

GEDATSU COMPANION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 News and Announcements
- 3 Celebrating our 2022 Graduates
- 4 "Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo" – Selected Quotes #15
- 5 Gedatsu Q&A – Part 26
- 6 Rev. A. Sebe: "Gedatsu in Practice"
- 7 Offerings and Upcoming Events
- 8 L.A. Church Honors Its Fathers

Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

"Fulfill your life's purpose in the present moment, not in the afterlife."

It may be important to achieve our ideals, but many people suffer through life unrealistically aiming for perfection.

Such idealistic dreams are often experienced in youthful stages of life. It is important to be aware, however, that the reality of the present moment holds the key to opening the way to the future.

We should always strive to do our best in the present moment. We will then be guided to the best way for us.

If we desire peace in the afterlife, we should be kind to our neighbors and strive to do our best in what should be done right now.

If we sincerely wish for world peace, we should first establish warm and genuine relationships with family members and neighbors.

Let us never forget that the key to unlocking a better future is always within our reach now.

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

AUGUST 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	14	9:30 am	Appreciation and <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Tue	16	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
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 and Luncheon
Thu	25	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	27	9:00 am	Women's Club Meeting - in person/ via Zoom
		11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom

SEPTEMBER 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4	9:30 am	Grand Fall Festival
Tue	6		Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
		7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	11	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	25	9:30 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4		Grand Fall Festival (In Sacramento)
Tue	6		Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
Sun	11	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	18	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service
			Grandparents Recognition / Taco Party
Thu	22	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	24	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom



August “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 on **Sunday, August 7, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **W. Royal Domingo, Shirley Nakamoto Hughley, Konami Ide, Kuma Kotabe Ide, Toshio Ide, Mitsu Ito, Nobuyoshi Ito, Rinpei Kino, Kiyota Mishima, George Nakayama, Yoshiye Ide Obu, and Katherine Kazuye Sato.**

The L.A. Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, August 14, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Masaru Akiyoshi, Mankichi Arakawa, Masako Azama, Mario Boras, Aaron Chodor, Toku Dyson, William Ishibashi, Shige Ishida, Mitsu Ito, Nobuyoshi Ito, Kimiyo Kikuta, Masaru Kikuta, Sumishichi Kikuta, Shoji Kusumoto, Haku Michigami, Glenn Mizuki, Jim Nakamura, Toku Nishi, Masakazu Oishi, Margaret Masako Oyanagi, Umeko Sasano, Shizuye Shiroishi, Charles Stoner, Kijiro Taniguchi, Yuki Tanji, Nora Ayako Toguchi, Chohei Tomita, and Tomoe Toyama.**

Autumn Moon Festival Canceled

The L.A. Gedatsu Church announces that its annual fundraiser, normally held in early October, has been canceled this year. According to the L.A. Regional Board, planning and preparing for the event are hampered because of lack of volunteers and uncertain vendor participation. Watch for our Autumn Moon Festival in 2023.

Manbu Kuyo Service Application

At the Fall Grand Festival in Japan in October a memorial rite will be conducted to liberate all spirits from suffering. If you would like to apply for this *Manbu Kuyo* service, complete the application form inserted in this issue and submit it to your church by the end of August.



Fall Grand Festival

Sunday, September 4 – 9:30 a.m.

Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento

Program I – *Gochi* Sanctuary Service
 Program II – Memorial Tower Enshrinement Ceremony
 Program III – *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony

- Members and guests are invited to attend.
- Health and safety protocols will be observed.
- *Saito Goma* plaques for the Fire Ceremony must be ordered by August 21.
- Free chartered bus from L.A. (minimum of 20 riders) will be provided. Contact the L.A. Church office to reserve a seat.
- Free lunch sandwiches (roast beef, turkey, vegetarian). Contact your local church to reserve a sandwich.

Memorial Tower Enshrinements

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, Glen Naoya Hiram, Mark Alan Mullins, and Susie Setsuko Tateishi.**

Congratulations, Class of 2022!

Gedatsu Churches Celebrate Our Newest Graduates

Five new graduates – children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren* of Gedatsu members – were recognized this summer by the Gedatsu Church with congratulatory certificates and monetary gifts or gift cards, sponsored by the Sacramento Spiritual Center and Los Angeles Church Sunday School. Let's meet our 2022 graduates:

Ruby Reano, 12, graduated from elementary school in Chula Vista, earning the Principal's Award for Academics and outstanding achievement in the performing arts. She plans to enter middle school in the fall. Her hobbies include gymnastics and sketching, and she likes kayaking, math and online "Mystery Science." Parents: **Tami and Rich Reano**. Grandparents: **Harriet and Sam Sekikawa**.

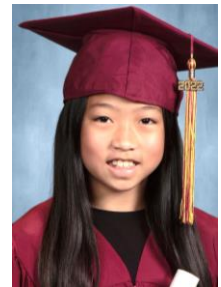
Carson Kuritani, 14, graduated from middle school in Pasadena and plans to attend Loyola High School in the fall, where he aspires "to succeed and go on to attend a good college." Carson is a member of the California Junior Scholarship Federation and the academic decathlon team. He enjoys spending time with friends and family, and his hobbies include track, running and art. Parents: **Camille and Kevin Kuritani**. Grandparents: **Ikuko and Kenny Kuritani**.

Gavin Tsujimura, 17, graduated from high school in San Pedro. He plans to go to San Diego State University and get a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. He enjoys playing basketball and hanging out with friends, and he likes sports and music. Parent: **Todd Tsujimura**. Grandparents: **Carole and Howard Tsujimura**.

Andrew Shaklan, 18, graduated from high school in La Canada and will enter California State University, Fullerton in the fall, with plans to get a degree in Public Relations. He and his high school golf team captured the CIF Southern Section Division III championship. His dream job: to become a broadcaster for a sports team. His hobbies include doing voice impressions of celebrities, friends and family, and he enjoys swimming, skiing and golf. Parents: **Pam and Stuart Shaklan**. Grandparents: **Arlene and Rudy Tsujimura**.

Jonathan Shaklan, 22, graduated from Chapman University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, minoring in Data Analytics. Jonathan recently began working for the Los Angeles Dodgers. He enjoys golfing, watching baseball, reading books, listening to country music, and spending time with friends. Parents: **Pam and Stuart Shaklan**. Grandparents: **Arlene and Rudy Tsujimura**.

* It should be noted that Carson, Gavin, Andrew and Jonathan are second cousins, sharing the same great-grandparents, the late **Yozo and Sumiko Tsujimura**, pioneers of the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church.



Ruby Reano



Carson Kuritani



Gavin Tsujimura



Andrew Shaklan



Jonathan Shaklan



Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #15

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

- ☉ Humility is the secret of a happy and prosperous life.
- ☉ The sun rises in the morning. The moon glows in the evening. Universal truth appears in ordinary ways.
- ☉ A severe back pain can be relieved by inserting a needle in a vital spot of the body. If we miss that vital point, we cannot relieve the pain. The vital point of our Gedatsu study is *appreciation*.
- ☉ Gedatsu is like a mother's finger, pointing at the moon for her baby. The baby learns to see the beauty of the moon from his mother's finger of love. As he grows, the baby becomes independent of his mother's finger and sees the moon directly by himself. This is the Gedatsu path that we should follow.
- ☉ The main purpose of education should be the teaching of appreciation and gratitude.
- ☉ I will not reach a goal during my lifetime. When I have crossed a mountain, I will head off for another. Today I will try to improve myself to be better than yesterday. Tomorrow I will strive to be better than today. I have no end to achieve in life.
- ☉ Religious individuals may tend to criticize other religions, but they are often limited by their own beliefs. Genuinely religious people should be open to other religions.
- ☉ A religion that doesn't meet the needs of the times will be abandoned by contemporary societies.
- ☉ Gedatsu is always just before us. Everything that happens to us should be a Gedatsu lesson to improve ourselves.
- ☉ The moon can be equally reflected on the surface of a big lake or a cup of water. Gedatsu is not a fixed rule. It should be always free from conventional thinking.
- ☉ Good luck or bad luck is our mind's creation. When we live each day with appreciation and gratitude, we will never have bad luck.
- ☉ The Universal Life Force is always working within us. Do not seek divinity outside of ourselves.
- ☉ Reflect within oneself and establish love and peace inside first. This is the beginning of world peace.
- ☉ Humility is a vital requirement for our faith.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 26

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *When I encounter difficulties, how should I cope with them?*

A Master Gedatsu Kongo stated, "Gedatsu is to self-reflect and abandon your egoism." By scrutinizing and correcting our egotistical thoughts and attitudes, which are the cause of difficulties in our life, we will be able to start afresh and live a happy life. This could be said to be the basics of the Gedatsu study.

It is important to remember: "Appreciation First." When we encounter difficulties in life, we tend to think negatively of things. But even though we may suffer, we should remember the positive and beautiful elements that are still in our life. We have family and friends. We can enjoy beautiful sunsets, children's smiles, beautiful flowers and plants, birds' singing, etc. Above all, we are alive. Our heart continues beating even when we are suffering. These are all miracles.

When we suffer from difficulties, we may forget these blessings and take them for granted. If we deeply appreciate the fact that we are alive, we will never become desperate. We will be able to accept everything as a divine blessing. Nothing is meaningless. Everything has meaning, even though it may appear negative to us. When we face adversity and endeavor to overcome it, we learn something important and realize a full life. This is Gedatsu Kongo's teaching of "Appreciation First." If we firmly believe this and do our best no matter what difficulties we face, we will never be hopeless in life and will be able to live fully.

Appreciation First. This is the key to attaining true peace and happiness and living a full life. Please remember this.

Q *My life is full of troubles. How can I live happily each day in this life full of hardships?*

A I would like to tell you a story about Buddha. One day, Buddha was about to speak before many of his disciples. Instead, he did not say a word. He just held

up a flower and blinked. His disciples did not understand what Buddha meant and were silent. Only one of them, Mahakashyapa, understood him and smiled. Buddha then said, "I transmitted all of my teachings to Mahakashyapa." This is the story of the first transmission of Buddha's teaching.

What did Buddha transmit to Mahakashyapa simply by holding up a beautiful flower and without saying a word? Buddha was showing them the reality of life. Buddha urged us to appreciate the reality of our life. This is the essence of Buddhism.

We are all looking for happiness. Even in our Gedatsu study, we may perform practices to attain happiness. When we think of happiness, we may imagine it as an ideal state that is far beyond us, or something that can only be attained in the future. We must understand that these kinds of thoughts create delusions and suffering.

We seek happiness in our attempt to avoid misfortunes. We search for something desirable in the future and forget the present moment. In this way, we are always deluded by thoughts and forget the reality of life. We should truly appreciate our life as it really is.

We sometimes face difficulties. At other times, we experience happy events. This is our life. No matter what adversities we may encounter, we should accept the present situation as it is and do our best in our duties. This is the right way to live a full life. When we live in this way, we will be guided most appropriately and attain true happiness. Remember, our life is a precious gift from the Universe, no matter what it is. We should accept our life as it is and appreciate it.

When I was young, a teacher told me to appreciate what I am, meaning that we should accept the present situation as it is even if it is unfavorable to us. Face the present situation as it is and do your best in what should be done now. Master Gedatsu Kongo always encouraged members to appreciate everything unconditionally. This is the path of true happiness.

(Continued on page 6)

(Gedatsu Q&A – continued from page 5)

Master Gedatsu Kongo stated, “You should deeply appreciate life itself. You may appreciate the beauty of flowers in the garden. Why don’t you appreciate your life? Life is everything for you. It should be the greatest joy for you. But unfortunately, because of your selfish desires and thoughts, you forget to appreciate your precious life. It is really shameful.”

Please remember to live fully in this present moment. When we truly appreciate our life, we will be able to live a full life with gratitude and joy.



Gedatsu in Practice: A Call to Action to Cultivate Our Spirituality

By Senior Reverend Akira Sebe

I would like members who have studied Gedatsu for some time to prioritize developing appreciation for the strength and spirit of water. This will need to start with members of our leadership boards within our church.

Appreciation for Water

Water has the ability to cultivate and nurture the plants that we depend on. Our bodies are made up mostly of water, and we rely on clean water to live. The importance of access to clean water has been in the news in recent years, but appreciation for the spirit of water has long been key to the Gedatsu teachings.

For the past 50 years, I have worked to develop a deep understanding of and appreciation for the spirit and strength of water. I have experienced this understanding and appreciation now for 20 years. When I was in my twenties, I learned of this concept from **Bishop Kishida**, but I was too young to understand. After my wife passed away in 2012, I started to receive spiritual guidance from **Sugimoto Sensei** in Japan. Sugimoto Sensei stressed the importance of learning how to appreciate the spirit of water. It was in this time of emotional hardship, when my ego declined, that I became more dedicated, perhaps out of necessity, and cultivated my appreciation for water.

My Daily Routine

Before I go on a walk every morning, I thank the spirit of the land where I stand and the spirit of water. I also express appreciation in my room before I go to sleep. In a two-way movement, I both feel my appreciation approach the divinity of water and the divinity of water coming to my body and soul. This is a feeling of great peace stemming from appreciation.

My appreciation has had an impact on how I use water. When I use water from the faucet, I do not let the water run. I am careful not to use water wastefully. All of these actions, of course, are in line with current efforts to protect our natural resources and the environment.

How Do You Start?

The following are two-step instructions to start developing appreciation

Step 1: Recognize the spirit and strength of water.

Step 2: Spend time every day to thank the spirit of water. This can be 15-30 seconds every day.

- Bow your head
- Say “thank you.” Saying thanks can come in many forms, for example:
 - In your head, say what you are grateful for.
 - Recite the following in your head seven times:
 - “*Namu Gedatsu Kongo*” – reverence to Gedatsu Kongo
 - “*On sora soba tei ei so waka*” – reverence to *Benzaiten*, the Divine Spirit of Water



Practicing Appreciation

Walks along the banks of the American River are part of Reverend Sebe’s daily practice. He prays to *Ryujin*, the divine water guardian of the river, giving thanks for its blessings in providing water to irrigate the state’s agriculture, benefiting millions of Californians.

As he walks, Rev. Sebe collects litter that he finds along the riverbank. He also regularly picks up trash along Happy Lane, the busy road in front of the Sacramento Spiritual Center.



JUNE 2022 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$1,680

General Donations: A. Sebe, D. Enochs, M/M D. Ide, M/M D. Tsuboi, J. Ito, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M. Fukushima, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, M/M S. Sekikawa, T. Wakabayashi

Special Acknowledgments

R. Ide	Appreciation for one-year memorial service for Buster Ide
M/M D. Ide	Appreciation for one-year memorial service for Buster Ide
M/M D. Tsuboi	One-year memorial service for Buster Ide

Southern California Total: \$4,887

General: C. Barthel, M/M K. Chinen, K. Fujii, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M B. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hiram, M/M M. Ishida, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, M. Kimura, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, Y. Naruko, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M P. Young

Special Acknowledgments

Do. Shiroishi	Special donation
D. Mukai	"Never Forgotten" service for Manabu Mukai
De. Shiroishi	"Never forgotten" service for Hidekichi and Tsuna Shiroishi
Kaku/Mahoney Family	"Never Forgotten" service for Mitsuko Kaku
M/M S. Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" service for Hidekichi and Tsuna Shiroishi, Philip Nakamura and Mary Otera
De. Shiroishi	In memory of Phillip Nakamura and Mary Otera
Do. Shiroishi	In memory of Hidekichi and Tsuna Shiroishi, Philip Nakamura and Mary Otera
J. Shiroishi	In memory of Hidekichi and Tsuna Shiroishi
F. Sueyoshi	In memory of Ben Toguchi and Harry Arakawa
M. Nakamura	Gratitude to Gedatsu Church

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

2022

October

- 1-2** (Sat-Sun) Autumn Moon Festival
L.A. Church (Canceled)
- 11** (Tue) Churches Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
- 16** (Sun) L.A. *Ujigami* Service / Luncheon and Pumpkin Decorating Contest
- 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 / Luncheon
- 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 / Luncheon
Ornament Decorating Contest
- Dec 24-31** (Sat-Sun) Church Closed

2023

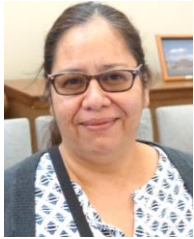
January

- 1** (Sun) New Year Homage
- 8** (Sun) Sacramento New Year Service
- 15** (Sun) L.A. New Year Service
- 17** (Tue) Churches Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

February

- 12** (Sun) Sacramento Sun Spirit Service
- 19** (Sun) L.A. Sun Spirit Service
- 21** (Tue) Churches Closed (in lieu of Presidents' Day)

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Mariko Locheo** of the L.A. Church. Mariko, her husband **Miguel**, and their three children live in El Monte. An elementary school librarian and multi-media specialist, Mariko serves on the church staff as Director of

Outreach, helping the church develop a supportive relationship with a number of community organizations.

Mariko is originally from Guadalajara, where she was a pediatrician. Her great-grandfather was Japanese, so her family takes pride in their mixed heritage. Attending the Gedatsu Church, says Mariko, makes her feel “complete.”

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Fathers Celebrated on Their Special Day

Our Gedatsu churches honored dads at the annual Father's Day services in June. At the L.A. Church, as a Sunday School project, children and teens decorated BBQ aprons for their dads. All “Dads and Gents,” shown above, were gifted candy leis,

created by the L.A. Women's Club. The day's program included entertainment and a delicious luncheon. At the Sacramento Spiritual Center, shown at bottom left, dads were given gift bags containing tasty treats and gift cards.