

GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"We are, ever, one with our ancestors.
We are the crystallization of our
ancestor spirits."*

We were all born from our parents, and they were born from their parents. Our present existence is totally due to the immeasurable blessing from our parents and ancestors.

Everyone may understand this from the viewpoint of biology. But it may be difficult to realize that our ancestors, although gone and unseen, may actually be with us still, warmly watching over us.

If we truly comprehend this, we will never feel helpless, no matter what difficulties we may experience. With this knowledge, we can overcome any hardships.

Please remember that we are always one with our ancestors, so let us sincerely do our best in our daily duties and activities. This is the path to our true happiness.

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 Honored, Taco & Pinata Party
Thu	22	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	24	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom

OCTOBER 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	4	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	9	9:30 am	Appreciation Service
Tue	11		Church Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
Sun	23	9:30 am	Appreciation / All Souls Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2		No Service
Sun	9	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	11		Church Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
Sun	16	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Ujigami</i> Service
			Luncheon / Children's Halloween Costume Parade / Pumpkin-decorating Contest
Thu	20	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	22	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom

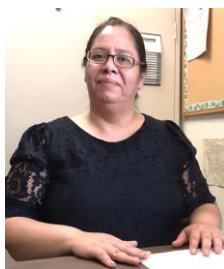


September “Never Forgotten” Memorial Services

“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** on **Sunday, September 11, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Robert Katsumi Fukushima, Glenn Shuji Hatae, Linda Carol Kashiwagi, Shigetaro Kino, Teruko Kino, Soichi Nakatani, Masako Sakamoto Tagawa, and Tetsuo Yomogida.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, September 11, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **David H. Dyson Jr., Kazuko Endo, Malanie Yosa Garion, Ann M. Ghazarians, Nancy Kikuchi, Misako Kobata, Liam Mikael Kowal, Hitoshi Matsumoto, Yasuko Matsumoto, Frank S. Miyamura, Nancy Mizuki, Hajimu Murakami, Charles Migiwa Nishi, Arlene Okimura, Tomoki Oyanagi, Jacobus Johannes Reckers, Ruth Muriel Reckers, Kiyoshi George Sakuma, John Takeshi Sangen, Yuri T. Sangen, Setsu Shiroishi, Yoshio Fred Shoga, Himeko Tanji, Itsuya Frank Tanji, Moto Tanji, and Atsuko Watanabe.**



New Office Manager in L.A Church Office

L.A. member **Mariko Locheo** has been hired as Office Manager of the Los Angeles Church, responsible for general office and administrative work, under the supervision of

Rev. Naoya Okano. In her new part-time role, Mariko will be in the office three days a week. She can be reached by email at locheo.gedatsu.lab@gmail.com.

Mariko also serves part time as Director of Community Outreach. She succeeds **Marylin Nakamura**, who recently retired after serving nine years as Office Assistant.



Fall Grand Festival

Sunday, September 4 – 9:30 a.m.

Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento

Program I – *Gochi* Sanctuary Service
Ordination Ceremony of **Mica Rodriguez**
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.
- Free lunch sandwiches (roast beef, turkey, vegetarian).

Obituaries

Our Gedatsu Church mourns the passing of two long-time members whose dedication and leadership significantly contributed to the growth of the Gedatsu teaching in America.

Louis K. Ito passed away on July 6 at his home in Rancho Palos Verdes at the age of 91. Louis is survived by his four younger siblings, **Edward, Robert (Norma), Jackson and Karen (Harry)**; two children; and five grandchildren.

Deacon Rudy K. Tsujimura passed away on July 17 following a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 83 years old. Rudy is survived by his wife, **Arlene**; his daughter and son-in-law, **Pamela and Stuart Shaklan**, and grandchildren, **Sarah, Jonathan and Andrew**; his siblings, **Howard (Carol), Hisato (Loretta) and Ikuko (Kenny) Kuritani**; and many nephews and nieces.

Both Louis and Rudy served the church as Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Mica Rodriguez Completes Her Minister Training in Japan



Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training at the Sacramento Spiritual Center, spent two weeks this summer in Japan, completing her minister training course, which began in January 2020.

Her spiritual education in Japan included training at *Goreichi Gedatsu-kai*, where she received instruction in Gedatsu practices, services, prayer, and health guidance. She performed a number of service duties, such as cleaning the Holy Grounds and preparing offerings at the various shrines and monuments.

While in Japan, Mica also participated in the annual Gedatsu Pilgrimage to the Three Sacred Sites with the *Gedatsu-kai* Youth Group. She visited Ise Grand Shrine, Kashiwara Shrine and Sennyuji Temple, the memorial site of **Master Gedatsu Kongo**.

Now that she has completed her minister training and received approval of **Bishop Teruo Okano** and U.S. ministers, Mica will be ordained as minister in ceremonies at the Fall Festival in September.



L.A. Church Sunday School – Revitalized for Growth

With the recent influx of several new families with young children, the L.A. Regional Board has revitalized its Sunday School program as part of the church's broader propagation initiative. Young parents are encouraged to have their children attend Sunday School classes in the downstairs social hall after the morning prayer service.

Gedatsu Sunday School classes help our youngest members build character through simple lessons based on Gedatsu teachings and values. And with creative, hands-on activities under the supervision of adult instructors, they have fun, too!

Recent and planned activities include holiday-themed crafts (like decorating coffee mugs and BBQ aprons for Mothers'/Fathers' Day) and projects that focus on appreciation and gratitude for nature, ancestors and family.



At left, Mica and others in training at *Goreichi* give prayers and prepare offerings. Above, she cleans the Holy Grounds and attends a health-guidance class.





Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #16

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

- ☼ When you study and practice Gedatsu sincerely, you will be free from the fear of death.
- ☼ Everyone lives every day. However, if you do not know how you should live, you are like a living corpse.
- ☼ You cannot hide your true personality. It expresses itself as your speech and action.
- ☼ Be kind to everyone. This attitude will lead to your happy and prosperous life.
- ☼ Every evening before going to bed, reflect deeply on what you have done during the day and vow to yourself to live better tomorrow.
- ☼ I don't care for daydreamers. There are many dreamers in the world, but they are far less important than doers.
- ☼ When a string becomes tangled-up, find the knot to be loosened. You will then be able to disentangle the string.
- ☼ Hell and paradise are our minds' creation.
- ☼ If you always grumble and complain about life, why don't you quit being a human?
- ☼ If you deeply examine yourself, you won't complain about life. You think too highly of yourself. That is why you are always grumbling.
- ☼ Our mouths are the passageway for our minds to express.
- ☼ When you make a mistake, apologize and correct the error promptly.
- ☼ Hope in the morning, effort during the day, and appreciation in the evening – this is Gedatsu life.
- ☼ Karma should not be a cause of pessimism and despair. Why don't you make it useful? When you are faced with adversity, make use of the adverse circumstances to change your life positively.
- ☼ Why don't you scrutinize yourself thoroughly before criticizing others? By ignoring your own meanness, how can you point out the meanness of others?
- ☼ Once you open your spiritual eye, you will find this world is filled with many beautiful things.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 27

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *Whenever I go to church, I've tried to practice Hiho meditation, but I really do not understand why I should perform the meditation. What is the significance of Hiho meditation and its method?*

A When we perform the *Hiho* Meditation, we hold the Holy *Hiho* between our palms. The Holy *Hiho* is a symbol of the Universal Life Force, which **Master Gedatsu Kongo** inscribed with his holy spiritual power. Therefore, to hold the Holy *Hiho* means that we leave everything to the Holy *Hiho*, or the Universal Life. This attitude of total surrender is the most important aspect of the Holy *Hiho* Meditation practice.

Our mind and physical body are not separate. Therefore, when we perform meditation, we should be mindful of our physical posture. We should sit in an upright manner, with our back straight, but relaxing our shoulders and arms. When we sit on a chair, we do not lean on the back. We breathe naturally through our nostrils.



When we perform meditation, we don't have to think of anything. We should try not to imagine anything in our mind, except keeping our physical posture in an upright manner and concentrating on our breathing. We will then be properly adjusted mentally and physically by the power of the Holy *Hiho*, or the Universal Life. This is *Hiho* Meditation.

In the course of our daily lives, when we see and hear something, we instantly label it with our thoughts and feelings at that moment: "This is good." "He is wrong." "I like this." "I don't like that person." And so on.

However, we should understand that these instant judgments result from our egotistical thoughts and feelings. Regularly practicing *Hiho* Meditation enables us to release ourselves from self-centered judgments and to see things without ego-centered labeling.

When we perform *Hiho* Meditation, we leave everything to the Holy *Hiho* and concentrate on our breathing. We should try not to think of anything but breathing naturally and focusing our attention on the way we breathe.



Meditation is to release our thoughts and return to our reality – the present moment. How do we do this? The answer is, through practice. Because our thoughts arise from our ego, it is very hard for us to correct our egotistical thoughts and attitude. Egoism cannot correct egoism.

The *Hiho* Meditation is not a matter of our thoughts. It is a matter of our practice. When we perform meditation, we shouldn't try to correct our egotistical attitude. Rather, our main focus is to keep our physical posture in an upright position and breathe naturally. Concentrate on our breathing. When stray thoughts arise in our mind, we let them go and we concentrate on our breathing again.

We repeat this until the end of the meditation session. In doing this, our mental and physical state will be appropriately adjusted through the power of the Holy *Hiho*, or the power of the Universal Life.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

The restorative power of the Holy *Hiho* is truly miraculous – beyond our intellectual understanding. The work of the Holy *Hiho* can only be fully understood through actual practice. The same is true of our everyday life. Master Gedatsu Kongo always stated, “Gedatsu should be practiced in your everyday life.” When you leave everything to the Universal Life Force and do your best in your duties, you will be guided most appropriately and will be able to live fully.

Every time you come to church, please take time to practice the *Hiho* Meditation. If you continue to practice the meditation, you will unknowingly be free from egoism and will be able to judge things in a right manner. This is the significance of *Hiho* meditation.

Q *I pray every morning. How do I know if my prayers are received and if they will be granted?*

A Many years ago, one of my friends who is Catholic sent me the message that appears at the right. I still keep it in mind and sometimes read the message. I believe this message perfectly explains how our prayers are granted.

These words reminded me that the Divine Will is something unfathomable to us. It is so profound that we humans cannot imagine it. We may feel happy when we have happy events. When something goes wrong with us, we may suffer. This is natural for human beings. But we should understand that the Divine Will is far beyond our thoughts and feelings. The Divine Love may sometimes not look favorable to us. However, through difficulties and hardships, the Universal Life will ultimately allow every one of us to attain happiness. I believe the Divine Love is something like this.



A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER

I asked God to take away my bad habit.

God said, No. It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole.

God said, No. His spirit is whole, his body is only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience.

God said, No. Patience is a byproduct of tribulations; it isn't granted, it is learned.

I asked God to give me happiness.

God said, No. I give you blessings. Happiness is up to you.

I asked God to spare me pain.

God said, No. Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow.

God said, No. You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked God for all things that I might enjoy life.

God said, No. I will give you life, so that you may enjoy all things.

I asked God to help me love others, as much as He loves me.

God said...Ahhhh, finally you have the idea. THIS DAY IS YOURS. DON'T THROW IT AWAY.

May God Bless You.

To the world you might be one person, but to one person, you just might be the world.

JULY 2022 OFFERINGS

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Northern California Total: \$7,025

General Donations: J. Tanaka, M/M D. Tsuboi, J. Detwiler / J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner (\$800), K. Gibson, M. Fukushima, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, S. Tanaka, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa

Special Acknowledgments

A. Sebe Appreciation for “Never Forgotten” and Kansha
R. Nakatani Appreciation for “Never Forgotten” for Steven Nakatani, Miyoko Nakayama and Yuno Family (Yone, Tsuyako and Yukie)
T. Bartos In memory of Victoria Bartos (\$5,000)
M/M D. Ide Appreciation for Obon Service
J. Tanaka Appreciation for “Never Forgotten” for Keisuke Tateishi, Yuko Tateishi and Yukie Ota

Southern California Total: \$3,766

General: M/M F. Barthel, M/M K. Chinen, J. Choy, K. Fujii, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M M. Hamada, M/M B. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, J. Ito, K. Kuritani, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M/M L. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, E. Ogawa, Y. Oishi, M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, M/M A. Shiroishi, De. Shiroishi, Do. Shiroishi, J. Shiroishi, N. Takara, H. Taki, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood, M/M P. Young

Special Acknowledgments

K/K Chinen Appreciation for 7 kaiki service for Haruko Chinen
T. Ishida Appreciation for Michiye / Nobuyoshi Shimohira
H. Mukai In memory of Rudy Tsujimura
M/M M. Hamada “Never Forgotten” for Harry Arakawa and Ben Toguchi

Online Donations: Total: \$680

General: S. Matsumoto, S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura, R. Sakamoto, J. Reid, G. Hass, A. Kandler

Special Acknowledgments

J. Reid “Never Forgotten” for Eddie Ogura and Nancy Ogura
G. Matsuhashi In memory of Rudy Tsujimura

Online Donations – Convenient, Easy, Secure

Gedatsu Church encourages you to make your donations online. It’s a convenient, easy and secure way to contribute to the church – from your home or workplace, on your laptop, tablet or cellphone.

You have the option of donating by credit card or ACH/bank payments, designating general or special offerings and lots more.

You can choose to make a one-time gift or, like many members, set up recurring payments so that the same amount is automatically donated each month.

Email and printable receipts are automatically generated.

You can also pay your membership dues, too, by going to the Members page on the site.

Just go to the Give page on the church website at www.gedatsu-usa.org to get started.



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

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org



Gedatsu Church USA
Los Angeles Branch
7850 Hill Drive
Rosemead, CA 91770

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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ONTARIO, CA
PERMIT NO. 574



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Victor Miyamoto** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church. A retired gardener, Victor and his wife, **Mary**, live in South Gate. Together, they have traveled the world – cruising to Hawaii, New York, England, France and Germany in this year alone.

Victor was introduced to Gedatsu forty years ago, meeting **Reverend Junnosuke Ishida** at the Gedatsu Church, when it was located in Los Angeles. He is receptive to many religions and attends a Baptist church, the Koyasan Buddhist Temple and a Jewish temple. He looks forward to attending services at the L.A. Gedatsu Church.

Editorial Staff

Joyce Reid, Editor

Reverend Naoya Okano, adviser

Mica Rodriguez, minister-in-training, adviser

Editorial contributors to this issue:

Donna Allum, Dave Ide, Marie Ishida, Mariko Locheo,

Victor Miyamoto, Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi,

Reverend Hisakazu Taki, Yoko Yamada



Email greeting messages feature designs (at top) created by English artist **Jacquie Lawson**. Cards mailed via USPS (at bottom) are designed and hand-crafted by **Marie Ishida**.



Birthday/Holiday Greetings Say “We Care” throughout the Year

Over the past two years – beginning with the COVID lock-down and isolation – L.A. Church members, young and old, have been delighted by birthday and holiday greetings they regularly receive via email and post. The good wishes are part of the birthday/holiday greeting program created by the L.A. Regional Board to keep in touch with members and brighten their spirits.

The email greetings feature a variety of animated greeting cards, illustrated with lovely landscapes, playful animals and charming settings, accompanied by an uplifting musical score. Each e-card is personalized with a message, sending “blessings and prayers from the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church.” Members who are not connected to the internet receive personalized, hand-crafted greeting cards – in English and Japanese – via USPS.

According to **Marie Ishida**, who coordinates the program with **Jo Ann Shiroishi**, member reaction to the program has been rewarding. Responses range from a simple “Thank you” to “You made my day” and “Wow. I loved it!”