



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo’s Thought for the Month

*“I embody both my ancestors
and my descendants.”*

We must recognize that we are the continuation of our ancestors, just as our descendants are an extension of ourselves.

Whether knowingly or unknowingly, we have inherited karmic misdeeds from our ancestors, for which we must humbly repent.

As students of Gedatsu, it is our mission to acknowledge this truth in unity with our ancestors and to dedicate ourselves to ensuring that these wrongs are not passed on to future generations.

SEPTEMBER 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Tue	2		Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
Sun	7	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Tue	9	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	14		No Service
Sun	28	10:00 am	<i>Rokujizo</i> and <i>Higan</i> Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Tue	2		Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
Sun	7	10:00 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	14	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	21	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service Grandparents Recognition
Thu	25	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	28	10:00 am	Cooking Class: “Let’s Make Mochi!”

OCTOBER 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Tue	7	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Tue	14		Church Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
Sun	19		No Service
Sun	26	10:00 am	Appreciation and All Souls Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sat	4	11 am-4 pm	Craft and Bento Faire
Sun	5	10 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	12	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	14		Church Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
Sun	19	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Ujigami</i> Service / Luncheon Children’s Halloween Costume Parade
Thu	23	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	26	10:00 am	Cultural Event TBD



September “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, September 7, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Robert Katsumi Fukushima, Glenn Shuji Hatae, Linda Carol Kashiwagi, Shigetaro Kino, Teruko Kino, Soichi Nakatani, Masako Sakamoto Tagawa, and Tetsuo Yomogida.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, September 14, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **David H. Dyson Jr., Kazuko Endo, Melanie Yosa Garion, Ann M. Ghazarians, Nancy Kikuchi, Misako Kobata, Liam Mikael Kowal, Hitoshi Matsumoto, Yasuko Matsumoto, Frank S. Miyamura, Nancy Mizuki, Hajimu Murakami, Charles Migiwa Nishi, Arlene Okimura, Tomoki Oyanagi, Jacobus Johannes Reckers, Ruth Muriel Reckers, Kiyoshi George Sakuma, Linda Sanchez, John Takeshi Sengen, Yuri T. Sengen, Setsu Shiroishi, Yoshio Fred Shoga, Himeko Tanji, Itsuya Frank Tanji, Moto Tanji, and Atsuko Watanabe.**

Obituary

The Sacramento Spiritual Center sadly announces the passing of life-long member **Scott Taketa**, who passed away on July 25 at the age of 58. Scott was the son of the late pioneer members **Steve Morio Taketa** and **Sadako Taketa**. He is survived by his sister **Sherri Mullins**; nieces **Sabrina, Danielle** and **Kaylee Mullins**; his sister **Sally McSwain** and nephew **Everett McSwain** and niece **Vivian McSwain**.

Sacramento Property to Be Sold

The 20-acre property in Sacramento, home to the Gedatsu Spiritual Center and *Goreichi*, has been listed for sale. This decision—announced in July by **Mark Ishida**, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gedatsu Church USA—was made in response to the church’s critical financial situation. Without a significant infusion of funds, the church faces the risk of being unable to meet its ongoing operating expenses.



To read the complete announcement, scan the QR code.

Gedatsu Church Secures Insurance

Mark Ishida, chairman of the Board of Directors, announced that a new property insurance policy has been secured for Gedatsu Church USA, ensuring continuous liability coverage for both the L.A. and Sacramento church properties.



“Let’s Make Mochi!” Sunday, September 28, 10 a.m.



Learn how to prepare Hawaiian mochi – a popular dessert that is known for its chewy, cake-like texture and rich, buttery flavor. It’s a variation of Japanese mochi, but with a distinctively different texture and flavor.

- Class is free with \$10 fee for ingredients. Donations are appreciated.
- To reserve a space, contact the church at (626) 288-1212 or **Pam Shaklan** at pamshak@hotmail.com or text (818) 216-4102.



Poster design by Pam Shaklan

Members Create Symbols of “Aloha”

On July 27, the L.A. Church held a Hawaiian lei-making workshop as part of the monthly cultural activities organized by the L.A. Women’s Club. Participants experienced the ancient art of creating authentic Hawaiian floral garlands, a tradition deeply rooted in Polynesian culture and a symbol of *Aloha*. The class was led by member **Karen Nakamura**, who was born in Hawaii and is an expert in lei making. Although everyone initially struggled, with Karen’s guidance, they were eventually able to create, and proudly display, beautiful leis, as shown at right.



Ryunosuke and Nanami Okano show off their floral creations.

Craft & Bento Fair

L.A. Church – Saturday, Oct. 4
11 am – 4 pm

- Dozens of **Arts & Craft vendors** selling their own original handcrafted items.
- **Japanese *bento*** (sale by pre-order), Spam *musubis*, yummy desserts and more.
- Volunteers needed – even for a few hours – to welcome/sign-up crafters, prepare *bentos*, handle pre-orders, etc.
- To reserve a craft or food booth, contact **Pam Shaklan** at (818) 216-4102 pamshak@hotmail.com.
- To pre-order *bento* boxes, scan QR code below or contact **Mariko Locheo** at (626) 288-1212 or locheo.gedatsu.lab@gmail.com



Gedatsu Teaching 6 By Seiken Okano (Gedatsu Kongo)

Gedatsu-kyo monthly newsletter, September 18, 1935
Translation by Reverend Hisakazu Taki

Gedatsu is to discard your ego, self-reflect, esteem integrity and diligently strive to improve yourself to attain peace of mind. This will promote the betterment of social conditions, lead you to the great path of humanity and cleanse society.

"Heaven generates virtue in me. Come what may, I fear not."

-- Confucian saying

To know why one has received God's blessing and has been granted from birth with the mission to save people's hearts, is to know God's will. If you do not know God's will, you are not a man of virtue. Neither grudge heaven nor reproach others in order to cultivate and know your character.

- 1. Earnestly strive to learn the path of Gedatsu, or the Natural Law, and teach others without getting discouraged.*
- 2. All of creation – from birds and animals to insects and fishes – happily accept Heaven's blessings and perform their activities without rest day and night.*
- 3. All things develop and mature naturally. It is evident that this is the Law of Nature.*
- 4. Look at nature! Nature, even now, says nothing. Furthermore, the transition of the seasons – spring, summer, autumn and winter – takes place without a fraction of an error.*
- 5. Without learning gratitude, it is impossible to achieve an orderly social system, establish family harmony or assure one's existence.*
- 6. Gedatsu is communication between God and man. And this communication is realized through man's sincere practice. It is to observe morality. It is not simply to utter empty words or to repeat sacred scriptures. The truth is, in order for us to be free from hardships and suffering, we must become aware of the Universal Life Force by actively endeavoring to elevate ourselves with all our heart and soul.*
- 7. There is no religion that has no prayer. Even in the absence of a clear doctrine, as long as prayer exists, religion lives.*
- 8. A true religion has a genuine sense of devotion, even if it has no formal doctrine. Therefore, the history of prayer is that of the improvement of religion.*
 - Human Nature is the manifestation of Heaven's Will.*
 - The Path is to comply with Human Nature.*
 - Religious teaching is to practice the Path.*

The lack of understanding of the above-mentioned has caused clashes between fatalism and liberalism. However, we should not be involved in this debate. Rather, we should self-reflect and study the path through practice. This is Gedatsu. In the past, people practiced asceticism, such as the denial of rest and food, to learn religion. Gedatsu is not just to think about doctrines or talk on theories. It must be actually practiced. This is why I say Gedatsu is sacred. Gedatsu study and practice is the best way for your spiritual awareness.

Commentary on Gedatsu Teaching 6

By Reverend Hisakazu Taki

Gedatsu Kongo explained in Teaching 6 the basic teaching of Gedatsu: the path of humanity according to the Law of Nature. When one deeply perceives that one is allowed to exist by God and receives infinite blessings from all beings in the universe, one will be aware of their duty as a human, and will attain true peace and happiness.

First, Gedatsu Kongo stated that Gedatsu is the path of self-reflection and self-renunciation. As I explained previously, our views are limited and self-centered, so we are usually not aware of this. This is the basic cause of our worries and troubles in life.

Therefore, if you want to be happy, you must have an inner eye of introspection and perceive egoism within yourself. When you truly perceive your egoism within, it will disappear. Self-reflection and self-renunciation, therefore, are essential for our peace and happiness.

“Heaven generates virtues in me. Come what may, I fear not.” This is a Confucius saying. Huan T’ui, Minister of War in Sung of ancient China, had hostility toward Confucius and tried to kill him. At that time, Confucius stated those words to his disciples, meaning: “I am allowed to exist in this world by Heaven’s Will. I have a mission from God. Therefore, even if such a man as Huan T’ui tries to kill me, it is impossible, because my life is bestowed by God.”

God grants us life – as well as our life’s purpose

By quoting these words, Gedatsu Kongo taught us that we are all allowed to exist by God. Everyone has a mission or duty given by God. We have to understand this. This duty is, in essence, to work for the salvation of mankind and world peace through our daily duties. When we perceive this, we can realize a meaningful life.

However, there are seeming inequalities in this world. Some people have material wealth and enjoy prosperity. Others have no money and live in misery. By such appearances, you may feel that God doesn’t treat people equally. But this is not so. Everyone has their mission or duty on earth. You should understand this and sincerely endeavor to do your best in your duties without begrudging God or reproaching others. You then will be able to live life fully and attain true happiness.

Gedatsu Kongo outlines the essential points of Gedatsu study, as follows.

1. Study and practice Gedatsu regularly and sincerely each day. Do not study for yourself alone but share Gedatsu with your friends. You will then be blessed by Heaven with peace and happiness.

2. When you see Nature, you realize that all creation, including birds, animals, insects and fishes, live happily while performing their roles. We humans also should realize our own mission on earth, which was bestowed by Heaven. This is the path of happiness.

3. When we observe the seasonal changes and natural phenomena, we can understand that Nature makes everything change without doing anything. We humans are also allowed to exist by this great Nature.

4. Nature speaks not a word – but it is working constantly and accurately, making everything change. This is God’s Will.

5. We humans are allowed to exist by Nature. Therefore, if we go against Natural Law, we cannot survive. Learn the spirit of gratitude, the path of humanity, and live according to this path. This will lead you to true happiness, family harmony, society’s prosperity and world peace.

6. Gedatsu is to be aware of the Will of God, and to live daily according to God’s Will. This is the path of man’s true happiness. You must deeply understand you are allowed to exist by God, receiving infinite blessings from everyone. Our present life is possible because of the guidance and protection of God, ancestors and other spirits.

(Continued on page 6)

(*Gedatsu Teaching* – Continued from page 5)

If you perceive this fact, you will appreciate their blessings. Gedatsu Kongo then says, “This communication is realized through man’s sincere practice.” If you have no sincerity, even if you chant holy scriptures hundreds of times, it is just like a frog’s croaking. Such chanting of sacred words never touches the divine spirits. Only your sincerity will allow you to live life fully

7. The essence of religion is in prayer. Religion is not in holy scriptures, doctrines, or religious rituals. It is your sincere heart searching for God. Prayer is not brought about by doctrines or rituals. Prayer is the expression of one’s true heart.

8. This is a repetition of point 7. Religion is not in such forms as doctrines or rituals. Rather, it is in your genuine sense of devotion and sincerity.

Following is a quotation from an ancient Chinese book about Confucian philosophy called *Moderation*. “Human Nature is the manifestation of Heaven’s Will. The Path is to comply with Human Nature. Religious teaching is to practice the Path.” These words speak for themselves.

In the last paragraph of Teaching 6, Gedatsu Kongo talks about fatalism and liberalism. Fatalism is a view that human life is totally determined by something beyond human will, such as God, *karma*, fate, etc. Liberalism is, in contrast, a view that man’s free will determines everything in his life.

While these opposing views have been widely debated, Gedatsu Kongo urges us not to be involved in this debate, but to actually practice the path in our daily life. Gedatsu is not just empty thinking – it is actual practice.

Through our sincere practice of the Gedatsu path, we will be able to attain true peace of mind and spiritual enlightenment. This is the way to true happiness for everyone.



“*Obon* and My Personal Experience”

Sermon by Reverend Takao Kojima

Los Angeles Gedatsu Church

Sunday, July 20, 2025

Good morning, everyone and welcome to our annual *Obon* Service. Although many of you are already familiar with *Obon*, I would like to share its essence once again.

Obon is one of Japan’s traditional events, deeply rooted in both Buddhism and the Japanese custom of honoring one’s ancestors. The timing of *Obon* varies by region. For example, in Tokyo, it is usually observed over four days around July 15.

During this period, families welcome the spirits of their ancestors back home by lighting a small fire at the entrance, called *Mukaebi* or “welcoming fire.” Prayers are then offered, along with offerings, such as fruits and vegetables, placed at the family altar to express respect and gratitude.

Obon concludes with *Okuribi* – or the “sending-off fire” – a ritual to return the ancestral spirits to the spiritual realm, accompanied by heartfelt prayers.

In Japan, *Obon* has become a national tradition. Many people return to their hometowns to reunite and enjoy a good time with family and friends – similar in spirit to Thanksgiving or Christmas in the United States.

For me personally, *Obon* was always celebrated in Tokyo, our family’s hometown. We welcomed the spirits of our ancestors with a *mukaebi*, or welcoming fire, and offered prayers with sincere hearts. We also visited our parents’ graves to express our deep appreciation for being able to live each day in good health and without major difficulties.

Today, I am truly grateful that we were able to offer prayers to our ancestral spirits together.

Now, if I may, I would like to share my own personal experience with ancestral spirits.

Looking back, I would say my life has been relatively stable – though certainly not without its ups and downs. I spent 20 years at my first job with a U.S. bank. Eventually, I accepted an early retirement package when the company downsized its operations.

Then several years later, I lost my job again. The Tokyo branch of another bank I was working for shut down its operations.

(Continued on back page)

JULY 2025 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$8,555

General Donations: J. Tanaka, B./C. Hirayama, M/M Ho. Tsujimura, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M/M K. Kuritani, M. Fukushima, M/M M. Hamada, M. Lumpkin, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, S. McSwain, S. Taketa, M/M V. Mizokami, A. Sebe, M/M C. Tanaka

Special Acknowledgments

In memory of Sadaye Tanaka A. Akashi/P. Tomita, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M D. Ide, R. Ide, T. Ishida, M/M M. Mastalski, T. Murakami, M/M P. Reid, R. Ruoizzi, M/M S. Sekikawa, M/M R. Reano, Do/De Shiroishi, N./J. Swenson, C. Takuma, M/M P. Tateishi, T. Tateishi, A. Tsujimura

M/M D. Ide "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service appreciation in memory of Uncle Yukio Ide & Auntie Kazue Kotabe

M/M D. Ide Gratitude and appreciation for Obon Service

M/M S. Mukai Social Hall appreciation

M/M S. Mukai Appreciation and gratitude for Sadaye Tanaka's long life (\$500)

M/M D. Mukai Appreciation for Sadaye Tanaka (mother/grandma) 49-day Service (\$500)

R. Nakatani Appreciation for "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service

K. Ota Shubert "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service in memory of Yukie Ota

A. Sebe Surgery appreciation (\$500)

M/M C. Tanaka "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service appreciation

M/M C. Tanaka Appreciation for 49-day Service for Sadaye Tanaka (\$500)

J. Tanaka "Never Forgotten" Service in memory of Yukie Ota, Susie Tateishi, Keisuke Tateishi and Yukio Tateishi

J. Tanaka Appreciation and gratitude for Sadaye Tanaka's longevity and in memory of mother (\$500)

J. Tanaka Appreciation for mother's (Sadaye Tanaka) 49-day Service (\$500)

M/M K. Tateishi In memory of Susie Tateishi

M/M P. Tateishi In memory of Susie Tateishi (mom)

M/M D. Tsuboi With gratitude for "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service

M/M D. Tsuboi With gratitude for Appreciation/Obon/Graduates Service

M/M D. Tsuboi With gratitude monthly donation

S. Yabut "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service in memory of Yukie Ota

Southern California Total: \$6,735

General: Anonymous, M/M N. Chodor, A. Dewitt, M/M M. Hamada, J. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hirami, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, M/M T. Kojima, A. Kojima, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M D. Mah, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, E. Ogawa, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M P. Reid, M/M A. Shiroishi, De. Shiroishi, Do. Shiroishi, J. Shiroishi, N. Takara, A. Tsujimura, C. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, T. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood.

Special Acknowledgments

M/M P. Reid Appreciation for Rev. Naoya Okano's recovery

M/M P. Reid "Never Forgotten" Service for Eddie Ogura and Nancy Ogura

M/M S. Mukai Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo

A. Tsujimura Rudy Tsujimura memorial service

M/M K. Chinen Memorial service for Haruko Chinen

M/M Ho. Tsujimura Birth of great granddaughter Maya

De. Shiroishi Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo

T. Ishida "Never Forgotten" Service for Michiye and Nobuyoshi Shimohira

M/M Ho. Tsujimura Memorial service for Rudy and Yoko Tsujimura

M/M T. Matsumoto Memorial service for Kyoko Nakaguchi and Tomoko Imai

Tomita/Akashi Families Ten-year memorial service in memory of Dorothy (Dottie) Tomita (\$2,000)
(Donation underwrites the purchase of tables for L.A. Church)

Online Donations: Total: \$402

General: G. Iwata, D. Allum, S. Shiroishi, W. Young, H. Tsujimura, J. Reid



GEDATSU COMPANION

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GEDATSU CHURCH USA

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Dave Ide, Mark Ishida, Mariko Locheo, Reverend Takao Kojima, Reverend Naoya Okano, Pam Shaklan

(Obon – continued from page 6)

I was shocked. I had to start job hunting all over again – and this time, I had two children to raise and a mortgage to repay.

During that difficult time, I naturally turned to Gedatsu Kongo – and, for some reason, also to the spirit of my late father. After one job interview, I even went to visit my father’s grave, sincerely asking for his help.

I still clearly remember the day. I was in the middle of my job search when I received a phone call from the company, offering me the position. Believe it or not, the call came during the middle of the Appreciation Service at the Gedatsu Tokyo Dojo.

I ended up working for that company for over 15 years until my retirement.

Through that experience, I truly felt the presence and protection of my ancestral spirits - especially my late father.

In the “Ancestor Spirits” section of “Sincere Practice,” Gedatsu Kongo said, “We receive incalculable protection and guidance from our ancestral spirits.”

He continued: “Once parents die and enter the spiritual realm, their affection becomes pure and perfect because they are no longer bound by physical existence.”

Gedatsu Kongo also said in Sincere Practice: “Ancestor spirits confer especially affectionate protection upon their direct descendants.”

It’s important to remember that we don’t pray and offer blessings to our ancestors only in times of difficulty or hardship. Rather, we offer our gratitude to them every day – for they are always with us, guiding and protecting us from the spiritual realm.

Today is truly a special opportunity to offer *Amacha* blessings in honor of our ancestral spirits, as part of the *Obon Kuyo* ceremony. If possible, though, I encourage you to make this a part of your family’s daily practice – to offer *Amacha Kuyo* at home in front of your *Amacha* plaques, honoring your ancestral spirits.

As you offer *Amacha Kuyo*, please express your heartfelt gratitude to your ancestors – for allowing you to live each day in peace, under their protection and guidance. I truly believe that by doing so, you will be blessed with a peaceful and fulfilling life each and every day.

