



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

If we are asked about our calling or vocation in life, we should begin with appreciation and requital.

Gedatsu Kongo said that when we realize that our life is a gift from God, it becomes our duty to live each day with appreciation and gratitude. Likewise, our job, or vocation, is also given by God.

Gedatsu Kongo taught us that when we work without appreciation and gratitude, we are motivated by greed. Working with such a selfish attitude is unethical. It is against God's will, which embodies truth, goodness, and beauty.

APRIL 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Tue	8	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	13	9:30 am	Spring Grand Festival Saito Goma Fire Ceremony
Sun	27	10:00 am	No Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	6	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	13	9:30 am	Spring Grand Festival (Sacramento)
Sun	20	10:00 am	Appreciation Service Easter Service and Easter Egg Hunt
Thu	24	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	27	10:00 am	Culture Class: “How to Make <i>Chirashi</i> and <i>Kimpira Renkon</i> ” (See page 2)

MAY 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	11	10:00 am	No Service
Tue	13	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	25	10:00 am	Appreciation and Mother's Day Service / Old Plaque Burning Service (<i>Joen-no-gi</i>)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	4	10:00 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	11	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	18	10:00 am	Appreciation and Mother's Day Service
Thu	22	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	25	10:00 am	Culture Class: “ <i>Shakyo</i> – Immerse Yourself in <i>Hannya Shingyo</i> ”



April “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, April 6, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Natsuko Nakatani, Masashi Russell Ota, Arthur Sakamoto, Susumu Suyeyasu, Chiyoko Suzuki, Thomas Taro Takashashi, Keichi Tekemura, Katherine Kazue Tanaka, Henry Toshio Tateishi, Keiji Tsuboi, Sally Yukiko Tsuboi, and Tsutomu Ben Tsuboi.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, April 6, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Matsuichi Azama, Maria Lechuga Covos, Sameko Hamaoka, Ted Tadashi Hayashi, Sadao Hirano, Kazuye Ito, Will Karger, Fumiko Kawamura, Karen Mineko Kawamura, William Masami Kawamura, Yoshimi Richard Kikuchi, Masaichi Richard Kikuta, Randy Kuritani, Thomas Mahoney, Matsuko Yamashita Miyasako, Clifton Mizokami, Kinryo Mizuki, Seiichiro Mizutani, Larry Katsuichi Nakamura, Margaret Nakamura, Yoshinobu Nakamura, Osamu Naruko, Harry Odama, Otomatsu Odama, Tomoyo Ogura, Akiko Okazaki, Emiko Okimura, Laly Padilla, Helen Shiroishi, Hidemi Pat Shiroishi, Dayna Slotnik, Tsutako Sherrie Takimoto, Bobby Kiyoshi Tanji, Shigeno Tomita, Henry Tsujimura, Joseph Harold Wessman, Jr., Dr. Tsuyoshi Yamashita, and Enes S. Sarvello Zeto.**



L.A. Church Women’s Club Presents

“How to Prepare *Chirashi* and *Kinpira Renkon*”

- Join us in the main hall of the L.A. Church on **Sunday, April 27, at 10 a.m.**
- Learn how to make two traditional Japanese dishes: *Chirashi* and *Kinpira Renkon*
- Instructed by church members **Judy Hamamoto** and **Yoko Oishi**
- Class is free. We welcome donations.
- Bring an apron, chef bandana, and your appetite!
- Reserve your space now! Seating is limited to 25 spaces.
- To reserve your spot, contact **Rev. Okano** at naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com or call (626) 233-2359.



Spring Grand Festival

Sunday, April 13 – 9:30 a.m.

Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento

Program I – *Gochi* Sanctuary Service

Program II – *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony

- Members and the public are invited to attend.
- **A curry lunch** will be available for \$10 (includes \$5 donation). Contact your church to reserve a lunch.
- **No bus** will be available from the L.A. Church.

Old Plaque-burning Service

The Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento will hold its annual *Joen-no-gi* Old Plaque-burning service on the *Goreichi* grounds on Sunday, May 25. Return your old holy tea plaques and holy paper plaques to be burned.

Memorial Tower Enshrinements – Fall 2025

Enshrinements in the Gedatsu Memorial Tower are scheduled for the Fall Grand Festival on August 31 in Sacramento. Enshrinement plaques are \$500 each. Applications for enshrinement will be accepted until June 15. Application forms are available at your church office.

Sacramento Congregation Bids Heartfelt Farewell to Reverend Mica



"Best Wishes and Thanks, Rev. Mica."



Sacramento Spiritual Center members and friends gathered on Sunday, February 23, for the monthly Appreciation Service. It was the last service Reverend Mica Rodriguez (above, with daughter Ami) would officially conduct as a Gedatsu minister. Due to the poor financial condition of the church and significant cutbacks in operational expenses, including staff salaries, Rev. Mica has sought employment elsewhere.

In appreciation for her friendship and service, members held a potluck luncheon in her honor.



L.A. Church Members Welcome the Kojimas



"I wish to express my gratitude to everyone for the warm welcome extended to me and my family. It has been wonderful to reconnect with old friends and to meet many new members. Although it has only been a few months since we arrived, we already feel as if this is our new hometown. Thank you for your kindness, hospitality, and support." -- Reverend Takao Kojima

In Los Angeles, Reverend Takao Kojima and his wife Tomoko were warmly welcomed by L.A. Church members (shown at right with Mark Ishida). They were accompanied to the U.S. in December by their daughter Atsuko, 31, who returned to Japan in March.

Read on page 4 how the Kojimas teamed up to teach a *Chado* class.

Learning and Enjoying “The Art of *Matcha* Tea”

The downstairs social hall of the L.A. Church was transformed into a Japanese tea house when Team Kojima – **Reverend Takao Kojima**, his wife **Tomoko**, and daughter **Atsuko** – presented participants with a rich cultural experience: the Japanese tradition of *Chado*, the “way of tea.”

Lacking a formal tearoom setting, the Kojimas cleverly replicated the environment and various elements of the ritual, using traditional utensils and ornaments. Although it was the first time for most of the participants to experience *Matcha* tea in the traditional Japanese style, everyone appreciated and enjoyed the cultural experience.



The *Matcha* tea ceremony event held on February 23 was organized by the L.A. Gedatsu Church Women's Club as part of the service group's monthly cultural, community-building programs.

More than 20 participants – members and guests of all ages – participated in the cultural event.



Following the opening prayer led by Reverend Naoya, the “Art of *Matcha* Tea” class began with an introduction to the Japanese tea ceremony, known as *Chado*. Reverend Kojima explained the ceremony's origins and history. Atsuko Kojima, in traditional kimono, performed the ceremony, carefully demonstrating each step according to the established *Chado* ritual.



Acting as the ceremony host, Atsuko prepared and served *Matcha* tea to Uzuko Shiroishi, who acted as a guest (center photo). Participants stepped forward to closely observe the formal manners and gestures of preparing, serving, and consuming *Matcha* tea.



Tomoko Kojima assists Ryunosuke Okano in the proper technique of whisking the *Matcha* tea.



After the demonstration, it was time for participants to practice what they learned. They took turns preparing and serving *Matcha* tea to one another and sipping the tea in the prescribed manner.

Gedatsu Teaching 3

By Seiken Okano (Gedatsu Kongo)

Gedatsu-kyo monthly newsletter, June 18, 1935

Translation and Commentary by Reverend Hisakazu Taki

Gedatsu is truly sacred. Gedatsu is easy to practice, yet also very difficult. This is because we embody the spiritual and physical heritage of ancestors going back tens of thousands of generations.

You may think that your ancestors were truly moral, but I don't believe this is so. Know that if you begrudge someone, you, in return, will be begrudged. If you are jealous, you will be the object of jealousy. Therefore, I implore you to stop being jealous, hateful, sorrowful, combative and arrogant. Because of your ancestral heritage, this is not easily done. You are the extension of your ancestors, and your descendants will extend from you. Therefore, I urge you to improve your thoughts to heighten your morality.

Once you are aware of the negative physical and spiritual traits you have inherited from your ancestors, eradicate them immediately and establish a strong moral value in your family. You will then be blessed with physical health, family harmony and material rewards, and will be completely happy and cheerful. If you assess yourself honestly, you will clearly understand this.

You may think that you alone know your own mind. However, it is impossible to know your true state of mind because of self-praise, formed through generations of ancestors. Only by carefully observing others, and comparing yourself with them, can you know your true self.

You are wrong to think that you grew up by yourself and became an adult without any help from other people. A child, unable to do anything by himself, is painstakingly taught by his mother – from how to hold a spoon to how to walk. When you went to school, your teachers taught you everything. Through the knowledge of your predecessors, you matured. Realize that you are but a tiny drop in a vast sea, in which you receive the blessings of everyone around you. When you truly understand this and express absolute gratitude, you will achieve the highest wisdom.

Your predecessors – through their self-conceit – may have thought they were imparting their knowledge and wisdom. But they themselves forgot appreciation and obligation to their predecessors. Thus, we all have a wrong view of ourselves. We should recognize and improve our ancestral heritage both spiritually and physically. This in turn could improve society. Please think deeply about this.

You are lucky simply to be alive, even though you may idle away your life each day. I would like you to live feeling like the Buddha. The statue of the Buddha is naked with two forefingers pointing toward heaven and earth. There is no deception or embellishment in him. Born naked, he realized and appreciated the sanctity of heaven's blessings. He stated, "I am the only eternal being in the universe," meaning that for the first time, he was able to truly comprehend the sanctity of Nature's blessings. In those words, there is no embellishment or deception. He has distinctly perceived the sanctity of heaven's blessings and virtues. In effect, he stated that if one proceeds with absolute gratitude and obligation, one would truly be happy.

When the Buddha attained this state of consciousness and clearly became self-cognizant, he uttered: "Ah, I have attained Gedatsu!" If you can understand this, it is easy for you to attain Gedatsu. Then you will be blessed with good health, harmony of family and material rewards, and will always be joyful and cheerful.

People who decry societies' degeneration in the world are biased and prejudiced. Who is responsible for the world, nation, society and family? The family, composed of a husband and wife, is a microcosm of the larger society. A group of families forms a society and, in turn, a nation. Today's society is but a cluster of people born from couples who lack proper understanding. I urge you to reform your family and society, but be aware that those who focus only on the deterioration of society are looking in the wrong direction. They should look inwardly at themselves first and realize how, as a couple, they are deceiving each other.

Using the Law of Nature as a mirror, reflect on yourself. You will then see that your mind ultimately expresses itself in your speech and behavior. The most frightening fact is that those around you are the images of you in the mirror. They are visible, they speak, wear clothes and walk around.

People have grand illusions that are only pipe dreams, never to be realized. I urge you to fully understand this and proceed along the path of Gedatsu. Gedatsu is truly sacred. Nothing can be achieved without practicing Gedatsu.

Commentary on Gedatsu Teaching 3

Gedatsu Kongo said that Gedatsu is easy and, at the same time, most difficult to practice. Why? This is because, as he stated, “we embody the spiritual and physical heritage of ancestors going back tens of thousands of generations.”

By examining our DNA, we can clearly see that we are the sons and daughters of our parents. No matter one’s status in life, one cannot exist without parents. The entire physical and mental traits of our ancestors are in our DNA. We often see evidence of this. A girl resembles her mother. A boy, without being taught, possesses a distinct habit of his grandfather. Facts like these tell us that every quality inherited from our parents and ancestors is within our DNA.

Thus, we are already conditioned hereditarily when we are born – and after birth, we are conditioned by our circumstances. Our family traditions, in particular, can profoundly affect our personality, all at a subconscious level. Whether that influence is positive or negative is the question. We are all raised in a certain family environment and, therefore, unknowingly influenced by family traditions.

Thus, the spiritual tradition of the family, which is transmitted from ancestors, affects our mentality and helps form our character. This is so-called “*karma*.” We are all conditioned physically and spiritually by the family tradition of our ancestors.

Self-awareness Unlocks Our Karma

Importantly, Gedatsu Kongo emphatically stated that anyone can become happy, no matter what negative karma they may have in the family tradition. We have the key to change our life and realize happiness – namely, our self-awareness. Self-awareness through profound self-reflection will liberate us from family karma. When you find something negative within yourself, try to correct it immediately. Then you can start a new life. This is the path of happiness.

Quoting the Buddha, Gedatsu Kongo explains the meaning of Gedatsu. Buddha’s statement – “I am the only eternal being in the universe” – is well known, but I think most people do not understand its true meaning. This may sound very arrogant, but it’s not.

What the Buddha attempts to say with these words is that each of us is a unique and precious being in the universe. These words are the expression of Buddha’s total confidence in human nature and the universe.

When you have this confidence in yourself and the universe, you will be able to comprehend the sanctity of Nature’s blessings and will be truly thankful for it. Gedatsu Kongo called this state of consciousness “Gedatsu.” When you attain this state of Gedatsu, you will be blessed with good health, family harmony and material things and will always be joyful and cheerful.

Gedatsu Kongo very clearly expressed his basic idea about “social reform.” He explained that the basis of social reform should be in each individual’s awareness – that each individual is ultimately responsible for the present society. If you are truly aware of this, you will be able to change society and achieve world peace.

The structure of this world is like that of a clock, in which there are many interconnected gears. If a single tiny gear stops working, the clock will not function. If one gear moves in the wrong direction, the other gears also will move incorrectly. Each gear is responsible for the working of the entire clock.

Similarly, all beings in the universe are interconnected. The universe and we are inseparable. This understanding should be the foundation for the betterment of society and world peace. Reform should always begin with yourself. The situation will then change according to your change, because you are connected with the world. This is Gedatsu Kongo’s basic idea about “social reform.”

Husband and Wife Play a Key Role

Gedatsu Kongo particularly emphasized the importance of a couple’s role. If a husband is unfaithful to his wife, or if a wife is untruthful to her husband, their infidelity will be definitely revealed through their attitudes, actions and speech. This, in turn, will cause various troubles and discord for the couple and the family.

Gedatsu Kongo said, “The most frightening fact is that those around you are the images of you in the mirror. They are visible, they speak, wear clothes and walk around.” These words mean that husband

(Continued on back page)

FEBRUARY 2025 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$3,794

General Donations: J. Tanaka, A. Sebe, M/M D. Ide, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, K. Ota-Schubert, M. Fukushima, M. Lumpkin, No Name, M/M P. Tateishi, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, M/M S. Sekikawa, S. Taketa, S. Yabut, T. Bartos

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R. Nakatani	In memory of Roy Nakatani
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude for "Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
J. Tanaka	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service appreciation in memory of Karl Tanaka and Noboru Tateishi
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude for Sun Spirit Service
M/M D. Ide	Sun Spirit Service appreciation and gratitude
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude for Appreciation Service
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude – monthly donation
M/M D. Ide	Gratitude for 4 th Sunday Service and appreciation for Mica Sensei
M/M C. Tanaka	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service appreciation
M/M C. Tanaka	Appreciation for Mica Sensei in Sacramento (\$500)

Southern California Total: \$4,100

General: Y. Elvin, K. Fujii, M/M, M. Hamada, J. Hamamoto, M/M T. Hiram, T. Ishida, J. Kaku, M/M T. Kojima, K. Kuritani, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M D. Mah, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, P. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, E. Ogawa, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, M/M S. Shalkan, D. Shiroishi, N. Takara, A. Tsujimura, C. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, R. Wakasa, M/M P. Young

Special Acknowledgments

I. Kawamura	"Never Forgotten" Service 2025
Do. Shiroishi	Appreciation for New Year Service
Do. Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" Service for Tadayoshi Ishida, Yvonne Ishida, Sayoko Shiroishi, and Max Chodor
D. Mukai	"Never Forgotten" Service for Karl Tanaka, Kimiye Akiyoshi, and Mashe Akiyoshi
M/M V. Mizokami	Appreciation for home blessing
S. Kaku	"Never Forgotten" Service for Morio Kaku
M/M N. Chodor	"Never Forgotten" Service for Tadayoshi Ishida, Yvonne Ishida, Sayoko Shiroishi, and Max Chodor
J. Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" Service for Sayoko Shiroishi and April Navran
T. Ishida	"Never Forgotten" Service for Tadayoshi Ishida
De. Shiroishi	"Never Forgotten" Service for Tadayoshi Ishida and Maxine Chodor
M/M T. Matsumoto	"Never Forgotten" Service for Yoshihisa Hirayama
D. Mukai	Appreciation and gratitude to Gedatsu Kongo
J. Ito	In memory Nancy Michiyo Ito (\$500)

Online Donations: Total: \$326

General: G. Iwata, S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura, J. Reid, G. Hass

*Note: Special Acknowledgments are listed for gifts \$100+.
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(Gedatsu Teaching 3 – Continued from page 5)

and wife are mirrors who reflect each other. Many couples complain of their discord or each other's infidelity. But blaming each other never solves the problem. Before criticizing others, think about your own attitude toward others. Both husband and wife are responsible for their relationship. If you are unfaithful to your wife or husband, your spouse will reflect your unfaithfulness to them. Your partner's attitude is a reflection of your attitude toward them. This understanding is the foundation to rebuild the true mutual relationship of the couple.

Children Copy and Reflect Their Parents

A couple's feelings toward each other affect not only their relationship but also affect their children and especially influence their children's future.

When Gedatsu Kongo says, "They speak, wear clothes and walk around," he means the children's attitudes are the reflection of their parents. They copy you.

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Many families have various problems with children, such as juvenile delinquency and violence. They are the results of their parents' influence on them. Before condemning the children, parents must deeply reflect on their own minds and attitudes. This is the key to resolve the problems.

The husband's and wife's self-reflection and mutual understanding are the keys to solve all problems in the family. While this seems quite reasonable, the reality of the world appears just the opposite. Husbands and wives, parents and children blame each other and do not admit their own faults. Therefore, Gedatsu Kongo stated, "People have grand illusions that are only pipe dreams, never to be realized."

Our self-reflection is the beginning of true happiness. Blaming others without self-examination is like trying to grab an illusion of happiness. Such a pipe dream will never come true. We should look at ourselves first. This attitude will realize our true peace and happiness. This is the path of Gedatsu.

