



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"One's mind is revealed in words,
and words are an expression
of the body."*

With these words, Gedatsu Kongo taught the importance of the mind.

Therefore, keep your mind and words consistent. Never stray from the Gedatsu teachings. Live each day with joy and happiness.

For it is your own mind – not that of others – that will give your life meaning or lead it to ruin.

OCTOBER 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	12	9:30 am	Fall Grand Festival
Tue	14		Church Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
Sun	19		No Service
Tue	21	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	26	10:00 am	Appreciation and All Souls Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sat	4	11 am-4 pm	Craft and Bento Faire
Sun	5	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	12	9:30 am	Fall Grand Festival in Sacramento
Sun-Tue	12-14		Church Closed
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

NOVEMBER 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	16		No Service
Tue	18	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	23	10:00 am	Appreciation / Gedatsu Kongo Birthday 7-5-3 Children's Celebration
Thu-Fri	27-28		Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	9	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	16	10:00 am	Appreciation Service / 7-5-3 Children's Celebration & Luncheon
Thu	21	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Thu-Fri	27-28		Church Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)



October “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, October 5, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Clarence Aiona, Shane Holland, Motoji Ide, Shinji Kobayashi, Leon Letoto, Ted Matsumoto, Kazuko Nakayama, Yasuichi Sebe, Sadako Taketa, Yoshi Tanaka, Nancy Yabu, and Tony Yabu.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, October 5, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Teruko Arakawa, Richard Hiroshi Kikuchi, Tomiko Konishi, Suzuko Mallek, Mariko Michiuye, Kiyoko Nagahama, Hiroshi Nakaguchi, Shizuya Nakaguchi, Roger Setsuo Nishida, Peggy Ogawa, Takashi Okazaki, Harumi Tanji, Tsugio Tanji, Robert Toshiaki Tomita, and Mariko Maria Tsuruta.**



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 16
Sacramento – Sunday, November 23

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.



Fall Grand Festival

Sunday, October 12 – 9:30 a.m.

Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento

The annual Fall Grand Festival (originally scheduled for late August) has been rescheduled for October 12. All members and friends are warmly invited to attend.

Program I – Festival Service and All Souls Prayer

In front of *Tenjinchigi* Universal Life Force shrine, weather permitting

Program II – Gedatsu Kongo Memorial Tower

Enshrinement Ceremony

Program III – *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony

- **Smaller-scale event.** Because of the shortened planning time, the Festival will be held on a smaller scale, similar to those held during the pandemic years.
- **Dress appropriately.** The day’s programs will be held in the Social Hall and/or outdoors. Take care to dress appropriately for the hot Sacramento weather.
- **A simple lunch** (hot/chili dogs, chips, water) will be available for \$10. Contact your local church to reserve a lunch.

Order Your Holy Tea Plaques Now

Your *Amacha* holy tea plaques should be replaced at the beginning of each year. To have new plaques by New Year 2026, complete the order form inserted in this newsletter and mail it by November 1 to your local church with your check for payment.

Renew Your Church Membership for 2026

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.
- Or mail your check – made payable to Gedatsu Church USA – to your nearest church branch.

No Increase in Annual Pledge Amount to Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund

The annual minimum pledge to the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund (*Hosankai*) remains the same as in previous years: \$600. Members are welcome to contribute more if they wish.

The purpose of the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund is to provide sustained financial support for the church's long-term growth and development goals. The annual pledge of \$600 is separate from general membership dues. Flexible payment options are available: one-time payment of \$600, two biannual payments of \$300, or 12 monthly payments of \$50. Application forms are available at your local church.

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. Kojima** at jamkojitak@gmail.com, call at (626) 288-1212, or text at (626) 766-4015. Or email **Mariko Locheo** at locheo.gedatsu.lab@gmail.com.



Craft & Bento Fair

Saturday, October 4 -- 11 am to 4 pm

Come out and support the L.A. Church fund-raiser! Our Craft & Bento Fair will feature dozens of Arts and Craft vendors selling original, handcrafted items and lots more!

Pre-order and pre-pay for delicious Japanese *bento*, featuring three box options:

- Option 1: BBQ teriyaki chicken, rice and *nishime* (Japanese veggies) – \$15
- Option 2: BBQ teriyaki chicken and rice – \$10
- Option 3: *Chirashi* (seasoned sushi rice mixed with Japanese fixings) – \$8

To pre-order and pre-pay for *bento* options, use the order form enclosed with this newsletter. Or contact **Mariko Locheo** at (626) 288-1212 or locheo.gedatsu.lab@gmail.com.

Members are encouraged to support the event by inviting family and friends, pre-ordering *bento* boxes, welcoming crafters to participate, purchasing craft and sale items, and serving as volunteers

L.A. Members Meet & Greet Future Abbot

The Los Angeles Gedatsu Church congregation warmly welcomed **Yotsugi** (future Abbot) **Takayuki Okano** at a reception held in his honor on Sunday, August 31.

Visiting from *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, **Yotsugi** Okano joined the Sunday service, which included prayers and ancestor blessings officiated by **Reverend Takao Kojima** and **Reverend Naoya Okano**, who returned from medical leave to the joy of members. **Yotsugi** Okano delivered the sermon (see page 5) in both English and Japanese. His strong command of English, combined with his warm and outgoing manner, helped him build genuine friendships with all members. An engaging, candid Q&A session at the end of the Sunday program (at right) brought everyone even closer.

During his brief four-day visit to the U.S., **Yotsugi** enjoyed a variety of member-hosted activities—including an outing to Santa Monica and Manzanar (see page 5); shared meals at restaurants, In-N-Out, and members' homes; and attendance at a Los Angeles Dodgers game at Dodger Stadium.



At left, Reverend Takao Kojima, **Yotsugi** Okano, Katsuo Chinen, Reverend Akira Sebe, and Sachiyo Matsumoto gathered to watch *kendo* practice in the Gedatsu *dojo*. At right, **Yotsugi** Okano at Santa Monica Pier.



Following the Sunday program, members enjoyed a Welcome Brunch featuring a delicious Hawaiian grill and other tasty potluck dishes organized by the Women's Club.

Q&A with the Future Abbot



At the end of the Sunday program, Reverend Naoya invited the congregation to ask **Yotsugi** Okano questions. Following is a sampling of Q&As from that session:

Q: As the future spiritual leader of Gedatsu, how do you feel about Gedatsu USA selling the Sacramento Goreichi?

A: *It is a sad situation. However, given Gedatsu USA's financial challenges and the leakage and mold issues in the Goreichi Sanctuary, I understand the decision was unavoidable, despite members' efforts to prevent it. We must accept this as God's will. At the same time, if the Goreichi grounds are ever needed again in the future, I believe God will make that possible. For now, the most important thing is to devote ourselves fully to what we can do.*

Q: As the leader of Gedatsu Japan's Youth Group, how do you think we can attract younger generations to Gedatsu?

A: *Attracting younger generations, or sharing the teaching with youth, is also a challenge in Japan. For many years, communication within the Gedatsu community was mostly one-way, with Senseis speaking to the congregation. We now need to reach out to young people, learn what they want and need, what they are seeking in Gedatsu, and how they hope we can support them. That is the focus of my efforts as Youth Group leader.*



During his U.S. trip, **Yotsugi** Okano accompanied L.A. members Tetsuya and Sachiyo Matsumoto to Independence, Calif., to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site. **Yotsugi** and Sachiyo stand before the iconic monument that was built as a permanent tribute to Manzanar's dead.



Sermon by Future Abbot Takayuki Okano

L.A. Gedatsu Church
Sunday, August 31, 2025

Hello everyone. It has been a year since I last attended the Fall Grand Festival in Sacramento, and I am very happy to see everyone in Gedatsu Church USA again.

On this visit, I am especially grateful and overjoyed to see Reverend Naoya looking energetic and well.

In early June, Reverend Naoya and I exchanged online messages. We were both excited about the upcoming births of our third child – coincidentally, both born on the same day, June 11. After sharing our congratulations, you can imagine how deeply shocked I was to hear of Reverend Naoya's sudden collapse and medical emergency.

At our Kitamotojuko branch, members gathered daily – together with Reverend Naoya's parents, siblings, and many others – to pray and offer holy tea for his recovery. Members throughout Japan also offered their sincere prayers. At the same time, I learned that U.S. church members prayed daily for his safe recovery, while also comforting and supporting his wife, who had just given birth, and his young children, who were confused and anxious.

I am truly grateful that the heartfelt prayers of so many people reached God, Buddha, Master Gedatsu Kongo, and our ancestors, and that Reverend Naoya has recovered his health and strength. His father, Bishop Teruo Okano, remarked that his son's recovery was nothing short of a miracle.

This experience has convinced me that human acts of goodwill can generate great power and even bring about miracles beyond human understanding.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. The Gedatsu Church of Japan has been working with increased effort to commemorate the victims, while renewing our vow never to repeat such a tragic war.

Recently, I was privileged to visit Thailand to pay respects to Allied prisoners of war, Thai and neighboring nations, and Japanese nationals who lost their lives

building the Thai-Burma Railway – known locally as the “Death Railway” – constructed by the Japanese military. Within Japan, I also visited Okinawa, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, offering prayers and holy tea for the repose of the souls of all who perished in war.

At the museums we visited, we witnessed the stark realities of war – engraving in our hearts its brutality, tragedy, sadness, and futility.

Those who lived through war often say: *“War turns people into something less than human.”*

War drives people to kill one another; it is the worst of human nature brought to the surface. We must always remember that any one of us could become either a victim or a perpetrator.

After World War II, when people were in turmoil, Gedatsu Kongo gave the following guidance:

“As survivors, it is our duty to offer sincere prayers for the spirits of both enemy and allied soldiers who sacrificed their lives in this war, as well as for the animals – horses, dogs, pigeons – who were also used in the war.”

“We should not hate the enemy, but rather the heart that creates enemies, causes conflict, and seeks to subdue others by force.”

“Instead of killing each other, we should help each other. Instead of taking from each other, we should share. Instead of hating each other, we should show compassion. Together, we must build peace.”

Gedatsu Kongo taught us that this is the path humanity must follow. He also instructed us to spread this teaching beyond Japan, to the people of America and throughout the world. I believe this remains his wish for us today.

As we continue to study Gedatsu Kongo's teachings, let us strive to create peace in our daily lives – at home, at work, and at school – by refraining from hate, envy, discrimination, and conflict, and instead showing respect and compassion through our actions.

Finally, the Gedatsu Church of Japan will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2028, just three years from now. At that time, we look forward to welcoming many American members to the sacred sites in Japan and greeting you with open arms and smiles. Personally, I will endeavor to continue improving myself so that I may welcome you in an even more mature state by then.

This concludes my remarks. Thank you very much.



Gedatsu Teaching 7 By Seiken Okano (Gedatsu Kongo)

Gedatsu-kyo monthly newsletter, November 18, 1935
Translation and commentary by Rev. H. Taki

The Gedatsu teaching is truly precious and sacred. Without practicing Gedatsu, absolutely nothing can be accomplished. I have repeatedly stated this reason in the monthly magazines. The gist of Gedatsu teaching is the great path of God, or the path of humanity.

In this world, there is but one true path. Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism and all the other religious teachings are supposed to be the gateway to Gedatsu. When the path is reached after numerous scriptures and sutras are researched and studied, along with meditations in the mountains, it should save the world and benefit people. If not, then it should be an evil path.

The righteous path should definitely benefit the world. You should not learn or do anything unnecessary or useless in life. You cannot recapture youth. Time passes. Life is truly not permanent. Therefore, don't do anything useless.

Teachings must be put into practice. Reading countless doctrinal volumes, if not applied, is useless. There are many religions which take pride in the substance and magnitude of their doctrines and scriptures. However, after diligently judging their merits and demerits, advantages and disadvantages, you should discard the useless and retain the useful.

The purpose of your Gedatsu study should be to save the world. Only when you actually practice this path, can you reach the point of Gedatsu.

Commentary on Gedatsu Teaching 7

Gedatsu Kongo begins by stating: The Gedatsu teaching is truly precious and sacred. Without practicing Gedatsu, absolutely nothing can be accomplished.”

When you read these words, you may construe them to mean that Gedatsu is the only truth, and that other religions are inferior or unreliable. I believe that interpretation is far from Gedatsu Kongo's attitude on religions.

In 1935, Gedatsu Kongo published the monthly magazine entitled “Gedatsu-kyo,” or Gedatsu Religion.” However, in 1936, he changed the title to “Gedatsu,” explaining that Gedatsu is not a religious sect, but a common goal for all religions.

Gedatsu is not a particular religious sect. Gedatsu means the Universal Truth. All religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, have explained this Universal Truth according to their historical and cultural backgrounds.

Just as there are various routes to the summit of a mountain, each route is different but reaches the top. Similarly, various religions in the world have explained this Universal Truth according to their respective traditions.

Why did Gedatsu Kongo teach Gedatsu then? It is important to fully understand this point. All religions explain the Truth of the Universe in their own words, but many of them promote solely their own dogmas, while rejecting other beliefs – sometimes killing people in the name of preserving their faith. World history is rife with religious persecutions and wars.

Gedatsu Kongo emphasized that we should not relate to the difference of dogmas and sectarianism, but rather, clearly see the common basis of all religions, which is the Universal Truth.

(Continued on back page)

AUGUST 2025 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$4,531

General Donations: J. Tanaka, A. Sebe (\$750), A. Akashi/P. Tomita, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M. Nakashima, M. Lumpkin, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, B. Yamamura, S. McSwain, S. Yabut

Special Acknowledgments

M/M D. Tsuboi "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service with gratitude
M/M D. Ide "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service appreciation for Ide/Kino/Mishima ancestors
S. Teruko In memory Sadaye Tanaka
M/M D. Tsuboi With gratitude for Appreciation and Benzaiten Service
S. Yabut In memory of Sadaye Tanaka
M/M D. Tsuboi In memory of Scott Taketa
M/M D. Ide In memory of Scott Taketa
A. Sebe Benzaiten appreciation
M/M D. Ide Gratitude for Benzaiten and Appreciation Service
J. Tanaka Appreciation and gratitude for Benzaiten and Appreciation Service
M. Fukushima In memory of Sadaye Tanaka
M/M J. Horner In memory of Sadaye Tanaka
A. Shiroishi Family In memory of Sadaye Tanaka
M/M J. Horner "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service in memory of Hsueh Horner
M/M D. Tsuboi With gratitude monthly donation (\$500)
M. Macias Appreciation for use of church grounds (\$500)

Southern California Total: \$14,425

General: M/M K. Chinen, M/M N. Chodor, A. DeWitt, K. Fujii, M/M M. Hamada, M/M T. Hiram, Imuta Family, T. Ishida, J. Kaku, S. Kaku, M/M T. Kojima, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M V. Mizokami, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M S. Shaklan, M/M A. Shiroishi, D. Shiroishi, A. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, DAFGiving 360

Special Acknowledgments

Do. Shiroishi "Never Forgotten" Service for Shizuye Shiroishi, Shige Ishida, A. Chodor, Eryn Nakamura
T. Ishida "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service for Shige Ishida and Shizuye Shiroishi
M/M M. Hamada "Never Forgotten" Service for Nora Ayako Toguchi
De. Shiroishi "Never Forgotten" Service for Shizuye Shiroishi, Shige Ishida, Aaron Chodor, Eryn Nakamura
M/M N. Chodor "Never Forgotten" Service for Shizuye Shiroishi, Shige Ishida, Aaron Chodor, Eryn Nakamura
S. Shiroishi "Never Forgotten" Service for Shizuye Shiroishi, Shige Ishida, Aaron Chodor, Eryn Nakamura
A. YoKota / R. Cooley In memory of ancestral spirits of Katako and Cooley
M/M N. Okano Appreciation for *Kurogofu*
M/M S. Mukai Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo
Don/Julie Mah Donation to support Gedatsu Church USA (\$10,000)

Online Donations: Total: \$609

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

Special Acknowledgments

C. Sunahara In memory of Scott Taketa
S. Matsumoto "Never Forgotten" memorial gift for Shoji Kusamoto and Junniji Nakaguchi

Note: Special Acknowledgments are listed for gifts \$100+.

Dollar amounts are shown for gifts \$500+.



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(Gedatsu Teaching – continued from page 6)

When you look up at the sky, you see no divisions in the sky. The universe is one in its wholeness. It is not religion but man's self-righteousness and exclusiveness that perceives this wholeness as fragments, and causes fights, wars and genocide.

When we become aware of our dogmatic sectarianism and see the wholeness of the universe, all religions will be able to work together for people's happiness and world peace. This is Gedatsu.

Gedatsu Kongo encouraged us to respect our family religions, which have been transmitted from ancestors. When we join Gedatsu, we need not change our faith or family religion. Rather, we should respect our family religion more and try to practice it in our daily lives. This is the teaching of Gedatsu Kongo.

Gedatsu Kongo expanded this concept further by saying, "In this world, there is but one true path. Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism and all the other religious teachings are supposed to be the gateway to Gedatsu." That is to say, Gedatsu is not to stick to sectarianism but to see the common basis of all religions, which is the Universal Truth.

He explained the common goal of all religions as follows. "When the path is reached after numerous scriptures are researched and studied along with meditations in the mountains, it should save the world and benefit people." "The righteous path should definitely benefit the world." "When you actually practice this path, you can get to the point of Gedatsu." This is Gedatsu.

What is the essence of religion? It is not in the magnitude of scriptures or in the exhaustiveness of doctrines. The purpose of religions is served best when teachings are put into practice for the salvation of people and world peace. Let sincere practice be the core of your Gedatsu study.

