

# GEDATSU COMPANION

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### Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"'Gedatsu' means 'liberation.' The Kanji character 'Ge' means to 'untie,' and 'Datsu' means to 'discard.'"*

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised."

In this Biblical verse, Job expresses that in this world, we own nothing. Money, status, family, even our own bodies, are not our possessions.

Mental suffering – such as worry, jealousy, arrogance, and greed – is created from selfish desires, wrongfully thinking that worldly goods belong to us.

Gedatsu Kongo taught that we are liberated from suffering when we realize that we possess nothing.

## NOVEMBER 2024

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	10	10:00 am	Appreciation Service
Sun	24	10:00 am	Appreciation / Gedatsu Kongo Birthday 7-5-3 Children's Celebration / Regional Board Meeting
Thu-Fri	28-29		Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	10	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	17	10:00 am	Appreciation Service / 7-5-3- Children's Celebration & Luncheon
Thu	21	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	24	10:00 am	<i>Ajikan</i> Meditation Practice
Thu-Fri	28-29		Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)

## DECEMBER 2024

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	8	10:00 am	Last Appreciation Service of the Year / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service / Church Clean-up
Sat - Tue	21-31		Church Closed for Holidays
Sun	22	10:00 am	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	10:00	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	8	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	15	10:00 am	Appreciation Service / Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service / Holiday Program & Potluck Luncheon
Sat - Tue	21-31		Church Closed for Holidays



### November “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.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, November 3, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **George Akiyoshi, Henry Calderon, Harold Horner, Maio Kino, Kaoru Ide Kotabe, Toshiko Kusuhara, Hirohide Obu, Tracy T. Takahashi, Dorothy Tomita, Yasuno Niguma Tsuboi, and Sho Akira Wakabayashi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, November 10, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kakujiro Arakawa, Moto Arakawa, Ibo Roque Chaves, Hatsue Hiram, George Imuta, Ikuko Inoue, Seiji Inoue, Fumio Ishida, Hitoshi Ishida, Chiyoko Deguchi Kamei, Seitaro Kawamura, Fude Kikuta, Masaji George Kikuta, Ken Kimura, Tomio Kubo, Patsy M. Matsumoto, Robert Miyamoto, George Joroshi Miyasako, Masao Roy Mizokami, Emiko Okimura, Manabu Okimura, Nami Sakuma, Jon Nobuyuki Tanji, Dorothy Kiyoko Tomita, and Henry Urada.**

### Renew Your Church Membership for 2025

Annual membership dues increase to keep pace with the cost of living – the first increase in ten years.

Annual Membership: Renewable annually

Individual	\$60 (including each child age 30+ living at home)
Family	\$100

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

Individual	\$600
Family	\$1,000

#### 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.com](http://www.gedatsu-usa.com).
- Or mail your check – made payable to Gedatsu Church USA – to your nearest church branch.



### 7-5-3 Children’s Celebration

In November, Gedatsu members in Los Angeles and Sacramento will observe the *Shichi-Go-San* Festival, the traditional Japanese celebration for the well-being and healthy futures of children ages seven, five and three. So, if you have children, grandchildren, nieces/nephews of those ages, complete the application form available from your local church office to honor the children.

The 7-5-3 Celebration will be held on the following dates:

Los Angeles – Sunday, November 17

Sacramento – Sunday, November 24

Honored children will receive the traditional *chitose ame* candy, protective amulet, and gift card from the Sunday School. Lunch will be served. A donation of \$25 is appreciated.

### Update Your Contact Information

Please notify the L.A. Church of any changes to your home address, email address, phone/cellphone numbers so that we can send you the latest church communications and announcements. Member contact information is not published. Email **Rev. Naoya** at [naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com](mailto:naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com), call at (626) 288-1212, or text at (626) 233-2359. Or email **Mariko Locheo** at [locheo.gedatsu.lab@gmail.com](mailto:locheo.gedatsu.lab@gmail.com).

### 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.

### 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 and prices.

### L.A. Church Successful Fundraiser Serves Up Crafty & Yummy Faire



Middle row: Handmade ceramic pottery; an assortment of craft / gift items.

Bottom row: The Okano family display origami items and pressed-bead jewelry, trinkets, and ornaments; vendors show off their colorful hand towels.

Top row, left to right: Preparing bento trays, from left: Donna Shiroishi, Judy Hamamoto, Jodi Morioka, Carole Tsujimura, and June Kizu; tasty bento trays. Above: Saki Maekawa (back left), her friend, and their kids, offer macarons and other pastries.

### Craft & Bento Faire



Delicious Japanese bento trays, homemade goodies, and a wide array of handcrafted creations (like the pressed-bead trinkets above) lured shoppers to the L.A. Church on Saturday, October 5.

"This one-day fundraiser – our first since the pandemic – was essentially an experimental, start-up event, so we were delighted with the response," said Judy Hamamoto, event chairperson. "Thank you to members and friends, who pitched in to help with planning, food prep, craft vending, set-up, and so much more."

### Grandparents Showered with Love and Thanks



Bottom row, left to right: Toyoko Murakami, Fukuko Rico, Kiyoko Fujii, Karen Nakamura, Judy Hamamoto, Carole Tsujimura, Arlene Tsujimura, Sandra Martinez, Max Martinez.

Middle row: Pauline Muronaka, Jackson Ito, Ikuko Kuritani, Howard Tsujimura

Top row: Annie DeWitt, Anna Rico, Akemi Wood, Greg Wood, Ken Kuritani, Jodi Morioka, Mark Ishida

### Grandparents' Day



The L.A. Gedatsu Church honored the congregation's grandparents with a gift designed and handcrafted by Diana Mukai: a decorative 4-inch plastic ornament filled with Japanese tea and sweet treats. A "Happy Grandparents' Day" message, created by Mariko Locheo, adorned each gift. The Sunday School children made Grandparents' Day cards and pens decorated with artificial flowers.



### Brief Biography of Gedatsu Kongo

#### Chapter 11 After the War

On June 23, 1945, the Japanese troops in Okinawa suffered a crushing defeat. When the battle ended, 244,000 Japanese had died. On August 6, an American B-29 bomber dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, killing more than 200,000 people. On August 9, the U.S. dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki, taking another 140,000 lives.

On August 15, the Emperor's announcement of Japan's surrender was broadcast by radio.

On that day, the monthly Gedatsu Appreciation Service was held in *Goreichi*. Along with many members, President Okano sat erect, listening attentively to the radio broadcast. When the broadcast was finished, he said only, "This is fine." He had tears in his eyes.

The members were strongly shaken by the Emperor's announcement. Most of them thought, "Why didn't the Emperor tell us to fight to our last breath?"

President Okano then spoke to them in a calm tone, "Taking a wide view, although we lost, we will win in the end. The U.S. Army will arrive in Japan very soon, and we will all be their captives. But if we accept the current situation and make every effort, we will be able to reconstruct our country soon."

#### Preparing to fight "our spiritual battle"

In the beginning of September, President Okano assembled all the instructors and said, "No doubt, many members feel very uneasy. The battle of arms is over. We must fight our spiritual battle from now. Go and tell them to cope with the times calmly."

President Okano then sent the instructors to branches throughout the country. This was just before the Allied Forces were to make an entry into Japan. All sorts of rumors were circulating among the people. Police told women and children to evacuate the cities. The public's feeling of uneasiness reached the limit. The instructors made every effort to convey President Okano's message to members in all parts of the country.

Despite the confusion after the war, the Fall Festival was held on October 10. The *Goreichi* grounds were packed with members from all parts of Japan. President Okano addressed them as follows:

"Gedatsu is not an ideological play. Our ancestors have devoted their valuable lives to establishing the country of Japan. We should never forget their efforts and toils. We must cultivate our souls and earnestly practice Gedatsu. We are always nurtured by the great blessing of Nature. Therefore, we should make every effort to repay the blessing. Without gratitude, there can be no humanity. Learn from the sun, and practice appreciation and gratitude thoroughly."

Since establishing the Gedatsu teaching, President Okano physically overstrained himself, ministering to his members with only three or four hours of sleep a day. After he moved to Kitamotojiku, his body was gradually becoming weaker. He sometimes had difficulty walking, but he never talked about his condition with anyone.

#### Encouraging members to lend aid to others

Seeing the future after his death, President Okano began to teach the church leaders in a strict manner. He put all his efforts into establishing vocational aid centers all over the country.

"From now on," he said, "many war repatriates will return to Japan. War widows need jobs to make their living. Therefore, we should open vocational aid centers for them."

In these vocational aid centers, they produced various clothing items by using military materials, such as parachute cords and rucksacks. They also sold at low prices army-surplus military uniforms, which could be repurposed for civilian clothing.

President Okano encouraged members in this effort by always saying, "Utilize everything effectively, allow everyone to achieve their fullest potential and uplift their spirits and hearts. True religion should benefit society."

With these words, he encouraged members in all parts of the country to devote themselves to their vocational activities.

(Continued on page 5)

(*Biography – Continued from page 4*)



After the war, people throughout the country suffered from extreme shortages of housing, clothing, and daily necessities, some dying from starvation.

President Okano encouraged members to help others through voluntary activities. One such activity was the creation of a public feeding service using *tokoroten*, a kind of seaweed jelly. President Okano asked a member, who was the head of a fishermen's association, to obtain as much substandard *tokoroten* as possible, paying double the regular price.

Instructors and members in Tokyo prepared to use the substandard product. For the first *tokoroten* feeding service, they worked throughout the night, producing 20 barrels of *tokoroten* by the next morning. When they arrived at the elementary school where the feeding service would be held, they found a long line of people waiting. Members worked hard and were exhausted, but they felt great joy in serving the public.

After this successful start, the *tokoroten* feeding service was held at various places in Tokyo, then extended to Kansai and Nagoya regions.

One instructor said of this activity: "When I was working for the feeding service, I felt very happy. Even though I worked all night, I did my best. Through this activity, President Okano made us experience the joy of serving others. That was a valuable lesson for me."

### Love and consideration for the members

Since that time, President Okano often said to members, "I have a very short time to live. You should ask me everything until you fully understand."

He told members who came from a distance to learn from him. "You paid a lot of money riding a train to come to see me. After you leave, you should not regret, thinking that you should have asked me something more."

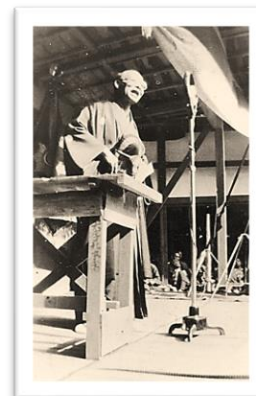
He told trainees to economize by reducing his portion of rice so that there were enough meals for the members who came to see him. He lived on a frugal diet, saying, "I am only sitting all day, so two meals a day is enough for me. Let members who come from remote areas eat one of my meals."

This was an example of how President Okano always showed consideration for members.

After the Fall Festival in October, President Okano's manner of teaching members gradually, but steadily, changed. For the industrial activities, he gave members only important instructions, leaving the rest to them.

Although he explained the basic Gedatsu teaching in plain language at the monthly Appreciation Service, he taught leaders in a very strict manner. He was preparing them for leadership after his death.

### Message on February 11, 1947, the eighth anniversary of the erection of the Sun Spirit Monument:



"After I die, you should not build a huge edifice, but instead, remember me each day. The sky is boundless and selfless. The sun always gives birth to and nourishes everything on earth. It never demands anything in return. You are too greedy to be contented with what you have. Your thinking is wrong.

"I am grateful and joyful every day. No one knows how long he will live. I have completed all the Three Monuments. I will be happy to die at any time now."

### Message at the Appreciation Service on March 1:

"Appreciation and gratitude are everything you need to practice. Forget the past. Be joyful in the present. Be hopeful in your future life. Now is the time of great trials. No matter what happens to you, stand as firm as a rock. Even if you lost material possessions in the war, your heart was never destroyed. Be second to none. Do not complain. Do not envy others. Do not bear a grudge against others. Do not fight. Do not be arrogant. This is Gedatsu."

(Continued on page 6)

## OUR GEDATSU STUDY

*(Biography – Continued from page 5)*

Message on April 1 to those departing for the Pilgrimage to the Three Sacred Sites:

“Man is born into this world with nothing and dies with nothing. Therefore, we should live our lives without selfish desires. Gedatsu is to sincerely pray for world peace and people’s happiness, and to take a moderate course. Do not be biased to the right nor to the left. Put your heart and soul into the practice of humility and poverty. Effort, effort, effort! Now is the time for you to prepare for the future after I die. Please make a spiritual fortune for your descendants. It is the most valuable asset for them.”

Message at the Appreciation Service on November 1:

“I have no selfish desire now. Night and day, I only pray for your happiness. After I die, please go to the Three Monuments in *Goreichi* and go down on your knees to pray sincerely before the monuments. After my death, please go forward according to the spirit I leave behind. Don’t chase past dreams. Live in the present. Don’t cry over what has been done. Let go of your lingering attachment to the past. Build a new ship and set sail for the great ocean.”

That sermon expressed how acutely conscious President Okano was of the future after his death. The many industrial activities, especially vocational aid centers, were managed by members themselves, no longer by President Okano.

Members produced mainly clothing and held bazaars at schools and public institutions to sell the clothing they made. They also continued to perform the *tokoroten* feeding service on a larger scale at various places.

This is how members practiced Gedatsu in the difficult times after the war.

*(Next month: “Toward Eternity”)*



## 2025 KEY DATES

Jan 1 (Wed)	New Year’s Homage
Jan 2-3 (Thu-Fri)	Church Closed
Jan 12 (Sun)	Sacramento First Service of the Year
Jan 19 (Sun)	L.A. New Year’s Service
Jan 21 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Martin Luther King Day)
Feb 16 (Sun)	L.A. Sun Spirit Service
Feb 18 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents Day)
Mar 14 (Fri)	Propagation Meeting 10 am via Zoom (TBD)
Mar 15 (Sat)	Board of Directors Meeting 10 am via Zoom
Mar 16 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service
Mar 23 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service
Mar 30 (Sun)	Church Closed
<b>Apr 13 (Sun)</b>	<b>Spring Grand Festival 9:30 am</b>
May 11 (Sun)	Sacramento Mothers’ Day Service
May 18 (Sun)	L.A. Mothers’ Day Service
May 25 (Sun)	Sacramento plaque burning ( <i>Joen-no-gi</i> )
May 27 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)
Jun 8 (Sun)	Sacramento Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Jun 15 (Sun)	L.A. Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Jul 4 (Fri)	Church Closed (Independence Day)
Jul 13 (Sun)	Sac’to <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored
Jul 20 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored
Jul 24-27 (Thu-Sun)	Youth Camp in Sacramento (TBD)
Aug 17 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Aug 24 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
<b>Aug 31 (Sun)</b>	<b>Fall Grand Festival 9:30 am</b>
Sep 2 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
Sep 21 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service
Sep 28 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service
Oct 4 (Sat)	L.A. Craft & Bento Faire
Oct 14 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu Indigenous Peoples Day)
Oct 19 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Ujigami</i> Service
Oct 26 (Sun)	Sacramento All Souls Service
Nov 16 (Sun)	L.A. 7-5-3 Children’s Celebration
Nov 23 (Sun)	Sacramento Gedatsu Kongo Birthday / 7-5-3 Children’s Celebration
Nov 27-28 (Thu-Fri)	Church Closed (Thanksgiving)
Dec 14 (Sun)	Sacramento Bishop Kishida Memorial Service
Dec 21 (Sun)	L.A. Holiday Program and Luncheon
Dec 23-31 (Tue-Wed)	Church Closed for Holidays

## **Northern California** Total: \$20,948

**General Donations:** J. Tanaka, A. Sebe, C. Oishi, M/M D. Ide, J. Detwiler / J. Sebe, J. Hamamoto-Choy, Ka. Kuritani, M. Fukushima, M/M M. Sunahara, M. Lumpkin, No Name, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, M/M R. Sakamoto, S. Taketa, M/M S. Shaklan, T. Arase, T. Hiram, W. / S. Matsumoto, Y. Oishi, Y. Hirai

### **Special Acknowledgments**

M/M D. Tsuboi	Gratitude for September "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
M/M D. Tsuboi	Gratitude for <i>Ohigan</i> Appreciation Service
M/M D. Ide	Gratitude for <i>Ohigan</i> Appreciation Service
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude – monthly donation
Anonymous	<i>Goreichi</i> Maintenance Fund
M/M D. Mah	In memory of Margaret and Tomoki Oyanagi (\$500)
J. Ito	<i>Goreichi</i> Maintenance Fund (\$5,000)

Appreciation for Grand Fall Festival & 75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Y. Oishi, V. Matsuura, M/M N. Okano, K. Nakamura, Bishop T. Okano, A. Tsujimura, A. Akashi / P. Tomita, M/M N. Chodor, J. Hamamoto, R. Nakatani, M. Okada, J. Detwiler / J. Sebe, J. Tanaka, J. Kaku, T. Kojima, <i>Yotsugi</i> T. Okano, K. Fujii, T. Murakami, M. Rodriguez, V. Miyamoto, De. Shiroishi, T. Hiram, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M C. Morioka, T. / K. Ishida, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M K. Chinen, M/M Ho. Tsujimura, M/M D. Tsuboi, M/M P. Reid, T. Okimura, Do. Shiroishi, A. Sebe, M/M D. Ide, M/M S. Mukai (\$500), No Name (\$528), J. Ito (\$1,000), M/M H. Funahashi (\$2,000), <i>Gedatsu-kai</i> Japan (\$5,000)
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## **Southern California** Total: \$3,682

**General:** Anonymous, M/M K. Chinen, M/M N. Chodor, A. DeWitt, K. Fujii, M/M M. Hamada, J. Hamamoto, Je. Hamamoto-Choy, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, S. Kaku, K. Kuritani, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M D. Mah, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, P. Nakamura, E. Ogawa, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M S. Shaklan, De. Shiroishi, Do. Shiroishi, J. Shiroishi, N. Takara, A. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood, K. Kitaoe

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M/M S. Mukai	"Never Forgotten" Service for Misako Kobata
H. Inouye	"Never Forgotten" Service for Tomiko Konishi
Donations to L.A. Sunday School for Crafts & Bento Faire	Je. Ito, J. Ito, K. Yamamoto, M/M H. Takahashi, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M M. Hamada, J. Mah, J. Delgado, De Shiroishi, M/M N. Chodor, M. Shiroishi, K. Fukumoto, J. Kizu, T. Ishida, M/M A. Shiroishi, J. Shiroishi, A. Rico, M. Kadogawa

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

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T. Palelek	In memory of Loretta Tsujimura

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



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Maintaining the *Goreichi* holy grounds of the Sacramento Spiritual Center is a year-round, heavy-duty task. The hot Sacramento summers have parched the land and stressed the wooden structures, while, in recent years, heavy rains, flooding, and winds have toppled trees and buckled pavements.

This year, in preparation for the 150<sup>th</sup> Fall Grand Festival and 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a number of important repairs were undertaken by member/workers. For the *Tenjinchigi* shrine, John Horner cut and stained new fencing and poured concrete footers. Scott Taketa resurfaced and re-stained the *Torii* gate, and both John and Scott installed the new fence.

Davis Vongkhamchanh refurbished and repainted the red *Benzaiten* bridge, and Scott repainted the decorative end caps. Scott repainted the Memorial Tower building. And John Scott used a power grinder to smooth out the dangerous, uneven cement walkways.

Thank you, all, for maintaining, repairing and beautifying our sacred grounds.

