



GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo’s Thought for the Month

“One’s vocation is based on repentance. Vocation without repentance leads to greed.”*

What criteria do we use when choosing a vocation in life? Compensation, personal fulfillment, passion, values, skills and talents?

If we reflect on Gedatsu Kongo’s words, his intent may become clearer if we interpret ‘repentance’ as ‘humility.’ When we consider our future calling in life, compensation is important but making it our sole motivation may lead to a dead end. By reflecting deeply with humility, identifying work that most benefits society, and committing to it wholeheartedly, we maximize our value as human beings. In this way, we can discover and pursue our true vocation.

*** “Repentance” is a direct translation of the Japanese word *zange*, which Gedatsu Kongo used in his message. Our study: Why did the Master choose this particular word in connection with one’s vocation?**

APRIL 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

| | | | |
|------------|-----------|----------------|---|
| Sun | 5 | 10:00 am | “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service |
| Sun | 12 | 9:30 am | Spring Grand Festival Saito Goma Fire Ceremony |
| Tue | 21 | 7:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet |
| Sun | 26 | | No Service |

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|--|
| Sun | 5 | 10:00 am | “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service |
| Sun | 12 | 9:30 am | Spring Grand Festival (Sacramento) |
| Sun | 19 | 10:00 am | Appreciation Service Easter Service and Easter Egg Hunt |
| Thu | 23 | 5:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Zoom |
| Sun | 26 | 10:00 am | Dessert-making Class |

CHURCHWIDE

| | | | |
|-----|---|----------|--------------------------------|
| Sat | 4 | 10:00 am | Steering Team Meeting via Zoom |
|-----|---|----------|--------------------------------|

MAY 2025

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|--|
| Sun | 3 | 10:00 am | “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service |
| Sun | 10 | | No Service |
| Tue | 12 | 7:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet |
| Sun | 24 | 10:00 am | Appreciation and Mother’s Day Service / Old Plaque Burning Service (<i>Joen-no-gi</i>) |

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 Mother’s Day Service |
| Thu | 21 | 5:00 pm | Regional Board Meeting via Zoom |
| Sun | 24 | 10:00 am | TBD |



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 5, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Suyeko Matsumoto, Natsuko Nakatani, Masashi Russell Ota, Arthur Sakamoto, Susumu Suyeyasu, Chiyoko Suzuki, Thomas Taro Takashashi, Keichi Takemura, 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 5, 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.**



Increase in Prices for Amacha Products

Due to increased import costs for *Amacha* products from *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, the prices of these products have risen. The following prices are effective April 1.

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------------------|
| <i>Amacha</i> (leaf tea) | \$35 | (formerly \$30) |
| <i>Amacha</i> (teabags) | \$32 | (formerly \$29) |
| <i>Amacha</i> Extract | \$35 | (formerly \$25) |
| <i>Amacha</i> Soap | \$8 | (formerly \$5) |
| <i>Amacha</i> Candy | \$3 | (formerly \$2.50) |

Thank you for your understanding.



**Spring Grand Festival
Sunday, April 12 – 9:30 a.m.
Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento**

Program I – Prayer Service and Program Universal Life Force (*Tenjinchigi*)
Program II – *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony

- Members and the public are invited to attend.
- **Reverend Hiroyuki Nakamura**, director of religious affairs, *Gedatsu-kai* Japan, will be the keynote speaker.
- **Reserve a lunch.** Lunches will be available for \$10 per person (includes \$5 donation). Contact your church to reserve a lunch.

Memorial Tower Enshrinements – Fall 2026

Enshrinements in the Gedatsu Memorial Tower are scheduled for the Fall Grand Festival on September 6 in Sacramento. Enshrinement plaques are \$500 each. Applications for enshrinement will be accepted until June 15. Application forms are available at your church office.

Old Plaque-burning Service

The Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento will hold its annual *Joen-no-gi* Old Plaque-burning Service on Sunday, May 24. Return your old holy tea plaques and holy paper plaques to be burned.



**Baking Class – Orange Muffins
Sunday, April 26, at 10 a.m.
Gedatsu Kendo Dojo (next to church)**

- Learn to bake delicious orange muffins with cream cheese filling. Bring a rubber/silicone spatula.
- Class is instructed by **Yukie Sira**.
- Class is free. A \$10 donation is appreciated.
- Maximum 12 spaces. Reserve a space by April 21.
- Contact the L.A. Church at (626) 288-1212 or **Reverend Naoya** at naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com or call/text (626) 233-2359.



New Member Forum
“Fun” . . . “Informative” . . . “Successful”

The L.A. Church hosted its first monthly New Member Forum, bringing together newcomers in a casual, relaxed setting to introduce them to Gedatsu and explain how the teaching can be incorporated into their daily lives. It was also an opportunity for them to meet the ministers and to foster connection and friendships within the church.

“It’s definitely not Gedatsu 101,” says **Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi**, who organized the forum to welcome newcomers who joined the church after attending the *mochi-tsuki* event in January 2025. Led by Jo Ann, **Cookie Barthel** and **Reverends Naoya Okano** and **Takao Kojima**, the session included informal discussions about the Gedatsu study, a Q&A session, and a demonstration by Rev. Naoya on how to prepare *Amacha* tea. Attendees shared personal anecdotes and experiences, along with laughter and warm conversations. By the end of the hour-long session and delicious luncheon that followed, they were eager to learn more. Future sessions will be held the first Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m.



Clockwise from lower left: Rev. Kojima, Jo Ann Shiroishi, Cookie Barthel, Anna Rico, Julie Mah, Nathan Scott, Tae Scott, Uzuko Shiroishi, Machiko Masuda, Lance Masuda, Michiye Takahashi, Ron Pang. Rev. Naoya, photographer.

Gedatsu Church USA Board of Directors



Board Directors met in March on a Zoom video conference. From left to right from top: Mark Ishida (chairman), Joyce Reid (vice-chairman/secretary), Allen Shiroisohi, Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi, Deacon June Tanaka, Deacon Hisato Tsujimura, Rev. Takao Kojima, Mariko Locheo (co-treasurer), Bishop Teruo Okano, Tetsuya Matsumoto, Dave Ide, Rev. Naoya Okano. Not shown: Marie Ishida (co-treasurer), Sr. Deacon Jackson Ito.

Comments from Attendees:

“The meeting was fun and informative. I look forward to learning more about the Gedatsu teachings.”

“I had a nice time and got to know people through their introductions.”

“I enjoyed sharing childhood memories and our connections to each other and the church. Thank you for arranging the meeting.”

“It was a successful first session. Everyone was happy with the way it was conducted.”

“I didn’t know what to expect, but I enjoyed the program and the delicious lunch. Everyone was friendly, and I learned basic things about the church. I’ve put the date of the next session on my calendar.”

“I enjoyed making new friends. The friendly banter was fun. It’s nice to spend time with the reverends in a casual setting.”

Update on the Sale of the Sacramento Goreichi Property

During the Board of Directors meeting in September 2025, concerns were raised regarding inconsistencies in the church bylaws, along with a suggestion to reevaluate the church’s financial situation and budget. As a result, the Board decided to temporarily remove the Goreichi property from the real estate market.

At our March 2026 meeting, the church bylaws were amended to correct the inconsistencies. Further, the Board decided to review the church’s fiscal budget and meet in June to determine whether the Sacramento church property should be sold or retained. We will keep you updated on this matter.

Thank you for your generous donations and continued support.

Mark Ishida, Chairman

Introduction to Study Series New

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the founding of Gedatsu, we are pleased to introduce a new study series based on the teachings of Master Gedatsu Kongo.

"The Practice of Humility, Poverty, and Death" is one of our founder's oldest and most well-known teachings.



A series of articles based on this teaching was published in *The Gedatsu Magazine* in Japan in 2022. We are grateful to **Reverend Naoya Okano** for translating these articles for American readers. We start with Part 1 below. Let's begin our study.

"The Practice of Humility, Poverty, and Death"

The "Practice of Humility, Poverty, and Death" is perhaps the most distinctive in Gedatsu teachings. In this series, we will study these practices with the goal of applying them to our daily lives.

The fundamental attitude in learning the teachings of **Gedatsu Kongo** is to "learn as if it were meant for you." This means receiving every word and guidance as if it were spoken directly to you, contemplating the true intent behind his words, and putting your realizations into practice.

"You Are a Salary-Bird!"

In Gedatsu lore, there is a famous story regarding a man who had found employment with the police force.



Gedatsu Kongo told him, *"You aren't a human being. You are a bird called a 'Salary-Bird' (Gekkyu-tori). I don't like Salary-Birds."* From then on, every time they met, Gedatsu Kongo would repeat the term "Salary-Bird."

However, when this same man later reported his promotion, Gedatsu Kongo celebrated with him, saying, *"That is wonderful news. Congratulations."*

This anecdote shows that Gedatsu Kongo was not rejecting the profession of a "salaryman" (wage earner) itself. Rather, he was rejecting the "bad habits" that wage earners often fall into — such as taking pleasure in spending company money on personal food and drink, or feeling they have "won" by cutting corners or slacking off.

Gedatsu Kongo once said: *"A person who works only to eat is a lazy soul who would choose not to work at all if they could eat without effort."*

For those with a fixed monthly salary — unlike those whose income fluctuates based on results — it is easy to fall into this misguided mindset.

Heavenly Vocation is Paradise

Another point to consider is that the joy of work is not found in the compensation alone. The sense of fulfillment when you can say to yourself, *"I have nothing to regret today; I did my absolute best,"* is a joy beyond compare. This aligns with the teaching: *"Paradise is found within the scope of one's heavenly vocation."*

(Continued on page 5)

("The Practice" – continued from page 4)

The shallow "Salary-Bird" mentality is a meaningless way of life that fails to experience this human fulfillment; it is a life that misses the very purpose of being born human. In a modern era where nearly 90 percent of the workforce are "salary-takers," we must self-reflect: *"Have I become a Salary-Bird?"* and strive to be someone who can report their deeds to Gedatsu Kongo with pride. This is how we bring the "Salary-Bird" guidance to life today.

Around 1946, Gedatsu Kongo began giving guidance that looked toward the time after his passing, saying, *"It is my greatest wish that my life for a single day lives on within a hundred members."* The many lectures he gave from that period until his death were his "last will and testament" to the members —and a message to us living now.

In nearly every lecture of that period, Gedatsu Kongo spoke of the *Sanken-pi* (Three Sacred Monuments) at the *Goreichi*.

"The Sanken-pi is the object of Gedatsu teaching. If you bow before the Sanken-pi, kneel, and pray with sincerity, I will teach you anything."

Taking this as a personal lesson, many members have found answers and realizations to resolve various life difficulties while bowing before the Three Sacred Monuments. The key to experiencing and embodying the teachings is to accept everything as personal guidance and practice it.

Gedatsu Kongo's final public speech for Gedatsu members was given at the Autumn Festival on October 10, 1948. In his speech, he spoke with great clarity: "I recently narrowly escaped death three times. I believe I am gradually heading toward recovery. However, I consider it an extraordinary honor and joy to be able to speak to you, even from my bed.

"Many of you have come today hoping to hear a profound Gedatsu lesson. But today, I want to speak very simply, so that everyone can understand. **The practice of humility and poverty is best for a human being.**

"Looking at the headquarters staff, I feel everyone is 'too clever.' Like the Sun Spirit monument, you should firmly remember and take home the practice of humility and poverty, day in and day out, without change. Those who try to act 'clever' will find themselves in conflict with others. Know that being a 'fool' (humble) is the most peaceful path.

"Generally, everyone dislikes being foolish and poor and uses too many flowery words. Let us firmly commit to the practice of humility and poverty today. If you sincerely pray for the happiness of others, happiness will surely come to you as well. When I die, I will rest at Sennyu-ji Temple in Kyoto. I no longer have any attachments to anything. I ask that you all truly learn the precious Gedatsu teachings in your hearts and move forward step by step."

The Final Guidance

Following his introduction—"I want to speak very simply"—his first words were: *"The practice of humility, poverty and death is best for a human being."* He repeated the importance of this throughout his short speech, emphasizing how much he required this of the members.

The late Archbishop Eizan Kishida noted that "The Practice of Humility, Poverty, and Death" was the most impactful teaching he received from Gedatsu Kongo.

He emphasized: *"I used to think 'I want to be great, I don't want to be looked down on, I don't want to be poor.' But this profound teaching transformed my entire view of life."*

Today, the world prioritizes economic wealth and individual rights. At the same time, it is a fact that many suffer from mental exhaustion or lack human bonds and emotional affection. The path to opening up this chaotic era lies within **"The Practice of Humility, Poverty, and Death."**



Gedatsu Teaching 13
By Seiken Okano (Gedatsu Kongo)

***Gedatsu-kyo* monthly newsletter, June 18, 1936**
Translation by Reverend Hisakazu Taki

Gedatsu is to revere God and respect ancestors. Observe the path of appreciation and requital. Practice integrity, filial piety, benevolence, fidelity and gratitude. Understand and comply with the great path of God or the Universal Truth. Endeavor in your vocation and fulfill your obligations of appreciation and requital. Cultivate yourself as a dutiful child, as an ancestor and as a descendant. Follow the path of humanity to benefit people and the world. Perform your duty first. This is the core teaching of Gedatsu.

The path of appreciation and requital:

- (1) Country - Without country, you have no home.*
- (2) Parents - Without parents, you cannot be born.*
- (3) Society - Without society, you cannot exist for even a single day.*

While this can be easily stated, it can be understood only through actual practice and serious contemplation.

Revere God and respect ancestors with absolute sincerity. This is the practice of integrity and filial piety. Benefit the world and work for people's happiness. Perform your duty first with sincerity.

The path of humanity is to practice integrity, filial piety, benevolence, fidelity and gratitude. This is the essential teaching of Gedatsu. I urge you to remember this in your heart and relate it aloud in order to practice Gedatsu and teach others.

We are allowed to exist by Heaven. We are provided with blessings from Heaven. We are nurtured by Heaven. This is the Law of the Universe. We cannot fully requite the great blessings from God, ancestors and society. This is the essential teaching of Gedatsu. Please do not forget this.

I have already mentioned the above in the past monthly newsletters. However, I have heard that some of you still do not understand this point. This is why I have explained it again.

The Gedatsu path is great. Without practicing Gedatsu, you will never be able to accomplish anything. If you sincerely endeavor along the path of Gedatsu, you will understand and experience that you are one with God, and that your mind and body are one. This is called the union of God and man. You will then feel assured and confident – knowing you cannot be burned by fire, drowned in water or blown away by a strong wind. This is because you are aligned with the Universal Law.

The above is explained in detail in my Gedatsu Doctrine Books I & II and the monthly Gedatsu newsletters. Please read these a thousand times over. This is the essential teaching of Gedatsu. I urge you to put these teachings into practice.

Commentary on “Teaching 13” by Rev. H. Taki:

In this final installment of Gedatsu Kongo's Teachings, the Founder restates lessons so that everyone can fully understand the essential teachings of Gedatsu. His explanation can be summarized in the following four points:

- (1) Reverence to God and ancestors
- (2) Appreciation and requital
- (3) Endeavor in your duties
- (4) Salvation of mankind

(1) Reverence to God and Ancestors

This is the most basic point for our faith, which is to fully understand and appreciate the foundation of our existence. Our life is neither created nor sustained by our will. We are allowed to exist by God. Our physical bodies were given to us through our parents and ancestors. Understand this and appreciate the blessings we receive from God and ancestors.

(Continued on back page)

FEBRUARY 2026 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$12,000

General Donations: A. Sebe, J. Detwiler / J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M. Fukushima, M. Lumpkin, No Name, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, R./R. Tateishi, S. McSwain

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D. Mukai "Never Forgotten" Service for Tadayoshi Ishida and Maxine Chodor
T. Ishida "Never Forgotten" Service for Tadayoshi Ishida
A. Tsujimura Ancestor blessing
Kaku Families "Never Forgotten" Service for Mario Kaku
M/M N. Chodor "Never Forgotten" Service for Maxine Chodor
M/am T. Matsumoto "Never Forgotten" Service for Yoshihisa Hirayama
J. Shiroishi In memory of Sayoko Shiroishi and April Norman
Shaklan Family Ancestor blessing
Do. Shiroishi "Never Forgotten" Service for Tadayoshi Ishida
M/M H. Tsujimura Appreciation for Howard Tsujimura
T. Fukushima In memory of Keiko Fukushima
K. Chinen In memory of Mizuki Kuyo

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*Note: Special Acknowledgments are listed for gifts \$100+.
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(Teachings – Continued from page 6)

(2) Appreciation and Requit

Gedatsu Kongo urged us to be aware of three essential elements of human existence: country, parents and society.

Country: Without a country, our daily life is impossible. When you observe the plight of refugees throughout the world, you understand this. We should not forget that our everyday life is possible because of our country's protection. Thus, we receive immeasurable blessing from our country. Language, custom and tradition, attitudes – they are all ancestral heritages of our country from ancient times. We also receive blessings from our country in the form of the land and regions where we live. Thus, our country is the foundation of our existence.

Parents: Our parents are the source of our physical existence. Everyone has parents. While we may naturally think of parental blessings as the care and upbringing of children, Gedatsu Kongo emphasized the actual giving of life as the primary blessing parents bestow on their children.

Society: Everything in our daily lives, including food, clothing and shelter, is provided through society. Without the contributions of others, we cannot live.

When you are aware of these immeasurable blessings, you will naturally feel like benefiting the world as a token of gratitude.

Gedatsu Kongo regarded the importance of the following five human virtues as the unchangeable paths of humanity: integrity, filial piety, benevolence, fidelity and gratitude. Integrity means to be loyal and sincere to God.

Filial piety is to be dutiful to parents. Benevolence is love and compassion towards other people. Fidelity is to have a sense of duty. Gratitude is the expression of respect and appreciation for all people and things. These virtues are integrated into our lives when we become aware of the greatness of blessings we receive from everything and everyone in the world.

(3) Endeavor in your duties

When you become aware that you are allowed to live by God and that you are nurtured by others, you will naturally feel like benefiting others and the world. This is accomplished by doing your best through your present roles in the world. By endeavoring in your duties, you contribute to the betterment of society and world peace.

(4) Salvation of mankind

Our Gedatsu study and practice is not only for our happiness alone, but for the happiness of mankind and to achieve world peace.

In conclusion, Gedatsu Kongo says, "Without practicing Gedatsu, you will never be able to accomplish anything. If you sincerely endeavor along the path of Gedatsu, you will feel assured and confident. I urge you to put these teachings into practice."

Thus, Gedatsu Kongo encourages us to practice Gedatsu for the happiness of all.

