



GEDATSU COMPANION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 News and Announcements
- 3 Guest Minister from Japan,
New Board Chairman
- 4 Spring Festival Address by
Rev. Shigehiro Kizaki
- 6 Gedatsu Q&A – Part 35
- 7 March Offerings

Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

"The world is the expression of our mind. We are always creating a new world with our thoughts."

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we encountered difficulties during the past few years. Also, we are saddened over the continuing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

In the midst of these troubling world conditions, many new advances – like remote conferencing, artificial intelligence, and cloud-based computing – are transforming the way we work and facilitating communications with others.

Good or bad, impediments or advantages – these are all the creation of the human mind.

While we may encounter difficulties in the future, we should not express discontent. Instead, we should gratefully accept all circumstances and deeply contemplate how we can create a positive outcome for any situation. This is the way we can use our minds to create a better life and world for everyone.

MAY 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	9	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	14	10:00 am	Appreciation and Mother's Day Service
Sun	28	10:00 am	Appreciation Service / Old Plaque Burning service (<i>Joan-no-gi</i>)
Tue	30		Church Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7		No Service
Sun	14	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	21	10:00 am	Appreciation and Mother's Day Service
Thu	25	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Tue	30		Church Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)

JUNE 2023

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	11	10:00 am	Appreciation / Father's Day Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Tue	13	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	25	10:00 am	Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4		No Service
Sun	11	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	18	10:00 am	Appreciation / Father's Day Service Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
Thu	22	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom



May “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.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, May 7, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Hyozauro Hirose, Ben Tsutomu Ide, Buster Ide, Raymond Kaname Nakamoto, Akino Ogawa, Betty Ozaki, Larizlado Rodriguez, Ramona Rodriguez, Isami Suzuki, Kenneth Taketa, Masao Taketa, and Shigeno Tateishi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, May 14, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Satsuki Akiyoshi, Keiji Ariyasu, Marilyn S. Ariyasu, Gorokichi Aso, Tsugu Endo, Andrué Gutierrez, Wesley Hiram, John Kuritani, Chih-ming Lai, Sumako Matsumoto, Tamotsu Matsuura, Kikuye Miyamura, Nobuichi Miyashita, June Junko Morioka, Tameharu Nagao, Hitomi Nakaguchi, Ronald Yoshio Nakamura, Shigemi Nakamura, Shizuyo Nakamura, Sumiko Nakamura, Teruko Nakamura, Seiko Notoya, Mitsuji Okada, Joyce Okimura, Miyoko Okimura, Adeline Sanchez, David Harry Schonbach, Rev. Jerry Shiroishi, Hiroko Takahashi, Joe Mitsuhide Takara, Kiyo Tanji, Yozo Tsujimura, Jane Harue Wakasa, and Hiroshi Yamamisaka.**

Use New P.O. Box for Sacramento Church

To avoid mail theft and ensure the security of mail deliveries to the Sacramento Spiritual Center – especially mail containing checks or sensitive/important information – please address mail to the following postal box address:

**Gedatsu Church USA
P.O. Box 278391
Sacramento, CA 95827**

Minister Schedules

Reverend Naoya Okano and his family will vacation in Japan this summer, departing for Japan on July 17 and returning August 4. We welcome the return of **Reverend Hisakazu Taki**, who will serve as guest minister at the L.A. Church from July 6 through July 31.

147th Spring Grand Festival

On Easter Sunday morning, under warm spring skies, approximately 110 members and friends gathered at the Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento to celebrate the Grand Spring Festival.

The Festival began with services and prayers in the *Gochi* Sanctuary, followed by the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony. A special feature of this year’s Festival was the performance by the Aztec Dance Troupe, whose dances and prayers expressed appreciation to the Universal Spirit, guardian spirits, and all souls.



In top photos, from left: Speaking in both Japanese and English, Reverend Taketoshi Nishiwaki introduces himself to the congregation. (Read more on page 3.) Ryunosuke and Nanami, children of Reverend and Mrs. Naoya Okano, participate in the All Souls prayer blessing. Middle photo: Special prayer plaques were prepared for the members of the Aztec Dance Troupe, who participated in the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony. At bottom: The Aztec Dance Troupe offers prayers in the form of dance.



Guest Minister from Japan at L.A. Church

We warmly welcome **Reverend Taketoshi Nishiwaki** from *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, who is visiting our churches for three months with the possibility of his becoming a U.S. minister. This three-month “trial period” – from April 4 through early July – will allow an opportunity for both Rev. Nishiwaki and our members to get to know each other.

Rev. Nishiwaki is a staff member of the Tokyo Headquarters, serving in the Health Department. He introduces himself, below.

Hello, everyone. I am Taketoshi Nishiwaki. Thanks to Gedatsu Kongo’s guidance, I was assigned to come to America and work with the U.S. Gedatsu Church through the end of June.

Twenty years ago, in 2003, I visited Gedatsu USA for the first time. My job was to inspect the site for “Tsubasa,” a Gedatsu Youth Group tour from Japan, which came to America in 2004.

During the “Tsubasa” tour, I, along with 10 other Japanese Youth members, had a wonderfully fresh and exciting time, as we participated in the Rokujizo Bazaar and stayed on the Sacramento Goreichi grounds. That was an irreplaceable and unforgettable experience for all of us – especially for me, because that was when I met my wife. We are now blessed with three children: a 15-year-old-daughter, 13-year-old-son, and an 8-year-old-daughter. My elder daughter will be a freshman in high school this spring.

I’m truly happy for this opportunity to return to Gedatsu Church USA after 20 years. I’m looking forward to seeing some of you again, meeting new members, and learning new things.

I left my family in Japan and came here by myself, so during this three-month stay in the U.S., I might be like a monk in training. I look forward to it as a new page in my life.

I heard that Gedatsu Kongo once said, “I don’t preach Gedatsu for Gedatsu. I preach Gedatsu for all humankind.”

I would like to learn the American Gedatsu Spirit, which was begun by Mother Kiyota and developed by Archbishop Eizan Kishida. Together with you, I want to put forth my best effort to propagate this teaching to the American people. Thank you very much!

Board of Directors Sets Policy and Direction for Gedatsu USA for 2023 and Beyond

The Board of Directors of Gedatsu Church USA held its annual Board meeting in March via video-conference (screenshot at right). New directors, **Marie Ishida** and **Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi**, were welcomed, expanding the Board to 13. Newly elected Board officers are **Mark Ishida**, chairman; **Joyce Reid**, vice-chairman and secretary; **Marie Ishida** and **Allen Shiroishi**, co-treasurers; **Senor Deacon Jackson Ito**, investment director.

“I am honored and blessed to be the new Board chair,” stated Mark Ishida. “I ask our guardian angels for guidance as we move forward with new policies and procedures, which will help ensure a sustainable future for our great church.”



Board directors in the meeting (from top, left to right): Marie Ishida, Joyce Reid, Deacon Jackson Ito, Mark Ishida, Dave Ide, Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi, Deacon June Tanaka, Allen Shiroishi, Tetsuya Matsumoto, as well as ministers, Rev. Akira Sebe, Rev. Mica Rodriguez, and Rev. Naoya Okano. Directors absent: Bishop Teruo Okano, Rev. Hisakazu Taki, and Hisato Tsujimura.



Video Address by **Reverend Shigehiro Kizaki**
Director of Propagation, *Gedatsu-kai* Japan
Spring Grand Festival – April 9, 2023

Translation by **Akiko Suzuki**, *Gedatsu-kai*

Hello, everyone at Gedatsu Church USA!
Congratulations on your Spring Grand Festival.

I am Shigehiro Kizaki, director of the Propagation Department of *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, newly appointed this year. I would like to say a few words on behalf of *Gedatsu-kai* Japan.

Master Gedatsu Kongo said that the Grand Festival is “the event of the highest honor.” This is because we, who live in this world, are not the only ones participating in the Grand Festival.

For example, when we leave our home to go on a family trip, traditionally we have been taught to say, “Please protect our home while we are away” in our prayer to our ancestors’ souls.

But when it comes to the Grand Festival, our prayer is different. We say, “Our dear ancestors, please come with us.” This is because our ancestors’ souls also participate in the Grand Festival with us.

Furthermore, it’s not just our ancestors. Souls that have any connection with us participate in the Grand Festival, as well.

For the members of Gedatsu Church USA, those souls would be Mother ine Kiyota, Archbishop Eizan Kishida, and the souls of all other leaders and fellow members, who have contributed to the church. Of course, our founder, Master Gedatsu Kongo, is definitely here with us today.

Because it is held in the presence of many gods, Master Gedatsu Kongo, and many other souls, with all of them watching over us, the Grand Festival is said to be the event of the highest honor.

The world is now on the cusp of historic transformation.

Master Gedatsu Kongo said, “There is a voice in the divine realm, and there are echoes and voices of people on the ground. They are all God’s admonitions, as well as revelations of joy.”

We are now experiencing earthquakes and abnormal climate all over the world, including a massive earthquake that hit southeast Turkey on February 6. Meanwhile, as of now, we see no signs of an end to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

In human history, natural disasters, epidemics and wars have been the major causes of human deaths, and we currently face all three of them on a global scale. It’s time for us to look back and rethink our values that we have formed over the years and re-align ourselves with God’s will and the laws of nature that allow us to live our lives. It’s time to transform our values.

It's time for us to look back and rethink our values that we have formed over the years and re-align ourselves with God's will and the laws of nature that allow us to live our lives. It's time to transform our values.

In particular, our attitude to prioritize economic wealth, in the belief that our happiness is derived solely from financial and material affluence, needs to be changed. Such an attitude appears to be prevailing, not only in modern Japan, but also in the U.S., China, Russia and all other countries in the world. This is evident if you take a look at the current global issues.

While we pursue such material affluence, we often forget our gratitude toward God and nature.

(Continued on page 5)

I would like to share with you my favorite poem, which was written by a Japanese Christian minister, Susumu Kono. It is titled "Free of Charge."

"The most important things are / all free of charge / sunlight / green fields and mountains / water from rain and rivers / morning and evening greetings / prayers to God / and mother's love."

Things that support us, such as sunlight, air, water, and love from God or our family are all free of charge, yet we cannot survive without such gifts from nature and love.

So, the path to true happiness is found in valuing such gifts from nature and love, as well as living in gratitude. This will ultimately lead to a world of co-existence and co-prosperity, where we thrive together by helping each other.

. . . the path to true happiness is found in valuing such gifts from nature and love, as well as living in gratitude. This will ultimately lead to a world of co-existence and co-prosperity, where we thrive together by helping each other.

One example of co-existence and co-prosperity can be found in the following lesson from Master Gedatsu Kongo.

"You might know a popular Haiku that goes, 'First snow of the year / if this were all made of sugar / I could make a lot of money.'

"Now, what if the ending is changed to 'If this were all made of sugar / I would share it with others'? This would give a sense of gratitude and humility."

Imagine waking up one morning to find the ground covered with snow. A person with a good business sense might think, "If this were all made of sugar, I could make a lot of money by selling it." A person trained in Gedatsu might have the same train of thought, but instead would wonder, "How happy would I make others around me, if I shared this sugar with them?"

Another one of my favorite poets, Mitsuo Aida, teaches us in the following poem the importance of "sharing."

*Fighting over something will cause shortage,
But sharing will create a surplus.*

*Fighting over something will cause conflict,
But sharing will lead to peace of mind.*

*Fighting over something will cause hatred,
But sharing will lead to joy.*

*Fighting over something will cause discontent,
But sharing will lead to appreciation.*

*Fighting over something will cause war,
But sharing will lead to peace.*

*Fighting over something will lead to hell,
But sharing will lead to heaven.*

I sincerely pray that each one of you participating in this Grand Festival will help each other, pray for world peace, help your family, acquaintances and friends, and contribute to society through your profession and vocation.

We, the Gedatsu Church in Japan, chose "Revamp" as the key word for this year and plan to transform our church to meet the needs of modern society. I hope that you will also take bold action to propagate the Gedatsu teachings by meeting the needs of contemporary American society.

I would like to conclude my remarks with my prayer created by tweaking a famous quote by Abraham Lincoln, a great politician whom I admire.

*I pray that the Gedatsu teaching
of the American people, by the American people,
for the American people will be spread to many
Americans and bring them a lot of happiness.*

Please accept my warmest wishes for your Spring Grand Festival. Thank you.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 35

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *Lately, we often hear the words “Sustainable Development Goals,” or “SDGs.” What is the Gedatsu point of view on SDGs?”*

A Many years ago, I saw a movie entitled, “An Inconvenient Truth.” You may remember this movie too. This film, which premiered in 2006, was composed of Former Vice President Al Gore’s public lectures about global warming. It showed us many examples of the results of global warming: glaciers melting, plants and animals being forced from their habitats, and the increasing number of severe storms and droughts. If the warming continues, Gore said, we can expect catastrophic consequences, such as:

- Deaths from global warming will double in just 25 years – to 300,000 people a year.
- Global sea levels could rise by more than 20 feet with the loss of shelf ice in Greenland and Antarctica, devastating coastal areas worldwide.
- Droughts and wildfires will occur more often.
- The Arctic Ocean could be ice free in summer by 2050.
- More than a million species worldwide could be driven to extinction by 2050.

This information was a real shock to me. But at the same time, Gore said, “There is no doubt we can solve this problem.” He encouraged us to take steps to stop global warming by following these **“ten things to do.”**

1. **Change a light:** Replacing one regular light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb will save 150 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
2. **Drive less:** Walk, bike, carpool or take mass transit more often. You’ll save one pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don’t drive.
3. **Recycle more:** You can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide per year by recycling just half of your household waste.

4. **Check your tires:** Keeping your tires inflated properly can improve gas mileage by more than three percent. Every gallon of gasoline saved keeps 20 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.
5. **Use less hot water:** It takes a lot of energy to heat water. Use less hot water by installing a low flow showerhead and washing your clothes in cold or warm water (500 pounds of carbon dioxide saved per year).
6. **Avoid products with a lot of packaging:** You can save 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide if you cut down your garbage by 10 percent.
7. **Adjust your thermostat:** Moving your thermostat down just two degrees in winter and up two degrees in summer. You could save about 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year with this simple adjustment.
8. **Plant a tree:** A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.
9. **Turn off electronic devices:** Simply turning off your television, DVD player, stereo, and computer when you’re not using them will save you thousands of pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
10. **Spread the word!**

It’s been 17 years since this movie was released. The situation of global warming has become much more serious today. Al Gore said that global warming was not a political issue but a human moral issue. It is quite clear that the destruction of the environment of our planet has been caused by our desire for more comfort and more convenience, as well as lack of appreciation for nature and all things. We have studied and practiced the path of appreciation as Gedatsu members. I believe this is the key to solve this problem of our planet.

I do believe the SDGs present a good example of the Gedatsu way of life that we should follow. Each one of us is responsible for properly maintaining the natural environment for future generations. Let us undertake a radical review of our daily living and try to live moderately with appreciation.

(Continued on back page)

Northern California Total: \$25,333

General Donations: J. Tanaka, Anonymous, B. Yamamura, M/M D. Ide, M/M D. Tsuboi, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M. Lumpkin, P. Harada, P. Chan, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, S. Tanaka, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa

Special Acknowledgments

J. Ito	Goreichi Maintenance Fund (\$10,000)
A. Sebe	Goreichi Maintenance Fund (\$10,000)
A. Sebe	Appreciation for 80 th birthday (\$3,000)
G/M Tahara	Memorial Tower appreciation – in memory of Kiyoko Oto
M/M D. Tsuboi	With appreciation – April donation
M/M P. Reid	Appreciation for Goshinpo
M/M C. Tanaka	March “Never Forgotten” service
M/M S. Sekikawa	Appreciation for “Never Forgotten” service
M/M D. Ide	Appreciation for “Never Forgotten” service – John Chin, John Hatae, Ide/Kino ancestors

Southern California Total: \$5,465

General: A. Tsujimura, Anonymous, De. Shiroishi, Do. Shiroishi, F. Sueyoshi, I. Long, J. Ito, J. Kaku, J. Shiroishi, K. Fujii, M. Kimura, M. Nakamura, M/M A. Shiroishi, M/M B. Barthel, M/M B. Hamamoto, M/M C. Morioka, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M K. Chinen, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M L. Muronaka, M/M M. Maekawa, M/M N. Chodor, M/M N. Okano, M/M P. Young, M/M S. Shaklan, M/M T. Hiram, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M Y. Makita (\$500), N. Takara, No Name, P. Muronaka, T. Ishida, T. Murakami, T. Okimura, Y. Oishi

Special Acknowledgments

M/M Ho. Tsujimura	In memory of Lily Kuritani and Tokutaro Tsujimura
N. Rivera/R. Gonzalez	In memory of Nestor Gonzalez Buenahora (\$1,000)
Do. Shiroishi	In memory of Terry Fumio Shiroishi
M/M N. Chodor	In memory of Terry Shiroishi
M/M S. Shiroishi	In memory of Terry Fumio Shiroishi
M/M S. Mukai	In memory of Shigeru Fred Tanaka
De. Shiroishi	In memory of Terry Shiroishi
M/M S. Mukai	Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo

Online Donations: Total: \$425

General: S. Matsumoto, S. Shiroishi, K/M Naimoli, H. Tsujimura, T. Palelek, M/M P. Reid, G. Hass

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

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org



The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Allison Horner** of the Sacramento Spiritual Center. Allison and her husband, **Davis**, are the parents of two daughters, **Brianna**, 16, and **Gwyn**, 10. She is employed by the State of California as an associate governmental program analyst.

The daughter of Sacramento members, **John** and **Nancy Horner**, Allison says she appreciates the Gedatsu teachings and all that she has learned as a church member. “Thanks to the ministers and the incredible Sacramento members,” says Allison, “I am dedicated to my continuing spiritual growth.”

Editorial Staff

Joyce Reid, Editor

Reverend Naoya Okano, adviser

Reverend Mica Rodriguez, adviser

Editorial contributors to this issue:

Allison Horner, Dave Ide, Mark Ishida, Reverend Shigehiro Kizaki, Mariko Locheo, Reverend Taketoshi Nishiwaki, Akiko Suzuki, Reverend Hisakazu Taki, Deacon June Tanaka

(Q&A – Continued from page 6)

Q *Wars and conflicts have been waged constantly since ancient times. What will stop these tragic human foibles?*

A Last week, I lost my nephew, who just turned fifty. He looked quite healthy but suddenly collapsed from a heart attack. It is still hard for me to believe this happened, but through this sad event, I keenly felt the transitory briefness of life and its preciousness. Regardless of age, we cannot predict how long we will live. Still, we are allowed to live now! This is truly a miracle!

Buddha said, “Everyone will die eventually without exception. Clearly understand this and keenly feel the briefness of life. All wars and conflicts will then be settled.”

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

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

Regardless of one’s belief, race, or nationality, all people on earth are allowed to live now. We are living our brief life by sharing this small planet. If we truly understand this and keenly feel the preciousness of life, we naturally feel affection and kinship with everyone, regardless of any differences.

Master Gedatsu Kongo stated, “Do not hate people; do not hold grudges against others; do not lament; do not fight; do not be arrogant.” These words teach the preciousness of life. Our life is not long-lasting. Each day, we are born afresh in the morning, and die in the evening. We are given fresh life each day.

When we act in accordance with this understanding, we will be able to live together with anyone in peace and harmony.

