



# GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA  
www.gedatsu-usa.org

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### Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"When we are aware of our negative karma, we should accept and appreciate it as a challenge to improve ourselves. We will then be able to start afresh and live fully."*

We may feel something negative when we hear the word *karma*. But *karma* itself just means "connection." We all have connections with many people and things in the world. Our current existence is possible because of our connections with everything in the universe since time immemorial – ancestors, parents, teachers, society, country, air, water, foods, sunlight, etc.

In other words, we cannot exist without *karma*.

Our thoughts and actions today create our *karma* tomorrow. Therefore, no matter what difficulties may face today, we should willingly accept the situation and do our best. We will then be able to step toward a future with hope.



## JULY / AUGUST ACTIVITIES

As COVID cases decrease and restrictions are eased, our Gedatsu churches move closer to reopening. Watch for announcements on the resumption of in-person services and activities.

### July

- **Virtual "Never Forgotten" Memorial Services**  
Sunday, July 11, at 10 a.m. – both Sacramento and L.A. Churches (see page 2)
- **Appreciation and Obon Services** – Sunday, July 18  
at 11 a.m. PDT. Livestreamed from the L.A. Church

### August

- **Virtual "Never Forgotten" Memorial Services**  
Sacramento Spiritual Center – Sunday, August 1, at 10 a.m.  
Los Angeles Church – Sunday, August 8, at 10 a.m.
- **Appreciation and Benzaiten Service** – Sunday, August 15,  
at 11 a.m. PDT. Livestreamed from the L.A. Church

### Weekly

- **Wednesday Evening Prayers** at 7 pm PST via Zoom
  - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89182635066>Meeting ID: 891 8263 5066

### Monthly

- **Regional Boards** meet via Zoom
  - Sacramento – First Sundays at 11 a.m.
  - Los Angeles – Fourth Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

**Photo:** A visually striking *torii*-style sign and cobblestone lake welcome visitors at the north entrance of the Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento. In the distance, the soaring roofline of the *Gochi* Sanctuary.



### July “Never Forgotten” Online 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. Our “Never Forgotten” services are video recorded and viewable on the Gedatsu YouTube site.

Both the Sacramento Spiritual Center and L.A. Church will hold their “Never Forgotten” Memorial Services on **Sunday, July 11, at 10 a.m.**

The Sacramento service will honor the souls of **Yone Yuno, Tsuyako Yuno, Yukie Yuno, Miyoko Nakayama, Steven Ikuzo Nakatani, Yukie Ota, Charlie Zenzo Tagawa, Steve Morio Taketa, Keisuke Tateishi, Yukio Tateishi, Tsuma Kino, Kimiko Yomogida, Yukio Jim Ide, Kazue Ando Kotabe, Alan Yoneo Oshima, Shizu Sebe and Mother Kenyu Kiyota.**

The Los Angeles service will honor the souls of **Chester Bennington, Nathan Capross, Kathryn Christina Howe, Tomoko Imai, Yoshino Kawamura, Maria Antonia Lechuga, Karen Martin, Hiroko Murakami, Stanley Muronaka, Yasoji Nagahama, Tazu Nagura, Tomoyoshi Naito, Kyoko Nakaguchi, Shigeko Nakamura, Helen Nakano, Eddie Kinya Ogura, Nancy Yoshie Ogura, Hiroko Omiya, Setsu Sakuma, Malayka Jane Sexton, Thomas Gray Sexton, Yukio Shimada, Jack Shimatsu, Michiye Shimohira, Nobuyoshi Shimohira, Yoshinori Takamine, Genpachi Tanji, Riichi Tomita, Kazuma Toyama and Yoko Tsujimura.**

### Obituaries

The Sacramento Spiritual Center mourns the loss of long-time member, **Buster Yoshiharu Ide**, who passed away on May 17 at the age of 88. He is survived by his wife **Reiko**, daughter **Amy Ide** and sons **Douglas** and **Dave (Penny) Ide**; granddaughters **Courtney Ide** and **Cheryl (Dan) Bean**, grandson **Christopher Ide**; and many nieces and nephews.

The Los Angeles Church sadly reports the passing of long-time member, **Teruko Nakamura**, who passed away on May 24 at the age of 91. She is survived by her daughters, **Marylin Nakamura** and **Irene (Keith) Long**; grandson, **Ken Long**; and many nieces and nephews.



### Hawaii Church to Celebrate Forty Years

Gedatsu Church of Hawaii will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in a one-day event on September 12. The Honolulu church, under the ministerial direction of **Rev. Kazuo Yamada**, welcomes members from the U.S. and Japan branches to participate in the celebration. A celebration banquet will be held on the garden grounds of the Hawaii Church on Sunday, September 12.

**Mica Rodriguez**, Minister-in-training at the Sacramento church, is coordinating U.S. mainland member attendance for the event. For planning purposes, if you are interested in attending the celebration banquet, please contact Mica:

By phone: (916) 363-6054

Or email: [gedatsuchurchsac@gmail.com](mailto:gedatsuchurchsac@gmail.com)

### Mothers and Fathers Honored

Although the pandemic prevented the L.A. and Sacramento churches from holding their usual Mother’s and Father’s Day programs, they honored parents in other ways. The Hospitality *Toban* Club of the L.A. Church recognized members who are parents by sending them greeting cards and five dollars as gifts for Mother’s and Father’s Day. And the Sacramento Spiritual Center sent greeting cards and \$10 Target gift cards to member mothers and fathers on their special days. The gestures of appreciation and honor were warmly received by member mothers and fathers, young and old.

### Members Gifted with Love and Kindness



Personalized greeting cards and flowers, along with \$25 gift cards from popular neighborhood shops, were gifted to more than twenty elderly church members in Northern California – part of the “Act of Kindness” program sponsored by the regional board of the Sacramento Spiritual Center.

“This is just one of many ways we try to show our elderly members during these challenging times

that they are loved and remembered,” says **Deacon June Tanaka**, regional board member.



### Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Reiko! Members Honor, Celebrate Her Centennial

Dozens of L.A. Church members fondly honored one of their own – **Reiko Nakamura** – surprising and delighting her on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with a lively, loving celebration at her home, complete with car horns, balloons, colorful posters, noisemakers, birthday cake, fresh flowers, and gifts galore. The June 12 festivities included an emceed program and hearty rendition of “Happy Birthday” sung by all and accompanied by ukulele. Gifts included a lovely bed comforter, homemade *lei* and a goodie bag filled with the honoree’s favorites – including Skippy creamy peanut butter, 7-up soda, *furikake* (Japanese condiment), *bento* lunch, Nut & Butter cookies and green *manju* with *anko* (Japanese confectionary).

The celebration was especially moving since Reiko was convalescing after a recent hospital stay. As a long-time Gedatsu member, she expressed her appreciation to her Gedatsu friends for the outpouring of well wishes and gifts.

The fun event was months in the making, organized by a special committee of the L.A. Regional Board. Special thanks are extended to **Jo Ann Shiroishi**, event chair, and committee members, **Mark** (emcee), **Marie** and **Hiro Ishida** (ukulele musician); **Pam Shaklan**; **Victor** and **Marian Mizokami**; **Judy Hamamoto**; **Diana Mukai**, **Marylin Nakamura**; **Arlene Okimura** (who made cupcakes for all), **Rev. Naoya**, **Cookie Barthel**, **June Kizu** and **Kiyoshi Nakamura**, the honoree’s son.

### Congratulations, Patrick!

#### The Power of Music to Heal and Inspire

Against the backdrop of the pandemic and growing hate crimes toward Asian Americans, the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center\* invited community members to share their favorite songs “to explore the diverse ways through which Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders use music for affirmation and consolation, as a call to action to find their joy.” The result is “Beckoning: A Playlist of AAPI Joy, Sorrow, Rage and Resistance,” an eclectic playlist that affirms music’s special power to heal and inspire.

The compilers of Beckoning selected as part of their playlist the work of L.A. Church member, **Patrick Shiroishi**, saxophonist and acclaimed musician, composer and recording artist. “Once There Was Only Dark” from Patrick’s 2016 album “Descension” (pictured at right) is, in the words of a Smithsonian reviewer, “a meditation on the Japanese American incarceration camps where his grandparents met and married, set against the grim new reality of the election.”

“An incredible thing to wake up to,” says Patrick on learning he was included in the prestigious playlist. “Honored to be included in this playlist. Joy, sorrow rage and resistance forever.”

\* The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center serves as a dynamic national resource for discovering and learning about the Asian Pacific American experience.



Reiko Nakamura receives members’ well wishes and gifts on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Additional photos on back page.



“Descension” album cover



Patrick Shiroishi



### Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo – #2

Selected and translated by **Rev. Hisakazu Taki** from  
“The Teachings of Master Gedatsu Kongo”

- ⊗ We have an infinite background of generations of ancestors, physically and spiritually. We are the extension of our ancestors. This is why it is very hard to reform our incorrect attitudes in life. This is the reason we should study Gedatsu.
- ⊗ Gedatsu is the path to reform our physical and spiritual sufferings completely. When we become aware of incorrect thinking within ourselves, we should strive to correct it immediately. If we leave our incorrect attitudes unchanged, we will suffer from physical and spiritual problems, eventually creating difficulties in our life.
- ⊗ By correcting our incorrect thoughts through self-reflection and self-reform, we will be able to embark on a new way of life, which is, in a word, the life of appreciation and gratitude.
- ⊗ Social change should start from the reform of ourselves and our homes. Then, we should extend it to our communities, country and the world. We will then be able to have a better world.
- ⊗ In this world, there is but one true path. Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism and all the other religious teachings should be the gateway to Gedatsu. Once we master the secret of those teachings through searching and studying numerous scriptures and sutras, or through meditations, we should aim to save people and benefit the world. If not, it is an incorrect path. The right path should definitely benefit the world. Do not learn or do anything unnecessary or useless in life. Life is short and impermanent. Time and tide stay for no one. Therefore, don't waste your life away.
- ⊗ Gedatsu should be put into practice. Reading countless volumes of doctrines, if not practiced and applied, is useless. There are many religions in the world, which take pride in the magnitude of their doctrines and scriptures. However, after judging their merits and demerits, advantages and disadvantages, we should discard the useless and retain only the useful. The purpose of our Gedatsu study should be to save the world. Only when we actually practice this path, can we reach the point of Gedatsu.
- ⊗ There are many religious teachings in the world. They are all valuable. But many of them vie against each other and cannot work together for the welfare of humankind. This is because they stick to their own teachings and praise themselves. What a pity.
- ⊗ Unhappiness falls upon those who constantly try to avoid it. Misfortune happens to those who fear it. In contrast, genuine good fortune will visit those who do not fear misfortune.
- ⊗ It is wrong to study Gedatsu for the fulfillment of our selfish desires. We should study Gedatsu to live in accordance with the Universal Law. As a consequence of living the correct path of life, we will be blessed with happiness. Don't be intoxicated with ideological religions that ignore real life.



### Gedatsu Church in Good Financial Health



*Strong investment profits are helping to fund operations, programs and long-term growth*

The Board of Directors of Gedatsu Church USA reports that the church's financial health is strong, primarily due to significant gains in its year-to-year stock investments, which are a major source of funding for church operations and activities.

"Our Gedatsu members should be very pleased with the highly positive, unprecedented financial position our Gedatsu Church enjoys today," says **Joyce Reid**, chairman of the board. "Our sound financial footing gives us new-found confidence to plan for our future – as well as address major issues and areas that challenged our formerly cash-strapped church."

#### Successful Investment Strategies

The church's positive financial position today is the result of extremely successful investment strategies of church funds by **Senior Deacon Jackson Ito**, who serves as board treasurer and investment fund director. In that capacity, Jackson manages the church's investment funds, which include two memorial funds – Heizaburo Kobayashi Memorial Fund and Grace Yuko Sato / Mariko Michiuye Memorial Fund – as well as the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund (*Hosankai*), Retired Ministers' Fund, U.S.-born Ministers' Endowment Fund and Youth Propagation Expense Fund.

Owing to his personal success in managing stock investments for himself, family members and friends for years, Jackson, in 2015, persuaded the board directors to allow him to invest a small percentage of the church's investment fund assets in the stock market. At that time, those church assets that were, at best, earning only 0.1 to 0.2 percent a year in CDs and interest-bearing savings accounts.

#### Reaping Dramatic Profits

Directors concurred, and dramatic increases in those invested funds immediately followed, convincing directors to give Jackson authority to proceed in aggressively investing the majority of the church's fund assets. In the ensuing five years, Gedatsu Church USA has reaped unparalleled returns on its stock investments – gains often of 40 percent to 70 percent a year – enabling each of the investment funds to thrive, increasing in value many times over their initial contributions.

**Gedatsu Church USA has reaped unparalleled returns on its stock investments, enabling each of the investment funds to thrive.**

Those investment profits, coupled with income from member donations and other contributions, have provided the financial resources to pay for the church's ongoing operating expenses – including minister and staff payrolls, facility maintenance and repairs, insurance, utilities, supplies, etc. – and various church programs and activities. At the same time, investment gains are continually reinvested to maximize opportunities for further growth.

#### Repaying Our Benefactor

Importantly, investment profits also have enabled Gedatsu Church USA to lessen its dependence on the financial support it has received for decades from *Gedatsu-kai* Japan and take more responsibility for its own expenses. Moreover, financial independence has allowed our church to return the gesture to our long-time benefactor. Twice a year, for the Spring and Fall Festivals in Japan, our American church now makes substantial donations to *Gedatsu-kai*. In addition, stock investment profits have allowed our church to pay the base salaries of our ministers from Japan.

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(Good Financial Health – continued from page 5)*

“We are deeply indebted to the officers and members of *Gedatsu-kai* who have generously supported our American church and congregation for so many years,” says Joyce. “Because of their sacrifices on our behalf, we have been able, at last, to stand on our own and finance our growth. Now that we have the financial means to reciprocate their generosity, it is only natural and fitting that we show our gratitude with our annual gifts of appreciation.”

### Divine Guidance and Blessings

Jackson attributes his investment success to the spiritual guidance he has received from Gedatsu – in particular, his teacher in Japan, **Sugimoto Sensei** – and the blessings given him from various guardian angels that have helped him “receive investment data, recognize its relative importance, and analyze and evaluate comparative benefits.

**“Most importantly, after benefits are received, it is necessary to express appreciation and gratitude for the source of those blessings.”**

**Senior Deacon Jackson Ito, investment director**

“Most importantly,” Jackson states, “after benefits are received, it is necessary to express appreciation and gratitude for the source of those blessings.

“For example, water is a blessing of Nature, but unless it is allowed to circulate, it stagnates,” he explains. “Similarly, profits gained through the guidance of the Universal Life Force need to be used for the benefit of others. If profits are hoarded for one’s personal use alone, stock prices will fall, and profits will return as losses.”

### Circulating Profits

In keeping with that paying-it-forward philosophy, profits are immediately allowed to “circulate” in multiple forms throughout and around the church – funding projects and programs to maintain our operations, while developing channels for long-term growth and development. For example, some of the areas currently being targeted include:

- Long-awaited major repair projects, such as the Sacramento Spiritual Center’s massive and costly re-roofing work for the *Gochi* Sanctuary and rebuilding of the barbecue structure, as well as repaving of the parking lot of the Los Angeles Church.
- Youth and young-adult programs to attract, engage and grow future generations of Gedatsu members.
- Outreach programs, such as support for community nonprofits, currently being undertaken by the regional boards in Los Angeles and Sacramento. Up to \$3,000 and \$2,000 per month, respectively, has been authorized for those efforts.

More about each of these and additional projects will be communicated to members in the coming months.

### Appreciation to Many

“In everything we do, appreciation is the key to our growth,” says Jackson.

“We thank the Kobayashi and Sato/Michiuye families for their generous and selfless memorial donations, as well as gifts from others, which provided the seed money to establish our investment funds. And we are grateful for the many years of support we’ve received from generations of U.S. and Japan members.

“These combined monetary gifts – and blessings we’ve received through our investment profits – enable Gedatsu USA to fund its growth and benefit our members now and well into the future.”



## Gedatsu Q&A - Part 13

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

**Q** *Does Gedatsu cure all illnesses?*

**A** In his doctrinal writings, *"Five Principles,"* Master Gedatsu Kongo states:

*"When and wherever a sincere prayer is offered, through the grace and compassion of God, regardless of any human sufferings and diseases, these will be resolved completely. This is really a wonder."*

We may believe that any disease will be cured if we sincerely pray. Actually, there are many cases where critically ill persons recovered miraculously by their faith in God. We should accept these facts as they are. However, if we think that any illness will be cured by our faith in God, it is not a correct understanding of Master Gedatsu Kongo's thought. Realizing how his words were often misinterpreted, he later changed that statement as follows:

*"The Universal God is present when and wherever sincere prayer is offered. How wonderful it is that, when you live with sincere appreciation, any human sufferings – physical or spiritual – are completely resolved through the grace and compassion of God."*

These words express Master Gedatsu Kongo's thoughts very clearly. When we encounter difficulties in life such as illness, financial problems, family problems, etc., we suffer and pray for the relief from them. For humans, this is quite natural. But we must think more deeply. Even when we are suffering from difficulties, we are still alive. We are allowed to live by the grace of God, the Universal Life Force.

Breathing, circulation of blood, and functioning of internal organs are not controlled by our will. They are all made to function by the Universal Life, or God. When we become aware of this, we will feel grateful for being alive.

Everyone wishes for things to go as they want, but things do not always go smoothly. Sometimes we may have hardships. This is human life.

**No matter what happens, we need to accept things as they are and sincerely try our best.**

When we encounter something undesirable, how should we accept and cope with it? This is a crucial turning point in our life. Grieving over misfortune will not solve the problem. We should not be influenced by our feelings. No matter what happens to us, we need to accept things as they are and sincerely try our best in our current situation. This attitude will definitely lead us to the most appropriate path for ourselves.

This is the meaning of Master Gedatsu Kongo's words, *"When you live with sincere appreciation, any human sufferings – physical or spiritual – are completely resolved through the grace and compassion of God."*

When we accept our current situation, no matter what it is, and sincerely try our best in our daily activities, God will guide us in the most appropriate way.

This is the Gedatsu way of life. If we have this attitude, no matter what happens to us, we will be able to overcome any difficulties and live life fully with hope.

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(Gedatsu Q&A– continued from page 7)*

**Q**     *What happens after we die?*

**A**     This is one of the oldest questions in human history. Everyone asks themselves this question seriously sometime during their lifetime.

Why do we ask this question? I believe it is because we will be comforted knowing the answer. We all grow older and will physically die someday. Who knows how long we will live? When we were young, we felt as if we could live forever. But truth is, we can live only for a short period of time, a hundred years at most. Compared with eternity, this is a mere instant.

During our lifetime, we experience various events. We were born into this world. We went to school. Maybe we loved someone and suffered a broken heart when you were young. Perhaps we got a job, got married, had children, etc. We may have attained great success in business and been highly praised. We may have lost loved ones, suffered from illness, or failed in business. No matter what we may have experienced during our lifetime, ultimately, we must die. This is the path of life.

When we look deeply into this fact of life, what do we feel? No matter what power or wealth we may have possessed during our lifetime, we will leave everything when we die. If we believe that this physical world constitutes everything about life, can we find any meaning in it? If we believe we will lose everything on our physical death, how can we find hope in life?

Master Gedatsu Kongo stated the following:

*“It is very inspirational to be able to realize eternal life while living in this ever-changing phenomenal world. It is natural to be attached to physical life, but there is a vast difference between knowing and not knowing that after death, the individual soul exists together with the Divine Spirit.*

**“If people sincerely want to search for the true path of life, they must be aware of life after death.”**

**Master Gedatsu Kongo**

*“Moreover, the existence of soul and spirit transcends time and space and is immortal. If one feels certain that spirit is the real substance of life, one is able to believe that one does return to the true spiritual home after death.*

*“Just to conceive of an eternal life after death is exhilarating. For those who believe that everything is over when they die, death is the greatest agony. I can sympathize with those who are on the verge of death. By contrast, those who are aware that the flowers of Truth, Goodness and Beauty do bloom even after death are the blessed ones. If people sincerely want to search for the true path of life, they must be aware of life after death.”*

Master Gedatsu Kongo said we will continue to live forever as spirits after our physical death. Only when we can firmly believe this eternal life, will we be able to live fully with hope and joy.





### My Life in Prayer

By Senior Reverend Akira Sebe

Prayer has been an important part of my life ever since my twenties, when I began training to serve the Gedatsu Church as a minister.

Three events in my life were significant in strengthening my conviction in the power of prayer. I recount these experiences in the hope that they may show you a way to appreciate prayer in your own life.

#### Gratitude to the Universal Life Force

In 2018, on the weekend of our annual *Rokujizo* Food Bazaar in late June, the weather was especially hot, even for Sacramento. Saturday was scorching hot, and the forecast for Sunday was 106 degrees.

My main job during the bazaar was cleaning pots and pans and the barbecue site. That Saturday afternoon, however, as I thought of the next day, my real job became clear to me: to offer appreciation for the blessing of water.

So later that Saturday afternoon, I prayed to *Ryujin*, the great guardian spirit that controls the cycle of water on earth and throughout our atmosphere. I thought it was time to offer my prayer of appreciation to the water spirit – expressing my gratitude for the water we receive from nature through the water cycle that is essential for the maintenance of life and our

ecosystems. The global water cycle includes the evaporation of water from the ocean and land surfaces, the transport of water vapor by the atmosphere, and precipitation onto the ocean and land surfaces.

In the Sacramento valley, the snow on the mountains in the winter melts in the spring, becoming the water source for California's agriculture. Snow and water transformed our state from desert to a productive agricultural region. I feel that water is the reason millions of people have come to California to live.

With these thoughts in mind, I prayed sincerely and gratefully for water that Saturday night. When I awoke on Sunday, I was surprised to feel a cool breeze in my face. Sunday's temperature rose only to the high eighties. What had happened?! I had forgotten about my prayers the evening before. In my prayers, I had not asked for cooler weather. I was very surprised. Later, when I mentioned this to **Deacon Jackson Ito**, he said that he, too, had offered his prayers.

We were not the only ones offering prayers that weekend. At the beginning of each day of the Bazaar, several women members offered their prayers of *Hannya Shingyo* at 5:30 in the morning and again at the end of the day. They gave prayers of appreciation for the rice and food they were preparing and for the all-day use of the washing machine. I thought, how wonderful!

From this experience, I learned that when you pray sincerely, your prayers can reach the sky. Weather can change.

#### Broken Neck

When I was in my twenties, one of our church members called me. His son had broken his neck bone. I was shocked and did not know what to say. I called **Bishop Kishida**, who was in Japan. I hardly knew how to explain the situation to him. After 50 years, I still remember his words and the tone of his voice.

"Akira," he said, "you must offer prayers . . . strong and sincere."

(Continued on page 10)

*(My Life in Prayer – continued from page 9)*

With those instructions, I began performing 100 rounds in front of the Universal Life Force shrine and put myself fully into expressing sincere prayer. When I started offering my prayers, I knelt directly on the concrete.

It was the first time in my life that I had offered prayers so sincerely. I believe my sincerity came from being greatly shocked by the condition of the member's son and that I personally knew the family – otherwise, I could not be so devoted in my prayers. It didn't matter whether I was a minister or not.

I became obsessed to the point of losing my sense of self and becoming crazy. I thought of only one thing: to pray for the young man whose neck was broken.

The only way I can describe those prayers is to say that I felt separated from life as I knew it. It was as if I were living in the air – living in a different reality.

I performed one hundred rounds for a week and drove more than 200 miles to visit the young man's family. The family told me that their physician had warned them that if their son had hiccups in the next 72 hours, he could permanently lose the ability to move below his neck, or he could die.

I began to have hiccups for twenty seconds at a time over two hours, which caused me much physical distress. I then realized two things: my close spiritual bond with the son and that it was important for the family to express its appreciation for the divine blessing of prayer that was guided by Gedatsu Kongo.

Feeling the full weight of the responsibility of praying, I gave prayer after prayer after prayer for the next week. Through that experience, I felt, for the first time, the power of devotion that comes from the purely unconditional desire to help someone. I believe that my life of prayer started from those hundred rounds. In other words, that experience guided me into my life in prayer.

Six Years of One Hundred Rounds

When it comes to one's life experiences, only the person who has lived them can honestly state what it takes to get through those experiences. I have learned that the power of prayer cannot be grown in a short time. For an ordinary person like me, it takes the accumulation of daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and decades of practice.

When it comes to prayer, people have all kinds of ideas. I was once asked by a visitor if there was any difference between his recitation of *Hannya Shingyo* – the Heart Sutra – and mine as a minister. He assumed that if there was no difference, he didn't have to ask a minister to offer prayer.

Some members told me that after I offered prayers, "Your prayer did not work." It may not have worked . . . or maybe the recipient did not appreciate it or was not ready to accept it. In other words, one must develop a sense of appreciation in order to accept prayer.

I performed one hundred rounds every day for six straight years. Ultimately, all those prayers have connected me to the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony prayer. When I was single and in my early twenties, Bishop Kishida instructed me to practice performing a miniature version of the *Goma* service indoors, which I did for many years before performing the prayer service outdoors before the *Fudo* guardian and the congregation.

When I reflect back on these experiences, I feel that my life's aim was planted deep within me many years ago – to live my life in prayer.



Senior Reverend Akira Sebe bows before the *Fudo* guardian, sincerely offering his prayers.



## MAY 2021 OFFERINGS

### **Northern California** Total: \$2,875

**General Donations:** M/M D. Tsuboi, S. Nishino, M/M N. Okano, M/M J. Horner, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe

#### Special Acknowledgments

M/M N. Okano	Appreciation for Spring Festival
F. Sueyoshi	"Never Forgotten" for Chiyoki & Isami Suzuki
M/M D. Ide	<i>Saito Goma</i> appreciation
M/M D. Ide	"Never Forgotten" for Ben Ide
M/M B. Ide	<i>Saito Goma</i> appreciation
A. Sebe	Appreciation for Spring Festival
M/M D. Ide	Appreciation for Dad's pillow service
M/M D. Ide	Appreciation for Dad's 7-day memorial service (\$1,000)

### **Southern California** Total: \$3,075

**General Donations:** Imuta Family, T. Ishida, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M V. Mizokami, M. Nakamura, T. Nakamura, M/M N. Okano, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M R. Tsujimura

#### Special Acknowledgments

N. Takara	"Never Forgotten" for Joe Takara
M/M T. Matsumoto	"Never Forgotten" for Sumako Matsumoto and Hitomi Nakaguchi
S. Okimura	"Never Forgotten" for Miyoko Okimura (\$500)
T. Tsujimura	Car blessing
M/M Ho. Tsujimura	"Never Forgotten" for John Kuritani and Yozo Tsujimura
M/M T. Matsumoto	7- <i>kaiki</i> memorial service for Hitomi Nakaguchi
M/M K. Kuritani	"Never Forgotten" service
M/M G. Wood	"Never Forgotten" for Tameharu Nagao

### **Online Donations:** Total: \$429

**General Donations:** Y. Elvin, D. Allum, N. Tsuboi, S. Shiroishi, M/M P. Reid, H. Tsujimura

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

## GEDATSU RESOURCES



### **At Your Fingertips**

Gedatsu study guides, minister sermons, current and past *Gedatsu Companion* newsletters and past *IN TOUCH* bulletins are all available on the Resource page of the Gedatsu website. Just go to [www.gedatsu-usa.org](http://www.gedatsu-usa.org)



### **Private Consultation and Family Services**

Our ministers are always available to support members and friends by phone, videoconferencing and other means for private consultations, family blessings and memorial services, and holy *Goho* and *Hiho* practice.

To arrange a service or consultation, contact your local church:

- Los Angeles Church:  
**Rev. Naoya Okano** (626) 288-1212  
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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Christopher Ide** of the Sacramento Spiritual Center. A fourth-generation Gedatsu member, Chris is the son of **Dave** and **Penny Ide**, the grandson of the late **Buster** and **Reiko Ide** and great-grandson of church pioneers **Kanzaburo** and **Hisaye Ide**.

Chris currently lives in San Jose and in his free time enjoys playing basketball and finding other ways to stay active.

"From a young age, I remember attending the Spring and Fall Festivals, as well as the *Rokujizo* Bazaar to help out," says Chris. "The atmosphere provided by Gedatsu is always so friendly and welcoming that it feels like you are part of a family."

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**Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Reiko!**  
**Members Honor, Celebrate Her Centennial**



L.A. Church members surprised and delighted Reiko Nakamura on her 100th birthday. Story and photo on page 3.