



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"We complain because
we think highly of ourselves.
If we are humble, we are at peace."*

When things go smoothly and we receive praise from others, we are happy and feel elated. However, when things do not work out as we expect and we are criticized by others, we may be easily discouraged. This is because of our pride.

Feeling a sense of pride may be important, but it is far more important to see ourselves as we really are.

We cannot live by ourselves alone. Our present existence is possible because of the great number of blessings we receive from many people and things in the world. We should be deeply grateful for these blessings. Only with appreciation will we be able to live happy and prosperous lives.

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

JULY 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	5		Church Closed (in lieu of Independence Day)
		7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	10	9:30 am	Appreciation / <i>Obon</i> 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 / <i>Obon</i> Service Graduates Honored
Thu	21	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	23	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom

AUGUST 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Tue	2	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	7	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	14	9:30 am	Appreciation and <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Sun	28	9:30 am	Appreciation Service / Clean-up for Festival

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7		No Service
Sun	14	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	21	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Thu	25	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	27	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom



July “Never Forgotten” 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, July 3, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Yukio Jim Ide, Tsuma Kino, Mother Kenyu Kiyota, Kazue Ando Kotabe, Miyoko Nakamura, Steven Ikuzo Nakatani, Alan Yoneo Oshima, Yukie Ota, Shizu Sebe, Charlie Zenzo Tagawa, Keichi Takemura, Steve Morio Taketa, Keisuke Tateishi, Yuko Tateishi, Kimiko Yomogida, Tsuyako Yuno, Yukie Yuno, and Yone Yuno.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **in person** on **Sunday, July 10, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Hideko Arakawa, Iku Arakawa, Masao Arakawa, Chester Bennington, Nathan Capross, Haruko Chinen, Kazuma Fukunaga, Kathryn Christina Howe, Tomoko Imai, Yoshino Kawamura, Maria Antonia Lechuga, Hiroko Murakami, Stanley Muronaka, Yasoji Nagahama, Tomoyoshi Naito, Kyoko Nakaguchi, Shigeko Nakamura, Shigeko Nakamura, Helen Nakano, Eddie Kinya Ogura, Nancy Yoshie Ogura, Hiroko Omiya, Setsu Sakuma, Malayka Jane Sexton, Thomas Gray Sexton, Yukio Shimada, Jack Shimatsu, Michiye Shimohira, Nobuyoshi Shimohira, Shigeko Sugata, Yoshinori Takamine, Genpachi Tanji, Riichi Tomita, Kazuma Toyama, and Yoko Tsujimura.**

L.A. Women’s Club Reorganizes

This important support group of the L.A. Gedatsu Church has reorganized and elected new officers:

Ikuko Kuritani, president
Bonnie Shimasaki, vice president
Yoko Oishi, Japanese corresponding secretary
Marie Ishida, recording secretary and treasurer
Jo Ann Shiroishi, advisor

See back page for story and photo.

Saito Goma Plaque Applications

Apply now for plaques for the *Saito Goma* fire ceremony at the Grand Fall Festival on Sunday, September 4. An application form is inserted in this newsletter and is available at your church branch. Deadline for applications is August 21.



Memorial Tower Enshrinement

The following souls will be enshrined in the Memorial Tower at the *Goreichi* in Sacramento in a special enshrinement ceremony in conjunction with the Grand Fall Festival in September: **Ben Tsutomu Ide, Saeko Nishino, ancestors of Nishino Family, ancestors of Komine Family, Linda Alis, Buster Ide, Victoria Bartos, Dan Harada, Mary Harada, Alan Taketa, Roy Nakatani, Margaret Oyanagi, Tomoki Oyanagi, Hiroko Omiya, Edward Yutaka Kuritani, Aaron Hitoshi Chodor, Linda Sanchez, and Glen Naoya Hirami.**

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.

After a two-year absence because of the pandemic, members welcome the return of **Reverend Hisakazu Taki**, who will serve as guest minister at the L.A. Church from July 1 through August 10.

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 foreign visitors to Japan.

“Thinking of You” Project Achieves Milestone: 250 Meals Delivered!

“We were so happy that someone thought of us while we were home and not feeling well. We really appreciate the extra effort you made. Thank you.”

“I received a call from Jo Ann that the church would like to deliver a meal to us. It was so unexpected and thoughtful since we are both confined at home.”

“I had an injury that prevented me from moving around. The L.A. Church, out of the kindness of their hearts, had two delicious meals delivered to us. It was such a great help for me, and especially my husband. We are so appreciative.”

Dozens of heart-felt thank-you messages like these were written over the past year by home-bound members in response to receiving the L.A. Church’s “Thinking of You” meals that were prepared by local eateries and delivered by food-delivery platforms and church members.

The “Thinking of You” initiative recently hit a milestone: delivery of its 250th meal!

Meals were sent from a variety of local eateries and online meal-delivery platforms, including Spoonful of Comfort, Harry & David, Panda Express, Yoshinoya, Ono Hawaiian BBQ, Tozai Market, Nijiya Market, Sushi Land, Oki Doki Sushi and SanSai Japanese Grill.

The “Thinking of You” project was organized last year by the L.A. Regional Board to help and support vulnerable members during a challenging time in their lives. The project is led by **Jo Ann Shiroishi**, project chair, assisted by **June Kizu**, **Marilyn Nakamura** and **Diana Mukai**.

Workshop Creates Fun, Edible Gifts for Father’s Day



A lei-making workshop was held at the L.A. Gedatsu Church to create gifts to present to all “Dads and Gents” at the Sunday, June 19, Father’s Day service and luncheon. The workshop produced fifty chocolate candy leis, embellished with ribbon bow ties and a “Year of the Tiger” lotto ticket. Workshop participants included June Kizu, Kazumi Chinen, Ikuko Kuritani, Cindy Tsujimura, Karen Nakamura, Diana Mukai, Jo Ann Kaku, Marie Ishida, Judy Hamamoto and Jo Ann Shiroishi, workshop chair.

“Out of the kindness of their hearts . . . ”



Meals from a variety of eateries – like these, from Spoonful of Comfort (top) and Tozai Market – are delivered to delighted home-bound members.

Honoring “Dads and Gents”



The attractive, yummy and potentially winning leis were designed by Judy Hamamoto.



Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #14

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

- ☸ We are the fruit of immeasurable blessings from the universe. In appreciation, we should benefit the world by living the path of humanity.
- ☸ Genuine religion should be free from religious strictures.
- ☸ Illusion or enlightenment is the creation of our mind.
- ☸ Many people may believe that religious life is only attainable by going into remote mountain areas. In fact, genuine religion should be practiced in the noisy environment of our modern world.
- ☸ Gedatsu is independent of time and space. Everything around us is a lesson for Gedatsu.
- ☸ Religion should be practiced in kitchens, bathrooms and everywhere in our daily lives.
- ☸ Gedatsu is the basis of all religions.
- ☸ Religion should be always fresh and animated like a flopping fish out of water.
- ☸ I don't like indecision. Either a thing is bad or good. Make immediate decisions and act quickly. We will avoid problems later.
- ☸ My sincere hope is that Gedatsu will be practiced in every home throughout the world.
- ☸ We can borrow money from others, but we cannot borrow another's heart. We must improve our attitude by living with appreciation.
- ☸ Giving is the path to becoming wealthy in the afterlife.
- ☸ Appreciation is the foundation of a good family, which becomes the foundation of a strong country.
- ☸ If we are not happy living in this world, we will never be able to rest in peace after death.
- ☸ When things do not work out as intended, we may feel frustrated. But if everything goes our way, the world will be a mess.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 25

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *Our Gedatsu teachers always say that our morning and evening prayers are important. Why is that? And how should I pray?*

A Master Gedatsu Kongo stated, "Prayer is everything about religion." By this, he meant that prayer was the most essential part of our religious faith. Why?

Take a moment to reflect back on the kinds of prayers you have offered at home and at church. When we offer prayers, we may often pray for something that we desire: health, wealth, safety of the family, success in business, etc. That's okay. However, it is important to understand the most essential point of our daily prayers



When I first began to study Gedatsu, my teacher repeatedly taught me the significance of prayer. He taught me what I should say when I pray.

He said that there are two important points in prayer. The first point is gratitude. When you pray in the morning, first of all you should say, "Thank you very much for giving me this brand-new life today." Then secondly, you should say to the Universal Life Force and ancestors, "Please use me as you wish." My teacher taught me this repeatedly.

Usually, however, we may not pray this way. We may say, "Please guide me *as I wish*." But this is not a true prayer to the Universal Life Force and ancestors. When we pray in this way, we are praying from our ego.

When we say, "Please use me as *you wish*," we leave everything up to the Universal Life Force. In other words, we accept everything as it is, and we endeavor to do our best in the situation, even when something unfavorable may happen to us. This should be our true prayer.

Mother Teresa said, "Prayer is total surrender to God."

In other words, when we pray, we surrender to the Universal Life Force unconditionally. When we have this attitude in life, everything about our life will be settled most appropriately for us. However, it is very hard for us to understand this intellectually. Only when we actually experience this, can we relate to it. This is the heart of religious practice.

Please think deeply about Gedatsu Kongo's words, "Prayer is everything about religion."

Let us offer sincere prayers every day, leaving everything up to the Universal Life Force. I am sure outlook this will become a tremendous source of strength in our lives.

(Continued on page 6)

Q *What is the meaning of the three symbols of worship enshrined in the Gedatsu altar?*

A In the altar of the Gedatsu Church, we have three symbols of worship: which are the Universal Life Force (*Tenjinchigi*) at the center; the Creative Principle (*Gochi Nyorai*) on the left; and Master Gedatsu Kongo on the right.

I believe everyone can understand the significance of the enshrinement of Gedatsu Kongo. Gedatsu Kongo is the founder of our Gedatsu Church. Our present happiness is due to his teaching. Therefore, it is natural and appropriate for Gedatsu members to pay respects to the spirit of Master Gedatsu Kongo.

The Universal Life Force (center) and the Creative Principle (on the left) are similar in essence. Why were they enshrined together in the Gedatsu altar then?

Gedatsu is a non-sectarian religious study. This is Gedatsu Kongo's basic view on religions. He said, "There should be no boundary among religions in the world." The Gedatsu altar is an expression of this idea.

The Gedatsu teaching was originally established in Japan, and Master Gedatsu Kongo mainly taught Japanese people during his lifetime. Therefore, he taught people on the basis of their Japanese religious traditions. The enshrinement was also based on Japanese religious traditions.

From ancient times, most Japanese people had faith in both Shinto and Buddhism. They have both Shinto and Buddhist altars together in their homes. This is the common way of Japanese people's religious faith.

When Japanese couples become parents, they visit a Shinto shrine to bless their babies. Their wedding ceremonies are usually observed in the Shinto tradition, and their funerals are held by Buddhist services. This is common for Japanese people. Thus, Shinto and Buddhism live together in harmony and peace in Japanese culture. Gedatsu Kongo valued this religious tradition of Japanese people and believed this spirit of religious harmony should lead us to world peace.

The Universal Life Force is enshrined in the Shinto manner, and the Creative Principle is enshrined in the Buddhist way. The Gedatsu altar's dual-religion enshrinement is an expression of our founder Gedatsu Kongo's view on religions. He emphasized that Gedatsu is not biased toward any particular religious tradition. We respect the essential common ground of all religions, which we view as one.

In the United States, we have many religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. Each of them has its own rituals, doctrines, and symbols to worship. They may look different, but when you look deeply into each tradition, we will be able to find in them a common ground of all religious traditions.

When we recognize this common ground, we are able to appreciate all traditions. This attitude of inclusion should be the path to world peace. This is the spirit of Gedatsu. Master Gedatsu Kongo expressed this spirit in the form of the Gedatsu altar.



MAY 2022 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$1,426

General Donations: J. Tanaka, M/M D. Ide, M/M D. Tsuboi, J. Detwiler / J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, S. Tanaka, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, S. Fujimoto

Special Acknowledgments

M/M D. Ide Appreciation for Buster Ide one-year memorial service
M/M D. Ide "Never Forgotten" service for Buster and Ben Ide

Southern California Total: \$5,092

General: D. Allum, M/M K. Chinen, K. Fujii, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M M. Hamada, M/M T. Hirami, M/M M. Ishida, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, M/M K. Kuritani, T. Misumi, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, S. Okimura (\$500), T. Okimura (\$600), D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, T. Toyama, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M R. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood, M/M L. Young

Special Acknowledgments

M/M T. Fukushima "Never Forgotten" service
M/M Ken Kuritani "Never Forgotten" service
M/M T. Matsumoto "Never Forgotten" service
T. Okimura "Never Forgotten" service for Nobuyoshi Miyashita and Joyce Okimura
M/M Ho. Tsujimura In memory of Yozo Tsujimura, Hiroshi Yamamisaka, John Kuritani and June Morioka
P. Shaklan In appreciation for holy *Goho* practice
J. Wakasa Jane Wakasa memorial
M/M G. Wood "Never Forgotten" service for Tameharu Nagao
M/M C. Morioka Successful opening for The Wrecking Yard

Online Donations: Total: \$274

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

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

UPCOMING EVENTS



September

4 (Sun) Fall Grand Festival
Sacramento

6 (Tue) Church Closed
(in lieu of Labor Day)

18 (Sun) L.A. *Higan* Service /
Grandparents Honored

25 (Sun) Sacramento *Higan* Service

October

1-2 (Sat-Sun) Autumn Moon Festival
L.A. Church

11 (Tue) Churches Closed (in lieu of
Indigenous Peoples Day)

16 (Sun) L.A. *Ujigami* Service /
Halloween Celebration

23 (Sun) Sacramento All Souls Service

November

6 (Sun) Gedatsu Kongo Service – L.A.

13 (Sun) Gedatsu Kongo Service –
Sacramento

20 (Sun) 7-5-3 Children's Celebration
Los Angeles

24-25 (Thu-Fri) Churches Closed
Thanksgiving Holiday

27 (Sun) Gedatsu Kongo Birthday/
7-5-3 Children's Celebration
Sacramento

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

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Paul Nakamura** of the L.A. Church. Paul resides in Diamond Bar with his wife **Akiko**. A Gedatsu member for 30 years, Paul recalls his father returning home after attending a church service and seeing him being moved to tears by the prayers given

for everyone's ancestors. From that moment, Paul believes that his family members' lives were forever changed, experiencing true happiness and stability for the first time.

Although Paul is eligible for retirement, he continues to work as a landscaper. When asked about his hobbies, Paul's answer is "work!" He simply loves his work, which provides him the opportunity to interact with people.

Editorial Staff

Joyce Reid, Editor

Rev. Naoya Okano, adviser

Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training, adviser

Editorial contributors to this issue:

Dave Ide, **Marie Ishida**, **Paul Nakamura**, **Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi**, **Rev. Hisakazu Taki**

Members of the L.A. Women's Club recently met to reorganize and reinvigorate this important support group of the L.A. Gedatsu Church.

Under newly elected officers (see page 2), the group is pursuing an ambitious agenda that includes organizing people, projects and activities to support the L.A. Gedatsu Church's propagation campaign this year and improve communication within the church. The Club's aim is to engage and delight members and guests of all ages in an effort to strengthen relationships with the church and build the congregation.

L.A. Women's Club Reorganizes to Focus on Propagation, Communication



In-person and virtual participants agreed on the Club's goals and activities and planned innovative ways to draw and engage new and current members.