

GEDATSU COMPANION

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

"A donation is not something you offer out of obligation. It is a gift you offer with joy."

Gedatsu Kongo taught that when we receive blessings, we should express our gratitude for those blessings.

One member recalled that after offering a donation, he told Gedatsu Kongo, "I will try even harder next time." Gedatsu Kongo replied, "A donation is not something you offer out of obligation. It is something you offer with joy."

Only later did the member realize that Gedatsu Kongo was teaching him the proper attitude in making an offering. A donation should not be motivated by duty or pressure, but by sincere gratitude and joy.

Let us express our heartfelt appreciation with a joyful spirit, offering our gratitude for the many blessings we receive from God and our ancestors.

JULY 2026

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	12		No Service
Tue	14	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	26	10:00 am	Appreciation / <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	5	10:00 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	12	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	19	10:00 am	Appreciation / <i>Obon</i> Service / Graduates Honored
Thu	23	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	26	10:00 am	<i>Chili Relleno</i> Cooking Class

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	11	12 noon	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom
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AUGUST 2026

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	9		No Service
Tue	11	7:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Google Meet
Sun	23	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Benzaiten</i> Service

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sun	2	10:00 am	<i>Hiho</i> Meditation Practice
Sun	9	10:00 am	"Never Forgotten" Memorial Service
Sun	16	10:00 am	Appreciation and <i>Benzaiten</i> Service
Thu	20	5:00 pm	Regional Board Meeting via Zoom
Sun	23	10:00 am	<i>Shakyo</i> Class – Writing <i>Hannya Shingyo</i>

CHURCHWIDE

Sat	22	12 noon	Steering Team Meeting via Zoom
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July “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, July 5, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Yukio Jim Ide, Tsuma Kino, Kazue Ando Kotabe, Miyoko Nakayama, Steven Ikuzo Nakatani, Alan Yoneo Oshima, Yukie Ota, Shizu Sebe, Charlie Zenzo Tagawa, Keichi Takemura, Steve Morio Taketa, Keisuke Tateishi, Susie Setsuko Tateishi, Yukio Tateishi, Kimiko Yomogida, Tsuyako Yuno, Yukie Yuno, and Yone Yuno.**

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, July 12, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Hideko Arakawa, Iku Arakawa, Masao Arakawa, Nathan Capross, Haruko Chinen, Kathryn Christina Howe, Tomoko Imai, Katsue Jon Inouye, Louis Kiyoshi Ito, Yoshino Kawamura, Maria Antonia Lechuga, Hiroko Murakami, Stanley Muronaka, Yasoji Nagahama, Tomoyoshi Naito, Kyoko Nakaguchi, Shigeko Nakamura, Helen Nakano, Eddie Kinya Ogura, Nancy Yoshie Ogura, Hiroko Omiya, Setsu Sakuma, Malayka Jane Sexton, Thomas Gray Sexton, Otomatsu Shiba, Yukio Shimada, Michiye Shimohira, Nobuyoshi Shimohira, Shigeko Sugata, Yoshinori Takamine, Genpachi Tanji, Riichi Tomita, Kazuma Toyama, Rudy Koichiro Tsujimura, and Yoko Tsujimura.**



Craft & Bento Fair
Saturday, October 3
11 a.m – 4 p.m.

- Hold the date!
- Vendors for craft / home-made items are welcome!
- Contact **Pam Shaklan** at pamshak@hotmail.com or call / text (818) 216-4102.



Fall Grand Festival Sunday, September 6 – 9:30 a.m. Gedatsu Spiritual Center, Sacramento

Program I – Festival Service

Social Hall or outdoors, weather permitting

Program II – Gedatsu Kongo Memorial Tower

Enshrinement Ceremony

Program III – *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony

- **Order your *Saito Goma* plaques by August 23.** Price per plaque is \$5. Application form is in this newsletter and at your local church.
- **Reserve a lunch for Festival Sunday.** Lunches will be available for \$10 per person. Contact your local church to reserve a lunch.



Chile Relleno Cooking Class

- Join us at the Los Angeles Gedatsu Church on **Sunday, July 26, at 10 a.m.**
- Learn to make *chile relleno*, the delicious traditional Mexican stuffed poblano-pepper dish.
- Instructed by member **Mariko Locheo**.
- Class fee is \$10 per person.
- To reserve your spot, contact **Rev. Naoya Okano** at naoya.gedatsu@gmail.com or call/text him at (626) 233-2359.



Mothers Celebrated, Honored in Mother's Day Programs



At the Los Angeles Church, pictured above, front row, left to right: Ann Pang, Jo Ann Shiroishi. Second row, left to right: Michiye Takahashi, Sachiyo Matsumoto, Yoko Oishi, Julie Mah, Marian Mizokami, Marilyn Nakamura. Back row, left to right: Machiko Masuda, Janet Hirayama, Anna Rico, Uzuko Shiroishi, Fukuko Rico, Yuko Okano, Carole Tsujimura, Wendy Young, Arlene Tsujimura, Pam Shaklan, Ikuyo Hiramii, Camille Kuritani, Donna Shiroishi, Karen Nakamura, and Diana Mukai.



Colorfully decorated paper bags made by Judy Hamamoto were given to each of honored ladies in the Mother's Day Program. Judy, Ikuko Kuritani and Kari Kuritani packed each of the bags with a delicious assortment of snacks and candies.



At the Sacramento Spiritual Center, pictured above, left to right: Nancy Horner, Sally McSwain, Pauline Tomita-Akashi, Laura Nussbaum, Ritsuko Nakatani, and Reiko Ide. The mothers were gifted lovely cloth tote bags filled with Japanese snacks and cushy socks with rubberized soles.

Annual Plaque-burning Ceremony



Before the *Fudo* deity, Senior Reverend Akira Sebe led the congregation in offering prayers for the annual Old Plaque-burning (*Joen-no-gi*) Ceremony.

Members and friends enjoyed a lunch following the ceremony.

Gedatsu Study Series: "The Practice of Humility, Poverty, and Death" – Part 4

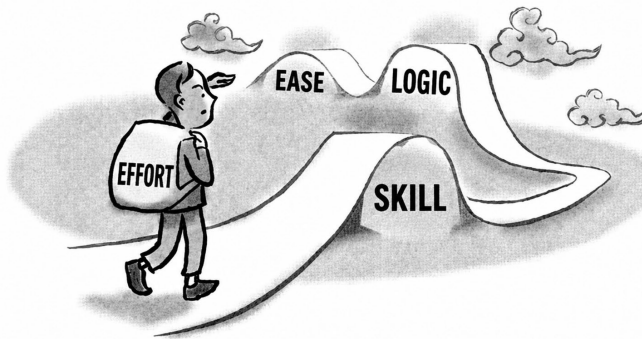
"The Practice of Humility" – Part 2

Translated and reprinted from
The Gedatsu Magazine – Japan 2022

In last month's issue, we referred to the words of Gedatsu Kongo to learn about "cleverness," "logic," and "self-conceit" — which he identified as the opposites of "humility" (being a fool) — as well as the "vanity" that lies at their root. We confirmed that these traits exist in everyone's heart and are the very source of our hardships. This month, we will begin by examining the various negative effects that "cleverness" and "logic" produce.

"Cleverness" Hinders Effort

All human beings have dreams and ideals, and we strive to achieve them. At the same time, when we reflect and recognize our own immaturity, we possess the drive to become better versions of ourselves.



Growing through honest methods, accumulating skill, and building a record of achievement is a wonderful thing. True success and happiness are the fruits of such persistent effort.

However, those who are "clever" or overly "logical" often seek results without the work. They find excuses to avoid effort, choosing to procrastinate or postpone their responsibilities. For those caught in "vanity," steady, humble effort seems "uncool," so they avoid it. Those trapped in "self-conceit" believe they are already perfect and that effort is unnecessary.

Because such people never truly apply themselves, they never achieve genuine human growth. Consequently, they fail to build real ability or reach true success. In this way, "cleverness" and "logic" become evil causes that hinder the essential human path of effort and growth.

The Effort of Little Panthaka

There is a story that teaches the importance of accumulating effort. Among the disciples of the Buddha were two brothers named Panthaka. The elder brother, Maha Panthaka, was brilliant and soon attained enlightenment as an Arhat. However, the younger brother, Chuda Panthaka (Little Panthaka), was so slow-witted that he could not memorize even a short verse.



Finally, the Buddha gave him a piece of cloth and commanded him to wipe the dust from the shoes of the practitioners while chanting, "I sweep away the dust; I wash away the dirt." Day after day, Little Panthaka performed this simple task. Eventually, he memorized the words, understood the essence of the "dust" within the heart, and became one of the sixteen Great Arhats.

This story shows that even the most "foolish" person can reach enlightenment through persistent effort, and that through effort, human beings can grow infinitely.

Gedatsu Kongo taught: "Unlike other living creatures, is there any limit to how far a human can advance through the workings of the spirit and heart? It is infinite."

(Continued on page 5)

("Humility" – continued from page 4)

Effort is what unlocks this potential. Therefore, "cleverness," "logic," and "vanity" — which block this effort — can be considered spiritual diseases. Furthermore, those who rely on "cleverness" and "logic" struggle to build healthy relationships.

Objectively speaking, hardly anyone likes a person who is always trying to look better than they are through conceit or vanity.

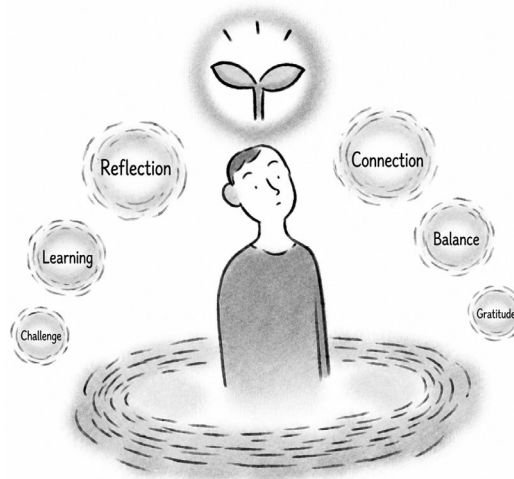
Gedatsu Kongo observed: *"The actions of the 'clever' always repel goodness... they burn with jealousy and pride."* Those who think "I am superior" tend to look down on others, focusing on finding faults rather than accepting people with respect. Typical examples include seniors who refuse to acknowledge the young, or youths who dismiss the wisdom of elders as "old-fashioned."

The Truth of Humanity

The greatest harm of "cleverness" and "logic" is that they prevent us from understanding the true nature and value of this world and humanity. This world is a manifestation of the Divine Will. The Divine Will is love and sincerity, which becomes the Law of Nature and the blessing that nurtures all things. God's wish is for all beings to grow spiritually and live in mutual prosperity.

We are beings sustained by the Law of Nature and its blessings. Simultaneously, we possess a "divine heart" that connects us to God, and we have a mission to achieve self-growth and build a world of mutual prosperity. We have been blessed with intellect and talents to accomplish the mission. However, as Gedatsu Kongo stated in *Shinko**, human intellect is tiny compared to the Divine wisdom. Moreover, our spirits are often immature—self-centered, dishonest, or conceited.

To help us grow, God gives us various opportunities: our environment, the people we meet, events, and our vocation. These are trials and nutrition for growth given to us because God loves us and expects us to grow. This is the essence of the world and our human presence.



Gedatsu Kongo taught: *"The truth of humanity cannot be explained within the logical scope of cleverness. It begins to ascend from the moment one leaves logic and academics behind. Awakening to this human truth and living by it is what we call Gedatsu."*

The truth of humans who are allowed to live by God cannot be grasped through "cleverness" or "logic." This is the primary reason why we must engage in the "practice of humility."



* *Shinko* – or "Sincere Practice" – published in 1942, is a 30-page book containing Master Gedatsu Kongo's essential teachings.

“The Precious Gift of a Mother”

Sermon by **Reverend Takao Kojima**

L.A. Church – Sunday, May 17

Last Sunday was Mother’s Day. I am sure many of you called your mothers, sent them cards, or perhaps enjoyed a meal together.

Mother’s Day is not simply a day to give presents to our mothers. Rather, I think it is a day to express our gratitude to our mothers for raising us, supporting us, and caring for us throughout our lives.

In our daily lives, we are often busy and do not express our gratitude to our mothers. Perhaps, we may even take their presence for granted. However, when Mother’s Day comes, we once again realize that we did not grow up by ourselves, and that we are here today because of the love and support of our mothers.

This is actually very much connected to the teachings of Gedatsu. Gedatsu Kongo taught about parental love in these powerful words: *“A parent’s love for a child is deeply instinctive. The self-sacrificing love of a parent naturally overflows beyond reason.”*

As I often mention in my talks, we are not living only through our own efforts. We have our parents, our grandparents, and countless ancestors, and our lives today are built upon that flow of life.

Therefore, Mother’s Day is not simply a day to say “thank you” to our mothers, but rather a day to express gratitude for the very life we have been given.

Today, I would like to share a little story about my mother.

My mother passed away about 20 years ago at the age of 85. She was born in Tokyo in January 1918 as the oldest of four children. She later married my father at the age of 22.

My parents had already become members of Gedatsu before they were married, and they eventually got married through the introduction of my father’s older brother, who was also a Gedatsu member. Then, two years after their marriage, in 1941, my mother gave birth to their first son, my oldest brother.

I was told that this childbirth became the greatest challenge of her life.

The delivery was extremely difficult. My mother fell unconscious due to eclampsia, placing her in a very critical condition. At that time, antibiotics were still not widely available, and medical technology was much more limited than today. Even a Caesarean section was considered a very risky operation.

Under such circumstances, the doctor reportedly asked my father whether priority should be given to saving the mother or the child. At that time, my father asked the doctor to save both my mother and my brother.

In the end, my brother was safely born through Caesarean section, and my mother also survived. And thankfully, after that, my mother was blessed with three more children, including myself, and was able to live a long life until the age of 85.



Looking back now, I truly feel that my mother’s survival was a great blessing from God and our ancestors, especially considering how limited the medical technology was. I also deeply feel how thankful I am that she was later blessed with more children and was able to live a long life.

(Continued on back page)

MAY 2026 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$3,355

General Donations: A. Sebe, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, K. Gibson, K. Ota Schubert, R. Ide, R. Nakatani, S. Yabut

Special Acknowledgments

M/M R. Chan	In memory of Richard Kitasoe
J. Tanaka	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service in memory of Shigeno Tateishi and Grayce Matsumoto
R. Ide	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service in memory of Buster Yoshiharu Ide and Ben Tsutomu Ide
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude monthly “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service
M/M D. Ide	Gratitude for Appreciation, Joen-no-gi, Mother’s Day Service
J. Tanaka	Appreciation and gratitude for Mother’s Day Service, Joen-no-gi
M/M D. Ide	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service in memory of Buster Yoshiharu Ide and Ben Tsutomu Ide
M/M J. Horner	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service appreciation
M/M M. Sunahara	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service in memory of Masao Taketa and Kenneth Taketa
A. Sebe	Appreciation for prayers and blessings for Robert Yoshiharu Ito
N. Ito	Memorial Tower Service appreciation for Robert Yoshiharu Ito
M/M C. Tanaka	“Never Forgotten” Memorial Service appreciation
M/M D. Tsuboi	With gratitude monthly donation

Southern California Total: \$3,818

General: DAFGiving 360, M/M T. Hirami, T. Ishida, J.Kaku, J. Kizu, M/M T. Kojima, M/M K. Kuritani, I. Long, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M V. Mizokami, M/M S. Mukai, M. Nakamura, Y. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, T. Okimura, D. Shiroishi, M/M K. Shiroishi (\$500), M. Takahashi, N. Takara, T. Truong, A. Tsujimura, M/M H. Tsujimura, T. Yamada.

Special Acknowledgments

E. Kusagaya	In memory of Glen Hirami
A. Tsujimura	In memory of Yoza Joe Tsujimura, John Kuritani and Hiro Yamamisaka
M/M H. Tsujimura	In memory of Yoza Joe Tsujimura, John Kuritani, June Morioka and Hiro Yamamisaka
D. Mukai	“Never Forgotten” Service for Sabuki Akiyoshi
M/M K. Kuritani	In memory of Yoza Joe Tsujimura, John Kuritani, June Morioka and Hiro Yamamisaka
M/M T. Hirami	For new car
T. Matsumoto	“Never Forgotten” Service for Sumako Matsumoto and Hitomi Nakaguchi
T. Yamada	Appreciation for old plaques
C. Tsujimura	Prayer for car

Online Donations: Total: \$383

General: D. Allum, S. Shiroishi, W. Young, H. Tsujimura J. Reid, Muronaka Family, M/M S. Sekikawa

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



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(Precious Gift – continued from page 6)

Because of this experience, my mother was very sincere and devoted to Gedatsu. She was raised in a very traditional Japanese way, so she was modest and humble, but very strong inside. She disliked waste and lived a very simple life.

I still remember that she often used the Japanese words, *mottainai* and *arigatai*. *Mottainai* means not to waste things carelessly, and *arigatai* means to feel thankful and appreciative. *Mottainai* and *arigatai* were words I heard from my mother all the time.

Looking back, I sometimes wonder how such a strong sense of gratitude was formed in my mother's heart – whether it naturally fit the teachings of Gedatsu, or whether she learned it through that difficult experience. If she were alive today, I would love to ask her.

I now realize that my mother shared many teachings and words of Gedatsu with us, not only about gratitude, but about many other things as well.

For example, she often said:

"Courtesy and respect are very important in life."

"You reap what you sow."

"It is important to have a balanced mind."

When I was little, my mother often took me to Appreciation Service in Yotsuya. Even now, I still remember her seriously taking notes during Sensei's sermon. I also remember my mother sometimes quietly falling asleep during the sermon.

I guess she tried to share these teachings of Gedatsu whenever she felt they were important for us to learn.

Watching my mother's sincere attitude toward Gedatsu while growing up, all of us became Gedatsu members and continue to learn its teachings. Besides the great influence of my father, I am truly grateful to my mother.

Gedatsu Kongo teaches us in one of his "Thoughts of the Month": *"A child's good or bad character is influenced by prenatal education and environment. From an early age, children should learn the teachings so that faith may be firmly established in the next generation."*

So, please try to take opportunities to share the teachings of Gedatsu with your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and other young people around you from an early age, so that they may also be guided to the teachings of Gedatsu.

Thank you very much.

