

GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Home is a place for rest and
comfort, where vitality is
restored. At the same time,
it is a learning place."*

Nowadays, our lives are full of stress and social pressures at work, school, and anywhere outside the home.

A warm home is an important place, where we can refresh our minds, rest our bodies, and generate energy for tomorrow.

What is a warm home?

It is where we express gratitude to our ancestors, who are our foundation, where husband and wife support each other, and where we lovingly watch over the growth of our offspring. We can learn a lot about Gedatsu life in our home.

MARCH 2024

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	10	10:00 am	Appreciation Service
Tue	12	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	24	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	3	10:00 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	10	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	17	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service
Thu	21	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	24	10:00 am	<i>Ajikan</i> Meditation Practice

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	16	10:00 am	Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom
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APRIL 2024

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Tue	9	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	14	9:30 am	Spring Grand Festival Saito Goma Fire Ceremony
Sun	28	10:00 am	Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	7	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	14	9:30 am	Spring Grand Festival (Sacramento)
Thu	18	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	21	10:00 am	Appreciation Service
Sun	28	10:00 am	<i>Ajikan</i> Meditation Practice



March “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, March 3, 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 on **Sunday, March 10, 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, Tomiko Mizokami, Masao Mori, Chisato Naito, Shigeru Nakamura, Hiroshi Nakatani, Tokumi Nakayama, Antonio Palumbo, Giulia Palumbo, Joe Sanchez, Joseph Sanchez Jr., Sumiko Sebe, Harunaga Shiba, Tom Masami Shiba, Terry Fumio Shiroishi, Shigeru Fred Tanaka, Tokutaro Tsujimura, and Yoshio Wakasa.**

Obituaries

The Gedatsu Church mourns the recent passing of three long-time members.

L.A. Church member **Helen Sachiko Nishida** passed away on December 10 at the age of 88. She is preceded in death by her late husband, **Roger**, and is survived by her son, **Ken (Kathleen) Nishida**; daughters, **Caryn (Ed) Ito**, and **Lori (Edgar) Eugenio**; son, **Bob (Trichelle) Nishida**; grandchildren, **Bradley, Alysa, Ryan Masa, Kara, Kaila, Kelli, Benjamin, Kamille, and Quinn.**

L.A. Church member **Florence Fumiko Sueyoshi** passed away on January 8 at the age of 86. She is survived by her son, **Stephen (Linda) Sueyoshi**; granddaughter, **Allison Sueyoshi**; siblings, **William, Victor, Alice, and Carol**; and many nephews, nieces, and relatives.

Sacramento Church member **Hiroko Takahashi** passed away on January 19 at the age of 90. She is preceded in death by her late husband, **Thomas**, and their late son, **Tracy**. She is survived by her son, **Dean Takahashi.**



Spring Grand Festival Sunday, April 14 – 9:30 a.m. Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento

Program I – *Gochi* Sanctuary Service
Program II – *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony

- Members and public are invited to attend.
- **Order your *Saito Goma* plaques by March 17.** Application forms are available at your local church.
- **Reserve a lunch.** A free lunch will be available: *Bahn Mi* Vietnamese sandwiches (veggie, teriyaki chicken, or BBQ pork), chips, and water. Reserve a lunch by contacting your local church.
- **Reserve a bus seat.** A free chartered bus from L.A. (minimum of 15 riders) will be provided. Gratuity for bus driver is appreciated. Reserve a seat as soon as possible by contacting **Mariko Locheo** in the L.A. Church office at locheo.gedatsu.lab@gmail.com. The bus is made available through the generosity of **Senior Deacon Jackson Ito.**

Gedatsu-kai Minister to Attend Festival

Reverend Yasunori Miyasaka, director of propagation, *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, will be the keynote speaker at the Spring Festival on April 14. Rev. Miyasaka addressed the congregation previously via video – at the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Festivals – but was prevented from attending in person because of the COVID pandemic. Let us extend a warm greeting to him.

Applications Due for *Saito Goma* Plaques and *Manbu Kuyo* Certificates

Please submit completed application forms for plaques for the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony and for the *Manbu Kuyo* service in Japan (see page 3). Applications are due by March 17. An application form for *Manbu Kuyo* is enclosed in this newsletter; *Saito Goma* application forms are available at your local church.

Manbu Kuyo Service

Twice a year, as part of the Gedatsu Spring and Fall Grand Festivals in Japan, a memorial rite for spirits is conducted on the *Goreichi* holy grounds. Called *Manbu Kuyo* – literally meaning “ten thousand expressions of respect” – the ceremony is performed to liberate all spirits from suffering and to transform them into protective spirits who benefit the living.

If you would like to apply for a *Manbu Kuyo* certificate, complete and submit the application form enclosed in this newsletter and available at your local church. It is recommended that you consult with one of the ministers, who can explain the significance of the service and various categories on the form, as well as guide you on the appropriate *Kuyo* for which you should apply.

Following the *Manbu Kuyo* Ceremony in Japan, applicants will be sent certificates signifying the completion of this sacred prayer. These certificates should be reverently and permanently displayed on your home altar as a family treasure.

Black Belt Recipient Inspires Others to Excell

Gedatsu Nippon Kenpo Dojo recently celebrated the achievements of one of its students. **Ethan C.**, 16, earned the coveted rank of black belt in the martial arts school of Nippon Kenpo. A sophomore at Mark Keppel High School in Alhambra, Ethan was twice awarded the Nippon Kenpo academic scholarship and is currently preparing for his Eagle Scout rank.

Nippon Kenpo Dojo, which instructs students in full-contact sparring, shut down for two years during the COVID pandemic. Ethan is one of five students who returned to the dojo after the two-year closure.

Dojo instructor-*senseis*, **Mark** and **Marie Ishida** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church are very proud of Ethan as he continues to train, motivate, and inspire younger students at the dojo.



Fellow Nippon Kenpo students and *senseis* celebrate Ethan's achievements in reaching the rank of black belt.



The *Manbu Kuyo* Service is solemnly performed on the *Goreichi* holy grounds in Japan.



Ethan is awarded the rank of black belt by Mark Ishida in a special belt-tying ceremony that recognizes Ethan's perseverance, determination and commitment to excellence in Nippon Kenpo.

A Brief Biography of Gedatsu Kongo

Chapter 5 Trials and Tribulations

In 1922, the storeowner of the Shimizu Shipping Company reorganized from a one-man business to a joint-stock corporation in order to put himself in the controlling position. Eizo Okano (Gedatsu Kongo) – wanting to become independent – asked the owner to allow him to leave. The storeowner agreed, allowing Eizo to take the staff of the Northern Sea Route department with him, as well.

The new company that Eizo formed was named the Hokkai Joint Company. Eizo was appointed director, and Hamada, the owner of the Hokkai Shipping Store, became adviser.

Around the same time, Eizo wanted to start another big business – a geisha house – in appreciation to Aki for her devotion in caring for him when he was gravely ill. Aki was very happy to hear the plan. They found a piece of land for sale in Araki-cho, Yotsuya. Eizo named the geisha house Akizuki after Aki. It was completed in March of 1923.

From happiness to catastrophe

Also, at this time, Eizo and Aki adopted a baby girl, Kikuye. They moved to Akizuki to live. Kikuye was healthy and growing, and the family was very happy.

On September 1, a severe 7.9 earthquake struck Tokyo, turning the city into hell in a moment. Nearly 100,000 people were killed by the quake and resulting fires, and another 40,000 were missing. Nearly 450,000 homes were destroyed.

In the quake, Kikuye was struck in the head and died four days later. A simple funeral was performed.



The Great Kanto Earthquake struck the Tokyo area just before noon on September 1, 1923.

In October, the Tokyo Clearing House resumed its operations. All the bills that Hokkai Joint Company had drawn before the earthquake were honored, but most of the banks that dealt with its customers dishonored the bills. This was a great shock to Eizo, who had spent all the capital of Hokkai Joint Company. It was doubtful whether the company would be able to operate. Eizo called the managing staffs to discuss the remedial measures to be taken. Some clerks who had been obedient spoke harshly of Eizo. In the end, several managing staff and 20 clerks left the company.

After they left, Eizo called the staffs to explain the company's course for the future. They had almost no capital, so they would borrow the money from Keika Company temporarily. With that money, they would charter two or three ships and transport goods from Hokkaido as much as possible. With those profits, they would increase the number of chartering ships and build an office building. When Eizo enthusiastically explained these plans, the staff's hope for the future was restored.

Akizuki, which was spared from the earthquake disaster, was repaired and prospered. Aki consulted Eizo and planned to build an annex of 20 rooms to Akizuki. They decided to buy a piece of land in the neighborhood and build another geisha house. Its construction started in December, and it was completed by the end of January. The new geisha house was named Chiaki.

The business of Keika Company was going well, and the stone-dealing business became busy. Eizo worked like a tiger, but his hard work affected his body. When he raised his arms, he felt an acute pain in the shoulders. Although he received Shiatsu massage and medical treatment, his condition did not improve.

From that time, Eizo began to exhibit psychic powers. Without having to walk into the mountains to count timber, he was able to give the exact amount. Often, after he sat on a stone meditating, he would avow the presence of spiritual masters: "There is a master who governs the whole area of Tanzawa, and various other masters are working on every ridge."

(Continued on page 5)

Spiritual connections

In early 1924, Eizo began visiting the *Shukugawara Fudo-son* guardian spirit to receive its healing prayer and continued his visits for four years.

Around the same time, Eizo started to visit the *Benzaiten* shrine of the Senzoku Pond in Tokyo. He went there alone at night and said nothing about his visits. After some time, he said, “As I continued to visit the Senzoku Pond *Benzaiten*, my shoulder pain disappeared.”

Though it was not yet clear, a new world was unfolding before Eizo.

After the earthquake disaster, business morality had been deplorably corrupted, affecting Hokkai Joint Company and Keika Company, as well. Some of the employees were receiving bribes and loaning money to acquaintances, which were not repaid. Because most of the bad loans were irrecoverable, the board directors concluded that there was no way to recover. The company would be dissolved at the end of the year.

Business corruption takes its toll

One day, in the midst of this business turmoil, Eizo thoughtlessly left his registered seal on his desk for a brief time. The chief manager, whom Eizo trusted most, took the seal and executed a bond for debt under the name of the company. He then borrowed a large amount of money from a private financial company and disappeared. It caused the collapse of Hokkai Joint Company, which Eizo had built up through his tireless effort.

In the middle of August 1926, Eizo collapsed at the company office. He was hospitalized immediately. He was suffering from exhaustion and diabetes. His condition was very serious. His body became weaker day by day. He was overcome by deep despair and was a mere shadow of himself.

A glimpse of the future

One night, Eizo desperately wanted to see his face. Raising his weak body from his bed, he crawled to look into a mirror. His face looked completely different, thin and unshaven.

At that moment, he was struck by an indescribable feeling. Eizo later told one of his close associates that he had a mysterious experience at that time. According to that person’s account, Eizo clearly saw his future in the mirror. He saw himself as the founder of the Gedatsu teaching, devoting himself to the salvation of mankind.

The following year, Eizo met Kensho Shimada, an ascetic Buddhist monk of the Nichiren Sect, who was gifted with psychic power. To heal his diabetes, Eizo often asked Shimada to pray for him. Shimada psychically understood the cause of the disease and was able to cure it. As he continued his spiritual practices with Shimada, Eizo developed psychic insight. Shimada played an important role when Eizo established the Gedatsu teaching four years later.

In May 1927, Eizo heard news that portions of the state forest in Tanzawa could be purchased. He decided to submit a bid for a lot. The Tanzawa mountain range was well known for its good timber of Japanese cedar and cypress, as well as its history for ascetic practices. Eizo and his employee, Riichi Komuro, drove into the mountain range as far as they could go, and then walked from there.

A notable incident

As he and Komuro went into the mountains, it began to rain heavily. When they reached a river, it was impossible to cross because of rising water. As Eizo walked down to the stream, his feet slipped in the mud, and he fell into the river. He later described this experience: “When I was swept away in the river and was struck on my head, I gained psychic insight.”

From the summer of 1927, Eizo continued the spiritual practice in the Tanzawa mountains, always dressing in formal kimono out of respect for the divine spirits of the masters, with whom he communicated. He also practiced with Shimada and visited various shrines and temples as he was guided by divine spirits to perform meditation.

At that time, Eizo also played an important role in the campaign to establish the Kitamotojuku Station in his hometown, making a large donation to support the campaign. The station was opened in August 1928.

Eizo owned a number of pedigree dogs. One day, he was secretly visited by a member of the Imperial Family, who wished to see his dogs. When he received the royal prince, Eizo was deeply moved by his noble character, which awakened in him an awareness of his Japanese traditional spirit and spiritual destiny.

This experience opened Eizo’s spiritual eye. The year 1929, when the Gedatsu teaching was to be established, was just around the corner.

(Next month: The Beginning)





“The Law to Become Beautiful”

Excerpts from a sermon by
Reverend Naoya Okano
Los Angeles Gedatsu Church

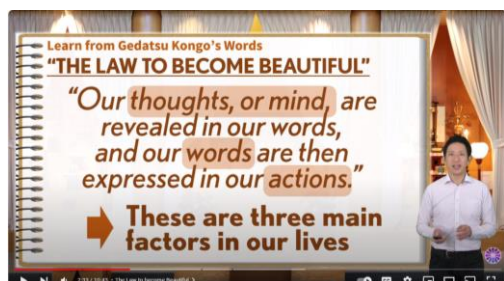
I want to introduce you to one of **Master Gedatsu Kongo’s** well-known principles, which he often told members: “The Law to Become Beautiful.”

I know that you are already beautiful, but I believe your beauty will be heightened by learning this law.

Gedatsu Kongo explained the law by saying, “Our thoughts are revealed in our words, and our words are then expressed in our actions.”

This makes sense when we think about our daily lives – especially our interactions and relationships with others.

In simple terms, our lives consist of three main factors: thoughts, words, and actions. Everyday human interactions demonstrate that a lot can be happening behind simple words and actions, because our thoughts and feelings cannot be seen.



Through this principle, our Master was teaching the clear dangers of dishonesty and lying. To lie is to express words or actions that differ from what we actually think or believe. We may lie because we think people can’t see into our minds. This may be true for a while, but over time, if we continually lie, we will destroy our relationship with others and lose their trust.

The images that illustrate this article are screenshots from the YouTube video of Reverend Okano’s sermon. See the back page for the QR codes for the video and YouTube site.

“The Law to Become Beautiful” also can be applied to our health. When we are healthy and happy, we stand more erect, and our voice is clear and strong. On the other hand, when we aren’t feeling well, we tend to complain, and our breathing is shallower. Also, if we are depressed, our shoulder blades and hip joints stiffen. As a result, we tend to stoop forward, and our walking stride becomes shorter.



Thus, our mind and spiritual state are revealed in our words, body, and actions. Our mind is the creator, and everything related to us is a reflection of our mind.

Together with this “Law to Become Beautiful,” Gedatsu Kongo stated five rules: grudge not, envy not, grieve not, dispute not, boast not. Further, he stated the penalty for not heeding these rules. “If you begrudge others, you will be grudged,” he said. “If you envy others, you will be envied. I want you to truly understand this law.”

So, you may ask, “Where is the ‘beauty’ in this ‘Law to Become Beautiful’?”

Let me unveil to you the treasure of Gedatsu Kongo’s words: “If our mind is revealed in our words, and our words are then expressed in our actions, then conversely, if we change our words and actions, our mind also changes.”

It may sound easy to change our minds, but it is very difficult. No matter how much we desire to change our minds, it rarely succeeds. However, with attention and effort, we can change our words and actions.

Take, for example, those who are depressed and tend to stoop forward and walk with short strides. What if they forced themselves to walk with their chests out and with long strides? What if we force ourselves to smile even if we are sad? When our behavior and actions are positive, our emotions and mind follow and become positive.

(Continued on back page)

JANUARY 2024 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$10,904

General Donations: J. Tanaka, M/M D. Ide, D. Letoto, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M. Fukushima, M. Lumpkin, No Name, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, S. Tanaka, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, T. Bartos

Special Acknowledgments

J. Ito	<i>Goreichi</i> Maintenance Fund (\$5,000)
A. Sebe	<i>Goreichi</i> Maintenance Fund (\$3,000)
J. Ito	New year offering
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude, monthly donation
J. Tanaka	"Never Forgotten" Service for Natsuko Furukawa
J. Tanaka	Appreciation and gratitude for new year
M/M S. Sekikawa	Appreciation for new year
M/M D. Tsuboi	Appreciation for new year
M/M J. Horner	Appreciation for new year
M/M D. Tsuboi	Gratitude for "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
M/M D. Tsuboi	Gratitude for First Service of the Year
M/M S. Sekikawa	Gratitude for New Year Service
M/M D. Ide	Gratitude for January Appreciation Service
M/M S. Sekikawa	Gratitude for Appreciation Service
M/M A. Akashi	Appreciation for new year
M/M D. Tsuboi	Gratitude for January Appreciation Service

Southern California Total: \$7,324

General: A. Tsujimura, Anonymous, De. Shiroishi, Do. Shiroishi, F. Imuta, H. Inuoye, J. Ito, J. Kaku, K. Fujii, K. Kuritani, M. Nakamura, M/M A. Shiroishi, M/M C. Morioka, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M K. Chinen, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M N. Okano, M/M S. Mukai, M/M S. Shaklan, M/M T. Hiram, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, N. Chuk, N. Takara, No Name, P. Muronaka, S. Kaku, T. Ishida, T. Okimura, Y. Oishi

Special Acknowledgments

Ka. Kuritani	Appreciation for 2023
D. Mukai	Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo (\$500)
M/M K. Kuritani	New Year 2024 appreciation
T. Ishida	New Year 2024 appreciation
M/M G. Wood	Appreciation for safe travels for Midori, Emiko, Meika, Greg, and Akemi Wood
M/M G. Wood	New Year 2024 appreciation
M/M L. Muronaka	New Year 2024 appreciation
Hi. Tsujimura	In memory of Loretta Tsujimura
M/M Ho. Tsujimura	In memory of Sumiko Tsujimura, Frank Young, Nobuko Tsujimura
M/M Ho. Tsujimura	Appreciation for old and new plaques
M/M P. Young	In memory of Sumiko Tsujimura, Frank Young, Nobuko Tsujimura
M/M G. Wood	In memory of Katsuyo Nagao
J. Kaku	In memory of Terry Imuta
P. Nakamura	Appreciation for pillow service for Mark Nakamura
P. Nakamura	In memory of Mark Y. Nakamura
M/M V. Mizokami	Appreciation for Mizokami Insurance Agency
A. Tsujimura	Appreciation for ancestor blessings
K. Nishida	Appreciation for Helen Nishida memorial service (\$800)

Online Donations: Total: \$429

General: G. Iwata, S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura, M/M P. Reid, M/M R. Allum, G. Hass

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

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***("The Law to Become Beautiful" –
continued from page 6)***



To view the video of Reverend Okano's sermon, scan the QR codes below.



Sermon



Gedatsu YouTube

Say that our spouse is in a bad mood. We don't know why, but they seem angry. In such a case, we can bring home their favorite cake or flowers, hug them tenderly, and say, "Thank you" and "I love you." Even though they may be in a bad mood, we can't change their mind. But through our loving actions like offering a surprise gift, their feelings may lighten, and their mind may change positively.

Gedatsu teachings require practice. In fact, only through practice can we derive the true value of the Gedatsu teachings.

In the Gedatsu teachings, we often hear "appreciation and gratitude." But appreciation and gratitude, being a state of mind, is elusive. We can, however, demonstrate our appreciation and gratitude through our actions, such as making offerings to the gods, reciting our prayers, and giving holy tea blessings to our ancestors. Our daily actions of appreciation and gratitude surely change – and beautify – our minds over time. Let us practice self-reflection as part of our daily routine. Whenever we have time – maybe in our bed at the end of the day – recall what we have done, good or bad, during the day, and reflect on it. Take steps to reform our behavior the following day. I believe that will improve our spirituality.

Always keep in mind our founder's words: "Our mind is revealed in our words, and our words are then expressed in our actions." By doing so, I'm sure we will find that we have become more beautiful.

