

# GEDATSU COMPANION

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 News and Announcements
- 3 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration and Tea Ceremony Classes
- 4 Proper Attitude for Fire Ceremony / Gedatsu Q&A – Part 21
- 6 “Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo – Selected Quotes #10
- 7 Offerings and Upcoming Events
- 8 Website: Now in Japanese

### Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*“We are the extension of our ancestors, and our descendants will be extensions of ourselves.”*

We were all born from our parents. Our parents were born from their parents, and so on. In other words, our present existence is totally owing to our parents and ancestors.

Even though we may have lost our parents or had a difficult time in infancy, we would not be here now without our parents. We are able to exist here today because our parents gave us birth.

The awareness of this fact is the key to living a happy life. We should also be aware that our children and grandchildren are extensions of our own existence.

Live fully and enjoy each day with appreciation. This is the secret to creating happiness for ourselves and our descendants.

## MARCH 2022

Sat	12	10:00 am	Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom
Sat	26	10:00 am	Propagation Meeting via Zoom

### 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

## APRIL 2022

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00 am	<b>Virtual</b> – “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
		11:00 am	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	10	9:30 am	<b>In Person - Spring Grand Festival</b> (See page 2) <i>Saito Goma</i> Fire Ceremony
Sun	24	9:30 am	<b>In Person</b> – Appreciation Service

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3		<b>In Person</b> – “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	10	9:30 am	Spring Grand Festival (Sacramento)
Sun	17	10:00 am	<b>In Person</b> – Appreciation Service
Thu	21		Regional Board Meeting via Zoom

**NOTE:** *In-person services are subject to change and may be held virtually, depending on COVID transmission rates at that time. Watch for last-minute updates.*



### March “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.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **via YouTube video** on **Sunday, March 6, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **John Chin, Muneo John Hatae, Rin Ide, Eleanor Ikesaki, Toyota Kino, Richard Shinichiro Kitasoe, Kotsuru Noritake, Sumiko Sebe, Takeo Sekikawa, Kumagoro Takagi, Fred Shigeru Tanaka, Mary Mitsue Tsuboi and Tamimasa Tsuboi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service **in person** on **Sunday, March 13, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Meiko Arakawa, Vincent Giroux, Ayako Hamamoto, Shikazo Hamaoka, Ernest Hirayama, Naoe Kimura, Lily Yuriko Kuritani, Bill Long, Norma Long, Hisano Miyashita, Masao Mori, Chisato Naito, Shigeru Nakamura, Shigeru Nakamura, Hiroshi Nakatani, Tokumi Nakayama, Tong Hon Nghe, Antonio Palumbo, Giulia Palumbo, Sumiko Sebe, Terry Fumio Shiroishi, Shigeru Fred Tanaka and Tokutaro Tsujimura.**

***Note: This service may be held virtually, depending on COVID transmission rates. Watch for updates.***

### **Saito Goma and Manbu Kuyo Applications Due**

Please submit application forms for plaques for the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony (see right column) and for the *Manbu Kuyo* services in Japan. Applications are due by March 20. Application forms are inserted in this newsletter and available at your local church.

### **Obituary**

The L.A. Gedatsu Church sadly reports the passing of long-time member, **Katsuyo Nagao**, who passed away on January 27 at the age of 98. She is survived by her children, **Ted (Sharon) and Ken (Jeanne) Nagao, Kikumi (Jupiter) Nagatsuka, and Akemi (Greg) Wood**; eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. A private gravesite service will be held this month, officiated by **Rev. Naoya Okano.**



### **Spring Grand Festival**

**Sunday, April 10 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento**

Program I – *Gochi* Sanctuary Service

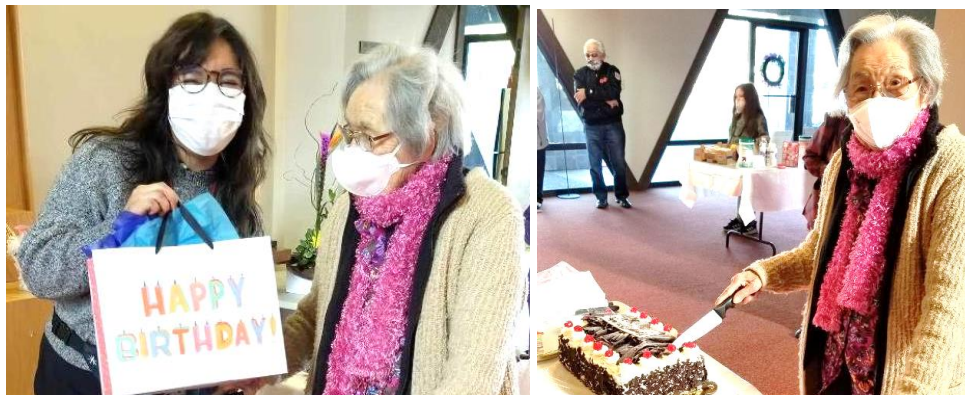
Program II – *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony

- Members and guests are invited to attend the in-person program and services.
  - Health and safety protocols will be observed.
  - Due to limited internet connectivity, the *Saito Goma* ceremony will be videorecorded but not livestreamed.
  - *Saito Goma* plaques may be ordered by Festival attendees and non-attendees alike. All plaques will be thrown by attending members.\*
    - An application form for plaques is inserted in this newsletter and available at church offices. Deadline for applications is March 20.
    - Plaques that were ordered for the canceled ceremony in 2020 may be used for this year’s event or refunded. Contact **Rev. Naoya** at [naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com](mailto:naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com) or (626) 288-1212.
  - Free chartered bus from L.A. (minimum of 20 riders) will be provided. Contact Rev. Naoya to reserve a seat.
  - Free catered lunch (beef, turkey, vegetarian). Contact your local church to reserve a lunch.
- \* See page 4 for a message from **Senior Reverend Akira Sebe** regarding *Saito Goma* plaques.

### **New Email Address for Rev. Naoya Okano**

Because of reported problems with his emails being received, Rev. Naoya has established a new email address: [naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com](mailto:naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com). Please use this new address.

### Sacramento Spiritual Center



#### **Members Honor, Celebrate Sadaye Tanaka on Her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

Amid cheers, well wishes, balloons, flowers and gifts, **Sadaye Tanaka** was honored by a loving circle of Northern California Gedatsu members in a lively celebration at the Sacramento Spiritual Center in January – recognizing her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on January 21. Her birthday gifts included a pretty housecoat and slippers, floral bouquets and a towering balloon display that amazed the new centenarian.

L.A. Church members also celebrated Mrs. Tanaka 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, surprising her with a Spoonful of Comfort gift box of soups and edible goodies.

Overwhelmed and humbled by the outpouring of affection and kindness from her Gedatsu friends, who made her birthday so special, Sadaye responded with “*Arigato*. Thank you so much for all the birthday wishes. I am so fortunate.”



Above, Sadaye Tanaka stands beside the giant display of balloons, celebrating her 100 years. In photos at left, she is presented birthday gifts by Mica Rodriguez and cuts a piece of her birthday cake.



#### **Learn *Chado* – the Ancient Japanese “Way of Tea”**

Sacramento members, **Ritsuko Nakatani** and **Jessica Scott**, are offering a unique opportunity to savor the spirit of Japanese culture. They invite members and friends to join them to learn the ancient Japanese art of the tea ceremony, known as *Chado*, or the “way of tea.”

Tea ceremony classes are held at the Sacramento Spiritual Center on the fourth Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m., immediately following the Appreciation Service. Classes are open to those seven years and older. Enrollment is free, and attendance on a drop-in basis is welcome. This is a beginner-level class, but additional instruction for intermediate practitioners is also available. Health protocols will be observed.

Students will be instructed in the tradition of Uranssenke, one of the main schools of Japanese tea ceremony, from which both Ritsuko and Jessica are graduates. To enroll in the class or for more information, contact Jessica (916-879-3351 or [pichikeen@gmail.com](mailto:pichikeen@gmail.com)), Ritsuko (916-448-1739 or [rrnakatani2018@gmail.com](mailto:rrnakatani2018@gmail.com)) or Mica Rodriguez (916-363-6054 or [gedatsuchurchsac@gmail.com](mailto:gedatsuchurchsac@gmail.com)).







### **The Proper Attitude for the Saito Goma Fire Ceremony** *A message from Senior Rev. Akira Sebe*

**Master Gedatsu Kongo** often told members that prior to the Grand Festivals on the *Goreichi* grounds in Japan, he sensed the tremendous gathering of souls, who eagerly awaited the event. The same is true of the souls that await our own Grand Festivals on our *Goreichi* sacred grounds at the Sacramento Spiritual Center.

Therefore, in anticipation of the gathering of souls at our Spring Festival in April, Senior Reverend Akira Sebe asks us to maintain the proper attitude when observing the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony – whether or not we will be in attendance.

Many members order *Saito Goma* plaques, but for various reasons may not be able to attend the ceremony in person. In those cases, their plaques will be thrown into the fire by a participant.

“If you ordered plaques but cannot physically attend the *Saito Goma* service, it is okay,” says Rev. Sebe. “However, it is important to realize that because you placed your plaque order, the souls and wishes connected with your plaques will be at *Goreichi*, eagerly awaiting your prayers of appreciation when they are offered to the fire. Therefore, your plaque order is not to be taken lightly, with the thought that someone in Sacramento will simply take care of it.

“Instead, at the very time of the ceremony, sincerely pray at your home altar or wherever you may be, and offer the Heart Sutra, or *Hannya Shingyo*, for the souls and wishes for which you applied and in appreciation for being able to participate in the ceremony. Otherwise, even though your plaques are thrown into the ceremonial fire, positive outcomes will not result from them.”

## **Gedatsu Q&A - Part 21**

**By Rev. Hisakazu Taki**

**Q** *In our Gedatsu study, ministers advise us to reflect within ourselves first. I just want to live a life that will lead to happiness. Why should I self-reflect?*

**A** When we have problems in our relationships with other people, we tend to criticize them. This seldom leads to any resolution of the problems. Think about yourself. When someone criticizes your faults, can you easily accept their criticism and change your attitude? It must be very hard for anyone to do that. Even when we are wrong, we don't want to accept other people's criticisms about us. It is only when someone admits their faults and apologizes for them, do we feel like admitting our faults and changing our attitude. This is human nature.

Human relationships are like a reflection in a mirror. It is hard to change another person's attitude by criticizing them. But we can change ourselves. This is the first step toward improving our relationships with others, and ultimately, to changing the world. When we reflect on ourselves and try to correct our wrong attitude, the rest of the world will begin changing accordingly.

Gedatsu is the study about oneself, not about others. Self-reflection is the direct path toward achieving our true happiness.

**Q** *When I go to church, ministers advise me to study and practice this and that. I feel confused. Do I really have to do that many things in Gedatsu?*

**A** Gedatsu is a simple path. Gedatsu is, to be succinct, to respect the Universal Life Force and ancestors, and appreciate their blessings. This is everything about Gedatsu.

*(Continued on page 5)*

Please think about your life today. You are alive now, but it's not you who created your life. You were born from your parents and ancestors. Your heart keeps beating constantly. Who allows your heart to beat? It's not you, but the Universal Life Force that makes your heart beat.

In our daily lives, we consume many things. We eat meals, breathe the air, drink water, etc. They are all provided by many people and things in the universe. Thanks to these immeasurable blessings, we are able to sustain our life every day. Without these blessings, it is impossible for us to live a single day. But we usually take it for granted.

This is why it is important to respect and thank the Universal Life Force and ancestors for their blessings. This realization is the key for everyone to live a happy life. Gedatsu is to become aware of this fact of our life and appreciate the immeasurable blessings. As a token of appreciation, we should then try to benefit the world through our daily duties and activities. This is the Gedatsu path, which will lead to happiness and prosperity.

Everything we study and practice in Gedatsu is only for this purpose. Please understand this clearly and try to practice this simple path each day. You will then be able to live a happy and meaningful life. This is the true study and practice of Gedatsu.

**Q** *I have learned that we should thank ancestors for their blessings. But I cannot see my ancestors physically. Why should I be thankful for them?*

**A** In Japanese, we have a word, "*Okagesama*," which literally means something hidden or unseen. This word says that our present existence is due to the help and support of many people and things that we usually take for granted.

Imagine a big tree. You can see its big trunk, branches and green leaves. But, when you closely observe the tree, you see that its existence is possible because of the earth, moisture, air, sunlight, etc. The important part of the tree is the root, which is in the earth and cannot be seen. But without the roots, the tree cannot take water and nourishment from the soil. The big tree is standing solidly on the ground because it has spread deep roots. A tree is nurtured and supported by these unseen elements.

The same can be said about yourself. Master Gedatsu Kongo explained this as the teaching of appreciation and requital. We receive immeasurable blessings from our country, parents, teachers, society, and all creation in the universe. We should appreciate these blessings and, as a token of appreciation, we should try to benefit the world and work for world peace.

We should be especially aware of the immeasurable blessings we receive from our ancestors. We have parents. Our parents have their parents, and so on. Our life is the fruit of this unbroken chain of life since far back in time. If there were a single break in this chain, we could not be here today.

The souls of our ancestors cannot be seen. However, they are always with us, watching and guiding us from the spiritual world. Please do not forget the great blessings you have received from your ancestors. Ancestors are our roots. Without roots, a tree cannot grow and prosper. We have to nourish and water the roots to have the tree grow. Similarly, when you deeply appreciate your ancestors' blessings, you will be happy and prosperous.

We annually observe the *Higan* and *Obon* services at our Gedatsu Church. These events are special times to remember our roots and appreciate their blessings.





### Selected Quotes of Master Gedatsu Kongo - #10

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

- ☼ Life is short and brittle. Why don't you appreciate and enjoy each day?
- ☼ When you totally surrender to the Universal Life Force, you can have true peace and happiness.
- ☼ The mystery of the universe is not far from you. You can see it in every phenomenon in the world. Human beings are the greatest mystery in the universe.
- ☼ Do we humans live in order to hate and resent others? No. We are allowed to live in order to love and help each other.
- ☼ We can easily evaluate a person's quality by observing how he or she listens and speaks to others. Gedatsu is to say “yes” and do promptly what should be done.
- ☼ When you praise others, you will be happier than being praised. When you hate others, you will feel bad and unhappy.
- ☼ Out of the mouth comes evil. Jealousy and arrogance spread poisons throughout the world.
- ☼ Defeating yourself is much more important than defeating others.
- ☼ Iron corrodes by its own rust. Humans go to wrack and ruin by their own immorality.
- ☼ Don't think too much. Practice Gedatsu immediately, and everything will go smoothly.
- ☼ Gedatsu is not another's matter. It is all your own.
- ☼ If you feel uneasy about your future without stepping firmly on the present situation, you create unnecessary anxiety.
- ☼ Do not chase your past. Appreciate your ancestors and respect your country. Stand firmly on the present moment and try your best to create the future. Your efforts will bear fruit in time.



## JANUARY 2022 OFFERINGS

### **Northern California** Total: \$4,881

**General:** J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M. Fukushima, M/M J. Horner, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, M. Rodriguez, A. Sebe, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, J. Tanaka, S. Tanaka, M/M D. Tsuboi

#### **Special Acknowledgments**

Dr/M A. Akashi	Purchase of tables for church in memory of Robert Tomita (\$1,000)
T. Bartos	In memory of Victoria Bartos (\$1,000)
M/M J. Horner	New Year service
M/M D. Ide	New Year appreciation
J. Ito	Happy New Year 2022 (\$500)
M/M S. Sekikawa	New Year appreciation
J. Tanaka	New Year appreciation
J. Tanaka	Appreciation for Mom's 100 <sup>th</sup> birthday
S. Tanaka	100 <sup>th</sup> birthday appreciation
M/M D. Tsuboi	January appreciation and gratitude

### **Southern California** Total: \$6,558

**General:** M/M K. Chinen, K. Fujii, M/M T. Fukushima (\$1,000), M/M M. Hamada, T. Ishida, J. Ito (\$500), J. Kaku, K. Kuritani, M/M K. Kuritani, J. Mah, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M S. Mukai (\$500), T. Murakami, M/M L. Muronaka, K. Nagao, T. Nagao, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M. Okada, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M. Sakata, M/M S. Shalkan, M/M A. Shiroishi, D. Shiroishi, H. Taki, C. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M R. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood, T. Yamada, M/M P. Young

#### **Special Acknowledgments**

J. Shiroishi	Shiroishi and Navran family ancestor blessing
M/M A. Shiroishi	Patrick and Amber's wedding
I. Kawamura	"Never Forgotten" service
J. Kaku	"Never Forgotten" service
M/M M. Hamada	"Never Forgotten" service for Dennis Toguchi
Ho. Tsujimura	"Never Forgotten" service
M/M N. Okano	New Year appreciation
M/M N. Okano	<i>Goshimpo</i> and <i>Goho</i> practice

### **Online Donations:** Total: \$356

**General:** S. Matsumoto, W. Young, S. Shiroishi, M/M P. Reid, H. Tsujimura

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

## 2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

### **May**

- 8 (Sun)** Sac'to Mother's Day Service
- 15 (Sun)** L.A. Mother's Day Service
- 22 (Sun)** Sacramento Old Plaque Burning
- 31 (Tue)** Churches Closed (Memorial Day)

### **June**

- 12 (Sun)** Sac'to Mother Kiyota Memorial/ Father's Day Service
- 19 (Sun)** L.A. Mother Kiyota Memorial/ Father's Day Service
- 25-26 (Sat-Sun)** *Rokujizo Bazaar* Sacramento – TBD

### **July**

- 5 (Tue)** Church Closed (in lieu of Independence Day)
- 10 (Sun)** Sacramento *Obon* Service
- 17 (Sun)** L.A. *Obon* Service / Graduates Honored
- 24 (Sun)** Sac'to Appreciation Service / Graduates Honored
- 25-28 (Mon-Thu)** Youth Camp Sacramento – TBD

### **August**

- 5-7 (Fri-Sun)** Lake Tahoe *Benzaiten* Service – TBD
- 21 (Sun)** L.A. *Benzaiten* Service

### **September**

- 4 (Sun)** **Fall Grand Festival – Sacramento**
- 6 (Tue)** Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
- 18 (Sun)** L.A. *Higan* Service
- 25 (Sun)** Sacramento *Higan* Service

### **October**

- 1-2 (Sat-Sun)** L.A. Autumn Moon Festival
- 11 (Tue)** Churches Closed (in lieu of Indigenous Peoples Day)
- 16 (Sun)** L.A. *Ujigami* Service
- 23 (Sun)** Sacramento All Souls Service

### **November**

- 6 (Sun)** L.A. Gedatsu Kongo Service
- 13 (Sun)** Sac'to Gedatsu Kongo Service
- 20 (Sun)** L.A. 7-5-3 Children's Celebration
- 24-25 (Thu-Fri)** Churches Closed Thanksgiving Holiday
- 27 (Sun)** Sac'to Gedatsu Kongo Birthday/ 7-5-3 Children's Celebration

GEDATSU CHURCH USA  
www.gedatsu-usa.org



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Traci Palelek**, who lives in Spokane, Wash., with her husband, **Mike**, and daughter, **Kathryn**. Traci is the daughter of **Hisato** and **Loretta Tsujimura** and granddaughter of church pioneers, **Yozo** and **Sumiko Tsujimura**.

Traci works in the long-term care industry and volunteers at Meals and Wheels, delivering meals to seniors, working the Northwest Harvest warehouse and filling free food pantries in her neighborhood. "Although I've been away from the L.A. Church for 20-plus years," says Traci, "Gedatsu has provided the foundation for me to have compassion for others and help out where there is a need."

#### Editorial Staff

**Joyce Reid**, Editor

**Rev. Naoya Okano**, adviser

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

Editorial contributors to this issue:

**Dave Ide**, **Mark Ishida**, **Traci Palelek**, **Jessica Scott**,  
**Sr. Rev. Akira Sebe**, **Rev. Hisakazu Taki**, **Deacon June Tanaka**,  
**Akemi Wood**

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

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ONTARIO, CA  
PERMIT NO. 574

## Our Gedatsu Website – Now in Japanese

Our Gedatsu website is now available in Japanese. Users can easily switch between English and Japanese by simply toggling between the two languages in the home page menu bar.

"This is a huge benefit for our Japanese-speaking members in the U.S. and Japan," says **Rev. Naoya Okano**, "as well as an opportunity to introduce Gedatsu to Japanese communities near at home and around the world."

The site was translated from English to Japanese by an auto-translation tool, then edited by **Rev. Hisakazu Taki** and **Rev. Naoya**. Translation of additional languages is planned for the future.

