

Happy Father's Day

Rev. Kazuo Yamada

June 15, 2014

Good morning everyone.

Today, we performed the memorial service for Mother Kenyu Kiyota, who is one of the founders of Gedatsu Church USA. As we remember the achievements of Mother Kiyota, let us keep in our hearts the teaching of Gedatsu, which Mother Kiyota brought us.

The writings you see to the left and right of the altar – “*Chu-Kou-Jin-Gi-Rei*” and “*Wakon*” – were treasures that Mother Kiyota received directly from Gedatsu-kongo. After Mother Kiyota passed away, these two writings were discovered among her mementos, and were brought to this church more than a half century ago.

These writings are Gedatsu Kongo's teachings for the members of the Los Angeles Church, and they are the last teachings that Mother Kiyota conveyed to us.

In the writing on the left, “*Chu-Kou-Jin-Gi-Rei*” literally means "Fidelity, filial piety, benevolence, duty and propriety, or civility." These are the Laws of the Universe, indicating the path that mankind should take. In the writing on the right, “*Wakon*” means “harmonious soul.”

How should we live life? Those answers from Gedatsu-kongo are written on either side of the altar.

Let us keep these two writings in our souls as our guide from Mother Kiyota.

Today is Father's Day. Just as I talked about the role of the woman during the Mother's Day service, today for Father's Day, I'd like to talk about the role of men, with special appreciation to fathers. As I speak, please reflect on your own father and yourself.

All things are nurtured through the combined blessings from heaven and earth. Similarly, both the balance of paternal and maternal influences is necessary to create life. That is the way of nature.

In Japan, it is said that the essence of father's love is strictness, and the mother's love is full of benevolence. In short, this is called “*Genpu, Jibo*”, or "strict father, affectionate mother." Nature, as we know, is not only gentle; there is strictness, too.

There is a poem in Japan, which says: “Father scolds a child, and mother embraces the child. The child may doubt the love of the father for the child.” But both father and mother are no different when it comes to cherishing and loving the child.

Parents sometimes scold their child, and at other times, embrace the child. They are just two aspects of one affection. Because the child is reared with both strictness and gentleness, the child does not stray from the correct path and is able to grow up morally straight. Even though the parental expressions of love are different, there is no difference in the purpose of both hearts: the good of the child.

In the same way, God, your guardian spirits and your ancestors are always watching over you. We have never been abandoned. However, just like the child who does not fully understand the parents' affections for their child, we doubt the affection of God and ancestors.

The father loves the children with wisdom, and the mother loves children with mercy. This is the same in nature. "Strict father, affectionate mother" are in the natural order of things. We live under the strict law of heaven and the full affection of Mother Earth. Thanks to both,

we receive their blessing of being allowed to live life.

If this were expressed in Buddhist terms, the strict father is *Fudo* Deity, and the affectionate mother is sacred *Kanjizaibosatsu*. Both are the manifestations of the law of universe.

When I say "strict father," some might imagine an old patriarch or a father behaving proudly. However, this has nothing to do with behaving proudly. "Strict father" in Japanese can also mean awe and respect. It means a father who is strict with himself – and because he is strict with himself, he can become a positive role model for others. Archbishop Kishida matches this image of "strict father," when expressed in Japanese. It is a man who can teach children the right things by showing his back, because you can see a person's true character when you see him from behind.

The fatherly aspect is the characteristic that men possess. The fatherly role is to present a vision and to teach rules.

Later, during the Father's Day presentation, a message of the five articles of "Observances for the Head of the Family" that Gedatsu Kongo said will be distributed to all the men as a present for this day.

Observances for the Head of the Family:

- 1. Don't be too rigid.**
- 2. Don't be a stickler about trivial things.**
- 3. Persevere.**
- 4. Act according to circumstances.**
- 5. Rise to the occasion.**

**Gedatsu Kongo's Message at Father's Day, June 15, 2014
Gedatsu Church Los Angeles**

Gedatsu Kongo said: "The head of the family at home is like a captain of a ship, and the family members are the crew. Each knows his position well, respects the position that should be respected, and reveres the position that should be revered."

I think that it is the basis of harmony: each one respecting each other's roles. For example, the man has a role to show a vision. The woman has a role to produce a happy environment. If each characteristic is combined, it will create and expand a greater energy.

Gedatsu Kongo said: "A married couple should be one."

Let's think of our own characteristics again. We can see our mission and roles, which are given to us from heaven. We are able know what we should do now. Let us be strict with ourselves and strive to create a better family and world.

Lastly, in our closing prayer, let us offer sincere *Amacha* kuyo for the spirits of our forefathers and all spirits.

Thank you and God bless.