



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*"Our country is a masterwork of our
ancestors' hard work and sweat."*

We receive many immeasurable
and profound blessings throughout
our daily lives.

Gedatsu Kongo taught us five
sources of blessings: country,
parents, teachers, society, and all
creation in the universe.

Among these five sources, he
emphasized the blessings we receive
from our country.

We are able to live safely
without fear of foreign invasion, for
example, primarily due to the hard
work of our ancestors.

Let's make every effort in our
daily lives to repay the blessings we
receive from our country.

FEBRUARY 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	9	10:00 am	Sun Spirit Service
Tue	11	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Tue	18		Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents' Day)
Sun	23	10:00 am	Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	Hiho Meditation Practice
Sun	9	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	16	10:00 am	Appreciation and Sun Spirit Service
Tue	18		Church Closed (in lieu of Presidents' Day)
Thu	20	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	23	10:00 am	Ajikan Meditation Practice

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	22	12 noon	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom
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MARCH 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	9	10:00 am	Appreciation Service
Tue	11	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	23	10:00 am	Appreciation and Higan Service /

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	Hiho Meditation Practice
Sun	9	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	16	10:00 am	Appreciation and Higan Service
Thu	20	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	23	10:00 am	Ajikan Meditation Practice

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	15	10:00 am	Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom
Sat	22	12 noon	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom



February “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.

People of all faiths are welcome, so invite your friends and family members to attend. 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 on **Sunday, February 2, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kaneko (Ide) Hatae, George Hughley, Hisaye (Kino) Ide, Anna May Kao, Roku Kino, Roy Akio Nakatani, 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 on **Sunday, February 9, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kimiye Akiyoshi, Masue Akiyoshi, Matsuno Aso, Maxine Chodor, Masato Fukumoto, Scott Hamamoto, Yoshihisa Hirayama, Tadayoshi Ishida, Yvonne Suzuko Ishida, Nancy Michiyo Ito, Morio Kaku, Yasuo Kikuchi, Kikuo Konishi, Fumiko Makishi, Kofuku Makishi, Kimiko Matsugami, John Seiki Mitsuuchi, Kesao Naito, Kikuko Naito, Shoichi Naito, Tomokata Naito, Horace Kazumori Nakamura, April Hawley Navran, Chikajiro Nishi, Koto Nishi, Miyo Linda Okayama, Masanobu Sakuma, Yoshinosuke John Sakuma, Don Makoto Shiba, Sayoko Dorothy Shiroishi, Karl Tanaka, and Ishi Yuzuki.**

Spring Grand Festival

Gedatsu Church will hold its **Spring Grand Festival on Sunday, April 13, at 9:30 a.m.** at the **Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento.**

Fire Ceremony *Saito Goma* Plaques

Apply now for plaques for the Fire Ceremony to be held in conjunction with the Spring Grand Festival. An application form is enclosed with this newsletter. Applications are due by March 16.



Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund (*Hosankai*)

Membership dues and donations help to ensure the day-to-day operations of our church. Donors to the Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund (*Hosankai*) 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.

Thank you to these 2024 Appreciation Fund donors:

John / Nancy Horner
Dave / Penny Ide
Mark / Marie Ishida
Tadao Ishida
Jo Ann Kaku
Kari Kuritani
Julie Mah
Tetsuya / Sachiyo Matsumoto
Victor / Marian Mizokami
Diana Mukai
Ritsuko Nakatani
Naoya / Yuko Okano
Tom Okimura
Paul / Joyce Reid
Sam / Harriet Sekikawa
June Tanaka
Sadaye Tanaka
Howard / Carol Tsujimura
Dennis / Judy Tsuboi
Terumasa Yamada
Ushigome Branch, Japan

Return Old *Amacha* Holy Tea and Paper Plaques

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

L.A. Church Celebrates Christmas Holiday



Songs, Santa, and Seasonal Spirit

There was good cheer all around as the L.A. Gedatsu Church celebrated its annual Christmas program on Sunday, December 15, in conjunction with the Appreciation Service.

The Christmas program featured the music of the Gedatsu Ukulele class, under the direction of instructor Stanford Tashiro. Children were delighted with a special appearance from Santa Claus, Brian Waldman, who treated them with goodie-filled stockings. Everyone enjoyed the potluck luncheon, Christmas tree, and decorations that heightened the festivities.

Attend Sun Spirit Services in February

On February 11, 1940, **Master Gedatsu Kongo** dedicated the Sun Spirit Monument on the grounds of the *Goreichi* in Japan. He regarded this monument – with its large circular sun image at its center and Japanese characters for *seishin*, or “spirit” – as a symbol of the sun’s expression of 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.

In his dedication speech, 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.”

Members are encouraged to attend the Sun Spirit services at their local Gedatsu churches in February to recognize and give thanks to the sun for its gifts and significance in their lives.



Gedatsu-kai members in Japan gather before the Sun Spirit monument in special ceremonies each February.

Gedatsu Teaching 1
By Seiken Okano (Gedatsu Kongo)

***Gedatsu-kyo* monthly newsletter, March 18, 1935**
Translation and Commentary by Reverend Hisakazu Taki

Gedatsu is to self-reflect and abandon selfishness.

While you are familiar with the term “self-reflection,” its meaning in this context is profound and difficult for most people to fully understand. To understand its meaning, you must begin by knowing yourself – by being honestly aware of who you are.

To do this, you must scrutinize your past and examine your present self. By comparing your present and past selves, you then can create a complete picture of yourself. Your present nature is the result of what you have done in the past. Thus, you must be aware of your past and present selves in order to improve yourself now. A self-admiring or inflated sense of yourself definitely will not allow you to know yourself completely. I tell you emphatically: you must see yourself honestly.

If you completely recognize and rectify your character, and earnestly endeavor in your life, you will, as a result, not only be happy, satisfied and healthy, but you and your descendants will enjoy long and prosperous lives. By contrast, if you are selfish, inconsiderate and unprincipled, and continually complain of inconveniences and insufficiencies, you will be troubled with anxieties and sufferings. Eventually, you will be fearful, unhappy and sickly – destroying your family and yourself. You will make a shambles of your status, circumstances and wealth.

If you discard all self-serving, egoistic feelings and selfish desires, and endeavor to fulfill your vocation and duties in life with all earnestness, you can serve the Universal God through your work. Your vocation serves to sustain yourself, but, moreover, is a duty assigned by God. Your vocation is very sacred, but all too few realize the sacredness of their vocations. They often disrespect and scorn their vocations. As a result, their progress is thwarted. In the end, they face extreme hardships, which force them to give up the very vocations and duties they disdain – receiving the justice of the Universal God. In short, they disregarded the blessings of God. If they absolutely discard their selfish desires and earnestly endeavor to fulfill their duties and obligations, they will be blessed with harmony, peace of mind, happiness and good health.

Therefore, correct your character by assessing yourself honestly. This is the total basis for your self-awareness – the first step of Gedatsu teaching. As I stated in the “Five Principles,” the highest moral conduct, self-reflection, self-renunciation, and the great path of God form the basis of humanity. Those who cannot comprehend this cannot see things as they really are because their vision is biased and prejudiced.

Commentary on “Gedatsu Teaching 1”

By Reverend Hisakazu Taki

Gedatsu Kongo established *Gedatsu-kai*, or Gedatsu Church, in Japan in 1929. In its early stages, Gedatsu Kongo personally taught people who asked him for guidance or visited branches and home meetings to teach. But as membership grew rapidly, it became hard for him to teach everyone personally. This led him to publish the *Gedatsu-kyo* monthly newsletter in 1935 as a vehicle to convey his teaching to all members across the country. The Founder published “Gedatsu Teaching” – writing down his essential teachings for the first time – in serial form each month for two years, beginning with the publication’s first issue.

The Founder was born Seiken Okano. Gedatsu Kongo is the name posthumously bestowed on him by the Daigo Buddhist Temple after his passing. Gedatsu members call him Gedatsu Kongo, but during his lifetime, he was called “*Kaicho-sensei*,” or “Mr. President,” by members.

The inward focus of “Gedatsu”

The word “Gedatsu” is originally among the most significant of Buddhist terminologies. It means the enlightened supreme state of mind the Buddha attained, or perfect freedom from all delusions and attachments.

Our mind is usually bound by our self-centeredness. This prevents us from seeing things as they are and causes numerous problems and sufferings in life. The Buddha deeply realized man’s self-centeredness and taught that freedom from egoism allows us to see things justly and brings us happiness.

Gedatsu Kongo used the term “Gedatsu” in its wider sense. He stated that our mind has been formed by the spiritual and mental stream of generations of ancestors from the beginning, and it is very selfish. However, it is difficult to be aware of our own selfishness, which is the cause of many problems in our lives.

Gedatsu is to look deeply into ourselves and be aware of our self-centeredness, which was inherited from our ancestors. By correcting our self-centered mind, we can attain freedom to see things as they are. This will lead us to peace and happiness. This is the core teaching of Gedatsu.

The very first sentence of “Gedatsu Teaching 1” is one of Gedatsu Kongo’s most important messages: “Gedatsu is to self-reflect and abandon selfishness.”

Gedatsu is to examine ourselves, become aware of our selfishness and free ourselves from it. Everyone may agree about its importance, but it is another thing to put it into practice. While we may be good critics of other people, we are apt to justify our own defects. Such a selfish attitude will never lead us to happiness.

(Continued on page 6)

A word about “Gedatsu Teaching 1”

“Gedatsu Teaching 1,” the first of 13 “Gedatsu Teachings,” is a remarkable document. Although it has been more than 90 years since **Master Gedatsu Kongo** wrote the words, the Founder’s voice still rings forth with unmistakable clarity and force. He compels us to look inward with unflinching honesty to see who we are and correct our character. To fall short of that is to deceive ourselves, and worse.

Reverend Mica Rodriguez, as our Gedatsu minister, eloquently spoke about the profound importance of the Master’s words – “scrutinize past self and know present self” – when she addressed her Sacramento congregation last year. We include an excerpt from that sermon on the back page of this newsletter.

The Founder’s words give evidence of a great teacher who imparted his wisdom and knowledge with deep, sincere compassion and love. I hope that the publication of these extraordinary “Teachings 1-13” will encourage *Companion* readers, including myself, to renew our commitment to Gedatsu and delve deeper into this beautiful study that Master Gedatsu Kongo left for us.

Joyce Reid, editor

(Commentary – continued from page 5)

Freedom from ego through self-renunciation

It is important to understand the difference between self-renunciation and self-restraint. Self-restraint means to conform to morality, restraining desires with your will power. In this case, your desires still remain unchanged within yourself. They are simply checked by morality. Therefore, even if you give the appearance of morality in your daily life, there may be conflicts among various desires within yourself. If your will power weakens, the restrained desires may be released and get out of control.

“Self-renunciation,” as Gedatsu Kongo taught us, is completely different. The Founder did not regard human desires as evil. He thought all desires are the expression of human vitality, and each desire performs an important role in our life. When all desires operate in harmony according to the natural law, they lead us to a healthy and happy life. However, through our selfishness, we often lose the harmony of desires, leading to troubles and conflicts. We must see ourselves as we are and be aware of our self-centered way of thinking and living. This is the way to be free from egoism.

When you are honestly aware of your negative attitudes, your mind is already transformed. Then, all desires within you will be working in harmony according to the law of the universe. This is the self-renunciation Gedatsu Kongo taught us.

You may think this is quite simple. However, it is very hard to actually practice, because our thinking is very selfish. Our mind has been formed not only through the experiences we have accumulated after birth, but also through our ancestors’ experiences.

Honesty the key in self-appraisal

What we usually call “mind” is only a superficial, tiny part of the entirety of our mind. We normally are not aware of the deeper, subconscious layer of our mind, which motivates us to act, feel and think. Our attitude is governed by this subconscious mind, which is the spiritual and mental heritage from generations of ancestors.

This is why Gedatsu Kongo stated, “You must scrutinize your past and examine your present self.” You have to understand that “your past” in this context includes generations of your ancestors.

You may think you know yourself better than anyone, but this is not true. You are probably the least able to understand yourself. This is why Gedatsu Kongo emphasized the importance of being honestly aware of yourself.

Our mind creates our future

Gedatsu Kongo stated, “Your speech and behavior are but expressions of your innermost self. Your words and actions speak eloquently about what you are. Therefore, your behavior must be consistent with your speech.” Only our mind will make us happy or unhappy. As Gedatsu Kongo stated, “The vicissitudes of your life are controlled by your mind. In other words, you alone can improve yourself, destroy yourself and nurture yourself.”

Our daily attitude will form the whole of our life. But you have to remember that our conscious mind is just the tip of the iceberg. There exists a huge layer of subconscious mind below the conscious mind. This deeper subconscious mind manifests itself as our daily speech, actions and so on. This is our personality. The problem is, it is very hard for us to be aware of this deeper self. Therefore, it is important to practice *Hiho*-meditation and *Goho-shugyo* practice, which are the holy methods Gedatsu Kongo gave us for our self-awareness and transformation.

Gedatsu is to be deeply aware of ourselves and transform our selfish way of life into the life of appreciation. Gedatsu Kongo emphatically stated that this is the only way to happiness.



DECEMBER 2024 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$6,184

General Donations: J. Ito, M/M J. Horner, K. Tateishi, K. Ota Schubert, M. Lumpkin, No Name, R. Ide, S. Taketa, T. Bartos, A. Sebe

Special Acknowledgments

L. Tanaka	Appreciation and gratitude for a good 2024
J. Tanaka	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service for Tomota Tateishi, Tokio Tateishi, Kiyoshi Tateishi
M/M D. Ide	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service in memory of Kanzaburo Ide, other Ide, Hatae, Tsuboi ancestors
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude for "Never Forgotten" Service
J. Tanaka	Appreciation for Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service and End-of-year Service
M/M D. Ide	2024 year appreciation and Bishop Kishida Memorial Service
Dr/M A. Akashi	New Year's thank you and <i>goshugyo</i>
M/M C. Tanaka	Appreciation for "Never Forgotten" Service
M/M D. Tsuboi	Appreciation for Archbishop Kishida Memorial Service, End-of-Year Service, monthly donation
M/M C. Tanaka	Thank you for 2024 (\$1,000)
Y. Nishino	In memory of Sueko Nishino (\$3,000)

Southern California Total: \$6,185

General: Anonymous (\$1,000), A. DeWitt, K. Fujii, Kubota Mortuary, M/M M. Garcia-Locheo, M/M M. Hamada, J. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, J. Ito, J. Kaku, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, No Name, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M/M L. Muronaka, P. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M S. Shaklan, C. Shiraishi, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, M/M S. Tashiro, C. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, M/M M. Tsujimura, M/M G. Wood

Special Acknowledgments

M/M N. Chodor	"Never Forgotten" Service for Glen Blaser and Junnosuke and Eiko Ishida
A. Tsujimura	Appreciation for 2024
D. Mukai	"Never Forgotten" Service for Tomota Tateishi
T. Ishida	"Never Forgotten" for Junnosuke and Eiko Ishida
A. Tsujimura	Bishop Kishida Service
D. Mukai	Appreciation for Bishop Eizan Kishida
M/M N. Chodor	Appreciation for Bishop Eizan Kishida
De. Shiroishi	Appreciation for Bishop Eizan Kishida
M/M Ho. Tsujimura	Appreciation for Bishop Eizan Kishida

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General: G. Iwata, M. Locheo, M. Ishida, S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura, J. Reid, W. Young, G. Hass

Special Acknowledgments

J. Reid	Appreciation for new <i>kuyo</i> plaques
A. Kishida	In memory of Bishop Eizan Kishida

2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

March

15 (Sat)	Board of Directors Meeting 10 am via Zoom
16 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service
23 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service
30 (Sun)	Church Closed

April

13 (Sun)	Spring Festival 9:30 am
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May

11 (Sun)	Sacramento Mothers' Day Service
18 (Sun)	L.A. Mothers' Day Service
25 (Sun)	Sacramento plaque burning (<i>Joan-no-gi</i>)
27 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Memorial Day)

June

8 (Sun)	Sacramento Mother Kiyota Memorial Service
15 (Sun)	L.A. Mother Kiyota Memorial Service

July

4 (Fri)	Church Closed (Independence Day)
13 (Sun)	Sac'to <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored
20 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored
24-27 (Thu-Sun)	Youth Camp in Sacramento (TBD)

August

17 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
24 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
31 (Sun)	Fall Grand Festival 9:30 am

September

2 (Tue)	Church Closed (in lieu of Labor Day)
21 (Sun)	L.A. <i>Higan</i> Service
28 (Sun)	Sacramento <i>Higan</i> Service

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

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www.gedatsu-usa.org



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Reverend Mica's remarks – delivered as part of her January 2024 sermon to the Sacramento congregation – reference Gedatsu Kongo's words from "Gedatsu Teaching 1." (See page 4.)

"Know Our True Selves"

Excerpt from sermon by Reverend Mica Rodriguez

One of the most important components of the foundation of our Gedatsu teaching is our ability to know ourselves.

Master Gedatsu Kongo said: "Scrutinize your past self and know your present self. Look at yourself sincerely and truthfully because the heart's workings will completely relate to the prosperity or decay of self. Therefore, what nurtures self is self."

Though this seems straightforward, looking at yourself and truly knowing yourself is heavy work. It takes a lot of strength to assess yourself honestly. So often, we fight to know our true selves because of guilt or other uncomfortable thoughts we may feel as we consider it all. Again, this is a necessary process to understanding ourselves, nourishing ourselves, and then being able to go forth and effect positive and loving shifts in our worlds.

I feel this is what Kongo-sama and **Bishop Eizan Kishida** understood about our Gedatsu teaching and why they ventured into arduous personal work to support their ability to grow and speak about it like we are doing now, hoping to effect more understanding and positive forward movement. Though Kongo-sama and Bishop Kishida may have had different experiences, they had in common the ability to adapt themselves to the situation in front of them, humble themselves, and so learn a new way to move through an experience yielding a more favorable result.

