

GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

"Never forget the immeasurable blessings we receive from ancestors."

Because we live in peace and safety, we may take these conditions for granted. However, when we encounter difficulties like severe illness, we become aware that our ordinary daily life is a great blessing.

Master Gedatsu Kongo told those who had lost their parents in infancy or were not raised by their parents, "You still received immeasurable blessings from your parents because they gave you birth."

In this sense, everyone receives immeasurable blessings from their parents. Our present existence is totally due to our parents' great blessing.

Waking up each morning, we should thank the Universal Life Force and our parents for giving us life and do our best in our activities during the day. This is the path for everyone to live a happy and prosperous life.

FEBRUARY 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service for January and February
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

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	25	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom
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MARCH 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	12	10:00 am	Appreciation Service
Tue	14	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	26	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5		No Service
Sun	12	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	19	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service
Thu	23	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	18	10:00 am	Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom
Sat	25	11:00 am	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom



February “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, February 5, at 10 a.m.** Because the January “Never Forgotten” service was cancelled due to heavy rains, this month’s service honors the souls for January and February.

January souls: **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.**

February souls: **Kaneko (Ide) Hatae, George Hughley, Hisaye (Kino) Ide, Anna May Kao, Roku Kino, Helen Sekikawa, Ted Sekikawa, Karl Kaoru Tanaka, Noburo Tateishi, Yasuko (Noritake) Tsuboi, and Yoritaro Tsuboi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, February 12, at 10 a.m.,** honoring the souls of **Kimiye Akiyoshi, Masue Akiyoshi, Maxine Chodor, Hideo Fujii, Mariko Fukumoto, Masato Fukumoto, Scott Hamamoto, Tadayoshi Ishida, Yvonne Ishida, Nancy Michiyo Ito, Morio Kaku, Yasuo Kikuchi, Fumiko Makishi, Kofuku Makishi, Kimiko Matsugami, John Seiki Mitsuuchi, Kesao Naito, Kikuko Naito, Shoichi Naito, Tomokata Naito, Horace Kazumori Nakamura, April Hawley Navran, Chikajiro Nishi, Koto Nishi, Miyo Linda Okayama, Masanobu Sakuma, Yoshinosuke John Sakuma, Don Makoto Shiba, Sayoko Dorothy Shiroishi, Karl Tanaka, and Ishi Yuzuki.**

Return Old *Amacha* Holy Tea and Paper Plaques

If you ordered new *Amacha* holy tea plaques and/or holy paper plaques for the home, your old plaques should be returned to your local church. They will be burned in a plaque-burning ceremony at the Sacramento Spiritual Center.



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 the church achieve its longer-range plans for growth and development.

The Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund enables Gedatsu members to demonstrate a higher level of commitment, appreciation and support for the church. Participation in the fund requires an annual pledge of \$600 a year, in addition to the general membership dues.

2022 Fund Donors

**Katsuo / Kazumi Chinen
John / Nancy Horner
Dave / Penny Ide
Tadao Ishida
Jo Ann Kaku
Kimiye Kitasoe
Tetsuya / Sachiyo Matsumoto
Victor / Marian Mizokami
Diana Mukai
Ritsuko Nakatani
Naoya / Yuko Okano
Tom Okimura
Paul / Joyce Reid
Sam / Harriet Sekikawa
June Tanaka
Sadaye Tanaka
Howard / Carol Tsujimura
Dennis / Judy Tsuboi**

Spring Grand Festival

Gedatsu Church will hold its **Spring Grand Festival on Easter Sunday, April 9, at 9:30 a.m. at the Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento.**

Fire Ceremony *Saito Goma* Plaques

Apply now for plaques for the Fire Ceremony to be held in conjunction with the Spring Grand Festival. An application form is enclosed with this newsletter. Applications are due by March 19.

***IREICHO* – The First-ever List of Japanese Americans Forced into Incarceration Camps. We Can Honor Them.**

Because of the strong Japanese ancestry and heritage of many of the members of our Gedatsu Church, we focus attention on the *Irei* National Monument Project for the World War II Japanese American Incarceration. This important project seeks to acknowledge, for the first time, the exact number and identities of the individuals of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated in wartime camps across the United States.

The project to repair the historical record – and honor those who were unjustly incarcerated – is led by Duncan Ryuken Williams, *Irei* Monument director, and Sunyoung Lee, project creative director. They, together with a dedicated team of 100 volunteers, painstakingly worked over three years to compile files from 75 incarceration camps across the country.

The result of those efforts is the *Ireicho*, a sacred book of more than 1,000 pages, weighing 25 pounds (shown at right). The hand-bound work contains the names of 125,284 Japanese Americans, who were forcibly detained at the camps. The first-ever of its kind, the book is now on view at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. The names are also listed on the museum's website, and individuals are searchable by name, camp or birth year.

As part of the exhibition, the creators of the *Ireicho* are inviting visitors to place a Japanese *hanko* stamp by the name in the book to acknowledge and honor each person's history.

Stamping of the *Ireicho* requires a reservation. All visitors are welcome to stamp up to six names in the *Ireicho*. When filling out the reservation, you will need to provide the names, dates of birth and detention sites for the people you are stamping so that JANM can prepare for your visit. Camp survivors and those with special circumstances can contact the Development Office at the museum at 213.830.5646 or email development@janm.org to arrange a time to stamp.

"We are drawing on Japanese and Japanese American cultural traditions of honoring elders and ancestors, not simply through building monuments of remembrance, but monuments to repair the racial karma of America," states project director Williams.

The project will be on exhibit until September 24, 2023.



Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles



The *Ireicho* is a sacred book containing the names of Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II.

The goal of the *Ireicho* project is to acknowledge "the erasure of the identities of individuals of Japanese ancestry" who were incarcerated during the war, the museum writes on its website.

The project is funded by the Mellon Foundation and led by Duncan Ryuken Williams, professor of American Studies and Ethnicity, chair of the USC School of Religion, director of the USC Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture and Soto Zen Buddhist priest.

To learn more about the *Ireicho* project or reserve a date/time to stamp, go to <https://www.janm.org/exhibits/ireicho>

AROUND OUR CHURCH

The following first-hand account by Sacramento members, **Dennis and Judy Tsuboi**, chronicles their recent experience in participating in the *Ireicho* Project. We thank Dennis and Judy for sharing their experience and photos with us.



Our *Ireicho* Experience

By Dennis Tsuboi

All three of our children graduated from UCLA. While two of our children eventually returned to Northern California, our middle daughter, Sunni, married and remained in Southern California. She and her husband have four boys, so Judy and I visit them at least four times a year so the grandchildren would really know their “Ji-chan” and “Ba-chan.”

We curtailed travel the past few years because of the pandemic, but by the fall of 2022, we felt it was safe enough to visit our grandkids, as well as visit with my good friend, Bob Matsumoto (see bottom of page 5). After a few phone calls, we set the dates for our visits: November 3 -6.

*Judy and I are charter members of the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), and we receive frequent emails from them about their activities. On October 20, 2022, we received an email from JANM introducing us to the *Ireicho* Project.*

*In planning the upcoming road trip, I had a few phone calls with my friend, Bob, who asked if I was aware of the *Ireicho*. I answered that I was and had received the email from JANM. He told me that he had just stamped the book and suggested that I try to set up an appointment to sign. I told him I didn’t think that I could gain an appointment with such a short time frame, thinking that I would have to make an appointment for a later date. I re-read the email from JANM and noticed that “Camp survivors and those with special circumstances can contact the Development Office at 213-830-5646.” I called the number and asked if there was any possibility that we could sign on Friday, November 4. They took my name and contact information and said they would get back to me.*

The next day, the Development Office called and informed me that since Judy and I were camp survivors, they would let us sign on Friday, November 4, before the museum opened. Furthermore, we could sign up to four names, instead of two.

(Continued on page 5)



Photos, from top: Dennis and Judy Tsuboi. The room containing the sacred *Ireicho* monument book and wall plaques listing the names of the 75 incarceration camps with soil from each of the sites. Judy places the *hanko* stamp in the book, acknowledging her father’s name, Kanzaburo Ide.

(Ireicho – continued from page 4)

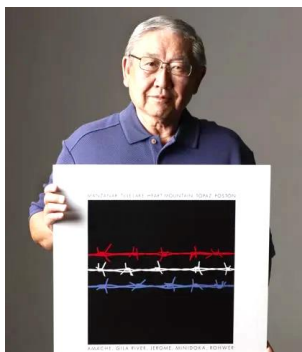
I asked if my daughter and her four adult boys could accompany us, and they said “yes.” Also, they would let her sign, too. And, we would have 30 minutes, instead of the normal 15 minutes. Needless to say, I was surprised but very happy. They stated that it was imperative that we supply ahead of time critical information regarding each name we planned to sign. We were to provide the full name and year of birth, as well as identify the camp or detention site they were assigned to, ASAP!

I had most of the information, thanks to Judy, who had documented our family histories, except that I didn’t know in which camp my paternal grandparents were incarcerated. On November 1, I emailed my cousins in Seattle, and they gave me the information. The next day, November 2, I emailed the Development Office and informed them that I would sign for my fraternal and paternal grandparents. Judy would sign for her parents, Kanzaburo and Hisaye Ide, who were introduced to Gedatsu in Tule Lake and were pioneers of the Sacramento Gedatsu Church. And our daughter Sunni would sign the names of her parents (Judy and me) and her fraternal grandparents (my parents, whom she knew).

Virtually hours later, I received an email from the Development Office to be at the front door of the Museum thirty minutes before opening time, on Friday, November 4, and to call Mr. Edward Escarsega, who would admit us and be our guide for the procedure.

On Thursday, November 3, Judy and I drove to the San Fernando Valley. The next morning, we drove to Little Tokyo; we had to take two cars, since there were seven of us. At 9:30 a.m. we were at the museum and called Mr. Escarsega, who admitted us and took us to the Ireicho room. He explained that there were 75 detention sites and that over 125,000 names are in the book. He further explained that the names are listed by their year of birth but are not in alphabetical order in that year; that is why they needed advanced information so that they could find the names. He had a card for each name, which listed the page number and rough location (lower left, for example) for all ten names. He showed us how to use the hanko (stamp) and instructed us to stamp just below the name (see photo on page 4). By the way, multiple stamping of a name is permitted. One of our grandsons was taking photos throughout the process.

It was a very fulfilling experience being able to honor our parents and grandparents. Judy could have signed for two of her siblings, but we felt it would be better if their children had the honor. I understand that the project launch date was September 24, 2022, and that the book would be at the JANM for a year. After that, the Ireicho may be displayed at other locations. I highly recommend that all descendants of incarcerated family members sign the Ireicho.



Bob Matsumoto (at left) and Dennis Tsuboi met when they were both in military service in 1957 and have remained friends ever since. Bob is an art director, who created the iconic poster of the red, white and blue barbed wire of the incarceration camps that is displayed on tee shirts, mugs, etc. The poster hangs in the Congressional Offices of Congresswoman Doris Matsui of Sacramento and Congressman Adam Schiff of Burbank. Bob also produced a documentary video that was shown at the Congressional hearings in the 1980s as part of the Japanese American Redress Movement.

Gedatsu Q&A - Part 32

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q What is our goal in studying Gedatsu?

A *"I have always prayed with all my heart that each of you would stand on your own feet. I sincerely pray for your happiness and good health."*

These are the last words that our founder Master Gedatsu Kongo spoke to us. He established Gedatsu and devoted himself to teaching and guiding Gedatsu members during his lifetime. This is only because he sincerely hoped that each Gedatsu member would become a person who could stand on their own feet.

What kind of person stands on their own feet? I believe that it is a person of gratitude. When we deeply recognize that we are allowed to exist by the Universal Life Force, and that we receive immeasurable blessings from many people and all things in the universe, we will naturally feel grateful for the blessings, and as a token of appreciation, want to help and benefit others as much as possible through our work. Master Gedatsu Kongo truly wanted us to become such a person.

At the Spring and Fall Festivals, Master Gedatsu Kongo always began his speech with the following statement: *"I won't thank you for coming today. This is because this festival is not held for me, but for your happiness."*

This statement teaches us a very important lesson about what attitude we should have in our Gedatsu study. We may tend to rely on other people and ask them for help when we have difficulties. However, as long as we have this attitude of dependence, we won't be able to live a full life.

No one is perfect. However, we are all allowed to live today by receiving immeasurable blessings from many people and all things in the universe. When we are truly aware of this, we will be able to stand on our own feet and live fully. Our goal to study Gedatsu is to become such a person of appreciation and gratitude.

Q Why should we celebrate our Founder's birthday on November 28th each year?

A November 28th is our Founder Master Gedatsu Kongo's birthday. On that day each year, many members from all parts of Japan gather together in *Goreichi* to celebrate his birthday. Why should we celebrate his birthday?

The Gedatsu teaching can be summarized in a single word: appreciation. All of us have experienced various things in life, good and bad. We may be suffering right now from mental, emotional or physical problems. But we exist here and now, alive as a human being. Who brought forth our physical existence? We did not make our physical body. We were given life through our parents and ancestors, allowing us to exist. We may call this life power God or the Universal Life Force. The name doesn't matter – only that we are allowed to exist by this power and the immeasurable blessings of our parents and ancestors.

In our daily life, we consume many things that sustain our life. We drink water, breathe the air, and receive sunlight. We live in a house, drive a car, use electricity and gas. We go to school, the hospital, the market, etc. We eat meat, fish, rice, vegetables, etc.

Our present life is possible because of the immeasurable blessings from these elements in the universe. No one can live alone without receiving blessing from these elements. Even the person who lives on a remote, uninhabited island consumes many natural resources in order to live. When we deeply understand this, we will naturally feel grateful for everything and everyone who supports our existence today.

This sense of appreciation and gratitude is the foundation of our true happiness. If we feel grateful for everything that supports us, we will feel the need to help people and benefit the world. This is a natural human desire. This is what Master Gedatsu Kongo taught us as a path of happiness.

Fortunately, we have been given the opportunity to learn Gedatsu, the path of happiness. This is entirely because Master Gedatsu Kongo came into this world. It is why we should celebrate our founder's birthday and express our gratitude.



DECEMBER 2022 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$2,781

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

Special Acknowledgments

K. Gibson	Thank you for all blessings in the world
M/M M. Sunahara	In memory of Fujiko Taketa
M/M D. Tsuboi	Appreciation for Archbishop Kishida memorial
M/M D. Ide	Appreciation for 2022 year
M/M J. Horner	In memory of Fujiko Taketa
G. Tomita	Donation of tables in memory of Toshiaki Robert Tomita
A. Sebe	Appreciation and gratitude (\$500)
K. Ota Schubert	"Never Forgotten" appreciation for Masahi Ota Yukie Ota (\$500)

Southern California Total: \$15,335

General: Anonymous (\$500), Anonymous (\$1,500), M/M F Barthel, M/M N Chodor, K. Fujji, M/M K. Fukushima (\$500), J. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hiram, M/M M. Ishida, T. Ishida,,J. Ito, J.Kaku, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M Kv. Kuritani, S. Matsumoto, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, Kubota Mortuary, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, P. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, R Rivera/N. Gonzalez, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, De. Shiroishi, Do. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M S. Tashiro, A. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood

Special Acknowledgments

M/M S. Mukai	In memory of Tomota Tateishi
M/M S. Mukai	Appreciation and gratitude for <i>Goshimpo</i>
T. Ishida	In memory of Eiko/Junnosuke Ishida
Do. Shiroishi	In memory of A. Kishida, Rev. J. Ishida and Eiko
M/M J. Peck	In honor of Tomiko Mizokami (\$1,000)
M/M K. Kuritani	Appreciation for 2022
M. Garcia/ M. Locheo	Appreciation and gratitude for 2022
K. Nagao	In memory of Tameharu and Katsuyo Nagao (\$3,750)
K. Nagatsuka	In memory of Tameharu and Katsuyo Nagao (\$2,500)
A. Yokota	Appreciation for <i>Goshimpo</i>
M/M R. Allum	In memory of Chiyoko Kamei (\$500)
Kamei Family	In memory of Chiyoko Kamei
T. Sato	Seven-year memorial service for Mariko Michiuye
Anonymous	Appreciation for stock investment success (50 shares of NVCR stock with 11/22 market value of \$3,461)

Online Donations: Total: \$2,328

General: S. Matsumoto, S. Shiroishi, A. Morioka, Y. Ono, M. Springer, H. Tsujimura, J. Reid, G. Tomita (\$1,000), G. Hass

Special Acknowledgments

M/M A. Kishida	In memory of Eizan Kishida
T. Palalek	In memory of Sumiko Tsujimura
M/M M. Tsujimura	In memory of Rudy Tsujimura
M/M M. Tsujimura	Support for youth programs

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

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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Patrick Shiroishi** and **Amber Navran**, who reside in Rosemead and celebrated their first wedding anniversary in December. Patrick is the son of **Allen** and **Uzuko Shiroishi** and the grandson of the late **Pat** and **Sayo Shiroishi**.

Both professional musicians, Patrick is a multi-instrumentalist and composer, and Amber is lead vocalist with the neo-soul trio "Moonchild. When they aren't on tour and playing before worldwide audiences, they enjoy performing at the L.A. Church Appreciation Service.

Editorial Staff

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Rev. Mica Rodriguez, adviser

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John Horner, Dave Ide, Marie Ishida, Mark Ishida, Amber Navran, Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi, Patrick Shiroishi, Reverend Hisakazu Taki, Dennis Tsuboi, Judy Tsuboi

The Los Angeles Gedatsu Church held its annual Christmas Celebration Program in conjunction with the December Appreciation Service. Highlights of the program included a visit from Santa (Brian Waldman) and musical performances by the Gedatsu Church Ukulele class and singers/musicians, Dylan Fujioka, Mallory Soto, Amber Navran and Patrick Shiroishi. Prizes were awarded to winners of the Christmas ornament contest, in which kids and adults created hand-made ornaments, and members voted for their favorites.

