



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's

Thought for the Month

*"Self-reflect and selflessly devote
yourself to your daily duties."*

As humans, we are all egocentric.
That is why Master Gedatsu Kongo
stressed the importance of self-
reflection.

We usually believe that our
opinion is correct, and when someone
defies us, we get angry. Therefore, it is
important to self-reflect and become
aware of our egoism.

However, because we are tainted
with egoism, honest self-reflection is
difficult to practice. Egoism cannot
correct egoism.

Master Gedatsu Kongo
encouraged us to be fully and selflessly
committed to our daily duties.
Through this daily practice, we begin to
discard egoism and prepare ourselves
to live productive, happy lives.

JUNE 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|---|
| Sun | 4 | 10:00 am | "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service |
| Sun | 11 | 10:00 am | Appreciation / Father's Day Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service |
| Tue | 13 | 7:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet |
| Sun | 25 | 10:00 am | Appreciation Service |

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|---|
| Sun | 4 | | No Service |
| Sun | 11 | 10:00 am | "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service |
| Sun | 18 | 10:00 am | Appreciation / Father's Day Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service |
| Thu | 22 | 5:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Zoom |

JULY 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|---|
| Sun | 2 | 10:00 am | "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service |
| Sun | 9 | 10:00 am | Appreciation / <i>Obon</i> Service Graduates Honored |
| Tue | 11 | 7:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet |
| Sun | 23 | 10:00 am | Appreciation Service / Graduates Honored |

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|---|
| Sun | 2 | | No Service |
| Sun | 9 | 10:00 am | "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service |
| Sun | 16 | 10:00 am | Appreciation / <i>Obon</i> Service Graduates Honored |
| Thu | 20 | 5:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Zoom |

CHURCHWIDE

| | | | |
|-----|----|---------|--------------------------------|
| Sat | 22 | 12 noon | Steering Team Meeting via Zoom |
|-----|----|---------|--------------------------------|



June “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, June 4, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Mine Kino Hirose, Motokichi Ide, Kinuyo Nakatani, Suyeko Hada Takemura, Minoko Tanaka, Isamu Yamada, Bettie Yamamura, and Masaru Yamamura.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, June 11, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Harry Hidejin Arakawa, Kimiko Hirano, Mitsuko Kaku, Masa Kikuta, Tsuchinojo Kimura, Edward Yutaka Kuritani, Kazumi Matsunami, Kameyoshi Michiuye, Manabu Mukai, Fusako Murakami, Phillip Nakamura, Robert Nakamura, Mary Anne Nolan, Ai Okada, Hideyo Okada, Masakichi Okada, Michael O'Leary, Yoshiko Mary Otera, Daniel Pacifici, Lawrence Sasano, Roy S. Shiba, Hidekichi Shiroishi, Tsuna Shiroishi, Yoshimasa Taninaka, Hironobu George Terakawa, Ben Seiroku Toguchi, Carolyn Wong, and June Tsuyoko Yamamisaka.**

Use New P.O. Box for Sacramento Church

To avoid mail theft and ensure the security of mail deliveries to the Sacramento Spiritual Center – especially mail containing checks or sensitive/important information – please address mail to the following postal box address:

**Gedatsu Church USA
P.O. Box 278391
Sacramento, CA 95827**

Memorial Tower Enshrinements – Fall 2023

New enshrinements in the Gedatsu Memorial Tower are scheduled for the Fall Grand Festival, which will be held at the Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento on Sunday, September 3. **Applications for enshrinements will be accepted until June 20.** The fee is \$300 per application. Application forms are available at your church office.



Let's Celebrate our 2023 Graduates!

It's time for our annual celebration of graduating students and their parents. The Los Angeles and Sacramento churches will be honoring graduates at their annual recognition programs in July.

If you have a student in the family who will be graduating this year from elementary, middle or high school, college, or graduate school, submit their name to be honored. Application forms (electronic and paper) are available from your branch office. **Completed forms are due by June 18.**

Minister Schedules

Reverend Naoya Okano and his family will vacation in Japan this summer, departing for Japan on July 17 and returning August 4.

We welcome the return of **Reverend Hisakazu Taki**, who will serve as guest minister at the L.A. Church from July 6 through July 31.

Obituary

The Los Angeles Gedatsu Church mourns the passing of long-time member, **Ben Y. Hamamoto**, who passed away on April 6, at the age of 77. He is survived by his wife, **Judy Hamamoto**, daughter **Jennifer (Martin Choy)**, son **Bryce (Adamaris) Hamamoto**, and grandchildren **Brevyn Choy** and **Liliana Hamamoto**.

AROUND OUR CHURCH



Family Fun for Sunday Easter Program

The Los Angeles Church was hopping with excitement as it welcomed more than 120 members and friends for a memorable, family-friendly Easter service celebration. With an Easter egg hunt, toys and treats for children, party favors for adults, a free lunch, and a special visit from Peter Cottontail, the Sunday program had everyone bounding with joy and good feelings.

“Thank you” to member-volunteers, who went all out in their propagation efforts to reach out to new young families and engage them in the Gedatsu Church.

The Sunday program also included a surprise 88th *beiju** birthday celebration for long-time member, **Naomi Takara**. Basking in the love and admiration of the congregation, she was gifted with a hula and song by youth member, **Hiro Ishida**, and a gift basket of birthday treats from the church.

* In the Japanese culture, reaching the age of 88 is considered a milestone in a person's life that deserves celebration. This observance is called *beiju*.



In top photos, Peter Rabbit delights youngsters with Easter treats and readies them for the Easter egg hunt. The happy hunters display their baskets of goodie-filled eggs. In bottom photo, Mark Ishida, on behalf of the L.A. congregation, surprises Naomi Takara with a gift basket from the church, celebrating her 88th birthday.

www.gedatsu-usa.org

New Features on Our Gedatsu Website

Two new features have been added to the Gedatsu website to increase visitors and enhance their understanding and interest in our church.

Our new **Activities Page** informs the public of the various activities that are offered at our churches and encourage participation. Turn to the back page for a description and photos of these activities.

Another new feature is our new **Member Testimonials** that crawl across the bottom of our home page. To explain the value and benefits of our church, we let our own members do the talking.

- **Yuri Elvin:** *"The lessons, philosophy, and holy tea changed my life. Gedatsu has shown me how to have gratitude, control of my life, and peace."*
- **Lori Hoeft:** *"The quiet, deep spirituality and prayers to my ancestors make me feel divinely guided and spiritually protected. Gedatsu is for all faiths and includes everyone. I appreciate that."*
- **Christopher Ide:** *"The atmosphere provided by Gedatsu is always so friendly and welcoming that it feels like you are part of a family."*
- **Sherri Mullins:** *"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."*
- **Jessica Scott:** *"When I attend the Gedatsu Church, I feel that I'm in a place of love and an absence of judgment."*
- **Cindy Tsujimura:** *"The Gedatsu teaching has been, and will always be, a part of my life. I have learned to appreciate my family, friends, and colleagues and to be grateful for my life experiences, both the good and the bad."*

We thank these members for sharing their thoughts and feelings about the Gedatsu teaching and the church. Check out their quotes on our website.

Gedatsu Q&A - Part 36

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *I have studied Gedatsu for many years, but as an American, I still feel a sense of strangeness to the teaching. How should I study Gedatsu?*

A Mother Ine Kiyota planted the seed of Gedatsu in the soil of America during World War II. Although 80 years have passed since then, we still have some old members, who have been part of the U.S. Gedatsu church from the very beginning. We should never forget the immeasurable blessings we have received from Master Gedatsu Kongo, and many teachers and pioneer members of the church.

When Master Gedatsu Kongo began teaching Gedatsu 95 years ago, he taught only Japanese people at that time. However, he stated that Gedatsu was not only for Japanese people, but for people throughout the world. He encouraged the Japanese members to raise awareness for the teaching. Efforts to demonstrate the universality of Gedatsu, however, actually started when the teaching was brought to the United States.

Mother Kiyota, Bishop Eizan Kishida, and other teachers worked diligently to adapt Gedatsu to the needs of Americans. We learned Gedatsu from these early teachers and have strived to carry forward the teaching to new generations of followers.

Over the years, however, some members, especially those of younger generations, have expressed their discomfort with the teaching. I understand their feelings. Because of the strong influence of the Japanese culture in the Gedatsu teaching, I believe that there may be elements in the current practice of Gedatsu in the U.S., which may not truly fit the traditions and culture of American people. We should take time to explore this further.

(Continued on page 5)

(Gedatsu Q&A – continued from page 4)

I have learned many things from Americans since I began to study Gedatsu in the U.S. In particular, I believe that American's spirit of independence and open-heartedness is a wonderful quality that we Japanese should learn. By combining this American spirit with the spirit of Gedatsu, I believe we can create an American Gedatsu that will clearly and strongly resonate within the hearts of Americans. In this way, the universality of Gedatsu can be established. However, this is only the beginning. When we spread the Gedatsu teaching throughout the world, the universality of Gedatsu will be truly realized.

This challenging task to create an American Gedatsu has just begun. It is up to you, the American Gedatsu members, to perform this task. This is Master Gedatsu Kongo's dream. Let us join together in the effort to create an American Gedatsu.

Q *I have learned that I receive countless blessings from everyone and everything in the world. How can I reciprocate these blessings?*

A It has been 45 years since I came to the U.S. for the first time. I was still under 30 years old at that time. Bishop Kishida and Mother Kiyota were still alive. I stayed at the former L.A. Church, located on Van Buren Place, for about a year to study English. During my stay, I was helped and supported by many people. **Mr. and Mrs. Tsujimura**, who lived next to the church, invited me for dinner almost every night. **Rev. Gerry Shiroishi, Pat and Terry Shiroishi, Mr. Tom Okimura, Mr. and Mrs. John Castello, Mrs. Mizokami, Mrs. Wakasa . . .** I cannot name them all.

Many of them have passed away. Surprisingly, they were all younger than I am today. Being aware of that, I feel guilty because I know that I have not fully repaid what I have received from them.

We have all received great blessings from many people. We perform *Amacha* holy tea blessing to express our sincere gratitude to all people and everything that support our lives. However, I don't think this will fully complete our repayment. When you really feel grateful for what you have received from others, you have to seriously consider how to repay it.

I remember seeing a movie entitled, "Pay It Forward," many years ago. An elementary school boy learned from his teacher a method to make all people in the world happy. The method was very simple: when you are helped by someone or when you receive something from others, you do something good to three others and then tell each of them to do the same thing to three more people, as well. The boy firmly believed in this and began to put the method into practice. As a result, a circle of happiness extended around him. The message of the movie was that when we demonstrate appreciation for our blessings by unselfishly giving to others, we create a ripple effect of happiness and goodwill around us.

When we receive a favor or act of kindness from someone, we usually think we should return the favor or kindness to that person. While that, of course, is appropriate, can we fully reciprocate what we have received? I don't think so, because many of the people who gave us help and support in our life – such as our parents, teachers, and friends – may have long passed away. What can we do then? The answer is to pay it forward to others. I believe this is what Master Gedatsu Kongo encouraged us to do as a token of appreciation.

Gedatsu is very simple. Every day we pay our respects to the Universal Life Force and our ancestors and say thank you for their blessings. We should then try to help people around us and benefit the world as a token of appreciation. This is the true Gedatsu practice for people's happiness and world peace.





Teachings of Gedatsu Kongo

Translated by the late Reverend Arthur Sakamoto

***Conducting ourselves in a manner that will rejoice others,
as well as benefit us, is the true blessing.***

When one draws water in a wash basin toward oneself, the water retreats. Conversely, when one pushes the water, it returns. From this simple truth, Nature teaches us the moral path.

Conducting ourselves with only personal gain in mind may seem at a given moment to be profitable, but just as the water in the basin retreats, eventually what appears to be gained will vanish.

If one does business with the benefit of others in mind, just as the water returns, people will be drawn in, which will naturally return as profit. To have others be gladdened is a blessing, which is the ultimate, real benefit. This not only applies to business but to interpersonal relationships, as well.

***All things are our teachers.
Before criticizing others, reexamine ourselves.***

In an egotistical way of life, one cannot discern the truth.

“Success is due to my own efforts – failure is the fault of others.” This type of attitude does not breed self-reflection.

Although the fault may be in others, if we reflect on being the recipient of the results – success or failure – both are food for the betterment of self. Even though the other party may be younger, older, or poor, if we feel that there was a necessity for coming into contact with them, then they are all our teachers, who are being used by God to guide us. If we recognize this, then everything is our study, and we can realize that everything is material for self-reflection.

One who leads a contented life truly is a wealthy person.

Contented daily life is knowing the sufficiency of one’s livelihood. Sufficiency is not material quantity but a matter of attitude. Because human greed is boundless, unless our attitude is changed, although we may gain material wealth, discontent will follow us throughout our life.

One who does not apprehend sufficiency, though wealthy, is actually poor. To know adequacy and to live a life of gratitude is, indeed, the foundation for being blessed materially and spiritually.



Northern California Total: \$7,188

General Donations: J. Tanaka, A. Sebe, M/M D. Ide, M/M D. Tsuboi, D. Letoto, M/M D. Mah, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, Ka. Kuritani, K. Tateishi, M/M K. Kuritani, M. Fukushima, M. Lumpkin, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, M/M S. Shaklan, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M T. Hiram, T. Murakami, Y./C. Oishi

Special Acknowledgments

| | |
|-------------------|--|
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| | S. Kaku, T. Nishiwaki |
| M/M D. Mah | In memory of Tomoki and Margaret Oyanagi |
| J. Tomita | Donation of tables in memory of Toshiaki Tomita |
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| T. Araki | Appreciation for Sr. Rev. Sebe's help (\$965) |
| A. Araki | Appreciation for Sr. Rev. Sebe's help |

Southern California Total: \$4,580

General: A. Dewitt, De. Shiroishi, Do. Shiroishi, J. Ito, J. Kaku, M. Kimura, M. Nakamura, M/M C. Morioka, M/M F. Barthel, M/M G. Miyasako, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M K. Shiroishi, M/M K. Yamada, M/M N. Okano, M/M N. Chodor, M/M S. Mukai, M/M T. Hiram, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, N. Takara, No Name, P. Nakamura, R. Morioka, S. Kaku, T. Ishida, T. Okimura, T. Yamada, Y. Oishi, T. Nishiwaki, M/M T. Araki

Special Acknowledgments

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| L. Mahoney | In memory of Thomas Mahoney |
| J. Kaku | In memory of Thomas Mahoney |
| M/M Ho. Tsujimura | In memory of Shegiro Tomita |
| M. Banker | In memory of Larry Nakamura |
| J./A./U. Shiroishi | In memory of Pat Shiroishi |
| J. Ito | In memory of Kazuye Ito |
| T. Okimura | In memory of Emiko Okimura |
| D. Allum | For good health |
| M/M T. Hiram | Recovery from lung cancer (\$500) |
| T. Ishida | Appreciation for Spring Grand Festival |
| N. Takara | For <i>Beiju</i> celebration |

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General: S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura, J. Reid, T. Palalek, G. Hass

Special Acknowledgments

| | |
|-------------|---|
| G. Iwata | Appreciation for vehicle storage |
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| A. Kishida | Appreciation for Spring Festival |

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Dollar amounts are shown for gifts \$500+.

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org



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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Anna Rico** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church. Anna, who resides in Monterey Park, is a retired substitute teacher, who enjoys spending time with her mother, three children, and two grandchildren.

Introduced to Gedatsu by **Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi**, Anna looks forward to attending church and particularly likes the Gedatsu teaching's focus on respecting and appreciating ancestors, nature, and all living entities. She is grateful to the Gedatsu Church for helping her understand and stay connected to her family roots.

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New Website Features

(Continued from page 4)

Check out the new **Activities Page** on the Gedatsu website (www.gedatsu-usa.org).

The page invites the public to join in a variety of church activities that appeal to the diverse interests of young and old – everything from martial arts training to classes for *ukulele* instruction and Japanese tea ceremony. (See photos at right.)



From top, left to right: IForce Dojo, Gedatsu Kendo, ukulele class and tea ceremony training.