



# GEDATSU COMPANION

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### Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"The Universal Life Force  
is constantly working to nurture  
everything on earth without asking for  
anything in return."*

If we closely observe the movement of celestial bodies and all natural phenomena around us, we see the miraculous presence of a Universal Life Force that is absolute and omnipresent.

We are all allowed to live by this Universal Life Force, but we usually take this wondrous gift for granted.

We must acknowledge the Universal Life Force as the source of our life and appreciate the immeasurable blessings we receive from it. We should express our appreciation by doing our best in our daily duties and activities.

This is the path we must take to lead us to true happiness and world peace.

**NOTICE:** Our churches continue their modified schedules of in-person and virtual services. Schedules and in-person services are subject to change, based on community health conditions. Watch for updates.

## FEBRUARY 2022

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6	10:00 am	<b>Virtual</b> – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
		11:00 am	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	13	9:30 am	<b>In Person</b> – Sun Spirit Service
Tue	22		Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents' Day)
Sun	27	9:30 am	<b>In Person</b> – Appreciation Service

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6		No Service
Sun	13	10:00 am	<b>In Person</b> – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Thu	17		Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	20	10:00 am	<b>In Person</b> – Appreciation Service / Sun Spirit Service
Tue	22		Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents' Day)

## MARCH 2022

Sat	12	10:00 am	Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom
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### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6	10:00 am	<b>Virtual</b> – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
		11:00 am	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	13	9:30 am	<b>In Person</b> – Appreciation Service
Sun	27	9:30 am	<b>In Person</b> – Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6		No Service
Sun	13	10:00 am	<b>In Person</b> – "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Thu	17		Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	20	10:00 am	<b>In Person</b> – Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service

## COMING IN APRIL 2022

Sun	10	9:30 am	<b>Spring Grand Festival – In Person</b> (See page 2) <i>Saito Goma</i> Fire Ceremony
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### February “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.

People of all faiths are welcome, so invite your friends and family members to attend – whether the service is held online or in person. 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 via YouTube on **Sunday, February 6, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kaneko (Ide) Hatae, George Hughley, Hisaye (Kino) Ide, Anna May Kao, Roku Kino, Helen Sekikawa, Ted Sekikawa, Karl Kaoru Tanaka, Noburo Tateishi, Yasuko (Noritake) Tsuboi, and Yoritaro Tsuboi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **in person\*** on **Sunday, February 13, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kimiye Akiyoshi, Masue Akiyoshi, Maxine Chodor, Hideo Fujii, Mariko Fukumoto, Masato Fukumoto, Scott Hamamoto, Tadayoshi Ishida, Yvonne Ishida, Nancy Michiyo Ito, Morio Kaku, Yasuo Kikuchi, Kofuku Makishi, Kimiko Matsugami, John Seiki Mitsuchi, Kesao Naito, Kikuko Naito, Shoichi Naito, Tomokata Naito, Horace Kazumori Nakamura, Chikajiro Nishi, Koto Nishi, Miyo Linda Okayama, Masanobu Sakuma, Yoshinosuke John Sakuma, Don Makoto Shiba, Sayoko Dorothy Shiroishi, Karl Tanaka, and Ishi Yuzuki.**

\* L.A. Church’s in-person service is subject to change, based on community health conditions. Watch for updates.

### Return Old Holy Tea and Paper Plaques

If you ordered new holy tea plaques and/or holy paper plaques for the home, your old plaques should be returned to your local church. They will be burned in a plaque-burning ceremony at the Sacramento Spiritual Center.



### 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 the church achieve its longer-range plans for growth and development.

The Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund enables Gedatsu members to demonstrate a higher level of commitment, appreciation and support for the church. Participation in the fund requires an annual pledge of \$600 a year, in addition to the general membership dues.

#### 2021 Fund Donors

**Katsuo / Kazumi Chinen**  
**John / Nancy Horner**  
**Dave / Penny Ide**  
**Tadao Ishida**  
**JoAnn Kaku**  
**Tetsuya / Sachiyo Matsumoto**  
**Victor / Marian Mizokami**  
**Diana Mukai**  
**Reiko Nakamura**  
**Teruko Nakamura**  
**Minaye Okada**  
**Tom Okimura**  
**Paul / Joyce Reid**  
**Sam / Harriet Sekikawa**  
**June Tanaka**  
**Sadaye Tanaka**  
**Howard / Carol Tsujimura**  
**Dennis / Judy Tsuboi**

### Spring Grand Festival

Gedatsu Church will hold its **Spring Grand Festival on Sunday, April 10, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sacramento Spiritual Center**, subject to community health conditions.

Information concerning the ordering and throwing of *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony plaques, bus transportation from Los Angeles, lunch, and other Festival details will be announced in the coming weeks. Watch for updates.



### Attend Sun Spirit Services in February

On February 11, 1940, **Gedatsu Kongo** dedicated the Sun Spirit Monument on the grounds of the *Gedatsu-kai Goreichi* in Japan as a symbolic expression of the spiritual significance of the sun. In his dedication speech, as he unveiled the monument before the crowd of members assembled on the cold February day, Gedatsu Kongo said: “I put my whole heart and soul into building this monument at my dear birthplace. It is only the expression of my sincere heart of reverence to God and respect for ancestors, and appreciation and requital.”

The monument – with its large red circular sun image at its center and Japanese characters for *seishin*, or “spirit” – was erected to impress upon the minds of people everywhere the importance of cultivating the spiritual qualities of the sun: selflessness, fairness and endless compassion. The everlasting light and heat from the sun are attributed as the sacred source of life, which the sun gives freely to all living things on earth without taking anything in return.

Sun Spirit services will be held at the Gedatsu churches in Los Angeles and Sacramento in February. Members are encouraged to attend the services to recognize and give thanks to the sun for its gifts and significance in our lives.

**Photo at top left shows current-day *Gedatsu-kai* members assembled on February 11 before the Sun Spirit monument on the *Goreichi* grounds in Japan. Photo at right shows members gathered for the monument’s unveiling ceremony in 1940.**

### COVID Response Team Guides Church into Year Three of Pandemic

Organized in mid-March 2020, just as COVID-19 burst into public awareness, the church’s COVID Response Team has been meeting monthly via Zoom. Its purpose is to safeguard the health and welfare of members by issuing guidance on health protocols; offer updated communications on services and activities – including the resumption of indoor, in-person programs; and provide critical direction and oversight to move the church forward during the pandemic and beyond. The Team is composed of officers from the Board of Directors, the Los Angeles and Sacramento Regional Boards, ministers and advisers.

“In many ways, the work of our COVID Response Team mirrors what is happening in each of our communities across the country and the world,” says Team coordinator, **Joyce Reid**. “We closely monitor and assess the impact of the ever-changing virus in our communities and attempt to navigate and lead the church through this challenging time by providing critical and timely information to our members.

“Our COVID Team relies heavily on our regional boards in L.A. and Sacramento, which monitor and assess the impact of the virus in their local communities and establish and enforce health protocols as needed. As health conditions change – either improving or worsening – our churches ease or tighten protocols and allow or restrict in-person gatherings. Health and safety is our priority.”



### Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #9

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

- ☉ Christ does not always reside in Heaven. Buddha does not always sleep underground. If you really want to see Christ or Buddha, why don't you become a living Christ or a living Buddha? I have a dream that this world will be filled with many living Christs and living Buddhas.
- ☉ Gedatsu is not far from us but is always just before us. As long as we sit back as an onlooker, we will never be able to get at the heart of Gedatsu.
- ☉ Once we make up our mind, we must practice Gedatsu immediately. Time flies. It won't wait for us. As long as we harbor jealousy, arrogance and resentment, Gedatsu will slip out of our mind.
- ☉ Religion should not be fixed. Religion should always lead and move forward with the times. I respect all religions and their doctrines, but I do not consider them as unchangeable truth. Water goes bad easily unless it flows. Water should be always running. Doctrines should not be fixed. No teachings or scriptures should be considered as rock-ribbed law. If our religion cannot address the current society, it is already dead. Modern society demands religions that solve its problems. Can religions truly meet those needs? By sticking to ancient scriptures and doctrines, how can we compete with modern times?
- ☉ Appreciation and gratitude is the cradle of world peace.
- ☉ The Divine Will divided people into many kinds to have them help one another. Without the sense of coexistence and appreciation, the world will never be free from conflicts.
- ☉ We all breathe the same air. It is wrong for we alone to prosper, being indifferent to others.
- ☉ Mutual support is the iron law of Nature and is an essential factor for all living things to evolve and prosper.
- ☉ Once we rid ourselves of selfishness, we will never come to a dead end in our life.
- ☉ As long as we cling to our old ways of thinking, we will get stuck and eventually wreck our life.
- ☉ Everything that happens in our life is a Gedatsu lesson to improve ourselves.
- ☉ If we always try with sincere effort and appreciation, everything will go smoothly.
- ☉ Those who always expect something without making efforts, expect even from the universe. Has the universe ever demanded anything from us? The universe is constantly making efforts without demanding anything in return.



## Gedatsu Q&A - Part 20

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

**Q** *There are a multitude of miseries throughout the world: wars, famine, plagues, hate crimes, bloodshed, etc. How can I be of service to the world?*

**A** Seeing the miseries prevailing throughout the present world, you may feel so helpless. I understand your feelings. But I want you to look at this world from a different perspective. Think about your daily life. You have family, friends, and many other people around you. Your mother, or maybe your father, cooks dinner for you every day. You go to school and learn from your teachers. You can enjoy your school life with your friends. Every day, we are indebted to many people and things, knowingly or unknowingly. Without them, we cannot live even a single day.

*Hannya Shingyo*, or the Heart Sutra, that we always chant, explains this truth of interdependence of everything in the universe. There are many kinds of living things on earth. They are all dependent on each other. In other words, no one can exist by himself or herself alone. If you are a parent, it is because you have a child. Without children, you cannot be a father or a mother. The same thing can be said about husband and wife, student and teacher. We are all dependent on each other. This is how this world exists and operates.

There are many people living in this world, but no two are exactly the same. This world is full of diversity. We are all different in appearance, views and thoughts, and many other ways. That's why we can learn from each other and grow. Everyone is unique, and everyone has an irreplaceable role to play in the world. Be proud of yourself, respect others, and do your best in your role. This is the path to create a better world.

Master Gedatsu Kongo said: *"The Universe created people of many different types so that we can help and learn from each other."*

He also said, *"Make the best use of yourself. Make the best use of everything!"*

Do not withdraw into yourself. Try to be open to others. Learn from different people and grow spiritually. Make the best use of yourself in your daily duties to create a better world. Bloom where you are planted. This is the path to benefit the world.

**Q** *I adore Master Gedatsu Kongo, who saved many people spiritually during his life. I really want to be like him. But I'm just an ordinary person without merit. What can I do for the happiness of people in the world?*

**A** Mother Teresa worked for the poorest of the poor in Calcutta. She and her sisters also worked in Australia. There, on an Aboriginal reservation, was an elderly man, who lived in extremely difficult circumstances. He was completely ignored by everyone. His home was disordered and dirty.

Mother Teresa told him, "Please, let me clean your house, wash your clothes, and make your bed." He answered, "I'm okay like this. Let it be." She said, "You will be even better if you allow me to help."

Finally, he agreed, and she was able to clean his house and wash his clothes. As she did so, she discovered a beautiful lamp, covered with dust. "Don't you ever light your lamp?" she asked him. "No," he answered. "No one comes to see me, so I have no need to light it." She then asked, "Would you light it if the sisters came?" He replied, "Of course."

Mother Teresa cleaned the lamp. From that day on, the sisters committed themselves to visiting him every evening and lighting his lamp. Two years passed. Mother Teresa had completely forgotten the man, when he sent her this message: "Tell my friend that the light she lit in my life continues to shine still." It was a very small thing, but we often neglect small things.

Mother Teresa always said, "Cheerfulness should be one of the main points of our religious life."

Mother Teresa did not seek to convince people of her beliefs. She simply lived her beliefs in the simplest way and prayed for people's happiness. I believe we may learn something important from her life. Let us pray for world peace and try our best every day.





### What COVID Has Taught Me

Excerpts from a sermon by **Rev. Naoya Okano**  
Los Angeles Gedatsu Church – August 15, 2021

When this pandemic began in March 2020, Los Angeles County declared safer-at-home orders. The church had to close, and most activities and events were canceled.

As we all know, this pandemic is far from over. The world is still suffering with COVID, and the risk of getting the virus still remains. Normal is no longer normal.

I would like to talk about the things COVID-19 has taught me during this pandemic.

#### Importance of the family bond

Because of the pandemic, I believe that most of you had to stay at home most of the time, and your daily life changed. No eating out. Reduced grocery shopping. You may have spent more time with your family and had more dinners at home together.

Gedatsu Kongo repeatedly emphasized the importance of family and harmony of the family unit when considering the condition of society.

He said, “Family is a unit of the country, the foundation of society.” In other words, a disturbance within society is a disturbance within the family.

To improve society, we have to consider the condition of the family unit. I consider this pandemic as a message from God to value the time spent with family and to tighten the family bond.

I hope that the many people, who have tightened the bonds of family over the past year and a half will make the leap to improve society in the post-COVID world.

#### Significance of *Amacha* holy tea blessing and prayer

Beginning in May 2020, when the number of Coronavirus victims was increasing dramatically, I, as a Gedatsu minister, started performing *Amacha* holy tea blessing for “Spirits of Coronavirus Victims,” the souls of those who perished as a result of the pandemic, and “All Unrested Spirits Related to Coronavirus.” I offered *Hannya Shingyo* prayer three times a day.

One day, a few months after I started the holy tea blessing, while pouring the tea over the stupa and sincerely praying for their peaceful rest, I could feel the movement of souls. I could clearly feel the happiness of souls who received the blessing, and I found many souls were asking for it. At the same time, it brought me a spiritual sense of security, like being protected by them.

Since then, as long as I do as much as I can to keep myself safe from COVID, I feel comfortable with the virus, not fearful. I’m pretty sure that the souls were purified through the blessings and have been protecting us like guardians.

Gedatsu Kongo said, “Holy tea blessing for unrested souls is blessing for yourself.”

I found that sincerely practicing *Amacha* holy tea blessing surely helps us.

#### Golden Mean

Gedatsu Kongo said, “Gedatsu teaching is the Golden Mean.”

By this, he was referring to the desirable middle between two extremes of excess and deficiency. We can find other dualistic ideas, such as “life and death,” “rich and poor,” “loss and gain,” “win and lose,” “man and woman,” and “light and darkness.”

Buddhism teaches that the source of many troubles and sufferings lies in the concept of dualism. When your thoughts lean too far to one side, you create equally negative thoughts toward the other side. That is why Buddhism teaches us to avoid extremes and stay in the middle.

I understand that those who got the vaccine may think that those who do not are putting others at risk. On the other side, those who do not get the vaccine have doubts about it, such as: the vaccine is man-made or not natural or that taking the vaccine could cause future problems. It is not a matter of who is right and who is wrong. It’s better if both sides can respect each other, but the fact that it’s a health-related issue makes the situation very difficult.

Anyway, whatever your opinion about the vaccine, if you think you are right, your thought can become the source of an argument. Therefore, it is important to stay in the Golden Mean by respecting each other. It is not how you think, but how others think about your words and actions.

*(Continued on back page)*

## DECEMBER 2021 OFFERINGS

### **Northern California** Total: \$4,319

**General Donations:** T. Wakabayashi, A. Sebe, H. Graham (\$500), M/M J. Horner, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, J. Tanaka, R. Ide, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, M/M D. Tsuboi, R. Nakatani, S. Tanaka, M/M D. Ide

#### **Special Acknowledgments**

M. Rodriguez	In memory of Henry Calderon
M/M D. Ide	Year-end appreciation
T. Bartos	In memory of Victoria Bartos (\$1,000)
K. Schubert	In memory of Masashi & Yukie Ota (\$500)
H. Tsuboi	Appreciation of prayer
M/M D. Tsuboi	Kanzaburo Ide 50 <sup>th</sup> memorial service
R. Ide	Kanzaburo Ide 50 <sup>th</sup> memorial service
L. Tomita	In memory of Shizue Kodani
S. Bush	Gratitude

### **Southern California** Total: \$7,950

**General:** M/M F. Barthel, M/M T. Fukushima, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, Gedatsu Kendo Dojo (\$600), M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, Kubota Mortuary, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, Do. Shiroishi, N. Takara, C. Tsujimura

#### **Special Acknowledgments**

T. / I. Hiram	Memorial service for Glen Hiram
D. Mukai	"Never Forgotten" for Tomota Tateishi
F. Sueyoshi	"Never Forgotten"
T. Ishida	"Never Forgotten" for Eiko / Junnosuke Ishida
T. Ishida	2021 Year end
C. Tsujimura	New job and year end (\$1,000)
Ho. Tsujimura	Old year and new year
J. Ito	In memory of Bishop Kishida
K. Kuritani	Year-end service
J. / J. Peck	In honor of Tomiko Mizokami (\$1,000)
Do. Shiroishi	Successful eye surgery
De. Shiroishi	Appreciation for 2021

### **Online Donations:** Total: \$2,290

**General:** S. Matsumoto, S. Shiroishi, M./K. Naimoli, M/M P. Reid, H. Tsujimura, O. Tsujimura, N. Kishida, G. Tomita (\$500)

#### **Special Acknowledgments**

M/M A. Kishida	In memory of Eizan Kishida
E. Shinamoto	Funeral service for Glenn Shinamoto (\$500)

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

## DIGITAL RESOURCES

### MEMBERS ONLY

### New Website Portal

A new Members-only Portal on the Gedatsu website is a section that shares information, reports, schedules, photos and videos for viewing by Gedatsu members only.

**Get the passcode.** To safeguard the privacy of members, this section is passcode-protected. The passcode will be emailed to members, announced at church services and available by contacting your local church. The code will be changed periodically to ensure security.

Please do not share the passcode or information and images on the portal with others, except Gedatsu members.

**Check it out.** Current postings on the Members Bulletin Board include:

- 😊 2022 Membership Roster pdf
- 😊 2022 Calendar of Events pdf
- 😊 Video of Reiko Nakamura's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party in June 2021
- 😊 Images of *Shichi-Go-San* 7-5-3 Festival at L.A. Church
- 😊 And more to come.



### Scan QR Codes for Church info

Popular QR (Quick Response) codes allow smartphone users quick and easy access to digital info, like restaurant menus, websites, notices, documents, and more. We're making that same quick-link convenience available for our Gedatsu website and other information to speed digital access. (See our QR Code for the Gedatsu website on the back page.) Watch for our QR codes. Just scan and go!

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www.gedatsu-usa.org



Gedatsu Church USA  
Los Angeles Branch  
7850 Hill Drive  
Rosemead, CA 91770

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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Narissa Tsuboi**, who resides in Seattle, Wash. She works as a construction manager, while pursuing her master's degree in computer science. She enjoys spending time at home with her fiancé and two Pomeranians.

The granddaughter of Sacramento members **Dennis and Judy Tsuboi**, Narissa began practicing the Gedatsu faith during her college years with the help of her grandmother and **Mica Rodriguez**, minister-trainee.

"Gedatsu has helped me to channel gratitude into my daily interactions and appreciate the guidance I've received from family, past and present," says Narissa. "Learning about Gedatsu with my family has also brought us closer."

#### Editorial Staff

**Joyce Reid**, Editor

**Rev. Naoya Okano**, adviser

**Mica Rodriguez**, minister-in-training, adviser

Editorial contributors to this issue:

**Dave Ide**, **Marylin Nakamura**, **Sam Sekikawa**,

**Rev. Hisakazu Taki**, **Narissa Tsuboi**

*(What COVID Taught Me) – Continued from page 6)*

#### **Words of a monk**

For my final lesson learned from COVID, I introduce you to Daigu Osho, a Japanese monk.

Daigu Osho said: "Regardless of the source of the virus, a virus the size of only a few microns can spread throughout the world. This was a lesson for me. If a tiny virus can spread all over the world, a good deed by one person also can be spread throughout the world. One person's thought or action can be replicated to others, expanding little by little, and ultimately develop into a sense of values which can change the world."

When we face a big problem like the pandemic, some of us may feel powerless and bewail the fact that there is nothing we can do to improve the situation. But who knows? No matter how insignificant we may feel we are, a good action or deed could actually change the world.

At the beginning of my remarks, I talked about the importance of the family bond. Let's begin there. Let's positively influence those around us first. It is a tiny change in a big world, but big movements must begin somewhere. Let's make an effort to create harmony with people around us and create a chain of happiness in our society, one link at a time.

