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	10	9:30 am	Appreciation / Obon Service
Sun	24	9:30 am	Appreciation Service / Graduates Honored

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3		No Service
Tue	5		Church Closed (in lieu of Independence Day)
Sun	10	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	17	10:00 am	Appreciation / Obon Service Graduates Honored
Thu	21	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	23	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom



June “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. People of all faiths are welcome, so invite your friends and family members to attend. Even if you are unable to attend, you may still honor the soul of a loved one.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **via YouTube video** on **Sunday, June 5, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Mine Kino Hirose, Motokichi Ide, Kinuyo Nakatani, Suyeko Hada Takemura, Minoko Tanaka, Isamu Yamada, Bettie Yamamura, and Masaru Yamamura.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **in person** on **Sunday, June 12, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Harry Hidejin Arakawa, Kimiko Hirano, Mitsuko Kaku, Masa Kikuta, Tsuchinojo Kimura, Kazumi Matsunami, Kameyoshi Michiuye, Manabu Mukai, Fusako Murakami, Phillip Nakamura, Robert Nakamura, Mary Anne Nolan, Ai Okada, Hideyo Okada, Masakichi Okada, Michael O'Leary, Yoshiko Mary Otera, Lawrence Sasano, Roy S. Shiba, Hidekichi Shiroishi, Tsuna Shiroishi, Yoshimasa Taninaka, Hironobu George Terakawa, Ben Seiroku Toguchi, Carolyn Wong, and June Tsuyoko Yamamisaka.**

Memorial Tower Enshrinements – Fall 2022

New enshrinements in the Gedatsu Memorial Tower are scheduled for the Fall Grand Festival, which will be held at the Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento on Sunday, September 4. **Applications for enshrinements will be accepted until June 20.** The fee is \$300 per application. Application forms are available at your church office.

Mica Rodriguez to Be Ordained as Minister

Micaela (Mica) Rodriguez, minister-in-training at the Sacramento Spiritual Center since January 2020, has completed her ministerial training under the supervision of U.S. ministers and received the approval of **Bishop Teruo Okano** to be ordained as a minister of Gedatsu Church USA. Mica will officially be ordained as minister in ceremonies at the Fall Festival in September.

Minister Schedules

Reverend Naoya Okano of the Los Angeles Church will vacation in Japan this summer, departing for Japan on July 5 and returning August 5.

During his absence, **Reverend Hisakazu Taki**, will serve as guest minister at the L.A. Church from early July through August 10. His plans remain tentative, pending the outcome of COVID health requirements in Japan.

Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training, will travel to Japan this summer to participate in the annual *Gedatsu-kai* youth group Pilgrimage to the Three Sacred Sites in early August, as well as to spend time at *Goreichi* to train for her new role as minister. Plans are tentative, pending easing of travel restrictions for foreigners to Japan.



Let's Celebrate Our 2022 Graduates!

It's time for our annual celebration of graduating students and their parents. The Los Angeles and Sacramento churches will be honoring graduates at their annual recognition programs in July.

If you have a student in the family who will be graduating this year from elementary, middle or high school, college, or graduate school, submit their name to be honored. Application forms (electronic and paper) are available from your branch office. **Completed forms are due by June 19.**



Family-friendly, Fun-filled Easter Sunday

The L.A. Church opened its doors to more than 110 members and guests – many first-time attendees and young families – for a memorable Easter service and celebration. With an Easter egg hunt, toys and treats for children, and free lunch and gifts for everyone, the Easter Sunday program was an all-out effort by member-volunteers to reach out to new young families to introduce them to the church.

To see all Easter Service photos, go to the Members Only portal on the Gedatsu website. Ask your church branch for passcode.



Honored mothers include, from left, Sadaye Tanaka, Sally McSwain, Harriet Sekikawa, Nancy Horner, Minister-trainee Mica Rodriguez, Ritsuko Nakatani, Judy Tsuboi and Reiko Ide. Not pictured, Allison Vongkhamchanh.

Mothers Celebrated with Love and Appreciation

The congregation of the Sacramento Spiritual Center honored mothers who attended the Mother's Day service. Each mom was presented with a greeting card, chocolates, and gift card. Moms' special day concluded with a light luncheon with fellow members.

The L.A. Church welcomed members and friends to its Mother's Day service and lunch. Moms and ladies were honored with gifts of roses and ceramic mugs like the one below, specially designed by children as a Sunday School project. The joyful celebration included a ukulele musical performance and Nijiya-prepared *bento* lunches.



Honored mothers and ladies at the L.A. Church Mother's Day celebration.





Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #13

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

- ⊗ A person who respects and appreciates all people and everything will make the most of everything to create a happy life.
- ⊗ Gedatsu is wonderful. If you sincerely practice Gedatsu, you will certainly feel happy and become healthy. Everything will go smoothly, and your family will become peaceful and harmonious. This is because Gedatsu is based on the Universal Law.
- ⊗ Every happening in life teaches you something important for your life.
- ⊗ No one can exist by themselves. Our everyday life is possible because of the blessings from parents, ancestors, teachers, and all people and everything in the universe.
- ⊗ We should live sincerely each day with hope and prayer.
- ⊗ Don't waste a single day with jealousy, arrogance and ill will.
- ⊗ The blood of our parents and ancestors is now flowing in the veins of our little fingers.
- ⊗ Do you work to eat or eat to work? Food is a precious blessing that the universe gives us to allow us to work with appreciation for the betterment of the world.
- ⊗ Live fully each day with appreciation. This is Gedatsu. Gedatsu is not to be involved in complex doctrines or empty theories.
- ⊗ The water that a cow drinks becomes delicious milk. That same water to a venomous snake becomes poison. A prideful person who boasts about his knowledge of Gedatsu but does not practice it benefits no one.
- ⊗ A single grain of rice is the crystallization of immeasurable blessings received from parents and ancestors, teachers, society and everything in the universe.
- ⊗ Gedatsu is to feel thankful for being alive, to live fully each day and to express appreciation by making the world a better place.
- ⊗ Gedatsu cannot be separated from our everyday life. Gedatsu should be practiced through our daily activities.
- ⊗ To benefit the world is to benefit ourselves.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 24

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *Realizing that everyone will die eventually makes me feel that life is meaningless. What is the meaning of life?*

A Please read the following short story.

Long ago, in order to attain spiritual enlightenment, a young monk practiced asceticism with great diligence. Despite his efforts, he could not become enlightened.

One day, his master told him to climb a high mountain, where no one had ever climbed before. The young monk climbed the mountain, pushing his way through bushes. Reaching the pristine peak of the mountain, he found a beautiful little flower blooming there. At that moment, he burst into tears and was spiritually awakened.



What did the young monk see in the flower that transformed his life?

The flower was not blooming to show itself to anyone. It might have withered away without being seen, but it did not care about that. It was simply blooming as best as it could.

Everyone wants to live a life worth living, but there are few who can attain everything they want. Some people despair of life, living with feelings of hopelessness and complaining about life. It is important to seek something to live for. There must be something more important in life.

Think about the flower in the story. Did the flower bloom there by its own will? No. A bird or a strong gust of wind might have carried the flower seed to the top of the mountain. That was not the flower's choice – it just found itself there. Some flowers bloom in remote mountains. Other flowers are admired by many people at a flower shop. Regardless of the circumstances, flowers bloom as best as they can. This is because flowers know their role in this world. Every flower has an irreplaceable role to exist.

The same thing can be said for our lives. Each of us has a unique role in the universe – as a parent, a child, a husband, a wife, an employer or employee, etc. It is important to do our best in performing our role in life. This attitude will create a full and meaningful life.

I remember the late **Archbishop Eizan Kishida** once said that when we are walking on a road and find a piece of wastepaper in front of us, we should pick it up right away and take it to a trashcan without any thought. This is our role to perform, but we usually think about many things in such a case. Our selfishness and vanity may prevent us from making the right choices in life.

It is important to accept everything as it is and do our best regardless of situations. When we fully perform our present role, the next role will be given to us. This is the secret to living a meaningful life.

(Continued on page 6)

Q *I have been studying Gedatsu for many years, but in difficult times, I sometimes feel disconnected from the Universal Life Force. How can I strengthen my belief in a divine power?*

A Have you seen the movie, “The Miracle Worker”? This is the story of Helen Keller, the famous author and disability rights advocate. Helen was born in Alabama in 1880. Soon after she was born, she suffered from a fever and lost her sight and hearing. She became an unruly child, who ate her meals by grabbing food with her hands. Instead of disciplining her, her parents pitied and spoiled her.

They hired Miss Sullivan as Helen’s teacher. Miss Sullivan tried to teach Helen the names of various things by making her touch them while she formed the letters for the name of each object in Helen’s hand. But Helen just imitated Miss Sullivan without understanding what she was being taught. Realizing that Helen would not be able to learn anything as long as she lived with her parents, Miss Sullivan insisted that she and Helen live in a separate residence. At this residence, she taught Helen in a very strict manner. Helen stubbornly resisted, and their life was like a fierce battle.

Under Miss Sullivan’s sole supervision, Helen soon learned to eat food with a spoon from a dish. Miss Sullivan felt such skills amounted to no more than those of a trained dog. Nonetheless, they pleased Helen’s parents, who pitied her and insisted that she return to their home.

So, once again, under her parents’ roof, Helen reverted back to her former undisciplined manners. When she was at the table for dinner, she threw away her spoon and napkin. Seeing this, Miss Sullivan carried the crying Helen outside to the water pump in the garden. She forced Helen to hold a pitcher under the spout, while she pumped the water. As she did so, she signed the word for

“water” in Helen’s palm. The moment Helen felt the gushing water from the pump, and the letters for “water” in her hand, she realized for the first time in her life that everything in this world has a



name. She joyfully shouted the sounds “wa! wa!” for “water.” In that instant, Helen truly understood this world is filled with life and “meaning.” Until then, she had lived in a dark, fragmented world.

When I watched this movie, I was deeply moved. I felt I was just like Helen Keller. Before I was introduced to Gedatsu, I did not know the spiritual world. I was bound by the physical world. When I began to study Gedatsu, I opened my spiritual eye and gradually understood that what I am today is totally due to the blessings of the invisible world. I understood the true meaning of life thanks to the Gedatsu teaching.

We are able to touch the wonderful divine world by seeing and experiencing all phenomena around us, such as trees and plants, singing birds, breezes, children running in the field, etc. This world is the manifestation of love of the Universal Life Force. Just as Helen Keller opened her spiritual eye to this divine world through the guidance of Miss Sullivan, Gedatsu has allowed us to open our spiritual eyes to the wonders of life.

Yes, we may sometimes encounter hard times and sorrows. At those time, let us remember to touch our heart and feel its beat. Our heart keeps beating constantly regardless of any difficulties in life. This is because we are loved by the Universal Life Force. We must trust the Universal Life and do our best in our present situation. We will then be guided in the best way for ourselves.



APRIL 2022 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$5,682

General Donations: P. Harada, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M. Rodriguez, H. Graham, S. Matsumoto, V. Matsuura, M. Morioka, M/M D. Tsuboi, M/M J. Horner, R. Ide, S. Taketa, J. Tanaka, S. Tanaka, M/M D. Ide, M/M S. Shaskan, M/M S. Sekikawa, R/A Morioka, K. Kuritani, C. Tsujimura, R. Ide, M. Morioka/N. Baker, R/P Sakamoto, Anonymous

Special Acknowledgments

R. Nakatani In memory of Roy Nakatani
R. Nakatani In memory of Natsuko Nakatani
T. Bartos For spirit of ancestors (\$500)
Spring Festival Donors: M/M R. Allum, M/M R. Ito, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M A. Akashi, K. Fujii, T. Murakami, V/S Matsuura, J. Tanaka, M. Fukushima, T/K Ishida, M/M N. Okano, J. Ito (\$1,000), Y/C Oishi, M/M T. Matsumoto, T. Okimura, M/M D. Ide, K. Chinen, H. Graham, M/M C. Morioka, Y/C/ Oishi, M/M R. Sakamoto, A. Sebe

Southern California Total: \$6,990

General: M/M R. Allum, T. Araki, M/M K. Chinen, J. Choy, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M M. Hamada, M/M T. Hiram, M/M M. Ishida, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, S. Kaku, M. Kimura, Kinjo Family, B. Kito, M/M K. Kuritani, L. Mahoney, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, M/M L. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, Y. Naruko, E. Ogawa, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, N. Takara, O. Tokunaga, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M R. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood, L. Young

Special Acknowledgments

K. Nakamura "Never Forgotten" for Larry K. Nakamura
J. Shiroishi In memory of Pat Shiroishi
Mahoney/Kaku Families "Never Forgotten" for Thomas Mahoney
M/M Ho. Tsujimura In memory of Shigeno Tomita / Henry Tsujimura
J. Hamamoto "Never Forgotten " for Larry K. Nakamura
Keith Nakamura "Never Forgotten" for Larry K. Nakamura
Banker Family "Never Forgotten" for Larry K. Nakamura
M/M A. Shiroishi "Never Forgotten" for Hidemi Pat Shiroishi
Easter service sponsors: C. Tsujimura, M/M V. Mizokami, T. Okimura, J. Reid, G. Wood
S. Chodor Appreciation for Easter service
Do. Shiroishi Appreciation for Easter service / Spring Festival
B. Kito Parking appreciation (\$500)

Online Donations: Total: \$1,882

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

Special Acknowledgments

Gedatsu-kai Appreciation for Spring Festival (\$1,000)
J. Reid "Never Forgotten" for Tomoyo Ogura
M/M A. Kishida Appreciation for Spring Festival
M/M P. Reid Appreciation for Spring Festival
T. Palelek In memory of Yozo Tsujimura

SPECIAL DONATIONS

Memorial Gift Funds Church Improvements

A donation of \$30,000 was recently received from the Grace Yuko Sato / Mariko Michiuye Memorial Fund to pay for significant facility repairs and improvements that were made in 2021 throughout the Los Angeles Church. These improvements include the resealing of the parking lots, retiling of kitchen and service areas, purchase of new kitchen stove, installation of security cameras and new sanctuary monitor, etc.

The Sato / Michiuye Memorial Fund was established nearly 20 years ago, in accordance with family wishes, as a charitable trust to provide financial support for tangible permanent church improvements. Monies in the fund have been aggressively invested in stocks. Over the years, stock profits, which well-exceed the initial donation, have funded a variety of church projects like the recent L.A. Church improvements.

Note on Offerings

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

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Karen Nakamura** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church. After working for many years as an office assistant, Karen enjoys her retirement and having fun with her two married children and five grandchildren.

Karen was introduced to Gedatsu by **Judy Hamamoto** and has volunteered many hours helping at the Autumn Moon Festival. She fondly recalls her late husband and Judy's husband **Ben** staying up all night playing cards and patrolling the church grounds to prevent Festival vandalism.

Karen spends her leisure hours crafting, designing and making floral leis. She drives every day to pick up her granddaughter from school. Is she ever bored? "Never!"

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Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training, adviser

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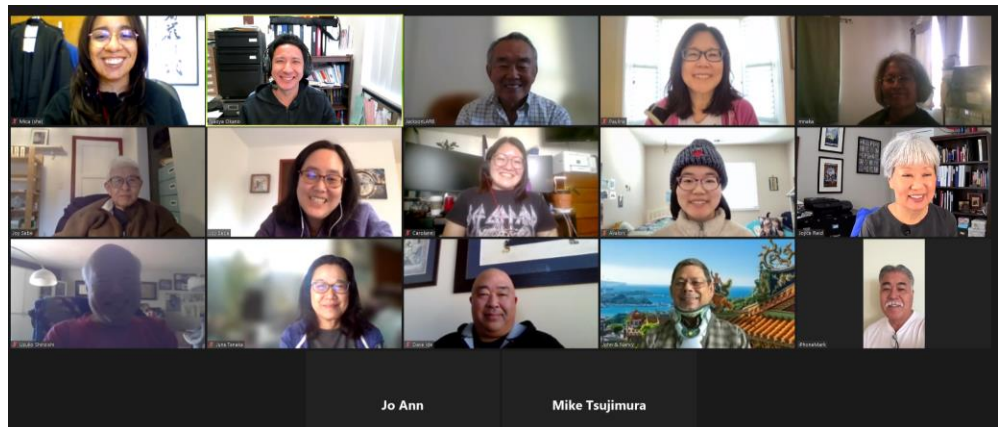
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Focus on Propagation

A recent member survey indicated that our church needs to make actionable changes to create a more supportive, welcoming and positive environment to attract new members, especially young adults and families with children. Armed with this "call to action" and a renewed sense of urgency, church leaders and ministers have been meeting via Zoom to address key propagation issues. Going forward, a primary focus will be on young adults and mothers of young families, groups that are critical to the future of our church.



Participants in a recent Propagation Meeting via Zoom videoconferencing include (top row) left to right: Minister-in-training, Mica Rodriguez, Reverend Naoya Okano, Senior Deacon Jackson Ito, Pauline Tomita, Marilyn Nakamura; (middle row) Senior Reverend Akira Sebe, Joy Sebe, Carolann Hirayama, Avalon Akashi, Joyce Reid; (bottom row) Allen Shiroishi, Deacon June Tanaka, Dave Ide, John Horner, Mark Ishida; (not pictured) Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi and Deacon Hisato Tsujimura.