

GEDATSU COMPANION

HAPPY NEW YEAR
2023

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"People demand a living religion
that is appropriate for their times."*

While the Universal Truth remains constant, its expressions should vary and adapt with time and place.

Master Gedatsu Kongo strived to establish Gedatsu as a living religion that was open to everyone.

He stated, "Religion should not be fixed. Religion should always lead the times and move forward with the times."

We should remember this spirit of Gedatsu, so that we can truly help and benefit people as time moves forward and changes.

JANUARY 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	9:00 am	New Year Homage (until noon)
Sun	8	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
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	8:00 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

FEBRUARY 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	12	10:00 am	Sun Spirit Service
Tue	14	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting – via Google Meet
Tue	21		Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents Day)
Sun	26	10:00 am	Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5		No Service
Sun	12	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	19	10:00 am	Appreciation Service / Sun Spirit Service
Tue	21		Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents' Day)
Thu	23	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sat	25	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom



January “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, January 8, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Richard Aadland, Natsuko Furukawa, Jane Kaoru Ide, Hatsuko Mishima, Teru Nakayama, Teiichiro Noritake, Bernard Sakamoto, Fudeyo Sekikawa, Genkichi Sekikawa, Tsuneko Sekikawa, Yoshiko Sekikawa, Machi Takagi, Taro Takemura, Rose Yamamoto, and Kenneth Kenichiro Yasuda.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, January 8, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **David H. Dyson III, Richard Higashi, Aileen T. Hirayama, Terry Teruko L. Imuta, Elaine Rose Kaproff, Takako Karplus, Walter Karplus, Yoshihiko Kitagawa, Tadashi Thomas Matsumoto, Kazuko Matsuura, Kiyoko Michiuye, Konami Miyakawa, Frank Miyamura, Asaye Mizuki, Fumi Murakami, Katsuyo Nagao, Hisano Nakamura, Misuko Nakamura, Mohei Nakamura, Hiroko Notoya, Chika Okimura, Motoichi Okimura, Leah O'Leary, Eiko Onishi, Chiyoko Sato, Grace Yuko Sato, Moto Tanji, Saburo Tanji, Dennis Koichi Toguchi, Masako Tokashiki, Nobuko Tsujimura, Sumiko Tsujimura, Frank Itaru Tsukamaki, Kenneth Kenichiro Yasuda, Noriko Yoshihara, and Frank Young.**

Notice of General Membership Meetings and Election of Board Directors

General membership meetings will be held at the L.A. Church on Sunday, January 15, and at the Sacramento Spiritual Center on Sunday, January 22, in conjunction with the regularly held Appreciation Services. The purpose of the meetings is the election of the slate of directors for the Board of Directors of Gedatsu USA. All members are invited to participate in the election.

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.

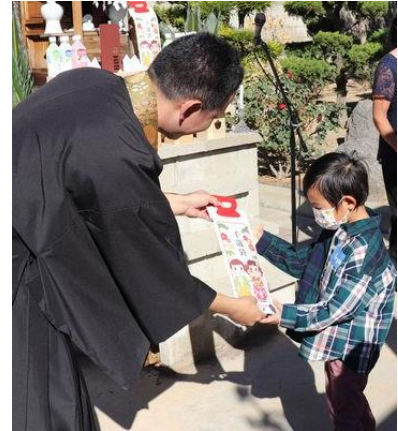
Participation in the Fund requires an annual pledge of \$600 a year, which is in addition to the general membership dues. This \$600 may be paid in a single lump sum; two biannual payments of \$300; or 12 monthly installments of \$50. Complete the application form that is available at your local church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

Return Your Old Holy Tea Plaques

If you ordered new holy tea plaques for the new year, the church urges you to show the proper respect for your old plaques. Give prayers of appreciation to your old plaques, wash and dry them thoroughly, then return them to your local church. They will be burned in a plaque-burning service in Sacramento.



Big Thanks for the Little Ones

In November, L.A. Church members and friends observed the annual 7-5-3 Festival, or *Shichi-Go-San*, the traditional Japanese celebration for the well-being and healthy futures of children. Parents of 10 children ages seven, five and three years gave thanks at the *Ujigami* local guardian shrine and altar for the divine protection and guidance their children receive. Also in the Japanese tradition, the children were given *chitose-ame* candy – *chitose* literally meaning a thousand years – by **Reverend Naoya Okano**. The candy and ornamental bag are expressions of the parents' wish that their children live long and prosperous lives. The children also received a special Gedatsu *omamori* (protective amulet) and a McDonald's gift card from the L.A. Sunday School.

In addition to the 7-5-3 Festival, children attending the November Appreciation Service enjoyed their Sunday School activity. They made Thanksgiving "thankful headbands," shown above, that display gratitude for country, teachers, parents, society and all of creation.



As part of the Sunday Service, red roses with ferns, individually wrapped and ribboned, at left, were offered by the congregation to Gedatsu Kongo in remembrance of his birthday and memorial anniversary.

Gedatsu Member Nominated for GRAMMY Award



Amber Navran with Moonchild bandmates, Andris Mattson (left) and Max Bryk.

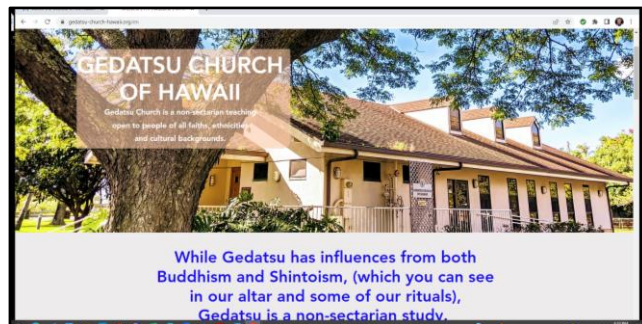
L.A. Church member, **Amber Navran**, lead vocalist, producer and musician with the neo-soul trio “Moonchild,” is celebrating the announcement in November that the band’s fifth album, “Starfruit,” below, has been nominated for *Best Progressive R&B Album* at the GRAMMY Awards.

The awards ceremony will be held in Los Angeles on Sunday, February 5.



Married last year to long-time L.A. Gedatsu member and musician, **Patrick Shiroishi**, Amber often performs with her husband at the L.A. Church Sunday Appreciation Services.

You can listen to Moonchild’s music on YouTube.



Gedatsu Church of Hawaii Launches New Website

Gedatsu Church of Hawaii has unveiled to the public its beautiful new website, which features stunning images of its church facilities in Honolulu, members and activities, as well as explanations about core beliefs and practices.

The dual-language site was created in Japanese and was translated into English by automated translation. The English page is still being edited. Your patience is appreciated until it is completed.

“We are excited to share our new website with you,” says **Reverend Kazuo Yamada**. “We hope you visit our site and enjoy it.”

You may experience Gedatsu Hawaii’s new site by visiting gedatsu-church-hawaii.org.

Gedatsu Q&A - Part 31

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *When ministers talk about karma, I often have negative feelings when I hear that word. What is karma and what does it mean in my life?*

A Karma is one of the most important principles we should learn in our Gedatsu study. Especially when we perform *Goho* study, we learn various lessons about our karma. Although you may have a negative feeling when you hear the word, karma itself is neither good nor bad. It just explains the law of cause and effect. Everything has its cause. Nothing happens without cause at its source. This is what karma means.

The original meaning of the word “karma” is action. When you look into your daily life, you realize that your everyday life consists of three elements: bodily action, speech, and thoughts and feelings. You may be surprised at this simple fact of life. These three elements comprise our daily life, and furthermore, our entire life.

Understanding this fact is key to attaining happiness, so it’s necessary to thoughtfully examine each of these elements. What kind of actions do you usually do in your daily life? What kind of words do you speak to others? What kind of thoughts and feelings do you hold in your mind every day? Please think of this deeply. Your attitude determines your whole life.

During their lifetime, our ancestors led their daily lives in various ways. Sometimes they loved others, and sometimes they hated people or hurt them. Sometimes they bore grudges toward others, and sometimes they held feelings of compassion and kindness to others in their minds. Good or bad, these attitudes of our ancestors are inherited within us. This is what we are today. This is called karma.

No matter what karma you may have from the past, it is important to accept it and appreciate it. This is because your present existence is due to the karma from your ancestors.

Therefore, even if you have difficulties in life, never blame your ancestors. If you find something negative in your attitude, accept it as it is and try to correct it through your actions, speech, and thinking in your daily life. Your happiness or unhappiness is totally up to you. Your future depends on your attitude in life.

No matter what negative karma you may have, you can change it through your daily attitude and become happy. Master Gedatsu Kongo stated, “Utilize your karma to create your better future.” Appreciate your karma and utilize it for your future happiness. Self-reflection is the key to changing your life. Everyone can become happy. This is the path of Gedatsu.

Q *I often hear that Gedatsu is a path of happiness for everyone. What does that mean?*

A Gedatsu is really a simple teaching. The main philosophy of Gedatsu is, in two words, appreciation and gratitude. Please look deeply into your existence. No matter what difficult situation you may experience, you are alive. Your heart is beating constantly. This heartbeat is not controlled by your will. It functions by the force of something beyond your thoughts. While sleeping at night, your heart keeps beating. This is how you exist here now. You are allowed to have this precious life.

We also receive immeasurable blessings from our ancestors. Our physical existence is due to our ancestors and parents. Most of our ancestors are gone already, but their spirits are still alive in the spiritual world, watching and loving us. We are always with our ancestors. Even at difficult times, they are always beside you.

When you deeply observe your present life, you will see that you receive immeasurable blessings from many people and things around you. You have families and friends. You are supported by them. You receive blessings from society and the country too. You eat meals every day. And the meals you eat are all living things. Thanks to their sacrifice, you are able to sustain your life. If you look into your existence in this way, you will clearly see that you are nurtured, provided, and supported by countless people, things and spirits. This is how you exist today. However, we are usually not aware of this, or we take it for granted. We always complain about our life.

(Continued on back page)



Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #20

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

- ✿ The present moment is the important link that connects the past with the future. Therefore, it is important to hold onto the present moment.
- ✿ Theory without practice will be of no use.
- ✿ When we cannot stretch, we should shrink. When we cannot advance, we should retreat. This is a fundamental rule of life.
- ✿ Before questioning whether our souls will exist after death, we should question about our mental state at this present moment.
- ✿ Gedatsu should not be separate from our daily life.
- ✿ If we are afraid and sorrowful in life, we should try to walk the path of Gedatsu. We will then see a bright future.
- ✿ When we lose, withdraw gracefully. When we die, die gracefully. If we are prepared, we can overcome any difficulties.
- ✿ If the gate does not open after knocking once, knock twice, then three times. If we keep knocking with sincerity, the gate will open eventually.
- ✿ When we truly understand the essence of Gedatsu, we will be free from all the doctrines, rituals, and manners to save people and the world.
- ✿ Gedatsu is to pioneer a new world constantly.
- ✿ True religion does not confine itself to ancient doctrines and theories. Gedatsu should be always focused on our time.
- ✿ There is no misfortune in Gedatsu. We receive benefits even from adversities. Everything is a divine blessing from the viewpoint of Gedatsu.
- ✿ The principle of one's life is simple: to appreciate everything in life and do our best every day.
- ✿ Don't use a cheap trick in life. Fight fairly.
- ✿ Widen your perspective to see everything.
- ✿ Gedatsu is to live with sincere appreciation and gratitude.

From the Editor: This concludes the series, “Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo.” We thank Reverend Taki for compiling and translating these quotations. He hopes these quotations “will serve as a primary resource for Gedatsu study for current and future generations of Gedatsu students.”

NOVEMBER 2022 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$2,390

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

Special Acknowledgments

A. Sebe Appreciation for John Horner repairing leaky pipes near Rev. Sebe's residence (\$500)
M. Fujita Appreciation to Rev. Sebe for prayers for the late Linda Hirayama
A. Tomita In memory of Toshiaki Robert Tomita – table donation
L./D./T. Tomita In memory of Shizue Kodani
M/M D. Ide Gedatsu Kongo memorial appreciation

Southern California Total: \$4,444

General: M/M F. Barthel, C. Harada, G. Hass, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, S. Kaku, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Miyamoto, M/M V. Mizokami, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M S. Shoklan, M/M A. Shiroishi, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M H. Tsujimura, A. Tsujimura, M/M P. Young, I. Sawamura, M/M K. Maekawa, F. Kinjo, Anonymous

Special Acknowledgments

G. Hass Special offering for Ben Adela
Yamamoto Family 7-Kaiki service for Mitsuko Numata
S. Kaku In memory of George Imuta
Do. Shiroishi Gedatsu Kongo birthday
D. Mukai Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo

Online Donations: Total: \$427

General: S. Matsumoto, S. Shiroishi, M. Springer, H. Tsujimura, Y. Ono, J. Reid, S. Matsumoto, G. Hass

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

2023 UPCOMING EVENTS

March

17 (Fri) Propagation Meeting 10 am (TBD)
18 (Sat) Board of Directors Mtg 10 am
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

October

7-8 (Sat/Sun) LA Autumn Moon Festival (TBD)
10 (Tue) Church Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
15 (Sun) L.A. *Ujigami* Service
22 (Sun) Sacramento All Souls Service

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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Lori Hoeft** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church. Lori, pictured with pal and service dog, **Macy**, is an indie artist who creates videos, abstract paintings, films, documentaries, and street photography.

Introduced to Gedatsu by her friend, **Sean Lennon**, the son of singer-musicians **John Lennon** and **Yoko Ono**, Lori is drawn to the inclusiveness of Gedatsu. "The quiet, deep spirituality and prayers to my ancestors make me feel divinely guided and spiritually protected," says Lori. "Gedatsu is for all faiths and includes everyone. I appreciate that."

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Rev. Mica Rodriguez, adviser

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HAPPY NEW YEAR
2023

The rabbit is one of the 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac calendar. 2023 is the Year of the Rabbit, characterized as a year of leaps and bounds, or improvements.

According to the Chinese zodiac, people who are born in the Year of the Rabbit are thought to be calm and peaceful. They avoid fighting and arguing and are responsible, friendly, honest and popular among a crowd.

(Gedatsu Q&A – Continued from page 5)

Our minds and bodies are always one. If you are filled with thankfulness, your physical body will be adjusted in a positive way. On the contrary, if you have jealousy, hatred and anger in your mind, your physical condition will go in a negative direction. Negativity will never bring you anything good. Therefore, please try to keep your mind positive and appreciative at all times. Try to live with appreciation and gratitude every day. Then your ancestors will be very happy, and they will protect and guide you.

From now on, when you wake up in the morning, pray to the Universal Life Force and your ancestors saying, "Thank you for giving me this precious life. I will do my best today. Please guide me appropriately."

During the day, do your best in your work. Before you go to bed in the evening, pray again and say, "Thank you very much for the day." Please practice this every day. I'm sure you will be guided most appropriately physically, mentally and spiritually. This is the path of Gedatsu.