

# GEDATSU COMPANION

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### Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Gedatsu is to create a  
beautiful life through our  
daily thoughts and actions."*

*Karma* means action. Our present existence is the result of our past thoughts and actions. Because we are constantly creating a new life through our present thoughts and actions, our future is all up to us.

This is a message of hope and courage. No matter what difficulties we may currently face, we have the opportunity to live a happy life. It is up to our thoughts and actions in the present moment.

Do not give up. Strive to make efforts constantly. Constant efforts will ultimately yield positive results.

## JULY 2023

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	9	10:00 am	Appreciation / <i>Obon</i> Service
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
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## AUGUST 2023

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	8	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	13	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Sun	23	10:00 am	Appreciation Service

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6		No Service
Sun	13	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	20	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Thu	24	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom

### CHURCHWIDE

Sat	26	12 noon	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom
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### July “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, July 2, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Yukio Jim Ide, Tsuma Kino, Mother Kenyu Kiyota, Kazue Ando Kotabe, Miyoko Nakamura, Steven Ikuzo Nakatani, Alan Yoneo Oshima, Yukie Ota, Shizu Sebe, Charlie Zenzo Tagawa, Keichi Takemura, Steve Morio Taketa, Keisuke Tateishi, Susie Setsuko Tateishi, Yuko Tateishi, Kimiko Yomogida, Tsuyako Yuno, Yukie Yuno, and Yone Yuno.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, July 9, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Hideko Arakawa, Iku Arakawa, Masao Arakawa, Chester Bennington, Nathan Capross, Haruko Chinen, Kathryn Christina Howe, Tomoko Imai, Louis Kiyoshi Ito, Yoshino Kawamura, Maria Antonia Lechuga, Hiroko Murakami, Stanley Muronaka, Yasoji Nagahama, Tomoyoshi Naito, Kyoko Nakaguchi, Shigeko Nakamura, Helen Nakano, Eddie Kinya Ogura, Nancy Yoshie Ogura, Hiroko Omiya, Setsu Sakuma, Malayka Jane Sexton, Thomas Gray Sexton, Otomatsu Shiba, Yukio Shimada, Jack Shimatsu, Michiye Shimohira, Nobuyoshi Shimohira, Shigeko Sugata, Yoshinori Takamine, Genpachi Tanji, Riichi Tomita, Kazuma Toyama, Rudy Koichiro Tsujimura, and Yoko Tsujimura.**

### Saito Goma Plaque Applications

Apply now for plaques for the *Saito Goma* fire ceremony at the Grand Fall Festival on Sunday, September 3. An application form is inserted in this newsletter and is available at your church branch. Deadline for applications is August 20.



### Memorial Tower Enshrinements 2023

New enshrinements of souls in the Gedatsu Memorial Tower at the *Goreichi* in Sacramento are scheduled for the Grand Fall Festival in September. To date, the following souls will be enshrined: **Kiyoe Ishida, Katsuyo Nagao, Teruko Nakamura, Lily Yuriko Shiba, and Rudy Koichiro Tsujimura.** Please contact the church office as soon as possible for additional enshrinements. The fee is \$300 per enshrinement application.

### Minister Schedules

**Reverend Naoya Okano** and his family will return from their vacation in Japan on August 4. **Reverend Hisakazu Taki** from *Gedatsu-kai* Japan will continue to serve as guest minister at the L.A. Church through July 31.

### Plaque-burning Service



The Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento held its annual *Joen-no-gi* Plaque-burning Service on the fire ceremony site on the *Goreichi* grounds. With prayers of invocation by the ministers, as well as holy tea blessing and prayers offered by the congregation, old holy tea plaques and holy paper plaques that were returned to the church were lit on fire, returning the sacred items to their natural elements and to the universe.





### Mothers Celebrated with Tokens of Love and Appreciation

The congregation of the **Sacramento Spiritual Center** honored mothers who attended the Mother's Day service. Moms and ladies were presented with a goodie bag containing a gift card, facemask, chocolates and a garden seed kit. Mom's special day concluded with a light luncheon with fellow members.

The **Los Angeles Church** welcomed members and friends to its Mother's Day service and luncheon. Moms and ladies were honored with bouquets of pink roses and gifts from Sunday Schoolers: hand-drawn thank-you cards and hand-decorated cupcakes (pre-baked by member **Mariko Locheo**).



### Gedatsu Yoga Class Led by Nishiwaki Sensei Promotes Healthy Bodies, Minds

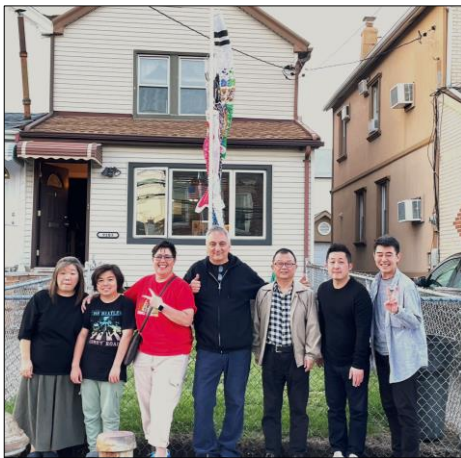
**Rev. Taketoshi Nishiwaki** – guest minister from *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, health practitioner, and keen yoga advocate – taught a combined lecture-practice yoga session at the L.A. Church, attended by eight members, and remotely by two others in New York and Hawaii. The hour-long session, which was given in Japanese and promoted as a “way to listen to the voice of our bodies and to adjust our bodies,” was thoroughly enjoyed by all participants. The yoga lesson was followed by a tasty potluck lunch and friendly social time.



### Zadankai in the Big Apple

#### First Gedatsu Home Meeting Held in New York City

The first Gedatsu home meeting in New York was joyfully held in early May at the home of **Michael** and **Kazumi Naimoli** in Queens, New York. Kazumi, a Gedatsu member originally from Japan, was joined by other Gedatsu members with U.S.-Japan connections -- **Terumasa Yamada**, **Yuji Sakurai**, and **Rev. Taketoshi Nishiwaki** – as well as U.S. member, **Flo Dyson-Palumbo**, who drove up from her home in New Jersey. The group offered prayers, performed *Amacha* holy tea blessing, and chanted the Heart Sutra, led by Reverend Nishiwaki.



Gedatsu members gather in front of the Naimoli home in Queens, New York. From left, Kazumi Naimoli, Lennon Ichiro Naimoli, Flo Dyson-Palumbo, Michael Naimoli, Yuji Sakurai, Terumasa Yamada, and Rev. Taketoshi Nishiwaki.

The gathering marked the first prayer and discussion home meeting for the member-friends.

The home gathering – *zadankai* in Japanese – was the long-wished-for, creative idea of **Reverend Naoya Okano** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church. Over the years, he had been communicating regularly, but separately, with the three Japanese members in New York – Kazumi, Terumasa, and Yuji – primarily fulfilling their orders for a variety of Gedatsu items, such as holy tea and plaques, *Saito Goma* plaques, *Manbu Kuyo* applications, and the Japanese-language *Gedatsu Magazine*.

For a long time, Rev. Naoya secretly desired to have those members get together on a monthly basis, dreaming that a Gedatsu N.Y.C. branch could be formed one day. His aspirations were heightened this spring, when Rev. Nishiwaki arrived in L.A. on a three-month visit from Japan. Since Rev. Nishiwaki coincidentally belonged to the same Gedatsu Okachimachi branch in Japan that was managed by Kazumi's father, he reached out to Kazumi. They formed a chat group, including Terumasa and Yuji, so they could easily communicate on social media. Then, with Rev. Naoya's encouragement, Rev. Nishiwaki decided to visit Kazumi's home for the purpose of propagation, and he contacted her to make the arrangements.

Thus, in early May, Rev. Nishiwaki boarded a plane from L.A. and flew 2,500 miles to New York City with the goal of holding a NYC home meeting. On the afternoon of May 6, that goal was achieved.

#### Member-friends meet for the first time

**Kazumi Uehara-Naimoli** is a third-generation Gedatsu member of the Okachimachi branch in Tokyo, Japan. She came to the U.S. in 1991 as a high-school exchange student in Connecticut. She went on to graduate from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, where she makes her home with her husband Michael and their 12-year-old son, Lennon Ichiro. She has been working as a carpet designer for the past 19 years.

**Reverend Taketoshi Nishiwaki** is a staff member of the *Gedatsu-kai* Tokyo headquarters, serving in the Health Department. He has just completed a three-month visit to Gedatsu USA churches – his initial U.S. visit was 20 years ago – with the prospect of becoming a U.S. minister. He is a member of the Gedatsu Okachimachi branch.

**Yuji Sakurai** is also a multi-generational Gedatsu member. He recalls attending home meetings in Japan as a child with his two triplet brothers. Today, he is manager of the Gedatsu Nihonbashi Chuo branch. Professionally, he has been working for the last year as president of the NY subsidiary of a stock brokerage firm. This is his fourth NY assignment since 1987.

**Terumasa Yamada** is a member of the Gedatsu Ushigome branch. He came to the U.S. in 1993 to study art in Miami, eventually working as a graphic designer. In 2001, he was granted permanent resident status and moved to New York City, where he runs a design business. Over the years, he's grown close with the Naimolis, with whom he often shares the holidays.

**Flo Dyson-Palumbo**, who lives in New Jersey, was born in Japan and learned the Gedatsu teaching from her mother, the late Toku Dyson. After moving with her family to the U.S., Flo maintained strong ties with member-friends in Japan. When in Japan, she attended the same Ushigome branch where Terumasa is a member.

(Continued on page 5)



### *(Home Meeting – continued from page 4)*

“Honestly,” says Kazumi, “I didn’t expect Rev. Nishiwaki’s visit to our home to turn into the first *Amacha* holy tea blessing session in New York City. I thought he was simply coming as a tourist, and we could show him around the big city.

“When Rev. Nishiwaki arrived and suggested for us to chant the Heart Sutra, we were speechless. How?! Where?! I had never even chanted the Heart Sutra on my own before. I felt uncomfortable at first, but with my husband’s support, I decided to go along with it, and we offered to host the session.

In addition to Terumasa and Yuji, I invited Flo to join us. I had met her 18 years ago, when she invited me to her home in New Jersey when Rev. Taki was visiting. I thought it would be nice for her to join our group, especially since she had once belonged to the same Ushigome branch that most of us belonged to.



**The *zandankai* group, from left: Rev. Nishiwaki, Yuji (in checkered shirt), Terumasa, Kazumi, Lennon Ichiro, and Flo.**

“So, everyone assembled at our home on a beautiful Saturday afternoon,” says Kazumi. “As soon as Flo walked in (after having sat in horrible NYC traffic for two and a half hours) we all lit up, and our prayer session began!

“Although this was the very first tea blessing for everyone here in NYC, as well as the first time we all met in person, we got along very nicely. The prayer session turned out to be such a wonderful experience.

“For me personally, it was amazingly soothing to chant the Heart Sutra with holy tea blessing as a group. It was so powerful. I felt so amazing to have all my stress go away afterward. I was happy to see my son sit with us, chanting and pouring holy tea over the stupa. My husband Michael, who has a Catholic background and is a drummer in a Beatles tribute band, also joined and kept the tempo with a little *taiko* drum during our chanting. He was proud to be co-host and very much enjoyed the whole experience.

“Without a doubt, I wanted to keep the holy tea stupa that Rev. Nishiwaki had brought from Tokyo to L.A. to New York. I still cannot believe that I have it in my home. I thank Rev. Nishiwaki for coming to our home and bringing it to me. I appreciate the Gedatsu teaching for inspiring me and for making me realize how sacred it is and what a much-needed practice it is for me. In addition to receiving the *Gedatsu Companion* in the mail, this experience brings back the holy practice of Gedatsu to my life here in America.”

For the other members of the first New York Gedatsu home meeting, the experience was also very enjoyable and spiritually rewarding.

“I had a really wonderful time attending the holy tea service in Kazumi’s home,” says Yuji. “It was a lot more fun to chant the *Hannya Shingyo* with others than to chant it alone at home. I hope one day to meet Gedatsu members in Los Angeles, Sacramento and Hawaii.”

“I really enjoyed visiting New York, participating in the *zandankai* and seeing everyone,” says Rev. Nishiwaki. “I am very appreciative of the Gedatsu teaching and for the sacred guidance I received in order make the visit. I hope I can visit again sometime.”



**The Naimoli altar with Kazumi’s cherished new holy tea stupa on the right.**



## Gedatsu Q&A - Part 7

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

**Q** *No matter how sincerely I pray, my prayers are often unanswered. What guidance do we receive from the Universe and ancestors?*

**A** Everything in life has meaning, even the difficulties that we encounter. When we are confronted with a difficult situation, instead of trying to escape, we should face it with appreciation and try to do our best. We will then be guided in the most appropriate way.

Think about the word “present.” The present moment is a present, or gift, from the Universe. No matter what difficulties we face, no matter what negative past we may have, we can create a happy future through the steps we take today. We are creating our future each moment through our thoughts and actions. Tomorrow is up to us. Please remember that the present moment is a precious gift from the Universe.

An old, well-known Chinese story begins: Once upon a time, an old man lived in a village in China. One morning, the old man discovered that his horse was gone. His neighbors said, “How unlucky you are!” But the old man did not care and said, “Who knows if this is bad luck?” A few days later the horse returned with several beautiful horses. The neighbors said, “How lucky!” But the old man said, “Who knows if I’m lucky?” The next day his son was thrown from a horse and became physically disabled. The neighbors said, “How pitiful you are!” But the old man said, “Who knows if this is unhappiness to me?” Several years later, a war broke out against the neighboring country. All the young men went to the front to fight, and many of them were killed. But the old man’s son was safe because of his physical disability.

This story tells us that we cannot foretell future happiness or unhappiness. The Universe and our ancestors are always guiding us in this way. We may have hardships and sorrows, but they may not necessarily bring us unhappiness. Understanding this is the key to attaining true happiness. We must try to accept whatever happens to us and do our best. We will then be guided most appropriately.

When we wake up in the morning, we should first thank the Universe and ancestors for giving us precious life and do our best in our duties during the day. This attitude in life will lead us to true happiness.

**Q** *I am easily influenced by my emotions. How can I calm my mind?*

**A** Gedatsu is a very simple path for everyone’s happiness, but we need practice to attain that goal. Athletes practice to strengthen their muscles and improve their physical abilities. We run, swim or go to the gym to lose weight and keep fit. Although we are aware of the need for physical training, we do not have much concern for training our mind. In order to attain peace and happiness, we need to train our mind to be strengthened and purified.

Gedatsu has several methods to train our mind. The first method is Holy *Hiho* meditation.

In our daily activities, we tend to be strongly influenced by our thoughts and feelings. When things do not go smoothly, we sometimes get irritated or negative in our thoughts. Because we see things only from our viewpoint, our judgment is not always right, but we stubbornly stick to our thoughts. This attitude creates problems, suffering, and worries. We need to train our minds to see things as they really are.

When we perform Holy *Hiho* meditation, we hold between our palms the symbol of the universal life energy, which Gedatsu Kongo left for us. We maintain the correct physical posture, sitting with a straight back and relaxed shoulders and arms. We close our eyes and breathe naturally, focusing our attention on our breathing, while we recite *Namu Gedatsu Kongo* in our mind. It is natural for thoughts to arise in our mind; we let them go by concentrating on our breathing and repeating this process throughout the meditation. In this way, our mental and physical condition becomes adjusted to the universal life cycle.

When we continue practicing *Hiho* meditation, we will not be influenced by our thoughts and emotions. Instead, we will be able to see and judge things correctly.

*(Continued on back page)*

## **Northern California** Total: \$2,970

**General Donations:** J. Tanaka, M/M D. Ide, M/M D. Tsuboi, Gedatsu Hawaii, J. Ito, J. Detwiler/ J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M. Lumpkin, No Name, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, A. Sebe, A/D Sekikawa

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T. Bartos	For souls of ancestors
M/M D. Ide	"Never Forgotten" memorial service Appreciation Buster Ide and Ben Ide
M/M S. Sekikawa	Appreciation and Mother's Day service

## **Southern California** Total: \$7,265

**General:** A. Tsujimura, Anonymous, I. Long, J. Ito, J. Kaku, K. Fujii, L. Young, M. Komura, M. Nakamura, M/M F. Barthel (\$800), M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M N. Chodor, M/M N. Okano, M/M P. Young, M/M R. Allum, M/M S. Shaklan, M/M T. Hiram, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, N. Takara, T. Murakami

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J. Hamamoto	"Never Forgotten" for Ben Hamamoto
J. Hamamoto	In appreciation for funeral services for Ben Hamamoto (\$600)
J. Ito	In memory of Yozo Tsujimura, Hiroshi Yamamisaka, John Kuritani, June Morioka
M/M S. Mukai	Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo
J. Hamamoto	In memory of Ben Hamamoto (\$800)
T. Tamada	<i>Goshimpo</i> appreciation
J. Kizu	In memory of Jane Harue Wakasa
M/M C. Morioka	In memory of June Morioka, Yozo Tsujimura, and Hiroshi Yamamisaka
M/M F. Barthel	In memory of Joe Takara
P. Nakamura	In memory of Nakamura family ancestors
M/M K. Shiroishi	To continue the church's good works (\$2,000)

## **Online Donations:** Total: \$376

**General:** G. Iwata, S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura, J. Reid, W. Young, G. Hass

*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 **Judy Tsuboi** of the Sacramento Spiritual Center. Judy and her husband **Dennis** have been active, involved members of the Gedatsu Church for many years.

"I am grateful to **Mother Kiyota** for guiding my parents, **Kanzaburo** and **Hisaye Ide**, to the Gedatsu teachings at Tule Lake Relocation Center during World War II," says Judy. "Gedatsu has taught me to thank God every morning for allowing Dennis and me, our children, our grandchildren, and even our pet cat to live each day."

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#### **(Gedatsu Q&A – Continued from page 6)**

The second method to train our mind is *Amacha* holy tea blessing.

Needless to say, our existence is due to the immeasurable blessings from many people and things in the world from ancient times, including our parents and ancestors. Through the practice of holy tea blessing, we express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to all people and things that support our daily existence. Our daily practice of holy tea blessing cultivates our sense of appreciation and thoughtfulness to everyone. This leads us to peace and happiness.

The third and simplest method to train our mind is prayer.

When we wake up in the morning, we go before our home altar and pray first to the Universal Life Force saying, "Thank you very much for giving me this precious life today. Please use me as you wish. I will do my best in my duties." We also pray to our ancestors, saying, "Thank you very much for your daily guidance. Please guide me most appropriately."

Then we start our day, striving to do our best in our duties and activities. Before going to bed, we again pray and say, "Thank you very much for the day."

This daily practice of prayer cultivates our heart of gratitude and leads us forward in life in the most appropriate way.

