

GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo’s Thought for the Month

“Appreciation and gratitude are the foundation of humankind’s continued existence.”

When we observe our current world and human history, it may look as if we were ruled by the law of the jungle, where the strongest survive. But if the world had been governed only by jungle law, humans must have killed each other into extinction.

The reality is, despite the many problems in the world, humankind has continued to exist and advance. This is because the world has been governed by the principle of mutual assistance and coexistence.

When we closely observe our daily lives, we can readily understand this. Everything we have, including food, clothing and shelter, is provided by a multitude of people and things. We cannot live by ourselves. Our existence is possible because of others’ help and support. When we appreciate these blessings from others and help one another, we can live in harmony with all people.

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

MAY 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	10:00 am	Virtual – “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
		11:00 am	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	8	9:30 am	Appreciation Service and Mother’s Day Service
Sun	22	9:30 am	Appreciation Service / Old Plaque Burning Service (<i>Joen-no-gi</i>)
Tue	31		Church Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	8	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	15	10:00 am	Appreciation Service and Mother’s Day Service
Thu	19	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Tue	31		Church Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)

JUNE 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	Virtual – “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
		11:00 am	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	12	9:30 am	Appreciation / Father’s Day Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Sat/Sun	25-26		<i>Rokujizo Bazaar Canceled</i>

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



May “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.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **via YouTube video** on **Sunday, May 1, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Hyozauro Hirose, Ben Tsutomu Ide, Buster Ide, Raymond Kaname Nakamoto, Akino Ogawa, Betty Ozaki, Larizlado Rodriguez, Ramona Rodriguez, Isami Suzuki, Kenneth Taketa, Masao Taketa, and Shigeno Tateishi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **in person** on **Sunday, May 8, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Satsuki Akiyoshi, Keiji Ariyasu, Marilyn S. Ariyasu, Tsugu Endo, Andrué Gutierrez, Wesley Hiram, John Kuritani, Chih-ming Lai, Sumako Matsumoto, Tamotsu Matsuura, Kikuye Miyamura, Nobuichi Miyashita, June Junko Morioka, Tameharu Nagao, Hitomi Nakaguchi, Ronald Yoshio Nakamura, Shigemi Nakamura, Shizuyo Nakamura, Sumiko Nakamura, Teruko Nakamura, Seiko Notoya, Mitsuji Okada, Joyce Okimura, Miyoko Okimura, Adeline Sanchez, David Harry Schonbach, Rev. Jerry Shiroishi, Joe Mitsuhide Takara, Kiyo Tanji, Yozo Tsujimura, Jane Harue Wakasa, and Hiroshi Yamamisaka.**

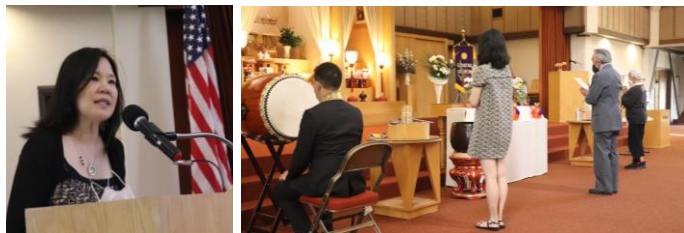
Memorial Tower Enshrinements – Fall 2022

The following new enshrinements in the Gedatsu Memorial Tower are scheduled for the Fall Grand Festival in September: **Linda Alis, Victoria Bartos, Dan Harada, Mary Harada, Buster Ide, Tsuneko Johnson, Sayako Nishino, Hiroko Omiya, Margaret Oyanagi, Tomoki Oyanagi and Alan Masayuki Taketa.** Applications for additional enshrinements will be accepted until June 20. The fee is \$300 per application. Application forms are available at your church office.

Obituary

The Sacramento Spiritual Center sadly reports the passing of long-time member, **Linda Alis**, who passed away in Bloomington, Ind., on February 12 at the age of 78. Linda was introduced to Gedatsu by her revered friend and church pioneer, **Dr. Kenneth Yasuda.**

145th Spring Grand Festival



With mild spring weather and COVID infections at their lowest level in two years, approximately 100 members and friends gathered at the Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento on Sunday, April 10, to celebrate the Grand Spring Festival.

The Festival consisted of services and prayers in the *Gochi* Sanctuary, followed by the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony before the *Fudo* guardian spirit. Special prayer plaques included “Global Souls Who Lost Their Lives to COVID-19” and “The Peaceful Resolution of Russian/Ukrainian Conflict.”



“The True Practice of Offering Blessing”

Video Address by **Reverend Yasunori Miyasaka**
Director of Propagation, *Gedatsu-kai* Japan
Spring Grand Festival – April 10, 2022

Congratulations on today's observance of the Spring Grand Festival. On behalf of *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, I would like to say a few words on this occasion. Because of the pandemic, I regret that I am unable to be with you, so I am delivering my address remotely again for today's ceremony. Thank you very much for your understanding.

This is the third year since the start of the worldwide pandemic, which has severely affected our communities with the loss of countless precious lives. Its impact has been felt everywhere, so I am sure the situation has been difficult for all of you.

When we are faced with natural disasters and global pandemics, saving lives is our first priority. But even though we put forth maximum effort, there is a limit to what we can do, and outcomes are often disappointing.

As Gedatsu Kongo stated in his “Five Principles,” no matter how far science advances, we are unable to alter the movement of nature. Natural phenomena are all expressions of the Supreme Spirit. They teach us an important lesson to respect and humbly adapt to everything that happens. Covid-19, the social changes brought about by the pandemic, and the worldwide efforts in response . . . they are all valuable challenges that we can learn from for our future.

We can help to overcome these challenges. As we offer sincere prayers, we can cooperate in harmony with others, putting forth our best effort to achieve true happiness and world peace.

We can accomplish Gedatsu Kongo's great vision by bringing out the best in each other, being mutually respectful, and creating new and greater value together.

One way is through *kuyo*, or the practice of offering blessing -- especially *amacha* holy tea blessing, which has been sincerely practiced since the founding of the Gedatsu Church. This blessing enables forgotten, unrested souls to finally rest in peace through the power of the holy *Goho* and the essence of the holy tea. When these rested souls are then enshrined in our altars, they are able to fulfill their primary duties as spirits. This is the significance of the holy tea blessing that Master Gedatsu Kongo established.

We can accomplish Gedatsu Kongo's great vision by bringing out the best in each other, being mutually respectful and creating new and greater value together.

I believe that one reason the Master founded Gedatsu is so that we, the living, can recognize and help these unrested souls from being neglected. When we dutifully perform holy tea blessing for them, these souls awaken and begin to actively work for world peace from the spiritual realm.

Let me refer to Gedatsu Kongo's own words to engrave them in our hearts. He said that the All Souls Monument, one of three sacred Gedatsu monuments, is “the great symbol of world peace.” He regarded it as “the summit of universal love.”

Gedatsu Kongo's teaching of “the unity of the visible and invisible worlds” is another way that we can learn about offering blessings in our daily life.

In our global societies, there are many people who are forgotten or neglected – just like forgotten, unrested spirits – even though they may be blessed with health, knowledge, and financial resources. Neglecting such people is a shameful loss for society.

(Continued on page 4)

Gedatsu Kongo taught us that when these neglected people are allowed to live useful, active lives, this becomes a blessing for unrested and neglected spirits. The practice of giving blessing is to help those people who have ability but lack opportunities so that they can work productively for the benefit of society. The true practice of offering of blessing is to uncover their positive talents and engage them where they can be most effective.

Gedatsu Kongo also said, “We humans constantly complain. We are selfish, greedy, insolent and lazy. That is why our lives are full of hatred, jealousy, arrogance and conflict. We can only be truly happy when we rid ourselves of our negative thinking, make the best use of things, minds and people, and live with abundant appreciation and gratitude. The genuine practice of offering of blessing is to be useful to society, benefit people, and make use of everything.”

The same applies to ourselves. Gedatsu Kongo taught us to make use not only of neglected individuals in our society but ourselves, as well. For us, too, the real practice of offering blessing is to realize our own true mission in life and to walk the correct path of Gedatsu without falling into oblivion ourselves.

Ancestor blessing is also the same. Giving blessing to ourselves, who are the offspring of our ancestors, becomes a part of our ancestor blessing. When we make the best use of our time and God-given abilities to work for the benefit of others and society, this becomes a blessing for our ancestors.

The state of being “unrested” is in many ways comparable to being a social outcast, neglected, forgotten or altogether cease to be seen.

We can learn from this. No matter how much we offer prayers to our ancestors, if we create new “unrested” conditions in our daily lives, the blessings we offer are meaningless and wasted. We must be mindful to avoid doing so. “Unrested” states are created by egoistic thinking and behaviors, like conceit, denial, criticism, anger, and hatred. It is important that we practice the life of appreciation and gratitude.

The basics of Gedatsu are practiced in our homes. Traditionally, religion was naturally shared within the family, but this has changed over time, and religion is increasingly an individual matter. I understand that in Europe and the U.S., more and more people consider themselves to be “non-religious.”

Despite this movement away from religion, everyone possesses a religious mind. Everyone has the capacity to feel the joy of finding meaning in their lives by working for the sake of society and others. More and more people enjoy volunteer activities to benefit society. This is the same as living a religious life. So, contributing to our communities and society with our Gedatsu friends is an important factor in our future growth.

World peace can be achieved through the accumulation of small deeds made by each of us every day. Happiness for everyone results from the happiness of each individual. Therefore, let us try our best to make the one person in front of us happier. We can never achieve happiness for millions without achieving happiness for one. One act of kindness, one prayer can change the world and lead to world happiness. So, it is important to propagate the Gedatsu teaching by unselfishly making use of each and every resource available to us, one by one.

Happiness for everyone results from the happiness of each individual. Let us try our best to make the one person in front of us happier.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center and Los Angeles Gedatsu Church are sacred places that contain Master Gedatsu Kongo’s spirit. They are sanctuaries that welcome all people equally, where we are warmly embraced physically, emotionally and spiritually. Where we can heal our broken heart, be comforted when we are anxious, find clarity and hope when we are confused. Where we can find guidance for our spiritual growth.

Let us gather our courage and invite our friends to our church and aid those who are suffering. Let us unite to serve others for the benefit of society and our communities. And let us share and enjoy true happiness.

In this difficult time of the pandemic and conflicts in the world, let us appreciate all the blessings we receive and eagerly practice the Gedatsu teaching.

I would like to conclude my remarks today by sincerely praying for your health and happiness.





Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #12

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

- ☉ Gedatsu is not difficult to understand but difficult to practice. Gedatsu is to appreciate the immeasurable blessings from everything in the universe and to live each day with appreciation.
- ☉ If studying difficult doctrines is required to master a religion, that religion is useless. To know appreciation is enough. Appreciation alone is the essence of religion.
- ☉ To waste time is to waste our life. Make the best of today's life. Live each day with sincerity and appreciation.
- ☉ Gedatsu is to live sincerely each day. There should be no Gedatsu apart from today's life.
- ☉ Our faith should be practiced in our daily life.
- ☉ Gedatsu has no barrier. We can study and practice Gedatsu through everything we experience in our daily life.
- ☉ Home is the smallest unit of a country. Gedatsu practiced at home should be the foundation of peace and prosperity for the country.
- ☉ A foolish person believes she/he knows everything. A wise person humbly admits his/her ignorance.
- ☉ Why don't we search for peace within ourselves first? That should be the foundation of world peace.
- ☉ Hate will destroy us, not others.
- ☉ Blessed is the person who has many good friends.
- ☉ World peace begins with an individual's peace and happiness.
- ☉ Self-help is good, but it is not good to rely on ourselves without realizing the immeasurable blessings that we receive from others. Overconfidence in ourselves does not produce a positive outcome.
- ☉ When we are aware of past negative karma within ourselves, we should accept and appreciate it as a challenge to improve. We will then be able to start afresh and live fully. Human existence is not possible without karma. All people desire to live a beautiful life. When we practice Gedatsu and create new positive karma, we can live beautifully.
- ☉ Why don't we make the best of our karma to create a good life? If we deceive others, we are creating negative karma. This attitude will never lead to happiness.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 23

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *What is the significance of the Sun Spirit service?*

A We celebrate the Sun Spirit Service in February every year. This event is the anniversary of the dedication of the Sun Spirit Monument, that was dedicated on February 11th, 1940 at *Goreichi* in Japan. Each year many Gedatsu members from all over Japan gather on that day to celebrate the anniversary.

I believe this Sun Spirit Monument has two major points of significance for us. First, this monument reminds us of the great blessings that we receive from the country in which we live and of our ancestral pioneers, who sacrificed their lives to build our country.

Master Gedatsu Kongo dedicated this monument as a token of appreciation to his country on February 11th, or Japan's National Founding Day. The red circle carved on the monument stands for the sun. The two characters beside the red circle read *Seishin*, or Spirit. When members pray before the monument, they should remember that they have received immeasurable blessings from their country and respect their ancestors who had gone through many hardships to build the country.

This is important for everyone, regardless of his/her nationality. We, who live in the United States, should think of the Sun Spirit service in the way that we observe the Fourth of July. Our daily life is impossible without our country, which is why we recite the following words in our prayer: ***"I shall reciprocate the profound and immeasurable blessings we receive from our country."*** Think about these words deeply.

Another significant point of the Sun Spirit Monument is to learn the spirit of the sun. Gedatsu Kongo would say, ***"Learn the spirit of the sun, which gives its heat and energy equally and selflessly to all living things on earth without demanding anything in return."***

When we think about the sun's activity, we realize that nothing can survive without the energy of the sun. It is given equally to everything. This is the spirit of the sun. When live according to this spirit, we will be able to enjoy a happy life together with others.

Master Gedatsu Kongo stated, ***"Egoism destroys self, home, country and the world."*** Egoism will never bring us happiness. Before criticizing other people, we must look at ourselves. This is a to our key to happiness.

Q *From the Gedatsu viewpoint, what significance does the Fourth of July hold for Americans?*

A The Fourth of July is the most important day for Americans, because it is the birthday of our country. In Master Gedatsu Kongo's teaching of appreciation and requital, he points to the immeasurable blessings we receive from our country, parents, teachers, society, and everything in the universe. Let me explain.

When we look closely at our lives, we realize that our life is not created by ourselves. It was given to us by our parents and ancestors, without whom we cannot exist. We all have received immeasurable blessings from parents and ancestors.

Secondly, we must acknowledge that we have received immeasurable blessings from our teachers. The word "teachers" does not mean only schoolteachers but everyone in our life who has taught us something, including our parents, friends, schoolteachers, work colleagues, etc. The knowledge they gave us allowed us to develop into the person we are today.

(Continued on back page)

MARCH 2022 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$2,000

General Donations: T. Bartos, R./P. Chan, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M/M D. Ide, R. Ide, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, J. Tanaka, S. Tanaka, M/M D. Tsuboi, T. Wakabayashi

Special Acknowledgments

M/M D. Ide	"Never Forgotten" service and appreciation
K. Kitasoe	In memory of Richard Kitasoe
A. Sebe	With appreciation of prayer for John Horner
G./M. Tahara	Memorial Tower appreciation in memory of Kiyoko Oto

Southern California Total: \$9,810

General: M/M R. Allum, M/M F. Barthel, M/M K. Chinen, Y. Elvin, K. Fujii, M/M B. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, Gedatsu Kendo Dojo (\$600), K. Kuritani, M/M K. Kuritani, I. Long, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M S. Shaklan, D. Shiroishi, J. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M R. Tsujimura, T. Yamada, M/M P. Young

Special Acknowledgments

J. Hamamoto	Special appreciation
D. Mukai	"Never Forgotten" for Karl Tanaka
D. Mukai	Appreciation for Sadaye Tanaka 100 th birthday
M/M K. Shiroishi	Special donation
Do. Shiroishi	In memory of Terry Shiroishi
M. Kimura	In memory of Naoe Kimura
De Shiroishi	In memory of Terry Shiroishi
S. Chodor	"Never Forgotten" service
M/M Ho. Tsujimura	Memory of Lily Kuritani and Tokutaro Tsujimura
Rev/M N. Okano	Appreciation for tax return and stimulus checks (\$500)
M/M Ke. Kuritani	Appreciation for <i>Ohigan kuyo</i>
T. Murakami	Appreciation for <i>Ohigan</i> service
J. Shiroishi	Appreciation for <i>Ohigan</i> service
J. Ito	Donation for Spring Festival bus (\$3,200)
J. Ito	In memory of Bishop Kishida
M/M V. Mizokami	Special donation

Online Donations: Total: \$299

General: S. Matsumoto, S. Shiroishi, M/M P. Reid, H. Tsujimura, W. Young, G. Hass, R. Sakamoto

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

2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

July

5 (Tue) Church Closed
(in lieu of Independence Day)
10 (Sun) Sacramento *Obon* Service
17 (Sun) L.A. *Obon* Service /
Graduates Honored
24 (Sun) Sac'to Appreciation Service /
Graduates Honored
25-28 (Mon-Thu) Youth Camp
Sacramento – TBD

August

5-7 (Fri-Sun) Lake Tahoe *Benzaiten*
Service – TBD
21 (Sun) L.A. *Benzaiten* Service

September

4 (Sun) Fall Grand Festival –
Sacramento
6 (Tue) Church Closed
(in lieu of Labor Day)
18 (Sun) L.A. *Higan* Service
25 (Sun) Sacramento *Higan* Service

October

1-2 (Sat-Sun) L.A. Autumn Moon
Festival
11 (Tue) Churches Closed (in lieu of
Indigenous Peoples Day)
16 (Sun) L.A. *Ujigami* Service
23 (Sun) Sacramento All Souls Service

November

6 (Sun) L.A. Gedatsu Kongo Service
13 (Sun) Sac'to Gedatsu Kongo Service
20 (Sun) L.A. 7-5-3 Children's
Celebration
24-25 (Thu-Fri) Churches Closed
Thanksgiving Holiday
27 (Sun) Sac'to Gedatsu Kongo
Birthday/
7-5-3 Children's Celebration

December

4 (Sun) L.A. Archbishop Kishida
Memorial Service
10 (Sat) L.A. Church Cleanup
11 (Sun) Sacramento Last Service
Archbishop Kishida Memorial
18 (Sun) L.A. Last Service /
Christmas Program
Dec 24-31 (Sat-Sun) Church Closed

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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Ted Bartos** of the Sacramento Spiritual Center. A long-time practitioner of Gedatsu, Ted resides in Yuba City, CA. He was born in Budapest, Hungary and came to California in 1986.

When asked what part of Gedatsu resonates most strongly with him, Ted says it is reverence toward ancestors. "I feel very happy to offer my ancestors sincere appreciation. I've always been aware of and grateful for the support and love they have provided me over my lifetime."

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Joyce Reid, Editor

Rev. Naoya Okano, adviser

Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training, adviser

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**Alaric Akashi, Ted Bartos, Dale Enochs, Dave Ide,
Yuko Okano, Rev. Hisakazu Taki**

(Gedatsu Q&A – continued from page 6)

Thirdly, we should be aware of and appreciate the blessings from society. In our daily lives, we use electricity, gas, water supply, postal service and phone service, etc. They are all provided by society. Without these societal blessings, we cannot live a single day.

Fourthly, we should be aware of the blessings from all creation in the universe. The water we drink, the air we breathe, the sunlight that warms us, the meals we eat – they are all living things. Thanks to the sacrifice of these countless living things, our life is sustained.

In addition to these four sources of blessings, Master Gedatsu Kongo emphasized the blessings we receive from our country. We can live safely each day because our country protects us. When we see the tragic

situations of refugees throughout the world, we understand this very well. Our current safe and happy lives are possible because of the country our ancestors and pioneers have built.

The Fourth of July is when we should think deeply on the immeasurable blessings we receive from our country. At the same time, we should appreciate the blessings we receive from Native Americans, who lived on and cultivated this continent long before others came. This is why we perform holy tea blessing for Native Americans. This is the significance of our celebration of the Fourth of July.

