



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Gedatsu is to live with
appreciation and gratitude
and then to practice virtue."*

Gedatsu is to respect and thank the Universal Life Force and ancestors for their blessings and live with appreciation. This is the path for everyone's happiness.

We are allowed to live by the Universal Life Force, and we were all born from ancestors. Therefore, it is quite natural for us to pay respect to the Universal Life Force and ancestors with appreciation.

No matter our situation in life, the fact that we exist and breathe in this moment is no ordinary thing. Truly, it is a miracle, isn't it?

We should appreciate our present existence and then make the best use of our life for the betterment of the world. This attitude will make us happy and fruitful.



DECEMBER 2022

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4	10:00 am	Virtual – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	11	10:00 am	Appreciation Service / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service / Church Clean-up
Tue	13	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sat-Sat	24-31		Church Closed for Holidays

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4		No Service
Sun	11	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	18	10:00 am	Appreciation Service / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service / Holiday Program and Luncheon
Sat-Sat	24-31		Church Closed for Holidays

JANUARY 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	9:00 am	New Year Homage (until noon)
Sun	8	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service (in person)
Tue	10	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting – via Google Meet
Tue	17		Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
Sun	22	10:00 am	First Service of the Year / Gift Exchange

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	7:30 am	New Year Homage (until noon)
Sun	8	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	15	10:00 am	New Year Appreciation Service
Tue	17		Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
Thu	26	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	28	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom



December “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, December 4**, at **10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Albert Ryozyo Akiyama, Soshiro Hatae, Kanzaburo Ide, Kazuo Ide, Dorothy Keiko (Takemura) Nakamoto, Eizan Kishida, Shizuye Kodani, Tomiji Nakayama, Kiichi Ogawa, George Sekikawa, Mariko (Mizumoto) Takemura, Kiyoshi Tateishi, Tokio Tateishi, Tomota Tateishi, and Kimi Yamada.**

Note: Beginning in January, the Sacramento Spiritual Center will resume holding its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Services in person.

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, December 11, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Yoshio Arakawa, Glen Blaser, Consuelo T. Castillo, Glen Naoya Hiram, Eiko Ishida, Junnosuke Ishida, Natsu Grace Kikuchi, Chizu Kitagawa, Helen Akiko Matsumoto, Shizuyo Mizutani, Jonny Numata, Mitsuko Numata, Kou Helen Sakuma, Glen Eichi Shimamoto, Dale Smith, Thomas Yasukiyo Sueyoshi, Koji Takahashi, Chisayo Taniguchi, Goro Gary Tanji, Ruby Toshiko Tanji, Shiro Paul Tanji, Tomota Tateishi, Gary Chin Toy, Toru Toyama, and Frank Yoshimichi Yamamoto.**



Special holiday-themed Sunday School projects and fun activities, like the Halloween costume and treat parade, shown at left, are part of the monthly Appreciation Service programs at the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church.

The Christmas Program on Sunday, December 18, will feature the holiday music provided by professional musicians Patrick, Amber, Mallory & Dylan, as well as ukulele performances by the beginning and intermediate classes held at the church. Santa Claus promises to visit, bringing treats for all attendees, and prizes will be awarded to the designers of “favorite Christmas ornaments.” A luncheon will be held following the church service. Ho, ho, ho!

Have You Renewed Your Church Membership?

Annual Membership: Renewable annually

Individual \$45

Family \$70

Lifetime Membership: Pay your membership dues just once, instead of paying annually

Individual \$450

Family \$600

Pay Online or by Mail

- To pay online – by credit card or ACH/bank payment – go to the Members page on the church website at www.gedatsu-usa.
- Or mail your check – made payable to Gedatsu Church USA – to your nearest church branch.

Donate to the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund

Membership dues and donations help to ensure the day-to-day operations of our church. Donors to the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund give the church an additional boost – providing sustaining dollars that help us achieve our longer-range plans for growth and development.

Participation in the Fund requires an annual pledge of \$600 a year, which is in addition to the general membership dues. This \$600 may be paid in a single lump sum; two biannual payments of \$300; or 12 monthly installments of \$50. Complete the application form that is available at your local church office.

Renew Your Holy Paper Plaques

The new year is the time to renew your holy paper plaques for placement throughout the home for the protection of our dwellings and happiness of its inhabitants. See your local church branch for details on types of plaques, prices and order form.

Interfaith “Peace Prayer” at Gedatsu Church of Hawaii

Praying for Peace

Religious leaders and “spiritually committed” people from various faiths and peace organizations gathered at the Gedatsu Church of Hawaii on October 23 for the annual “Peace Prayer,” an event to promote peace through interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Sponsored by the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace (HCRP), this year’s Peace Prayer drew more than 70 individuals, including 20 leaders and members of diverse religions and beliefs.

Transcending differences in religion, doctrine and culture, the interfaith Peace Prayer marked the 30th anniversary of the event, which was suspended for the past three years because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Assembling before the altar in the Gedatsu prayer hall, Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, Muslims, Jews and believers of other faiths offered their prayers for peace in the manner and tradition befitting their individual beliefs. They united in reciting the HCRP Universal Prayer, praying for “wisdom and compassion within the hearts and minds of all world leaders who have the power and responsibility of making decisions that impact the presence of peace.”

In his welcoming address, **Reverend Kazuo Yamada** expressed his gratitude and appreciation to HCRP for allowing the Gedatsu Church to serve as the venue for the event.

After the ceremony and program, an “appreciation meal” dinner party was held, and the participants enjoyed eating and socializing into the evening.

“I was deeply moved by how beautifully the participants prayed together with sincerity. Everyone was happy to share their prayers for peace and spent the day with happy faces,” remarked Reverend Yamada. “This experience renewed my conviction that God and holy beings absolutely receive our sincere prayers. I was inspired by the beauty of prayer, which motivates me to continue praying with sincerity.”



Reverend Kazuo Yamada warmly welcomes the religious leaders and Peace Prayer participants to the Gedatsu Church in Honolulu.

Peace Prayer participating faiths and organizations: All Believers Network, Aloha Peace Project, Baha’i Faith in Hawaii, Buddhism, Christianity (Catholic and Protestant), Gedatsu Church of Hawaii, Hawaiian Spirituality (Kanenuiakea), Hawaii Forgiveness Project, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Konko Mission, New Thought, Rissho Kosei-kai of Hawaii.





Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #19

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

- ☉ Respect and cherish the person in front of us. If we cannot, we will be unable to cherish anyone.
- ☉ Appreciation and gratitude are the Alpha and Omega in Gedatsu.
- ☉ Sincerity is most important for humanity. It moves the world. When we act with sincerity, we can accomplish anything.
- ☉ It is the Universal Law that parents love their children, and that children love their parents.
- ☉ Appreciation and gratitude is the cradle of everyone’s happiness and world peace.
- ☉ Pride and arrogance will not bring forth anything good.
- ☉ The key of our Gedatsu study is to undo egotistical attachment. We were born with nothing and will die with nothing. No matter what luxuries we may enjoy in life, when we die, we must leave everything behind. This is the truth of our life. Ponder this deeply.
- ☉ The sky may be cloudy, but the sun is shining above the clouds. When we look at the world with a bright soul, our outlook is bright. But when we view the world with a gloomy soul, our outlook is dark.
- ☉ Before pondering the afterlife, we should do our best as humans in this life. This is Gedatsu.
- ☉ Gedatsu should not be fixed. Gedatsu is continued effort without stopping.
- ☉ Gedatsu is always based on the present world.
- ☉ New wine should be poured into fresh wineskins. Break free from formalism and live freshly in the modern world.
- ☉ Once we perceive and truly understand the Universal Truth, we accept all religions, regardless of doctrine or creed. This is Gedatsu.
- ☉ As long as the earth exists, as long as human beings survive, Gedatsu will never perish.



The Case for Ignorance By Reverend Kazuo Yamada

Among the many teachings that Master Gedatsu Kongo left for us is his philosophical declaration: *Baka, binbo, shi no keiko* – which translates to “practice humility, poverty and death.” This simple statement, expressed in the plainest of words, has profound meaning for how we should conduct our lives. Let me attempt to explain the first part of his statement: *baka no keiko*.

Baka translates directly to ignorance, but it does not mean that one should be ignorant or not increase one’s intellectual capacity by acquiring knowledge. Rather, it is to be aware that knowledge does not equate to wisdom. The accumulation of knowledge can lead to self-pride and arrogance. *Baka no keiko* means to avoid being self-conceited.

The Greek philosopher Socrates famously stated, “The only true wisdom is knowing that you know nothing.” This parallels Gedatsu Kongo’s statement precisely, indicating that humility is the foundation of wisdom.

Baka no keiko means that we cannot be prideful or self-conceited if we truly realize that our entire existence is due to the power of the Universal Life Force and the support we receive from country, parents, teachers, society and all creation in the universe. We grow up learning and acquiring everything – from how to eat to how to read – through the contributions of others. The vegetables we eat, the water we drink, the clothes we wear, the books we read, the pencils we write with – we create none of these things. We are what we are thanks to others.

No matter how far human intelligence may have advanced, compared with the infinite mysteries of the universe, it is no more than a speck of divine wisdom. *Baka no keiko* is to abandon ego-centric thinking and to live our lives with humility and appreciation.

Gedatsu Q&A - Part 30

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *I have been studying Gedatsu for many years. However, to be honest, I feel I am far from being a perfect person. What should I do?*

A Imagine that a small child is playing in a park. If the child fears that his mother may leave him if he is naughty, he will hold his mother’s hand firmly and never leave her side. However, because he has complete trust in his mother, the child is completely absorbed in play, paying no attention to his mother.

The same is true about our faith in Universal Life Force. Does the Universal Life Force watch and love us because we are sincere and perfect persons? If so, then we should always try to become persons who gain the favor of the divine force. But is this true?

The Universal Life Force loves us regardless of our attitude, always and unconditionally. Do we lie awake at night, worried that the divine force may forsake us when we are asleep? Of course not. Everyone must sleep. While sleeping, we forget about the Universal Life Force, but the divine force always watches us with unconditional love. That is why we are alive now, and why our heart keeps beating even while we are asleep at night.

(Gedatsu Q&A – Continued from page 5)

If we truly recognize the divine force's unconditional love for us, we will feel secure and free, and may be relieved of worries and sufferings. We will then be willing to do our best in our duty or role in life. This is Gedatsu.

Gedatsu is not to adjust ourselves to what we should be but to accept what we are and appreciate it. When we become aware of the unconditional love of the Universal Life Force, we may be able to accept what we are with appreciation. We will then be willing to try to improve ourselves.

We need not grieve over our imperfectness. We need not feel sad about the gap between what we are and what we should be. We need only to be ourselves and try to do our best in our present situation. This is Gedatsu – a life of peace, hope and happiness.

Q *Gedatsu teachers encourage us to practice “unconditional appreciation.” What is the meaning and significance of unconditional appreciation?*

A Everyone experiences hardships in life. No matter how sincerely we study and practice Gedatsu, we may be challenged by difficulties. This is human life. However, we should remember that, without all of these experiences, our present existence would not be possible. We had a chance to encounter Gedatsu because of the difficulties we suffered from in the past. When we consider this, we understand that everything in the past – good and bad – was necessary for us to be here today.

There is no such thing as “bad luck” in our life. Actually, we may sometimes experience difficulties or sorrows. But those experiences are not always bad luck for us. The truth is, they are all challenges given by the divine will to create our true happiness. The question is, how we should accept these challenges?

Master Gedatsu Kongo always emphasized the significance of “unconditional appreciation,” which means to accept everything with appreciation. When something favorable happens to us, we can easily appreciate it. However, Gedatsu Kongo urged us to accept everything with appreciation even when something difficult or unfavorable happens to us. This is because everything that happens to us was given by the divine will, and it has meaning in our life. Therefore, we should not be influenced by our thoughts and emotions, but we should accept everything as it is and do our best in the situation. You will then be guided most appropriately. This is the path of Gedatsu.

When I started to study Gedatsu, a teacher taught me how I should pray. He told me there are two important points in prayer. First, when we wake up in the morning, no matter what happens in life, we should say, “Thank you very much for allowing me this precious life today.” This is because our life is a precious gift from the Universal Life Force through your ancestors and parents.

Secondly, we should say, “Please use me as you wish. I will do my best in my duty. Please guide me appropriately.”

Prayer means our total surrender to the Universal Life Force. No matter what happens to us, we should accept everything as it is and do our best in the current situation. We will then be guided to the appropriate path of life. This is the Gedatsu life, which is the path of true happiness.



OCTOBER 2022 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$1,189

General Donations: J. Tanaka, Anonymous, M/M D. Ide, M/M D. Tsuboi, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner M. Springer, M. Rodriguez, P. Harada, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, S. Tanaka, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa

Special Acknowledgments

M/M D. Ide Appreciation for Autumn season

Southern California Total: \$5,695

General: M/M R. Allum, M/M F. Barthel, M/M Katsumi Chinen, M/M Katsuo Chinen, M/M N. Chodor, K. Fujii, M/M K. Fukushima, M/M B. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hirami, M/M M. Ishida, T. Ishida, J. Kaku, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, E. Ogawa, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M S. Shaskan, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M H. Tsujimura, A. Tsujimura, M/M P. Young, P. Muronaka, S. Tsuno, A. Kishida

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N. Burks	In memory of Takashi Okazaki
M/M T. Matsumoto	In memory of Hiroshi Nakaguchi and Shizuya Nakaguchi
J. Mah	In memory of Suzuko Muller
M/M G. Wood	Appreciation for receiving <i>goshimpo</i>
M/M G. Wood	Appreciation for Akemi's successful surgery
M/M T. Matsumoto	Appreciation for injury recovery
J. Ito	Appreciation for guardian angel study in Japan (\$2,000)

Online Donations: Total: \$284

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

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

2023 UPCOMING EVENTS

January

1 (Sun) New Year Homage
15 (Sun) L.A. New Year Service
17 (Tue) Churches Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
22 (Sun) Sacramento New Year Service / Gift Exchange

February

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

March

17 (Fri) Propagation Meeting 10 am (TBD)
18 (Sat) Board of Directors Mtg 10 am (TBD)
19 (Sun) L.A. *Higan* Service
26 (Sun) Sacramento *Higan* Service

April

9 (Sun) Spring Grand Festival 9:30 am

May

14 (Sun) Sacramento Mother's Day Service
21 (Sun) L.A. Mother's Day Service
28 (Sun) Sacramento plaque burning
30 (Tue) Churches Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)

June

11 (Sun) Sacramento Mother Kiyota Memorial / Father's Day Service
18 (Sun) L.A. Father's Day Service

July

4 (Tue) Church Closed (Independence Day)
9 (Sun) Sacramento *Obon* Service
16 (Sun) L.A. *Obon* Service / Graduates Honored
24-27 Youth Camp – Sacramento (TBD)

August

4-6 (Fri-Sun) Sacramento Lake Tahoe *Benzaiten* Service (TBD)
20 (Sun) L.A. *Benzaiten* Service

September

3 (Sun) Fall Grand Festival 9:30 am
5 (Tue) Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
17 (Sun) L.A. *Higan* Service
24 (Sun) Sacramento *Higan* Service

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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Sherri Mullins**, who resides in Sammamish, Wash., and is employed as a technical business analyst and website manager. Recently widowed, Sherri and her late husband, **Mark**, raised three daughters. Born into Gedatsu – her parents, **Steve** and **Sadako Taketa**, were pioneers of the Sacramento church – Sherri likes that Gedatsu “feels like a close family friend – warm, inviting and comfortable.” She adds, “Gedatsu has taught me to pray to get through tough times, to be thankful, to meditate, work hard, take care of others and self-reflect.”

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Taki, Deacon June Tanaka, Reverend Kazuo Yamada



Contact your local church branch for information on price and availability of specific books. A number of the publications are in limited quantity.

Books, Reading Materials on Gedatsu – in English

A variety of books and materials on Gedatsu – all written in English – is available for students of Gedatsu. In their entirety, these publications provide a richly informative education on Gedatsu doctrine and history for everyone – those who are new to the Gedatsu Church, as well as long-time members who are seeking to deepen their understanding of Gedatsu. Here’s a sampling of some of the works:

- **The Character and Doctrine of Gedatsu Kongo**, 1962, written by Archbishop Eizan Kishida and translated by Louis Ito. This volume on the spiritual heritage of Gedatsu Kongo introduces the Gedatsu doctrine to the Western world.
- **Biography of Gedatsu Kongo, Volumes 1 and 2**, 1998 and 2002, transited by Rev. H. Taki from the Founder’s biography, published by *Gedatsu-kai*, Japan.
- ***Gedatsu-kai: Its Theory and Practice***, 1982, written by Minoru Kiyota (son of Mother Kenyu Kiyota). This scholarly work examines the historical and doctrinal roots of Gedatsu, delving into the Buddhist concepts that influenced Gedatsu theory.
- **Memoirs of Gedatsu Kongo**, translated by Rev. H. Taki. Compilation of interviews of Japanese members who studied directly with Gedatsu Kongo, personal accounts that reveal the members’ deep faith and love for the Founder – and he for them.