



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo’s Thought for the Month

*“True courage is found
in doing one’s utmost and then
entrusting the outcome to a
higher power beyond human control.”*

Gedatsu Kongo teaches us that reasoning is unnecessary when one has a heart of true faith. Empty arguments only destroy courage and passion and must therefore be avoided.

We are thus taught to live with the courage to follow the Divine Will, guided by a heart of faith free from excessive reasoning.

FEBRUARY 2026

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	8		No Service
Tue	10	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Tue	17		Church Close (in lieu of Presidents’ Day)
Sun	22	10:00 am	Sun Spirit and Appreciation Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	10:00 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	8	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	15	10:00 am	Appreciation and Sun Spirit Service
Tue	17		Church Close (in lieu of Presidents’ Day)
Thu	19	5:30 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	22	10:00 am	<i>Shakyo</i> Class –Writing <i>Hannya Shingyo</i>

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	28	12 noon	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom
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MARCH 2026

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	8	10:00 am	No Service
Tue	10	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	22	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	1	10:00 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	8	10:00 am	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
Sun	15	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Higan</i> Service
Thu	19_	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	22	10:00 am	Culture Class TBD

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	14	10:00 am	Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom
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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.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, February 1, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kaneko (Ide) Hatae, George Hughley, Hisaye (Kino) Ide, Anna May Horner, 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 8, 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 12, at 9:30 a.m.** at the **Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento.**

Obituary

The L.A. Church mourns the loss of two long-time members. **Teiko Fukushima**, passed away on December 1 at the age of 96. She is survived by her husband, **Deacon Takeshi Fukushima**; daughters, **Debra (Hiro) Nishi** and **Janice (Mark) Hansen**; and four grandchildren.

Kiyoko Murakami, passed away on January 15 at the age of 85. She is survived by her husband, **Miyuki Murakami.**



Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund (*Hosankai*)

The Gedatsu Kongo Appreciation Fund was established as a means for members to express their gratitude for the boundless blessings given to them by Gedatsu Kongo and to demonstrate their devotion and commitment to his spirit. Participation in the fund requires a minimum annual pledge of \$600 a year, in addition to the general membership dues.

Thank you to these 2025 Appreciation Fund donors:

- Fred / Cookie Barthel**
- John / Nancy Horner**
- Dave / Penny Ide**
- Mark / Marie Ishida**
- Tadao Ishida**
- Jo Ann Kaku**
- Takao / Tomoko Kojima**
- 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**

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 15.

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.



“Shakyo.” Practice the Art of Writing the Heart Sutra with Japanese Calligraphy

- **Sunday February 22, at 10 a.m.** The L.A. Church continues with class instruction of *Shakyo* – the peaceful, ancient Buddhist practice of writing the Heart Sutra (*Hannya Shingyo*), with traditional brush and ink.
- Taught by **Reverend Naoya Okano** and **Reverend Takao Kojima**.
- Open to all ages (students must sit quietly for up to 90 minutes).
- Class is free. Fee is charged for supplies (brush, calligraphy paper, ink, and ink stick). \$5 to rent supplies. \$20 to purchase a supply kit. Donations are appreciated.
- For reservations, contact Rev. Okano at (626) 288-1212 or (626) 233-2359 or naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com.

AROUND OUR CHURCH



A Joyful Celebration of Christmas at the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church

Good cheer and warm holiday spirit filled the air as the L.A. Church observed its annual Christmas service, holiday music program, and potluck luncheon. The congregation was delighted by performances from the 13-member Gedatsu Ukulele Group and welcomed a special visit from Santa (aka **Brian Waldman**), who brought smiles and excitement to children and families alike (see photos and story on back page). **Michelle Ishida**, who concluded her service as Sunday School teacher, was presented with a gift in appreciation for her years of loving dedication. The program concluded with a delicious potluck lunch in the downstairs social hall and patio.

Special thanks to:

- **L.A. Sunday School** for the Christmas stockings that were filled with sweet treats and were given by Santa to each child.
- **Mariko Locheo** for obtaining the gifts under the Christmas tree that were selected by the children (photo lower left).
- **Sunday School** for the festive poinsettias and to **Kim Katsumura** for the pine centerpiece that decorated the altar.
- **Tetsuya and Sachiyo Matsumoto** for the delicious holiday sheet cake – a special treat they donate every Christmas.
- **And Brian Waldman**, who, for many years, graciously suits up as our Santa.
- **See the back page for more photos and to read Brian’s comments on his Santa experience.**

Gedatsu Teaching 10 By Seiken Okano (Gedatsu Kongo)

Gedatsu-kyo monthly newsletter, February 18, 1936
Translation and commentary by Rev. H. Taki

Gedatsu is truly sacred and precious.

Get rid of your ego, self-reflect and sincerely practice morality. Live each day and night with a deep sense of appreciation and requital. Work for the salvation of mankind and follow the path of humanity. I have repeatedly explained this in the monthly Gedatsu newsletter.

A selfish person neither believes nor accepts the path of gratitude, the Gedatsu path, even when he hears the Gedatsu teaching. In fact, he may feel annoyed on hearing it. According to Buddhism, this is because of the Five Impurities: (1) turbulence of the times, (2) degenerating ideology, (3) spread of earthly desires, (4) lowering of human nature, and (5) shortening of life. By pursuing various desires, a person spends his lifetime astray, in a state of confusion and lawlessness. It is only natural that he suffers.

Buddhist teachings explain that there are four basic human sufferings: birth, aging, sickness and death. Beyond these sufferings, there are others, such as grief, as well as sufferings due to material cravings, greed and attachment. When one demonstrates greed and various cravings, one will not only suffer on earth while alive but also will suffer further in hell after death. There are also other sufferings, such as poverty, parting from loved ones and confronting adversaries. Buddhist teaching states that you should not explain the teaching to those who scheme and ridicule, who are lazy, or who have egotistical views, because they won't believe or accept the teaching even when they hear it. They are attached to selfish desires and cannot understand. Therefore, the Buddha said you should not explain the teaching to those people.

By contrast, if you renounce your ego, even while living in the present social environment, you can live happily and freely. You can also succeed in life, enjoy longevity and live contentedly without fear, boredom and troubles.

This is because, as I have stated, Gedatsu is sacred and precious. Gedatsu is truly profound and vast. I urge you to study and inquire into Gedatsu more deeply. Please read my book on the Gedatsu doctrine and monthly Gedatsu newsletters thoroughly.

Self-reflect, self-reform and render salvation to those who suffer mental conflicts, while working hard in your occupation. This is the path of humanity to save people and benefit the world.

Without changing your negative attitude in life, how can you find peace and happiness even when you pray to God? I urge you to seriously consider this.

Commentary on Gedatsu Teaching 10

Gedatsu Kongo explains again the Gedatsu teaching. In particular, he emphasizes here the importance of self-reflection as the means to achieving true happiness.

He also emphasizes the importance of self-renunciation and observing the highest morality. He urges us to live with appreciation and gratitude, and work for people's happiness, as this path of Gedatsu will bring forth happiness for yourself and others.

Some people may listen to and follow the teaching. Others, however, will neither believe nor accept Gedatsu, because their egos prevent them from hearing the teaching. This state of mind is called the "Five Impurities" in the Buddhist tradition.

The Five Impurities are the indications of a degenerated society: (1) turbulent times, when famines, plagues and wars arise, (2) degenerating ideology caused by erroneous views, (3) spread of earthly desires, (4) lowering of human nature because of people's rejection of morality, and (5) shortening of life.

Ego: The Source of Human Misery

Gedatsu Kongo describes the degenerated state of present society by using the above-mentioned Buddhist terminology. Without my going into detail, the founder simply describes the selfish state of the present world. When people are selfish, their egos are the source of every human misery in the world. Selfish people won't listen to the teaching or believe it.

Therefore, it is very hard to save these people. You are very fortunate to be able to study the Gedatsu teaching. While none of us is perfect, by listening to the teaching, you can become aware of your selfish thoughts and will be able to correct your wrong attitude. This is possible not only because of your efforts, but also because of the guidance of your ancestors. This is an important point to understand.

When you self-reflect and become aware of your egotistical thoughts, you will be free from egoism and will be physically and spiritually happy. Thus, self-reflection and self-reform is the path to your true happiness. This is why Gedatsu Kongo repeatedly states that Gedatsu is truly sacred. He urges us to carefully read and study his books and writings in order to understand this point. He also encourages us to try to share this path of happiness with people who are suffering. This is your sacred duty bestowed by God.

Change Your Thoughts to Change Your Life

Gedatsu Kongo concludes this writing with following words: "Without changing your negative attitude in life, how can you find peace and happiness even when you pray to God?"

Some people may think that to have religion is just to pray to God for personal gains without any effort and self-reflection. Such an attitude will never lead you to happiness. Gedatsu, the path of happiness, always starts with your self-reflection and self-reform. When you self-reflect and become aware of your selfish thoughts, you will apologize to God for your wrong attitude in life and will be able to become a new person by correcting your faults. This total change of your mind is the beginning of your true peace and happiness.

For Your Personal Study . . .

To aid you in your study and practice of Gedatsu, take a moment to ponder the following questions:

Question 1: *Our founder Gedatsu Kongo repeatedly stressed the importance of self-reflection. How do you practice self-reflection in your daily life?*

Question 2: *Do you practice Gedatsu in your daily work? If so, how? If not, why?*

Gedatsu Teaching 11 By Seiken Okano (Gedatsu Kongo)

Gedatsu-kyo monthly newsletter, March 18, 1936
Translation and commentary by Rev. H. Taki

Gedatsu is truly sacred. Every month, I have explained in the monthly Gedatsu newsletter why Gedatsu is sacred. I have also stated in my sermons each month, "Without practicing Gedatsu, nothing can be achieved." When you sincerely practice Gedatsu, you will be aware that Gedatsu is truly sacred. As I have explained in my sermons, the more civilization advances, the more people suffer. This is because the advancement of civilization is the manifestation of human desires. Knowledge gives birth to civilization, and civilization in turn creates additional cravings. Human desires are boundless. The advancement of human knowledge and rapid progress of science have no meaning if we do not have self-awareness of truth, goodness and beauty.

Gedatsu is sacred because nothing will ever be accomplished without practicing Gedatsu. Gedatsu encourages us to follow the path of appreciation and gratitude each day, to give our full effort in our vocations and to recognize the immeasurable blessings we receive from country, parents and society. This is the essential teaching of Gedatsu.

Commentary on Gedatsu Teaching 11

Gedatsu Kongo explains the same teaching he has repeatedly given before: "Gedatsu is truly sacred and precious." It is important to understand why he repeats this same message again and again.

Even though you are a Gedatsu member, you may not realize how truly blessed you are to have Gedatsu in your life. If that is the case, ponder deeply on what Gedatsu means to you. It is totally due to the guidance of generations of ancestors and the many people around you that you are able to learn and practice Gedatsu today.

A famous Buddhist scripture called "Sutra Opening Verse" says: "This teaching is very deep and beautiful. We are fortunate to have a very rare chance to see it, study it and practice it. We vow to realize its true meaning."

These words express our joy and gratitude to have a chance to encounter the holy teaching. When you truly realize that you are given a rare opportunity to study and practice Gedatsu because of the guidance of many people around you, you should be thankful for the immeasurable blessings you receive from those people.

You will then be able to understand the essence of Gedatsu and realize that you cannot achieve anything without practicing Gedatsu.

Gedatsu Kongo stated that, with the advance of human knowledge, human miseries have multiplied. This is because the advance of civilization lacks man's religious mind or morality. Gedatsu is the path to cultivate one's introspective mind and inner spirituality. Appreciation and gratitude is the path to open your spiritual eyes. To express our gratitude toward country, parents and society, we should maximize our efforts to benefit people through our daily duties. This is Gedatsu – the path of happiness for everyone.

For your personal study . . .

To aid you in your study and practice of Gedatsu, take a moment to ponder the following questions:

Question 1: *Do you really feel Gedatsu is important for you? If you do, why? If not, why?*

Question 2: *How do you interpret Gedatsu Kongo's words: "Nothing will ever be accomplished without practicing Gedatsu."*

DECEMBER 2025 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$3,800

General Donations: A. Sebe, M/M C. Tanaka, J. Detwiler / J. Sebe, K. Ota Schubert, K. Gibson, M. Fukushima, M. Lumpkin, No Name, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, R/R Tateishi, S. McSwain, S. Yabut

Special Acknowledgments

J. Tanaka	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service in memory of Kiyoshi Tateishi, Tokio Tateishi and Tomota Tateishi
M/M D. Ide	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service appreciation in memory of Kanzaburo Ide and Kazuo Ide
P./D./K. Tateishi	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service appreciation
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
J. Tanaka	2025 end of year appreciation
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude Appreciation Service
M/M D. Ide	2025 end of year appreciation and gratitude
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude monthly donation
M/M J. Horner	Monthly donation and “Never Forgotten Memorial Service appreciation (\$600)
M/M C. Tanaka	Appreciation and gratitude 2025 (\$1,000)

Southern California Total: \$6,905

General: M/M R. Allum, A. DeWitt, J. Hamamoto, T. Ishida, B. Kimura, M/M T. Kojima, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, Anonymous (\$500), M/M V. Mizokami, M. Kubota, M/M S. Mukai, T. Murakami, M. Nakamura, T. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, A. Sebe, Anonymous (\$1,200), M/M S. Shiroishi, M/M S. Tashiro (\$500), A. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, M. Takahashi

Special Acknowledgments

M/M S. Mukai	In memory of Reverend Ishida
De. Shiroishi	In memory of Reverend Ishida
M/M Norman Chodor	Memorial service for Reverend Junnosuke and Eiko Ishida
T. / K. Ishida	13-year memorial service for Eiko and Junnosuke Ishida (\$1,000)
T. Matsumoto	Appreciation for old plaques
Do. Shiroishi	Appreciation for Ishida and Shimohara ancestors blessing
T. Ishida	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
M/M H. Tsujimura	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service for Helen Nishida
M/M N. Chodor	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service for Glen Blaser
M/M S. Mukai	“Never Forgotten” Service for Tomota Tateishi
M/M H. Tsujimura	Christmas party service
Do. Shiroishi	Appreciation for Bishop Kishida memorial and holiday service
M/M N. Chodor	Appreciation for holiday service
J. Kaku	End of the year 2025 appreciation
M/M Ken Kuritani	End of the year 2025 appreciation (\$500)

Online Donations: Total: \$779

General: G. Iwata, D. Allum, S. Shiroishi, J. Reid, W. Young, H. Tsujimura, M/M A. Kishida, G. Hass

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



GEDATSU COMPANION

Vol. 77 No. 2 February 2026



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Brian Waldman – A True Santa at Heart

Behind the familiar red velvet suit, white beard and spectacles that he has donned every Christmas for the past 21 years, **Brian Waldman** is a true Santa, who loves to bring “loving, giving, joy and gratitude” to the children and families who attend our L.A. Church Christmas program. He delights in seeing the reactions of kids and families in the “holiday spirit of love and forgiveness.” Brian follows in the footsteps of his late father, **Bill Waldman**, who was our church Santa for decades. He happily continues the tradition, Brian says, “to honor my father.”